An Investigation of Transfer in the Literacy Practices of
Religiously Engaged Christian College Students

by

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To the students and faculty of Wheaton College (1998-2002 and 2005-2009),
who taught me that reading and writing are two of the most faithful acts
any Christian can undertake.

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This is a dissertation about what it means that individuals learn to read and write in community, so it is fitting that here I have the chance to acknowledge the many individuals and communities who have shaped this project. Community has been a rich gift in my own life: at each stage of my growth and education, I have lived among people who love learning, reading, and discussing ideas. Like Jane Austen's Anne Elliot, I have concluded that "the company of clever, well-informed people, who have a great deal of conversation" is not simply good company: it is the best.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the literacy practices of religiously engaged Christian college students who participate in a single campus ministry (College Christians) at a large, public university in the Midwest. It takes religiously engaged Christian college students as a case study of the ways that literacy practices and discourses transfer among discourse communities, in particular the curricular and extracurricular domains of students' lives. The study brings together research traditions from the social sciences and composition studies, drawing on observations of the campus ministry alongside interviews with students about their reading and writing practices. It therefore provides instructors with a more expansive picture than has previously been available of how Christian college students navigate the relationships between academic and religious ways of knowing.

Observations and interviews revealed that Christian students engage in a wide variety of church-related literacy practices, many of which could serve as resources to aid students in the development of academic reading and writing practices. In particular, church-related literacy practices can introduce students to dispositions and subjectivities that will help them succeed in the classroom, such as the openness to learning that accompanies a novice stance toward reading and writing. Students who participate in church-related literacy practices may also engage in protocols for textual engagement that will be useful in the classroom; these protocols include: use of interpretive apparatus and secondary research resources (such as commentaries), use of discussion to facilitate entering an academic conversation, and the use of various reading strategies to engage with different genres. These practices often result in a burgeoning sense that interpretation and composition are fundamentally rhetorical practices—that is, accomplished within a particular context for specific purposes and with a particular audience in mind.

Findings also suggest that as Christian college students determine when, whether, and how to integrate church-related literacy practices and discourses into their academic

work, they use a variety of strategies by which to transfer or compartmentalize knowledge and skills across domains. Although some students see little or no relationship between academic and religious ways of knowing, others see connections but choose to compartmentalize these domains because they believe that such compartmentalization is more appropriate in an academic context. Still other students find that compartmentalization of literacy practices is a necessary condition for their spiritual and intellectual growth. Among students who choose to transfer discourses among religious and academic discourse communities, some do so in ways that are visible to their instructors. These students often position their religious faith as aligning with the values of the public university. Other students integrate church-related discourses and literacy practices in ways that may be invisible to their instructors. These students draw on discourses and practices that are shared among religious and academic discourse communities, and as a result, the work that results may not be "marked" as the work of a Christian student.

Taken together, these findings suggest that students are often agentive in the ways that they bring religious and academic literacy practices into relationship with each other. In fact, opportunities to transfer or compartmentalize literacy practices are actually a mechanism by which students make sense of the expectations for reading and writing that they experience as they navigate their collegiate lives. Far from being passive reproducers of knowledge in either community, students are using their reading and writing activities to position themselves as productive members of both their religious and academic communities.

INTRODUCTION

"To be honest, it was a little discouraging ..." Theresa sighed and leaned heavily
back in her chair. Her voice trembled slightly: "You could almost see what *he* thought
and what *he* believed, and so that kind of was discouraging, just because I see God in *this*
way and believe in *this* God." She took a deep, shaky breath and I looked away in an
effort to give space to her emotion. I thumbed through my copy of "Vulnerability in
Friendship," the academic paper we were discussing. She continued:

> I think [the feedback] had me definitely ask some very serious questions that I've
> not asked before. I think that was good for my faith and that was good for how I
> see God and stuff. At the same time ... I lost a lot of faith in my writing and in my
> interpretation of the Bible. I lost confidence after this essay.

More than a year had passed since Theresa—now a senior economics major—had
enrolled in "Friendship in Literature," an elective offered by the English department at
Midwest University. She had entered the course with high hopes: "Friendship is not
something you put on your resume," she told me with a smile. "But it's just so important
to who I am and who I've become as a person. I wanted to see how other people value
this, hear what a professor had to say about friendship and hear what these ancient
authors have to say about it." In fact, the class met Theresa's expectations: she read
eagerly and developed a deep respect for the professor.

It was this deep respect that made his feedback both thought-provoking and
discouraging. "Vulnerability in Friendship" was Theresa's first formal piece of writing in
the course, a close-reading of the biblical book of Job that used Aristotle's definition of
friendship, drawn from the *Nichomachean Ethics,* to answer the question: *Can man and
God be friends?* Theresa's interpretation of Job led her to respond with a qualified yes;
her professor's interpretation of the same book led him to answer no, and she received a
grade that disappointed her. She recalled that in his feedback, the professor told her that
she had allowed her church-related interpretive practices to subvert her critical reading of

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Job. In her memory, his feedback suggested she was reading "to reinforce what [she] already wanted to hear." She told me that when she received her grade, she thought, "I just missed the mark. I guess I just was reading to reinforce what I already wanted to hear."

> So that made me be really critical of myself in how I approach the Bible and how I approach reading. I remember thinking, "Shoot. I wish I could redo this, take some of these thoughts and re-read [Job]." It also made me realize that it's going to be hard for me to read the Bible completely as … It's hard to just completely pull out emotion and experience and faith …

> You grow up and you hear these stories interpreted a thousand different ways … You watch how preachers, and mentors and people all do this. They take a Bible story and look at it in so many different ways. …It's not like looking at the pure—like, words on the page. I think what separates [the professor] is that … he reads the Bible purely—I mean, he knows it front to back. He knows all the history, all the context, the many different ways that people interpret it— believers, non-believers. But I don't think he *believes* in this.

Theresa is acutely aware that the Bible is an ancient and complex text, one that preachers, mentors, translators, and even knowledgeable professors can interpret in multiple ways. She recognizes that her approach to the Bible—rich with "emotion and experience and faith"— makes her vulnerable to accept some interpretations more readily than others, and that her friendship with God makes it difficult to read the Bible as she believes her professor would like her to do: as "words on the page."

A year later, Theresa was still reflecting on his feedback. She was still grappling with the possibility that he might be right: "It made me think a lot more about the [biblical] authors—what they mean … about translations, about all these technicalities … It just really made me think differently." Theresa firmly believes that this experience, and the reflection it evoked, was "good for [her] faith," but in the moment, she was frustrated. She had challenged herself to read Job through an academic framework, so when she received a disappointing grade, she went to the professor's office hours in an effort to make sense of their interpretive differences.

While there, she was confronted by the fact that her reading of Job was inflected by a narrative theology that interprets this Old Testament book in light of Jesus's New Testament act of redemption. In contrast, her professor reads Job as a single book, distinct unto itself: "When I went to his office, on his top shelf, one of the biggest books

that he had in among his whole collection was *The Book of Job*." As they talked about their respective interpretations, the professor told Theresa a story from his own life, and she realized that just as her reading was inflected by her religious beliefs, so her professor's hermeneutics were deeply personal:

> I almost think that with this story, with this thing, I hit kind of a nerve. He brought up a very personal story …. about the fairness of God and the coldness of God. I was like, okay. … As much as you might not try to, you still bring your own bag of belief or disbelief into this, into how you're reading this and definitely into how you're reading my story. It made more sense, and I was more at peace with it after that.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

Across the country, religiously committed college students find themselves navigating a complex web of literacy sponsors that includes—but is not limited to—church-related and academic communities. This study considers the experiences of a select group of religiously engaged Christian[1] students who participate in a single campus ministry at Midwest University—a large, flagship, state university. It is a study of students like Theresa: students who are eager to engage both religious and academic ideas, who seek to be productive participants in the curricular and extracurricular life of the academy without sacrificing their spiritual development. It examines their church-related,[2] academic, and extracurricular literacy practices, asking whether—and how—they make connections among those practices. In addition to contributing to the small but growing body of literature about the role of religion in the composition classroom, my study explores what students' approaches to reading and writing across multiple domains

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[1] Unless otherwise specified, this study will use the term "Christian" ecumenically, referring to a broad range of both Catholic and Protestant traditions, the two families of Christianity that comprise all the participants in this study. Bryant (2005) identifies Orthodox Christianity as an additional primary strain of Christianity, but none of the students in this study identify as Orthodox, so the Orthodox tradition will not appear in this work.

[2] I have chosen the term "church-related" literacies rather than "religious" literacies in order to differentiate these literacy practices from the concept of "religious literacy." "Religious literacy" is the phrase commonly used to define a base-line understanding of the theological and social tenets of the world's great religions (Prothero, 2008). The phrase "church-related literacy practices" in contrast, refers to activities like Bible study, the creation of testimonies, and the composition of missionary support letters. Reading and writing practices like these are examples of literacy practices that are directly sponsored by religious institutions, or that students encounter primarily within a religious context. The term "church-related" also accounts for the fact that while many of these practices have their roots in a formal church context, the students I study will often engage in these practices outside of a formal church—most likely within the context of a campus ministry.

can tell us about the ways in which learning might transfer between curricular and extracurricular discourse communities.

Transfer has traditionally been defined as "how previous learning influences current and future learning, and how past or current learning is applied or adapted to similar or novel situations" (Haskell, 2000, p. 23). Debates about transfer have been a hallmark of composition studies since its inception, as instructors and theorists have sought the best ways to equip student writers for the challenges of academic and professional communication. As David R. Russell points out, the history of composition studies can be framed as the emergence of the Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing in the Disciplines (WAC/WID) movement—with its insistence that both argumentation and literacy[3] are deeply embedded social constructs (Perelman, 2009; Scribner & Cole, 1981)—out of a skills-based educational model that assumed reading and writing, once learned, could be enacted successfully in any context (Russell, 1992).

Scholars have long acknowledged that writing-related transfer can be difficult to recognize and assess. Those who argue that transfer is difficult to prove point to the methodological challenges inherent in isolating specific knowledge or skills for the purposes of measurement (D. Perkins & Salomon, 1988). However, in order to assess the success of first year composition and WAC/WID efforts, administrators and writing instructors continue to rely on the belief that learning not only does, but must, transfer from one context to another. As Rebecca Nowacek observes, "The field of rhetoric and composition long ago rejected the myth of autonomous literacy, recognizing that what constitutes good writing is defined by the participants in a given discourse community … The field has, nonetheless, largely maintained its faith in the transfer of learning" (2011, p. 1). Because the field does believe in the existence of transfer, composition scholars

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[3] Commensurate with Scribner and Cole's assertion that literacy is both knowledge and implementation of a communicative symbol system, the term "literacy" is capacious in its contemporary usage. For example, it is not uncommon to hear that an individual exhibits numerical literacy or literacy about a specialized field, such as politics, food, religion, or the environment. Scholars of composition and rhetoric often use the term "literacy" to refer to the creation and interpretation of image, performance, and text. In this study, my use of the term "literacy practices" refers most commonly to students' reading and writing of traditional print and electronic texts, as well as the interpretive processes that accompany that reading and writing. Performance and the creation of visual media (including video) also play a role in the students' church-related literacy practices, however, because these forms of composition occur only rarely in the experiences of the students I interviewed, this study does not engage in a rigorous theorization of these practices.

have proposed a variety of alternate terms designed to help researchers, instructors, and students identify and describe the phenomena by which knowledge and skills from one domain are used in another. These terms include: generalization, remixing, repurposing, integration, and boundary-crossing (*Elon statement on writing transfer*, 2013). Each of these terms recognizes that the study of transfer is the study of "thinking, perceiving, [and] processing" information (Haskell, 2000, p. 23).

Within this scholarly context, the literacy practices of Christian college students offer a useful site for advancing the field's understanding of the varied ways in which transfer may manifest as students move among multiple discourse communities. Religiously engaged Christian college students are students whose religious practices are rooted in the interpretation of a sacred text. Not only do these students have deep personal investments in reading and writing outside of the curricular structures of college life, they are regularly presented in the rhetoric and composition literature as engaged in transfer of church-related literacy practices into the academic classroom. In fact, much of this scholarship focuses on the benefits that accrue in the composition classroom when instructors and students cooperatively explore both tension and coherence among religious and academic discourses. This literature pays particular attention to the ways religious discourses, literacy practices, and epistemologies appear among the academic literacy practices taught in the composition classroom.

As Theresa's story suggests, however, movement between academic and religious communities can happen both ways. Although transfer from academic to church-related contexts is less common than transfer from church-related to academic contexts, literacy practices are nonetheless circulating in a multi-directional manner. Just as students' faith is relevant to their academic activities, so academic learning can also inflect students' spiritual lives. This fact makes Christian college students an ideal population for deepening our understanding of transfer. The field of composition and rhetoric has recently called on scholars to theorize the movement of discourses and literacy practices between curricular and extracurricular communities, and it has encouraged further study of how this movement among communities "impacts [students'] self-identity and tool appropriation in each" (Moore, 2012, p. 11). In other words, the field needs to better understand how participation in a wide range of literacy-sponsoring communities shapes

students' purposes for interacting with texts, their sense of themselves and their affiliations with these communities (self-identity), and the methods or protocols (tool appropriation) students use to approach reading and writing. In order to further our exploration of these "uncharted territories," this study examines the literacy practices of Christian college students who participate in an extracurricular organization called "College Christians"—a campus ministry—on the campus of Midwest University.

By examining the possibility of extracurricular transfer in conjunction with students' dispositions toward reading and writing in both church-related and academic communities, this study also contributes to recent advancements that place the learner at the center of analytic approaches to transfer. Driscoll and Wells argue that "in some definitions, the learner is someone to whom or through whom transfer happens, rather than being the agent of transfer" (2012, p. 2). Nowacek rightly points out that emphasizing student agency "puts the individual as meaning maker at the center of conceptions of transfer and integration" (2011, p. 39). Taken together, these scholars suggest that transfer must be understood as something more than mere evidence of effective teaching and learning; it must be understood as a *practice* engaged by students who—with varying degrees of effectiveness and meta-awareness—are invested in their own learning.

This study also takes seriously recent calls in the field of composition and rhetoric to honor religious belief and practice as resources in students' academic, ethical, and intellectual development (DePalma, 2011; DePalma & Ringer, 2014; Geiger, 2013; Vander Lei, 2014b). Previous studies have recognized the distinctive nature of many of the church-related literacy practices that Christian students may bring to the classroom. Those who have studied the experiences of Christian college students show a deep commitment to identifying sources of tension between academic and religious communities in order to help students better undertake the challenging work of navigating among church-related and academic literacy practices. However, in recent years, scholars have also begun the valuable work of "renovating" previously underutilized historic, hermeneutic, and theological traditions that reveal shared or overlapping values among academic and religious ways of knowing (Vander Lei, Amorose, Daniell, & Gere, 2014). This study seeks to further develop this latter

trajectory by examining students' talk about the relationship between the literacy practices they take up within and across these two domains of their lives. I examine students' perceptions of the relationship between academic and church-related ways of knowing and in so doing, I draw attention to the complex ways in which students use literacy practices to guard or cross boundaries among their academic and religious communities.

By emphasizing Christian college students' tacit and agentive choices regarding transfer or compartmentalization of literacy learning, my study decenters the values of both religious and academic activity systems as the sole locus by which to determine the effectiveness of students' transfer of knowledge, skills, and literacy practices; it also deepens our understanding of the relationship between curricular and extracurricular learning. In this study, I demonstrate that literacy practices are more than simply an indicator of the fact that students are navigating (and sometimes negotiating) among these communities. Rather, I argue that literacy practices function as a mechanism by which students make sense of their positions in multiple communities with potentially conflicting values and beliefs; in this way, transfer of learning becomes a process by which learning occurs, and as such, a facilitator of students' ethical, interpersonal, spiritual, and intellectual development.

Religiously Engaged Christian College Students: Frameworks and Definitions

Although Christian college students—particularly those that I will here define as "religiously engaged"—are only one of many groups whose extracurricular literacy practices I might have considered, they are a particularly rich sample population for exploring issues of transfer. As Chris Anderson suggests: "Religious rhetoric is the ideal way of examining the assumptions of all discourse, as an ideal test case, because in it the kinds of bias that are present in all language are especially evident because especially blatant" (Anderson, 1991, p. 22). Anderson argues that because religious language and practice are rooted in explicit ideological goals, they represent a test case against which we can consider the significance of participation and practice in a wide variety of discursive communities. In the case of Christian college students' writing, the presence of religious rhetoric, religious discourse patterns, or traces of church-related literacy

practices within an academic paper may connote distinctly religious ways of knowing and doing.

Despite the common assumption that college acts as a secularizing influence on students, and despite the well-documented fact that contemporary emerging adults increasingly distance themselves from formalized religion (Smith, 2009; Twenge, Exline, Grubbs, Sastry, & Campbell, 2015), spirituality remains a prominent identity category for a significant number of students across the country. According to the Higher Education Research Institute's (HERI) report on "The Spiritual Life of College Students," 75% of all college students report believing in or experiencing a connection to God or a Higher Power. Although studies consistently show that college students are more "spiritual" than "religious" and that attendance at religious services declines during college (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2010; Smith, 2009), these reports also show that college attendance is a positive factor in measures of religious persistence: individuals who attend college are far more likely to remain connected to a religious community than their non-college educated counterparts (Schwadel, 2011; Smith, 2009). These studies suggest that contemporary intellectual trends have opened up spaces in which intellectual engagement might actually foster—rather than inhibit—religious participation (Dively, 1993).

The ongoing prevalence of religion in the lives of college students validates the field of composition and rhetoric's long-standing interest in the role that religion plays in the development and implementation of academic discourses and literacy practices. Indeed, nearly 44% of students enter college claiming some degree of "religious engagement," that is, "attending religious services, praying, and reading sacred texts" (Astin et al., 2010, p. 83), a characterization that emphasizes the role of reading and writing in students' personal lives. In the field's quest to understand and value the presence of students' home and extracurricular literacy practices in the composition classroom, religious students—particularly Evangelical and Fundamentalist Christian college students—have served as a valuable site of inquiry and analysis (DePalma, 2011; DePalma & Ringer, 2014; Geiger, 2013; Vander Lei, 2014b).

To date, the research corpus in composition and rhetoric that considers transfer in the literacy practices of Christian college students has typically analyzed the

interconnections between religious and academic discourses,[4] and more specifically, the ways that students' church-related reading practices manifest in their academic writing. Students associated with these Christian traditions have, as Anderson suggests, provided a useful test case because of the emphasis that the Evangelical and Fundamentalist theological systems place on belief in the Bible as the "literal" Word of God (Carter, 2007; Goodburn, 1998; P. Perkins, 2001, 2014). Anthropologists, sociologists, and literacy scholars have identified specific literacy practices—and attendant ideologies— that are common to some Evangelical and Fundamentalist congregations (Boone, 1989; Crapanzano, 2001; Juzwik, 2014). Taking these practices as evidence of what students may be exposed to in their churches, these scholars have traced Christian students' struggles to effectively engage academic writing to their use of "literalist," or "uncritical" Bible-reading practices.

In contrast, other scholars from these same fields have been eager to highlight the idiosyncrasies of individual belief and practice (Allington, 2010; Beilo, 2009; Frykholm, 2007; Grahmann, 2002; Griffiths, 2000; Lang, 2010; Neil, 2006; Ringer, 2013; Smith, 1998). These scholars suggest that just as an individual's reading practices may be shaped by theological viewpoints and community practices, so a reader's theology may be shaped by the reading methods and materials they engage. These differing perspectives on how to make sense of the practices of religious readers and writers suggest the need to adopt a hybrid analytic approach, one that recognizes the influence of common literacy protocols while also acknowledging that individuals imbue these protocols with deeply personal significance. This study builds on the field's understanding of how religion may function as a resource in students' academic development by adopting a theoretical and

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[4] James Gee defines Discourses as: "ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity" (Gee, 2010, p. 201). As a tool of inquiry, Gee distinguishes *Discourses* from *discourses*, specific instances of language in use (2010, p. 205). While some scholars have chosen to study the presence of Christian Discourses in the composition classroom, I argue that the religious tradition known as "Christianity" encompasses such an enormous range of potential Discourses, that when separated from a particular Christian community, the analytic potential of this construct is limited. I do, however, accept the theory—outlined in Chapter 1—that particular ways of reading may in fact inculcate particular Discourses (henceforth, *discourses*, for ease of reading). To that end, I will use the term discourses throughout the study to indicate ways that specific church-related literacy practices may engender discourses which are distinct from, or overlap with, academic, extracurricular, or civic discourses, depending upon the Christian tradition with which this practice is associated.

methodological approach that seeks to better understand how the intersection of institutional and individual meaning making activities may be shaping students' academic literacy learning.

In order to call attention to this balance of individual and institutional literacy practices, I have chosen to use the term "religiously engaged" as the primary descriptor of the student participants in this study. The term "religiously engaged" highlights the centrality of literacy practices in the lives of many religious students but allows their complex theological perspectives to emerge from analysis of their literate and rhetorical practices and from the ways that they talk about the significance of those practices. As I noted above, scholars have identified specific practices that are characteristic of many Evangelical and Fundamentalist churches. For this reason, I will refer to specific literacy practices as characteristic of "Evangelical" and "Fundamentalist" religious practice, but when referring specifically to the students, I choose to take as an analytic category the broader term "religiously engaged." A religiously engaged student may choose to adopt Evangelical literacy practices when approaching the Bible without identifying as Evangelical, or may evidence traces of some Fundamentalist beliefs without being Fundamentalist.

I also use the term "religiously engaged" because it admits two important realities about the student population represented in this study. First, the students who participate in this study are subject—to a lesser degree—to the same disaffiliative trends mentioned above in that they do not have strong denominational or institutional religious ties. Despite the fact that the students in this study attend an Evangelical campus ministry, none of the students self-identified as Evangelical or Fundamentalist, and all were unfamiliar with theological principles that characterize these Christian traditions. Most of the students who participated in this study identified as Catholic, Mainline Protestant, or not religiously-affiliated. While most of these students would not personally identify as Evangelical or Fundamentalist, they are nonetheless similar to the students considered in the literature thus far in that they count their Christianity as a primary identity category (so much so that they are willing to devote between two and seven hours of their already busy schedules to attending campus ministry events).

In addition to this, a majority of the students in this study attended public schools,

and for this reason, they had rarely been encouraged to think about faith as a defining factor of their academic experiences. As a result, these students bring to both the classroom and the campus ministry a range of beliefs and practices characteristic of those who participate in a wide variety of religious and secular communities. The students who participate in this campus ministry include students from three of Christian Smith's six major religious types[5]: "committed traditionalists," "selective adherents," and the "spiritually open" comprise 60% of the emerging adult population. Smith notes that these are not discreet categories, and the students in this study are evidence of the fact that young adults who enter college as committed traditionalists may become more selective or open in their spiritual practice. Similarly, college is a time when students who enter college as selective adherents or spiritually open individuals may learn more about their faith, eventually coming to occupy a position that more closely resembles that of the committed traditionalist. A majority of the students I interviewed lie somewhere on the continuum between "committed traditionalist" and "selective adherent": their faith is a "significant part of their identities and moral reasoning," yet they are also selective about the theological and moral dogmas to which they adhere (Smith, 2009, pp. 166–67).

Throughout this study, I am also careful to distinguish students' religious practice from their spiritual development. Scholarship generally conceives of religion as the "exterior" and often institutionally supported activities that foster a student's search for meaning and purpose in life, while spirituality pertains to a student's interior life and personal connections to the sacred (Astin et al., 2011; Hill et al., 2000; Small, 2011). It is important to note here that spiritual development is not limited to the religious domain of students' lives: spiritual development may also occur in academic spheres. To this end, I refer to students' intentional reflections on both religious practice and spiritual development as the "life of faith." Jenny Small defines faith in such a way as to combine

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[5] These six types include: 1) "committed traditionalists," individuals who actively practice their faith and can "reasonably well articulate" their beliefs; 2) "selective adherents," individuals who are grounded in a particular faith tradition but are more willing to pick and choose among the doctrines and behavioral norms espoused by the dogma of the tradition in which they were raised; 3) "spiritually open" individuals, who are often "spiritual, but not religious," i.e., open to spiritual ideas but not committed to a particular belief system; 4) "religiously indifferent" individuals, who are ambivalent to the practice of religion even while they may believe that religion has some value; 5) the "religiously disconnected," who have never had any experience with religion and simply have no investment in it at all; and finally, 6) the "irreligious," who, according to Smith , are generally skeptical about religion (Smith, 2009).

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elements of both religion and spirituality: she argues that faith is "one's way of understanding the world through religion, spirituality, and/or other forms of meaning-making" (Small, 2011, p. 10). This definition suggests that an individual's disposition toward making interior experiences public may contribute to an enactment of faith as deeply private, personal, and individual, or an enactment of faith made manifest through public articulation.

In order to accommodate the complexities of individuals' reading and writing within institutional contexts, this study is built around observation and analysis of the literacy events common to a campus ministry, and around interviews with individual students about their reading and writing practices. The study offers an in-depth examination of the multi-faceted nature of religiously engaged Christian college students' literacy practices and offers a rigorous accounting of the intersections and disjunctions between literacy practices from multiple domains of students' lives. Thanks to the hospitality of the College Christians, I was able to discover a wide variety of student conceptions about how literacy affects their spiritual development, and I was able to explore the ways that reading and writing activities help students navigate the relationship between faith and academic learning.

The Integration of Faith and Learning

I came to the University of Michigan after four years of teaching at my undergraduate *alma mater*, a small Christian liberal arts college whose stated purpose was to teach students to integrate their religious faith with academic pursuits. In response to a mid-20th century upsurge in Fundamentalist, anti-intellectual approaches to the Christian faith, many Christian colleges (including the college at which I was educated and at which I taught), reaffirmed their insistence on the inherent compatibility of academic inquiry and religious belief (Schultze, 1997, p. 499). They grounded their support of an academically rigorous curriculum in an intellectual Christian tradition. As both teacher and student, I learned that the integration of faith and learning demanded a consideration of scholarly concerns that extends beyond simple moralizing or the use of Scripture as textual and scientific evidence (Marsden, 1997, p. 9). I learned that integration entails "first, profound study of the issues themselves; second, study informed

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by profoundly Christian convictions" (Noll, 2010, p. 34). Thus, when I entered the composition classroom at the University of Michigan, I knew that although I would be unlikely to talk with students about my personal Christian faith, I would have no difficulty building and implementing a curriculum centered around principles of community engagement, social justice, and an emphasis on student development for self-authorship (M. B. B. Magolda, 1992, 2001), educational goals that are deeply rooted in my Christian faith, and strongly consistent with the goals of critical pedagogy.

I soon came to realize that I was a part of a growing contingent of scholars who were seeking to make this type of integrative engagement more visible in a field that had previously been dominated by narratives of Christian students' resistance in the composition classroom—what Philip Marzluff has called the "conflict narrative" (Marzluff, 2011). Although my own experience—as both a Christian student and a teacher of Christian students—suggested that this narrative was an incomplete representation of religiously engaged students' literacy practices, I also came to realize that my own assumptions about the value of integrating faith and learning might be both unfamiliar and inappropriate to students in an educational environment so radically different than the one I had experienced.

In particular, I recognized that regardless of whether or not religiously engaged Christian college students read the Bible in theologically rigorous ways, the ideological investments in the creation and interpretation of texts that they derive from the intersection of academic and religious communities makes them an ideal population for illuminating questions of transfer and student agency. I hypothesized that talking to students about their literacy practices would reveal a much wider range of understandings about the creation and interpretation of texts than has previously been represented by the field of composition and rhetoric. I suspected that students' variety of reading practices would complicate the field's easy assumptions about how modes of biblical interpretation might negatively transfer into academic reading and writing, and I believed that their reflections on their own writing would reveal modes of integration previously unremarked in the literature about the role of religion in academic writing.

What I did not anticipate were the ways in which students would disrupt my own assumptions about the value of integrating faith and learning, and the ways that they

would challenge me to think more deeply about the complexities of agency and intentionality. Throughout the data collection, analysis, and writing of this project, my perspectives have been challenged and shaped by the ways that students theorize their own literacy practices, and I have been profoundly grateful that qualitative research allows participants to serve as meaning makers alongside the researcher. Without the students' honesty, reflexivity, and good-humored acceptance of this informed "outsider," I might not have seen the degree to which my own study design presumed meta-awareness on the part of students, nor would I have learned to value knowledge compartmentalization as a vital component of some students' literacy learning.

Research Questions

This project was born out of my desire to more fully understand the ways that students in public and private non-sectarian institutions conceive of the relationship between the religious and academic domains of their lives. The two-part central research question of this study is as follows: *How do religiously engaged students respond to the various expectations for reading and writing that emerge from the discourse communities in which they participate? In what way*s, *if any, do literacy practices and discourses transfer between religiously engaged Christian college students' church-related and academic domains?*

In order to investigate these questions, I operationalized the study through the use of the three elaborated questions listed below:

1. What do the literacy practices inculcated in the College Christians organization teach us about the values and ideologies of the organization?

2. What literacy practices do religiously engaged Christian college students actually engage?

    2a. What literacy practices do religiously engaged students take up, reject, or bypass as they participate in multiple discourse communities, including schools, churches, campus ministries, and other extracurricular, social, or civic organizations?

    2b. How does idiosyncratic engagement with these literacy practices support the maintenance, adaptation, or undermining of a sponsoring organization's values and goals?

3. In what ways, if any, do the literacy practices with which students engage in various domains of their lives overlap, influence, create tension with, or exist in isolation from each other?

   3a. In what ways, if any, do the values and discourses inculcated in College Christians manifest in participants' reading and writing practices in other domains of their lives?

   3b. In what ways, if any, do the values and discourses inculcated in the academic sphere transfer to students' reading and writing in other domains?

In implementing this study, I observed students' participation in the campus ministry and gathered their reflections on the literacy practices that they engage in multiple domains of their lives, including the religious (both churches and campus ministries), the academic (both major and general education courses of study), extracurricular, civic, and professional. Although I will touch on non-academic and non-religious extracurricular domains where relevant, this study takes as its central focus the relationship between the religious and academic discourse communities in which students participate.

In the chapters that follow, I illustrate that the literacy practices of this particular group of religiously engaged Christian college students reflect their complex position as both willing and critical participants in the "popular" and "party" culture of college. I argue that the College Christians are highly aware that broader public discourses—both religious and secular—have positioned them as oppositional to the academy, but that students see themselves as productively engaged and in partnership with Midwest University. Students' reading and writing practices reveal the struggle to develop strategies by which they can live authentically at the intersection of Christianity and academia.

Chapter Summaries

In Chapter One, *"Wrestling with Faith: An Introduction to College Christians,"* I outline the central argument of this study: that literacy practices are a means by which students navigate the expectations of the multiple, sometimes competing communities in which they participate. I offer an overview of the College Christians organization at Midwest University and argue that, like many Evangelical organizations, it uses a mixture of (and sometimes hybrid) sacred and secular literacy practices. I provide historical context to explain the role that campus ministries have played in maintaining

the presence of religious faith on public university campuses. I derive from this history three models of the relationship between religious and academic literacy practices and discourses that I will discuss throughout the study.

Qualitative methods are vital to understanding the ways that individuals navigate among the literacy practices of multiple, sometimes competing discourse communities. Chapter Two, "Theoretical Framework and Methodology," summarizes the qualitative frameworks and methods used to investigate the research questions listed above. I introduce the student participants in the study, detail the ethical challenges and implementation challenges I encountered, and account for the limitations inherent in studying a single campus ministry.

The third chapter, titled "The Only Bible They'll Ever Read: College Christians' Reading for Spiritual Development" explores the many types of reading that participants engage in the religious domain of their lives. In this brief exposition, I demonstrate the range of approaches students take to reading for spiritual growth, and I argue that students' movement across multiple religious and academic communities cultivates a nascent rhetorical awareness—particularly intuitions about audience, genre, and purpose—that could function as helpful prior knowledge in academic reading and writing contexts. I argue that some of these approaches align with academic reading and writing protocols, and that these approaches can foster subjectivities and dispositions toward reading that serve as resources for Christian students' academic literacy learning.

Chapters Four and Five develop an argumentative arc in which I contend that transfer must be understood not simply as evidence of learning, but as a process by which students develop their understanding of, and responses to, the opportunity to apply learning across contexts. In the fourth chapter, "'That's Not What the Paper Is Asking You': The Absence of Religion in Christian Students' Writing," I explore students' perceptions that religion plays no discernable role in much of their academic writing. In this chapter, I argue for a reconceptualization of "zero transfer"—i.e., an apparent lack of learning applied across contexts. I suggest that compartmentalization of literacy practices may provide valuable evidence of how students understand disjunctions between academic and church-related literacy practices.

Chapter Five, "Evidence of Things Not Seen: Understanding Marked and Unmarked Transfer in Christian College Students Writing," explores the ways that students mark their writing—intentionally or unintentionally—as Christian. I argue that students can transfer religious discourses into their academic writing in visible (marked) or invisible (unmarked) ways. I demonstrate that the transfer of both marked and unmarked discourses can enable students to exploit and develop the overlapping practices and shared values among academic and religious communities.

The conclusion, "Implications and Directions: Suggestions for a Future of Cooperation" discusses the implications of this study for composition instructors and WAC/WID faculty. My research reveals the complex—and often invisible—ways that Christianity may be influencing students' engagement with academic reading and writing. This study challenges instructors to reevaluate assumptions about the relationship between curricular and extracurricular literacy learning, particularly with regard to the ways in which we identify and assess visible and invisible modes of transfer. I call for increased efforts to foster meta-awareness of shared discourses and the effects of transfer on the development of student agency. I also illustrate the need for further study of the discourses and practices that instructors may "mark" as Christian, and additional research into the literacy practices of students from diverse religious traditions.

CHAPTER 1
WRESTLING WITH FAITH: AN INTRODUCTION TO COLLEGE CHRISTIANS

Since the late 19th century, campus ministries—Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic—have functioned as what sociologist Christian Smith refers to as an "alternative plausibility structure" for sustaining students' faith during their college experience (Smith, 2009, p. 249). Campus ministries invite voluntary participation in social activities and spiritually-oriented literacy events such as homilies or testimonials, events that "bring the written word into a central focus in interactions and interpretations" (Heath, 1983, p. 200). In most campus ministries, these literacy events are designed to foster students' relationship with God, develop theological knowledge, and strengthen their ties to their respective faith communities (Marsden, 1994).

Because campus ministries support students' spiritual and religious development through a combination of educational and social activities that occur beyond the formal academic curriculum, they can be considered both literacy sponsors (Brandt, 2001) and a part of the extracurriculum of composition (Gere, 1994).[1] A campus ministry accrues benefits to the broader Christian church, enabling it—by means of students' continued participation—to maintain a prominent place on secular university campuses. However, as a part of the "extracurriculum," a campus ministry is also "constructed by desire, by the aspirations and imaginations of its participants. It posits writing as an action undertaken by motivated individuals who frequently see it as having social and economic consequences" (Gere, 1994, p. 80).

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[1] In recent years, higher education scholarship has revised its terminology for talking about out-of-school learning. Because the term "extracurriculum" has often been conceptualized as referring only to social activities, higher education scholars have adopted the term "cocurriculum" to emphasize the educational potential of organizations that function beyond the bounds of the formal academic curriculum (P. Magolda & Ebben Gross, 2009, p. 132). Although I recognize the usefulness of this shift in terminology for theorizing organizational activities in the context of contemporary higher education, because this study is primarily situated in the fields of literacy studies, composition, and rhetoric, I will continue to use the term "extracurricular," as derived from Gere's notion of the "Extracurriculum of Composition." As a theoretical construct, this use of "extracurriculum" acknowledges the educational contributions of literacy organizations that function independently of formal academic curricula to promote self-directed learning.

As they move through college, students who participate in a campus ministry engage in a broad range of literacy practices that are variously sponsored by a network of institutions and individuals, including: the college or university; professional and co-curricular organizations; students' home churches; their campus ministries; and perhaps least commonly acknowledged, their peers and their own personal goals and desires. Taken together, sponsorship theory and the theory of composition's extracurriculum suggest that the literacy practices of College Christians—as well as the significance of those practices—are subject to both the designs of the organization's leadership and the needs/desires of the student population. These practices, like the organizations that sponsor them, are dynamic and shifting; as both the pastoral staff and the student population change, they bring with them the resonances of developing theological and cultural trends.

Midwest University hosts more than 90 organizations classified as "religious/spiritual," of which 45 self-identify as Christian. College Christians—the organization at Midwest that served as the site of this study—exhibits the key characteristics of a typical Christian campus ministry: much like any other campus ministry, it is a large, student-led group in which individuals from a variety of different Christian traditions can come together in a high-energy environment to worship God alongside their peers (Cawthon & Jones, 2004). In this study, College Christians serves as a "critical case" for studying knowledge transfer among church-related and academic literacy practices (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2013). Critical cases provide insight into a particular theoretical problem, in this case the question of whether, when, and how, religious and academic literacy practices intersect. College Christians' relevance lies in both its similarities to, and differences from, other ministries.

College Christians is useful as a critical case for both its similarities and its differences in relation to the other campus ministries at Midwest. The national College Christians organization is the progenitor of "relational ministry,"[2] the most common

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[2] "Relational ministry" is the notion that Christian ministry is most effectively accomplished by developing authentic relationships beyond the Christian community, relationships that are motivated by the *hope* that a person will convert to Christianity, but exist outside of and beyond the *expectation* that a person become a Christian or live a particular type of Christian life. For the College Christians, "relational ministry" represents the opposite of "evangelism," or "proselytizing" (which they conceive of as witnessing

philosophy of ministry among contemporary campus ministries. This chapter of the national organization is typical of many campus ministries in both its structure and its reliance on literacy events that could be classified as "Evangelical," especially the use of student testimonies, singing contemporary praise and worship choruses, and a consistent use of the Bible—which the ministry staff and many of the students take to be an infallible guide to Christian living—as a central teaching tool (Beilo, 2009; Bryant, 2005; Grahmann, 2002; Juzwik, 2014). As we saw in the introduction, the participants in College Christians are also representative of broader trends in young adult spirituality: as both "committed traditionalists" and "selective adherents" (Smith, 2009), the students who participate in College Christians are religiously engaged (Astin et al., 2010),but often struggle with alienation and disconnection from the traditional church (Bryant, 2011b; Kinnaman, 2011), and they increasingly exhibit an ecumenical worldview (Bryant, 2005, 2011a; Murphy Cope & Ringer, 2014).

However, this chapter of College Christians is also distinctive in ways that help to shed light on the movement of literacy practices among discourse communities. One distinctive feature of this ministry is its administrative structure: unlike most groups, which are either church-based or parachurch,[3] College Christians is a non-denominational parachurch ministry that is affiliated with both a national organization and a local Mainline Protestant church. As such, variety of literacy sponsorship is built into the organization's very DNA: as we will see in the next section, the literacy practices inculcated in College Christians are always already a hybrid of practices from many Christian faith traditions.

Moreover, in the extracurricular marketplace at Midwest University, each campus ministry develops a particular "brand."[4] On Midwest University's campus, the chapter

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outside the bounds of any authentic relationship). In fact, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Three, the students in College Christians are resistant to the notion of evangelizing. This resistance is consistent with a cultural distaste for the notion of proselytizing, and a broader shift (noted by Bryant, Smith, and Kinnaman) toward accommodation of what Smith calls "society's broader 'culture of civility' that requires tolerance and acceptance of difference" (2009, p. 169).

[3] The term "parachurch" refers to institutions or service organizations which exist to meet needs that local churches are unable to accommodate, such as social services, media distribution, or educational services.

[4] For this reason, each ministry in its own right could be a "critical case" by which to test theories regarding the relationship between religious and academic ways of knowing. The literacy frameworks I

brands itself as the place for disaffected and seeking Christians. Whereas some campus ministries might seek to provide students with shelter from, or remediation of, the effects of postmodernism (particularly relativist and post-structuralist epistemologies) and party culture (Armstrong & Hamilton, 2013; Grahmann, 2002; P. Magolda & Ebben Gross, 2009), College Christians tries to exploit the tensions between traditional Evangelicalism and the broader secular culture. It does so by creating a space for students to "wrestle" with what it means to be Christians who are open to developing mutually impactful relationships with peers, faculty, and staff at Midwest University. The students in College Christians are challenged not only to worship God, but also to ask questions of their faith, both independently and in community. Individually and as a group, they struggle to understand what it means to live out their Christian faith while simultaneously engaging fully in the academic and social practices of the contemporary public university. For all of these reasons, College Christians offers an opportunity to examine how the deep value for relationship across and beyond the campus ministry may be shaping students' approaches to literacy-related transfer, integration, or compartmentalization.

In this chapter, I introduce the literacy practices sponsored by the College Christians organization, describe how the group frames its distinctive mission on the campus of Midwest University, and show how this mission shapes both organizationally sanctioned literacy practices and the group's goals for students' spiritual development. After discussing the literacy practices of College Christians, I present a brief historic overview of the role that campus ministries have played in maintaining the presence of religious faith on public university campuses while simultaneously shifting the character of students' religious participation. I derive from this history three models of the relationship between church-based and academic literacy practices and the religious and academic discourses that attend them: an embedded model, a cooperative model, and an oppositional model. I situate the scholarship about religiously engaged students within this framework, and suggest that a qualitative examination of students' literacy practices

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discuss in Chapter Two suggest that a study of students who participate in other campus ministries would turn up similarly complex approaches to reading the Bible and to integrating religious faith into their academic writing (and vice-versa). The most significant variation between participants might be the language they use to talk about these practices, which would likely exhibit some discursive variation, depending on how the ministry has crafted its particular "brand" at Midwest.

is necessary if we hope to better understand whether, when, and how, transfer of literacy practices and discourses might occur between academic and religious communities.

I offer this institutional and historical context in order to begin answering the study's first research question: *What do the literacy practices inculcated in the College Christians organization teach us about the values and ideologies of the organization?* I demonstrate that the literacy practices of the College Christians are situated within a network of sacred and secular practices that then come into contact with literacy practices from academic and extracurricular communities as students move through their collegiate networks. I argue that in this space, sacred and secular practices come together in cooperative and overlapping ways to support students' spiritual growth. These practices illuminate the organization's appeal to, and support of, students who are attempting to navigate among academic and religious discourse communities.

This argument offers institutional context as a backdrop for later understanding of how students use, subvert, or adapt these practices in a more agentive fashion. The experiences of students in College Christians bear out the provocative suggestion that literacy practices are more than simply evidence of the fact that religiously engaged students are negotiating among spiritual and academic communities. I argue that religiously engaged students' literacy practices—as well as the discourses, epistemologies, subjectivities, and dispositions toward reading and writing that accompany them—not only move across students' curricular and extracurricular networks, but actually function as the mechanism by which students learn to navigate their participation in multiple communities which may have differing values for their social, intellectual, and spiritual growth.

College Christians in Context

On the campus of Midwest University, College Christians has sought to create a niche as an open, non-judgmental atmosphere welcoming to any student who may be seeking a Christian community. As noted above, the group is a critical case study for understanding the transfer of knowledge among communities because of both its institutional structure and its philosophy of ministry, which emphasizes relationship

development over and above theological instruction. In this section, I introduce College Christians by describing its structure and activities, and by presenting the organization's philosophy of ministry in the words of the organization's ministry leaders.

The administrative and organizational structure of College Christians facilitates the inclusion of both Evangelical and Mainline Protestant theological influences. The group is an independent chapter of a national Evangelical campus ministry organization but is co-sponsored by a local Mainline Protestant congregation that has adopted theological and political positions many Evangelical congregations might consider "liberal." The group is led by a professional ministry staff of three paid ministers and one intern, typically a recent graduate of Midwest. Greg[5], the group's head campus minister, is one of the longest serving staff members with the national College Christians organization, and he has served with the group since its founding at Midwest. He identifies "liberation theology" as a primary theological influence, and as a result, much of his teaching emphasizes Christ's liberating work on behalf of the poor and oppressed. These themes typically appear in homily style talks that draw heavily on Ignation practices for contemplation of the gospel. Alissa is a relatively new staff member, also employed by the College Christians national organization. She is a twenty-something married woman who joined the ministry during her years as a student at a small liberal arts college. She graduated and served as an intern with the organization overseas; while there, she met her husband and received some seminary training from the organization before returning to the U.S. to join the staff at Midwest. Alissa describes her youthful participation in an Evangelical church as the place where "faith came alive for her," but she suggests that her adult journey of faith has challenged her to "unpack the rigidness of the box that confined the language and the experience there." As staff members with College Christians, both Greg and Alissa have been sanctioned to lead the ministry as Evangelicals, but both have theological perspectives that foster a complex interaction with "Evangelical" theologies.

Phil is the "student and family pastor" at the local Mainline church that co-sponsors College Christians. Phil's ministry is sponsored by the church, and in exchange,

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[5] All names in the study are pseudonyms. Some were selected by the students themselves; I selected others, including those for the leaders.

College Christians functions as the church's outreach ministry to college students. Aligning himself clearly with Mainline trends over and above Evangelical approaches, Phil cites as primary theological influences feminist theology, Celtic spirituality, and neo-orthodox theologians like Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr. Lexie, the ministry intern, is a recent Midwest graduate who was hired by Greg but whose funding comes largely from charitable contributions from the sponsoring church. Lexie's spirituality has been formed at the nexus of the Evangelical practices of the campus ministry, Evangelical media trends, and a formative mentoring relationship with Greg.

According to the mission statement of the College Christians national organization, the ministry seeks to provide an ecumenical and authentic Christian community in which college students can gather—regardless of religious belief or lack thereof—to build community. Each chapter seeks to provide a refreshing and energizing environment in which students can seek answers to life's most fundamental questions. The fact that the organization's mission emphasizes relationship and individual spiritual development reflects the key tenets of "relational ministry," an historic trend by which Christian churches moved from an emphasis on theological rigor to a discursive emphasis on "self-exploration and personal transformation" (Bergler, 2012, p. 11). Historian Thomas Bergler argues that Christians nurtured within relational ministry environments "seek out intimate, nurturing groups of friends who will support their faith journey. They care more about the quality of their religious friendships than about truth" (2012, p. 10).

Rooted firmly in this tradition, the participants and leaders of College Christians reject easy comparisons to organizations with missions to evangelize or provide theological instruction. Rather, the group seeks to craft meetings that balance lighthearted playfulness with opportunities for spiritual growth and nourishment, which they would distinguish from direct instruction in biblical interpretation. The group defines itself—and its specific niche on the campus of Midwest University—as one in which students are encouraged to be honest about the state of their faith, regardless of whether they consider themselves Christian, and regardless of how strong they might consider their faith.

Like many campus ministries at Midwest (and nationally), College Christians is racially and ethnically homogenous (Park, 2013): the group is predominantly White and

middle-class, and women comprise a slightly higher proportion of the group's active members than do men. However, the ministry staff does not keep close records regarding its student population. The lack of specific demographic information about the group is the byproduct of both the organization's priorities—relationship building efforts that often eclipse administrative work. [6]

Identifying membership demographics is also challenging because of the group's structure. College Christians operates using a three-tiered structure by which students can increase their participation as desired: the most basic level of participation is the Tuesday evening "community meeting." On a weekly basis, College Christians hosts an hour-long event that requires no preparation on the part of attendees and is open to all students—regardless of their faith perspectives (or lack thereof). Because all are welcome, no attendance is taken, and the size of the group can range from fifty to 100 participants from week to week. Attendance is largely determined by the demands of the university's academic, extracurricular, and social calendar. During the period of my study, the weekly community meeting took place in a large public meeting room in the student union at Midwest. These events are led by members of the student Leadership team and the four members of the ministry staff, and they feature games, contests, and literacy events that include singing, videos, skits, testimonies, announcements, and a homily-style message from the Gospels.

Students who wish to get more involved—to "go deeper," in the organization's parlance—can participate in one or both of two additional activities: they can get involved in a "small group," a (typically gender-segregated) group of four to six students who meet weekly with a volunteer adult leader. These small groups feature opportunities

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[6] Although this study will not take up issues of gender and race in the campus ministry, these identity categories constitute an important site of inquiry for scholars interested in student development and student participation in religious organizations. For more on how gender impacts student development throughout the college years, see Baxter-Magolda, *Knowing and Reasoning in College: Gender Related Patterns in Students' Intellectual Development* (1992). For more on how the role that gender play in the construction of campus ministries and small groups, see Bryant's "Assessing the Gender Climate of Evangelical Student Subculture In the United States" (Bryant, 2006). For more on race and ethnicity in Christian campus ministries, see Park, *When Diversity Drops* (2013) and Kim, *God's New Whiz Kids?: Korean American Evangelicals on Campus* (2009)

to "fellowship,"[7] pray, and explore a passage of the Bible or read an alternative text designed to help students think about issues related to theology or Christian living. Students and leaders typically collaborate to determine the character of the group's readings and activities; they select meeting times, places, texts, and expectations for preparation in response to students' schedules, learning styles, and goals for spiritual development. During the 2012/2013 academic year, College Christians sponsored between eighteen and twenty small groups.

Leadership team members are the most deeply involved in College Christians, spending up to seven hours per week in ministry activities. In addition to setting up, tearing down, and leading the Tuesday evening community meetings, Leadership team members attend an additional two-hour dinner once per week: they share a meal, explore a passage from the Bible (typically one of the Epistles), and prepare for the following week's community meeting. The student leaders are members of ministry teams that typically meet once per week outside of Leadership[8] and they are expected to be members of a small group. Students can ask or be invited to join the Leadership team, and any student who agrees to the stipulations for attendance and participation is accepted.

The organization's ministry leaders insist that College Christians seeks to reach not only students who are established Christians but also those who might be new to faith, or disillusioned by the trappings of Christianity as they have experienced it. According to Greg, "we have a majority of people who like Jesus, are open to him, but really have no idea how [faith] intersects their everyday life… it's marginal people, marginal faith people." Similarly, Phil described the group's demographic as diverse in its approaches to and interests in spiritual development:

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[7] The use of the word "fellowship" as a verb is common to some Evangelical communities, and denotes time Christian believers spend together with the express purpose of creating a supportive and encouraging environment.

[8] Leadership team members subdivide into additional teams that are responsible for the following aspects of College Christians community life: welcoming new attendees on Tuesday evenings, developing the Tuesday evening program, prayer, music, visual arts/web design, service, and Greek Life outreach. Student members of the Leadership team are welcomed to propose a new "ministry team" to address any gaps they might see in meeting the mission of the organization. Designing and executing the work of a "ministry team" typically requires an hour or two during the students' weekend.

> We have some [students] who were disaffected from some kind of religious tradition, some who are looking for any kind of religious tradition—haven't had any at all. Then we've got a lot of students who were active in [ministries] in high school and continue on in college, so it's a community for them. ... I think it functions for some students as just another social club and social outlet. For others it's their center group of friends and they're really a support network… For some it really functions as the faith community in lieu of a church, which is one of the challenges of parachurch organizations.

Although some students join College Christians because they participated in an affiliated high school ministry, Phil also views College Christians as an entry point for students who have had no experience with religion, and as a reentry point for students who have experienced some form of alienation from the Christianity of their upbringing. He acknowledges that students who identify as Christian often use the organization as both a social group and a substitute for attendance at a more traditional church. In fact, more than half of the students I interviewed told me that they attend traditional church services only sporadically, and that they identify College Christians as their primary spiritual community. Phil—whose ministry straddles both traditional church and parachurch ministry—sees this as a "challenge" because he believes that parachurch ministries do not possess the historic and theological traditions that give traditional denominations their spiritual authority.

What Phil sees as a challenge is an opportunity according to Alissa and Lexie. Alissa describes College Christians as possessing a "looser fence," by which she means that students are welcome to attend regardless of whether or not they call themselves Christians or hold orthodox Christian beliefs. She pointed out that when she joined the organization, she found it unique in that "it was not assuming a belief." Lexie, the organization's intern, argued that this openness to students with alternative viewpoints is key to the group's effectiveness on campus. As a student, she felt welcomed and supported by College Christians as she tried to decide whether or not she wanted spirituality and Christian faith to be a central part of her life. "This is where College Christians is different," she argued:

> We try and describe it as a community where students can come and ask questions and wrestle with faith. Yes, we do talk about Jesus. They know that coming into it. We're not lying or trying to cover it up. 'Oh, we got them in the door.' No. No.

> We read them the Gospels. We read from the Bible. We talk about Jesus, but we wrestle with it. Everyone is struggling with your faith. Why don't you come and ask questions and we'll talk about it.

Lexie recognizes that to many, the idea that College Christians does not want to evangelize students might seem disingenuous, particularly because student participants are encouraged to invite their friends. She clarifies, pointing out that College Christians doesn't downplay the fact that relationship with Jesus, as outlined in the Gospels, is central to the organization's vision of how to live well. But as a group, they want to acknowledge that figuring out what it means to live as Christian on a secular college campus can create cognitive and emotional dissonance for many students. Consequently, Christian students may experience the same kinds of social, spiritual, emotional, and intellectual struggles as their non-Christian peers; the organization hopes to serve as a space in which students from all faiths—or no faith at all—can come together to engage these struggles.

Greg argues that the ministry's distinct role on campus is to help students navigate the dissonances they experience trying to makes sense of religion's role on a public university campus students by reorienting their basic understanding of what Christianity is: Christianity is not, he argues, a moralistic set of theological beliefs, but rather active pursuit of relationship with God. Here is how he describes the organization's role:

> I think the niche that College Christians has played is that we are not telling kids what to believe. When I speak on Tuesday nights, I don't tell them to believe this way, or to not have sex anymore, or to not drink. …that's not my language. They know that language and that language has not worked for them, so how do we invite them back into an exploration of what it means to be a follower of Jesus, not a Christian? I'm not saying we're that much different than [other campus ministries] but the way we talk about what we allow kids to say, who we allow them to be, what we allow them—and allow. Like we have any control!—what we allow them to do. For me, it's all about the dialogue and what they really want, because if they don't know what they really want, then they'll just do what everybody else tells them. I've seen enough of that.

Greg argues that Christianity has become, for many college students, little more than a restrictive moral code, and as such, has earned a bad name. He argues that placing behavioral restrictions on students is likely to drive them away from Christianity. "I want

them to tell me the truth," he told me. "The minute they sign a contract, they will lie. They'll tell me what I want to hear, and I don't want that."

Greg's self-reported goal is to reframe students' basic understanding of the relationship between religion and spirituality, encouraging college students to be "followers of Jesus" rather than "Christians": that is, people who are in the process of defining what it means to flourish as a human being, rather than members who adhere uncritically to a dogmatic set of beliefs that are common to a particular type of static community. He hopes to help students articulate healthy goals for personal growth and to help them discover how a relationship with Jesus can support them as they work toward those personal goals. When students come to Greg with questions and/or concerns about their behavior, Greg does not prohibit any behavioral choices, but he does challenge students to think critically about whether their choices are helping them meet their goals for personal and spiritual growth. He then encourages students to rely on the College Christians community to hold them accountable to living life in ways that align with those goals.

For example, if a student were to ask Greg's opinion about whether or not she was wrong to drink at a party, Greg would not tell her to abstain from alcohol altogether; he would encourage her to exercise moderation in her alcohol consumption and would challenge her to consider whether or not her alcohol consumption was impeding her ability to live a whole, healthy life in relationship to Christ. He would also encourage her to surround herself with friends who support her as she seeks to make wise lifestyle choices. Greg believes that students must first develop a desire to live in authentic relationship with God, and only then will they be inclined to think critically about how lifestyle choices might impact that relationship.

The Literacy Practices of College Christians

In the previous section, I described College Christians' institutionally supported vision of Christianity as an orientation toward an authentic relationship with God rather than a set of theological beliefs. This vision shapes the literacy practices that the organization encourages, as well as its goals for students' spiritual development. In this

section, I describe the literacy practices common to the organization in order to articulate the central argument of this work: I extend the notion that literacy practices reflect students' negotiation among communities, and I argue that students can use literacy practices as a means of navigating among, and making sense of, their positions within multiple religious, academic, and extracurricular communities.

This study is built on the assumption that reading and writing are best understood as an embedded set of social practices, rather than a collection of decontextualized skills (Gee, 2007; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Street, 2003). Engaging literacy practices within a particular community requires more than simple knowledge of how to interpret or reproduce a script; it also requires knowing when, and for what purposes, certain protocols for the interpretation and creation of text are used. This means that literacy "is always embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles. It is about knowledge: the ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity, and being" (Street, 2003, pp. 77–78). In other words, literacy events and literacy practices both reflect and are shaped by the beliefs and values of the communities that use them. All literacy learning thus takes place within ideologically motivated "reading formations"—sets of contextual factors that shape how contemporary readers choose, make sense of, and articulate their interpretations of texts (Lang, 2010, p. 129).[9]

Studies of the role of religion in the composition classroom have been highly attentive to the possibility that students' church-related literacy practices might shape their understanding of whether, when, and how, to integrate religious discourses into academic writing (Downs, 2005; Goodburn, 1998; Juzwik, 2014; Montesano & Roen, 2005; Moss, 2001, 2003; P. Perkins, 2001, 2014; Williams, 2005). Indeed, as Beth Daniell notes, when individuals express concern that academic and religious literacies must exist in opposition to each other, "the underlying issue is actually, more often than

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[9] I draw the term "reading formation" from contemporary literacy studies; this concept is analogous to the notion of "discourse community," but is relevant primarily to those facets of a discourse community that govern the selection and interpretation of texts, the primary focus of this chapter. In the second chapter I will more fully theorize the notion of a discourse community, particularly as it relates to individuals' ability to shape, adapt, and subvert the interpretive and creative conventions of the discourse communities in which they participate.

not, how people read" (2014, p. 106). As I noted in the introduction, scholarship that considers the role of religion in students' writing has paid close attention to the ways that church-related reading and writing practices may manifest in the classroom, particularly those associated with more conservative and systematic Evangelical and Fundamentalist theological traditions (Goodburn, 1998; Juzwik, 2014; P. Perkins, 2001, 2014). In this study, I join a small, but growing body of scholarship that builds on these findings by undertaking a qualitative study of the practices of a Christian community that engages in a complex set of Evangelical reading practices that extends beyond dogmatically-oriented readings of the Bible (Beilo, 2009; Deans, 2014; Juzwik, 2014; P. Perkins, 2001, 2014). This study also considers how Christian readers use popular texts to support their spiritual purposes (Frykholm, 2007; Griffiths, 2000; Neil, 2006). Students like the College Christians, who participate in a variety of academic and extracurricular organizations, must differentiate between, and if necessary, integrate not only the methods and attitudes toward text fostered within particular communities, but also the epistemological values communicated by those literacy protocols.

Church-Related Literacies: Culturally Relevant and Spiritually Significant

During the period of this study, I observed twenty-four College Christians events including thirteen community meetings, six Leadership team meetings, and three meetings of a women's small group. The literacy practices featured in these meetings reflect the organization's desire to help students navigate the challenges of being Christian college students. At an organizational level, both the leaders and student participants recognize that the literacy practices must reflect the realities of Christian students' collegiate experiences. My own analysis extends this insight. I suggest that literacy practices can be more than a reflection of how students navigate among communities: literacy practices can function as the means by which students learn to position themselves within multiple communities simultaneously.

The spiritual priorities of the College Christians organization are articulated most clearly in the Leadership Team application, which outlines the organization's learning objectives for its student leaders (see Figure 1.1). Consistent with the organization's emphasis on relationship rather than theology, the vision and expectations for student

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Vision: What do we hope Student Leaders will be and do? Be lovers of God and others Develop a thoughtful, authentic faith in God that works in real life through Bible/book study, prayer, fellowship, reflection and discussion Be accountable for actions to the College Christians Leadership Team and help others on the Team to be accountable for their actions Communicate Christ in words and actions to others – "spiritual friendship" Invite others to come to College Christians activities so they can participate in Christ-centered community (willingness to make yourself uncomfortable so others can be comfortable) Discover and exercise spiritual/leadership gifts and help others to do the same In all things, seek not to glorify ourselves or College Christians, but to glorify God **Expectations: What does a Student Leader commit to?** Being a disciple of Christ and a representative of College Christians Attending Student Leadership Gatherings on Thursday evenings from 5:30-7:30pm, with permission to miss two during the semester. Attending the Fall Retreat and Spring Retreat (dates TBD) Participating in a Small Group (doesn't need to be a College Christians Small Group) Serving on a Ministry Team Being salt and light on your college campus
Figure 1.1 Excerpt from the College Christians Leadership Team Application The learning objectives for participation in the College Christians Leadership team are defined by the "vision" and "expectations" presented in the application. These objectives suggest that participation in the organization and its related literacy practices are designed to encourage self-reflection, inquiry, and engagement with the university

leaders are centered around the creation and support of interpersonal relationships in the service of community building. One might expect a campus ministry to include biblical literacy or theological proficiency in its learning objectives, but the sole mention of biblical learning or church-based literacy practices comes in the second statement listed under "vision": "Develop a thoughtful, authentic faith in God that works in real life through Bible/book study, prayer, fellowship, reflection and discussion." Two points are key here: first, the Bible, and knowledge of it, is secondary to the development of a "thoughtful relationship with God." Second, this thoughtfulness can also be developed through interaction with other texts such as a Christian book or through other literacy

events, such as reflection and discussion. These expectations suggest that while the group does hold the Bible in high esteem, the ministry is not primarily invested in ensuring that students have correct interpretations of the Bible. Rather, the College Christians' literacy practices and engagements with the Bible are designed to orient students toward more in-depth relationships with God and with others.

Constructs such as "spiritual friendship" and "willingness to make yourself uncomfortable so others can be comfortable" suggest that the primary way in which students will be "salt and light" on the campus is not by evangelizing or witnessing, but by engaging in authentic relationships with other students on campus. For the student participants in College Christians, this means that college life can include active participation in a wide variety of additional organizations, including fraternities and sororities. It also means that students may feel more comfortable engaging in activities that would be taboo in more conservative ministries, such as dating non-Christians and attending (or hosting) weekend parties that include underage drinking. Such choices are not necessarily condoned by the ministry staff, but the ministry staff would try not to alienate students who engage in these activities. As noted above, students are encouraged to take responsibility for making wise and responsible choices that help them to flourish as individuals and that support the growth and health of their communities, and many find participation in the typical social activities of college life commensurate with a Christian life.

Because the members of the Leadership team organize and run Community meetings on Tuesday nights, these events bring into stark relief both the tensions and overlaps between the religious and "secular" domains that Christian students experience when they seek to be actively engaged in college life. The examples of activities and literacy practices provided here come from a typical Tuesday night meeting in March, when the students returned to Midwest University energized after their Spring Break.[10] These meetings feature a variety of literacy practices and events (see Table 1) which range from the spiritually significant, such as teaching from Scripture and student

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[10] See Appendix C for a sample transcription and coding model of my field notes from this particular evening.

Table 1.1 College Christians Literacy Practices
Literacy Practices and Their Institutional Functions across College Christians Meetings

Literacy Practices	Description/ Purpose		
Engaged in:	*Community Meeting*	*Leadership Team Meeting*	*Small Groups*
Announcements	Develop group cohesion Communicate logistics	Communicate logistics	
Singing	Welcome newcomers Establish cultural relevance Worship/Provoke analytic thought		
Prayer	Blessing	Blessing	Blessing and Supplication
Skits	Make people comfortable Develop group cohesion Establish cultural relevance		
Videos	Use of YouTube videos or student-made videos designed to: Make people comfortable Develop group cohesion Establish cultural relevance	Use of film or TV clips designed to: Provoke analytic thought about the significance of Biblical texts to pop culture	
Student Stories (Testimonies)	Encourage and challenge peers	Encourage and challenge peers Develop group cohesion	
Bible Reading and Exposition	Leader-led/non-participatory Gospel passage from *The Message* Retelling/reframing designed to provoke thought and imagination about how the Bible could apply to everyday life.	Leader or student led/participatory Retelling/reframing of an Epistle Mini-lesson from *The Message* or NIV version designed to provide theological insight through the use of historical/linguistic context	Leader or student led/participatory Use of various versions of the Bible Discussion or mini-lesson designed to provide encouragement, address personal questions, and encourage application to students' lives.
Discussion		Help students internalize concepts and beliefs, and reflect on how the Bible can apply to their lives.	Designed to help students internalize concepts and beliefs, and reflect on how the Bible can apply to their lives.

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testimonies, to "secular" practices, which show that the group is culturally relevant and pop-culture aware.

Table 1 illustrates that the literacy and community building events common to a traditional church service—such as communal worship, biblical exposition, service, and/or outreach—are designed to promote a spiritually supportive community built around both intrapersonal and interpersonal dispositions such as authenticity, vulnerability, openness to seeking and questioning, and personal reflectiveness. The group also makes use of popular media, games, skits, and activities that are "secular," that is, largely unrelated to students' spiritual lives, and are appreciated as such. These activities are typically designed to foster interpersonal engagement and group cohesion amongst a spiritually diverse student population whose primary cultural reference points may be popular culture. Tuesday evening community meetings—which follow a set, weekly structure—progress from the "secular" to the "sacred," blurring the boundaries of these categories in ways that can encourage students to think critically about popular culture in light of biblical narratives and teachings, and encourage students to understand church-related communities as spaces that can be shaped by popular culture.

Each community meeting begins with a collaboration between the tech team and the worship team: the lights dim, the band begins to play, and the lyrics to a popular song are projected on the screen. The opening song is nearly always a popular song—a Top 40 hit or perennial favorite designed to invite attendees into the fun and catch the attention of passers-by. During my observation period, the group opened with Tom Petty's "Free Fallin'" and Taylor Swift's "I Knew You Were Trouble." When the students returned from Spring Beak, the band had a special treat for the assembled group—a mash-up of "Breakfast at Tiffany's" by Deep Blue Something, and "Give a Little Bit," by the Goo Goo Dolls. The lyrics to both of these pop songs depict moments of decision, when lovers are "falling apart," or recognizing that if they are to last, "now's the time we need to share." While the use of this mash-up could be spiritualized to suggest that students should "give a little bit of their lives" to God in order to make the relationship work, such an interpretation would be a stretch; as they enter the room with high energy from greeting their friends in the hallway, most students respond primarily to the pop-cultural resonances—the familiar lyrics and pop rhythms—of these songs.

Jimmy, a second year engineering student and the drummer on the worship team, argued that the purpose of this initial song is not only to get attendees warmed up and excited to be there, but also to welcome people who might not expect Christians to listen to Top 40 pop music: "It's going to be something to invite people in that if random strangers were walking past and they were like 'What's that song?' we'd be like 'Hey, we're playing this. You should come check us out.'" Unlike the students in Rebecca Y. Kim's *God's New Whiz Kids: Korean American Evangelicals on Campus* (2009), who appropriate popular culture texts for spiritual purposes, the organizers of a College Christians community meeting want some popular culture texts to remain compartmentalized from the spiritually-oriented texts that they will engage later in the evening. By retaining the "secular" nature of these songs, the organizers believe they create a welcome environment for students who don't identify as Christian.

The tech team is responsible for the technologies that keep the meetings functioning. Although most students would not identify the creation of PowerPoint slides as a literacy practice, this is the most common writing activity associated with this team. Participants on the tech team see their work as a practical service that facilitates worship, but the students do not consider the work itself spiritually-significant. For example, over the six months that she spent creating the PowerPoint slides, Shelly became an expert at designing complex and visually appealing slide shows, but she does not ascribe any spiritual value to this work: "I mean, the Powerpoints, they are an important part of College Christians, but I don't know if they're really meaningful. The actual song and the actual lyrics that people are singing is the meaningful part. Whereas I just write them so that people can see them." Shelly frames some writing activities and technological platforms as purely functional, useful primarily for the facilitation of sacred or secular activities. Although the activity of creating the PowerPoint slides has no material impact on her spiritual life, Shelly believes that the slides help to facilitate singing—both secular and spiritually-oriented—that, in turn, enhances group cohesion.

In addition to the tech team's use of technological platforms, such as PowerPoint and a web-platform used for the submission of anonymous prayer requests, the program team (organizers of the Tuesday Community meeting's central literacy events) also makes consistent use of popular media that can be perceived as having little or no

Figure 1.2 Excerpt from the College Christians Facebook Page
Although the College Christians Facebook page occasionally features spiritually-uplifting messages, the students perceive it as a place to advertise upcoming events and take a "study break."

spiritual value. On a typical Tuesday evening, the group may watch a video created by and featuring students from the Leadership team. During my observations I saw two videos, one in which two young men sneaked into a fellow Leadership team member's dorm room to wake him up early in the morning, and another in which they played a harmless prank on an unsuspecting McDonalds drive-through employee. On the first Tuesday following Spring Break, the students treated themselves to a YouTube video of "Penguin Fails"—a rock soundtrack accompanying video footage of drunken looking penguins slipping off of icebergs or trying to jump on to icebergs and missing. The group also has an active Facebook presence. Although some students occasionally use the page to post spiritually significant content, more often than not, students use Facebook for logistical purposes (such as announcing events) or as what Kendall called a "study break," to post amusing and entertaining things they've seen online (see Figure 1.2). According to Amy, a second year public health student,

It's what goes around. We'll post funny videos. Things like that that are pretty general across the base. You might not be able to tell it's a Christian organization by just looking at the Facebook page if you didn't see the name on that… It's a way to connect with people, but I don't think it's necessarily spiritual development. I don't want to say that's a good or bad thing, I think it's just how it is.

Just as Shelly sees the PowerPoint slides as facilitating group cohesion despite having no spiritual significance, Amy contends that Facebook is a source of social connection that need not be spiritually oriented in order to have value.

As Thomas Bergler suggests, the group's acceptance of these "secular" and pop culture practices is simultaneously a reason for and response to the secularizing trends in youth culture (2012). Scholars who study Evangelicals' use of the tools of mass media might critique Shelly's and Amy's perspectives as short-sighted; they might challenge these interpretations of the use of Facebook, websites, and technologies as failing to recognize the significant impact that media and technological forms can have on the content of beliefs (Schultze, 1990). In contrast, these technologies might also be viewed as mere implementations of generalized literacy practices that can transfer easily across any community that uses the specified platforms (Brandt, 2001; Moss, 2001); they could be seen as an act of what Haskell calls "skill-to-skill" transfer (2000, p. 31). In fact, the College Christians understand these technologies as something more than mere generalized practices but something less than the significant to the Christian life.

While the students may not be articulating clear "critical" engagements with the media platforms themselves—and while the platforms certainly carry resonances of their use across multiple communities—the students' insistence that these forms build community suggests that the students value these practices for reasons other than their general skill-building potential or their ability to help students build a deeper relationship with God. Rather, these practices are valuable for helping their role in helping students cultivate relationships with their peers both within and beyond the ministry. As Beilo discovered, literacy practices within a religious organization can be motivated by participants' interests beyond the church community: he cites affinities such as history, politics, or social activism (Beilo, 2009, p. 18). In the case of College Christians, these affinities include music, pop-culture, and campus events. The College Christians use technology to facilitate participation in a community of students who manifest some

characteristics of "selective adherence" to traditional Christian practices, particularly those related to preaching and teaching of God's Word, use of popular media, and engagement with popular culture.

After the games and skits, which—like the music and technologically oriented practices detailed above—are designed to create a high-energy atmosphere of "fun" that will be welcoming for all attendees, the student-led program team transitions the evening to the more spiritually-oriented portions of program. Like the opening minutes, this portion blurs the boundaries between sacred and secular, but it does so in a different way: whereas the "fun" portion of the evening blurs religious and non-religious domains by fostering authentic friendships as a foundation for future spiritual discussions, the "crossover" portion of the evening uses two literacy events that illuminate what happens when individuals encounter God in their day-to-day lives: the "student story" testimonial and the "crossover" song.

On the Tuesday following Spring Break, Charity (a senior member of the Leadership team) shared her "student story." Reading from typed text, she told the group a story of hitting "rock-bottom": despite the fact that she joined College Christians during her first year at Midwest, Charity got involved with friends that she described as being "unhealthy" for her, and she eventually ended up drinking herself into hospitalization during her junior year. She told the gathered students that this "failure" had taught her to "actively pursue God in a community-based way." She closed her testimony by reading a few verses from I Corinthians, the passage the Leadership team was exploring together. She read from *The Message,* a contemporary paraphrase of the Bible that many students prefer to more traditional translations. Before Charity was seated, a friend (also a Leadership team member) prayed a blessing over her, thanking God for Charity's willingness to be vulnerable with her struggles in front of the whole College Christians community. Her testimony was followed by the band playing Howie Day's "Collide," a "crossover" song that highlights the spiritual themes of her talk with lyrics like "I worry I won't see your face," and "even the best fall down sometimes." Like the earlier songs, "Collide" is secular love song, but (in contrast to the "secular" resonance of the first song) at this stage of the evening, students are explicitly encouraged to use the lyrics as an analogy between human and divine love.

A testimonial like Charity's highlights the daily struggle to live in relationship to God. The testimonial is designed not only to testify to God's grace at work in students' lives, but also to help the students from all walks of life begin to connect over the ways that each individual must, in Lexie's words, "wrestle" wrestle with the Christian life. In fact, Charity strikes a balance between two types of testimony: the conversion narrative in which a wild and unrepentant sinner meets God, "[shedding] an older self and [obtaining] a new, purified one in return," and the model that depicts a "perpetual search for authenticity" (Griffiths, 2000 p. 102). The leaders of College Christians encourage students to tell stories that highlight the search for authenticity, and for this reason, the very acts of reflection and composition required to write a testimony embody the message of open-ended seeking that students are being asked to provide. However, the students' actual performances of the testimony, which often end (like Charity's) with a Bible verse and a tidy message of God at work in an individual's life, show the students' indebtedness to their previous exposure to the "conversion narrative style testimony.

As R. Marie Griffiths points out, these testimonial traditions are always already hybrid, developed out of the therapeutic practices of organizations like Alcoholics Anonymous, which themselves developed in relation to the church. In this way, such even the testimonial, while certainly a church-related practice, also has resonances of practices from a range of other communities. Similarly, the use of a "crossover" song highlights just how difficult it can be to disentangle "secular" and "popular" culture. A crossover song is a song published and recorded outside of the Christian subculture that nonetheless contains overt spiritual themes. Unlike the "fun" practices, which rely on a degree of compartmentalization between the spiritual and the secular, crossover songs and the testimonial form—and in Charity's case, the message it delivers—highlight the fact that sacred and secular experience are always already intertwined. As I have argued, these practices not only demonstrate that Christian students are constantly navigating between multiple discourse communities, but they also provide students with the opportunity to make sense of the relationships between the religious and non-religious communities of which they consider themselves a part.

The final stage of the evening is the explicitly "religious" portion of the event. It is marked by a ten to fifteen minute homily-style talk from one of the campus ministers,

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the singing of a "praise and worship" song, and a prayer of blessing before students go their separate ways. On the Tuesday following Spring Break, the group was continuing their study of the book of Luke. In preparation for Easter, they turned their attention to Luke 22, the passage that recounts Judas's betrayal of Jesus. Each campus minister in College Christians has his or her own distinctive teaching style, and his or her favorite themes to draw from a text. Greg, the speaker for the evening, took his usual approach to a biblical passage: he tells the story in his own words, interspersing occasional quotes from *The Message* and stories from his own life. On this night, Greg emphasized several of his favorite themes, including the need for community. Referencing Charity's testimony, he reminded students that it is vital to show up if they hope to be touched by or have an impact on a community.

Greg's approach to teaching the Bible most closely resembles the Ignatian practice of Gospel contemplation, which encourages practitioners to "close one's eyes and reconstruct the scene in one's imagination… See what is going on and watch the men and women in the scene. So a person can place oneself in the scene, perhaps as an observer, as one lining up for healing, or as one helping others to Jesus. Some people's imaginations are very active, so they construct a movie-like scenario with a Gospel passage" (Leonhardt, 2005, p. vii). Greg challenged the students to use their imaginations in order to apply the Bible to their lives. He encouraged them to understand the Bible as "cinematic" and facilitated their engagement with the Bible by asking them to raise their hands if they had ever been betrayed; if so, he claimed, they would understand the anguish that Jesus must have felt when he was kissed by Judas. In closing, Greg's Evangelical practices surfaced as he called on the students to turn to Christ if they had experienced, or were experiencing, such pain. He reiterated his primary theme: the notion that Christianity is an orientation toward life rather than a set of behaviors or beliefs. "Jesus reorients folks in the way they choose to live life," he told them, before turning the floor over to the band, which led the final song—an explicitly Christian praise and worship song.

In Chapter Three, I will more fully explore the impact of the way that the participants in College Christians approach the Bible and how their approaches help them develop intuitions about the rhetorical nature of reading and writing. What is important to

note here, however, is that Greg's own approach to teaching the Bible is a hybrid of Catholic and Protestant Evangelical approaches. He first models for the students an Ignatian approach to biblical interpretation that builds on lived experience in order to make familiar an ancient text. After he has facilitated students' engagement with this foreign and unfamiliar text, he then encourages them to think about how it might speak to their experiences as modern day college students, and he offers a more Evangelical call to return to Christ. Like the testimony, Greg's model of biblical interpretation relies on students' willingness to reflect on the complexities of their own lives in relationship to the Biblical text, particularly the gospel's accounts of the life of Christ. Theological traditions take a backseat to the pragmatic and ecumenical use of practices that will help students engage deeply with the spiritual impact of their experiences as college students. By encouraging students to experience the Bible in these ways, College Christians seeks to provide students with an opportunity to make sense of their lives in relationship to the overarching narrative of God's redemptive purposes in the world.

Embedded, Cooperative, Oppositional: The Historic Roots and Contemporary Realities of Tensions between the Academy and Religion

Until recently, many analyses of religious readers argued that church-related literacy practices inculcated an "uncritical" acceptance and passive reproduction of dogmatic theological positions (Boone, 1989; Crapanzano, 2001). In contrast to the description above, which suggests that campus ministries can support cooperative and hybrid approaches to engaging with university culture, Evangelical campus ministries have also occasionally been characterized as fostering essentialist approaches to truth and supporting "homogenous peer groups" that may be "oppositional" (P. Magolda & Ebben Gross, 2009), that is, resistant to the dominant philosophical and social expectations of the university.[11] Not surprisingly then, until recently, the field of composition and rhetoric has focused its attention on building strategies that can help to better equip Christian college students who may be inclined to negatively transfer the resistant or oppositional discourses and ideologies they've learned in their religious communities into reading and

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[11] It is important to note that most of this literature—and most of the literature addressing the notion of Christian privilege—takes as its reference point White, Protestant iterations of Christianity, while acknowledging that Christian traditions associated with other racial or ethnic groups (such as the African American Church or Catholicisms from the Global South) might have different characteristics.

writing in academic domains (Carter, 2007; Downs, 2005; Goodburn, 1998; P. Perkins, 2001, 2014; Peters, 2005; Smart, 2005). However, as both sociologists of religion and scholars of literacy have suggested—and as the literacy practices of the College Christians organization bear out—oppositionality is only one of many possible stances religiously engaged Christian college students may adopt toward academic practice and university culture.

In this section, I argue that the assumptions embedded in both the conflict narrative and the movement to reframe the value of religion in the composition classroom are the by-product of historic complexities related to an ongoing negotiation of the role of religion in the academy. In this section, I present three models that represent historic understandings of the relationship between religious and academic ways of knowing. I suggest that while some of the early scholarship in the field of rhetoric and religious traditions is indebted to what I will call an "oppositional model," the most recent scholarship is invested in renovating a cooperative model that seeks to recognize and make productive use of discourses that are shared among academic and religious communities. Although I will discuss these models chronologically—as the by-products of major historical trends—it is important to note that they should not be understood as distinct and successive stages, nor should they be understood as an exhaustive presentation of all possible models for conceptualizing the relationship between church and school-related ways of knowing. Although one model might predominate during a particular time period, each of these models has been present throughout the history of American higher education, and as we will see in later chapters, individuals may adopt multiple models simultaneously, depending on the nature of the religious or academic community in which they find themselves at a given moment.

Indeed, this study responds to the (often tacit) assumption that campus ministries are oppositional and that religiously engaged Christian college students will struggle to feel fully integrated into the social and academic life of the University. I argue that this assumption, which remains prevalent among many instructors, despite significant advances in scholarship, fails to account fully for the ways that the disestablishment of religion as the center of academic life effected students' understanding of transfer between religious and academic communities. In this historic overview, I show that

simultaneous with the development of "distinctively Christian" discourses incommensurate with the values of the University, campus ministries and the students who attended them also developed intellectual practices and social stances that overlap with academic practices. In this section and the next, I argue that because composition and rhetoric scholars have been primarily concerned about remediating the problem of negative transfer from religious communities to academic communities, the field has consistently emphasized incommensurate discourses and literacy practices. Although the field has begun the work of reclaiming cooperative Christians discourses, it has not yet paid enough attention to students' agentive engagement with a wide range of literacy practices, discourses, and values which may be compartmentalized or transferred in both visible and invisible ways.

The Embedded Model

The higher education system in the United States is deeply indebted to the Christian church (both Protestant and Catholic), which has served as primary sponsor of literacy learning since the beginning of the U.S. educational system (Brandt, 2001; Kaestle, 1983; Marsden, 1994). The close ties between Christianity (particularly Protestantism) and the U.S. educational system contribute to the ongoing impact of what higher education scholars call "Christian privilege," the advantages—tacit or explicit— that accrue to Christian students in colleges and universities (Small, 2011; Watt, Fairchild, & Goodman, 2009). In fact, early college classrooms were explicitly designed to train ministers or to inculcate particular approaches to textual interpretation, belief, and virtue that were not only consistent with—but embedded within—frameworks of Christian belief (see Figure 1.3).

Within this model, transfer between religious and academic communities would be invisible, perhaps even irrelevant, because religious and academic literacy practices were not simply compatible, they were nearly identical. In the late 19th century, the epistemologies informing academic approaches to the creation and interpretation of text were largely embedded within religious frameworks, and as a result, the literacy practices of the academy—as well as the ideologies, discourses, values, and subjectivities that accompanied them—were sanctioned by the church. Critical engagement with text could be synonymous with devotional or worshipful engagement with text.

Figure 1.3 The Embedded Model
The earliest relationship between the church and institutions of higher education, in which academic literacy practices, ideologies, discourses, values, and subjectivities are derived from and embedded within religious institutions.

Analysts have found ongoing strains of the embedded model in contemporary church-related literacy practices. Literacy researchers have suggested that some Evangelical and Fundamentalist churches promote interpretations of the Bible that encourage readers to insist that any intellectual position that cannot be circumscribed by or reconciled with the Bible must be rejected (Boone, 1989; Crapanzano, 2001; Juzwik, 2014). Compositions scholars Lizabeth Rand (2001), Amy Goodburn (1998), Priscilla Perkins (2001, 2014), and Shannon Carter (2007) all identify traces of this type of Evangelicalism and Fundmentalism in the struggles of students who have difficulty with critical thinking or who exhibit some resistance to the exploration of unfamiliar ideas.

Indeed, the *embedded model* of the relationship between religious and academic literacy practices is one example of why many students—particularly students from Christian communities that encourage them to see all knowledge as embedded within a religious framework—see the inclusion of religious discourses in their academic writing as a viable intellectual practice (Juzwik, 2014). Some students have deep intellectual commitments to the beliefs and epistemologies they learn in church; consequently, when

they are asked to undertake intellectual work in the classroom, they draw on church-related literacy practices or discourses. Approaches that many academics might dismiss as "religious" are simultaneously "intellectual" approaches for some students, even if they do not always align with what instructors might define as "academic."

Conversely, this model can also be used to explain the Christian privilege that leads some religiously engaged Christian college students to include religious perspectives as an act of resistance against the notion that contemporary academic and church-related literacy practices and discourses may sometimes be incompatible. Because the embedded model was dominant until the late 19th century, its disestablishment has led some Christian students to feel that their ways of knowing and their approaches to solving intellectual problems have been illegitimately discredited. In fact, despite the reality of Christian privilege, religiously engaged Christian college students typically perceive themselves as a marginalized population within the academy (Larson & Shady, 2012; Small, 2011; Thomson, 2009). This sense of marginalization is one reason that campus ministries have flourished in the U.S. In fact, the campus ministry's dual emphasis on religious education and creation of spiritual community developed out of two significant historical movements early in the 20th Century: the slow disestablishment of Protestantism in the American university system (Marsden, 1994), and the rise of youth culture in the American church, a movement that resulted in what historian Thomas Bergler has deemed the "juvenilization" of American Christianity (Bergler, 2012).

The Cooperative Model

Correspondent to the disestablishment of religion in the universities, students' spiritual lives were increasingly coded as extracurricular, and as a result, campus ministries were designed as places in which a curriculum about the Bible could occupy primacy of place alongside, but distinct from, the secular curriculum of the college or university. The contemporary campus ministry arose as a space designed to help students maintain and develop their faith within an institution that was perceived as pushing religious faith out of the curriculum. Campus ministries arose alongside the "semiautonomous student culture" of the late 19th/early 20th century (Marsden, 1994, p. 19), as students increasingly took responsibility for creating and maintaining a social
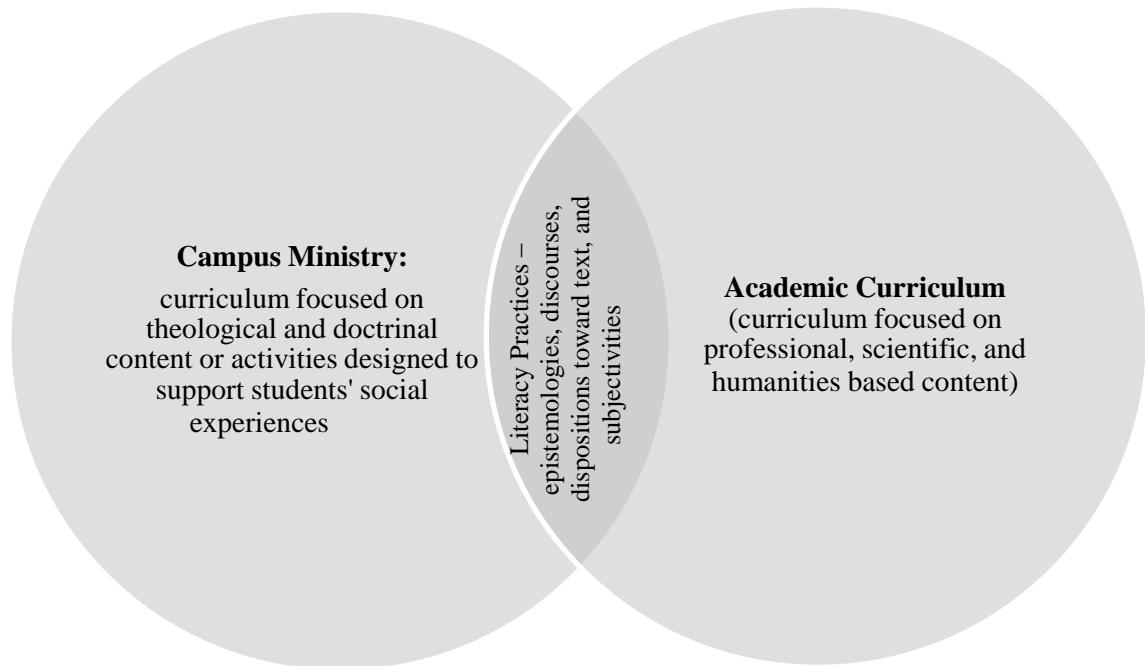
Figure 1.4 The Cooperative Model
Following the disestablishment of religion, scholarly literacy practices (and the dispositions toward learning that attend them) constitute a shared discursive spaces between university and campus ministry.

culture separate from, and often in opposition to, academic culture (Horowitz, 1987, p. 12).

As university curricula shifted from ministerial education to an emphasis on the emerging professions toward the turn of the 20th century (Horowitz, 1987, p. 73), religious institutions felt a strong need to compensate for an absence of doctrinal training in the curriculum. They responded by developing a *cooperative model* which utilized campus ministries to offer academically oriented "supplemental courses of study, especially in the Bible" (Marsden, 1994, p. 335). These sometimes credit-bearing religious courses were taught by both faculty and clergy. Although academic administrators viewed these courses as increasingly tangential to the academic curriculum, campus ministries maintained a degree of coherence and cooperation with the formal curriculum by using scholarly literacy practices as the means by which to explore theological content (see Figure 1.4). Within this cooperative model of the relationship between the church and the academy, content might differ between academic and church-related contexts, but many of the literacy practices—as well as the epistemologies, discourses, literacy protocols, and subjectivities correspondent to those practices—were

shared across communities. For this reason, literacy practices developed in each community could positively transfer across and amongst these domains.

Among some students however, the successful implementation of a "cooperative model" relied on living in the disjuncture between the domains of the academic/intellectual and the social/spiritual. Bergler notes that not all students were interested in pursuing academic approaches to Christianity, nor were all students joining the emerging group of Fundamentalists who opposed the social and intellectual life of the academy. Instead, taking a page from youth organizations that targeted high school students, some crafted parachurch ministries that emphasized relational ministry and "fun spirituality." This new approach looked much like what the College Christians Community meeting described above: it was characterized by an acceptance of popularity, celebrity culture, the use of popular film and contemporary music to promote Christian messages, and a readiness to eschew complex theological issues in favor of helping students deal with the challenging social issues of the day (Bergler, 2012, p. 175). Although literacy practices could potentially bridge the gaps between the academic and religious domains, the relational campus ministry model resulted, for many students, in a comfortable compartmentalization of the spiritual from the academic.

Recent scholarship that calls on the field of composition and rhetoric to examine the ways that religious experiences may serve as a resource in the composition classroom demonstrate that the cooperative model has continued to exert some influence in contemporary composition instruction (Anderson, 1991; Daniell, 2014; DePalma, 2011; Geiger, 2013; Montesano & Roen, 2005; P. Perkins, 2001, 2014; Ringer, 2013), despite the fact that many students and instructors perceive compartmentalization and/or oppositionality as the norm. As I have already suggested, a majority of the literacy practices of the College Christians can be classified as fitting within the "cooperative" model, though, as I will show, student participants in College Christians do sometimes express opinions that align them with the embedded or oppositional models.
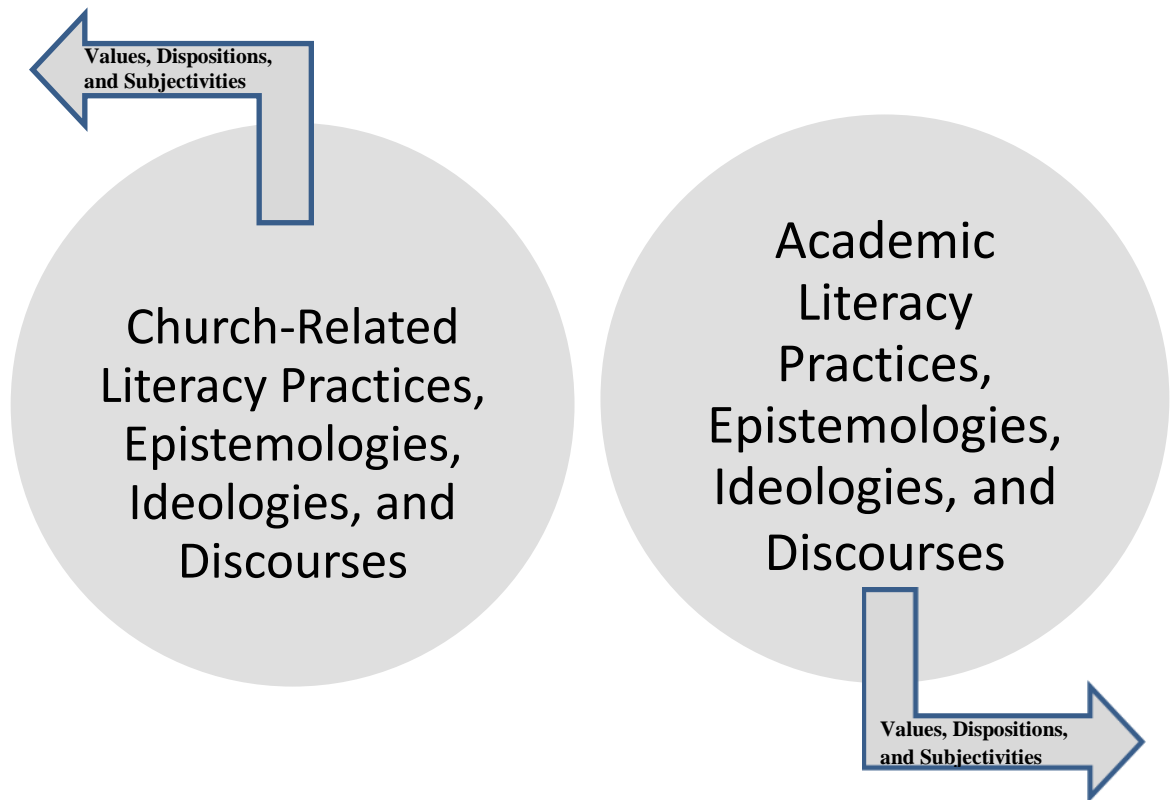
Values, Dispositions, and Subjectivities

Church-Related Literacy Practices, Epistemologies, Ideologies, and Discourses

Academic Literacy Practices, Epistemologies, Ideologies, and Discourses

Values, Dispositions, and Subjectivities

Figure 1.5 The Oppositional Model
The disestablishment of religion in the University and the rise of Fundamentalism led to a concept of religious and academic institutions as wholly disconnected and incommensurate, with widely divergent goals for participants

The Oppositional Model

During the early part of the 20th Century, Fundamentalism, with its rejection of Darwinian science and biblical higher criticism, gained a foothold in American Christian consciousness. This strain of Christianity set itself up in opposition to some of the prominent intellectual standards of the day, and in so doing, supported a burgeoning skepticism (on the part of many Christians and many academics alike) that religious and academic ways of knowing might be compatible. By the 1950s, what Marsden calls the "Golden Age" of the campus ministry, Fundamentalism had given way to Evangelicalism as the dominant movement in Christianity, but deeply seeded strains of Fundamentalist resistance to the broader culture remained (Marsden, 2006). Many religiously engaged students were being challenged by campus ministry leaders to see themselves as a "creative minority" on secular/Modernist campuses (Marsden, 1994, p. 395).

Denominational campus ministries were beginning to develop an increasingly oppositional stance toward the academy, and for many students, and Marsden reports that the intellectual goal of a campus ministry became "[challenging] the underlying

presuppositions of the Universities and their pretensions to neutrality" (1994, p. 395). The purpose of many campus ministries had slowly shifted from a cooperative stance, in which ministries and universities might draw on shared literacy practices and discourses in order to foster learning, to an *oppositional model*, by which students were encouraged to reject the ideologies and epistemologies of the Modernist university.

Similarly, by the 1930s, a significant number of academics and college faculty members had rejected religious ways of knowing as largely personal, concerned not with empirically-verifiable fact but with "values." Julie Reuben notes that "in the nomenclature of the twentieth century, only 'science' constituted true knowledge. Moral and spiritual values could be 'true' in an emotional or nonliteral sense, but not in terms of cognitively verifiable knowledge. The term *truth* no longer comfortably encompassed factual knowledge and moral values" (1996, p. 2). Both academic and religious intellectual trends had separately developed in such a way that religious and academic ways of knowing could now be seen as not only different but wholly incommensurable (Reuben, 1996; Roberts & Turner, 2000). Within this context of radical incommensurability (see Figure 1.5), any application or appearance of religious discourses or literacy practices in the academic classroom was likely to be perceived as an instance of negative transfer.

This framework laid the groundwork for what Philp Marzluff called "the conflict narrative in composition" (Marzluff, 2011). These studies relied heavily on the assumptions that literacy practices can, and do, transfer amongst students' discourse communities and that the movement of these practices—with their attendant epistemologies, ideologies, discourses, dispositions, and subjectivities—would necessarily create tension between students' religious and academic practices and between their religious and academic identities. In these studies, Evangelical and Fundamentalist literacy practices emerged as "intrusions" in the composition classroom and in students writing in other courses (Diamond, 2008). Whether scholars were grappling with their own discomforts at the emergence of religious discourses in the classroom (Carter, 2007; Downs, 2005; Goodburn, 1998; Rand, 2001; Smart, 2005; Vander Lei, 2014a), or seeking to help others make sense of instances of negative transfer of church-based practices, epistemologies, and values into an academic setting

(Anderson, 1991; Dively, 1993, 1997; Peters, 2005), studies that draw on the conflict narrative form develop from the assumption that religiously engaged students and politically progressive instructors will struggle to connect intellectually.

This "teaching genre" typically features two characters engaged in a challenging interaction. The first character is the instructor, whose commitments to the politically progressive goals of critical pedagogy seem to come into conflict with their desires to honor the "home literacies" of the second character, the Evangelical or Fundamentalist student. The narrative suggests that while instructors would like to help Christian students succeed academically, they also feel anxiety at the prospect of substituting academic discourses for religious discourses. The presumption (reflective of the oppositional model), is that in teaching students to think "academically," instructors may risk "changing" the student against his or her wishes, thereby betraying their own critical ideologies (Anderson, 1991; Dively, 1997; Goodburn, 1998).

The prospect of engendering this type of personal betrayals looms largest when the instructor encounters an Evangelical or Fundamentalist student whose church has **"**taboos against 'independent interpretation'" (P. Perkins, 2001, p. 586) and emphasizes the Bible as authoritative over all other texts. In some cases, the studies suggest, students' churches encourage them to engage not in biblical interpretation, but in the reception of a single, divinely-ordained Truth. They suggest that this model suppresses a spirit of inquiry and nullifies the need for critical thinking (Goodburn, 1998; P. Perkins, 2001; Rand, 2001; Thomson, 2009). Goodburn argues that for the Evangelical or Fundamentalist student, "values and knowledge are stable, unitary, universal, and revealed by God," while a typical composition instructor believes that "values and knowledge are always changing, multiple, partial, and contingent upon various communities in specific historical contexts" (Goodburn, 1998, p. 334).

One presumed result of this privileging of the Bible is the negative transfer of protocols and strategies for approaching texts. For example, some students depicted in the conflict narrative simply refuse to read any literary texts or textbooks that threaten to challenge their understanding of the Bible and/or Christian morality (Downs, 2005; Goodburn, 1998). Other students featured in this teaching genre are portrayed as inappropriately mapping onto their academic writing argumentation strategies that are

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common in a religious worship-setting, such as a conversion narrative, sermonizing and/or oral rhetorics, proselytizing rhetoric (Anderson, 1991; Moss, 2001; Peters, 2005; Smart, 2005), or the use of Bible verses as evidence (Downs, 2005; Goodburn, 1998; P. Perkins, 2001).

In addition to negative transfer of literacy protocols, much of the literature also presumes that students will negatively transfer the discourses, subjectivities, and dispositions toward reading and writing that are inculcated by these practices. Religiously engaged students are assumed to privilege what Downs calls "Discourses of Affirmation" over "Discourses of Inquiry" (Downs, 2005): where composition values critical inquiry, religiously engaged Christian college students are depicted as resistant to inquiry and only willing to affirm truth received from trusted advisors within their religious community. While these intellectual discourses are not mutually exclusive, they are, as Downs argues, "in strong conflict and enacting them simultaneously is neither easy nor intuitive" (Downs, 2005, p. 42). Whether it is opposition to homosexuality (Downs, 2005; P. Perkins, 2001; Smart, 2005), resistance to conversations about cultural diversity (Goodburn, 1998), or other "hot-button" political issues, students' integration of religion in academic writing is viewed as problematic when they use "uncritical" readings of the Bible to justify particular political and cultural ideologies that they have learned by association with their "childhood religions."

For this reason, respect for biblical authority became synonymous, in much of the early literature, with conservative political positions. This conflation made it difficult to disambiguate the true source of instructors' concerns about the transfer of church-related literacy practices into the composition classroom: it is possible that when instructors express concern about students' "uncritical" reading practices, they are actually concerned that students' perceived misreadings of the Bible lead them to adopt political perspectives that run counter to "the respect, tolerance, and open-mindedness prized by most humanities departments at public universities" (Thomson, 2009, p. 66). Elizabeth Vander Lei argues that in their efforts to honor students, instructors have often displaced their discomfort with students' beliefs and identities onto their literacy practices:

> what really bugs us—what leads us into a kind of intellectual violence—is that these students seem unwilling to think as we do. They resist using the methods of academic inquiry to reach the intellectual goals that we have set for them. What

we might be less likely to admit is that our frustration with *how* students think is compounded by our distaste for *what* students believe. (2014a, p. 93)

Vander Lei argues that what might initially appear to be concern about students' specific literacy practices and attitudes may also be a concern about the beliefs and subjectivities that these literacy practices make available to students (Warner, 2004), a concern that is further aggravated by anxieties about the communities that foster these approaches to interacting with culture. The conflict narrative suggests that Christian students are likely to resolve this tension in one of two ways: they will either wholly reject academic discourses or attempt to recreate an embedded model, subsuming academic discourses into religious discourses and eliding real differences between these communities.

By presenting stories in which students rely heavily on or protect the Bible as a sacred text, scholarship that is rooted in the oppositional model subtly obscures not only the range of ways that students may approach the Bible, but also the variety of texts that religiously engaged students may be engaging with on a daily basis, the various ways students approach those texts, and the diversity of belief and practice that is supported by those literacy practices and protocols for reading. In the next section, I will discuss the ways that more recent scholarship, including this study, seeks to reclaim the cooperative model, in an effort to make visible such diversity.

Literacy, Subjectivity, and Student Agency: Renovating the Cooperative Model

Certainly, Christian students' faith is most visible in the composition classroom when it comes into conflict with the social and intellectual norms of the academic community. The participants in College Christians would acknowledge that they have met and heard of students who set their religious viewpoints in opposition to those of the academy, but this group of engaged, participatory, experiential learners belies the notion that a belief in the value of the Bible necessarily results in such limited subjectivities and such narrow approaches to the creation and interpretation of text. Despite its limitations, the body of literature that we have come to call the "conflict narrative" is valuable because it reveals that religiously engaged Christian college students are consistently navigating possible opportunities for transfer between curricular and extracurricular literacy practices. It also suggests that as students engage these literacy practices, they

develop dispositions toward reading and writing that may affect their ability or willingness to engage in transfer (DePalma, 2011; P. Perkins, 2001).

In recent years, scholarship has moved beyond the conflict narrative, emphasizing those shared spaces in which religious and academic communities are making use of similar or cooperative discourses. Since DePalma's eloquent call to seek out ways that Christianity might be functioning as a rhetorical resource (2011), scholars seeking to complicate the "conflict narrative" have begun to offer a more nuanced vision of the relationship between religious and academic ways of knowing; they have also begun to acknowledge the variety of stances that religiously engaged students take toward the intellectual and social values of the contemporary university. In an effort to disrupt the dominance of the embedded and oppositional models, the field has begun to privilege and/or reexamine scholarship that recognizes religion as a resource in the writing classroom (Carter, 2007; Daniell, 2014; DePalma, 2011; Dively, 1997; Geiger, 2013; Moss, 2001, 2003; P. Perkins, 2014; Vander Lei, 2014a). These studies highlight church-based literacy resources and cooperative pedagogical strategies that can serve students and instructors alike by bridging, without erasing, perceived gaps between academic and religious discourses.

For example, scholars seeking to address perceived hermeneutic differences have drawn scholarly attention to theological frameworks and/or church traditions that are commensurate with academic discourses (Daniell, 2014; P. Perkins, 2001, 2014). Such approaches include appeals to Catholic liberation theology (P. Perkins, 2001, 2014) and the African American church tradition (Brandt, 2001; Moss, 2001, 2003; Peters, 2005), which Brandt argues inculcates "self-determination, freedom, education, advancement, and often, a unity between religious and secular existence" (2001, p. 107). Pedagogically-oriented studies have proposed teaching strategies by which progressive instructors and conservative religious students can achieve mutual respect and understanding (Diamond, 2008; Geiger, 2013). Each of these studies has contributed to the creation of a more expansive conversation about the presence and significance of religious belief in the composition classroom. This scholarship offers valuable models for how instructors and students can honor differing approaches to literacy and capitalize on discursive and

epistemological commonalities among discourse communities that are often perceived as oppositional.

Indeed, cooperatively oriented Christian students have always appeared in the literature alongside oppositional students. The recent renovation of the cooperative model has made these students increasingly visible. Cooperative Christian students seek productive engagements between academic and church-related literacy practices, even if those engagements include deep struggles with the Christian faith. The College Christians are much like students featured in other scholars' work, such as Anderson's Colleen (1991), Sommers and Salz's Maura and Jeremy (2004), Nowacek's Alan, Betty, and Tigra (2005), DePalma's David (DePalma, 2011), Ringer's Austin (Ringer, 2013), and Perkins's Sara (P. Perkins, 2014); each of these students is deeply invested in the work of seeking cooperation between academic and religious ways of knowing. As qualitative studies of religiously engaged students become more common (Grahmann, 2001, 2002; Murphy Cope & Ringer, 2014; Ringer, 2011, 2013; Thomson, 2009), the complexity of students' practices and myriad manifestations of Christian identity also become increasingly clear.

While these more recent studies have done an excellent job of highlighting historic, hermeneutic, theological, and rhetorical models that might function as resources in the composition classroom, they have not yet done enough to highlight the ways that students might be agentively using their Christianity as a resource for their ethical and intellectual development. This study contributes to the renovation of the cooperative model by examining the ways that students conceptualize and practice reading and writing across religious and academic contexts. It highlights students' agentive practices in an effort to give instructors a framework by which to better facilitate transfer as mode of learning.

Consider, for example, how different the assumptions of the oppositional model are from the actual practices engaged in College Christians, described above. College Christians is a primary spiritual influence for the religiously engaged students who attend; it utilizes a mixture of sacred and secular literacy practices, including—but not limited to—Evangelical practices that encourage students to acknowledge where their own lives challenge Christian belief. These students, who are representative of a majority

of Christian students in the public university, are relatively unlikely to fear academically-oriented texts; in fact, as I will demonstrate in upcoming chapters, although church-related rhetorical strategies and discourses do occasionally appear in the writing of religiously engaged Christian college students, one cannot simply assume that the appearance of Christian discourses in academic writing is the result of students' failure to think critically about received practices from their religious communities. Rather, I will show that students are often agentive in their engagement with literacy practices from multiple communities and that instructors can identify in students' engaged learning activities a variety of practices that are instructive to the ongoing renovation of the relationship between Christianity and composition.

In offering the description and analysis of the College Christians above, I have sought to show that the group's approaches to the creation and interpretation of text privilege relationship building across and beyond the ministry. As I further develop this study, I will show that this emphasis is both a by-product of students' desire to productively engage with the social and intellectual life of the academy and an incentive for reframing the activities of students who might be otherwise inclined to adopt an oppositional stance. In this chapter, I have illustrated that the literacy practices of a campus ministry are sponsored by both religious organizations and a dynamic and changing population of religiously engaged young adults. As a result, the literacy practices of a campus ministry are likely to be mixed and sometimes hybrid, a complex network of literacy practices from multiple faith communities and the curricular and extracurricular communities in which students participate. I have demonstrated that "Evangelical" literacy practices are rarely pure or isolated. Rather, they can be enacted in multiple ways and for multiple purposes. I have also shown that even secular literacy practices might have a role to play in fostering students' spiritual lives.

By illustrating the value of considering literacy practices within social contexts, this chapter has illustrated the need to better understand what significance religiously engaged Christian students ascribe to their reading and writing practices as they move throughout their academic and extracurricular activity systems. My research suggests the value of eliciting from students a more complete description of what they read and write in order to identify the overlaps, intersections, and tensions they may experience among

literacy practices in potentially competing communities. In the next chapter, I will argue for the value of qualitative approaches that can illuminate not only the multi-directional movement of literacy practices among communities, but also students' perceptions of the significance of those practices as mechanisms for helping them make sense of their participation in a variety of communities.

CHAPTER 2
FRAMEWORKS AND METHODS

As noted in the first chapter, this study is built on the premise that reading and writing are social practices embedded in discursive context (Gee, 2007; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Street, 2003). It presumes that an individual's reading and writing practices can best be understood in the context of a sponsoring discourse community and its corresponding interpretive repertoires—habituated ways of creating, interpreting, responding to, or talking about texts within a particular community (Allington, 2010, p. 21). The study also builds on recent developments in the theory and conception of writing-related transfer in the field of composition and rhetoric (Beaufort, 2007; Driscoll & Wells, 2012; Moore, 2012; Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011; Wardle, 2007, 2009, 2012). It builds on conceptualizations of "transfer" as a rhetorically significant act undertaken by an individual who simultaneously responds to and participates in the construction of knowledge in particular social contexts (Donahue, 2012; Nowacek, 2011).

This project responds to calls for new approaches to the study of writing-related transfer; it also extends recent developments in the methods used to explore religious rhetorics, particularly as they appear in the college composition classroom. Writing-related transfer scholarship has relied on a variety of methods, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups with faculty and students; studies have also included site observations and analyses of student writing. However, correspondent to the need to better understand how literacy practices transfer among curricular and extracurricular communities, scholars concur that the field also needs "additional longitudinal studies and studies that examine both writers' academic and non-academic activity systems" (*Elon statement on writing transfer*, 2013). In particular, my study takes up the second part of this call, shedding light on the ways that students perceive literacy practices transferring across and among curricular and extracurricular contexts; in doing so, my

study reveals the multi-directional movement of literacy practices and discourses among students' academic and spiritual communities.

Additionally, scholarship in composition and rhetoric has called for increased use of qualitative approaches, particularly approaches that privilege students' perspectives about how they employ religious rhetorics (DePalma & Ringer, 2014; Thomson-Bunn, 2014; Thomson, 2009). I have answered these calls by designing what Thomson-Bunn calls an empirically hybrid study; in this case, I use a multi-methodological approach that uses site observations, rhetorical analysis of organizational texts, and interviews with students. Observations of the campus ministry fostered a familiarity with the group's most commonly used literacy practices, and textual analyses of organizational documents enabled me to examine how the organization positions itself with respect to the broader campus culture. Interviews with students and collaborative analysis of their academic writing provided students with the opportunity to articulate the significance of their reading and writing experiences within both the classroom and the campus ministry.

This variety of approaches allowed me to identify the complex variety of literacy practices in which the student participants in College Christians actually engage; it also facilitated the identification of which literacy practices students count as significant to their collegiate experiences and helped me better understand what connections, if any, students perceive among these practices. This empirically hybrid approach also enabled me to consider the theological, intellectual, and social implications of those practices in relation to broader trends in both religious and academic culture. The remainder of this chapter will detail the theoretical frameworks and methods used to investigate students' approaches to the transfer of literacy practices across learning contexts.

Theoretical Frameworks

As noted in the first chapter, I conceptualized Christian college students' church-related literacy practices as simultaneously institutionally sponsored and self-sponsored—that is, constructed by students' personal goals and aspirations as well as the motivations of religious organizations. This conceptualization derives from the presumption that because literacy is sponsored, "learning does not occur 'in' the individual but in the relationships between activity systems as the individual moves

within and between them" (Donahue, 2012, p. 153). Moreover, because students' motivations drive the design and maintenance of literacy practices within an extracurricular organization, this study acknowledges students as agentive in the transfer or compartmentalization of learning. I agree with Donahue's assertion that learning is more than the internalization of knowledge or cognitive constructs, that learning takes place on the boundaries of discourse communities and in the resonances that literacy practices leave behind as they circulate among discourse communities. However, as I will show in Chapter Three, within extracurricular spaces (and to a lesser degree within curricular spaces), students have a role in determining the nature and scope of the literacy practices in which they partake. To that end, I also extend Donahue's argument by suggesting that in order to fully understand how learning occurs across contexts, we must conceptualize students who participate in extracurricular literacy organizations as agentive in constructing and curating their own networks of literacy sponsorship. I also argue that because students are using reading and writing as a means of navigating among multiple communities, learning can take place when students perceive relationships among discourse communities or activity systems, even if the student forgoes developing relationships among them.

In fact, this study seeks to understand the complexities of how individuals choose when, whether, and how they will take up and deploy literacy practices as they move among multiple sponsoring institutions, particularly institutions characterized by varying social, intellectual, and interpersonal priorities. For this reason, the theoretical framework undergirding this study is a synthesis of discourse community theory and activity theory—the two predominant frameworks used in composition and rhetoric to address the development of textual practices within learning communities. My synthesis of these two theories accounts for the fact that when students enact reading and writing practices among multiple domains of their lives, they engage (to varying degrees of awareness) with the ideologies that develop correspondent to the use of texts in specific literacy sponsoring organizations (Beaufort, 1997, 1999; Brandt, 2001, 2009; Lang, 2010; Scribner, 1984; Scribner & Cole, 1981). By bringing together discourse community theory and activity theory, I also seek to account for the ways that literacy practices move across communities; as mediational tools, literacy practices leave behind traces of the

ideological significance they acquire in a particular community, thus creating resonances among the many discourse communities within a student's network of curricular and extracurricular activities (Nowacek, 2011; Russell, 1995).

In composition theory, the notion of *discourse communities* has provided a useful way of thinking about the influence that communities exert on the creation and interpretation of texts. For example, classrooms, campus ministries, and other extracurricular organizations typically meet Swales's six primary qualifications of a discourse community: each has "a broadly agreed set of public goals," "mechanisms of intercommunication among its members," "participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback," "one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims," "specific lexis,"[1] and "a threshold of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discoursal expertise" (Swales, 1990). Because it draws attention to the use of "lexis" and "genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims," this definition usefully highlights the centrality of reading and writing to the creation and maintenance of discourse communities. Discourse communities not only engage in shared reading and writing practices, but may sometimes develop as a result of shared reading and writing practices.

This definition also articulates a set of categories useful in the analysis of discursive and linguistic patterns common to members of a specific literacy sponsoring organization. These categories offer an analytic construct by which to account for the dynamic interplay between texts and interpretive conventions; they suggest that discursive conventions not only arise from, but also shape both the linguistic and interpretive repertoires of discourse community members.[2] As Bizzell's characterization

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[1] In this study, I am particularly interested in lexical patterns that index Christianity or the campus ministry (Silverstein, 2003). The indexing function of such language patterns may provide cues to indicate the ideological frameworks and interpretive repertoires fostered within the faith community. For example, even though they may be unaware of the broader sub-cultural resonance of the term, when the students in my study refer to themselves as "Christ-followers," rather than "Christians," they signal their engagement with the literature and media associated with an Evangelical movement sometimes referred to as the "Emerging Church" (McManus, 2005).

[2] While Swales takes pains to differentiate speech communities (which have the force of aggregating people into groups) from discourse communities (which tend to separate people into special interest groups), he does recognize a place for spoken genre within his definition of discourse community (p. 23). Consistent with Heath's notion of a "literacy event" (Heath, 1983), I include in this study spoken

of discourse communities suggests, these discursive conventions thus serve as the boundaries that define who is (and who is not) a participant in the community and can also shape how participants interact with those who are outside of the community (Bizzell, 1992).

However, in recent years, scholars have critiqued discourse community theory as overly static, particularly in its ability to account for the analytic complexities of an individual's participation in multiple discourse communities at the same time (DePalma, 2008; Nowacek, 2011, p. 21; Russell, 1995). To address this challenge, scholars in transfer studies now more commonly rely on activity theory as a framework. Activity theory recognizes that individuals participate in a wide-range of potentially overlapping activity systems, which may use similar tools to different ends, or may use different tools with similar motivations and to shared purposes. For example, churches and writing courses might use a similar tool—textual interpretation—with potentially divergent motives: whereas composition courses would use textual interpretation for the purposes of critical analysis, churches might use textual interpretation for the purposes of spiritual development. Conversely, these two activity systems might share motivations, but might have access to very different tools for accomplishing their purposes. For example, leaders in both the classroom and the campus ministry might share a desire to build community among students. In a classroom, instructors can encourage such community building by challenging students to work collaboratively, or to deeply engage their peers' ideas and opinions through the use of small groups; while this is one facet of the campus ministry experience, campus ministries also use community building tools like games, skits, retreats, and service projects—tools not as readily available to the typical classroom instructor. One of the advantages of using activity theory as a theoretical framework is its ability to highlight not only the dissonances that occur across communities, but also the resonances that can be created when motivations or tools from one community appear in another.

Although I am supportive of the move to conceptualize literacy organizations as dynamic and developing, I will continue, throughout this study, to use the term

genre that inform—and are evidence of—how students understand their own position vis-à-vis biblical interpretation, particularly the homily and testimony.

"discourse community" rather than "activity system." I make this choice for two reasons: first, I continue to use the term discourse community because the word "community" resonates deeply with the primary goal and motivation of the College Christians literacy events—namely the development of a spiritually-oriented community. Within a teaching context, this term—more so than activity system—would carry resonances that might encourage both leaders and student participants to engage in cooperative (rather than oppositional) approaches to literacy engagement.

Secondly, I believe that the term *discourse community* need not connote static, unchanging uses of text. I argue that critiques of discourse community theory, which suggest that the concept of *discourse community* is unable to account for the ways that literacy practices change, have not fully made use of Anne Beaufort's contribution to discourse community theory. In *Writing in the Real World: Making the Transition from School to Work,* Beaufort argues that discourse communities cannot "be viewed in isolation but [must] be considered in a broader cultural context of overlapping discourse communities and the conditions influencing each" (1999, p. 59). In particular, Beaufort highlights the role that individuals play in broader organizational change. She points out that "individuals' influences on the community practices must be considered in order to see the dynamic nature of those practices" (1999, p. 59). She goes on to reconceptualize discourse communities not solely in terms of textual practices, but in terms of motivation for engaging in those textual practices. She defines a discourse community as "a social entity distinguished by a set of writing practices that result from the community's shared values and goals, the physical conditions for getting writing done, and individual writers' influence on the community" (1999, p. 59).

With Beaufort, I conceptualize *discourse communities* as dynamic entities, influenced by both textual practices and the motivations of those who engage in them. The textual practices engaged within a particular discourse community are always already inflected by traces of their usage in alternate activity systems. However, these practices alone cannot account for changes in a community: these practices may shift in response to the networks in which readers and writers participate and the idiosyncratic, individualized motivations that undergird this participation. Thus, when I refer to "discourse communities" throughout this study, readers should understand that I am not

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referring to a fixed set of discursive constructs that can be completely understood through a simple analytic application of Swales's six defining categories. Rather, I am referring to dynamic and shifting communities, communities that—as activity theory suggests—develop and change as participants' motivations and tools change.

The Study: Overview and Rationale

General Design

In order to identify and analyze the significance of the literacy practices of religiously engaged Christian college students as they move across multiple domains of their lives, I began by selecting a single campus ministry, with the intention of comparing its institutionally sponsored literacy practices—and their attendant values—with the perceptions and idiosyncratic practices of its participants, who might be transferring tools, protocols, and motivations among the classroom, the campus ministry, and other extracurricular activities. In order to capture both institutional and individual perspectives about church-related reading and writing practices, I observed multiple occurrences of three different meetings of the College Christians campus ministry at Midwest University: the Tuesday evening Community meeting, Leadership team meetings, and a women's small group. I collected textual artifacts associated with the organization in order to analyze the relationship between the organization's stated goals and purposes, the literacy practices I observed, and those taken up or ignored by the individual participants. I also interviewed the four members of the ministry staff and conducted initial interviews about reading and writing with 29 student attendees who participate with varying levels of commitment and intensity. Finally, I conducted six additional interviews with students who provided writing samples that represented a variety of approaches to integrating religious faith into academic writing. A complete listing of observation, interview, and analyzed text types is presented in Table 2.1.

Site Selection

Because of its niche within the University and the wider Christian community, College Christians provided an ideal location from which to learn more about religiously engaged Christian college students' reading and writing practices. As we saw in Chapter One, the institutional structure of College Christians at Midwest University makes it a

Table 2.1 Dataset of Observations, Interviews, and Texts

	Type	Qty	Description
Observations	Community Meetings	10	Day/Time: Tuesday Evenings, 9:00 PM Location: Student Union, Midwest University Participants: Regular, sporadic, and first-time attendees
	Leadership Team Gatherings	6	Day/Time: Thursday Evenings, 5:30-7:30 PM Location: Basement of local church affiliate located near fraternity row Participants: 25-30 committed students interested in learning more about their faith and responsible planning Community meetings
	Women's Bible Study	2	Day/Time: Thursday Evenings, 9:00 PM Location: Organizational Intern office, Local church affiliate located near fraternity row Participants: Organizational intern (small group leader) and six college women (sophomores and juniors)
Interviews	Pastoral/Ministry Leaders	4	Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews designed to elicit leaders' perspectives about the mission of the organization, its purpose on campus, and the significant demographics of students who attend
	Initial Interviews: General Literacy	29	Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews designed to elicit students' perspectives on their curricular, extra-curricular, and non-academic literacy practices, including reflection on what relationships, if any, exist among these practices
	Follow-Up Interviews: Writing	6	Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews designed to elicit students' perspectives on the variety of ways that religious and academic discourses may overlap in written texts
Texts	Promotional Materials	2	Informational flyer and promotional Facebook page designed to introduce the organization to new members
	Internal Documents	1	Leadership team application, which communicates the organization's learning goals for members of the Leadership team
	Community Facebook Page	1	The Facebook page used by student participants in College Christians to advertise relevant events, promote the activities of other extracurricular organizations, reflect on current events, or present devotional thoughts

theoretically significant, or "critical," case (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2013). College Christians is oriented toward students who might be considered "seekers," i.e., students with lower levels of religious engagement who nonetheless exhibit a commitment to their religious identity. These students recognize themselves as different from both their more conservative Christian counterparts and their secular peers, even as they seek to engage productively with university culture and the Evangelical subculture. Although the students engage in a range of Evangelical literacy practices, a plurality of the students who participate in College Christians comes from Catholic and Mainline Protestant backgrounds. Some of the students come from homes where no religion was practiced, and only a few come from church backgrounds that might be considered Evangelical. Several of the students described leaving the faith to experiment with party culture early in their college careers, only to "return" to College Christians in an effort to reconnect in a new and more meaningful way with the Christian principles and Christian communities of their childhood. In all of these ways, the College Christians are representative of a majority of Christian college students, including—but not limited to—those who come from Evangelical and Fundamentalist backgrounds.

In addition, because the campus ministry is sponsored by both the College Christians parachurch organization and a local Mainline congregation, this chapter of the organization has developed a hybrid approach to supporting students' spirituality, an approach comprised of multiple theological perspectives and textual traditions. When this hybrid is brought into contact with the theologies and approaches to text that students bring from their home churches, the result is an organization in which students are developing a shared interpretive repertoire for thinking about Christian community, while simultaneously engaging with the ongoing resonances of other literacy-sponsoring religious institutions. The organization's structure makes visible a reality experienced by all Christian college students: their experiences with church-related literacies are always already hybrid. As I will show in the remaining chapters, students who participate in College Christians then experience the circulation of these literacy practices in relation to those they take up in their academic lives, adding additional complexity to their network of reading and writing-related activities.

Because College Christians adheres to a philosophy of relational ministry, students who join the group find themselves in an environment that intentionally values their investments in other extracurricular and non-academic organizations. Relational ministry asks Christian ministers—typically adults, but in this case also college students' peers—to stand with and alongside young people as they grapple with the challenges of daily life. As a result, the leaders and students who join College Christians are asked to engage with a wide array of college students as they experience the joys and challenges associated with participation in the collegiate experience. Students who are members of fraternities and sororities are invited to share their experiences as pledges; students who are involved in social service organizations invite their fellow College Christians to attend fundraisers and service events. Because student members of College Christians are encouraged to share their curricular, extracurricular, and non-academic activities during large and small group meetings, College Christians becomes a place in which students can engage with and learn from a range of perspectives informed by many different discourse communities. This variety was important to me as an analyst because it allowed me to capture a wider range of students' perspectives about literacy practices than has previously been considered. I also had the chance to hear students reflect on how their experiences in this range of extracurricular, non-academic, and religious organizations might be simultaneously shaping and shaped by their academic experiences.

Participant Recruitment

Although the participants in College Christians are largely white and middle-class, the population does feature diversity among students' selected academic fields of study, religious backgrounds, and modes of extracurricular participation. Because College Christians is a loosely organized group from which students can come and go as they please, there are no records of students' majors or denominational backgrounds, or their racial/ethnic backgrounds. For this reason it was impossible to select a representative student sample; instead, I adopted a *stratified purposeful sampling procedure* orientated toward maximizing diversity. In selecting students to interview, I attempted to achieve a gender balance (I interviewed 16 women and 13 men), and I sought significant variation among academic fields and majors, extracurricular activities,

and religious/denominational backgrounds. My goal in using this approach was to honor the variety of students' experiences while simultaneously identifying common patterns which might be grounded in, or the reason for, their participation in College Christians (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 106). After attending several Leadership team meetings and getting to know a selection of students individually, I began by recruiting students from this group who had different majors, who varied in progress toward their degrees, and who had different religious backgrounds. To aid this method, I also used s*nowball sampling* (2010, p. 107): at the end of each interview, I asked students to recommend a friend who might find the study interesting, or who might offer responses that would be different from their own. Although I received many additional names and identified several students who might be good candidates for participation, in the end only one participant was obtained using this method.

Finally, I took advantage of *volunteer sampling* (Jupp, 2006)*.* After I began attending Leadership team gatherings, word of my study began to circulate among the students. Two students approached me to express interest in taking part in the project. After ascertaining each student's major and religious/denominational background, I selected one to participate in the study. The other student, Tara, was pre-med and came from a Catholic background, two categories that were already represented among my sample population, so I did not formally interview her. However, because she was the leader of the worship team, my informal conversations with Tara provided valuable perspectives regarding the theory and method behind selecting music for College Christians Community meetings.

Taken together, the three strategies discussed here resulted in the recruitment of 29 student participants who offered their informed consent to participate in the study (see Appendix A for recruitment protocols and informed consent documents). I selected student participants for their involvement at various levels of the organization, and for their self-reported religious backgrounds, which represent a variety of Christian, non-Christian, and other spiritual perspectives. In Table 2.2, I report the ways that students described their religious participation when I asked them if they were raised in a religious home and what they currently consider their primary spiritual community. Of the students I interviewed, 10% were raised in households that they identified as without faith or

Table 2.2 Students' Self-reported Family Religious Affiliations and Their Current Religious Affiliations

Name	Family Religious/Denominational Affiliation	Student's Current Affiliation
Risa	Baptist/(Chinese family has Buddhist roots)	College Christians
Naomi	Baptist/Assemblies of God/Community/"Free"	College Christians/(strong affinity to local Charismatic church)
Tim	Baptist/Non-Denominational	Non-Denominational
Jessica	Catholic	College Christians
John	Catholic	College Christians
Sean	Catholic	College Christians
Amy	Catholic	College Christians/Catholic
Theresa	Catholic	Christian/College Christians
Silence	Catholic	Doesn't, but wants to, believe in God
Brian	Catholic	Loves Jesus and is open to whatever makes sense (including Eastern Religions)
Leland	Catholic	Non-Denominational/College Christians
Bethany	Catholic	Non-Denominational
Kendall	CEO (Christmas and Easter Only), denomination unspecified	College Christians
Jason	Christian Reformed	Non-Denominational
Patrick	Christian Reformed/ Church of God	Non-Denominational
Brianna	Lutheran	College Christians
Diana	Lutheran	College Christians
Nathanial	Methodist	Presbyterian (PCUSA)/College Christians
Irene	Methodist/Baptist/Father not religious	College Christians
Chad	Non-Denominational	College Christians
Carlos	None (Mother Atheist, Father wears a cross but doesn't talk about his faith)	College Christians/Non-Denominational
Ava	None/Catholic/Parents are hostile to faith, but Uncle is a supportive Christian (denomination unspecified)	Bible Church/Multiple Campus Ministries
Shelly	None/Attended a Baptist youth group in high school	College Christians/Non-Denominational
Layla	Presbyterian (PCUSA)	College Christians/PCUSA
Jimmy	Presbyterian (PCUSA)	Presbyterian (PCUSA)
Charlotte	Presbyterian (Unspecified)	Non-Denominational/PCUSA
Elle	Presbyterian (PCUSA)	Non-Denominational/Catholic
David	United Church of Christ	United Methodist
Lisa	United Methodist	Non-Denominational

hostile to faith; 27% were raised Catholic; 48% identified as Protestant, (of which 59% identify primarily with Mainline denominations); 27% identified as being raised within multiple Christian denominations. Only 17% of the students retain an affiliation with their childhood faith, and more than 50% identify College Christians as their primary spiritual community. 41% of the students I interviewed participated in a campus ministry in high school. The 29 students that I interviewed were also selected for their participation at a range of levels within the organization: three students attended only the Tuesday Community meeting, eight attended Tuesday Community meetings and participated in a small group, and 18 participated at all three levels, including the Leadership team.

I also attempted to select students who represent an array of academic backgrounds, academic majors, levels of academic progress, and extracurricular activities. 25 of the students attended public high schools. Of the remaining four, two attended private Protestant Christian schools, one attended a Jesuit high school, and the final student attended a private non-sectarian high school. With the exception of two first-year men, participants in the men's small group discussed below, I chose to work primarily with students at later stages in their academic careers: I interviewed ten sophomores, seven juniors, and ten seniors. The literature currently available regarding religiously engaged Christian college students focuses primarily on first-year students who occupy a "dualistic" stage of moral and intellectual development (Anderson, 1991; Dively, 1993; Perry, 1998). My hope was that because the students I interviewed would have had at least one year of social and recreational experience within the university, they would have likely selected a major, and would have had time to select among the broad range of campus organizations that vie for their time and attention. In this case, I would be able to represent a wider range of students' literacy practices and their perspectives about potential relationships among those literacy practices than the literature about Christian college students has previously made visible.

Finally, I selected students from a wide-range of disciplines and departments (see Table 2.3, below). Consistent with the curriculum at Midwest University, most of these students had taken both a first-year writing course and an upper division writing intensive course, but the vast majority of these students' curricular literacy practices were

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Table 2.3 Distribution of Students' Major and Minor Fields of Study

Major/Minor Field of Study	Departments, Disciplines, and Programs Represented
STEM	Engineering-unspecified (1), Aerospace Engineering (2), Mechanical Engineering (1), Biopsychology (4), Biology (2), Statistics (1), Movement Science (1)
Social Sciences	Economics (3), Psychology (1), Organizational Studies (2), Entrepreneurship (1), Political Science (1), International Political Economics (1), Informatics (1), Program in the Environment (1), Public Health (1), International Studies in Global Health and the Environment (1)
Humanities	English (2), Spanish (5), History (1)
Pre-Professional	Pre-dental (2), Pre-medical (2), Bachelor of Business Administration (2), Sports Management (3)

developed within disciplines other than English. The students who participate in College Christians participate disproportionately in STEM and social science fields. Despite repeated requests of both leadership and students, I struggled to find students who majored in humanities fields. I did, however, succeed in finding multiple students who had committed to minoring in humanities fields. One student, Kendall, identified as a double-major in English and biopsychology, but most students who were pursuing two academic tracks specialized in a social science or STEM field while also pursuing a pre-professional curriculum (e.g., Jessica, who majored in biopsychology in fulfillment of her pre-dental curriculum).

Observations

Over the course of a semester, I attended 18 College Christians events: 10 Community meetings (including a Christmas cookie decorating event and group "devos"), six Leadership team gatherings, and two meetings of a women's small group. In each of these environments, I functioned as a participant observer[3]: for example, when

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[3] As a participant observer, I followed the principles outlined in Marshall and Rossman's *Designing Qualitative Research,* where they argue for setting appropriate boundaries for participant observation: "Ethical practice would suggest that these relationships be benign, nonmanipulative, and mutually beneficial" (2010, p. 142). I engaged in those activities with which I felt most comfortable, and those which would not require too high a degree of intimacy with the students. For example, I did not participate in a game which required moving an orange wedged between the chin and chest of one student to that of another without using hands. I did, however, participate in a "20-questions" style game in which each participant had to guess the identity of the pop-culture figure whose name was taped to his or her back.

I arrived at Community meetings on Tuesday evenings, I greeted the leaders and the students with whom I had developed relationships. I filled out a nametag (with a weekly trivia response, such as: "your favorite '90s band", "your hometown," or "your spring break destination"). During the majority of the Community meeting program, I would take notes on how texts were used during the program—including music selections, student-created YouTube videos, skits, testimonies, and the weekly "talk" from the Gospels. I would also make note of dominant language patterns that I heard arising throughout Community meetings, Leadership team gatherings, small groups, and interviews. I recorded the public Community meetings, transcribing the leader's talk, and using the remainder of the recordings to facilitate recollection and the creation of fieldnotes. Two meetings featured "student stories" that were particularly salient to the study; I asked the students in question for permission to use their testimonials, and upon receiving permission, I also transcribed those talks, which typically lasted from three to five minutes in duration.

I also attended six Leadership team gatherings, in which I was primarily an observer, taking notes about literacy practices and language patterns, as I did in the Community meetings. In contrast to the Community meetings—where students' active participation is confined to games and singing—students participate in Leadership team meetings by engaging in Q&A about the talk, and by interacting with their Community meeting planning teams at the end of the evening. I participated in Q&A during only one of six observations: the text under discussion that night was *Love Does*, a Christian book that the Leadership team members received as a Christmas gift from the organization's ministry staff. When the intern and the student discussion leaders invited students to talk about God's leading in their life, one group of three young men (comprised of one first-year, one third-year, and one fourth-year student) invited me to join their group, and I accepted the invitation. I tried to listen as much as possible, but also provided enough input and questions that the men in the group felt I was an engaged part of the conversation.

Because Leadership team gatherings are understood by the organization as "more intimate" than Community meetings and include students asking questions and sharing observations, I recognized that recording these meetings would require permission from

all of the students present. Unfortunately, the representation of Leadership team members present fluctuated from week to week, and the gathering's loose format, in which students could come and go during the course of the two-hour meeting, made it nearly impossible for me to obtain permission from all of the students who might have attended during my six visits. In response to this challenge, I opted instead to take notes on students' interactions with texts, and I worked to capture by hand as much relevant language from leaders and students as I was able. I then transcribed and coded my notes following the meetings, much as I did when transcribing and coding Community meetings (see Appendix C).

As is so common with qualitative research, observations did not proceed fully according to the original research design. The most significant difficulties were related to my attempts to observe small groups. Because small groups are the most intimate of the College Christians' offerings for spiritual growth, small group members and leaders were understandably reluctant to accept my request to observe. I was eventually able to secure the participation of a women's small group led by intern Lexie. The group consisted of six sophomore and junior women. At the women's invitation, I acted as a participant observer during the small group meetings, engaging them in discussion of a shared devotional text and joining them in prayer. With their permission, I recorded these meetings in order to help me reconstruct field notes and capture pertinent language patterns that might help to explain the perspectives I heard when I later interviewed each member of the group.

I had initially planned to attend four small group meetings, in order to ensure that I had seen the group participate in a range of representative literacy practices. Unfortunately, after I had observed twice, this group decided that they would discontinue the text-based portion of their small group due to inconsistent attendance and their struggle to find a shared text that they would all like to study (an ongoing discussion among the small group members that I will discuss further in the third chapter). Instead, they opted to function as a once-weekly social group. The leader and participants would text one another during the week to find a date and time that could accommodate all members of the group, then get together for a social event, such as miniature golf or a trip to a local frozen yogurt shop. Lexie routinely expressed dismay when she saw me at

Community meetings, declaring that she had intended to invite me but had forgotten to include me in the group text messages. I did not push to attend social events because I felt that interviews with each of the six members of the group and attendance at two text-based meetings had offered a representative sample of the group's interactions with text.

I had also planned to select and observe a men's small group. However, the organization sees far less small group participation among men than among women. I had already interviewed most of the men who participate in the small groups as a part of their participation on the Leadership team. After I had eliminated those groups comprised solely of these Leadership team members, I was left with two remaining groups. One leader rejected my request to observe, citing the men's desire to build intimacy among themselves. The leader felt that my presence—as an outsider and a female—would be distracting and counterproductive to the group's goals. One group, which consisted of five first and second year men, tentatively agreed to allow me to observe a single meeting of their small group, but due to prior commitments in my schedule, I was not able to attend meetings at the time that this small group got together. I did, however, interview each member of the group and talked informally with their leader in an effort to better understand the nature of this group.

Toward the end of my observation period, Lexie, the small group leader and intern, instituted ad hoc morning "Devos" (short for "devotional time") at a local coffee shop on Thursday mornings. All members of College Christians were welcome to attend, and on the mornings that I attended, a small handful of Leadership team members had braved the sunny chill of a Midwestern winter at 9:00 AM. I was able to attend only two of these meetings before they were cancelled due to lack of interest.

Initial Interviews: A Holistic Picture of Reading and Writing

With its emphasis on describing students' experiences and perceptions, this study is located within the phenomenological tradition of qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). Heather Thomson-Bunn rightly points out that within composition scholarship, religiously engaged Christian students' "words, actions, and writing are almost always filtered through the perspective of their instructors" (2009, p. 13). I therefore felt it vital that I adopt an interview approach that allowed students to discuss the literacy practices that were most significant to them: even if I did not learn about

every literacy practice that students engage, I knew that I would learn which practices students took to be the most salient to their college experience. The centerpiece of this study, therefore, consists of two rounds of in-depth, semi-structured and open-ended interviews (Hammer & Wildavsky, 1993; Merriam, 2009) with student participants in College Christians.

I conducted 29 first round interviews, which were designed to evoke students' descriptions of regular reading and writing practices, their literacy learning experiences and their perceptions of the relationships between those experiences. Each interview lasted approximately sixty to ninety minutes, and although students were not asked to bring anything with them, some students brought with them texts that they happened to be reading at the moment.

Follow-Up Interviews: Writing Discussion

After using the first round of interviews to explore how literacy practices may be circulating amongst students' discourse communities, I requested an additional interview with a select group of students in order to focus on student writing as a site in which to explore issues specific to writing-related transfer. During the initial interviews, I identified students who would be willing to engage in a follow-up interview focused specifically on how and why religious faith does or does not appear in their academic writing. At the end of each first-round interview, I showed students a series of three statements designed to identify the range of ways that they might choose to include or exclude religious faith from academic writing.[4] I requested a second round interview with any student who could assent to two of the following three statements:

1. *Since coming to college, I have written a paper that I believe had little or nothing to do with my religious faith.*

2. *Since coming to college, I have written a paper in which I directly discuss my religious faith or explicitly talk about being a Christian.*

3. *Since coming to college, I have written a paper that made me think about my religious faith, or in which I drew on religious beliefs and principles, but in*

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[4] I chose to frame these questions in terms of how students include or exclude their "religious faith" so that students would have the greatest degree of freedom in characterizing what "religious faith" means to them, whether that be the institutions or heritage that support their faith, the social and political beliefs inculcated by those traditions and institutions, or the student's personal beliefs and spiritual values.

which I did not directly discuss the fact that I am a Christian.

These statements are built upon the assumption that students will exercise the relationship between their Christian faith and their scholarly work in a variety of ways, some of which may occur simultaneously.

Implied in statement one is the notion that students may sometimes find that their faith does not, or need not, play a role in their experience with academic reading and writing. I designed this statement to reflect the possibility of "zero transfer" (Schunk, 2004), compartmentalization of knowledge or skills into discreet domains, with no evidence of transfer from one community to another. Statement two implies that some students may actively integrate their faith with their learning by openly discussing their faith perspectives in their writing, explicitly identifying those perspectives—or themselves—as Christian. I operated on the assumption that students who assented to this statement would have made intentional choices about when and how to disclose their Christianity. As noted in the introduction, many of the students who participate in College Christians exist somewhere on the spectrum between "selective adherents" (who might be more prone to compartmentalize their faith), and "committed traditionalists." For this reason, both compartmentalization and explicit integration are possible approaches Christian students might take to navigating the relationship between faith and writing (Smith, 2009).

Like statement two, I designed statement three around an assumption of intentionality, only this time, I sought to learn whether students might be making intentional choices to integrate their Christian beliefs with their academic learning implicitly, rather than explicitly. Much of the existing literature recognizes the influence of students' religious beliefs and perspectives only when they use explicit Christian discourses. This statement was originally designed to elicit from students moments when they found themselves functioning in a paradigm that Arthur Holmes once called "integration of faith and learning" (1987). These students would—in theory—be engaged in integration in an implicit way, i.e., recognizing that Christian scholarship does not "refer only to theology or to study *about* religious topics" (Marsden, 1997, p. ii). Rather, they would recognize that incorporating faith perspectives may extend beyond explicit discussion of one's Christianity to a more subtle use of epistemologies and Christian

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worldviews as a way of developing, or assessing the merits of, arguments.

In designing these three statements, I wanted to create space for students to be staking a more complex set of positions with regard to the relationship between reading and writing than the field has recognized to date. However, as I talked with students, I quickly learned that even in my desire to be expansive, I was thinking too small. In Chapters Four and Five, I will explore the productive ways in which the students disrupted my categories, challenged my presumptions of intentionality, and introduced me to variations in modes and methods of transfer that I had not yet imagined.

In all, 15 students were able to assent to at least two of the three statements. I requested a follow-up interview with each of these 15 students. This interview entailed that the students send a copy of any paper(s) that they felt were useful examples of moments when they had transferred church-related literacy practices or discourses into their academic writing or had integrated faith with their writing.[5] I also requested that students include the writing prompt and any instructor feedback, if available. After experiencing some attrition (due to inability to locate past writing, technical difficulties such as crashed hard drives, scheduling conflicts, and general student busy-ness), I was able to schedule second round interviews with six students. Two additional students sent me their writing, but we were unable to schedule additional interviews before the end of the semester during which I was collecting data.

Prior to each interview, I read and analyzed the materials that the student sent. I made notes regarding areas of interest that I hoped to cover, then printed two copies so that each of us would have a copy from which to work. These follow-up interviews were in-depth, open-ended interviews typically lasting between 45 and 75 minutes. The interview protocol (Appendix B) was designed to encourage students to identify where religious faith appeared either explicitly or implicitly within the papers, and it also served as a locus for conversation about how students respond to expectations for literacy practices across discourse communities. As students described the rhetorical choices that

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[5] I asked each student who assented to statement one to talk more about student writing that had little or nothing to do with religious faith, but I did not ask students to provide me with sample papers that fit this category. I was concerned that in talking about these papers together, we might end up trying to locate traces of faith in papers that students believed had no such traces. I was more interested in hearing the students' perceptions of what kinds of writing might fit this "zero transfer" category than I was in disrupting the notion that such compartmentalization is possible, and for this reason, I opted to forego a closer look at this "compartmentalized" work.

led to the creation of a particular piece of writing, I encouraged them to reflect not only on content in which Christian and academic discourses or epistemologies might overlap, but also on how the linguistic patterns and genres common to discourse communities might have shaped their approaches to the creation of the text. This follow-up interview also offered me the opportunity to ask students for further thoughts about our initial conversations and allowed us to elaborate on any questions and/or thoughts that might have been provoked in the initial interviews. As I will discuss below, this follow-up interview served as an important part of reflecting on my own ethical responsibilities as a researcher. Interview protocols are available in Appendix B, and excerpts of sample coded interviews are provided in Appendices D, E, and F.

Data Analysis

After recording and transcribing the interviews, I analyzed the data using both rhetorical and discourse analysis methods and an open-coding technique. I chose to use rhetorical analysis in order to focus on the "larger-scale choices involved in the design of discourse (choices about topic development, organization, style, and delivery)" (Johnstone, 2008, p. 265). I used rhetorical analysis to draw themes from the language used in the administrative and promotional documents associated with both this local branch and the national College Christians organization, as well as the language used in the Community meetings and small-group settings within this chapter of College Christians. Rhetorical analysis allowed me to identify the messages students receive about the value of the literacy practices they exercise in this faith community, and through triangulation, it enabled me to connect those messages to larger themes within both academic and religious subcultures. These messages subsequently offered an important reference point for triangulation with students' talk about the value of literacy practices across multiple literacy contexts.

I used discourse analysis techniques when working with interview data. With the assistance of qualitative data analysis software, I began by coding broad themes that arose from the interviews, then developed more nuanced and fine-grained codes related to the key themes and findings. I derived codes both emergent from the data—consistent with traditional conceptions of open-coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2011)—and from the existing literature (Suddaby, 2006) about college student readers and about Christian

college students. I also derived codes consistent with the theories outlined in the first chapter and earlier in this chapter, including sponsorship theory, theories of transfer, and discourse community theory. Discourse analysis techniques enabled me to see how students position themselves as they move among discourse communities (Davies & Harre, 2007; Ivanic, 1998), and how they describe the ways that particular courses and genres position them (Bawarshi, 2003). In short, discourse analysis techniques make visible the ways that linguistic patterns develop at the intersection of multiple linguistic "contact zones" (Queen, 1997), enabling students to index their participation in both academic and religious discourse communities. Sample codes can be found in Appendices C, D, E, and F.

Research Ethics: Acknowledging Limitations,
Ensuring Dependability and Validity

A case study of this size, which considers only one campus ministry and the perspectives of only 29 religiously engaged students, necessarily has its limitations. Despite my efforts to bring together as diverse a student population as I was able, the data from this study cannot establish whether students' perceptions regarding writing-related transfer vary based on their selected field of study, the religious tradition in which they were raised, their age, gender, race and ethnicity, or sexual orientation. In fact, the findings of this study are in no way predictive or "generalizable" to all religiously engaged Christian students across the United States or even to students who participate in other campus ministries at Midwest.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that presumption of variety among literacy sponsoring organizations (regardless of individuals' identity categories) is consistent with contemporary literacy theory, which argues that different discourse communities and reading formations will develop alternative aims for the text creation and interpretation that take place within them (Allington, 2010; Beaufort, 1999; Lang, 2010; Smith, 1998). With a few important exceptions (Grahmann, 2002; Ringer, 2011, 2013; Thomson, 2009), to date, the most common methods used to examine the reading and writing practices of religiously engaged Christian college students have been the anecdote or teaching narrative. These methods have limited the field's conception of Christian college

students and obscured our ability to recognize the variety in how Christian students may read and write across domains. To that end, I reject the premise that it is possible or even desirable to generalize about Christian college students as a result of the findings of this study. Rather, the findings suggest just how important it is that researchers balance institutional discourses with individuals' idiosyncratic means of taking up those practices.

To that end, I contend that the methods utilized here would be useful for determining how students in other religious organizations navigate literacy learning across multiple organizations. I seek instead to establish the dependability and validity of my interpretations using alternative approaches more consistent with what Lather refers to as "post-positivist" approaches to qualitative research (1986). One such approach, laid out by Marshall and Rossman, is that of *transferability*—the ability to apply methods and theoretical constructs in a related study (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 106). In this chapter and in the appendices that follow this study, I have provided a methodological description that would allow other researchers to conduct a similar study with a different campus ministry, partaking in similar conversations and data about reading and writing, but potentially eliciting different findings, based upon how the group and its individual participants approach the creation and interpretation of text. By triangulating interviews, observations, and document analysis, then analyzing the resulting findings in light of both larger religious trends and literature related to the organization's mission, this study offers a model that can be used to understand how students in any campus ministry, or indeed any extracurricular organization, perceive the relationship between curricular and extracurricular literacy practices.

Lather argues that a study's trustworthiness can also be established through multiple types of triangulation (1986, p. 67). In addition to the multiple data-collection methods noted above, I also triangulated my research data, theory, and methods (P. Magolda & Ebben Gross, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). In this study, theory and method are mutually constitutive, informing—and informed by—the data collected. During my pilot study, I attempted to interview students only about their Bible reading practices related to College Christians. It was as a result of the data gathered during the pilot study that I developed a methodological approach that accounts for students' perceptions of reading and writing across *multiple* communities. As a result of this

methodological shift, I learned significantly more about how students understand the complexity of reading and writing across their collegiate activity system. In fact, it was during the analysis of the data from this revised method that I began to conceptualize discourse communities as dynamic and recognized the need to develop a more rigorous historical and theoretical framework for discussing how knowledge and skills move among academic and religious domains. In addition to leading me to the literature on writing-related transfer, this development enabled me to deepen my analysis of students' talk about their reading and writing in order to provide new theoretical lenses through which to understand the relative visibility of transfer.

Responsiveness to the developing needs of the study is one way that researchers develop *dependability* (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). Dependability refers to the ways in which a researcher accounts for changes in both the phenomena being researched and the research itself, as researchers gain increasing knowledge of the subject under study. At several times, I did shift the plan of the study itself: when changes in the organization created new sites of literacy engagement, such as morning devos, I accommodated those changes in order to try to create as complete a picture as possible of the literacy practices in which student participants in College Christians engage. Similarly, although I did not initially intend to interview first-year students, I adjusted my research plan to include first year students when it became clear that doing so would enable me to learn more about how a variety of students engage their faith.[6]

As noted earlier, I initially planned to exclude first-year students from my study design because I wanted to focus on students who had already developed a strong social network in college, and who might have begun to develop beyond a dualistic phase of ethical and intellectual development. What I learned from including the two first-year men who participated in the study is that a student's particular year in school bears little correlation to their ethical development or to the strength of their social networks. The two first-year students I interviewed had more definitive social ties within the group than

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[6]The need to include first-year students became particularly important in two contexts: first, as noted above, when seeking to find an appropriate men's small group to interview, the group to which I received access was comprised of first and second year students. Second, I had already decided to interview Chad, one of the first year students in the group, because he had betrayed some concern about my presence in community meetings. It was important to me that Chad understand the purposes of my study and have the opportunity to speak into the study if he so desired.

some of the students who had joined College Christians later in their academic careers. Similarly, the fact that these two first-year men talked in different ways about the role of authority and the value of engaging in peer-based learning bore witness to the fact that ethical and intellectual development occurs in a complex, fluid, and highly individualized way. Including these men in the study reinforced my understanding that researchers cannot make simple assumptions about students based on the external and visible circumstances of their lives.

Establishing Validity

In addition to establishing transferability and dependability, I sought to establish multiple types of validity. In particular, I sought *construct validity*, or what Lather calls "systematized reflexivity**"** (1986, p. 67). By combining open-ended and semi-structured interview protocols, I sought to ensure that the data I gathered was focused toward the research questions while simultaneously allowing space for students to present any relevant information that I might not have anticipated in my interview protocol. This method also enabled me to better account for students' relative "performance" within the interviews. Because both interviewer and interviewee co-construct the meaning of interviews, it is vital to account for the ways in which students shape both their literacy practices and the accounts they provide of those practices, not only in relationship to me as the interviewer, but also in relationship to each other (Allington, 2010; Weiss, 1994).

Certainly, self-reports of students' literacy practices have their limitations as well. Davies and Harré rightly argue that the stories people tell are not "part of a linear non-contradictory autobiography … but rather the cumulative fragments of a lived autobiography" (2007, p. 263). Similarly, Allington argues that anecdotes regarding the reception of text cannot provide truth about how a text is received: instead, these self-reports must be understood as "written discourse embedded in culturally specific narrative traditions, drawing on historically specific cultural materials, and shaped both by the anecdote-writer's rhetorical purposes and by his or her anticipation of the anecdote reader's responses"(2010, p. 27). This means that when drawing conclusions about the circulation of literacy practices among students' discourse communities, I must remain circumspect, recognizing that I cannot draw definitive conclusions about whether or not literacy practices are transferring between institutional contexts. Nor can I make

arguments about the identities students are constructing for themselves as they engage with literacy practices and/or reading and writing protocols across discourse communities. I can, however, surface and analyze the ways that students think about the range of relationships among literacy practices. I can also illustrate how students respond to the interpretive repertoires fostered within and among literacy sponsors. These student perceptions offer valuable insights for instructors and administrators who seek to better account for students' literacy learning across the curriculum.

The Researcher's Positionality

Because the interviewer and the interviewed co-construct meaning in any qualitative interview project, establishing the boundaries of ethical analysis and representation demands the work of establishing *face validity* (Lather, 1986, p. 67). Establishing face validity requires that the researcher ensure participants understand the purpose of the study as well as the potential positive and negative effects the study might have. Moreover, establishing face validity also demands measures by which I, the researcher, am challenged to confront my own preferences and biases. As I noted in the introduction, during the course of this project, I encountered students whose perspectives about the integration of faith and scholarship sounded similar to my own and those whose perspectives sounded, to my ear, underdeveloped and unreflective. I also encountered students with highly considered perspectives that were antithetical to my own. As a researcher, I needed to recognize and honor each of those perspectives, talking to students about faith-informed academic perspectives when asked, but refraining from explicit teaching about the integration of faith and learning—an activity that feels familiar to me given my background as an instructor in a college setting that privileged just such an activity.

In a project such as this, with ideological motivations and ramifications, the creation of an ethical study demands far more than mere documentation and consent of the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 44). This particular project required regular reflection on my own positionality, which in many interviews, manifested as the interviewee and I reflecting on our common perspectives as Christians, and on our differences born of my education in a Christian liberal arts college and their education in a large, public university. As a Christian, I not only share a common religious

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background with the students I interviewed, I also share the experience of being a practicing Christian on a campus that students variously described as "open" to their faith (which has been my own experience), "hostile" to their faith, "indifferent" to their faith, or "culturally Christian."

As a Christian believer who has participated in a variety of different churches, my familiarity with a range of Christian belief systems (both Protestant and Catholic) offered me several important advantages. First, I was in a position to understand the complexity of navigating between the values systems of a range of religious discourse communities. I know well the challenges of simultaneously being asked to approach texts through a systematic theological lens, a devotional lens, a creative lens, and with the scholarly detachment and exploration characteristic of some academic communities. To that end, I am familiar with the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual stakes of talking about what reading and writing can mean in the life of a Christian, and throughout these pages, I have worked to ensure that I am fairly and accurately representing students' experiences reading and writing for spiritual growth.

Second, because I am a professional scholar and teacher who is familiar with many of the Christian discourses in which these students engage, I functioned as both an informed outsider and a practicing insider in the students' primary religious community. The students' responses reflected their perception of this dual role. They shared a reaction common to many who learn that I am an "English teacher," offering caveats about the quality of their own writing, expressing concern that they did not read enough or noting that they did not read the "right" things. They often performed regret or embarrassment about their relatively low homework completion rates. Yet they also responded to me as a fellow believer; students would ask questions like: "Do you know that worship song?" or "Have you seen this devotional book?" They regularly expressed curiosity about my investments in the project and about my experiences in a Christian college, and often, both parties in the interview sought to establish rapport around shared experiences in the Christian subculture. From this vantage point, I was able to hear the nuances of the students' talk about faith and writing, and challenge them to more clearly articulate their own beliefs and perspectives.

By the same token, however, my own familiarity with the students' need to

navigate among discourse communities also presented a unique challenge for the collection and analysis of data. During the creation of the interview protocols and during interviews, I struggled to avoid bias in the construction of interview questions. My interview recordings are full of stops and starts as I sought to generate open-ended questions that allowed for a full range of responses, rather than asking questions that subtly privileged the ways that I would answer the question based on my own experiences. The interviews are also full of moments in which I work with students to unpack the Christian lingo (sometimes referred to as "Christianese") that is shared among believers but may not be meaningful to readers who are not a part of a Christian faith community.

For example, when Jason told me that he values small group participation because it offers him "accountability," I had a general sense of his meaning, but I learned a great deal when he defined accountability as having spiritually-oriented friends who will say, "Hey. How are you guys doing? Are you struggling with anything? Is there any way that I can pray for you?" According to Jason, the value of accountability is that it "really pushes you, as a person, to live up to those standards that you know you want to live …" Whereas my understanding of accountability was focused primarily on building community in order to ensure that an individual lives up to church-appropriate behavioral standards, Jason's definition emphasized assistance in helping an individual live up to the goals they've set for their own lives. Working with students in an effort to unpack our shared "Christianese" offered distinct benefits for my data analysis because it offered me the opportunity to unpack my own assumptions about these shared language patterns and provided a place for students to articulate similarities or differences in our respective conceptions of these terms. While I was able to catch many instances of "Christianese," the deep familiarity of much of this Christian lingo means that some instances probably slid unnoticed past both me and the interviewee.

Perhaps the greatest challenge, however, as mentioned above, was accepting and honoring the many ways in which students think about the relationship between faith and academics, particularly when I was talking to students whose perspectives were uncomfortable and unfamiliar to me. Unlike the students in this study, most of whom had attended public schools, I received a majority of my education in private schools that

explicitly taught me to integrate religious and academic perspectives. Unlike many of the students in the study, I also come from a theologically conservative faith tradition, yet one that values intellectual engagement. For this reason, I found it easy to talk with students who had identified modes of integrating religious and academic ways of knowing. In contrast, I felt a wide array of emotions toward students who experience tension between religious and academic discourse communities, including confusion, empathy, and a longing to help them on the path to integration. I initially felt deep frustration with students who sometimes took an oppositional stance to the intellectual values of the university, and also with those who chose not to think about the relationship between academic and faith communities at all.

To that end, the creation of an ethical study demanded that I "grapple with ways to ensure that [students'] voices are represented transparently" (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 46). I took several methodological steps to ensure that participants were fully protected and that the research findings were subjected to rigorous examination against bias: first, I ensured that participation in interviews and small-group observations was entirely voluntary. I worked with and through group leaders to ensure that students were aware of their options and were comfortable working with an outside researcher. I worked to alleviate the concerns of any students who expressed discomfort about my presence— particularly by building relationships with ministry leadership and by asking other students to share their experiences as study participants. I also approached small group participants to participate in interviews only after all group members had consented to their leader that they were willing to work with me. I ensured that students knew that they could discontinue their participation at any time, and I offered students the opportunity to redact their interviews if desired. Although no student took me up on this option (most citing time as their reason), some did intentionally request that I conceal the names of extracurricular organizations in which the student played some kind of sensitive role.

Second, as a part of my effort to ensure construct and face validity, I offered all participants the opportunity to participate in member-checking. Toward the end of the drafting process, I invited students and leaders to respond to my representation and interpretation of their perspectives. This process can make both participant and researcher feel vulnerable, but I learned how important the process is for challenging me—as

researcher—to do a gut-check about my analysis and presentation of participants' voices: before sending the work to readers for feedback, I felt compelled to examine my presentation closely in order to ensure that I was not imposing on students' talk any theoretical constructs that would result in interpretations foreign to the students themselves. Participants were most comfortable with my work when my interpretations of the worked matched their own. In two cases, students disagreed with my interpretation that unintended discursive patterns in their written texts might have subtly marked them as Christian. In these cases, I reached out to the students to explain my thinking: one student agreed that my interpretation was reasonable. The other never responded to my request for further dialogue. In writing about this latter student's work, I made sure to be clear that the student intended the work to be unmarked, but that as a researcher I see marked discourses. I believe that our differences of opinion on this topic suggest the validity of my argument, developed in Chapter Five, that because students do not have full control over the implications of their own writing, some linguistic and rhetorical patterns may mark students as Christian even when they did not aim to disclose their religious participation.

I also learned that one key benefit of member-checking processes is in the mutuality and respect that can accrue when I, as a researcher, acknowledge the co-construction of meaning and refine my own interpretations in light of the participants' responses to my interpretations (Lather, 1986). The students and leaders who responded to my requests for feedback were generous in responding to me—several students wrote back to tell me about how their thinking has grown and changed over the two years since the interviews were conducted. In one case, a student's response challenged me to return to the work to examine my presentation for unintended traces of value judgment about students' choices. During the member checking process, Jessica responded via email to my presentation of her psychology paper. In her email, she noted that, "As much as I want to say 'my writing has become stronger and I have shared my faith more verbally,' I do not think I can admit that I would have naturally marked my academic writing more. I think it took essentially being called out for not marking as a Christian as much as I thought I was."

I was alarmed by Jessica's use of the phrase "called out," because I had sought to

be descriptive, rather than evaluative, in my presentation of her work. I responded with an email in which I sought to better explain my purposes for writing and asked her if she could point me to any places where she felt "called out" so that I might revise appropriately. Jessica replied: "Let me rephrase: I walked into that interview confident that I was marking my papers. And I was shocked with myself that I wasn't. It was a self-calling out for not being the person I thought I was being, just causing me to be more aware of my actions." Jessica's response was encouraging in two ways: first, her response, like the disagreement I noted above, validated my argument that students' use of marked and unmarked discourses are not always fully in their control. Second, Jessica's assertion that participation in the project had made her "more aware of [her] actions" suggested a degree of catalytic validity ("knowing reality in order to change it") among some students in the study (Lather, 1986, p. 67).

Finally, I maintained a research journal (both handwritten and audio-recorded). As a Christian student myself, one who has always considered reading and writing to be primary vehicles of both intellectual and spiritual growth, I found that this journal offered me a productive space in which to process my own perspectives, approaches, and opinions, differentiating them from those of the students. It also offered me an important space in which to monitor my own emotional responses to the project, acknowledging the ways that my approach to spirituality might be similar to or different from that of the students I was interviewing. This journal allowed me to make visible those places where I was most inclined to agree or disagree with students' perspectives, and in so doing, encouraged me to more fairly represent all of the students.

In the chapters that follow, I will present three of the major findings from this study. First, in Chapter Three, I explore the findings from my observations and initial interviews, detailing the significance of students' reading for spiritual growth, and I discuss how these practices facilitate an understanding (rather than an occlusion) of the rhetorical impact of textual interpretation. Then, in the fourth and fifth chapters, I develop the findings from the follow-up interviews, discussing how this rhetorical awareness manifests in students' use of school-related writing to negotiate their participation in religious and academic communities.

CHAPTER 3
THE ONLY BIBLE THEY'LL EVER READ: THE RHETORICAL
DIMENSIONS OF READING FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

On a Thursday evening in late February, I was sitting in the basement of a local Mainline church, on a well-worn youth group couch. The weekly Leadership team gathering was under way and approximately 30 members of the College Christians Leadership team were sprawled around the room in small groups. Greg, the campus minister affiliated with the national College Christians organization, had just finished "unpacking" 1 Corinthians 10, a passage that emphasizes the balance of freedom and responsibility in moral decision-making:

> We want to live well, but our foremost efforts should be to help *others* live well. With that as a base to work from, common sense can take you the rest of the way. Eat anything sold at the butcher shop for instance; you don't have to run an "idolatry test" on every item. "The earth," after all, "is God's, and everything in it." … As a matter of fact, do everything that way, heartily and freely to God's glory. At the same time, don't be callous in your exercise of freedom, thoughtlessly stepping on the toes of those who aren't as free as you are. I try my best to be considerate of everyone's feelings in all matters; I hope you will be, too. (*The Message*)

Over two weeks, Greg and Phil had led the students in an exploration of the chapter, including this passage. The ministers encouraged the students to reflect on the contemporary equivalents of ancient idols and food prohibitions. The purpose of this discussion was to help students think about when they might be exercising freedom "heartily and freely," and when they might be "thoughtlessly stepping on the toes of those who aren't as free." By the time I observed this Bible lesson, I had been listening to the students talk about their broad engagement with the campus life of Midwest University for nearly two months; as a result, this passage felt particularly resonant with the challenges faced by many religiously engaged Christian college students, who must daily make decisions about how they will exercise their Christian faith in relationship to a secular campus culture.

The ministry structures Bible teaching in much the same way that a traditional church might: the Tuesday Community meeting is comparable to a Sunday morning church service, and Thursday's Leadership team gathering is comparable to traditional weekly Bible study. While the teaching portion of Tuesday's Community meetings is typically conducted using exposition and exhortation (Alissa, Lexie, and Phil), or Ignatian Contemplation (Greg), Thursday evening's teaching relies heavily on methods for helping students apply what they are leaning about the Bible to their everyday lives. According to James Beilo, this approach is "the most familiar way that American Evangelicals read the Bible" (2009, p. 50). During Thursday's Leadership gatherings, the students eat dinner together and catch up with each other for about thirty minutes. Once the teaching time begins, students typically hear a selected Bible passage read aloud then receive a brief lesson about the historical context and linguistic nuances of the text. If Greg is teaching, they may learn about the cultural patterns common at the time of the writing; if Phil is teaching, they may be asked to think about how possible alternate meanings of a Greek word or phrase could shift their interpretations of the passage. Next, the students typically group themselves into smaller sets of three or four students in order to discuss how this passage might shed light on recent experiences in their lives and how it might shape their thinking and actions going forward. The students whom I interviewed described these protocols—the interpretation practices and the discussion—as fostering both an intellectually stimulating and practical approach to the practice of reading the Bible. According to Leadership team members, the literacy practices they engage on Thursday evening cultivate an approach to Bible reading that is simultaneously more intimate and more in-depth than the teaching they receive during Tuesday's Community meetings.

On this night (like many others), the students had been asked to discuss the passage quoted above in small groups with their peers, exploring how this passage might relate to their experience as students at Midwest. The members of the Leadership team took this passage to mean that they should not uncritically accept the social norms typically associated with conservative Christianity, nor should they participate uncritically in college party culture. The room was buzzing as students debated the parameters under which drinking and going to frat parties are acceptable weekend

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activities. They discussed the social and spiritual challenges associated with dating non-Christians, and they considered how to ethically manage the difficulties of a crushing homework load.

Over the din of their conversations, I heard Greg's voice break in: "Yes! You said it!" he shouted. "Everyone needs to hear this!" The students quieted and directed their attention to the end of the room as Greg continued: "This is why freedom and responsibility is so important: You're going to go out tonight and you're going to see your friends, and you've got to remember that you may be the only Bible they'll ever read!" As a group, the students vocalized their delight with this catch phrase, repeating it to one another with satisfaction. I wrote down the interaction in my notes then scribbled the word *ironic* in the margin. I wasn't sure what Greg was suggesting about the relationship between friendship and moral choices, but my interviews and observations to that point had suggested that in fact, Greg himself might be the only Bible many of the students in College Christians were reading.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

In Chapter One, I demonstrated that the literacy practices inculcated in the College Christians organization are designed to orient students toward personal relationships with God and to cultivate authenticity, vulnerability, openness to seeking and questioning, and personal reflectiveness. I also showed that the practices students take up in a campus ministry are often a mixture of sacred and secular practices, as well as the occasional sacred/secular hybrid. The group uses approaches to textual engagement that are common among a wide range of discourse communities, including (but not limited to) multiple Christian faith traditions and widely available popular and new media forms. In this chapter, I leave my exploration of how the organization has designed its literacy practices and take a closer look at the ways that the student participants in College Christians actually use these literacy practices (and others) for spiritual growth. This chapter addresses the second major question driving this study: *What literacy practices do religiously engaged Christian college students actually engage?* With a specific focus on reading, the chapter explores the literacy practices that religiously engaged students take up, reject, or bypass as they participate in multiple discourse communities; the chapter also explores what students' engagement with these literacy

practices can tell us about the roles that students play in the creation, maintenance, or undermining of the values of those discourse communities.

To address this research question, I use data from the first round of interviews conducted with 29 student participants in College Christians. These interviews are rich with detail about what, when, and how students read across multiple domains of their lives. For this reason, this chapter is necessarily selective in its focus: I pay particular attention to how students talk about their reading for spiritual growth, and I highlight how their approaches to reading for spiritual growth are commensurate or incommensurate with the reading practices that might be privileged in academic domains. In this chapter, I demonstrate that religiously engaged students—even those who participate in the same campus ministry—exhibit wide variation in their approaches to reading for spiritual growth. For some students, church-related reading practices exist in isolation from academic approaches to reading; for other students, these practices diverge and converge in ways that can result in both tensions and productive engagements between academic and religious ways of knowing.

Throughout this study, I have argued that the practices inculcated in the College Christians organization are most closely aligned with a cooperative model of the relationship between academic and religious ways of knowing (cf. Figure 1.4). My observations and conversations with students taught me that because the academic and spiritual domains of students' lives share some common discourses and literacy practices, it is difficult—if not impossible—to fully distinguish the practices of one community from those of another. In this chapter, and in Chapters Four and Five, I focus on the campus ministry and academic environments individually, but I do so with full recognition that when I am discussing one of these domains, the other domain is always in the background. For example, in Chapters Four and Five, I focus primarily on students' engagements with academic literacy practices and discourses, asking whether, and how, church-related literacy practices emerge in the classroom context. In this chapter, I focus specifically on students' reading for spiritual growth, but their reading and writing for academic purposes remain present in the background of this argument. In an effort to better understand how these extracurricular reading practices may be shaping students' approaches to the creation and interpretation of text in an academic context, I

illuminate the protocols for textual engagement and the dispositions toward reading that students develop as they read for spiritual growth.

I begin my examination of the College Christians' use of literacy practices by talking about reading because, as I demonstrated in Chapter One, most of the scholarship about Christian college students' writing practices begins with assumptions about their reading practices. As Michael Warner rightly points out, church-related reading practices (along with many other commonly practiced approaches to reading) have too often been denigrated as "uncritical … naïve, immature, unexamined" (2004, p. 15). Shirley Brice Heath categorizes Bible reading as "conformational" in nature, that is, characterized by "reading to gain support for attitudes or beliefs already held" (1983, p. 198). While "conformational" approaches to Bible reading are not the same as "unexamined" approaches, these descriptions nonetheless evoke an image of religious readers as static, unquestioning, and passive recipients of a divine message relayed in the pages of the sacred text. And indeed, because many Christian readers do engage the Bible with a spirit of attachment and personal investment—a spirit that many scholars contrast with what they call critical reading (Warner, 2004)—it is not surprising that Thomas Deans sees engagement with sacred texts as disruptive of "habitual academic reading and reception processes" (2014, p. 86).

However, recent studies of religiously engaged Christian readers have demonstrated the importance of Warner's call to think more carefully about the actual work accomplished by so-called "uncritical reading practices." In contrast to early representations of Evangelical and Fundamentalist reading practices as dangerous to both the readers themselves and to the very foundations of liberal democratic society (Boone, 1989; Crapanzano, 2001; Crowley, 2005), scholars like Beilo (2009), Neil (2006), Frykholm (2007), and Juzwik (2014) have demonstrated the complexity with which religious readers engage both their sacred texts and the many other works of literature that they read for spiritual growth. Indeed, Beilo and Juzwik demonstrate that while Christian readers may not always be academic in their approaches to the sacred text, they nonetheless view their engagements with the Bible as interpretive practices that are social, analytic, and agentive. Similarly, Neil and Frykholm draw scholarly attention to the ways Christian readers may be agentively engaging other texts, such as Christian

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adventure and romance fiction, which can help readers personalize and make use of principles from Scripture that might otherwise seem abstract or distant from their lives.

Indeed, Christian college students are no different. Much like I have suggested so far in this study, Grahmann's study of Bible reading on college campuses suggests that for college students, the interpretation of Scripture is a highly nuanced social act that must be understood in relation to the broader social and intellectual climate of college life (Grahmann, 2002). Thus, before beginning an analysis of the College Christians' writing practices, it seems appropriate to consider the reading practices that may influence how these students perceive the relationship between the academic and the spiritual domains of their lives. As I have already shown, scholarship about the intersection of religious and academic discourses in student writing has been attentive to the ways that students' church-related reading practices may shape their decisions about whether, when, and how to transfer literacy practices among religious and academic discourse communities. The literature has demonstrated that some church-related literacy practices may hamper students' ability to take up and effectively deploy academic literacy practices, while other church-related literacy practices can foster both protocols for textual engagement and dispositions toward reading and writing that align with academic approaches to the interpretation and creation of text (Daniell, 2014; Geiger, 2013; Goodburn, 1998; Juzwik, 2014; Perkins, 2001, 2014; Ringer, 2013). As Beverly Moss rightly points out, if students implement their church-related literacy practices in the composition classroom, they are likely to find both "sites of negotiation" and "sites of common ground" (Moss, 2001).

It is important to note, however, that most discussions of those religious reading practices that might be "sites of common ground," or "resources" for students' literacy learning tend to focus on models for student practice, rather than on the actual practices that students themselves engage. These models tend to fall into two categories: the predominant model seeks to renovate historic, underutilized, or overlooked hermeneutic approaches from the Christian tradition (Daniell, 2014; Geiger, 2013; Montesano & Roen, 2005; Perkins, 2001, 2014; Peters, 2005). A second, less commonly used model analyzes contemporary religious practice for protocols or subjectivities which might serve as models for students who want to effectively transfer literacy practices or discourses from one domain to another (Moss, 2001). In responding to DePalma's call to

make visible literacy practices that might serve as rhetorical resources, what we have not yet seen is an example of students themselves using and talking about reading practices as resources to support their academic practices.

In this chapter, I extend the scholarship above by offering a close examination of the ways that the participants in College Christians talk about their church-related reading practices. While this study is not the first to analyze the ways that religiously engaged readers approach and interpret spiritually-oriented texts (Beilo, 2009; Frykholm, 2007; Juzwik, 2014; Neil, 2006), I am the first to examine how students are both bypassing and taking up literacy practices in the religious domain of their lives, and I am the first to analyze how students talk about the relationships (or lack thereof) between church-related and academic reading practices. This chapter thus offers a valuable contribution to the field's understanding of the ways that students' interpretive practices, protocols for text engagement, and dispositions toward reading and writing (whether tacit or agentive) might function as resources in their engagement with academic reading and writing.

Here, I would like to acknowledge an important limitation to the argument that I make in this chapter. When I began my study of the College Christians, I quickly discovered that while it was easy for students to talk about how writing exhibited transfer of discourses between and among discourse communities, it was much more difficult for students to conceptualize and describe instances of reading-related transfer. In fact, one of the things that surprised me most as I began interviewing students was how difficult it was for them to recognize and talk about precisely *what* they do when they read; they were far more easily able to articulate the social significance of their practices than they were able to detail the practices themselves. While I had designed my study in such a way as to elicit talk about the church-related reading protocols that might serve as resources in academic writing and research, what emerged from my conversations with students was not—as I had hoped—an emphasis on strategies and techniques for reading that align across classroom and campus ministry. For this reason, I cannot address actual instances of reading-related transfer between the academic and religious domains of students' lives.

I can, however, take steps in the direction of acknowledging student agency by examining students' talk about their reading for spiritual growth in light of academic

expectations about analytic approaches to text. In this chapter, I argue that because of their participation in College Christians, the students I interviewed have a burgeoning understanding of the rhetorical dimensions of biblical interpretation. In other words, although they cannot yet fully articulate the significance of their experiences, the students describe Bible reading as an act accomplished for a variety of different purposes, with specific protocols for textual engagement that support those purposes. They also understand that particular ways of reading the Bible both address and invoke an audience of which they may (or may not) be a part. As they move amongst communities, the students who participate in College Christians learn that particular ways of reading the Bible can cultivate different subjectivities and dispositions toward reading (Driscoll & Wells, 2012; Moss, 2001; Warner, 2004), some of which differ from, and some of which align with, what is expected in the classroom. I suggest that instructors and campus ministers alike should work to develop students' nascent understanding of the rhetorical dimensions of reading for spiritual growth. By developing a meta-awareness of (and meta-language for) their reading practices, students may be able to transition their tacit awareness of the rhetorical dimensions of reading for spiritual growth to an agentive transfer of the practices that best align with academic approaches to reading.

Choosing a Campus Ministry: A Crash Course in the Rhetorical Significance of Biblical Interpretation

As I noted in Chapter One, College Christians frames itself as a space not only for students who are established in their faith, but also for students who are curious about Christianity, new to the faith, or returning to the faith after a period of personal exploration. When students decide to join a campus ministry at Midwest University, they have a variety of options, and students often choose the campus ministry that feels like the best fit given their background, personality, and personal goals. The students who choose to attend College Christians join for a variety of reasons: some attended an affiliated high school ministry; some learned about the ministry through fraternity and sorority networks or networks of family and friends. Still others decided (at various points in their college careers) that they wanted to maintain and/or reconnect with the faith of their childhood and found their way to College Christians after trying out many

different campus ministries. For this latter group of students, the process of choosing a campus ministry can be a crash course in the rhetorical power of biblical interpretation.

Vander Lei and Hettinga rightly call attention to the fact that hermeneutics are inherently rhetorical (Vander Lei & Hettinga, 2002); that is, the work of interpretation is always undertaken within particular interpretive communities, for a specified purpose and with the express intent of persuasion (even if only to persuade those already inside the community to continue in their current behaviors). As Steven Mailloux points out, hermeneutic work "always involves rhetorical action, attempts to convince others of the truth of explications and explanations" (1985, p. 630). Mailloux's assertion highlights that the way in which a particular group interprets the Bible may have an impact on the group's discursive style and protocols for textual engagement. Hermeneutics are deeply imbricated with both the discursive repertoires and the protocols for textual engagement that are cultivated within a specific Christian community. For example, some campus ministries might take a "hot topics" approach to helping students learn the Bible, defining a relevant issue (such as alcohol consumption or sexual ethics), then walking with students through a particular set of Scriptures designed to help them understand the importance of avoiding drunkenness or refraining from sex outside of marriage. The reading and discussion protocols in this scenario would be designed to support a particular interpretation of biblical teaching about moral issues. The participants in College Christians learn to engage with the Bible by "putting themselves into" a Gospel story and imagining how they might interact with Jesus, or by engaging the Epistles by means of a looser, more free-flowing discussion format (as in the example at the beginning of the chapter). This model suggests that the organization is attempting to help students see first and foremost that the Bible can be relevant to their daily lives, and that Christianity makes space for a range of potential, highly individualized understandings of how the Bible speaks, and what it says about moral questions.

The students who chose College Christians from among other campus ministries would not use the language of rhetoric or hermeneutics to describe their experiences of selecting a spiritual community. Nonetheless, the language that they use indicates that their experience of participating in multiple Christian communities has taught them that interpretive practices (and the discursive norms that accompany those practices) have the

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power to welcome or alienate an audience. Indeed, the students' descriptions of their experiences in other ministries reveal an awareness that reading and talking about the Bible within a group constitutes a rhetorical situation. These students talk about their participation in Bible studies in ways that reveal sensitivity to the ways that Bible reading is shaped by context, purpose for reading, and the audience that a particular group works with (audience addressed) or hopes to attract (audience invoked). The students' talk about their journeys to participation in College Christians suggests that this act of selection entails recognition of—and selection from among--the various audiences and purposes for biblical interpretation. In this way, the act of selecting a worship community (an act that is inherent to Protestant religious participation) becomes a crash course in the rhetorical significance of discursive and hermeneutic differences; the lessons that the students learn in this process, if made explicit, could be valuable tools for familiarizing them with the fundamentals of rhetoric that they might exercise in the writing classroom.

The students who choose College Christians do so because in this particular ministry, they experience literacy practices, Christian discourses, and subjectivities that they feel will help them develop their faith in the ways they are most comfortable. As the students identified their motivations for choosing College Christians, they described the power of language and interpretation to welcome or alienate a particular individual; that is, they often experienced themselves as the audience addressed, but not necessarily the audience invoked, by a particular set of interpretive protocols or discursive practices (Ede & Lunsford, 1984). As I begin to unpack the students' comments, I want to note that their interpretations of other campus ministries are exactly that: interpretations, based on their own experiences. While the College Christians experienced other campus ministries as strict, narrow-minded, and closed, students with different backgrounds, goals, or personalities might experience those ministries as offering a similar type of environment, or an environment that is no less valuable for being different. Like the students in College Christians, students who made their way to other ministries would also undertake the process of discerning whether or not they were the audience best served by the way that a particular set of interpretive frameworks guides spiritual engagement and moral decision-making.

Among the students I interviewed who had visited multiple campus ministries, one was still attending two ministries. The others had chosen College Christians for one of two reasons: some left other ministries because they felt that what constituted acceptable social behaviors in their own lives differed from the norms of the ministry that they were attending. Others felt that they approached the Bible differently from students in those other ministries. Many of the students who chose College Christians described a link between biblical interpretation and particular dispositions toward reading that might constrain the subjectivities and subsequent moral choices available to them.

Jimmy and Tim drew direct correlations between the ways that particular campus ministries interpreted the Bible and the discomfort that led them to choose a different campus ministry. Tim, a first year student from a non-denominational Evangelical church, told me that he left another ministry to join College Christians because College Christians "was a little more laid back, I'd say. [The other organization] … their whole agenda is—it's almost like knocking on doors and pushing the agenda, I almost felt like. College Christians is like, 'Come to us and we'll teach you,' if that makes sense. I liked that." After a few weeks of attending the more evangelism oriented campus ministry, Tim came to feel that this ministry read the Bible solely for the purpose of proselytizing others. His discomfort with that purpose for reading made him feel that he was not the appropriate audience for that ministry, and he sought out College Christians, where the purpose of reading felt more educational ("come to us and we'll teach you"). Tim was raised in an Evangelical church and considers himself a lifelong Christian, but he was nonetheless more interested in developing his faith than in witnessing to others. Although he does not use the language of rhetoric or interpretation to describe his interactions with this other ministry, it is clear from Tim's description that this experience could help him understand reading as motivated by particular ends and could illuminate the impact that particular ways of reading can have on an individual's motivations for interacting with others.

Talking about the same campus ministry, Jimmy, who was raised in a Presbyterian church (USA) and is now the drummer in the College Christians worship band, explained, "They were more about proselytizing at its finest, is how I would put it…They were more about if people [are] not Christian then they're going to hell. It was

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more conservative than maybe College Christians was. I guess I didn't agree with that, so I left." While it only took Tim a few weeks to realize that he was not interested in reading the Bible for the sake of witnessing, Jimmy participated in a Bible study with this ministry for a full semester before he decided that he wanted to read the Bible in a more open way, one that emphasized concepts other than an individual's salvation status. Contrasting College Christians to the other ministry, he described an excitement about learning to use the Bible to reorient himself toward more loving and God-honoring relationships with his neighbors:

> [Attending College Christians] makes me feel better after. I go there and be *All right. This is how the world works. I can deal with that.* "Love your neighbor" doesn't seem that hard, but then you get into conflicts and *Screw them!* …You go back on Tuesday and you're like, "Oh. All right. Fine. Let me try to sort this out." There's definitely merit to reading the Bible and going to College Christians."

Jimmy was not interested in evangelizing his peers at Midwest (quite literally, his neighbors), but he was interested in learning to cope with the challenges of living in relationship to them, so he found a ministry whose literacy practices and discourses more closely aligned with his goals. Jimmy's roommate still participates in the ministry that he left, so Jimmy is more inclined to respect that ministry than Tim was. Regardless, both men recognize that they have made choices about which group best fits their beliefs, personalities, and goals based in part on the way that organization interprets and talks about the Bible.

As I listened to other students talk, the relationship between Bible reading and approaches to Christian living was less explicit, but still present. Instead of talking directly about purposes for reading, some students identified their relative discomfort with the linguistic and discursive norms of a community. Discourse community theory suggests that these patterns are closely tied to the organization's social purposes, and these social purposes, as we saw above, are closely tied to the ways that the organization interprets (and subsequently approaches) the Bible. Irene, for example, heard in the language of another campus ministry an implicit critique of how she interprets the Bible. She told me that the codes of conduct she encountered in the other ministry made her think:

> Oh my gosh, I was wrong. Like, everything I was doing wasn't right. *I'm not a true Christian* because they had all these rules and all these ideas of how you had to go about different things and I had to stop myself. It's like, *wait a second.* There's so many different ways to go about your religion, your faith, and how you feel about things, and I feel like a Christian. There's got to be a community where you can explore that with others.

Although Irene doesn't directly say it, she is reacting strongly to the sense that her peers in this other campus ministry read the Bible in order to find an explicit set of rules for Christian living.

Irene, who was raised Methodist, "feels like a Christian," and intentionally sought out Christian community when she came to college, but she left the first ministry she joined because its insistence on particular standards for living seemed (to her) to foreclose the possibility of personal growth that Irene believes to be the purpose of college. When I asked her how she came to join College Christians, Irene described her belief that college should be a time of personal growth in which students develop independence and autonomy:

> It's the time to be a part of everything and, in the midst of everything, know where you stand and be okay with it, but be okay that people are going to do things that are different than you. …College Christians is a time to make our own decisions and figure that out. And I like that College Christians is "figure it out for yourself," like "we're here to help you and guide you and question things, but ultimately it's up to you."

Irene has taken up the idea that college is a time for experimentation, a time for students to figure out who they are and what they really want to believe. Like Tim, she appreciates that she finds in College Christians a community that does not mandate she read the Bible or behave in particular ways, but rather a community that will "help" her and "guide" her as she figures out how to read, interpret, and apply biblical teaching in her own life. Irene values the rhetoric she hears used in College Christians and its corresponding protocols for textual engagement; the discursive patterns and ways of reading in College Christians suggest a high degree of individual discretion in applying Scriptural principles to one's life.

Like Irene, Charlotte initially joined a small group associated with a campus ministry that approached the Bible so differently from the ways she did that she found herself questioning her Christianity. Like Irene, she did not directly talk about how the

other group read the Bible, but it is clear from her description that the ways the women in this group talked about God were bound up in the group's shared practices—its beliefs about, and approaches to, living a Christian life. Within an Evangelical community like the church Charlotte describes, these approaches would likely be justified through the use of particular interpretations of the Bible. Instead of discussing their approaches to the Bible, however, Charlotte located her discomfort with the small group experience in terms of the discursive power of a community's language to include or exclude:

> I felt like at the church small group, all of the girls in the small group their faiths were really established and their relationships with God was [sic] really strong. I didn't think that they struggled with the same things that I did with college and partying and stuff like that. I felt like they were kind of just past that and it was almost like I was embarrassed to talk about my struggles. Maybe embarrassed isn't the best word. Maybe more ashamed and that's where I think I clicked with College Christians so much.

When I asked Charlotte why she felt that the women in the other small group were more "established in their relationships with God, she replied, "Maybe the way they talked, the way they spoke or the things that they said." Because of their language for talking about God, Charlotte associated the women in this small group with a faith that is simultaneously simpler and more advanced than her own. In contrast, she found in College Christians a group in which she did not need to feel ashamed of her struggles. Charlotte was not fully equipped with the rhetorical tools she needed to understand that the women she perceived as "stronger" Christians might simply have different experiences with, and approaches to, reading the Bible; she did not have the theoretical knowledge to understand that their hermeneutics might result in ways of talking about God that are different (but not better or more advanced) than those that she would develop and respond to in College Christians.

David, who is a more experienced Bible reader, has also begun to understand that a single text is subject to interpretation in light of the values and motivations of a particular discourse community. David was a senior when I interviewed him, and he had been a member of College Christians since his first year at Midwest. Because he had so many friends in the group, David continued to attend College Christians even after he felt that he had outgrown the interpretive repertoires of the group. To continue learning and

growing, David also chose to attend a local church, which he told me interprets the Bible in ways that are more appropriate for his particular life circumstances:

> I think it's the sense of some of the messages that College Christians delivers, I've heard—been living out since I was back at church as a six, seven year old. It's one of those things that obviously is a necessity, but not as much in this point in my life. Whereas [at church], it's more along the lines of there's an understanding that everybody's not at the same certain point as I am. It's taking what's the next step as far as either stewardship goes, or whether you're talking about defining boundaries in certain aspects as far as the Bible says we should love everybody, but to what extent is that realistic? Or how does that look in my personal life? Where do I need to be? I think that's a little bit more of the … some of the more nuance to things that I guess really keep you engaged with developing your faith.

When he made these assertions about College Christians, David was preparing to graduate. Reflecting on his life of faith, he argues that the messages provided by College Christians are some of the more basic messages that he had been learning since his early childhood in the church. He recognizes the value of those messages for other members of College Christians, but suggests that the local church he attends has offered him a more suitable environment in which to continue to exercise his curiosity about his Christian life. Like Tim, David has a tacit sense that interpretive communities emphasize different elements of a text and can interpret a text differently based upon its purposes. As he encounters various protocols for interpreting the Bible in each of his religious communities—particularly the types of questions that each group asks of the sacred text—David is learning that Bible reading is a rhetorical act in which particular communities are tailoring their interpretive protocols to the needs and expectations of an audience.

In the anecdote with which I began this study, Theresa commented that "you watch your preachers, and mentors, and people … all take a Bible story and look at it in so many different ways." Like Theresa, Tim, Jimmy, Irene, and Charlotte, four students who chose College Christians after experiencing another campus ministry, have an acute sense of the discursive differences that characterize specific ministries, and a nascent sense that these differences are related to the ways in which people interpret the Bible's expectations for the Christian life. David occupies the other end of the educational spectrum, demonstrating that these lessons may be reinforced when students choose

another church or ministry upon leaving college. All of these students recognize many possible ways of enacting a Christian life, and they recognize that the subjectivities on offer in some religious communities may be a better fit for a student's particular personal needs, goals, and desires. Notice that while some of the students disagree with the theological positions they encountered in other ministries, they do not reject those groups as "wrong." Rather, they recognize a range of possible approaches to Christianity and select the one that most closely aligns with their beliefs and goals. Although the students are not necessarily equipped to see the act of choosing a campus ministry as a resource that they might use in the classroom, their experience is nonetheless one that instructors might use to help students develop a meta-awareness of the rhetorical significance of biblical interpretation, especially the ways that specific interpretations influence discursive patterns and shape particular protocols for engaging texts.

Struggling With the Bible: How Contemporary Students Encounter an Ancient Text

Within College Christians, responsibility for organizational activities is divided among the Leadership team, which is responsible for all non-Bible related literacy events, and the campus ministers, who are responsible for Bible teaching. As they oversee the design and implementation of literacy events across all levels of participation in College Christians (small groups, Community meetings, and Leadership gatherings), the group's campus ministers seek to help students cultivate relationships with God and others rather than trying to teach more advanced Christian theology. This decision is in part a byproduct of the "brand" that the group has created on campus, but it is also a practice created by the needs and interests of the student participants, which shape what is possible to accomplish in an extracurricular organization.

The challenges of biblical interpretation are particularly salient for the College Christians when they are trying to think through complex moral and ethical questions that might have an impact on how the students relate to people about whom they care deeply. The afterlife and sexuality were two of the most pressing issues students were grappling with. For example, Brian, whom I will discuss more fully in Chapter Four, decided he believes that reincarnation is compatible with biblical teaching in part because he was striving to build a strong relationship with his brother. Irene expressed uncertainty about

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how to understand the Bible's teachings about concepts like hell (her father is not a believer) and the moral status of homosexuality (she is a passionate advocate for marriage equality). Elle had recently finished reading a book by fitness guru Jillian Michaels; while she was describing how much she enjoyed the book, she mused that she wasn't sure what the Bible would have to say about the fact that Michaels is in a committed same sex relationship. Consistent with the core principles of the College Christians organization, each of these students approaches reading for spiritual growth with an orientation toward cultivating and maintaining relationships with the people around them. This orientation leads them to ask difficult questions about the relationship between contemporary culture and biblical interpretation.

Brian went so far as to contend that God may have designed the Bible to be intentionally difficult: "God doesn't want us to just to, you know, just take things as given. He wants us to work and become—that's how we become better people, you know? He wants us to work through our—the stories and so on." Although proponents of the perspicuity of Scripture would reject Brian's assertion that God has made the Bible difficult on purpose, his assertion that God wants people to "work through… the stories" reflects a nascent understanding of the type of disciplined study (of the sort one might learn in an academic environment) that might be a useful tool for unpacking the biblical text. In this section, I outline the variety of approaches to Bible reading that are present within the College Christians organization as students learn to "work through the stories." I demonstrate that while not all approaches to Bible reading are useful for academic practice, students are nonetheless engaged in a learning process that highlights the rhetorically-situated nature of reading for spiritual growth.

As the examples above suggest, although the students who participate in College Christians are religiously engaged, they are less familiar with the Bible and less comfortable with typical Evangelical discursive practices than previous literature has suggested (Carter, 2007; Downs, 2005; Goodburn, 1998; Perkins, 2001). In fact, these students are much more like the students that Montesano and Roen describe, students who "lack … intellectual background for [their] religious faith" (Montesano & Roen, 2005). This reality limits what the campus ministers can ask of students. Indeed, the campus ministers wish that the participants in College Christians engaged with the Bible

more analytically, and more often. Unfortunately, the campus ministers feel constrained in terms of how far they can push students: they don't want to alienate students who might find the Bible difficult or off-putting. The College Christians ministry staff identified two primary reasons that the Christian students to whom they minister may not read the Bible as often as the ministers would like: first, the difficulty of understanding an ancient text, and second, the time pressures placed on students by their collegiate workload.[1] The campus ministers see the students' low levels of biblical literacy as a problem, but they recognize that there is little they can do to address the problem given both students' motivations and the limited time they have with students. Alissa, for example, positions College Christians not as a solution to the problem, but as a potential resource for students who are themselves concerned about developing a more rigorous "intellectual background" for their faith:

> Most students, or a lot of students I talk to at least, say that they don't know how to read the Bible. They open it up and they don't feel like they can understand it. Our hope is to help people become more literate. I guess Bible literacy—that people will feel comfortable with their Bible and reading on their own—would be an awesome goal. I don't think we always meet that, but it's a two-way street. It's like meeting in the middle. We can offer some, but you have to want it and try it and it's hard. And you have to dig in and most people don't have time in the midst of classes and reading and everything else.

Alissa offered this explanation with an air of resignation: she is concerned that the students' low levels of biblical literacy constitute a deficit to their faith, and while she works to support independent biblical literacy, she recognizes that she does not have sole control over whether or not students achieve this outcome.

And indeed, many of the students with whom I talked do not read the Bible at all outside of College Christians. Only ten students self-identified as regular Bible readers, and of these ten, several confessed that they struggled to read the Bible with any kind of consistency. I will discuss their experiences as Bible readers shortly. In this section, however, I explore the experiences of students who struggle with the Bible, and I show

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[1] One of the main reasons that students told me they do not read the Bible is that reading the Bible would compete with academic work for students' limited time. As Charlotte pointed out, "being in school, I don't have as much time, or I feel kind of guilty. I feel like I should be doing school work rather than reading the Bible. There is time for that after I graduate or after classes end." Similarly, Amy sees her participation in a small group as a way of compensating for the fact that—given the time pressures of college life—she would be unlikely to read the Bible on her own.

that as they seek to redress these struggles, they engage in protocols for reading that cultivate an understanding (often tacit) of the fact that individuals can read the same text in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. As I noted above, the students rarely possess a meta-language to express this nascent understanding that some protocols are more or less useful for supporting a particular type of, or motivation for, reading. Nonetheless, as they talk about their reading for spiritual growth, the students use language that suggests their attempts at Bible reading have shaped their dispositions toward engaging with complex texts and have exposed them to a variety of protocols for textual engagement. In this section, I demonstrate that students' more and less successful attempts to read the Bible result in complex dispositions toward reading challenging texts; they also provide experience with protocols for reading that might be valuable if implemented in the composition classroom.

Dispositions Toward Bible Reading

The nineteen students who are not independent Bible readers exhibited variance in the value that they ascribed to the Bible itself. At one end of the spectrum are students like Diana, who have very little reverence for the Bible and see it primarily as what Priscilla Perkins has called the "honored center" of the community (2001). These students, a minority among the College Christians, recognize that the Bible has a valuable place in the life of the College Christians community, but this recognition does not result in students' directly engaging with the Bible on their own. Like a textbook,[2] the Bible is the signifier of a community's foundational principles and its purpose for existence, but some members of the community feel no need to engage with it directly as the Word of God. Diana described her position this way:

> The Bible for me is just a basis of a story that you can—like a lesson that they give. I guess whoever's talking, be it Greg or Alissa, could say that same story without the Bible, but that's where it came from and it's kind of interesting to relate it to when the Bible was written and relate it to now … I guess just looking

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[2] This approach to the Bible—respect for the text as the center of a community that community members have no obligation to engage—was also a common way that I heard students in the STEM fields talking about their textbooks. For example, Patrick argued that the reason engineering classes assign textbooks is "largely just to tell you where the information is that we're on and like the information you do know is in there, but then so is a bunch of other information." In this way, the Book becomes valuable as both a material artifact that signifies an intellectual community and a reference text containing practical knowledge that a student might need to access at some point in the future.

at how Jesus is portrayed in the Bible as someone you should look up to and someone who is just such a caring, good person. It's important that you can see that that can still be related to you in your life now, I guess.

Diana makes a distinction here between the medium (the physical text of the Bible) and the message (the stories contained within the book). The Bible as an object has no relevance to her, and the message matters primarily to the extent that Jesus is a good role model, "a caring, good person" who has relevance to her life even now. Whatever small value Diana ascribes to the Bible derives from the fact that adults she respects—Greg and Alissa—have told her that the Bible can help her live more purposefully. Beyond this fact, Diana does not feel any obligation to engage with the Bible as the "Word of God." According to the leaders of College Christians, this perspective—characteristic of what Smith calls "moral therapeutic deism" (2005)[3]—is most common among students who attend the low-stakes Tuesday Community meetings.

Far more common among the students I interviewed, however, was a strong sense that they should be reading the Bible, even though they weren't. Most of the students whom I interviewed believe they would benefit from reading the Bible more than they do. As Tim pointed out, "Sometimes it's just because, well, people tell you to read the Bible. *You better read the Bible. It's God's Word.* There is always something you can get out of it." Tim's rationale for believing the Bible is his trust in the people he respects who tell him that it is valuable. This lack of internal motivation is a disposition toward reading that many composition instructors might find frustrating. However, as we will see below, this external motivation also drives Tim to use protocols for reading the Bible that could be useful resources in the classroom.

Phil and Alissa rightly highlighted that students struggle to read the Bible due to its unfamiliarity and the challenges of finding the time to read.[4] As I talked with students

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[3] The basic tenets of Moral Therapeutic Deism, as described by Smith in *Soul Searching, the Religious and Spiritual Lives of Teenagers* are: 1) A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth. 2) God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions. 3) The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself. 4) God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem. 5) Good people go to heaven when they die (2005, p. 162-63).

[4] Phil also identified a third reason students may struggle to engage the text: their participation in visual culture, which he claimed makes it more challenging for students to engage in the sustained intellectual work required to interpret the Bible with confidence. Phil's assertion about the nature of shifting cultural practices raises important questions about how students may be using multimedia and

about why they didn't read the Bible, they told stories of attempting to read the Bible at an earlier time of life and discovering that they were ill-equipped to understand the ancient and unfamiliar text. While most of the students have not yet become independent Bible readers, they identify College Christians as a space that is slowly helping them re-engage and that is equipping them, little by little, to read the Bible. When students talked about their struggles with the Bible, many of them cited a lack of hermeneutic tools that could help them make sense of the Bible's complexities. Risa described her childhood experiences with Bible reading as an exercise in attempting to reconcile contradictory messages:

> I think growing up it was like, I didn't really know how to interpret the Bible. In general, there are certain obvious principles like, "Don't steal, don't murder," or whatever. But if you see in the Old Testament and the New Testament, they're very different. Almost all are opposite and sometimes, in the Bible, [it] contradicts itself on something that God wants you to do, not doing—Like, *I thought you just told me not to do this!*"

As a young person, reading the Bible, Risa did the best she could to take in the messages the Bible makes clear, but she had no concrete ideas about how to make sense of the differences between the Old and the New Testaments. Risa's earliest experiences taught her not only that the Bible demands interpretation, but that she herself was not equipped to undertake this interpretation.

Two things are significant here: first, Risa does not elide or ignore the complexities of the Bible. Although she grew up with the Bible, it remains a challenging ancient text, deserving of the work required to interpret it well. Second, note that Risa's frustration is not one issue but two: the difficulty of interpreting conflicting messages compounded by a desire to obey the God she believes in (but cannot understand). Risa simultaneously exhibits two dispositions toward Bible reading—(frustration and motivation—that could potentially work together to push her to greater sophistication as a Bible reader. However, if not channeled productively, Risa's two-fold frustration could easily result in a disposition of disengagement or an answer-getting disposition (Wardle,

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social networking platforms to engage with the Bible. While I saw some evidence of this in the students' social networking activities (such as the use of "meme" formats to share Bible verses or sharing photos of daily devotionals on Instagram) I did not observe enough of the students' social media activities to make any claims about these practices.

2012) that could incentivize her to accept the interpretation of anyone who offers her a reading that seems plausible.

Irene had a similar experience when she began reading the Bible as a child. She remembered the frustrations she felt during a youthful attempt to read the Bible from cover to cover. The experience felt similar to the frustrations she experiences in school, and because she felt that she was not up to the task of interpreting the Bible, she gave up on reading it altogether:

> …it's not like I sit there and read the Bible all day, because it's like a textbook to me. … I need something that's going to guide me through. Because when I was younger … you know, everyone at one point in their life, I think, is like, "Oh, I'm going to read the whole Bible front to cover" and obviously that's not—"it just makes the most sense to [read it] that way." I know that there's a better way to do it; I don't know what it is. But I tried to do it anyway. I was literally just reading to say that I read it and wasn't even like taking in what it said. Because it's like, I don't know all the context behind things and I'm reading this, like, I don't know the same and there's so many words and so many pages that I'm like, "Yeah. I'm not going to read it."

Irene's early attempt to read the Bible on her own, without guidance, resulted in little more than confusion and disappointment. The sacred text felt long and boring, like a textbook, and the experience falsified Irene's belief that reading the Bible "front to cover" would make the most sense. This early experience also shifted her sense of herself in relation to the Bible. It belied the notion that anyone can read and interpret the Bible and taught Irene that she needed some of the tools of the expert interpreter if she hoped to succeed as a Bible reader. Like Risa, Irene describes dueling dispositions of frustration and motivation. These dispositions are useful in that they create an awareness of what skills she might need in order to interpret well, but they are also counterproductive in that they make Irene feel that her best option is to give up.

Taken together, the movement from frustration with past experiences to motivation for finding new ways of interacting with the Bible indicates that while they may not yet be engaging with the Bible in sophisticated ways, their engagements with the Bible are nonetheless one factor in their development from "absolute knower" (one who desires to receive knowledge of right and wrong and answers) to "transitional knower" (one who recognizes that knowledge in some domains may be culturally constructed) (Magolda, 1992). From the position of the absolute knower, the students in this section

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felt frustration that they did not feel certainty in their interpretations of the Bible. Instructors should be watchful for these subjectivities, which may impede or facilitate students' classroom literacy learning: for example, instructors might need to help students push beyond their confusion so that frustration does not result in lack of motivation or disengagement with challenging intellectual questions. As transitional knowers, the students are learning that the different communities have different ways of reading the Bible, and are willing to try to learn new approaches. Their willingness to admit what they do not know reflects a novice stance toward the discourse community, a disposition toward learning that scholars have suggested is key to intellectual growth (Sommers & Saltz, 2004). To the extent that instructors can help students develop a meta-awareness of the ways that reading experiences cultivate certain dispositions toward text, Bible reading can be an experience that will serve students well when they encounter difficult texts in the classroom.

Protocols for Supporting Biblical Literacy

In order to facilitate more robust biblical literacy among all the students, but especially among the students who feel ill-equipped to read the Bible (students like Risa, Irene, Elle, and Brian), the College Christians ministry staff encourages techniques and reading protocols that are designed to scaffold students' burgeoning comprehension and interpretation skills. The result, as I will argue in this section, is experience with a range of reading protocols that could support engagement with a variety of complex texts. In particular, the students' use of supplemental texts, interpretive apparatus, and group dialogue are strategies and reading protocols shared among the classroom and the campus ministry.

When I asked students what they were reading for spiritual growth, I was not surprised to discover that although so few of them were reading the Bible, many of them were reading Christian books designed to help them learn more about God and about their relationships with others. Students were reading *New York Times* best-selling Christian titles like *Jesus Calling* (a daily devotional), *The Purpose Driven Life, Boundaries in Dating,* and *Crazy Love* by Francis Chan (the most current "rock-star pastor" to take over the Evangelical publishing world). The campus ministers had even given the Leadership team members a Christian book, called *Love Does*, as a Christmas

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gift. As the students talked about why they were so excited about these books, and why they mattered so much to their spiritual growth, I heard a theme arise time and again: these books help students see how an ancient faith and its complex sacred text are relevant to their lives.

"Relevance" is a watchword for the students in College Christians, and students are most likely to read books that they see as "relevant" to their lives. As Theresa, a regular Bible reader, argued, "[T]he Bible needs to be relevant to our everyday lives for—I think that that's crucial. It's critical to read the Bible. If it's not relevant to our everyday lives, then why would we do all of those—why would we read this?" Although Theresa takes the relevance of the Bible as a given, this is not the case for every student, as we saw above. Books like *Love Does* provide inspiration for students to think about how their faith can enliven their day-to-day interactions with the people around them. Books like Rob Bell's *Sex God* (one of the books Greg regularly recommends to students) help students develop theologically informed perspectives on hot topics in their lives. While the leaders of College Christians would like these books to serve as a supplement to students' Bible reading, many of the students use these books in place of Bible reading. These books keep students in touch with the Evangelical community and with traditions in Christian thinking without requiring that they develop the sophisticated interpretive protocols needed to read the Bible like a theologian. While some students read these texts in a conformational manner, the texts also provide students with additional exposure to the range of interpretive repertoires and analytic practices that exist within the Christian community.

In addition to encouraging students to read Christian books, the campus ministers have tried to design protocols for reading the text of the Bible in ways that will make it more approachable and appealing to students. One notable feature of the College Christians Community meetings was the relative absence of traditional print Bibles in the room. In fact, students who come to Tuesday evening's Community meeting may never have the need or opportunity to open a Bible. Those who choose to follow along with the week's featured Bible passage typically use a Bible app on their smartphones, often the "YouVersion," which is the only Bible app licensed to offer *The Message*, a paraphrase of the Bible in contemporary American English. College Christians uses *The Message* on

Tuesday nights. Most students appreciate the use of *The Message* because they believe that the paraphrase makes the language of an otherwise difficult text more "relatable." On Thursday evenings, for the more in-depth discussions engaged during Leadership team gatherings, they use the *NIV Student Bible*, which features an educational apparatus designed to help students apply Bible passages to their daily lives as students. In each of these contexts, the Bible functions less as a theological treatise or moral instruction book than as a framework through which students can develop a better understanding of themselves, their experiences, their relationship to God, and their relationships with their peers.

What the students begin to recognize, however, as they read from these versions, is that there is no single way to interpret the Bible. When Brianna joined the Leadership team, she was exposed, for the first time, to the notion that there are multiple versions of the Bible:

> I just thought there was a single Bible. I had no idea that things like *The Message* and NSRV [sic], NIV,[5] stuff existed. I was at Bible study last night. [Our leader] always has us read from different versions of the Bible, like every person in the group read a particular section. I was looking at this other [version] last night. It had a commentary on the side of it, which I thought was really cool.

Whereas Briana might have previously accepted any interpretation of the Bible as definitive, her discovery of various versions of the Bible represents the first step toward a more complex understanding of how to use divergent versions of the same text to support analysis and interpretation.

The use of Bibles with commentary and educational apparatus is one way that the campus ministers are trying to help students develop a capacity for interpretation. Although he doesn't have a particularly sophisticated rationale for valuing the Bible, Tim nonetheless tries to engage with it on a regular basis, and his Study Bible is key to this sustained engagement. During our interview, Time proudly pulled his Bible from his backpack to show me the red-letter words of Jesus and the interpretive apparatus, which allows him to engage independently with the text. In fact, he explained that although he feels unfamiliar with much of the Bible, he enjoys conversation with the interpretive apparatus in the text:

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[5] Brianna evokes both the New International Version of the Bible (NIV), and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), which she mistakenly calls the NSRV.

My Bible is really nice. It's a study Bible. It's fantastic. It would be a lot harder for me to read the Bible if it was just a plain blank Bible, just reading words. I'd be like, *Oh, these are just some old passages. I don't really know what this is saying.* The Study Bible, it's phenomenal. Maybe I'll interpret it the same way they will, but maybe I won't. It's got certain passages, the number of the verses in blue, and it's got a margin on the side and it will detail all that's going on there, or maybe the bottom of the page will have a reason why this passage in the Bible was written, back story, maps in there. It keeps you more engaged in the reading, if that makes sense.

Embedded in Tim's description of the interpretive apparatus, which he finds "fantastic," is his assertion that "maybe I'll interpret it the same way they will, but maybe I won't." By *they*, Tim refers to the editors of the Bible, the acknowledged experts who are offering him an explanation of how they interpret the sacred text. Tim knows that the editors of his study Bible have oriented the Bible toward his student experience, and as a result, he receives their explanations not as unquestionable truth, but as an invitation to dialogue, to disagree if his experiences or his interpretations happen to differ from theirs. Tim's interaction with the Study Bible shows that he has begun to develop an awareness that biblical interpretation can be shaped by the purposes of many different types of readers. He is learning that the same evidence can be used to support a variety of interpretations, and he is learning how to speak back to respected scholars in ways that correlate with the act of entering an academic conversation. Although Tm did not articulate any connections between his Bible reading and his academic reading, one can imagine that it would be easy to help a student draw connections between the use of an interpretive apparatus and the use of secondary research resources in the classroom.

Just as Tim engages in a type of academic conversation with the editors of his study Bible, so the students in College Christians value discussion with their peers as a learning opportunity. Group discussion is one of the only reading protocols that the students in College Christians consistently identified as shared across both academic and religious discourse communities, and it is this protocol that I believe might be the most visible and available resource for students to draw on in the classroom. As we saw above, many of the students believe that there are "better and worse" ways of interpreting the Bible and many believe that good interpretations are the province of experts. Simultaneously, however, the students demonstrate a willingness to engage in discussion of the Bible, to encounter new ideas and to dialogue with peers. Both Perry and Baxter

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Magolda suggest that as students grow intellectually, they become increasingly open to the perspectives of their peers. As students develop, they acknowledge that engaging with peers does more than merely confirm truths received from a teacher; instead, dialogue becomes a key way of constructing knowledge (Magolda, 1992; Perry, 1998).

Dialogue with peers happens most commonly during Small Group meetings and breakout sessions during Thursday evening Leadership Team gatherings. In these conversations, the students have the opportunity to learn how other people interpret the Bible, thus making them feel more knowledgeable and simultaneously raising their awareness that all texts demand interpretation and offer a multiplicity of interpretations. To assess how the students responded to the varying interpretations that exist even within the group, I asked each student how the College Christians handle disagreements: in general, students rejected my premise that the group experiences disagreements, choosing instead to frame their interactions in a more positive light by replacing disagreement with terms like "interpretation," "perspective," or "discussion." Indeed, members of College Christians recognize that the Bible can be variously and multiply interpreted, even among their peers in the campus ministry.

For example, Layla highlights the importance of hearing different perspectives as a way of developing relationships:

> I think that it's nice to talk about [the Bible] with people and to hear their stories and relate. Everyone has a different perspective on what Bible verses mean, and I think hearing it from one of my friends would be completely different than hearing it from another one. I think that's the interesting part. Not even just to read the Bible. I just think it's interesting to hear what people have to say.

Layla understands that the Bible is an interpreted text—that in fact, each of her friends would interpret the text differently, and she appreciates what others have to say, even if she might not be willing to shift or change her beliefs in response to considering those opinions. Being a part of the College Christians community has helped Layla cultivate an appreciation for dialogue, and although she does not yet view her peers as full co-constructors of knowledge, she nonetheless sees their discussions as a valuable part of creating a collaborative and meaningful learning environment

In contrast, the following excerpt from my conversation with Naomi reveals that differing interpretations are integral to her intellectual development.

Naomi: I think a lot of the time, in terms of disagreeing, is people interpreting the Bible differently and what they read differently. …

Melody: Right. But you perceive it more as different perspectives or different interpretations.

Naomi: Yes. Different interpretations. I guess it is disagreeing.

Melody: You don't have to agree with me!

Naomi: No, but it is! I guess when I hear disagreeing I think more of a negative connotation rather than positive.

Melody: So for you that variety then is a good thing?

Naomi: Yes. For sure!

Melody: How come?

Naomi: I think it all just comes back to me living overseas and just seeing so many variety of things out there and just embracing that rather than pushing it away.

Noami was raised in both Pentecostal and Baptist churches, the types of traditional Evangelical and Fundamentalist churches that many assume foster a literalist view of the Bible. Notice also that a key component of Naomi's life of faith is seeing and embracing variety, "rather than pushing it away." Naomi spent four of her formative educational years in Japan, and as a result, she embraces difference. While she does not want to disagree with those in her community, she thrives on difference: note how she accepts my question only after she has been able to reframe my use of "disagreement" into the more positive terms "difference" and "variety." She also demonstrates through her interaction with my question that she is willing to reevaluate her ideas in light of the perspectives of others.

Both Layla and Naomi demonstrate that the use of discussion can be another literacy protocol that students and composition instructors might draw on in order to emphasize what religious and academic communities have in common. Discussion, whether in the campus ministry or the classroom, has the potential to help students develop both a disposition toward inquiry and a willingness to entertain the ideas of a diverse group of peers. These protocols foster specific skills that can be valuable when writing in any classroom situation, skills such as learning to read a single text in a variety of ways, entering academic conversations, and engaging different perspectives.

In this section I have demonstrated that the student participants in College Christians generally struggle to read the Bible for spiritual growth, and that they believe this struggle is the result of both inadequate tools for approaching a complex text, and an

inability to engage with the Bible at the level of expertise they believe they would need in order to read the Bible well. Although some students choose to disengage from the Bible, I have suggested that far more often students seek to increase their levels of biblical literacy. As they do so, they develop dispositions toward reading and protocols for textual engagement that have the potential to serve as resources in academic reading and writing. I have also demonstrated that by choosing to take up particular literacy practices and protocols offered in College Christians, the students may develop an awareness of the rhetorical dimensions of spiritual reading practices. These dimensions include interpretations that are framed for specific audiences, and approaches to reading that cultivate dispositions and subjectivities that include an openness to dialogue and debate about difficult ideas.

Bible Reading as a Rhetorical Act

While the protocols and dispositions outlined to this point have the potential to serve as resources in the classroom, those possibilities remained tacit among most of the students I talked to, because they had not yet developed the kind of meta-awareness needed to put these resources to work (Beaufort, 2007; Wardle, 2007, 2009). In this section, I turn to a small group of students who not only recognize that Bible reading has rhetorical dimensions, but who characterize Bible reading as an explicitly rhetorical act. These students confirm the hypothesis that meta-awareness can facilitate students' ability to transfer skills from one community to another (Reiff and Bawarshi, 2011; Wardle 2007).

As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, scholars have variously argued that Bible reading is "uncritical" and "conformational" on the one hand, "social," "analytic," and "agentive." These ways of encountering a religious text are often understood as antithetical, even by religious readers. For example, the women in the small group that I observed had a difference of opinion about the devotional book they were reading, a difference of opinion that was rooted in the belief that "critical" reading and devotional reading are entirely different practices. At the suggestion of Lexie, the small group leader, the women in the small group had agreed to read the daily devotional text *Jesus Calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence*. *Jesus Calling* offers 365 daily meditations that

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the author, Sarah Young, composed in the voice of Jesus. Each meditation is one-two paragraphs long and is a meditation based on Young's interpretation of two or three selected passages of Scripture, often drawn from different parts of the Bible. These passages are printed at the end of the meditation, and readers can use them to engage the meditation more deeply. In the regular Bible reading that accompanies her use of *Jesus Calling*, Layla finds that

> everything I'm struggling with is just there. Every time I open up *Jesus Calling* the verses are at the bottom and I see it. I'll sometimes go to the Bible and read the verses. It's just everything, whatever I'm struggling with is there. It's just so comforting, reading it. … seeing it in the Bible, it's reassuring. Even on my phone, the apps are just sometimes so relatable. Like, *Gosh, how did you know I was thinking that*?

Layla's use of free indirect discourse to address God directly is evidence of the fact that she is building a relationship with a personal God, a God whom she believes is directly speaking to her through both her Bible and the devotional text.

In contrast, the voice of *Jesus Calling* evoked in Shelly, a member of the same small group, the response of a critical reader. Shelly wondered aloud to the group if it was appropriate for an author to assume the voice of Jesus as though her interpretation was the definitive reading of these biblical passages. Shelly voiced her questions in this way:

> One thing is the writer is a woman, and she writes in first person, but she is kind of posing as God, saying—she uses the verses that she says we can look up and takes things out of them, and interprets them and writes them from like God's point of view. I don't know if I particularly like that, because to me it seems like she's kind of acting as God, even though that's not what she intended to. But I don't know if I personally like that. I know some people do like that she's talking in the first person, because it helps them feel more connected.

Shelly accepts the fact that her peers generally like the book, which is one of the bestselling devotional texts of the day. But Shelly approaches the text with a hermeneutic of suspicion that can sometimes accompany the act of critical reading.

These disparate reactions to *Jesus Calling* demonstrate that devotional approaches to reading are characterized by different subjectivities and dispositions toward the text; Layla reads (as Heath suggests) for confirmation of her belief in God's love. Shelly reads with a skeptical disposition, characterized by an air of critical distance. Between differing

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contexts, dispositions, and protocols for reading, it is not surprising that many students see little to no possibility for transfer between church-related and academic literacy practices. However, in this section, I would like to suggest that while devotional reading may in fact be different from the types of reading against the grain or reading with critical distance that characterize academic approaches to reading and writing, these approaches need not be mutually exclusive in the literacy practices of a Christian reader.

Consider, for example, Jason's description of how he reads the Bible. He describes reading the Bible as "being with God. You have that time to spend with Him … but trying to use that passage for your day—If there's something that I read that I see I need to work on, trying to work on that, or something that I can apply to, I think, really helps and motivates me and affects how I live out my day." Jason reads the Bible devotionally, with passion, faith in the text, and a deep connection to the work. Yet he also uses the Bible as a springboard for analytic reflection on his own life. Jason's reading of the Bible is simultaneously conformational (reading to support what he already believes) and analytic because he believes that the Bible's purpose is to challenge him to assess his own life in light of what he believes to be true about God.

I would now like to offer two examples of students who are engaging the work of Bible reading with full awareness that it is appropriate to read the Bible in different ways and for different purposes. Using stories from Nathanial and Theresa's experiences, I demonstrate that when students do in fact have a meta-awareness of different purposes and protocols for reading, they are better able to use these differing approaches to reading to support their development as members of multiple communities, including the academic and the religious.

As I noted in Chapter One, some scholars have expressed concern that changing the way a student reads and/or talks about the Bible will necessarily change the nature of the student's faith. I use Nathanial's experience with academic approaches to Bible reading to demonstrate that while new approaches to reading the Bible may shift a student's faith, they need not destroy or weaken that faith. Rather, through the work of cultivating meta-awareness about different ways of reading students can learn to appropriately compartmentalize their reading practices in ways that facilitate participation in both academic and religious communities. In Nathanial's case, he carries

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knowledge from the classroom back into the campus ministry, and as he navigates this knowledge transfer, he learns the value of compartmentalizing different ways of reading (a pattern that I will discuss more fully in Chapter Four).

Nathanial, a second year economics and Spanish major, grew up in a Methodist household. When I met him, he was just beginning to learn more about how to read the Bible. He had recently joined the Leadership team and had begun working his way through a Bible literacy workbook with Greg. "I just try to read a chapter each day, or, each week," he told me. "And, it's pretty good. I don't know. It's pretty cool. It just kind of asks you questions throughout the whole thing, and it definitely picks apart the Scriptures a lot, so …" In his earnestness to learn more about how to read the Bible, Nathanial also enrolled in an academic course called "Jesus and the Gospels." Taking the course seemed to offer him a clear opportunity to incorporate his religious faith into the classroom. However, Nathanial's encounter with the Incarnation narrative in his course created complexity in his understanding of what it means to read the Bible, and Nathanial carried that complexity with him back into the campus ministry. Far more than the act of uni-directional transfer of his Christian faith into the classroom that he anticipated, the movement of literacy practices between and among the classroom and the campus ministry helped Nathanial realize that if he approaches Bible reading as a rhetorical act, informed by a particular purpose and appealing to a particular audience, he would be better able to maintain his faith in the face of an historical challenge to the accuracy of the Incarnation narrative.

When I asked Nathanial to reflect on the relationship between reading the Gospels for class and reading the Bible for spiritual development, he began by highlighting the fact that the course asked him to take an historical, rather than a devotional approach to reading the Bible. This was a learning moment for Nathanial: "You're definitely just taking word for word what they're saying and kind of trying to put that into an event definitely, [rather than a] kind of a message that you read for like a faith background. You know, you're trying to get something out of it, where this is definitely just trying to decipher something." Nathanial precisely articulates the difference between academic and devotional approaches to reading the Bible: the academic approach asks him to consider facts, whereas the reading he does in College Christians calls on him to "try to decipher

something," to look for "kind of a message." Nathanial highlighted the fact that the professor of the class makes explicit for students the fact that the course privileges a particular type of reading that may differ from (but should not replace) the reading that students undertake in a religious context. Reading the Bible across these two different contexts helped Nathanial develop an awareness of the inseparability of rhetoric and hermeneutics that I outlined in an earlier part of this chapter. Nathanial learned to articulate the different purposes for which Bible reading occurs, and thus when he carried these approaches back into the campus ministry, he was able to think analytically about different approaches to Bible reading.

Nathanial is naturally inclined to enjoy historical analysis of the Bible. He told me that he values the way that Tuesday evening Community meetings not only provide him with some historical context but also use that context to help him reflect on his own experiences. In response, I asked Nathanial to reflect on how his newfound historical knowledge of the Bible affected the way he had listened to a recent Community meeting talk that focused on the Christmas story. Nathanial replied:

> They [the campus ministers] take definitely a faith-based perspective. And even sometimes, like some of the stuff they say—we learned something that it's not historically accurate. And that's definitely been different through the semester like, *Oh. Well, that probably didn't happen.* So, that's definitely been weird, sitting there, like, oh, well, it's kind of written for the message. It's trying to teach something. They definitely told us in the class that they used six stories to kind of tell messages, because it's easier to remember, and that's kind of why a lot of the Bible is created, because the story is kind of the message. … I mean, the whole Christmas thing probably didn't occur. You grow up with this whole—learning about Jesus and the whole Christmas thing, and that was kind of weird.

Nathanial recognizes that the approach the campus ministry takes to reading and interpreting the Bible is more similar to his own devotional practice than it is to the approach taken in his academic course. And yet the interpretive perspectives of his course are now present in his participation with the campus ministry. He recognizes details of his campus ministers' sermons as serving a devotional, rather than an historical function. He can now see a particular Bible story as a part of an historic literary tradition.

In Nathanial's mind, historic and literary practices are simultaneously disconnected from his "faith-based perspective" and yet also constantly resonating with

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each other as he moves among the classroom and the campus ministry. His experience encountering the same text in two different contexts deepens Nathanial's burgeoning understanding of literary and historical genre, and of the reading protocols that support engagement with those genres. Nathanial's repeated use of the word "weird" illustrates that he is not yet entirely comfortable with the need to read the Bible both academically and devotionally. These varying approaches to reading the Bible have indeed shifted and unsettled Nathanial's understanding of the historicity of the Incarnation.

Despite this discomfort, however, Nathanial chose to trust the process: "I kind of understood, it was probably—I think it helps you grow in your faith to know the history behind it too. It kind of allowed me to figure out stuff by myself and make my own views and stuff. And not just hearing something from someone else and kind of learning what it's supposed to say, but taking it into my own hands." In the moment that I interviewed him, only a few weeks after learning that the Virgin Birth might be a literary device, rather than an historical reality, Nathanial makes hesitant claims to understanding: "I *kind of* understood," and "it *kind of* allowed me to figure out stuff." Because he has chosen to learn about the Bible in both the academic and religious domains of his life, Nathanial recognizes that he is responsible for thinking about the relationship between these seemingly disparate ideas. This realization does result in intellectual and developmental growing pains, as he begins to develop self-authorized beliefs about the value of biblical historicity. As he reads the Bible across multiple contexts, Nathanial is learning a meta-language to describe the fact that a person can read the Bible at different times, for different purposes; in this instance, learning transfer is a process by which he learns that academic knowledge making practices may differ from and disrupt his devotional understanding of God without causing him to lose his faith.

Like Nathanial, Theresa also exemplifies the ways that a burgeoning awareness of genre and access to a meta-language for talking about the protocols that support various genres can help to sustain a student's faith as they move across contexts. In the introduction to this study, I recounted Theresa's story of reading the Book of Job, differently from her professor. She relayed an experience in which she learned that individuals approach the Bible with varying motivations and different interpretive

protocols that support those motivations. Theresa is a passionate devotional reader of the Bible. During our first interview, Theresa told me:

> I think that every single time I hear the Word of God or I think it's important, not only does it remind me about my faith, but I feel that it is the Living Word and I learn about—every single time I read, I learn more about God and I feel like there's just— … I feel like the Holy Spirit is there. And I feel like that's something that ends up staying in my mind and it's like an anchor. It anchors me back in to what know is important and reminds me—I always want to be learning and growing and I feel like every single time I read the Bible I do, and I still know that I feel very young in my faith. I said I feel very ignorant and you know there's a lot to be learned and it's going to be a lifelong journey in reading the Bible.

Like Layla and Jason, Theresa is passionate about the Bible's ability to connect her to God. Each time she reads the Bible, it reaffirms the Bible's ability to challenge her, to push her spiritually ("every single time I read, I learn more about God") and yet keep her safely within the bounds of Christian community ("it anchors me back in").

What is important here is that Theresa made this statement months after she had received her professor's comments on her paper about Job. Because Theresa and her professor read the Book of Job differently, Theresa learned more than she had expected to learn about the differences between academic and devotional approaches to reading the Bible. She learned that there is a difference between these approaches, and just as Nathanial felt a degree of discomfort with these approaches, so did Theresa: at the time, she wished that she could "go back and reread Job" in light of what she had just learned. And yet the process of interacting with her professor about her paper also taught her that it is possible to read with "emotion, and experience, and faith," while also "thinking a lot more about the [biblical authors]—what they mean … about translations, about all these technicalities." I talked to Theresa several months after her experiences with learning different approaches to reading the Bible, and she had developed a degree of comfort with these various approaches to reading.

Like Nathanial, Theresa argued that the experience of learning to read the Bible in these various ways was good for her faith. As she develops a meta-awareness of various dispositions toward reading and protocols for textual engagement, Theresa has learned that reading occurs for varying purposes and amongst different communities/audiences. In both Theresa and Nathanial's cases transfer of reading practices from one community to another does more than simply indicate what they are learning in multiple

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communities. Rather, the process of engaging in transfer helps the students develop a more rigorous understanding of the relationships between their academic and religious communities. The process of transfer helps the students develop a meta-awareness by which they learn to productively navigate the expectations for Bible reading in both the classroom and the campus ministry.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that a single campus ministry can both contain and facilitate many approaches to reading for spiritual growth. I have shown that while not all of these practices align with academic approaches to reading, some protocols that foster reading for spiritual growth can also create dispositions that might serve students well in their academic reading and writing practices. In the first part of the chapter, I made an argument that although the students may not always see the possibility for reading-related transfer between communities, they nonetheless exhibit dispositions (such as openness, curiosity, frustration, and personal motivation) and protocols for textual engagement (such as use of interpretive apparatus, secondary sources, and group discussion) that could serve them well in the classroom.

Key to students' ability to use these protocols and dispositions as resources in their academic literacy learning is the recognition that interpretation of the Bible is a rhetorical act. In each of the examples I offered in this chapter, students are using language that reveals a burgeoning awareness of the fact that communities interpret the Bible in various ways depending on their purposes, the needs of the audience addressed, and the expectations they impose upon the audience invoked. Although most of the students I interviewed do not yet have a meta-language to talk about the rhetorical dimensions of reading for spiritual growth, they have begun to recognize that they often read the Bible in ways that vary depending on purpose, audience, and context of their encounter with Scripture. These experiences provide a valuable foundation that instructors might be able to use to help students develop the meta-awareness needed to facilitate agentive transfer or compartmentalization of literacy practices.

In the final section of the chapter, I used Nathanial and Theresa's stories to illuminate the possibilities that arise as students develop a meta-awareness of, and metalanguage for describing, different genres and the protocols that support analytic engagement with those genres. Because they understand the rhetorical nature of biblical interpretation, both Nathanial and Theresa were able to navigate the expectations for Bible reading in both the classroom and the campus ministry. Although learning to read the Bible in multiple ways entailed some discomfort and some negotiation, both Nathanial and Theresa were able to engage Bible reading in new and challenging ways without feeling that they were required to sacrifice their faith. In fact, both argued that the work of reading the Bible in both the classroom and the campus ministry helped them develop a more complex, rigorous approach to their reading for spiritual growth. As they develop and implement their understanding of the rhetorical dimensions of reading for spiritual growth, these students demonstrate that the process of transfer is more than mere evidence that students are learning in multiple communities. Reading across communities is also an opportunity for students to position themselves within a variety of discourse communities, some of which may have differing expectations for their personal, intellectual, and academic development. In the next two chapters I turn to the ways that students use writing-related transfer of church-related and academic literacy practices to situate themselves within academic and spiritual communities.

CHAPTER 4
"THAT'S NOT WHAT THE PAPER IS ASKING YOU": THE ABSENCE
OF RELIGION IN CHRISTIAN STUDENTS' WRITING

In the last chapter, I demonstrated that the participants in College Christians exhibit wide variation in their approaches to reading and writing. I demonstrated that some students approach reading for spiritual growth in ways that differ from academic protocols for reading, while others engage critically and analytically with the texts they read for spiritual growth. Still others use varying strategies, depending on the circumstances in which they are encountering a text that they associate with the religious domain of their lives. I argued that some of these approaches have the potential to serve as resources when students undertake the work of academic writing. This argument raises the question of whether and how students' approaches to reading for spiritual growth manifest in their academic writing. In this chapter, I begin the work of answering that question by addressing the third research question driving this study, namely: *In what ways, if any, do the literacy practices with which students engage in various domains of their lives overlap, influence, create tension with, or exist in isolation from each other?* Taken together, Chapters Four and Five offer a two-chapter arc in which I argue that transfer of literacy practices and discourses among students' academic and religious communities must be understood as more than mere evidence of student learning. Rather, the College Christians use opportunities to transfer as opportunities to learn more about the values, priorities, and relationships among religious and academic communities.

Chapter Five will explore overlaps and influences among these communities, but here, in Chapter Four, I discuss the ways in which students compartmentalize the literacy practices and discourses that they encounter in each of these domains. Such compartmentalization may be the result of perceived tensions, but as I will show, this compartmentalization may also be a byproduct of the ways that students have learned to articulate distinctions between religious and academic domains. In this chapter, I use the

College Christians' talk about the disjunctions between academic and religious communities to offer a reconceptualization of the concept of zero transfer. I argue that what often appears to be zero transfer may in fact be students' agentive compartmentalization of knowledge and skills, a compartmentalization that reveals students' awareness of the values of the communities in which they participate.

As I explained earlier, at the end of each first round interview, I asked students to respond with a "yes" or a "no" to the following three statements:

1. *Since coming to college, I have written a paper that I believe had little or nothing to do with my religious faith.*

2. *Since coming to college, I have written a paper in which I directly discuss my religious faith or explicitly talk about being a Christian.*

3. *Since coming to college, I have written a paper that made me think about my religious faith, or in which I drew on religious beliefs and principles, but in which I did not directly discuss the fact that I am a Christian.*

These statements are designed to elicit talk about the writing-related choices that students make, and in so doing, to illuminate students' experiences of what Aoki and Yancey refer to as the lived curriculum of classrooms and disciplines (Aoki, 1993, 2004; Yancey, 2004, 2012). In the case of the first statement, students' talk about moments when they feel they ought to compartmentalize reveals their perceptions about, and experiences of, moving among the epistemologies, protocols, and values of a field.

In her recent article "'Where the Wild Things Are': Christian Students in the Figured Worlds of Composition Research," Elizabeth Vander Lei argues that composition scholarship has often positioned Christian students in the role of "monster." According to Vander Lei, monsters embody "the instability of culturally negotiated understandings of gender, race, heredity, hierarchy, emotion, science, and sexuality. In composition, religious students do some of this monstrous work" (Vander Lei, 2014c). Indeed, questions of gender, sexuality, and science are a few of the publicly debated topics around which academic and religious communities are most likely to find themselves at odds, and for this reason, when Christian students write about these topics, they may mark themselves as Christian, regardless of whether or not they intend to do so. Because the writing of religiously engaged students can function as a barometer of cultural change, it is unsurprising that scholars have been attentive to the successes and

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challenges religiously engaged students either encounter, or create, in classrooms, particularly when the issues above are the topics of inquiry and discussion. When these students transfer Christian discourses into their academic writing, they reveal ongoing cultural negotiations between academic and religious communities.

It is important to note that public discussion of contentious cultural and political issues is likely to illuminate these "monstrous" students precisely because these topics are sites of debate (and often tension) amongst multiple communities seeking to coexist in a pluralistic society. As I have demonstrated throughout this stud, many Christian students are seeking to navigate these communities, and they may mark themselves as Christian—and therefore become a subject of discussion in the field—when they express values that run counter to the norms of a broader secular or academic culture, or when their academic work makes visible the challenges that some students face in attempting to reconcile (or "graft together") those cultural norms with their Christian beliefs and moral stances (Ringer, 2013; Vander Lei, 2014c). Vander Lei also briefly draws attention to the fact that a smaller body of literature "showcases students whose writing demonstrates an ability to be simultaneously, seamlessly religious and academic" (2014c, p. 79). These students have received far less scholarly attention, but as I will demonstrate in Chapter Five, their work has a great deal to teach the field about how students are taking advantage of both instabilities and overlaps in the discourses of the many reading cultures in which they participate.

In this chapter, however, I would like to turn to a third group of students, a group that is rarely seen because they neither "embody tensions" nor do they find ways of seamlessly integrating academic and religious discourses. Rather, the students I call attention to here are those who compartmentalize the religious and academic domains of their lives. These are students who may have commitments to or investments in religion and spirituality, and who may participate in religious life, but who fit the category of what Smith calls "selective adherents." As Smith points out, "selective adherents" comprise the largest category of emerging adults. He also notes that these students are often able to compartmentalize religious and academic domains more easily than those students who are strong "committed traditionalists." Logically then, a significant portion of the Christian students who engage with academic writing are likely to have operated

within the frameworks of zero transfer and compartmentalization that I discuss here. Rather than embodying tensions and instabilities, this group of religiously engaged Christian college students is more likely to produce academic work that they believe has little or nothing to do with their Christian faith, or in which they agentively compartmentalize their Christian faith in order to accommodate the expectations of academic culture.

In this chapter, I will take up the writing that students discussed in response to the first writing and faith statement: "Since coming to college, I have written a paper that I believe had little or nothing to do with my religious faith." I will include in my discussion a few responses to the other statements that fit best with the findings of this chapter. The first writing and faith statement presumes that some students may find that their academic writing is distinct or isolated from their religious faith. Of the 30 students interviewed, 12 responded "yes" to the first statement and "no" to statements two and three, indicating that all of their written academic work is fully compartmentalized from the religious domain of their lives. 29 of the 30 students indicated that they occasionally write papers that have little or nothing to do with their religious perspectives. Consistent with previous research, these responses suggest while some students do perceive their faith as fully compartmentalized from their academic work, a majority of students distinguish between academic writing that is appropriate for inclusion of religious discourses, and writing that is not appropriate for the transfer of religious discourses (Thomson, 2009).

Much of the student writing that I discuss here can be interpreted as evidence of "zero transfer," that is, the condition in which "one type of learning has no noticeable influence on other types of learning" (Schunk 2004). While I recognize the legitimacy of classifying the writing discussed in this chapter as writing that fails to engage in *transfer*, I contend that it need not represent a failure of *learning*, and for this reason, I use this chapter as an opportunity to reconceptualize the notion of "zero transfer." Rebecca Nowacek argues that

> students aren't able to see possible connections for a variety of reasons that the concepts "negative transfer" and "zero transfer" disguise. For instance, if a student perceives, however dimly, a conflict between the expectations of two contexts, one reasonable response is to abandon that line of connection-making. Such a response should be characterized as frustrated transfer rather than zero transfer.

Although I agree with Nowacek's assertion that the terms "negative transfer" and "zero transfer" obscure the reality of students' experiences as writers, my goal in this chapter is to show that the act of abandoning, or choosing to forego, a "line of connection-making" may in fact be constructed as an agentive choice. Rather than a frustrated attempt at transfer, such compartmentalization may represent a student's successful interpretation of the norms and expectations of a given discourse community. Christiane Donahue argues that simply because scholars and instructors cannot identify transfer in a student's paper does not mean that the student did not acquire knowledge or skills that can be utilized in other contexts. In fact, she points out that "most college teachers would prefer that some strategies and forms of research or writing not transfer to college tasks or across college contexts. Studies of students working cross-culturally have highlighted some kinds of transfer that do not serve students well" (2012, p. 156). In the cases Donahue points to here, compartmentalization might be a sign of rhetorical awareness rather than a frustrated act of transfer or a failure to see connections between learning domains.

This chapter acknowledges that students' compartmentalization occurs with varying levels of rhetorical awareness. Students do sometimes enact what scholars typically identify as zero transfer, that is, a failure to perceive connections that both instructors and church leaders might argue are valuable for the students' ethical and intellectual growth. However, I also show that sometimes the appearance of so-called zero transfer is actually evidence of rhetorically aware compartmentalization that aligns with instructors' expectations that some church-related literacy practices, discourses, or protocols ought not transfer into the classroom. In the case students who practice zero transfer and/or rhetorically aware compartmentalization, Jessica's words, included in the title of the chapter, ring true: Christian faith is "not what the paper is asking [students]" to discuss.

Finally, I highlight a third group of students who may be using compartmentalization to help them navigate the psychological, emotional, and intellectual challenges of moving amongst discourse communities that function under the "oppositional model" (see Figure 1.5). While this act of compartmentalization may pose challenges to the goals of both faculty and religious leaders alike, I argue that in each of the last two scenarios, compartmentalization—like the integration we will explore in the

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next chapter—can be a means of helping students position themselves among multiple discourse communities.

The Problem of Intentionality

Before I turn to a discussion of zero transfer and compartmentalization, however, it is important one of the challenges inherent in asking students to talk about the choices that they make as writers: namely, the problem of intentionality and metacognition. Although some students can articulate meta-awareness of the choices they make while writing, far more often students make tacit decisions, which are responsive to an instinctual sense of what the paper, or the instructor, may be asking of them. When Christian college students appear in composition scholarship, it is typically because teachers, scholars (and occasionally students themselves) are concerned about the intentional inclusion of Christian discourses in the academic classroom. In fact, when I asked students to respond to the three statements listed above—each of which represents a possible stance that students can take toward the integration or compartmentalization of faith and writing—I assumed that students would have the meta-awareness needed to articulate their choices. I also assumed that they would have made conscious decisions about when and how to transfer literacy practices and discourses among their religious and academic discourse communities.

As I suggested in Chapter Two, however, the participants in my study challenged me to rethink my own assumptions about the degree of intentionality that may characterize students' integration or compartmentalization of religious and academic discourses. For example, at the end of our second interview, as I finished talking with David about his writing, he made a point that subtly, but irrevocably, shifted my understanding of my own research project. I asked David if he had any additional thoughts about the conversations we'd had during either the first or the second interview. "I don't know," he replied:

> At some points, I have a difficult time voicing the consciousness of the decisions that I put into my writing, or why I read things. A lot of the times, it just kind of happens and then obviously it'll make an impact, but I don't think—it's difficult to draw the line of intention, action, resolution kind of thing with a lot of this.

David—a senior organizational studies major—pointed out to me that the statements I had designed in order to learn more about how students think about the relationship between writing and Christian faith all presumed a degree of intentionality that might not be applicable to all of the students in my study. David's insight challenged me to acknowledge that many of the students who participated in my study might find it difficult to "draw the line of intention, action, resolution," and in so doing, he helped me better understand why many of the students I interviewed struggled to articulate the choices they'd made when compartmentalizing or integrating their faith with their writing.

Such distinctions were particularly difficult for students who argued that all of their work is motivated by their personal spiritualty; these are the students who, like Isabelle in Thomson-Bunn's study, "can't *not* talk about" their faith (2009, p. 181). For example, David argues that because his faith is so intrinsic to his sense of self, it is impossible for him to disentangle the academic from the spiritual: "I think it's been a part of who I am for so long that that's just kind of naturally how I think about the world. I think it's one of those things also that's so broad scoping that you're able to easily translate it, however direct or indirect, to anything that you're working at." For David, religious faith can apply to any topic, and for this reason, should be understood as permeating all of his writing, regardless of whether or not he has intentionally chosen to include it. Similarly Ava, a recent convert to Christianity, told me that she had never written about religion or spirituality prior to her conversion. But "my faith is my life now," she told me, "so [the next paper] would be based on faith, I guess."

Although David was the only student in the study to answer "no" to question number one (implying that all of his writing is related to his Christianity), he was not the only student to make an argument for this type of imbrication between academic and religious perspectives. John, a senior biopsychology student, offered very different responses to the writing and faith statements but articulated an argument much like David's. Because he had never intentionally thought about his faith in relation to his academic writing, John argued that all of his writing has little or nothing to do with his faith. Despite this assertion, however, when asked to elaborate on his perspective, he asserted that

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I'm not two different people, so I'm sure some of my ideas and my persona and all of that are influenced by my religion and standpoint and my thoughts. I think that my opinions on different topics and stuff like that are probably somewhat influenced by [my religion and faith, but] I don't think that I have ever written a paper in college where I have directly thought about its implications with my religion.

In completing the writing and faith statements, John took my assumptions of intentionality at face value, but upon further discussion, even he disrupted the distinctions that I had created.

Students like John, students who articulate positions that seem self-contradictory, illustrate the ways that external forces shape students self-positioning. As Roz Ivanic argues, there is an inherent "multiplicity in the available discoursal resources for self-representation" (1998, p. 281). For example, Elle—who initially argued that she had written papers that had little or nothing to do with her academic faith—concluded her reflection on the writing and faith statements by arguing that "everything I do almost is based on who I am, but who I am … is Christian and I think … I think everything I think and do is based on that, even if it's not specifically said." When asked to articulate how she positions her writing among the various discourse communities in which she participates, Elle argued that all of her writing is rooted in her Christianity, but her initial response to the first writing and faith statement was to suggest that some of her writing has little or nothing to do with her Christianity. The fact that Elle changed her response shows how challenging it can be to distinguish between instinctual and intentional choices. Prior to our interview, Elle had never been asked to articulate her stance on these issues; as she proceeded through the statements, they opened up new avenues for self-positioning, and Elle adjusted her position accordingly with each new possibility.

Similarly, Jessica reflected on the ways that increasing attention to her faith over time might have a potential impact on her writing.

Yeah, there are times that I don't think about the relation, but then again, I guess that's all unconscious kinds of things that you don't know you're doing. Let's say I never got involved in College Christians and I just kept going with whatever I was doing. Would this paper that I just wrote have been different? [Maybe] with that psych paper I wrote, and definitely with my personal statement, but this lab report? Who knows? I really don't. I do definitely think religion will always be

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the way I think. It definitely has changed the way I view and think all the time. When does [religion] start and when does it end?

Jessica cites two papers that evoked reflection on her Christian beliefs: a psychology paper that asked her to identify her beliefs about the relationship between material and metaphysical realities and a personal statement that asked her to reflect on her professional motivations.[1] She suggests that if her own positionality with regard to her participation in College Christians were to change, these genres might exhibit different textual features or content. The genre of the lab report, however, might not allow her to position herself differently. She acknowledges, like David, John, and Elle, that faith is an intellectual framework that informs all she does, but she suggests that her faith perspectives might not appear visibly in a genre such as a lab report. Indeed, the genre itself might influence the degree to which she is able even to sense that integration of religious belief is a possibility.

David, Ava, John, Elle, and Jessica all claim religious faith as a significant component of their primary intellectual frameworks, and each suggests that because faith serves this role, it is likely to inform their writing(Goodburn, 1998). The influence of faith may be present, they suggest, even if they are not intentionally seeking to integrate their faith, and even if their faith perspectives are not visible to their readers. Conversely, as Nowacek suggests with the metaphor of transfer as "selling" (2011), attemps to transfer intentionally may fail to reach their intended audience and go unrecognized. Religiously engaged students like these attempt to position themselves in their academic writing, all the while recognizing that classrooms, communities, and genres are simultaneously positioning them. The truth of their observations about the difficulty of developing meta-awareness suggests that student writing which evidences the integration or compartmentalization of religious faith is the result not simply of student intention, but of a complex matrix of cognitive, social, and material factors. For this reason, analysts need to approach the text of a student's writing with caution, recognizing that the integration or compartmentalization of a students' religious faith is not always a deliberate choice. Instructors should be cautious when using written texts as the basis on which to build an understanding of a student's personal identity. Throughout the

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[1] I discuss Jessica's psychology paper more fully in the next chapter.

remainder of this study, I will highlight moments when these questions of intentionality are significant to the ways that students reveal or conceal their religious participation and religious identity in the classroom.

Articulated and Unarticulated Religious Discourses

When students talked about writing that has little or no relation to their religious faith, it became clear that there were broad, but not definitive, patterns in the ways that students determine which religious discourses are related to, and which are segregated from, their academic work. In this section, I offer a framework and description for understanding the nature of those patterns. In *Toward a Civil Discourse: Rhetoric and Fundamentalism,* Sharon Crowley seeks to understand why some ideas persist beyond the realm of consciousness; she argues that ideas gain force in part because they are consistently "articulated" (that is, expressed in relation to) other ideas that are circulating within a particular discourse community or set of discourses. Crowley defines articulations as "the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions" (2005, p. 60). For example, the religious position opposing abortion has been articulated so vocally by Evangelical leaders that for many, Evangelicalism in the United States has become synonymous with the anti-abortion movement.

Crowley's notion of "articulated discourses is useful in the context of this study because it suggests that students are likely to perceive the relationship between church-related and academic domains in response to the multiple and various ways in which their Christian faith has been articulated. In other words, some topics, values, and literacy protocols are far more likely than others to create and/or result from intuitive linkages between the religious and academic domains. Crowley uses this theory of articulation to explain how ideas become imbricated in the minds of adherents to a particular ideology or religious tradition. However, as she also rightly points out, "rearticulation" and "disarticulation" are simultaneously common and culturally constructed (2005, p. 61). That is, a culture's commonplace beliefs may shift over time and be replaced by alternate commonplace perspectives. For example, as I demonstrated in Chapter One, the belief—represented by the embedded model—that all knowledge exists within a religious domain

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has been replaced by alternate models of the relationship between academic and religious knowledge that recognize both shared and differing discourses. In the context of this study, the theory of articulation suggests that students' religious beliefs never function within an isolated discursive system: that is, students' (often tacit) sense of which "religious" discourses are appropriate for inclusion in academic writing are always constructed in relation to their participation in both their academic and church-related discourse communities. As we saw in Chapter Three, students recognize the appropriateness of particular discourses not simply as they move among disparate discourse communities, but *because* they move among these disparate discourse communities.

The students in this study articulated a fairly consistent set of perceptions and expectations regarding the church-related or "religious" discourses that were most appropriate within the classroom. The strongest association that students have with "religious" discourses was explicit discussion of church and church-related activities, divinity, and the enactment of religious traditions in culture. For example, when asked if they had discussed their faith in their academic writing, some students mentioned having the opportunity to discuss God and Satan (Kendall), historical accounts of the appearance of Jesus (Irene), Greek Orthodox Christianity (Layla), Catholicism in Mexican culture (Patrick), and mission trips (multiple students). A second major category of articulation between the academic and religious domains of students' lives related to political and moral topics, particularly those hot-button issues (such as those Vander Lei noted above) that have long divided the Religious Right from political progressives. For example, students readily saw connections between academic and religious domains when asked to talk about evolution (Brian, John, and Brianna), abortion (Leland), consumerism (Ava), and marriage equality (multiple students, whose writing I will discuss further in chapter five).

However, as Vander Lei suggests in her evocation of the monstrous, the writing of Christian college students reveals the culturally "negotiated" standpoints of various communities, and as we will see throughout the remainder of this study, religious students' changing political viewpoints suggest the range of political viewpoints that discourses that may (or may not) be articulated within the Christian faith. For example,

both Shelly and Jimmy were among the students who claimed that they had never written about, or even reflected on their faith since coming to college, despite the fact that both had been offered opportunities to write about environmental ethics. Jimmy, a second year engineering major reported: "The only paper I have officially had to write so far was—I was taking a history of the 1960s class and I talked about *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson. That was pretty much about protecting the environment, and I didn't really think about my faith at all while I was doing it."

Similarly, Shelly, a sophomore environmental ethics major reflected on the absence of faith in her academic writing:

> I feel like a lot of the things that I write don't have anything to do with my religious faith, especially for the one class that we write papers for: it's environmental justice class. A lot of the—we've written two papers so far, and we have another one due coming up. And it's just basically just talking about facts and things that happened in the past. I feel like it doesn't really relate to religion at all.

Despite the fact that environmental justice has been a key concern of many progressive Evangelicals and Mainline Protestants for many years—and despite the fact that some conservative Evangelicals express skepticism about environmental justice—these students have never encountered questions about environmental justice within the spaces that they associate with the religious domains of their lives. For this reasons, they do not experience this topic as an invitation to think and/or talk about their religious faith. Certainly many Christians, both politically conservative and politically progressive, might be disappointed to learn that conversations and ideas circulating within popular Evangelical and Mainline Protestant media have not trickled down to these students. But Jimmy and Shelly's perceptions suggest that instantiated articulations of both religious and academic ways of knowing may limit students' ability to perceive connections between these domains. Because they have learned to articulate their religious beliefs largely in terms of social and interpersonal relationships, they are not immediately inclined to make connections between their faith and the topics of these papers. Moreover, because environmental justice is not one of the issues that is typically presented as a public negotiation related to religion (in contrast to issues of "gender, race, heredity, hierarchy, emotion, science, and sexuality" noted above), connections between Christian faith and environmental ethics are not readily apparent to these two students.

The third articulation of the relationship between church-related and academic traditions was less concrete, but no less prominent, than the two discussed above. Indeed, foundational to students belief that some topics of inquiry can be categorized as "religious" and others as "academic" is the notion that academic and religious domains are rooted in fundamentally different ways of knowing: fact, and opinion, respectively. This deeply ingrained perception arises from longstanding public discourses that distinguish between fact and opinion as irreconcilable ways of making sense of experience. In the first chapter, I briefly noted that during the late 19th and early 20th century, universities experienced a shift from an educational model that sought to balance moral and intellectual education to a model that promoted the realm of fact—empirical knowledge and disciplinary specialization—as distinct from the realm of opinion— knowledge rooted in morality and value judgment (Reuben, 1996). Turner and Roberts argue that this shift was instantiated by curricular changes that became an integral part of the university system in the United States:

> As higher education increasingly became identified with expanding the boundaries of verifiable knowledge, such knowledge became valorized in classrooms, seminar rooms, laboratories, and academic discourse. Truth claims based on alternative epistemologies—tradition, divine inspiration, and subjective forms of religious experience—increasingly lost credibility within the academy. (2000, p. 70)

The students in this study articulate scholarship as "objective," "fact-based," "research-oriented," and public, while they associate religion with "emotion," "opinion," "personal perspectives," and self-disclosure. Their associations are consistent with both this historical shifts discussed above and with College Christians' emphasis on relational ministry. Notably, for the majority of the students in my study, religion is only rarely articulated in relationship to academic disciplines or academic knowledge-making protocols.

Not surprisingly, within the College Christians setting, it was common for students to articulate connections between their spiritual/religious activities and the extracurricular activities they engage alongside peers. It was far less common to hear them discuss academic ideas in relation to what they were learning in a Community meeting or Leadership Team gathering. As I noted earlier, because the learning environment of College Christians is so focused on relationship building, the only way

that many students saw classroom learning experiences intersecting with the campus ministry was in the shared use of group discussion. In contrast, it was common to see students bringing their extracurricular experiences into the literacy practices they engaged in College Christians: students regularly used the College Christians Facebook page to advertise upcoming events in other organizations, and skits on Tuesday evening regularly referenced important social events happening on campus, such as sporting events or upcoming concerts. Because the students have a faith that is articulated as social and oriented toward relationship building, many students were far more likely to identify relationships among extracurricular organizations than they were to see transfer occurring between the campus ministry and the classroom. In the remaining sections of this chapter I will demonstrate how this broad compartmentalization manifests in students' academic writing.

Reconceptualizing Zero Transfer

Indications of Zero Transfer

In this section, I set the stage for reconceptualizing zero transfer by outlining the linguistic and rhetorical patterns that indicate a condition of zero transfer. I show that for some students, the presumption that academic and religious ways of knowing are distinct is so deeply ingrained that they do not perceive connections between these two knowledge-making domains. I will distinguish zero transfer from rhetorically aware compartmentalization by showing that zero transfer is a compartmentalization born out of experiences in both academic and religious communities that have not fostered articulations of the relationship between religious and empirical ways of knowing.

Carlos, a third-year aerospace engineering major who asserted that he had never integrated his faith with his academic writing, most clearly articulated the condition of zero transfer when he laughed at the first writing and faith statement:

> Carlos: Ha ha! Yes, I have written papers that have little or nothing to do with my faith. Have you found someone that said no to the first one?
> Melody: Not yet.
> Carlos: Okay. I want to meet that person. I was like, "What did you do to get [through] college without doing that?"

When I interviewed Carlos, I had not yet interviewed David, and I had begun to empathize with Carlos's belief that it is impossible for a religiously engaged student to

get through college without compartmentalizing religious and academic ways of knowing. What is most notable in Carlos's response is the ease with which he assumes that at some point, every Christian student will encounter a moment that demands compartmentalization.

The students whose writing seems to exemplify a state of "zero transfer" all articulated a similar discursive assumption that there is no intrinsic relationship between academic and religious ways of knowing. Although they would not contend that the end goals of religious and academic pursuits are incommensurate, they do operate from an understanding of the relationship between religious and academic discourses that most closely resembles the oppositional model (cf. Figure 1.5). When I asked Layla why she did not write about her faith in her academic papers, she responded: "I've just never really been asked. I know I don't need to be asked, but I've never really thought to write about my religion. I don't know. That's a good point though." When she reflects on her initial reaction to my question, Layla recognizes that she does not need to be prompted to talk about her faith; however, it is clear that without that prompting, Layla is unlikely to articulate her religious faith as a viable construct for integration into the classroom, whether as a topic of discussion or as a theoretical grounding for her beliefs. Layla's "zero transfer" can thus be understood as the by-product of the challenges associated with what Haskell (2000) calls "far transfer": the classroom simply feels too different and distant from the spaces in which Layla believes religion is an appropriate topic to warrant any potential transfer of content or ways of knowing.

I suggested earlier that Christian students may position the relationship between academic and religious ways of knowing in multiple ways—sometimes simultaneously—depending on the cognitive, social, and material forces at work in a particular academic assignment. One of the indicators of Carlos's "pure" compartmentalization is his expression of wonder at the prospect that religious and academic ways of knowing might coexist. "It's actually interesting," he mused during the interview, "because it makes me wonder what I'd write about or like what I would approach wise?" Carlos went on to speculate about what it might mean to engage religious and academic ways of knowing in a way that he had never before imagined.

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Similarly, Chad—a first year information science major who attended a public high school—expressed fascination about the fact that his religious faith and academic coursework might be related in some way. "Yeah," he said, in response to the writing and faith statements:

> It's just because I'm trying to think of what being a Christian means and how that applies to academic work. It's interesting to think about what your decision to talk about Christianity might mean. … I kind of, like, see how that would apply … [but] I haven't consciously thought about it. I haven't made an argument like, "Okay. I'm a Christian so I should structure my argument like this." I haven't done that, but I'm not saying that I haven't subconsciously … used that fact to write about something. That's interesting to think about.

It is clear that the writing and faith statements presented Chad with a new idea he had never before considered ("I'm trying to think … That's interesting to think about"). It is also clear from Chad's reflection that the notion of integrating religious and academic perspectives—in addition to being new and exciting—prompts an act of backward reaching transfer—that is, an active reassessment of prior experience in light of new ideas (Haskell, 2000). Unlike Carlos, who engages speculatively with the prospect of future moments of integration, Chad takes up my writing and faith statements in a way similar to Elle: he uses the new ideas that the statements offered as an opportunity to reach back into his academic career and begin the work of recognizing previously unseen and unintentional acts of integration ("I'm not saying that I haven't subconsciously … used that fact to write about something").

Unlike Carlos and Chad—who have never imagined the possibility of integration—other students, like Jimmy and Shelly discussed above, occasionally recognize potential connections between religious and academic communities, but those connections are dependent on whether or not the topic, genre, and literacy protocol introduced by the academic environment has also been articulated in the student's religious communities. When students recognize the possibility of integration only in relation to a particular set of explicitly religious and/or political topics, they may be unlikely to perceive connections to more general topics. For example, Jason, a third-year sports management major who does significant integration in some settings, identified a paper that he had written in his first year composition course as an example of writing that had little or nothing to do with his Christian faith: "One of the essays was a

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descriptive essay," he told me, "and so, I talked about building a house because I framed over the summer." Jason's response suggests that the lack of any integration of faith in this particular essay stems from the combination of the genre (a descriptive essay) and his topic selection (a "secular" activity such as building a house). Jason finds it easy to access the descriptive language for this secular topic, and to present it in a descriptive fashion does not require him to reflect on his religious beliefs.

Just as the students learn to articulate particular topics with their religious faith, Theresa's recollection of reading *The Metamorphosis* suggests that particular reading and writing protocols can also be articulated as either religious, academic, or simultaneously both. As we saw in the introduction to this study, Theresa's paper on Job illustrates her tendency to read Scripture for broad literary and historical themes; not surprisingly then, she saw little connection between her religious faith and the writing that she undertook in her literature-based first year composition course, where both the topics and the ways of reading were very different: "We read *The Metamorphosis* or something and I had to write a paper on that and I don't think … It was only like picking apart paragraphs and so it wasn't very much like at all faith-related." Because Theresa reads the Bible for broad literary themes (and as we will see in Chapter Five, reads novels for their thematic connections to her experiences), the act of "picking apart paragraphs" does not evoke her Christian faith.[2]

The most commonly cited examples of papers that students perceived as having little or nothing to do with their academic faith were various scientific lab reports (Jessica, Layla, Patrick, Theresa, Brianna, Charlotte) and other quantitative reports (Brian, Sean). Jessica argued that labs are "just straight scientific facts" and do not, therefore, require her to think the way a paper asking about her personal opinions might require her to do.

> I guess there's very few things that I write to think about. I would say I'm sure there's something that was just straight scientific facts. I had to write observations and what—the purpose of lab is nothing to do with religion. I'm thinking about this lab thing I wrote, lab reports. There are times I have not thought about

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[2] Although Theresa's experiences of reading for spiritual growth do not lead her to articulate this literacy protocol in relation to her Christian faith, this is not true of all Christian traditions. For example, my own Christian tradition often relied on just this type of "picking apart paragraphs" (tracing and close reading the use of key words throughout the Bible), in order to develop an understanding of the very narrative themes that Theresa prefers.

religion while writing papers because I am just consumed and overwhelmed with homework and getting it done and it's only signs and straight facts [so] it doesn't come across in my mind.

Under the constraints of her academic work load, Jessica writes from her fundamental perception that "the purpose of lab is nothing to do with religion." Once she had been challenged by my questions to think about the connections between the religious and academic domains, Jessica (like Chad) engaged in backward reaching transfer: "I'm trying to think of my straightforward research paper—if I tied something into discussion. We did it about if attractiveness relates to how smart you perceive someone as. So, I probably could have put it in." In this act of reflection, Jessica reveals simultaneously that her faith is not clearly articulated in relationship to scientific knowledge, and that her articulations might be disrupted under different material conditions, such as a different topic, or a different genre—one that requires a different type of analysis than she associates with the lab report.

Among students like Jessica, the notion that academic topics and genres are "fact-based," rather than personal, and that spirituality is about the students' personal opinions, is foundational to their engagement with academic work. For this reason, students are relatively unlikely to perceive connections between religious and academic discourses, even outside of the sciences. Diana, a second year political science major argued:

> All my papers so far have been about like, political science and like, history—so I don't really know how my faith would've ever played into a paper. I've never had a paper that was just about me or that I would even have an opportunity to discuss being a Christian, so, not really. … We wrote about the books we read, like arguments in the books or themes in the books. It was never really like, I never wrote anything personal in them, I guess.

Consistent with both the historical trends discussed above and the theology and values of College Christians, Diana articulates her faith in relationship to her "personal" life, and cannot imagine that history or political science would intersect with her religious perspectives or her spirituality.

Both instructors and students alike agree that religion is marked in the classroom in large part because academic work is fact-based and often empirical while religion is a matter of personal opinion. An instructor surveyed in Thomson-Bunn's study "When God's Word Isn't Good Enough" argued that "religion is only acceptable as a belief

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system and that isn't relevant to academic arguments" (2009, p. 161). Moreover, another argued that religious faith is appropriate for "personal narrative, reflection, etc. Not for analytic work" (2009, p. 131). Similarly, the students in my study made a clear distinction between writing that asks them to treat the classroom subject—which would not evoke discussion of religion—and writing that calls for personal opinion (which might cause a student to consider self-disclosing their religion).

In the passage excerpted above, Diana introduces the language of the "personal" as a contrast to her academic work. This contrast appears time and again in the College Christians' talk about their writing. Naomi, a senior Spanish and psychology major, describes the blogging and journaling that she does outside of school as personal, but she categorizes her academic writing as "more like research articles and papers and stuff like that, that were pretty dry." Irene, a third-year psychology major told me that "when I'm writing … I don't know … it's about the material, the book that I read. It has nothing to do with my opinion, and yeah, it's purely for educational reasons." Diana, Naomi, and Irene all recognize that academic writing demands a degree of dispassionate engagement, but their interpretation of academic writing as impersonal (Diana), "dry" (Naomi), and "purely for educational reasons" (Irene) results in writing that does not seem connected to the spiritual and/or religious domains of their lives.

As I noted above, specific articulations of the relationship between religious and academic domains occur not simply as students move between these communities, but because they are moving between these communities. When students experience zero transfer between academic and church-related literacy practices and discourses, it is the result of both academic curricular priorities, the theological emphasis of College Christians, and students' experiences in other religious and extracurricular communities. Within an academic environment that conceptualizes religious belief as subjective, private, and therefore unacceptable in the classroom, the College Christians' emphasis on relational ministry reinforces some students' belief that Christianity is only relevant when they have been asked to write explicitly about religious services, participation in religious structures, personal relationships with Christ, or interpersonal relationships. In this section, I've shown that students whose talk about their writing indicates zero transfer

(either consistently or occasionally) work from a deeply instantiated ideology in which Christian discourses are distinct from the vast majority of academic discourses.

Rhetorically Aware Compartmentalization

The perception that religious and academic discourses belong to different domains also plays out in what I here describe as "rhetorically aware compartmentalization." Unlike students who exhibit zero transfer, students who compartmentalize in a rhetorically aware fashion recognize that they could potentially integrate religious discourses, but they choose not to do so because they believe this is not what is being asked of them. As I will show in the next section, it is also possible for students to keep their academic knowledge-making activities separate from the campus ministry context, but only one student provided a clear example of this, so this section will focus largely on students' choices to keep their religious beliefs separate from their classroom practices.

As we saw in Chapters One and Three, the students who participate in College Christians are willing participants in the social and intellectual life of Midwest University: they seek to learn from their peers and professors, give more of their time to academic work than to religious pursuits, and—like most college students—would like to achieve good grades as an indicator of academic success. This desire to achieve good grades is a key motivator of rhetorically aware compartmentalization. The students in this section are aware that inclusion of Christian discourses will have a rhetorical impact on their instructors, and because they are often uncertain about the precise nature of that impact, they choose to compartmentalize their faith and to "censor" possible available connections between religious and academic domains. As I noted above, after the writing and faith questions introduced Carlos to the possibility of integration, he engaged in a thought experiment about what it might look like to integrate his faith with his academic writing:

> Like, would I do that or—Would I just put it all out there and just go for broke? I feel like a lot of academic writing in terms of maybe just writing a paper to turn in tends to be like—You start writing like, "Oh, I'm going to write all this stuff that I really want to write about." Then it ends up being like, "I need to please the person to get a good grade" or something like that. …It's one of those things where I wonder if I'd actually like write what I actually feel and what I believe in or if I would take some parts out, like kind of censor myself or censor what I want being out there kind of thing. It is a curious question.

Carlos names the challenge faced by the students in this section of the chapter: integrating faith with academic perspectives carries with it some risk, because students are not confident that such integration will be well-received, and instructors have the power to assign grades.

For some students, the intentional decision to engage in rhetorically aware compartmentalization derives from the distinction between fact and opinion that I discussed in the section above. These students engage in *logos* oriented thinking, arguing that it would be illogical to include papers that draw on their Christian faith. Charlotte, a second-year double major in Spanish and biology with a pre-med emphasis, defined papers that had little to nothing to do with her faith in this way: "Those would be more papers in like chemistry class or my science class that were more factual and I didn't really have to touch on Christianity to go along with the point of the paper." Charlotte's use of the phrase "I didn't really have to touch on Christianity" suggests that her compartmentalization is a rhetorically aware choice. She recognizes that what is being asked of her is the rehearsal of textbook facts and figures, rather than an analysis of how those facts and figures are related to her understanding of God.

Whereas Charlotte seeks to appropriately exercise *logos* appeals, Bethany associates her compartmentalization with the appropriate exercise of *pathos* appeals. Bethany believes that inclusion of her religious discourses—stories of her life, belief, and feelings—might have an undue impact on her readers. Bethany is one of the few students in my study who had a job outside of school. As the volunteer coordinator for a local not-for-profit organization, Bethany composes newsletters, which she believes should take advantage of the emotional investments that can accompany personal stories. In contrast, she believes her academic writing needs to be more objective.

> My voice is heard in [academic writing], but it's not my thoughts and feelings and deep emotions. It's less reflection in a school paper or in my work writing. The more stories I share, the more of my experiences I can draw on in writing [for work], the better! In a paper for school, it's not always the case. You have to be incredibly intentional with your stories as a writer for school, because your story may create bias that you weren't aware of. And so being more objective with my writing at school, and less personal in my sharing, because it's not about sharing my personal views. … Sharing my personal views as a person in the world is appropriate in some papers and not others. …To say here's the emotion behind

how I feel about this and this, you know, it can sway a person if you're doing it with an object—like, "let's look at this with an open and clear mind."

Bethany argues that "stories" and personal views can create unintended bias, and that the purpose of academic writing is to look at topics objectively, "with an open and clear mind." As we will see in Chapter Five, Bethany does integrate her faith with her academic writing, but she argues that students ought to be very careful in deciding when to do so. Her belief that it is her responsibility to avoid bias, to "look at this with an open and clear mind," results in the creation of some papers that compartmentalize in order that she may create a rhetorically appropriate framework for inquiry.

While Charlotte and Bethany focus on genre level considerations about when to compartmentalize their faith, Amy, a sophomore public health major, takes a more institutional view: she attributes her compartmentalization not to a general sense of good academic writing, but to both the disciplinary norms and the larger institutional context in which this type of argumentation occurs:

> Since being at Midwest, I really only have had my English class last year which was a lot of typical English, like reading things and reflecting or prompts. There's not a lot of flexibility in those different things. What else? Maybe one or two papers in different classes, besides that, but usually it has a lot to do with the subject of the class and not necessarily as much your personal area, your personal view of things. It's more like this author--or, "Read this writing, and reflect on what were they thinking at this time period. How does that relate to nowadays?" Good stuff, but not necessarily anything that's religious. I think that at an institution like Midwest, they try to shy away from that on purpose, because it's not supposed to be necessarily a religiously-affiliated institution.

Like Charlotte, Amy argues that talking about faith is not the point of the writing that she created in her English class, so she would be unlikely to include any discussion of her religious perspectives. However, Amy is also one of only three students in the study to have attended a private, religious high school. This is likely the reason that she points to institution type as a salient factor in her compartmentalization. Amy believes that because Midwest is a public institution, it might not welcome the inclusion of religious discourses in academic work.

Moreover, while attending a Protestant Christian high school, Amy was encouraged to explicitly mention God in her academic writing, and as a result, she mostly clearly associates integration of religious perspectives into academic writing with papers

that explicitly discuss a student's Christian faith: "I took a class when I was in high school," she told me. "It was a psychology class. We did have a paper there, and I wrote about God in my paper, which at Midwest I would never do with a psychology paper, more than likely." Amy's belief that integration means writing about God leads her to assume that any inclusion of her Christian faith in her academic writing might be perceived by an instructor as inappropriate to the academic context. Consequently, Amy believes that her compartmentalization is in fact an effective rhetorical choice, and in some cases, she may be correct.

Patrick's rationale for compartmentalizing is also constructed by his understanding of the institutional context, though his perceptions of the institution are shaped less by the sense of "separation of church and state" that drove Amy, and more by his sense of Midwest University's pluralistic culture. In a 300-level anthropology course in which he discussed the role of Catholicism in Mexican culture, Patrick was tempted to write about his own religious perspectives but chose not to. He explained his choice this way: "I know my GSI like, almost for sure, was not a Christian, and what his beliefs were probably didn't necessarily line up with mine and so I feel it wouldn't have been smart for me to write much, if at all, about my personal faith." Patrick didn't actually know what his instructor's beliefs were, but within the context of a public university, he presumed that his instructor would not be open to a discussion of his religious beliefs, so he chose to exclude them from the paper.

Students like Charlotte, Bethany, Amy and Patrick recognize that academic writing is a rhetorical situation that is constructed by a general set of expectations for academic writing, by institutional expectations, and by the idiosyncratic preferences of instructors (Thaiss & Zawacki, 2006). While these students may see the relevance of their Christian faith to the topics they are discussing in class, they nonetheless choose to compartmentalize because they believe this to be the more appropriate rhetorical choice. Because students associate "religious discourses" with being invited to discuss personal experiences or viewpoints and with courses or assignments that evoke explicit references to divinity or religious structures, these students contend that many assignments do not require them to discuss their faith. In an effort to show that they are learning what is

expected (and thereby to get a good grade), these students believe it is better to compartmentalize their faith than risk the perception of negative transfer.

I use these students' work to argue that what might look to an external observer like an instance of "zero transfer" is actually a moment in which students have assessed the values and priorities of the communities with which they interact and have made a rhetorically agentive choice not to build connections. In talking about the reasons that they compartmentalized their faith, these students demonstrate what they have learned about the appropriateness of integrating religious and academic discourses. They also articulate the boundaries they sense—if even tacitly—between their religious and academic communities, providing a description of the "lived curriculum" of their collegiate experience. In compartmentalizing their faith, students reveal their learning and articulate where they experience the boundaries between academic and religious discourses. Far from "frustrated transfer," students' talk about their writing reveals that occasionally, learning is exemplified not by evidence of transfer, but by its very absence.

Fencing: Compartmentalization as a Coping Strategy

The final compartmentalization pattern that I identified in students' responses to the statements about writing and faith is what I will here call "fencing," a decision to compartmentalize in an effort to avoid potential conflicts between faith and academic subject matter. Although this was a minor theme among the students' responses, students did occasionally compartmentalize in the event that engaging academic ideas might demand a rethinking of personal beliefs before the student is intellectually and emotionally prepared to do so. When faced with an intellectual or social conflict that they were not quite prepared to address, some students chose (both intentionally and unintentionally), to keep their church-related literacy practices separate from the practices—and the people—they engage in other domains of their lives.

Although I was surprised that students engaged in this type of compartmentalization, several students hinted that while they themselves did not "fence" their literacy practices, they had seen other students do so. David, the same student who questioned my presumptions of intentionality, also explained that he believes so few of his peers engage in intentional transfer of church-related knowledge and literacy practices because of the pressures they face as they seek to learn in both academic and religious

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communities. David argued that many of his peers are attempting to make sense of key ideas in each community before they attempt to put them together:

> I think it's difficult for people to see the connection [between faith, the social, and the academic]. It's a lot of this social figuring out or whatever, and they see them as separate issues. I think that makes it easier for them to kind of say, I'm going to be a college kid but then I'm also kind of a Christian on the side. I think it's a lot to undertake as one. I think the separation makes it easier for a lot of people to better understand and navigate, rather than throwing it all into one bin.

David argues that the compartmentalization he observes among other Christian students may be explained not simply by the differences between religious and academic discourses, but by students' own developmental processes. He suggests that students in a particular stage of ethical and intellectual development may need to compartmentalize religious and academic domains. My findings suggest that David's assertions are sometimes correct: compartmentalizing the academic and religious allows some students to learn to think productively about each domain before attempting to engage them in relationship to one another.

This type of compartmentalization is common among students who are experiencing the challenges of being an academic novice. Sommers and Saltz argue that "learning happens in stages; ideas need to be ingested before they can be questioned. Students need to immerse themselves in the material, get a sense of the parameters of their subjects, familiarize themselves with the kinds of questions asked of different sets of evidence, and have a stake in the answers before they can articulate analytical theses" (2004, pp. 134–35). That is, a learner needs time to become familiar with the content and conventions of a specific discourse community before they will be able to take up an analytic stance toward that community. Although Sommers and Saltz focus on the work of first year students, I showed in Chapter Two that students do not always progress at the same rate. Students join both the College Christians community and particular academic communities at different points in their collegiate experience. While they may not be first year students, they may nonetheless be entering a discourse community for the first time, learning its norms and standards in stages. For this reason, students may be novice to a discourse community multiple times over during their college careers. Sommers and Saltz also argue that students must move beyond their novice status in order to grow, and while this is certainly true, the work of moving through and beyond

such a novice stance is highly individualized. In this section, I demonstrate the appropriateness of students' occasional use of compartmentalization as they work toward greater understanding of the discourses they engage across communities.

Within the field of higher education, students' ethical and intellectual growth is typically represented by developmental schemas, which could be misinterpreted as suggesting that students move in an orderly fashion from one stage of development to the next. However, all of the generally acknowledged schema recognize that students do not progress in lock step from one stage of development to the next. Perry's schema uses negative terms like "delay," "deflection," "regression," "escape," "temporizing" and "retreat" to classify the kind of compartmentalizing that David describes above. In particular, David is describing what Perry calls "temporizing," that is, delaying "in some Position for a year, exploring its implications or explicitly hesitating to take the next step" (1998, p. 11). In Sommers and Saltz's language, these students are standing on the "threshold" of two communities (2004, p. 125).[3]

While Perry's schema depicts intellectual and ethical development as a forward progression from one discreet stage to another, Baxter Magolda argues that development is always highly fluid. She points out that "some students may use 'pure' versions [of a particular way of knowing and reasoning], whereas others use a mixture of patterns" (1992, p. 22). The three students whom I will discuss in this section might be seen by some as "retreating" or "delaying" an inevitable clash of values, but I will argue that in fact, each of these students is engaged in a "hybrid" way of knowing. They are neither personally invested in, nor are they working towards a "pure" approach to knowing and reasoning. Rather, their choices represent a coping mechanism by which they can continue to participate in multiple communities while grappling with potential completion among the knowledge, values, or epistemologies of those communities.

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[3] In this passage, Sommers and Saltz evoke the notion of a "threshold concept," currently much in vogue among scholars of transfer studies. Adler-Kassner, et. al., define threshold concepts as "specific ideas within disciplines 'without which the learner cannot progress' (Meyer and Land 1)" (2012, p. 1). While I value the idea that some concepts are key to progressing from the status of novice to expert within a given discourse community, I have avoided the discussion of threshold concept in this study because as a conceptual metaphor, the "threshold" evokes the sense that an individual can be in only one place at a particular moment. In contrast, this study reveals that students can be members of multiple discursive spaces simultaneously, and can occupy multiple subjectivities within any one community, suggesting more fluidity in student learning than the notion of a "threshold concept" implies.

I use the term "fencing" to delineate this approach to compartmentalization because I see in the students' reasoning a corollary to the sociocultural practice of fencing that Scott Lyons identifies among some Native American communities. Lyons argues that individuals who wish to delay the effect of an inevitable "hybrid" identity and culture may experience the need to build a fence between two differing communities. In his 2009 article "The Fine Art of Fencing: Nationalism, Hybridity, and the search for a Native American Writing Pedagogy," Lyons defines fencing as the set of choices that communities make when they seek "not to keep things out, but to keep important things in" (2009, p. 79). Lyons argues that some Native American communities are always already hybrid: the people in these communities have developed their identities and belief systems in relationship to the broader culture, and for this reason, some ideas—particularly those which are valued within the non-dominant cultural frame—need to be protected in order that they might survive to take a place within the hybrid framework. As I have shown, the students in this study also partake of a Christianity which is always already a mixture of religious, intellectual, and pop-culture trends. The students who participate in College Christians seek a radical openness to the perspectives of the broader university culture, but who simultaneously understand themselves as novices within their religious community and may therefore seek to protect some elements of their faith.

The concept of fencing differs in an important, if subtle, way from the separatist and purist instinct of Christian Fundamentalists: rather than seeking to eliminate or avoid any potentially corrupting influences, the individual or community that fences activities and beliefs does not deny the validity of alternative ways of understanding or approaching the world. Instead, the one who fences beliefs or actions can acknowledge—and potentially even respect—alternative viewpoints while nonetheless choosing to strategically protect a prized viewpoint or activity as they seek to develop it more fully. Students who choose to fence their beliefs from outside influences may be perceived by some as exhibiting strains of Fundamentalist thinking, but as I will show, these students are *not* Fundamentalist. Analysts who look solely at their writing, or who consider their writing only in light of the relationship between academic and religious discourses, without accounting for the many other factors at play in these students' lives

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might misread their reasoning as, on the one hand, a simple lack of awareness of the possibility of integration, and on the other hand, pure resistance, or complete rejection of hybridity.

As I consider the work discussed by Ava, John, and Brian, I argue that in fact, this fencing approach allows some students to grapple with their faith while simultaneously familiarizing themselves with new academic concepts. If David's analysis is correct, this step may be crucial to enabling students to eventually navigate a multiplicity of perspectives about important ideas. Ava, John, and Brian all suggested that they know integration of faith with academic writing is an option, but in the scenarios described here, each chooses not to do so. They draw a strong boundary around their faith *specifically because* they are concerned about protecting a Christian identity long enough to allow them to develop a strong grasp on academics and the core tenets of the faith individually as they develop the means to live as a Christian within the social structures of the university.

The concept of fencing is perhaps most eloquently illustrated by Ava's reflections on why she chose to spend a summer listening to Christian audiobooks in the calm and protection of her bedroom. Although this example is not specifically about student writing, it nicely sets the stage for the compartmentalization of writing that John and Brian describe. When I interviewed her, Ava was a new Christian who had come to faith while participating in a different Evangelical campus ministry at Midwest. During our conversation, Ava described a hunger to learn Christian ideas; her appetite led her to watch sermons on YouTube, visit Christian bookstores, and listen to Christian audiobooks.

Although these activities allowed her to continue the work of building her faith by gaining exposure to Christian ideas, Ava expressed a need to conceal her activities from her family in order protect her new religious viewpoints from their hostility to Christian faith. What follows is an excerpt of our conversation:

> Ava: I was just listening to [a Christian audiobook] and I would never listen to it in front of my family members. I was always in my room, in my bed.
> Melody: Okay. Is there a reason for that?
> Ava: Yes. I have an uncle who--he's the one Christian in my life, but my parents call him "Jesus-freak." They just say, "Oh that's a bunch of hoo-ha." It's hard to be around that. It's mainly my mom who's telling my dad. My dad

is like interested, but not really. Yes. I think my parents just have a huge negative association with Christ and so for me, I just keep that out of there for now. Let me grow on my own, and then maybe I can help you guys later, but I would just try and keep it out of there because I just get a lot of block from them.

Melody: Sure. For now, you need to protect it and be around people who can …

Ava: Right. Yes. Exactly.

Ava prizes her newfound relationship with God, and has relied on her uncle—the only Christian in her family and the man who gave her her first Bible—as both a safe person to talk to, and as a person who can provide her with resources for deepening her Christian faith. When her parents say negative things about both her uncle and his beliefs, Ava feels that her own faith might come under attack; as a result, during the summer following her conversion to Christianity, she retreated to the company of Christian audiobooks while alone in her room. She does not resent or resist her parents, and consistent with the values of the Evangelical ministry in which she became a Christian, she argues that someday she may seek to evangelize them ("maybe I can help you guys later"). For the moment, however, Ava is not worried that they will corrupt her faith: rather, she is concerned with protecting her new and fragile faith. She is fencing her faith in order that one day she might be able to encounter her parents with confidence.

In contrast to Ava's fencing of her faith from social threats, John and Brian fence their growing faith from the intellectual complexities they encounter when attempting to reconcile questions about creation and evolution. John, who is one of twelve students to claim a complete compartmentalization of faith and writing, talked about why he believes that his faith is unrelated to his academic writing, even though much of his coursework espouses evolutionary perspectives—a topic which, as we saw earlier, often leads students to articulate their faith as relevant to academic life. John argues:

> My major and everything that I am learning for that is somewhat contradictory to some of the things that the Bible says are true. I guess I'm primarily living in two different zones in those terms. I was talking to Phil about this over coffee a couple weeks ago. I guess it has been difficult and I think it's something that a lot of my friends struggle with that are in College Christians. A lot of us are taking evolution classes and stuff like that. There are things that you can't really deny and stick your head in the sand. I think there is a way to do both. I think that it's difficult. It's two different thoughts or mind processes that I'm living in. … A lot of people in my major, if they thought I was a devout Catholic and believed everything in the Bible, they would probably think that I was crazy because of all

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the proof that they have for evolution and all that stuff. … It's something that a lot of people don't talk about. I guess that's why College Christians is good in a sense that I can talk to Phil about that and not be ostracized…. It's a very real problem that no one really talks about in most religious places.

Consistent with the social positioning I identified in chapter three, John recognizes that with regard to this particular topic, he does not belong fully in either the secular scientific community or the Christian community. He believes he cannot tell his colleagues in the lab that he is Christian because they may think he is "crazy." Neither can he tell many Christians that he is grappling with evolution, for fear he may be "ostracized." But rather than identifying himself as existing on a "threshold" or "reconciling" these potentially competing perspectives on human origins, John tells me that he is "living in two different zones … two different mind processes."

     As he learns to navigate among these communities, John does not reject an evolutionary perspective, nor does he reject a biblical perspective; instead, he shares his intellectual concerns with Phil, the campus minister, who (like Ava's uncle) is a safe person with whom he can share his thoughts about both evolution and his Christian beliefs. The campus ministry provides John with a place where he can begin to safely break down the perception that the dogmatic beliefs of religious and scientific communities are necessarily incommensurable. While John's default position is to fence his religious and academic beliefs, College Christians offers him a safe space in which to be a novice in both Christian and academic communities: "I'm trying to sift through [these perspectives] and figure out what … trying to make sense of it all. That's kind of where I am in College Christians. I'm kind of in a crossroads, but I'm there with other people who are in the same spot. That's fine with me right now." While Perry would describe John—who, for the time being, remains "in" the crossroads—as "delaying," John believes he will not remain at this stage, and so he feels comfortable fencing religious and academic communities from each other for the time being.

     Unlike John, who expresses comfort with this stage of his intellectual development, Brian is less confident in his ability to navigate the intellectual questions presented by an evolutionary perspective. A gregarious and emotionally expressive student, Brian became passionate as he talked about a paper on human origins that he wrote as a part of a philosophy class he took during his sophomore year of college. Taken

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at face value, Brian's discussion of this paper—a frustrated (and frustrating) process of invention and composition—could be interpreted as an outright rejection of the theory of evolution. But in bringing this chapter to a close, I contend that a closer examination of the way he positions himself and his instructor throughout the story suggests that, in fact, his frustration is not with the theory of evolution itself, but with the way the assignment constrained his ability to examine new and unfamiliar ideas.

In the portion of our conversation excerpted below, Brian describes his first encounter with William Paley's teleological "watchmaker" argument, one of the cornerstone arguments of the intelligent design movement. Brian reflects on his excitement at encountering a new idea—one that immediately made logical sense to him in light of his belief in Christianity. He also explains his distress at subsequently being asked to call that argument into question.

> We talked about this … who was it? I don't remember the philosopher's name, but it … it was a paper about the watch and the watchmaker. Like, someone is just walking on a field and they find this watch and the watch is—rational, rationalism. The watch is the proof of the watchmaker. And then he talked about it, and I was like "Yes. This is–do you want more proof? This is great. I totally agree." Then *of course* the professor, excuse my language again, the asshole professor, just *had* to play devil's advocate. He's like, "I disagree with this," or something like that. "You have to argue against it." And I was just like "No! Are you kidding me?" … And then we had to discuss the opposite point. And I did not like doing that *at all*, just because I had absolutely nothing to say.

The strength of Brian's emotion in this passage—evidenced by his use of profanity and his use of emphatic phrases—suggests that he is excited about a new idea that has been presented to him: the idea that one can see evidence for a creator in the design of the universe. At an academic moment when Brian has been looking for a way to reconcile the theory of evolution with his belief in the Bible, he is excited to encounter a logical proposition that could enable him to resolve this tension.

Although the instructor is justified in asking students to articulate a philosophical counter-argument, Brian immediately resists being asked to question this new idea. Because he has not had the chance to fully explore what he values about the argument from design, he asserts that he has "absolutely nothing to say" about the opposing position. Brian's resistance to this assignment could be interpreted as a strain of Fundamentalism by which he refuses to consider an idea that could potentially pose a

threat to his belief in God. One might also assume that Brian is concerned that the academic propositions he is learning will weaken or change the nature of his faith. Indeed, this is a very real concern espoused by some scholars; Chris Anderson, for example, has expressed concern that by introducing academic writing into a student's discursive toolkit, an instructor might change the student's faith against his or her will (1991).

But several elements of Brian's situation suggest that the concept of fencing might be a more appropriate way to describe Brian's hesitance to engage with theories of evolution. First, Brian is by no means the stereotypical Evangelical: he believes that reincarnation is compatible with Christian eschatology and suggests that he believes there may be "many roads" to finding God. Brian told me that he had chosen not to reveal this belief to his campus ministers because he thought they might try to talk him out of his belief. This decision simultaneously represents Brian's instinct for fencing and demonstrates the possibility of rhetorically aware compartmentalization of external discourses from the campus ministry.

Although Brian's faith is already hybrid, he nonetheless seeks to protect this particular idea—the "argument from design" proof of God's existence—from academic discourses. In fact, Brian's description of the situation suggests that he himself was surprised by the vehemence of his own response to the assignment, another factor that suggests he was not necessarily concerned about evolution "corrupting" his faith so much as he was attempting to cope with a challenging intellectual problem. "It's weird," he said,

> because, despite I'm very open about my views, I'm extremely passionate about them. To convince me otherwise you're going to have to do some major work. I don't know why. Like in that case you're like, "Oh. You're closed." No. I'm open. Like, I can discuss with you anything that you want, but, just try to convince me that Jesus isn't King. Or try to convince me that you know, despite I believe in like reincarnation or other things, just, just tell me why that doesn't fit with Christianity. Of course it fits. There are many – there are various ways to get to the common goal.

Brian does sense that arguing against the teleological watchmaker proposition may directly implicate his own religious beliefs. However, I would argue that his language suggests this is less because he feels his faith threatened, and more because he is a

particular personality type, one who needs significant trust and conversation in order to process an objection to a new and welcome idea. His frustration—which is directed at the "asshole" professor, rather than the assignment—suggests that if he and the professor had established a better relationship, he might have had a different response to the assignment.

When I asked Brian how he dealt with this assignment, he informed me that he had simply chosen to invest no effort in the paper.

> I guess—because it was just a paper, and because it was something I didn't want to do, I asked someone who had an opposing view, and then they said it, and I was just like: "Yeah. But I still think you're full of crap." You know? But I was just like, "Yeah. Sure. That makes sense." And it was just something that I just kind of turned in, just to, you know, get the grade, and I was just like, that was something that I did not believe in. I was like: "Yeah. I can see this person's point of view, but I can see that my point of view at least, is a lot better than this person's point of view." But it was just something that I was reluctant—I had to turn in reluctantly, cause it was just like, yeah. This is something I don't believe in. I just kind of went through, like the whole, "Oh yeah. These are the arguments against." But they don't make sense to me. So it's just kind of like, I'm just going to do this just to get the grade. So, that was something I wasn't proud of. I just kind of turned in something that was just, like—it didn't have any effort into it. Not because I didn't want to put in the effort, but because I honestly don't see this happening.

Brian feels a deep emotional commitment to his faith, and it is clear from this passage that something about this interaction shook him. In fact, the language of hesitance and backpedaling that characterizes this excerpt belies the confidence with which he rejected the professor's viewpoints in the two passages above ("just try to convince me …): he asserts simultaneously that "I can see this person's point of view" and "these are the arguments against. But they don't make sense to me." Because Brian is struggling to make sense of his own responses to both a welcome new idea (the argument from design) and the possibility that this new idea might be logically invalid, he chooses to compartmentalize rather than pushing back against his professor's assignment.

To address the practical impact (that is, the effect on his grade) of such fencing, Brian "borrows" ideas from a friend, a choice he is not proud of. Brian's story is tempered by the combination of charged language ("full of crap"; "I honestly don't see this happening"), and descriptions of restraint ("I was reluctant," and "not because I didn't want to put in the effort"). Brian's fencing of his faith is neither an easy rejection

of the professor's ideas, nor a simple condemnation of an evolutionary viewpoint because it contradicts with a "biblical" position. Rather, fencing this new idea is Brian's best available response to an intellectual problem that he was not prepared to deal with: by fencing the religious and academic domains and writing "just to get the grade," Brian tries to buy himself time to grapple with a new idea until he feels better equipped to consider alternative viewpoints.

Just as some scholars have feared might happen when Christian students encounter academic perspectives (Anderson, 1991; Dively, 1993; Goodburn, 1998), Ava, John, and Brian all express concern that they need to protect their developing knowledge base from alternative perspectives. This response, however, is not necessarily born of anger or fear. Indeed, this protective instinct arises not because these students believe that their religious belief is somehow pure or privileged, but because they need to "keep important things in." Each of the students I described in this section is responding to a felt need to protect sometimes fragile and still developing beliefs at a particular moment in time. In contrast to the systematic and "purist" instincts of the Fundamentalist, each of the examples above stands out as a singular moment in which students reject the option to transfer discourses, knowledge, and skills among the academic and religious domains of their lives because they instinctively believe that such a delay—if not permanent—can be an asset to their personal spiritual and intellectual growth.

Conclusion

The field of composition and rhetoric has generally perceived religiously engaged Christian College students only when they intentionally mark their work as religious. What I have shown here is that many Christian college students perceive significant portions of their academic writing as distinct and in isolation from their religious beliefs. This perception arises both from the limitations of how students have learned to articulate their belief systems, and from larger historic and public discourses that position academic writing as "fact-based" and empirical in contrast to religious ways of knowing, which are personal and "opinion-based." For many students, these perspectives are so deeply instantiated that they are nearly invisible; they are ideologies operating to normalize

students' sense that religious and academic domains are wholly differentiated, and sometimes in conflict.

While these discourses often obscure the possible theoretical and content oriented connections that could facilitate transfer of learning, I have shown that a closer look at how students talk about the compartmentalization of religious and academic discourses allows for a rethinking of the concept "zero transfer." Rather than indicating that no learning has taken place, or that students have been frustrated in their attempts to build connections, this chapter shows that students may be appropriately choosing not to exercise particular ways of knowing and doing when they believe that those approaches are not rhetorically warranted. Students may also compartmentalize when doing so enables them to grapple more completely with complex ideas prior to putting those ideas in relation to each other. In each of these latter cases, students are making agentive choices that allow them to function productively as members of multiple discourse communities that they may perceive as having conflicting or incommensurate values. As Sommers and Saltz rightly point out, "Writing development isn't always happening on the page" for novice writers (2004, p. 144), a factor that will figure importantly in this study's implications for pedagogy and assessment. Whereas the students in this chapter are conceiving (if only momentarily) of academic and religious communities as distinct, in the next chapter, I will discuss the ways that students build relationships between church-related and academic discourses when they presume a cooperative, or overlapping, model of the religious and academic domains.

CHAPTER 5
"EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN": UNDERSTANDING MARKED
AND UNMARKED DISCOURSES IN STUDENT WRITING

During my second year of teaching at the University of Michigan, I taught two Christian students who had very different approaches to incorporating their religious faith into their academic writing. On the first day of the advanced argumentation class I taught during the winter term, I told my students that they would spend the semester exploring the language and rhetoric that shape a particular discourse community. At the end of the first class, Molly approached me to say in no uncertain terms that her chosen discourse community would be her church back home, one of the most prominent mega-churches in the United States. She hoped to study how the church's minister, a prominent media figure, used new media platforms to shape the moral life of his congregation.

Throughout the semester, members of Molly's writing group told me how engaging and informative they found her project. They experienced Molly as flexible and open to feedback. Behind the scenes, I was also privy to the incredible challenges she faced as she learned the differences between academic argumentation and personal writing. In fact, Molly often found me a frustrating respondent, particularly when I challenged her to be more critical of this community that she deeply loved. As Molly analyzed and wrote about her pastor's blog posts, she struggled with the ways that her desire to be a passionate advocate for her community conflicted with the need to be a dispassionate analyst of public discourses. Early in the semester, she relied on the language of Evangelical insiders as she sought to prove her arguments. Through conferences with her peers, and with me, she began to see Evangelical jargon and revise it from her papers. As I watched Molly work that semester, I knew that I was watching a woman who was negotiating between resistance to academic subjectivities and the desire to create a hybrid scholarly and Christian identity.

Jill was in the same class. She initially concerned me because she proposed four topics, all of which pertained to the writing experiences of individuals who had

attempted, or were considering, suicide. Eventually, Jill chose to write about the public art project Post-Secret, in which people submit anonymous secrets on creatively modified post-cards. She chose to undertake a genre analysis of post-cards containing suicide threats. As she drafted, Jill's investigation of Post-Secret suicide threats became an insightful analysis that drew on peer-reviewed psychological research about trauma and recovery as well as histories of the postcard as a material artifact. It was not until the second draft of her full seminar paper, submitted about a month before the end of the semester, that I began to wonder if Jill might also have a religious background. It was in this second draft that I began to see the language of community—much like what I heard in College Christians—enter her paper: "Human beings are not creatures that were made for isolation" she wrote. "We live best in community with others, whether that community is friends, coworkers, family, or even animals." The subtle reference to human beings as created for a purpose piqued my curiosity. Could it be that, like Molly, this young woman was a Christian? She had never mentioned a faith community and was writing about a topic that bore no explicit relationship to Christianity, but the language she used indexed possible religious engagement.

I never spoke to Jill about her religious commitments[1]; I rarely spoke to Molly about anything else. Nonetheless, I believe that each of these women was able to incorporate her Christianity into her work in ways that were simultaneously challenging and productive, helping them grow as both an academic writer and person of faith. The writing that each woman provided offered me evidence of personal commitments and spiritual growth that might otherwise have remained unseen in the classroom. In this chapter, I seek to shed light on the experiences of students like Molly and Jill by investigating the widely varying practices of students who incorporate their Christian faith into their academic writing. I demonstrate that these students are aware that their Christianity may have a polarizing effect on their pluralistic audience—the academic community in which they seek to be productive and engaged members. I argue that this leads students to enact rhetorically savvy (if sometimes tacit and unintended) choices about how to put church-related and academic literacies in relation to each other. Unlike

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[1] More than a year later, I attended a campus a capella showcase, where I saw Jill perform as a member of a Christian a capella group, thus confirming my suspicions about her religious commitments.

those students who mark their work by proselytizing or proof-texting, the students that I interviewed marked themselves as Christian while simultaneously positioning their religious identities as a part of, or as cooperative with, the values of Midwest University. Those who create texts that remain largely unmarked do so by capitalizing on discourses and literacy practices that are shared among religious and academic communities.

In order to make this argument, I draw on findings from six interviews with students who provided writing that they identified as either a) directly discussing religious faith, or b) drawing on (or making them think about) religious belief and principle without directly disclosing or discussing their Christian faith. Alongside Chapter Four, this chapter answers the research questions: *In what ways, if any, do the literacy practices with which students engage in various domains of their lives overlap, influence, create tension with, or exist in isolation from each other?* and *In what ways, if any, do the values and discourses inculcated in College Christians manifest in participants' reading and writing practices in other domains of their lives?* Like the writing discussed in Chapter Four, these papers are not necessarily the by-product of conscious decision-making, and as co-constructor of meaning alongside the students, I explicitly note the degree of self-awareness that the students themselves identified as apart of their writing processes.

Variations in the perceived visibility and rhetorical impact of religious discourses have a two-fold cause: first, as I demonstrated in Chapter One, religious discourses, like literacy practices, are fungible (Brandt, 2009) and may appear in students' writing even when the student writer does not intend it. Second, as I argued in Chapter One, some students may experience their religious and academic experiences as cooperative; as a result, students may draw on discourses shared among these communities, creating polyvocalic texts—sometimes, but not always marked as Christian—that can be read by some as faith-based and by others as academic. This chapter further develops the argument that transfer of religious and academic discourses is one way that students can exercise agency in curating their academic experience; they can use reading and writing practices to navigate their positions as members of both academic and Christian communities. I use these findings to extend the argument that I began in Chapter Four, namely that transfer cannot be fully understood by examining written products, nor can it

be understood only as the result of successful learning in a previous context. Rather, transfer must be understood as a process by which students engage literacy at the intersection of multiple communities. In this way, the act of transferring literacy practices becomes a mechanism by which students develop a more rigorous understanding of the values of each community and the most effective ways to navigate among them.

"Marked" and "Unmarked" Christian Discourses in Student Writing

This chapter examines how students talk about the writing they submitted in response to the following two statements:

2. *Since coming to college, I have written a paper in which I directly discuss my religious faith or explicitly talk about being a Christian.*

3. *Since coming to college, I have written a paper that made me think about my religious faith, or in which I drew on religious beliefs and principles, but in which I did not directly discuss the fact that I am a Christian.*

I designed these statements to elicit exploration of potential intersections between writing and religious faith, and as I explained in Chapter Four, I anticipated that students would be easily able to differentiate between these two categories. In response to these statements, I expected to receive very different types of papers. What I learned, however, is that students may perceive self-disclosure—and may experience an attendant sense of risk accompanying that disclosure—even when they have not explicitly identified their Christian faith in their writing. Similarly, they may discover that they have disclosed their faith even when they did not plan to do so.

In response to these complexities in how students talked about integrating their faith with their academic work, this chapter reframes my initial assumptions about explicit and implicit integration and instead proposes a new approach to understanding the effects of transfer. This approach acknowledges that discursive and rhetorical practices—like linguistic practices—can be either "marked" or "unmarked." While most transfer categories—such as "positive and negative," "near and far," or "high road and low road" transfer (Haskell, 2000; D. Perkins & Salomon, 1988, 1989)—emphasize the way in which transfer occurs, the terms "marked and unmarked" emphasize the rhetorical impact of transfer. This proposed approach to interpreting and recognizing transfer responds to and extends current conceptions of transfer by taking seriously the agentive

aspect of students' writing (Nowacek, 2011). The terms marked and unmarked acknowledge that students are agents of transfer, making decisions that shape the written text. Moreover, because these terms are descriptive, rather than evaluative, they focus on the text as an object of analysis and response that can facilitate individuals' learning processes, rather than casting evaluative light on the student's performance of religious identity. I argue that understanding the ways that transfer can result in "marked" and "unmarked" texts provides a framework broad enough to account for the array of techniques and motivations that accompany students' integration of religious faith into their academic writing. Simultaneously, these terms explain why some instances of transfer between religious and academic discourse communities are highly visible while other instances of such transfer may be nearly imperceptible to students and instructors alike.

I draw the terms "marked" and "unmarked" by analogy from linguistics. Rosina Lippi-Green points out that "language can serve to mark a number of kinds of identity. The way individuals situate themselves in relationship to others, the way they group themselves, the powers they claim for themselves and the powers they stipulate to others are all embedded in language" (2011, p. 31). Linguistic "markers" are "'norms which define the speech community,' to which members of the community react in 'a uniform manner,' although without necessarily being aware of the variables or their social meanings" (Johnstone, Andrus, & Danielson, 2006, p. 82). Communicative situations always contain a range of available "marked" phonological, grammatical, and lexical variations that index particular dialects, regions, or groups of people (Lippi-Green, 2011). For example, whether he intended to or not, when Brian—a third-year economics major who was raised Catholic—casually remarked that "JC is my homeboy," he marked himself as both a participant in pop culture ("homeboy") and as an adherent to a version of Evangelical culture that constructs Jesus Christ as a buddy close enough to receive a nickname ("JC").

Of the linguistic features Lippi-Green mentions, lexical features are the most likely to index religious participation, but in this chapter, I extend the term "marked" to include the discursive patterns and rhetorical strategies used by participants in College Christians which may index their religious participation. As we saw in the first chapter,

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the writing created by religiously engaged Christian college students has been critiqued for its inappropriate use of both Christian discourses and church-related rhetorical strategies. By framing these discursive patterns in terms of "marked" and "unmarked" discourses, I also seek to draw attention to the performative dimension of marking a text as Christian, an act that is particularly important given scholarly concerns about the way that introducing Christian students to academic discourses may impact their engagement with their sense of Christian identity. In this chapter, I will show that while rhetorical and discursive strategies may shape an instructor's perceptions that a student is writing from a church-related perspective, these strategies have limited usefulness as indicators of precisely what, or how, a student engages with Christianity.

Simultaneously, instructors and scholars must recognize that Christian students may also be creating work that is influenced by their Christian faith even if it does not explicitly disclose their affiliations with a Christian faith community. In this chapter, I address explicit uses of religious discourse in academic writing as well as this second type of integration: implicit or theoretical use of discourses and rhetorical strategies that students articulate as a part of their Christian belief systems. I use the term "umarked" to designate this latter approach to drawing on Christianity in academic writing. Linguistics does not use the term "unmarked"; indeed, in linguistics, any utterance which is not "marked," would fall into the category of "standard usage". In this argument, I introduce the category "unmarked" because I want to demarcate a specific subset of discourses and rhetorical strategies that students articulate in relation to their faith, even if these discourses and strategies are not universally understood as "Christian."

In a given paper, a religiously engaged student might use "standard" rhetorical and discursive patterns, common to any academic writer of any background, such as the use of formulaic language to help construct a research space. They also have the option to integrate marked discursive patterns that most people would immediately identify as Christian, such as a testimonial of personal salvation. Finally, students might choose to incorporate rhetorical patterns and discourses that derive from their Christian faith but that overlap with or are embedded within lexical, discursive, and rhetorical strategies that are also appropriate to an academic context. It is this latter category that I call "unmarked." While standard and marked usages in linguistics are typically universal

amongst speakers of a specific language, in my schema, the identification of "marked" and "unmarked" discourses is contingent upon the way that a particular text is received by its audience. In other words, those elements of a paper that a student might point to as evidence that they have integrated their Christian faith into their academic writing might be imperceptible to a reader.

My discussion of unmarked texts extends the reconceptualization of zero transfer that I began in Chapter Four. I show that even when academic texts are not marked with evidence of Christian discourses, they may draw on shared discourses that work to help students position themselves simultaneously as members of religious and academic communities. In addition to explaining why some instances of transfer amongst discourse communities are highly visible while other instances of transfer may be imperceptible, the notion that transfer can result in marked or unmarked texts has several advantages. First, it accommodates a greater range of possible relationships between academic and religious discourses than other categories might. On the one hand, this approach to transfer acknowledges that students may occasionally draw on discourses that are distinctive to academic or religious communities. It does not force students or instructors to elide the very real differences that can exist among academic and religious communities. On the other hand, when placed alongside notions of "positive and negative" transfer, this model also calls attention to the existence of overlapping and shared discourses among religious and academic domains. These are the strategies that exist within the shared space of the cooperative model (see Figure 1.4). As we will see later in this chapter, when students draw from these uncontested discursive spaces, they can engage in a transfer process that results in writing that is influenced by, but not marked as Christian. In these cases, the influence of students' religious belief may be imperceptible to instructors, and in some cases, to the students themselves.

Secondly, this category can help to alleviate the analytic tensions created by the presumption of intentionality discussed in Chapter Four. Johnstone et. al. argue that those who use and respond to "marked" discourses may not be fully cognizant of "the variables or their social meanings." For this reason, marked discourses should not be equated with intentionality, nor should one equate transfer that happens in an unmarked fashion with a lack of intentionality. Those who are cognizant of the social meanings of marked
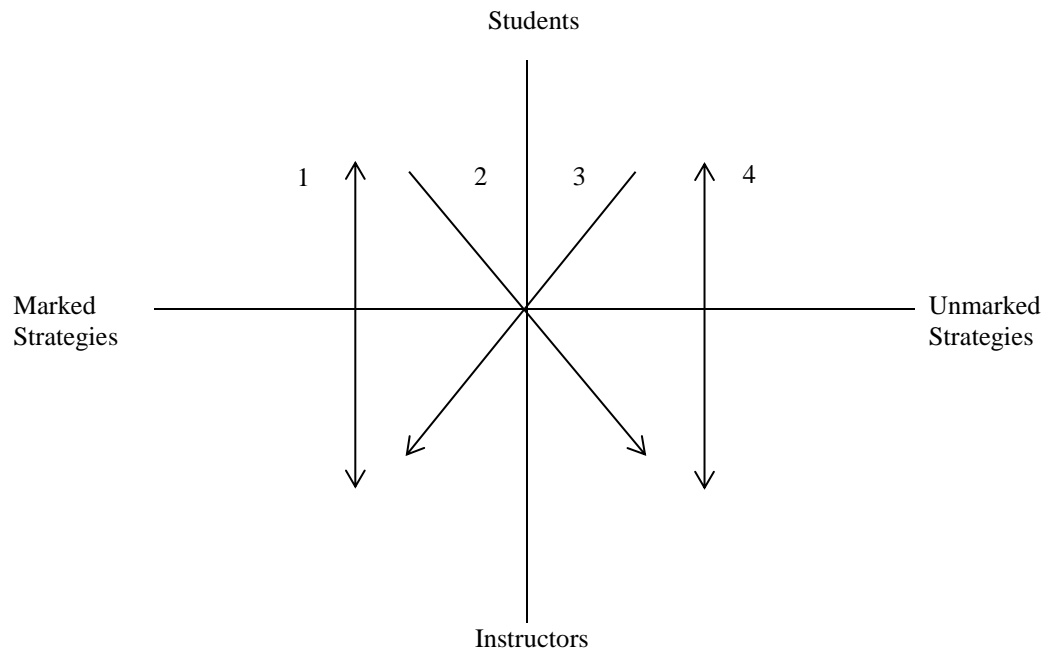
Students

Figure 5.1 Marked and Unmarked Discourses: A Reception Matrix
This matrix illustrates the possible variations of "marked" and "unmarked" strategies by audience. A strategy can be 1) "marked" as Christian to both student and instructor alike, 2) "marked" to a student but not an instructor, 3) "unmarked" to a student but "marked" to an instructor, and 4) "unmarked" to both student and instructor alike.

discourse may be able to intentionally adapt their discursive patterns, drawing on shared discourses to operationalize their faith in an unmarked way. Certainly students may sometimes intentionally implement marked or unmarked discourses that are received as such by their audiences. However, sometimes students may unintentionally transfer into their writing literacy practices and discourses that mark them as Christian. When students incorporate these marked discourses, instructors—depending on their own ideological frameworks—may or may not interpret those discourses as Christian and will assess those practices and discourses as they see fit. Conversely, students may intentionally or unintentionally transfer their faith in an "unmarked" fashion, incorporating beliefs and discourses that they draw from a religious intellectual framework, but which may not be perceptible as Christian to their instructors.

Figure 5.1, above, illustrates the matrix of possible options for how marked and unmarked discourses may be implemented and received. A student may mark a paper as explicitly Christian by including discourse, literacy practices, or linguistic strategies from

their religious communities; those marked discourses may be perceptible to the instructor (1). However, a student might also perceive his or her work as marked yet receive no indication that the instructor perceived this self-identification (2). Conversely, an instructor may identify marked literacy practices or discourses in students' writing where students themselves are not aware of these strategies (3). Finally, a student might transfer literacy practices and discourses in an unmarked fashion, and the instructor might receive this work without recognizing any elements that mark the student as Christian (4).

As I bring this section to a close, it is important to note that because students are not always in full control of the ways that their Christian faith may seep into their academic writing, a single academic paper may contain both discourses that are marked as Christian and discourses that remain unmarked. In the pages that follow, I will use the terms marked and unmarked to highlight the ways in which students both consciously and unconsciously signal or suppress their religious identities in their academic and school-related writing.

Marked Christian Discourses and the Stakes of Self-Identification

As I noted in Chapter Four, students and instructors typically identify religiously marked writing with texts that explicitly reference God, faith, church attendance, or certain political and social norms. Within the literature, the writing of Christian college students may also include proselytizing language, Biblical prooftexting, or sermonic rhetoric. The use of these topics and discursive patterns can be productive, particularly if students are drawing on prior knowledge as they work to learn the norms of a new discourse community; they can be also be challenging, particularly when instructors perceive the incorporation of church-related literacy practices and discourses as "negative transfer" of church-based rhetorical strategies and literacy protocols into student writing. In Chapter Four, I also demonstrated that the Christian college students involved in my study typically perceive their faith as unrelated to their academic writing, except in cases where the genre or institutional context for the assignment seems to welcome self-disclosure of a student's religious perspectives.

In this section, I will discuss the writing that students provided as examples of times when they explicitly discussed their religious faith. I draw on conversations with

the students about their writing in order to illuminate the complex motivation that underlie these inclusions. Because qualitative studies are a relatively new approach to studying rhetoric and religious traditions (DePalma & Ringer, 2014; Thomson-Bunn, 2014), the field has only recently begun to offer insights into students' motivations for (or feelings about) using these strategies (DePalma, 2011; Goodburn, 1998; Ringer, 2011, 2013; Thomson, 2009). In this section, I contribute to our understanding of why students may be incorporating explicit reference to their Christianity into their academic writing, and as Nowacek advocates that researchers ought to do (2011), I illustrates the effectiveness of this transfer in light of the students' own decision-making processes.

Of the 29 students I interviewed, nine told me that they had explicitly disclosed their faith in their academic writing. I was able to interview six of these students and—as a part of our initial interviews—to hear the remaining three students describe the writing evoked by the first writing and faith statement.[2] The students who were willing to mark their writing—and therefore themselves—using explicit reference to, or language of, Christianity did so most often when they felt that the nature of the assignment (Thomson, 2009) and its institutional context (Nowacek, 2011) would make such self-disclosure appropriate. The most common genres in which students used language, strategies, or topics that might mark them as Christian were reading responses, journal entries, and application essays, each of which calls on students to present their "personal opinion."

In this section, I show that in cases where students have been invited to share their beliefs, intentional transfer that results in marked texts may be perceived by students and instructors alike as appropriate and can give students the opportunity to think more deeply about how they apply their faith in a range of academic and social contexts. I also show that for some students, this self-disclosure through the use of "marked" writing entails a degree of risk, even in low-stakes writing. I contend that in order to mitigate this risk, students often embed their use of "marked" Christian discourses alongside, or within, discourses that they perceive as reflective of contemporary academic values. In so

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[2] This count includes Jessica's personal statement, discussed at the beginning of chapter four, which she mistakenly remembered as including an explicit discussion of her Christianity. It does not include Patrick, who told me that he thought he "probably" had, but couldn't verify or describe his intuition beyond telling me that if he had, it would have been a "short worthless paper, like two pages or less. Just to get it done. Proof read it quickly."

doing, they position themselves, and their faith, as a vital part of the pluralistic academic community for which they perceive themselves to be writing.

Positioning Faith in Classroom Writing

In this section, I consider the ways that students mark their faith when engaging in low-stakes classroom writing. As noted in Chapter Four, the participants in College Christians typically identify Christian discourses as explicit references to divinity, religious services, church-based organizations (including church camp and Sunday school), a personal relationship with God, personal beliefs, and/or discussion of how those beliefs play out in social relationships. Here, I use writing samples provided by Silence, Elle, Theresa, Lisa, Charlotte, and Naomi to illustrate two patterns that characterize students' integration of marked discourses that they intend their audience to recognize as Christian. The writing assignments that these students shared with me illustrate two possible ways of framing explicitly Christian discourses in academic writing: first, students may use marked Christian discourses when they believe that their religious faith has been invited into the classroom, and therefore, will not be stigmatized or stigmatizing of others. Second, when Christian discourses have not been invited, and religiously engaged Christian students fear that their religious perspectives may evoke a strong response from their audience, they may nonetheless be willing to mark their work. In these cases, students couple their use of marked language and strategies with discourses that enable them to actively position themselves (Davies & Harre, 2007) as students who are engaged participants in the values system of a diverse academic environment.

First, I provide examples of students who use "marked" Christian discourses when they perceive that their religious faith will be welcomed and accepted as appropriate within an academic context. When explicitly invited to discuss their spirituality or beliefs, students typically feel very little risk in the act of disclosing their Christian faith; as Thomson-Bunn suggests, in the context of courses and assignments that welcome their personal experiences, students often feel that religious beliefs are an appropriate topic for discussion (2009), and for this reason, they feel comfortable incorporating their religious beliefs and practices into their academic writing.

In a first year composition course, Silence shared a personal narrative in which he discussed how the death of a friend made him think critically about his relationship to the Christian faith of his childhood. Although Silence explicitly identified his religious upbringing, he did not seem concerned about whether or not it was appropriate to mark himself as Christian because he had been asked to write about a personal experience. Similarly, Elle reported a time when she explicitly disclosed her Christian faith in a reflection that she wrote as a part of a course focused on meditation. She perceived the act of marking her work with Christian discourses as perfectly acceptable because she had been asked to reflect on her experiences with meditation, a topic she connects closely to her Christian spirituality.

Occasionally, a student's perception that Christian discourses may be appropriate for the classroom is accompanied by an unarticulated connection between the student's Christianity and his or her academic work. Charlotte described one course in which she explicitly talked about being a Christian. The course was "basically a volunteer class, so we didn't get a grade for the class but we did have to write papers. It was like a pass or fail." Students in the course volunteered at a homeless shelter, then wrote five brief reflection papers in response to their experiences. Charlotte recalled: "I had talked about my faith probably in like three out of the five. I don't know why, but it just seemed very relevant." While some mature Christians might argue that Charlotte is intuitively responding to the need to ascribe to the homeless a human dignity derived from the image of God, Charlotte does not fully understand what is motivating this response. Like Jimmy and Shelly, who did not identify the academic study of environmental ethics as relevant to their Christian faith, Charlotte has not fully articulated a relationship between Christian faith and academic work, but she does have a nascent understanding of the connection between religious faith and social advocacy. Unlike Jimmy and Shelly, Charlotte finds herself compelled—perhaps by the genre of the personal reflection—to mark her work as Christian, to use writing as a way of creating, exploring, and deepening her understanding of the relationship between Christianity and her experiences at the homeless shelter. This course served as a space in which she could bring together academic and religious discourse, and with further reflection, might help Charlotte

develop not only spiritually, but ethically and intellectually as she learns to articulate why working with the homeless seemed deeply imbricated with her Christian faith.

In the work that Silence, Elle, and Charlotte produced, near transfer (or content to content) transfer is at work, because the content of the course or the assignment invited religious faith. In a class about the New Testament, Lisa also believed that her faith would be appropriate to the context, so she used her personal faith not as the topic of a paper, but as the foundation from which to launch an academic argument. Lisa was tasked to review a book about the historical significance of the Virgin Mary. When I asked her to describe the assignment, she said: "I almost want to say book report but you're supposed to bring your own beliefs into it also. So, like a glorified book report." Under other circumstances, the "book report" as a genre might have deterred Lisa from writing about her faith, because the genre evokes an emphasis on "facts." But Lisa was tasked to "bring [her] own beliefs into it," a linguistic move by the instructor that opened up space for Lisa to reflect her own experiences as a Christian. Both the content and the method demanded by this assignment made Lisa feel that discussion of her religion would be welcome. As she stated, "It was such a question about religion that I couldn't really look at it without bringing my views into play."

Lisa opens her book review with her personal faith in an effort create a research space (Swales, 1990):

> My education in the New Testament began in the days of felt boards and Veggie Tales. I learned the stories of Mary that most people think of when Mary, the mother of Jesus, is mentioned. … In some ways, Mary is seen as wearing the Scarlet Letter at this time. She has the willpower to except [sic] the role that was given to her and not back done [sic] from what God has asked of her even in a society where what appears to be her situation is disgraced. These key examples are able to exemplify Mary's role, but interestingly, the stories that she is most known for all include her role as the mother of Jesus. Her identity is not often referred to as the first believer or the beginning of the Church, but the Mother of God.

What is notable about this excerpt is Lisa's recognition that her childhood beliefs about the Bible were not only limited, but limited in part because of the intertextuality that shaped her youthful interpretations. This type of intertextual engagement is one more literacy practice—like those I discussed in Chapter Three—that has the potential to serve as a resource for students' academic engagement. Indeed, Lisa's introduction reflects a

degree of bemusement about the way that a girl who learned about Christ's incarnation from innocent, non-sexualized sources like Veggie Tales and flannel boards, can realized one day that, in her mind, the mother of Jesus most closely resembles Hester Prynne. Until Lisa read the book that she was reviewing, Mary was little more than the suspect and somewhat shameful body that gave birth to Jesus. It is in this disjunction that Lisa locates her research question, and finds herself ready to rethink her previous beliefs.

In the final sentence above, Lisa cues her readers to the way that the paper will build on her personal experiences with faith as a contrast to what she has learned by reading an historical account of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The paper makes the argument that "Mary's role as the mother of Jesus and a women [sic] in 1st Century CE led to the creation of faith in the early believers, a critical element to the development of the Christian religion." In the context of a course about the New Testament, Lisa knows that she can use her religious faith as a resource. She crafts a review that summarizes the book under discussion while simultaneously reflecting development in her intellectual understanding, and—as she revealed in our interview—her spiritual connection to the mother of Jesus. Just as Lisa's faith informed this piece of academic writing, so the academic task helped her engage her faith in new and welcome ways.

Like Nathanial in Chapter Three, whose academic engagement with the Bible resulted in a creative tension between academic and religious ways of reading, Lisa told me that she was able to integrate an academic perspective on the Bible into her understanding of her own Christianity. Although the remainder of the paper remains relatively unmarked, Lisa pointed to a single instance in which she did not plan to mark her writing but did so subconsciously. In the paper, she writes that without Mary, "we would not have had the birth of the Messiah, of Jesus." During our interview, Lisa commented that a discerning reader might mark her use of the word *Messiah* (and her reliance on the term as an appositive) as evidence of her Christianity. As an insider to the Christian community, I had not marked this usage. This oversight highlights the complexities of creation and reception: it is possible for instructors to miss markers that a student intended, or to perceive markers that the student did not intend. Later in this chapter, I will discuss the challenges and opportunities that arise from this fact, particularly as they relate to an instructor's interest in engaging students in deeper

conversation about their non-academic interests. In this case, because she perceived her use of Christian discourses as welcome in that classroom, Lisa was intrigued (but ot concerned) to discover an unintended use of marked discourse.

In cases where students' academic faith is not invited, students may nonetheless use marked discourses in an effort to build bridges between academic and religious contexts. I now turn to writing provided by Theresa, Charlotte, and Naomi to illustrate the ways that students may couch their faith in discourses that they associate with the public university when they fear that marking themselves as Christian may evoke negative reactions from their audience. Charlotte was one of the few students in the study (along with Brian, who I discussed in Chapter Four) who reported a classroom experience that made her feel as though her faith was under direct attack. Her response was a defiant assertion of her religious identity. Charlotte—who does *not* identify as feminist—felt that her religious faith had been stigmatized when she was asked, in a women's studies course, to read an article discussing religious women and sexuality. Unlike Brian, whose response to a direct attack was to fence his faith, Charlotte explicitly discussed her Christianity because she wanted to defend a group of women with whom she *does* identify: "religious women, or religious girls." In our first interview, she described the reading she had been asked to do, and her response to it:

> It was basically calling religious women, or religious girls, prudes and that they didn't feel like they needed to be in … the whole class is like perspectives in women's health, so it was how they didn't feel like they need to be intact with their sexuality until they were married, and how they're just like goody-goody Christian girls. I kind of got mad. In my paper about it I was like, this author first of all lessens her audience because a lot of people right there would disagree with her and not really want to listen to the rest of the things that she says.

At the core of Charlotte's negative response to this article is anger at what she takes to be a personal affront. Although Charlotte did not choose to disclose to me her personal sexual ethic, as a contemporary college student with a boyfriend, she has likely been faced with the need to make choices about how to exercise her sexuality. Moreover, because she is a member of College Christians and was raised in a Mainline Protestant church, one cannot assume that she has adopted a traditional Evangelical "abstinence until marriage" model of sexuality. Additionally, she recognizes that abstinence until marriage is not a position typically advocated in a women's studies class. For these

reasons, Charlotte has a strong response to the paper; she reads the author as arguing that all religious women are prudes, out of touch with their sexuality. Note, however, that while her gut response is related to her personal experiences as a religious woman, she couches her resistance in rhetorical terms: "In my paper about it I was like, this author …lessens her audience because a lot of people … would disagree with her and not really want to listen to the rest of the things that she says." Charlotte is indeed resistant to the ways that her primary community has been depicted, but rather than resisting solely on the grounds of religion, Charlotte uses the tools of academic rhetorical studies—namely audience analysis—to justify both her resistance and her self-disclosure as a Christian.

Fortunately, the threat of stigmatization need not always result in the type of frustration that Charlotte experienced. Theresa's "Friendship in Literature course" (featured in the introduction to this study), included academic study of the Bible, but biblical study was neither the purpose of the course nor Theresa's primary motivation for taking it. Throughout the semester, Theresa worked closely with a discussion partner: together, they would select a topic to discuss in class, and after their discussion, they would follow up with an email exchange in which they would copy the professor. Because the goal was to develop a semester long "friendship of the mind," Theresa chose to disclose her Christianity in the context of weekly emails with her partner, but she also worried that discussion of her religious faith might cause discomfort in their relationship. When they read passages from the Christian Bible (particularly the Gospels), Theresa and her partner regularly disagreed, or found their ideas in tension. Theresa ascribed these tensions to both gender and religious affiliation—she is a Protestant Christian woman, and her partner is a secular Jewish man.

As I noted in Chapter Three, the students of College Christians are unlikely to identify disagreements as "conflicts"; the sample email exchange that Theresa provided offers just such an example of the way that a student can simultaneously mark her writing as Christian and utilize hedging in an attempt to preserve a relationship with her peers. During class, Theresa and her discussion partner experienced tension related to their interpretations of Jesus's claims of exclusivity. In her email response after the class, Theresa recognized that she would need to disagree with her partner, so before articulating her own position, she engaged in politeness maneuvers that were designed to

help her maintain a positive relationship with him and help both of them save face in front of their professor (Brown, Levinson, & Gumperz, 1987). "I would say that yes, we disagreed on some points," she began, "but some of it might have just been misunderstanding too!" The remainder of Theresa's email attempted to differentiate points of genuine disagreement from points of misunderstanding. She sought to explain Jesus's claims to exclusivity by interpreting the passage they had discussed in class in the context of Jesus's broader teachings.[3] In this email, Theresa simultaneously sought to justify her Christian commitments and maintain relationships with both her discussion partner and her professor. Her use of a face-saving move ("but some of it might be misunderstanding too!") suggests that Theresa is highly aware that marking her perspectives as explicitly Christian will have a rhetorical impact on both her and her partner. It also illustrates that some Christian students have access to rhetorical resources that enable them to disclose a Christian identity without alienating themselves from the non-Christian members of their academic community. That is, Theresa's sense that her Christianity might be both stigmatized and stigmatizing does not necessitate that she leave it at the classroom door. It merely necessitates framing that faith in ways that assist in the maintenance of relationship.

Like Theresa, Naomi—a senior Spanish and psychology major—perceived an opportunity to disclose her faith in a low-stakes writing assignment, and like Theresa, she used discursive hedging maneuvers to position herself as a vital part of an academic context that she believed might not be friendly to the inclusion of Christian discourses. While Theresa's emails use broadly available linguistic maneuvers (hedging) to couch

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[3] Theresa's interpretation of Jesus's exclusivity claims mirrors the language used by College Christians leaders to suggest that Christian students struggle with faith every bit as much as other students. In response to her partner's resistance to Jesus's exclusivity claims, Theresa writes:

> Jesus often (elsewhere) reinforces that salvation comes with grace – that all humans are sinful and that the type of sin doesn't differentiate one human from another in concept in God's eyes. That is, that all humans are guilty and imperfect, period. Thus, salvation comes not to those that are above the others, but rather to those that seek that which will give them grace for their transgressions. Rephrased, seeking and loving Jesus doesn't make people better than those who don't; it simply provides grace for the universal human condition. From this passage [the passage under discussion during class], the larger theme of grace isn't clear, but this is my interpretation based on a larger slice of the Bible.

Theresa's interpretive approach in this email—an insistence that an individual passage of Scripture must be read in light of the broader Biblical narrative—is the same approach she took in her "Vulnerability in Friendship" paper, which suggests that while she may not have explicitly identified as Christian in that particular paper, the professor may have been interpreting her reading of the book of Job in light of what he already knew about her beliefs.

her marked use of literacy practices and Christian discourses, Naomi uses broadly available public discourses to couch her use of both content and linguistic strategies that will certainly mark her work as Christian. In a 400-level psychology course, Naomi wrote a brief reflection titled "What optimism looks like in my life." She opens her reflection by discussing a series of advertisements that she saw in a New York Airport: the advertisements featured the same image three different times, each time with a different set of modifying descriptors. Naomi recognizes these ads as a nod to perspectivalism and the social construction of meaning. In the written response, she argues that "these ads helped me better understand how optimism works and how it can be defined differently, as it looks different to everyone." On the heels of this nod to pluralism—a value that many would associate with academic, rather than religious values—Naomi goes on to elaborate the source of optimism in her own life:

> The root of optimism in my life has been my faith and my relationship with my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I use the Bible as words to live by. To me, God always has a positive and optimistic answer. My faith is motivating. I say, "It's impossible," and He says, "All things are possible" (Luke 18:27). I say, "I'm too tired" and He says, "I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28-30). I say, "I can't do it" and He says, "You can do all things" (Philippians 4:13). I say, "I feel all alone" and He says, "I will never leave you or forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). I've been consumed by the optimism that I get from my faith. I've been motivated by it, and it makes my life possible. Some may call me narrow-minded, that I only see optimism through my religion; perhaps, this is why I was so drawn to the HSBC ads, because they show the power of different perspectives.

Note here how Naomi takes conscious ownership of her choice to disclose her Christian faith, using highly marked language such as "Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." Note also that she ties her belief in Jesus closely to her reading of the Bible and uses rhythmic parallelism (reminiscent of sermonic rhetoric) to communicate her energy and passion for the topic.

Contemporary scholarship has offered varying opinions on the appropriateness of the type of "proof-texting" that Naomi exercises in this passage: some scholars would reject her glossing of Scripture as shallow, an uncritical engagement with verses taken out of context (Downs, 2005; Goodburn, 1998). Others might consider her self-identification as a believer and her use of Scripture appropriate in this type of low-stakes, reflective assignment (Thomson, 2009). What is significant for the purposes of this study,

however, is not whether or not Naomi reads the Bible "correctly," but rather that her Pentecostal upbringing has taught her that it is appropriate to use favorite biblical passages as means of emotional engagement and support in difficult times. Because the assignment evokes "near transfer" by asking her to reflect on the notion of "optimism"— a topic that seems to be about (and therefore to invite) emotion—Naomi feels justified implementing in the classroom a set of discursive and literacy practices that she may have developed in a church-related context.

The rhetorical choices that Naomi makes in this passage demonstrate that she is aware that some academic readers might reject her use of Scripture; as a result, she only introduces her faith after acknowledging that meaning may be socially constructed. She then reaches out to those who might feel some skepticism about her belief system: in the closing clause—"perhaps, this is why I was so drawn to the HSBC ads because they show the power of different perspectives"—Naomi implicitly claims that it is the very situatedness of her faith, coupled with her recognition that Christianity is one option among many, that legitimates her discussion of faith in this academic context. She couples explicit reflection on her faith with a discursive emphasis on acknowledging and valuing multiple viewpoints, a value (as we saw in Chapter Three) that is shared by both College Christians and the broader academic community. In so doing, she seeks to make space in academic discourse communities not only for her religious belief but for the act of quoting Scripture, a literacy protocol that would often be perceived by analysts as a "misstep" in the writing classroom. Like each of the writers in this section, Naomi recognizes that even in a low-stakes written response, she must contextualize her Christianity for a pluralistic audience.

Examining Naomi's transfer of church-related literacy practices in terms of how it marks her text as Christian offers several advantages. First, it enables instructors to move beyond the simple question of whether or not this instance of transfer is "successful." By considering the ways in which Naomi's choices simultaneously situate her within what she believes to be accepted discourses about the value of diversity and mark her as Christian, an instructor can move beyond an assessment of how Naomi engages her Christianity, and instead engage with the choice to deploy her out-of-school literacy practices in ways that resonate more or less effectively as she moves among discourse

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communities (Nowacek, 2011; Russell, 1995). Secondly, using the language of "marked" discourses might help instructors develop a more nuanced understanding of why students may be choosing to integrate church-related discourses and literacy practices into their academic writing. Each of the students discussed in this section integrated religious faith into their academic writing sought to engage productively in academic spaces, even when they were concerned that their faith might be unwelcome. While not all religiously engaged Christian students adopt such a cooperative disposition, assessing students' writing not in terms of success, but in terms of when and why it may be marked as Christian, can provide instructors with a setoff questions and conversation pieces that might facilitate the development of a meta-language for students' future agentive transfer of marked Christian discourses and literacy practices.

Polyvocality: Setting the Stage for Unmarked Discourses

In this section, I offer a closer look at papers that draw on both marked and unmarked discourses. I use two samples of student writing—provided by Jason and David—in which students simultaneously make use of "marked" discourses alongside polyvocalic language that exploits shared discourses. In many cases—like those we will examine in the next section—polyvocalic language might go unmarked in students' academic writing. I introduce the notion of polyvocality here, however, because these discourses may be more visible when coupled with students' explicit disclosure of their Christianity.

I begin with Jason's application to the business program at Midwest University, a high stakes genre that evokes from Jason both the desire to disclose his Christian identity and a perception that he might need to mitigate the effects of close identification with Christian communities. Like the low-stakes responses discussed above, college and graduate school entrance essays[4] not only invite self-disclosure, they position students in such a way that they must adopt a persona in which they are willing to share their personal stories (Bawarshi, 2003; Ivanic, 1998). For this reason, these genres are relatively likely evoke students' use of marked Christian discourses. Unlike classroom

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[4] Although some might hesitate to identify application essays as "academic" writing, application essays are clearly a part of the larger genre networks that comprise academic writing (Paltridge, 2012; Swales, 1990); students who associate application essays with "academic" or "classroom genres" are justified in so doing.

responses, however, these essays are high-stakes: more than simply a grade, these essays offer the opportunity for *belonging* within a new community. In this context, rather than simply contextualizing their faith within the values of the academic community, students must show that their values directly align with those of the academic community they seek to join. The result is often explicit self-disclosure coupled with the use of polyvocalic language that resonates with both academic and Christian viewpoints.

When he applied to the undergraduate business major at Midwest University, Jason was asked to explain how his personal values and extracurricular activities had prepared him to be successful in the business program. He chose to disclose his Christianity in these essays, and when I asked if he thought disclosing his religious affiliation was risky, he (like Naomi) positioned his religious affiliation as an identity category that makes him "diverse":

> I've always lived my life to be who you are. Be honest about yourself. Don't be somebody fake, and don't wear a mask. I really tried to show that in these essays because they are looking for different types of people, and sometimes, it can be looked down upon to be a Christian because of a lot of hypocritical actions that have been done. But I wanted to really express myself in the exact way that I felt like I had lived my life and the things that I had wanted to pursue. If I wasn't going to get in because of that, then I don't belong there in the first place.

By marking his text as Christian, Jason is concerned that he may suggest he "doesn't belong there." As I noted in Chapter One, Christian students like Jason often equate the disestablishment of Christianity as a foundational part of college intellectual life with the belief that Christianity is embattled on college campuses. Thus, although Jason believes that his Christianity makes him "diverse" (and therefore a viable candidate for acceptance), he also believes that he may have to contend with a long-instantiated resistance to Christianity.

To show that he does *belong* to the business program, Jason relies on the heteroglossic nature of language (Bakhtin, 1982) to position himself within discourses of leadership, collaboration, planning, and strategic decision-making that are shared between College Christians and the business program. He uses this heteroglossic language to downplay potential tensions between his professional and church-related domains (Scott, 2007) and seeks to tie his explicitly marked Christian beliefs to the business program's mission. In one essay he writes:

As a Christian, my greatest goal in life is to glorify God in everything that I do. I want to use the qualities he [God] has instilled in me to the best of my capability. [The business program] would help me further establish these assets as I would be faced with leadership opportunities in group projects, pushing my limits to succeed in school, competing with others for top positions in the business world, and making friendships with other great future leaders who are a part of this program.

In this passage, Jason not only marks himself as Christian, he *wants* to be marked as Christian. He recognizes, however, that he would be unwise to associate himself only with a community whose influence on his ethical and intellectual development might compete with the business program.

As a result, Jason relies on heteroglossic language to smooth over potential competing discourses that might cause the admissions committee to question his fit. The ethnically-affiliated Protestant denomination in which Jason was raised values thrift and professional success, so it should not be surprising that he identifies God-given character qualities not as gifts (a more traditional Christian usage), but as "assets." Similarly, he couples "competing … for top positions" with "making friendships" a primary value of College Christians, and he presents these as unquestioned values, despite the fact that during our interview he told me that this competition creates pressure to cheat. In fact, he identified the pressure to cheat as the primary way that the business program challenges his faith.

As I noted earlier, Christian privilege is a reality on many college campuses nationwide, but the displacement of Christian values—coupled with a presumption that the university values religious diversity—leads many Christian students to perceive their religious identity as suspect. They then channel their sense of difference into the language of "diversity," a discursive positioning that is designed to remind the Midwest University community that religious students do in fact belong in an academic environment. Just as Naomi uses this language to defend herself against potential perceptions that she is narrow-minded, Jason asserts that if the business program doesn't accept him, he doesn't "belong there in the first place." Both Naomi and Jason believe that their faith should be acceptable to the Midwest Community but feel that they need to use the language of diversity to reinforce this argument in case the audience to whom they are writing disagrees.

Because the stakes of a classroom writing response are low, Naomi asks the university to accept her belief and her modes of developing and expressing that belief. Jason, in contrast, simultaneously creates and relies on shared discourses. Jason believes that the genre of the application essay justifies his choice to explicitly mark the work as Christian. At the same time, he acknowledges and exploits values shared among both his Christian community and the business program. In this case, Jason's use of heteroglossia may be more visible to the admissions committee receiving this paper than it might be if he had not disclosed his faith. While Jason and Naomi use different strategies, each marks their transfer of church-related literacy practices and discourses in such a way as to incentivize their audience to accept their religious ways of knowing and doing as appropriate to the academic context.

David represents another model, and another situation, in which unmarked, polyvocalic discourses may become more visible in part because of a student's explicit self-disclosure of religious faith. While Jason's writing shows that students can use both marked and unmarked discourses to strategically position themselves for acceptance within the broader university environment, David models the use of unmarked discourses simply because those discourses resonate most deeply with the ways that he seeks to construct an identity in relation to multiple communities.

David, like the students we have examined so far in this chapter, shared a piece of personal writing (a "personal manifesto") he composed in a capstone course titled "Creativity at Work." Although this piece of writing is relatively low-stakes academically, it signals a significant, high-stakes transition in David's life. When I interviewed him, David had just gotten a job and was preparing to say goodbye to his family and friends in the Midwest before moving to Colorado. He described this assignment as a "reflection, goal setting, centering type paper as far as defining what's gotten you to this point, where you want to be in the future and what's going to help you get there." He added, "A lot of that has been faith based for me, and so it felt natural just to include that in part of the paper." This assignment explicitly invited David to be "personal," and as a result, he felt comfortable declaring himself a "person of faith." Unlike some of his peers in College Christians who might identify as "Christian" or as "followers of Jesus," David opts instead to talk about God and faith. David's preference

for the broad concepts "God" and "faith" are reflective of his Mainline Protestant upbringing, his low-key personality, and his strong affinity to Phil (the College Christians pastor who also works for the Mainline Protestant church).

David's willingness to identify with God and faith reveals that he is willing to disclose his Christian faith, but in his "Personal Manifesto," David attempts to create a truly heteroglossic vocabulary that enables him to integrate his spiritual, professional,[5] and social life:

> There are two main phrases that I use as guiding principles for my life. The first appears on the back of a necklace that my mother gave to me as a child. "Do Right, Do Best, Respect." The second comes from a book that I read early on in my golf career. "See it, Feel it, Trust it." These two phrases not only are significant because of their simplicity and meaning at face value, they are also deeply rooted reminders of how I should live out my faith on a daily basis.

Although one can imagine the Judeo-Christian ethic underlying the phrase "do right, do best, respect," these two "catch phrases" are broadly secular. In fact, the second, "see it, feel it, trust it" comes from David's passion for extracurricular participation on the golf team at his high school and as a caddy during his summers off from taking college coursework. These catch-phrases are excellent examples of "unmarked" Christian discourse: had David not identified as a person of faith, there would be no reason for a reader to associate these phrases with David's faith. Internally, however, David imbues these "secular" phrases from other domains of his life with spiritual meaning by attaching to them a theological interpretation of what it means to "do right" and who he wants to "trust."

While some might take these phrases as evidence of David's unwillingness to make the sorts of explicit, uncompromising statements about his faith that characterize Jason and Naomi's writing, David argues that the universality of these statements is precisely what makes them so powerful:

> I think that's one of those things: As I try to transition some of this … faith-based stuff into me as a college student right now, that's kind of the intersection between those two things. … People can understand it at a surface level, whatever it is, but then I understand it differently. And that it is a reminder that those two worlds

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[5] Because David majors in organizational studies (a field that combines both psychology and business studies), the academic and professional domains of his life are more closely tied than they might be for other students.

[college and Christian faith] need to be married somehow. And I think that's kind of why it works.

As David works to integrate his "faith-based stuff" into his collegiate life, he recognizes polysemy in the phrases that have guided him, and he celebrates the power of their strategic ambiguity (Ceccarelli, 1998). [6] By couching his proclamation of faith in discourses accessible to a pluralistic audience, David reminds himself of one of the truths he holds deeply: his Christian faith should be an integral part of his daily activities in and amongst the pluralistic university without creating an insurmountable barrier between them.

In the case of both David and Jason, polyvocalic writing gains its strategic power in part because it is coupled with the students' explicit identification as a religious person. As in all of the marked writing discussed in this section, these polyvocalic discourses, which might otherwise go unnoticed, function as a mechanism by which David and Jason are able to position themselves within multiple discourse communities. In fact, unlike the marked discourses so commonly used to represent students' failure to engage academic communities, all of the marked discourses in this section are evidence that the students have taken a confidence vote in support of Midwest University's role in their academic and spiritual lives. Even Charlotte's resistant response to her women's studies course can be taken as a show of good faith, an effort to employ rhetorical practices in advocacy for her community. Moreover, these students all reveal that the inclusion of marked discourses can be a tool by which students make sense of the relationships between academic and religious communities.

Unmarked Christian Discourses: The Cooperative Model in Use

In the last section, I discussed writing that students clearly marked as Christian and that they intended audiences to receive as marked (the first position marked by the

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[6] Given David's reliance on polysemy here, it is also tempting to read David's use of "person of faith" as a strategic ambiguity that would enable his writing to appeal to readers of multiple faith traditions. This assumption, however, would belie the fact that David did not anticipate sharing this assignment with anyone or receiving any feedback on this assignment. The purpose of the assignment, he believed, was to "make you a better a student," by encouraging individuals to "pin down what you want and kind of flesh through some of that—how you can tangibly make it happen or what's worked for you in the past." While a logic of strategic ambiguity that can facilitate interfaith dialogue might indeed underlie David's broader use of "person of faith" as his most common religious identifier, David himself did not make this argument.

diagram in Figure 5.1). In order to introduce the distinction between "marked" and "unmarked" discourses—discourses which are determined largely by the ways that they are received by their audience—I also provided examples of students who included both types of discourses in their writing. In this section, I will focus on the writing that students either discussed or provided that I have classified as "unmarked." This work contains discursive content, literacy practices, and linguistic or rhetorical patterns that the students' might associate with their faith, but which an audience might not associate with Christian faith.

Writing that utilizes unmarked discourses differs from compartmentalized writing primarily in the ways that students position the discourse communities that they are navigating. Students who compartmentalize church-related and academic ways of knowing and doing construct these domains as existing in relative isolation from each other (a model most closely related to the oppositional model, Figure 1.5). While they may see the possibility to build bridges between these discourse communities, they do not seek to exploit preexisting shared discourses. Students who transfer religious discourses into writing that appears unmarked typically position their academic and religious communities as existing in cooperative relationship (see Figure 1.4). As we saw in the first chapter, a cooperative model of the relationship between academic and religious domains makes space for shared literacy practices, discourses, epistemologies, subjectivities and dispositions toward reading and writing. This model suggests that students may be able to engage their religious beliefs and church-related literacy protocols in the classroom without explicitly marking their work, or themselves, as Christian. Students who use these strategies engage knowledge and skills that derive from both the religious and academic domains.

As an example of the difference between unmarked discourses and rhetorically aware compartmentalization, consider Amy, a second year public health student, who commented that she had thought about her Christianity when composing a journal entry about "privilege" in a sociology class. Amy characterizes this classroom writing as "writing about people, about how I see the world and how it pertains to me with some of these definitions, and terminology we learn about." Some students might be tempted to compartmentalize the realm of facts, definitions, and terminology from their religious

faith, and as we saw in Chapter Four, Amy does sometimes compartmentalize these domains. However, in her sociology class, Amy sees common ground between her personal faith and the topics she is being asked to explore: "You can't help but when you're thinking about yourself to think about where you've come from and your background. … I grew up in a Christian environment. I don't go into tons of detail about my faith." Amy suggests that her religious background influences how she thinks about notions of socio-cultural and economic privilege, but she argues that this does not require her to "go into tons of detail" about the fact that she identifies as a Christian. Because Amy is working from a cooperative model in which her religious and academic communities share some overlapping discourse, she can simultaneously reflect on her faith and fulfill the assignment by writing about people and definitions. Those places where Amy uses or reflects back on what she learned from growing up "in a Christian environment" without explicitly naming her faith would be "unmarked" Christian discourses.

As noted above, writing that draws on unmarked uses of Christian discourses or literacy practices emerged most commonly—but not solely—in response to the third writing and faith statement: *Since coming to college, I have written a paper that made me think about my religious faith, or in which I drew on religious beliefs and principles, but in which I did not directly discuss the fact that I am a Christian.* A total of fifteen students[7] assented to this statement. In our initial interviews, I asked students to describe the assignments that came to mind in response to this statement; I then explored the function of unmarked discourses in writing samples provided by five of the six students with whom I conducted follow-up interviews. This section examines these compositions, each of which included Christian discourses that students integrated in an unmarked fashion and that students believed were received as unmarked (the fourth position marked by the diagram in Figure 5.1).

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[7] This count includes Elle, who could not provide a sample paper but argued—as we saw in Chapter Four—that even if she cannot identify the impact of faith in her writing, it is all informed by faith: her writing is based on her personal interests, and her personal interests are shaped by her faith. As above, this count also does not include Patrick, who responded that he had "probably" written such a paper, but whose explanation for his responses most closely aligns with the reasoning of students in chapter four who compartmentalize their faith.

Unmarked Use of Content and Procedures in "Near" Transfer

As I demonstrated in the fourth chapter, many Christian students most clearly perceive connections between their faith and their academic pursuits when they are being asked to write *about* religious experiences, religious history, religious figures, or religious principles in an academic context. Even if a student chooses not to disclose his or her Christian faith when writing about these topics, the inclusion of religion in the academic domain facilitates transfer. Theorists recognize this connection as the "identical elements" model of transfer, which closely corresponds to the principles of content-to-content and "near" transfer (Haskell, 2000). Here, I provide examples of student writing in which students' use of content-to-content or "near" transfer negates the need for students to explicitly self-identify by marking their writing as Christian. In the cases I explore here, I show that for some students, use of near transfer can activate church-related literacy practices and protocols that can serve as resources in the classroom. For other students, topical and thematic overlaps with religious discourses have potential to override students' understanding of the literacy practices and protocols that are appropriate in an academic setting.

In Nathanial's case, an instance of near transfer prompted him to utilize discourses and literacy practices that he took up in College Christians to support academic analysis of the Bible. When I asked Nathanial if he had written a paper that made him think about religious faith, or in which he drew on religious principle without disclosing his faith, he immediately thought of a paper that he wrote in a course focused on Jesus and the Gospels. In this paper, Nathaniel undertook an historical analysis, comparing the "Calling of the Disciples" narrative across the Synoptic Gospels. Analyzing this narrative through an historical lens, Nathanial argued that "Luke is probably the best account, because they knew each other and he was preaching before instead of just some random guy saying 'Hey, look, come follow me.'" Nathanial's preference for Luke's story over the other Synoptic Gospels is closely linked to the value for friendship and community that draws him to College Christians. Although he did not explicitly disclose his own Christianity in the paper, Nathanial nonetheless used this paper, which he believed was unmarked as Christian, to reflect on his Christianity. Because Nathanial—like many of the College Christians—articulates his Christian

beliefs primarily in relationship to specific reflection on the divine, or on his personal religious activities, he identified his paper as an opportunity to reflect on his faith, despite the fact that he did not mark his paper as Christian.

It is also important to note here that while Nathanial points to content-to-content transfer as the primary reason that he thought about his faith in this paper, this paper is also an excellent example of how a novice reader's openness to new strategies for reading the Bible can function as a resource when students seek to bridge gaps between church-related and academic ways of knowing. Those who imagine Christian students accepting the Bible as received and unquestionable truth might be surprised that Nathanial is comfortable positioning one of the Gospels as "the best account" over and above the others. While some Christian students might seek to resolve apparent discrepancies between these synoptic narratives, for Nathaniel, the distinction between content and procedure is an asset: as we saw in Chapter Three, Nathaniel is a novice Bible reader. Because of the intellectual openness that accompanies this novice stance, he has learned that he can read the Bible either devotionally or historically, and he believes that these potentially conflicting approaches can exist in creative tension. In this paper, Nathanial's use of content-to-content transfer—that is, his ability to see Jesus engaging in the same kinds of friendship so deeply valued in College Christians—works in conjunction with what he has learned about procedures for reading the Bible in an academic context. He does not feel tension about being asked to provide an historical critique of the Gospels rather than engaging in the kind of Ignatian reflection encouraged by the campus ministry because he believes the Bible has devotional value even if its historical accounts do not align precisely. Rather, the process of imagining the story enables him to craft an argument that analytically engages among the multiple biblical narratives.

However, a similar experience in Tim's history class demonstrates that when two learning contexts seems similar, content-related transfer and procedural transfer can also align in such as a way as to obscure students' ability to see subtle but important distinctions between discourse communities. When I asked Tim to say more about a paper in which he thought about—but did not explicitly discuss—his Christianity, Tim immediately thought of a history class, in which he had written a biographical sketch of the eighteenth-century emancipated poet and preacher Jupiter Hammon. This paper gave

Tim the chance to think about his Christian faith because the topic he chose felt "near" to the principles and figures he values in the campus ministry. However, this paper also shows that a content-orientation can sometimes impede students' execution of academic procedures. Like Nathanial's reflection on Jesus calling the Disciples, the content of Tim's paper—an analysis of Hammon's life that included reflection on his sermons—immediately evoked Tim's sense that the paper was rooted in, without explicitly identifying, his Christianity. Overall, Tim's assessment of the paper is correct: in general, he does not explicitly or intentionally mark the work as Christian; the paper offers a summary and synthesis of the academic sources he engaged in the history class. The content of this paper engages Tim's religious sensibilities and in so doing, facilitates the creation of a paper in which he can integrate his faith and his academic learning without explicitly revealing his Christian faith.

It is interesting to note, however, that religious discourses can be unruly, and can permeate an academic text even when students may not intend to mark their writing as Christian. Tim's biographical sketch does contain one passage in which he transfers his Christian belief in a way that some readers might receive as a marker of his Christianity. In a passage grappling with the "paradox of the Enlightenment," Tim points out that "Hammon's parents were brought by terrible force of passage to America, but in America awaited beautiful Christianity, which teaches that everyone is equal and everyone should treat each other with respect." In this passage, Tim's passion for his own Christianity is evoked by Hammon's preaching and is exemplified by his contemporary interpretation of the Bible as teaching "that everyone is equal." Tim's appreciation of contemporary Christian discourses obscures his ability to recognize that many slave-owners used the Bible to justify slavery. Although Tim acknowledges that Hammon uses the Bible to argue that "it is a plain command of God for us to obey our masters (Hammon 859)," he allows his own contemporary interpretations of Christian theology to override the historical realities under discussion. As with Lisa's paper about the Virgin Mary, Tim does not realize that he has marked his belief in this way.

Tim spends the majority of the paper analyzing the circumstances of Hammon's life in light of Enlightenment principles, and these elements of the paper do not mark him as Christian. However, his desire to build content-related connections between

Hammon's belief and his own leads him to apply historical critiques only to Hammon's life, and not to his own understanding of Christianity. Tim's desire to create coherence between Hammon's love of God and his own is the result of near/content-to-content transfer, as is the fact that he misinterprets historic Christianity in light of contemporary Christian discourses. While the motivations, procedures, and protocols by which students interact with religious topics in the academic domain may differ from how they would engage these ideas in a religious context, the similarity of topics has the potential to override students' perception of these differences. The papers provided by Nathanial and Tim suggest a need for a nuanced understanding of the relationship between content related transfer and procedural transfer: in some circumstances, closely related content can evoke effective transfer of reading and writing protocols from one context to another. In other cases, however, closely related can obscure the need to approach a single topic in context-appropriate ways.

Theoretical Transfer

Another mode of transfer that can results in writing that is not marked as Christian derives from a theoretical orientation toward building connections between the academic and religious domains. Haskell identifies "theoretical transfer" as "understanding deep level relationships of cause and effect in one area that can be transferred to another" (2000, p. 31). In other words, for twelve of the fifteen students who responded "yes" to the statement that they had drawn on religious faith without directly discussing faith, religion is most salient in their academic writing not when they are self-disclosing or talking about religiously-oriented topics, but when they are using religious principle as a theoretical foundation for their thinking. By calling attention to students' use of theoretical transfer, I use this section to reveal a mode of religious engagement with academic writing that has not yet been discussed in the field of composition and rhetoric. I argue that students can use theoretical transfer in multiple ways to help them construct models for productive relationship between academic and religious ways of knowing.

One way that students use theoretical transfer is by drawing on shared discourses in order to create coherence between their academic, extracurricular, and professional domains of their lives. For example, Bethany, a psychology major who works for a local branch of the YMCA, argues that her academic work is "strong because of my personal

passion, and my personal passion is because of my spirituality." Likewise, she told me, her professional experiences at the YMCA are also motivated by her personal faith. Like Elle, John, and David, Bethany believes that any writing that is motivated from her personal experiences will necessarily incorporate principles from her religious belief. For this reason, Bethany argues that even though a paper about coaching girls' basketball "may not seem very religious, talking about building relationships between girls so that they learn and grow is great because it connects all three [work life, academic life, and spiritual life]." Bethany's Christian spirituality, which manifests in part as a strong belief in the value of relationships to foster human flourishing, is the theoretical foundation for a paper about the value of coaching girls' basketball. She was able to write about her personally-motivated professional experiences in the academic domain of her life, and consequently, she created work that coherently extended from her religious faith into the classroom, even though she never directly referred to her personal spirituality in the paper.

Jason's scholarly approach to academic argumentation creates a similar coherence, and also illustrates that students are simultaneously able to make rhetorical choices about when to mark religion in a paper, and when to include it in an unmarked fashion. Jason's application to the business program took advantage of similarities between his religious and academic communities to craft a space for explicit mention of his Christianity, but he recognizes that the genre of an academic argument requires him to position his faith in a different way. In a 200-level academic argument course offered by the English department at Midwest, Jason built on these same shared discourses of community and leadership, but in this instance, he did so in ways that would not clearly mark him as Christian. The students were tasked to develop a researched argument that was related to the Midwest University community. Jason is an athletic young man who enjoys outdoor adventures. In addition to his participation in the campus ministry, he volunteers with a Christian organization that reaches out to middle school and Jr. High students, practicing the same type of "relationship evangelism" that characterizes College Christians.

Combining his passion for working with pre-teens with his love of sports, Jason chose to compose an argument in which he advocated that Midwest University ban

spectators from shouting profanity during its collegiate sporting events. In this paper, Jason never explicitly self-identifies as a Christian, but his religious convictions are apparent in both the topic he has selected and the argument that he makes. Jason's argument is built on the premise that institutionally-sanctioned use of profanity is a social ill that may have a negative impact on children. He argues that a public university, as an institution that seeks the public good, has a responsibility to incentivize an atmosphere that is welcoming to individuals of all ages; he suggests that although profanity cannot be entirely eliminated, it is the university's responsibility to discourage this behavior.

In this paper, Jason transfers knowledge from his faith community by adapting his religious beliefs to a social commonplace that is rooted in his Judeo-Christian ethic but common among individuals of diverse faiths, or of no faith. The core of his argument is that social leaders have the responsibility to "speak and act in a more appropriate way, to be better examples for those around them." He recognizes that while his own intellectual and theoretical foundations for this argument may be rooted in his religious beliefs, he must also develop a correlated sociological and psychological foundation for the argument.

Jason shows his rhetorical awareness not only in how he frames the topic, but in how he chooses to support his argument. He never mentions the Bible in his paper, but when I asked him why he believes the widespread use of profanity is a social ill, Jason appealed not simply to the Judeo-Christian cultural ethic, but to the Bible itself, and its directives for the Christian life:

> We're told in the Bible, "Don't misuse God's name in vain." I think even not saying, "Oh my God," or something like that … saying words that are also swear words, like vulgarities or cuss words or anything. I think there's better ways to express yourself. I think we're commanded to—I don't have an exact verse, but where it talks about, "Have proper speech and live in an upright way." … Obviously, there's going to be times where we slip, but if you can, as much as you can, try not to, you're living in a different way, and people can really see that. I've talked to people and they've told me, "People notice that you don't swear if you're around a lot of people that do swear." And that can be one way to be a light for Christ. You're standing up to make a difference, and people can really see that because you're talking to them every day.

Jason felt comfortable appealing to the Bible in my presence, because he knew that I am also a professing Christian. He also knew that this was not a choice that he could make in his academic argument.

In the passage below, he explains why the Bible is not among the sources that he uses to establish his argument for limiting profanity.

> My experience with talking about faith and stuff is that using the Bible isn't always the ultimate authority for people. … I mentioned it to you because we are reading the same Bible, and we hold that to the highest authority. Other people might say, "Well, that's just biased. Because you're taking it from the Bible, you can't really say that." You have to use other things, which is why I incorporated these other sources for guidance.

In his third year at Midwest, Jason fully understands the complexities required to substantiate an academic argument to an academic audience, so he draws on literature related to taboo language, deviance, and the psychological construction of group identity. He develops an academically rigorous foundation for his argument, including peer-reviewed research articles that he weaves throughout the paper in order to build a well-organized paper that addresses counter-arguments.

Although he never truly questions the religious and cultural commonplace underlying his argument, Jason carefully and often sympathetically accounts for alternative viewpoints. At the midpoint of his research paper, Jason responds to the notion that profanity is protected by the first amendment: "A place like Midwest should be able to uphold its values of inclusion and a positive future through its students in order to welcome all types of spectators to their events. It can better fulfill that role if the students make *wiser choices*" [emphasis mine]. Greg, the head campus minister at College Christians, routinely encourages the student participants to live into their faith by making wiser choices, and this language seeps into Jason's work. Even more telling, however, is a moment near the beginning of the paper, when Jason combines language familiar to Midwest University with a phrase drawn directly from his Christian communities. In closing his introductory paragraph, Jason argues that "As [students of excellence],[8] we at Midwest are called to live out our lives in a different way than the rest of the world." Here, Jason builds a bridge between his faith communities and the

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[8] Here, "students of excellence" is a substitute for one of Midwest's University's best known slogans.

university community as a whole by combining a university slogan with the language of divine sanctification ("be in the world but not of it") to summon the university and its student body to a higher standard.

Using the academic stances that he learned in his research and argumentation course, Jason was able to compose a strong argument that is rooted in his Christian belief but appeals broadly to his Midwest University community. When I asked how this paper was received, he noted that his professor joked with him in the comments because her husband had recently purchased tickets to take their child to a Midwest sporting event. Following her joke, however, Jason recounted:

> She said, "You did a very good job of providing the kind of arguments—and your reasons for it, and believing what you believe," and stuff. I think—yes. She didn't really say anything to the reasoning of whether it's right or wrong, or whether she was swayed, type of thing. She said I did a very good job of how I structured it and how I approached it.

Jason's instructor did not acknowledge whether or not she recognized Jason's unmarked transfer of Christian discourses, but she did acknowledge that he had executed the argument skillfully. Her response confirmed for Jason that Christian students who engage in rigorous argumentation and logical reasoning can develop arguments of compatibility and coherence that arise from shared religious and academic discourses.

While Bethany and Jason are relying on knowledge and beliefs shared among religious and academic communities, the next two students I will discuss—Risa and Ava—argue that their religious faith has provided them with analytic protocols that serve them in their academic life. Risa described the experience of writing a paper in first-year composition about the challenges she faces in her relationship with her mother. She argued that this paper was different than it might have been because of her experiences as a member of College Christians. Prior to going on an alternative Spring Break mission trip with College Christians, Risa argued that she "would just have been like, 'No, I don't like my mom. She sucks.'" The Spring Break mission trip, however, afforded Risa the opportunity to see that "this is what Christians are supposed to be like. … this is what love is, and this is what compassion is. I think this is the way you see Jesus in people, really." Having attended the trip, Risa learned that as a Christian who seeks to model the person of Christ, she must show love and compassion toward those with whom she

struggles. As result, she argues, the paper that she wrote about her relationship with her mother "was kind of like, you love her because she was my mom, and there is a lot more compassion in writing the paper. Except for—just like, before, I was like anger and resentment."

Although Risa did not still have this paper, and although she did not provide extensive detail about the Spring Break mission trip, she believes that the principles she learned on the trip—principles of compassion and Christian love—enabled her to take a procedural and theoretical approach to the narrative about her mother that was more open and reflective. She argued that developing the stance of a novice in the campus ministry caused her to take up the stance of the novice in her academic contexts as well, and to adopt a more analytic disposition toward writing consistent with the expectations of a first year composition course (Driscoll & Wells, 2012; Sommers & Saltz, 2004; Thomson, 2009). She explained that what she learned through her experience with College Christians enabled her to analyze her relationship with her mother in a manner that privileged compassion over resentment. Far from the student whose religious faith forecloses open engagement with people who think differently, Risa exemplifies a personal openness to others. She describes her disposition to her mother before the trip as closed and resentful, and she believes that it was her experience in College Christians that taught her to develop a critical distance from her own emotion. As a result of her mission trip experience, Risa believes she is now better able to imagine alternative viewpoints, and to account for those viewpoints in her analytic thinking. Although she never explicitly identifies as a Christian in that paper, she does believe that it is experience born of her participation in a church-related extracurricular organization that provided her with the analytic constructs she needed in order to write an effective narrative in her first-year composition course.

Ava also talks about her Christian faith in a way that illustrates that theoretical transfer can involve not only topical and discursive similarities, but also shared ways of approaching an academic question. When I met Ava—a second-year sport-management major—she told me that she had converted to Christianity approximately one year earlier. Because she was a relatively new Christian, she told me, she had never thought about what role her newfound faith might play in her academic work. Nonetheless, she took

some time to speculate about the relationship between faith and the "Consumer Behaviors" she was enrolled in that semester. In the quote below, Ava suggests that her faith has taught her to be mindful of individuals' motivations. She believes that this attention to motivation is relevant to the work she is asked to do in her Consumer Behavior course:

> If I had to write a Consumer Behavior paper, it might be about studying people and stuff that they like or whatever. I think that I would use what God has taught me about people and what they're drawn to and want out of life, and just all the negative things in life that just pulled them down and what they're looking for and they're searching for something. I would use that to describe people but I wouldn't really bring God's name into it.

Although Ava uses language that initially seems to suggest a rhetorically aware compartmentalization ("I wouldn't bring God's name into it"), a closer examination of what she is saying reveals that Ava believes the consumer behaviors course shares a theoretical and procedural grounding with her Christian faith. Ava articulates her faith in terms of "what God has taught me about people," and as a result, she would be likely to see connections between the religious/spiritual domain of her life and this particular academic course, both of which ask her to be aware of human motivations. Like Risa, Ava imagines she might be able to utilize both knowledge and analytic protocols that she associates primarily with her spiritual community to help her develop an academic argument.

Bethany (who wrote about girls' basketball in the excerpt above) also draws on both knowledge and dispositions toward text that she has developed in her religious community to help her construct an academic argument. In a child psychology course, she wrote a paper supporting the idea that homosexual couples should have the same freedom to adopt that is afforded heterosexual couples. She recognizes that

> the traditional Christian kid, conservatively, may have a struggle with writing that paper. But for me, approaching it in a very different way and letting go of the politics about, "Oh my gosh. You know, according to the Bible, the gays will go to hell," which you know—some people hold those views, which is so sad. But for me, who holds the idea that Jesus loved everyone regardless of where they came from, their background, how much money they had, and what style lifestyle they lived, and whether they were a man or a woman, you know, and where they came from. So for me it helped—my spirituality helped shape my openness in that paper, and helps me focus more on the strength of family unit, whether they were

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homosexual or heterosexual parents. It's about the health of the family unit as a whole, not about who's in it. Because, you know, you can have strong single-parent families, you can have strong blended families, you can also have strong co-parent families. So, that openness in being able to write like that. …

Bethany points out that it is her faith—and in particular the model of Jesus Christ—that leads her to articulate an argument that acknowledges the need for equity among homosexual and heterosexual parents. Moreover, Bethany points out that her Christian faith also shaped the attitude of openness with which she approached the topic. Consistent with College Christians' openness to a range of viewpoints on social issues, Bethany has sought to put the dominant perspectives in American culture in dialogue with her Christian faith. In this case, her interpretation of Jesus's identity offers her a theoretical grounding so strong that she is able to look beyond the hot-button theological and political arguments about LGBTQ adoption and productively narrow her research question to an analysis of "the health of the family unit as a whole" rather than focusing on "who's in it." Although Bethany doesn't talk directly about her faith in this paper, her religious beliefs provide her with a theoretical foundation and a disposition toward the topic (openness) that enable her to situate the academic and religious domains of her life in cooperative relationship with each other.

Several factors might obscure an instructor's ability to see that Bethany has operationalized her faith in her academic writing through the use of theoretical transfer: first, she never explicitly states her faith connections. Second, she is making an argument that aligns more closely with progressive politics, rather than with the conservative political viewpoints most commonly imagined as the stance of religiously engaged students. If, as Vander Lei suggests, much of the frustration felt about Christian students is the result of their political and moral beliefs (Vander Lei, 2014a, 2014c), an instructor might be inclined to take the argument Bethany makes as evidence only of her participation in the academic domain, and might not see the ways in which she is integrating her religious faith in unmarked ways.

While some might be surprised that a Catholic undergraduate is supporting equality for LGBTQ couples, Bethany's rationale reflects shifts in how Christian young

people think about LGBTQ equality[9] and also illustrates the ways that church laity may synthesize moral theologies with broader public norms—even those that might seem to run counter to accepted church dogma. Catholic theology suggests that homosexual practice is unacceptable to God, and yet Bethany accepts the validity of LGBTQ because she has interpreted Christ as accepting of everyone. Although she does not say so, it likely that Bethany's theological approaches have been shaped by both larger public discourses and intra-Catholic discourses, particularly those espoused by politically-progressive Catholic theologians and lay-Catholics.

As I bring this section to a close, I offer one final example of how theoretical transfer might be operating in students' unmarked writing. Bethany's argument shows that many religious individuals have internalized theological interpretations that synthesize public and religious discourses. Theresa's writing shows how such a synthesis might occur. Although Theresa is not as confident in her belief that Christian morality can encompass a queer sexual ethic, her analysis of *The Color Purple* illustrates the way that acts of reading and writing can break down the political and ideological barriers between religious and academic communities. In this case, Theresa uses reading and writing to place religious and academic ways of knowing in reciprocal relation to each other, with knowledge and skills from each community informing her work in the other.

In the same "Friendship in Literature" course that we examined at the beginning of this study, Theresa wrote her second paper—on which she received no feedback—about the book *The Color Purple*. Theresa chose to write about this book in part because she had been grappling with how to think about sexuality as a Christian. She told me that the book "was actually aligning with a lot of things that I was struggling with outside of this class in my personal life … in my faith. Like, questions I was having because I just seemed to find these contrasting ideas and it bothered me. I was trying to understand, like starting to dig more into the idea of like sexuality and how the Bible sees that and stuff." It is clear from this statement that Theresa had continued the work she began after

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[9] A recent Pew Research poll shows that 67% of Millenials (including current college-aged students) approve of gay marriage, as opposed to only 53% of those in Generation X (a majority of the College Christians parents would likely have been born near the beginning of this generation). Similarly, approval of gay marriage among White mainline Protestants and Catholics (the childhood affiliations of most of the College Christian) has increased nearly 20% since 2001 (Pew Research Center, 2014). For these reasons, it should not be surprising that Bethany, Theresa, and David all write papers that make arguments favorable toward LGBTQ equality.

receiving feedback on her Job paper. She continued to reflect on the ways that Scripture can be variably interpreted and was struggling to apply this idea to *The Color Purple*, a book that she told me "makes me smile thinking about it."

Unlike the papers written by Lisa and Tim, each of which is largely unmarked but in which a careful analyst can see subtle markings of their faith, this paper is completely devoid of evidence that Theresa is a Christian. Nonetheless, both the topic choice and the analysis she engages are rich with evidence that Theresa is allowing her thinking about her spiritual life to be influenced by this novel, just as she is bringing a Christian analytic eye to bear on her interpretation of *The Color Purple*. Indeed, religiously engaged Christian students participate in multiple communities, and as they do so, they become curators of complex non-systematic belief systems. As I noted in the Introduction to this study, it is more common to see students transfer church-related literacy practices into the classroom than it is to see students transfer academic literacy practices into their church-related reading and writing practices. Nonetheless, Theresa's response to *The Color Purple* clearly illustrates the ways in which her reading and writing about this text bring her church-related and academic domains into reciprocal relation with each other.

Theresa used the paper to argue for the possibility of passion and friendship not only co-existing, but in fact enlivening and enriching the other. She remembered encountering the paper with a radical openness:

> It was so cool because the things that I took from this essay that—I didn't go into the essay, I didn't go into the book thinking, 'I want to get this or I want to make this argument, or I want to get this grade.' I was just like, 'Let's just see what I can take and what it was trying to teach me and stuff.' I let it be so open, and then it was just so crazy that the things that I took from this book actually did speak to like my faith journey right at that moment and all these other things.

As she read and responded to the text, Theresa found herself reflecting not simply on what it had to say about sexuality but on how it spoke to the relationship between sexuality and spirituality. In response, she began to apply a theological lens deeply informed by the College Christians emphasis on relationship. "I didn't see it as an argument for or against homosexuality," she told me. "I tried to just see, like tried to look at the character Celie and think about how would like God see her, how would He understand her, and how would He take her from the beginning of her journey to the end." Theresa allowed her reading of the text to guide her sense that the book is not a

political argument for or against a particular sexual identity; rather she chose to encounter Celie and Shug as individuals to whom she owed the dignity of asking how God would see them.

Like Naomi, whom we met in Chapter Three when she was grappling with biblical approaches to LGBTQ sexuality, Theresa recognizes that progressive and conservative Christians use the Bible to construct differing views about both queer sexuality and the ethics of engaging in extra-marital sex (the "contrasting ideas" cited above). However, for her, the more salient point in the story is that Shug opens Celie to self-love, and to a corresponding vision of God that had been previously unavailable to Celie. Theresa used the book as the entry point for personal spiritual reflection on notions of self-love and self-abnegation in Christian life. She spent time reflecting on how Celie's newfound self-acceptance related to the Christian notion of "dying to self," a concept that had been under discussion in Leadership team gatherings, alongside conversations about freedom and responsibility:

> It had me thinking a lot about this idea of self-love. Because you know, even in the Bible, so much reading through Corinthians and Paul is talking about dying to oneself and surrendering and, you know, having it not be for you and not being about you. Those ideas seemed contradictory to self-love….

> …I think that this idea of like dying to oneself is more about dying to one's own selfish desires and selfish ambitions. But I still do think that God—I think that there's a distinction between that, but like still honoring all of creation. We are God's most brilliant creation. Still, like, looking at ourselves as a beautiful piece of God's creation.

As she reflects on this paper, Theresa articulates a burgeoning theological position on the value of "self-love" in the Christian life. She adopts a middle-ground between self-indulgence and self-abnegation, taking the position that one must put away personal "selfish desires" while valuing the self as a manifestation of the image of God in creation.

Theresa's reflective talk shows that she is using the process of reading and writing to develop her thinking, but that she has not yet fully solidified the relationship between what seem to her two potentially competing ideologies:

> The transformation that occurred [in Celie]—maybe there was some blurring of the lines, and stuff, with what the Bible says is right and wrong and all that. But I think that at the end, like, He [God] would have been happy and smiling at this transformation that occurred in her. That's what He would have wanted.

Theresa's language here shows the power of long-instantiated Christian discourses that reject homosexuality ("maybe there was some blurring … with what the Bible says is right and wrong"), but as she brings religious perspectives to bear in the classroom and academic ideas to bear in her spiritual life, Theresa is willing to forego taking a moral stance toward LGBTQ sexuality and instead celebrate the fact that Shug's love helped Celie develop a newfound appreciation of her goodness as a child of God. She is willing to put academic and religious discourses in dialogue with each other and to allow them to coexist in uneasy relationship as her own thinking develops.

In this case, adopting academic literacy practices does cause a shift in Theresa's thinking, but it does not weaken her faith or cause unwelcome changes in the way she thinks about her Christianity (Anderson, 1991). Rather, Theresa is engaged in what Geiger calls "the free exercise of rhetoric," a process by which students come to recognize "personal commitments and enhance their rhetorical practice through a process that can involve encountering multiple uncommon or unexpected arguments, acknowledging the value of misreading, and embracing uncertainty" (2013, p. 249). What Theresa's paper makes clear is that discourses and literacy practices are circulating productively both from Theresa's religious community into her academic community, and from the academic domain back into her thinking about spiritual and religious life. This process has enhanced both her scholarly and spiritual engagements.

Each of the students in this section of the chapter provided me with writing samples that exemplified the transfer of church-related literacy practices or discourses into unmarked academic texts, and in several cases, the ways in which literacy practices from the classroom and popular discourses have shaped students' Christianity. Although these students did not explicitly disclose their religious faith, each used writing to develop and/or express viewpoints that are more complex than those previously acknowledged by the literature in the field of composition. These discourses have not been seen in part because they arise from discourses and literacy practices that are shared among students' academic and religious communities, and for this reason, instructors often see them through the lens of the academic community that they share with the students. In fact, each of the students uses writing as a way to make sense of the overlaps and disconnects that exist among academic and religious communities. Except for those

rare moments in which students unintentionally reveal their faith, the fact that the inclusion of their Christian faith goes unremarked means that these students are engaged in transfer as a mode of learning that may be invisible to the instructors who assess their work, enabling the students to engage their religious faith without sacrificing their academic success. In the next section, I explore the challenges and opportunities that arise when students and instructors perceive markedness differently.

Marked or Unmarked?
Negotiating the Presence of Christian Discourses

Throughout this chapter, I have alluded to the fact that a paper can feature instances of both marked and unmarked discourse. I have also suggested that it is possible for students to mark their papers when they did not intend to, and for instructors to overlook (or receive as unmarked) instances that students perceive as marked. In this section, I explore the significance of these differences (namely, positions 2 and 3 in Figure 5.1). I use three examples of student writing in which Christian discourses unintentionally enter the text of an academic paper, subtly marking it in ways that even the student may not see. I argue that these moments can tell instructors a great deal about how and when students are grappling with the intersections and disconnections between academic and religious communities. The framework of marked and unmarked discourses is a particularly useful tool for helping students and instructors leverage these moments of negotiation for greater student learning. This framework is useful specifically because "marked" and "umarked" are descriptive, rather than evaluative, terms.

I begin with the example of Lisa, whose Christian discourses entered a philosophy course even when she had no intention of marking herself as Christian. I use Lisa's mid-term philosophy exam to show that in such instances, instructors have the opportunity foster greater depth of student learning by inviting students to reflect on how and why their religious faith might have seemed relevant in a particular instance. In the midst of a timed philosophy midterm about theodicy, Lisa forgot the language of hard and soft determinism that had served as the primary topic of class discussion. She drew instead on language of sin and repentance. She wrote: "The idea of sin and people having the choice to sin or repent has kept the idea that people have more responsibility alive today." In the passage below, Lisa reflects on her appeal to this explicit church-related language:

I remember writing that and thinking, can I say this here? Am I going to get marked down? I was nervous about this prompt mostly because I remember reading it and like, hard determinism and soft determinism was what we were talking about in the class and I remember being the last to talk. I was pretty flustered and I couldn't think of a lot of the stuff we had talked about in class. So a lot of what I had written was like bringing my personal beliefs and try to mold it into what we had talked about in class. So I don't think … I honestly think if I would've thought about evil and thought about how we had used the language in class, I probably would have used that instead. But from here, I was just writing what I knew, I guess, and that's kind of just what came out.

Lisa was flustered by the limits of the timed test, and so she reached back into the discourse of good and evil with which she is most comfortable: the language of the church. She knew that "sin and repentance" are church words and wondered if she would be penalized for using them. The instructor did not comment on this language, choosing instead to focus on other elements of her characterization of "soft determinism." As a result, Lisa never knew whether or not the instructor marked her usage of Christian discourses (position 2 in Figure 5.1). What is clear, however, is that the instructor's choice to comment on Lisa's characterization of "soft determinism" indicated that her definition was not yet rigorous enough to meet his standards.

It is also clear that because Lisa's inclusion of church-related language goes un*remarked*, both Lisa and the instructor miss out on a key opportunity for her to use her religious training as a resource to better understand a foundational concept in philosophy. In the passage above, Lisa remembers "being the last to talk," an indicator of the difficulties she was having taking up the concepts of hard and soft determinism. If the instructor had marked her language in this passage, not evaluating, but merely describing or asking questions about the fact that Lisa saw a connection between her religious and philosophical training, and if the instructor had invited conversation about this language, they might have found a common ground on which to help Lisa makes sense of the concepts of hard and soft determinism. Without such marking, Lisa cannot recognize her faith as a resource; she merely feels that she has escaped "getting marked down." In an environment where both students and instructors are often reticent to discuss religion for fear it may create tension in the classroom, the descriptive language of marked and unmarked discourses may provide an opportunity for individuals to engage with the ideas

and to think more deeply about the relationships between differing discourse communities.

While Lisa's experience reflects the challenges and opportunities created by the use of marked discourses that are received as unmarked, I use David and Jessica's writing to demonstrate the complexities of writing that students believe is unmarked, but that an instructor might perceive as marked (position 3 in Figure 5.1). In the context of courses dealing with topics that the broad public discussion often frames as antithetical to Christianity (namely LGBTQ equality and scientific materialism), David and Jessica each sought to downplay the complexities of their religious belief. In their attempts to frame their work as what Jessica calls "neutral," they reveal how Christian students may be struggling to engage the most contentious issues of the day. I use these examples to argue that instructors should be attuned to what these negotiations can teach us about how students interpret and respond to the key values of the academic classroom.

I begin with David, a third student who shared writing that deals with issues of LGBTQ equality. I demonstrate that the subtle ways in which David marks his moral position illustrates the limits of what he feels he can and can't say about LGBTQ issues.[10] Within the context of a 100-level sociology course, David crafted an argument in favor of gay marriage that actually obscures the complexity of his position toward marriage equality. During the class, which David took in 2010, when he was a first year student, he was asked to respond to statements made by Carrie Prejean (then Miss California) in opposition to gay marriage (BBC News, 2009). In his written response, David acknowledges that Miss California had the right to hold her beliefs but then states his own position: "I personally disagree with Miss California's views that marriage should be strictly between a man and a women [sic] for the main purpose that America has made marriage a financial advantage for those who are [married], and should not exclude gay people because of it." David goes on to assert, "This issue goes back to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, saying that language is the limit to the extent of which we understand our society. If we were to create another word to separate the two current meanings of

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[10] It is important to note here that David wrote this paper as a first year student. When I sent this chapter to David for comment, he responded with a brief note telling me that his own position on this topic have shifted and changed over the years. While his position as a first year student was more complex than most of the examples currently in the literature, it is nonetheless incumbent on me to recognize that the viewpoints discussed here do not necessarily reflect David's current beliefs.

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marriage, religious union and financial advantage, we would not even be having this discussion."

During our interview, David told me that this latter position is in fact his policy stance toward marriage equality, even if it does not reflect what was, at the time, his moral position. When I asked him to talk about his linguistic choices, he told me that while he did not believe that the church should bless same-sex unions, he does have a much-loved uncle who is gay and has had a long-term partner. David is in a position that is not commonly represented in polarizing public discourses regarding marriage equality: that of needing to reconcile religious convictions that position queer sexuality as "disordered" sexuality with personal feelings of love and respect for his uncle and his uncle's partner. David has thought deeply about the relationship between Christian faith and public morality and has developed a complex theological position: although he believes the church should not sanction same-sex marriages, he believes that his interpretation of Christianity cannot be used to develop public policy.

During his first year, David believed that if he was not being asked to explicitly disclose his religious perspectives, he should downplay them.

> I felt that the response didn't necessarily require [that I state my moral conviction] and that I kind of would be extrapolating or unnecessarily going outside the bounds of the paper to say that. I mean it's one of those things, like, in a lot of responses or whatever you're given, kind of a context to operate within and then you'll read these papers where kids just bring out personal opinions here and there and that's just like, *why are you even doing that?* I feel like that kind of would have been the vibe here.

David argues that within the parameters of the assignment all he was asked to do is respond to Miss California's statements in academic (here economic and linguistic) terms. He felt that presenting his moral position would be "outside the bounds" of the requirement.

Because David did not want to reveal his discomfort with same-sex marriage as a moral choice, he does not recognize the fact that his language reveals the complexity and subtlety of his thinking. In the passage above, David asserts that marriage equality should be awarded on financial grounds but then gestures toward a policy recommendation in which religious union and financial advantage might be disentangled: "If we were to create another word to separate the two current meanings of marriage, religious union and

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financial advantage, we would not even be having this discussion." While David believes that he has left his writing unmarked, an attentive reader can see in this assertion the limits of what David believes he can say in the academic classroom. David believed at this time that churches should not sanction gay marriage, but he did not feel that it was appropriate for him to say so, because when students include their "personal opinions … that's just like *why are you even doing that?*" If David—the only student in my study to assert from the beginning that all of his writing is grounded in his Christian faith—believes that the classroom is not a space in which one can discuss moral conviction, how much more so might other students be grappling with the limits of when their faith is acceptable to disclose in the classroom?

Jessica offers one such example. As we saw in Chapter One, two of the primary themes emphasized by the students and leadership of College Christians are authentic living and choosing to be self-challenging, that is, exhibiting a willingness to put oneself in the way of experiences that encourage the development of self-authorized beliefs (M. B. B. Magolda, 1992; Perry, 1998). Jessica was asked to undertake such a task in a summer course studying "Perception, Science, and Reality." At the beginning of the course, the instructor provided students with a conceptual framework (see Figure 5.2, below)—a Cartesian plane on which one axis represents approaches to the metaphysical, with idealism (the spiritual) at one end and realism (materialism) at the other. The second axis represents potential epistemological positions, with "humanist intuition" at one end and "rigorous positive science" at the other end. The students were asked to plot their beliefs within the framework. Students were clearly told on the syllabus that this assignment was not meant to reflect what the instructor wanted students to think, but rather to help students take ownership of their personal beliefs. The assignment read: "It is important to note that the grade on the paper will NOT depend on the student's agreement with the instructor's point of view. In fact, it is our intention to have the student develop his or her own perspective. However, the grade will depend on how clearly the ideas are presented in written form."

Clearly designed to facilitate self-authorship of her ideas, this assignment had the potential to be provide Jessica with an opportunity to think deeply about the relationship between Christianity and science. What her writing reveals, however, is just how difficult
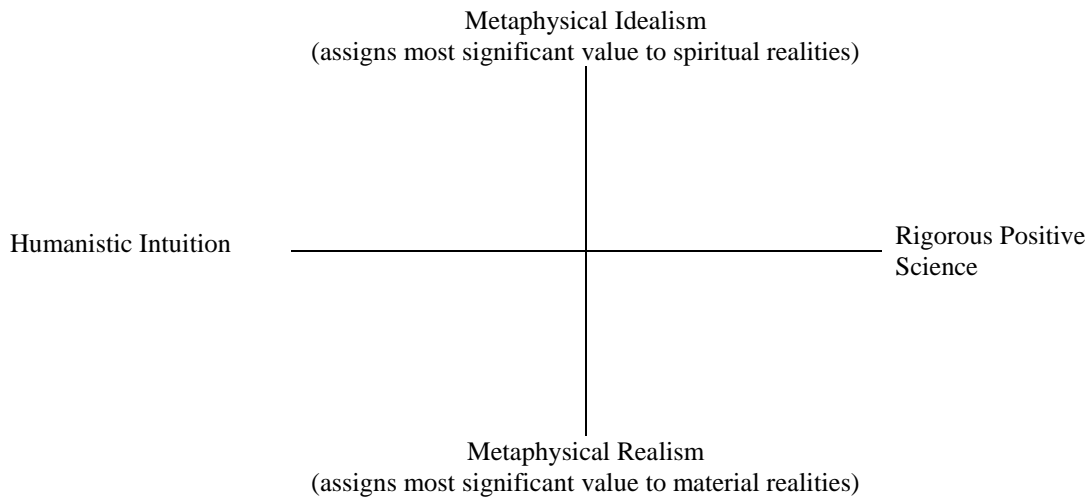
Metaphysical Idealism
(assigns most significant value to spiritual realities)

Humanistic Intuition ———————————————————— Rigorous Positive
Science

Metaphysical Realism
(assigns most significant value to material realities)

Figure 5.2 Conceptual Framework from an Undergraduate Psychology Course
A conceptual framework for thinking about the psychology of perception. The X-axis represents epistemological approaches. The Y-axis represents approaches to thinking about metaphysics.

it can be for students to craft a position as both scientist and Christian in a world that so often pits these domains against each other. Jessica described the assignments as moving her in the direction of owning her ideas, but her sense that she was writing for school, and even more so for a science course—a context that she perceives as existing in opposition to her religious discourse communities (a position that the conceptual framework reinforces)—stifled her ability to take full ownership of these ideas. In plotting herself and her beliefs on this conceptual framework, Jessica largely ignored the Y-axis, which asked her to consider how she perceives the nature of reality. She focused instead on plotting epistemological perspectives, which, in her description of the project, she mislabels as "scientism" on one end, and "idealism" (humanistic intuition) on the other.

Jessica told me that she believes her own epistemological system can account for both "scientism" and "idealism," but her writing reveals her struggle to articulate this integration in response to the framework offered by her instructor. She wrote:

> As a student at Midwest University who has enrolled in a number of various science courses, it is almost assumed that I have been trained to see Positive Science (Scientism) as the most understandable and believable. I believe Scientism is the best way to interpret the nature of perceptual experience and its relation to reality because it possesses the authority with the scientific method which developing [sic] literal results that do not create any interpretation.

Jessica's assertion that she has been "trained" to believe in positivist epistemologies foreshadows the complications that she will bring to bear in the rest of the paper. Jessica

accepts science as a source of authority and she explicitly identifies both herself and her work with the subjectivity of a scientist. In contrast, she relegates her faith to the realm of intuition and attempts to suppress her identity as a Christian:

> I believe in faith … I do not agree that it is a meaningless topic; it does have meaning. You cannot prove it with the scientific method, so therefore, Scientism declares is [sic] unreal … If someone chooses to believe that God is part of the nature of perceptional experience and is involved in reality, so let it be.

While Jessica readily calls herself a student of science, she hedges her identity as Christian believer throughout this passage. Nonetheless, what Jessica takes to be unmarked could be marked by a reader as evidence that she is distancing herself from her Christian faith: "I believe *in faith*" [emphasis mine], she says, rather than saying that she is a Christian believer. She similarly marks herself as religious (if not explicitly Christian) in making space for belief in higher powers other than the Christian god, and she legitimizes the possibility that "someone" might choose to believe in God, not that she herself does.

In this paper, Jessica embodies the struggle of the novice learner. As a biopsychology major, she is striving to better understand both her Christian faith and core principles in psychology, but she does not yet have the tools needed to push beyond the limits of public discourse. In fact, she refused to question the continuum that her professor had created, a continuum that depicts religious faith and scientific empiricism as mutually-exclusive: "He's really a very, very smart man," she told me, "and has gone to many awesome schools. I wouldn't doubt that he could create and do something like that and just be like 'This is my new method.'" Instead of challenging the way her professor's framework conceptualizes the empirical and the metaphysical as opposite ends of a spectrum, Jessica plots herself at each of the spectrum and internalizes the notion that her ideas are inherently contradictory.

When I asked Jessica why she chose to position herself at both ends of the axis rather than placing herself at the center of the continuum, she responded:

> the center kind of means you—it's like *meh* for both. But I feel that I am strong for both. I take the center as being just like the mediocre in the center. I guess I could be classified as that, but I still feel that I 100% believe in God, but then I 100% believe in science.

In the face of broader public discourses, Jessica struggles to articulate a position that she has never heard from a Christian or a scientist—namely a position in which religion and science can co-exist. Jessica's writing, like Jason's, reveals the limits of what a student may feel she can say in the classroom: she is free to mark her writing as the work of a scientist but attempts to suppress her Christian identity. What Jessica believes is unmarked, however, may signal to her audience the struggle to craft an identity as a Christian and a scientist.

As I suggested with Lisa's writing, an instructor could use this struggle to help students take greater ownership of their ideas. Because this paper was designed to help students take a self-authorized intellectual stance, if the professor had marked those places where Jessica subtly reveals the very belief she sought to suppress, he might have been able to help her move beyond the limits of the framework he had proposed and might have helped her learn to craft a theoretical framework more appropriate to her beliefs. Such an act would require him to be willing to reconsider his own ideas, but in so doing, he might model for Jessica the development of academic expertise and help her learn more about potential areas of overlap between her Christian faith and her value for scientific inquiry.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that paying close attention to when, how, and why students mark their work as Christian can help instructors understand the ways that students may be strategically bringing together religious discourses and academic literacy practices in order to build bridges among academic and religious communities. I have also shown that an apparent absence of religious discourses does not mean that students have chosen not to integrate religious and academic perspectives. In some academic writing, students may be implementing shared discourses that are unmarked as Christian and therefore enable students to effectively develop their understanding of the relationship between both academic and religious communities.

However, as I have also suggested throughout this chapter, students do not always have full control over their use of marked and unmarked discourses. This suggests that the presence of marked Christian discourses should be treated with an appropriate

caution: while they may indicate that a student possesses a religious perspective, they may indicate very little about what that perspective is or how it operates in the student's life. Conversely, the fact that Christian discourses may not appear in a clearly marked fashion does not indicate that Christian belief is absent from the student's thinking. Rather, students may be engaging these discourses in ways that are personally meaningful, even if they are invisible to readers.

In particular, these findings point to the importance of recognizing students' agency as they navigate among or build bridges between the discourse communities in which they live, work, and play. Among those students who may not be making intentional choices, these findings suggest the value of giving students the opportunity to reflect on how their linguistic, procedural, and rhetorical choices may be enabling them to navigate and mediate the values and expectations of their multiple communities. I also demonstrated that the framework of interpreting students' use of Christian discourses as marked and unmarked can help instructors see the limits of what students believe they can and cannot say in the classroom. Because this framework offers a descriptive, rather than an evaluative, language for talking about the inclusion of religious discourses in academic writing, it may open space by which students and instructors can leverage students' religious faith as an opportunity to learn more about the overlaps and disconnects between academic and religious communities. In the next chapter, I provide a holistic look at how these findings contribute to our understanding of the interplay of religious and academic ways of knowing among religiously engaged Christian college students.

CHAPTER 6
IMPLICATIONS AND DIRECTIONS:
SUGGESTIONS FOR A FUTURE OF COOPERATION

As I bring this study to a close, I turn one last time to Theresa's experiences in her Friendship in Literature class. In one class—indeed, in the composition of one paper—Theresa experienced many of the complexities that I have outlined thus far in the study. When Theresa saw the class listed in the Midwest University course catalog, she imagined that it would be an ideal space to integrate the academic and spiritual domains of her life by applying a scholarly lens to friendship—one of the core values of that led her to College Christians. During the course, she developed unexpected friendships, and she used writing to navigate the challenges of differing religious perspectives and social expectations at Midwest.

In the past, Theresa had written English papers that she believed had little to do with her Christian faith, so she was excited when her first major paper assignment allowed her to bring together her passion for studying the Bible with her interest in learning more about what ancient philosophers might have to say about friendship. While analyzing the book of Job, she began to develop a nascent sense of the fact that the Bible can be read academically or devotionally, and this understanding of Bible reading as a rhetorical act was deepened and confirmed when her professor identified in her paper marked Christian discourses that she had not intended to include. Throughout her Friendship in Literature class, Theresa used literacy practices—reading, writing, and interpretive activities—to navigate her academic and spiritual life; her reading and writing practices helped her deepen her understanding of both communities, and enabled her to construct an identity as a Christian and a scholar.

While not every student navigates these challenges with as much agency and awareness as Theresa, reading and writing can help many students makes sense of their experiences moving amongst curricular and extracurricular communities. This study has shown that many religiously engaged Christian college students are committed to success

in the classroom, and it has demonstrated that their faith may play a vital role in supporting students' efforts to take up academic literacy practices. In previous chapters, I have shown that Christian college students can be active and engaged participants in the social and intellectual life of the public university, and I have shown that the literacy practices and discourses fostered within academic and religious domains need not—and often do not—exist in complete isolation. The student participants in College Christians are deeply aware of this reality, and although they understand that their particular model of religious engagement may stigmatize them among both their religious and non-religious peers, the College Christians nonetheless continue to make a home within the public university, hoping that they might develop both intellectually and spiritually.

After spending nearly five months observing and talking with these religiously engaged and socially vibrant young men and women, I believe that the College Christians' experiences as readers and writers offer valuable insights into the ways that instructors and students alike can seek mutuality of respect. In this final chapter, I discuss the primary findings of this study and begin the work of exploring the questions that are evoked by, and linger on, even after this work. I attempt to provide a glimpse of the intellectual pathways that the College Christians are creating as they daily circulate among academic, extracurricular, and religious communities. These pathways result from the College Christians' daily journeys among the many communities in which they participate. As they move between and amongst these communities, the College Christians become both the agents and beneficiaries of hybridized literacy practices. They also become bellwethers, capable of providing insights into the possibilities and limitations of engagement among academic and religious ways of knowing.

I begin this chapter by discussing how this study contributes to the ongoing renovation of the relationship between composition and rhetoric and religious traditions. I go on to synthesize my key findings and outline suggestions for how instructors and Christian students might begin the work of making a home together. In light of these potentialities, I turn to a discussion of questions that future research might take up in an effort to help students and instructors thrive in this endeavor. Finally, I close with a reflection on a recent experience that I had at the University of Michigan, where I met a

Christian student who brought my latent stereotypes to light and reminded me of why it is important to make space for a wide variety of religious perspectives in the academy.

Contributions to the Field

In the introduction to this study, I highlighted several of the key contributions that this study makes to the field of composition and rhetoric. In particular, by bringing together two major areas of inquiry, namely transfer studies and explorations of the role that religion plays in classrooms, this study has charted new territory in both areas. First, this study offers one set of responses to the call to examine how students' religious identities, literacy practices, and discourses may serve as resources when students are learning the discursive norms of an academic community (Carter, 2007; DePalma, 2011; Moss, 2001; P. Perkins, 2014; Vander Lei & kyburz, 2005). This study is not the first to examine students' participation in campus ministries (Bryant, 2005; Kim, 2009; P. Magolda & Ebben Gross, 2009; Park, 2013), nor is it the first to examine Christian students' approaches to reading in writing in that context (Grahmann, 2002). However, this study is the first to examine the specific literacy practices that students take up in these spaces, and it is the first to provide opportunities for students to talk about how they navigate the demands and expectations for literacy that arise as they develop biblical literacy in relationship to academic literacy. It is also the first study to examine contemporary students' experiences as readers and writers in light of the historic trends that have led so many Christian students to believe their religion may be stigmatized in the classroom. These historical patterns reveal the multiple and complex ways that students may position their academic and religious communities in relation to each other. By examining students' practices in light of these patterns, I have created space to see how religious and academic ways of knowing may be functioning cooperatively and interdependently in many students' lives.

In this way, my study also responds to the small but growing body of scholarship that seeks to understand the ways that academic and extracurricular literacy practices exist in reciprocal relation to each other. Although this study is not the first to suggest that academic and religious communities share what Moss calls "sites of common ground" (Moss, 2001), it is the first of its kind to demonstrate, through discussions of

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students' reading and writing practices, that students' literacy practices move not only from the campus ministry into the classroom, but (to a somewhat lesser degree) from the classroom back to the campus ministry. This study demonstrates that church-related literacy practices and discourses are functioning in the classroom to a greater degree than many instructors realize: the resonances of students' church-related literacy practices enter the classroom in multiple ways, including dispositions toward text and available subjectivities that align with academic discourses. By the same token, I have shown that academic discourses and literacy practices are an integral part of students' religious participation and spiritual lives, even though students themselves may not always be cognizant of how these discourses and literacy practices are operating. This insight was facilitated by the work of tracing some (though by no means all) of the pathways on which literacy practices may travel, including friendship networks, students' dispositions toward reading and writing, and their broad perceptions of what constitutes an appropriate opportunity for transfer.

The qualitative methods by which this study was conducted also foster understanding of the ways that religious and academic literacy practices transfer. By providing a platform for students to talk about their reading and writing practices, I have contributed to the ongoing work of conceptualizing church-related literacy practices as robust and multi-faceted. Indeed, this study demonstrates that far from being passive reproducers of theological discourses, many Christian students enter college having already developed hybrid, and sometimes syncretic, church-related literacy practices and discourses. These practices and discourses are further nuanced as the students circulate among a network of discourse communities.

Because I chose to ground my investigation in a single extracurricular site (i.e., a particular, localized campus ministry), I was able to make visible the diverse array of practices that students take up across multiple domains of their lives. By analyzing the specific literacy practices that "religiously engaged" students take up and which they bypass, I have shown that religiously engaged Christian students are agentive in their use of literacy practices as rhetorical resources that help them navigate the expectations of multiple domains.

Finally, in addition to allowing me to trace the resonances of literacy practices among these networks, the qualitative methods of this study allowed me to learn more about how students experience the lived curriculum of our classrooms. I have demonstrated that although instructors often see no evidence of learning transfer on the pages students submit, this seeming lack of evidence does not indicate that no learning has taken place. In fact, the key contribution of this study, and indeed, its central argument, is a modest, but important insight: reading and writing practices are not merely evidence of the fact that students have learned. Rather, reading and writing practices are a principal means by which students learn to navigate their simultaneous participation in many discourse communities.

Major Findings

While previous studies have offered valuable insights into Evangelical and Fundamentalist theological beliefs and the literacy practices that sustain (or are sustained by) them, I have sought to understand more about how students enact their religious faith amidst broadly shifting trends in religious participation. This study offers four major sets of findings that are valuable to the field of composition and rhetoric and in particular, the sub-fields of transfer studies and rhetoric and religious traditions. The first finding concerns the perception that church-related literacy practices are somehow "pure" or completely distinct from popular and academic practices. In Chapter One, I demonstrate that the literacy practices featured in the College Christians campus ministry are never pure reflections of a particular theological position. Rather, they are inflected by an array of pop-culture practices, practices from multiple faith communities, and even, sometimes, academic ways of knowing and doing. As a result, the religiously engaged students I met are comfortable navigating among a variety of practices, and they recognize that the literacy practices they engage in College Christians have rhetorical significance as methods of building community, engaging spirituality, and appealing to their peers. All of these practices are designed to help students as they navigate the social and intellectual challenges of being a Christian student in a public university environment.

The data suggest that as students read and write across communities, they use literacy practices to facilitate their movement from one community to another,

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developing an awareness (if sometimes tacit) of when and why they will be best served by integration or compartmentalization of knowledge and skills across domains. In Chapter Three, I develop the second major finding of this study: I demonstrate that the members of College Christians do not claim expertise as Bible readers, and as a result, they take up literacy practices that might serve as resources in academic writing contexts. I show that some—though by no means all—of the protocols for text engagement and dispositions toward reading and writing overlap with those that they might use in the college classroom. In particular, I highlight how Christian students move among multiple communities that use and interpret the Bible in various ways and show that as they seek to learn more about the Bible, they engage with multiple versions of the Bible and the interpretive apparatus included with some versions of the text. These practices work to foster in many students a burgeoning sense that communities can read the same text (even the Bible) in multiple ways and for a variety of purposes. These practices also have the potential to help students develop a basic awareness of the protocols that they can use to support engagement with various literary and historical genres. I also highlight the value that students place on discussion with their peers, an activity that fosters openness to multiple perspectives and the ability to enter into conversation with others about the significance of a text. Finally, I use two students who struggled with the negotiation between academic and devotional approaches to reading the Bible to demonstrate that as students develop a meta-awareness of—and meta-language for—these reading practices, the integration or compartmentalization of these practices may enable them to navigate more agentively among communities that have different expectations for reading and writing.

The final two findings take up the concepts "compartmentalization" and "integration" in greater detail. The third major finding of this study demonstrates that although students' church-related literacy practices are hybrid, some religiously engaged students may be compartmentalizing their academic and church-related writing. I show that students' talk about the compartmentalization of reading and writing across communities can help us to rethink our understanding of what it means when a student's writing shows no evidence that knowledge or skills have transferred from one community to another. Rebecca Nowacek's study, *Agents of Integration: Understanding Transfer as*

a Rhetorical Act (2011), demonstrates that assessing transfer on the basis of the written text is inadequate: she uses students' talk to reframe the field's understanding of "negative" transfer, by showing that students are often learning valuable lessons—even as they make what instructors might consider rhetorical missteps. Building on Nowacek's insights, I suggest the need to reconceptualize the notion of "zero transfer" as well, arguing that although transfer may not appear on the page, learning may nonetheless occur.

In the fourth chapter, I argue that while zero transfer is a reality among some Christian college students, many students have used opportunities to transfer as a means to sharpen their understanding of the boundaries and disjunctions between academic and religious communities. I demonstrate that many students have seen opportunities to transfer religious discourses into the classroom but have chosen to compartmentalize these domains for a variety of reasons, including a desire to succeed academically and a desire to grapple with ideas singly prior to putting them in dialogue. Although no evidence of transfer appears on the page, the students who compartmentalize academic and church-related discourses or literacy practices in these ways have done the work of analyzing the relationship between these two knowledge-making domains. They have learned more about how these bodies of knowledge relate to each other, thus engaging the very foundational activity sought by scholars and instructors interested in supporting transfer. Students' choice to compartmentalize does not mean that they see no relationship between these domains; the choice to compartmentalize makes visible the boundaries and limits of academic and religious domains as students experience them within the classroom.

The fourth and final finding addresses the complexities of students' integration of religious faith with academic writing. In Chapter Five, I argued that when students do transfer knowledge from their religious communities into their academic writing, they do so in more complex ways than have previously been acknowledged by rhetoric and composition scholars. In particular, I illuminate how Christian college students may integrate their faith in both visible (marked) and invisible (unmarked) ways. I demonstrated that—consistent with their desire to be integrated into the life of Midwest University—when the students of College Christians choose to mark their writing with

evidence of their Christian faith, they typically couple their self-disclosure with discursive and linguistic moves that position their practices and beliefs in alignment with the values of the public university. Those who choose to integrate their religious beliefs in unmarked ways may be utilizing shared discourses to craft identities as both Christians and scholars. Taken together, these insights into the ways that students navigate the relationships between academic and religious domains demonstrate that transfer should not be understood only as evidence of what students have learned. Rather, this phenomenon that the educational community currently calls "transfer" is a complex process by which students come to better understand the overlaps and boundaries between the knowledge-making domains in which they participate.

Classroom Implications

The argument that transfer is a process, rather than a singular event, suggests several ways that religiously engaged students and instructors can begin the work of recognizing that academic classrooms are their mutual home, and thereby begin making a home together. As I demonstrated at the end of Chapter Five, the ways in which instructors may overlook or mark particular religious discourses and literacy practices may deepen our understanding of the ways that religious discourses are operating in the classroom. In this section, I provide several suggestions for how instructors might operationalize these findings in the classroom. These suggestions align with the current emphasis in transfer studies on helping students develop meta-awareness of their composing practices (Moore, 2012; Wardle, 2007, 2009), and they build upon the insight that students may benefit from reflecting on the academic curriculum in multiple ways, especially the content and delivery of the curriculum as well as the impact of both content and delivery on students' intellectual and interpersonal development (Aoki, 1993; Yancey, 2004, 2012).

First, I encourage instructors to help students reflect on the approaches to reading that they have developed in their religious communities, in order that the students might develop a meta-language about which subjectivities, dispositions, and reading protocols might transfer productively into academic reading and writing activities. Regardless of students' proficiency at reading and interpretation, reading the Bible can introduce them

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to subjectivities and dispositions which might be useful resources as they seek to navigate academic contexts. For example, many of the students who participate in College Christians believe that they have low levels of biblical literacy—that they do not have the expertise needed to read the Bible well. If students perceive their lack of expertise as a failure, they may stop reading, which could forestall further intellectual growth. However, students who adopt a novice subjectivity—that is, an awareness that they are new to the activity of biblical interpretation and are willing to learn—are far more likely to develop "problem-exploring" dispositions of openness and inquiry that will serve them as they seek to better understand when, why, and whether to transfer literacy practices and discourses among communities (Sommers & Saltz, 2004; Wardle 2012).

In working to develop students' biblical literacy, the College Christians also engage in protocols for reading that could serve as resources in academic contexts. For example, instructors might be able to draw on familiar church-related resources, such as study Bibles and commentaries, to help religiously engaged students recognize that they regularly engage in reading processes much like those that support academic research. They might draw students' attention to the ways that the various Christian communities in which they participate apply differing sets of questions to the same text in order to derive from it interpretations and applications suitable to the needs of a particular community. Making explicit this hermeneutic act—which is also fundamentally rhetorical (i.e., motivated by particular purposes and shaped by the needs of a specific audience)—could be useful for helping students understand the importance of using various reading protocols to support their interaction with a range of text types and genres. It could also help students learn to articulate the value of reading a text multiple times and in various ways, depending on the rhetorical situation. By encouraging students to recognize, name, and analyze the significance of these practices, instructors can help students see that the church-related literacy practices they bring to the classroom have already equipped them with some of the skills needed to engage in academic argumentation.

To help students learn when, whether, and how to transfer church-related literacy practices into the classroom, I contend that it is vital for instructors to help students understand their role as co-constructors of the curriculum with which they engage in

writing courses across the curriculum. As Yancey points out, students are always making sense of their learning activities in a way that overlaps with, but is also distinct from the work of the instructor. Both students and instructors can benefit from the reflexive work of engaging these disjunctions. Yancey notes that by "working as members of a *we*, students engage in process they can use on their own, and in accounting for their activity in a reflection, they articulate the experienced curriculum" (2004, p. 63). For instance, after receiving a disappointing grade, Theresa chose to meet with her English professor; she took advantage of the opportunity to reflect alongside him and in the process, discovered that her grade was not dependent on a "correct" or "incorrect" interpretation. Rather, the process of reflecting with her professor helped to deepen her understanding that individuals may interpret a text differently based on the purposes for which they are reading. The experience also developed her audience awareness, making her more sensitive to nuances of how a particular audience may take up an argument. Theresa's experience shows that as students interact with faculty about their reading and writing activities they may come to better understand that literacy practices are not "right and wrong," but more or less appropriate to a given situation. For these reasons, I agree with Yancey that by inviting students to share their experiences of the lived curriculum, we may increase students' investments in the learning process.

Moreover, by inviting students to reflect on how they take up our instructional choices, we may give students the opportunity to deepen their own articulations of the value of the activities they engage across multiple contexts. For example, Lisa's unintentional inclusion of Christian discourses in her philosophy class created insecurity—about her grades, and about her relationship with her instructor. But this risky moment also provided Lisa with the opportunity to think about how her tacit understandings of sin and repentance correspond to the philosophical concepts she was learning in class. Lisa's concern about the inclusion of Christian language should serve as a reminder that for a variety of reasons, not all students will feel comfortable bringing their religious identities into the classroom. In fact, I would argue that students should never feel required to disclose their faith if they are not comfortable doing so. However, instructors need to be aware of, and watchful for, the traces of religious discourses that may be subtly present in a student's writing. These traces can provide instructors with

important insights about both the possibilities for, and limitations of, collaboration between religious and academic communities.

As I suggested in Chapter Five, religious discourses may appear even when students seek to suppress them or embed them invisibly in academic discourses. In the case of suppressed discourses, students' writing may signal those places where a student feels that his or her religious discourses are unwelcome in the classroom. This is a valuable data point for instructors who would like to make the classroom a more hospitable place for religious perspectives of all sorts. As we saw in the last chapter, Jessica's instructor earnestly desired to invite students' evaluation of their own learning from all perspectives, and in fact, it was not necessarily his personal beliefs that led Jessica to suppress her Christian faith. Rather, it was the broader cultural discourses about the incommensurability of religion and science that led him to create a continuum which unintentionally exacerbated Jessica's struggles to craft an identity as a Christian and a scientist. Instructors who approach students' work with an attentiveness to the suppression and involuntary intrusions of religious faith in students' writing may learn a great deal about which discourse and practices they associate with religious faith, and about students' experiences in the lived curriculum. These lessons can then be leveraged to create an environment in which students feel freer to think about the similarities and differences of belief across their network of discourse communities.

In the case of embedded discourses, instructors who are attuned to the inclusion of unmarked religious discourses have a unique perspective on the ways that religious discourses are operating productively to enhance students' uptake of knowledge and academic protocols for reading and writing. Instructors who are open to discerning the cues surrounding unmarked discourses have the opportunity to begin the difficult work of disarticulating the assumption that academic and religious discourses must always exist in opposition or isolation, and they can allow students to contribute to the work of rearticulating overlaps among academic and religious communities. As I demonstrated in Chapter Five, we do not know whether Jason's instructor recognized his attempt to use unmarked Christian discourses in building his argument for curtailing profanity. Instructors who are able to perceive such integrated discourses are well-positioned to talk with students about the rhetorical effects of these unmarked discourses, and in so doing,

would have the chance to help students develop a meta-language for thinking about skills and concepts that can transfer productively from one discourse community to another.

Finally, regardless of whether or not transfer is visible or invisible to instructors, I recommend the use of reflective assessment measures such as those outlined in Yancey's discussion of the "insight resume," a brief questionnaire that encourages students to articulate their own perspectives and contributions (Yancey, 2012). Asking students to reflect on the origin and practice of particular literacy practices and discourses will not only make transfer more visible to instructors, it will give students the opportunity to articulate, and potentially increase, the number of transferable skills and discourses in their repertoire. Such an activity is valuable because, as Rebecca Nowacek (2011) contends, effective assessments of transfer must decenter—without eschewing— academic norms and standards as the gauge of successful transfer. In order to assess whether or not acts of transfer have provided a learning opportunity, the instructor must balance his or her own assessment of the document's "success" with the student's personal assessment of whether or not a particular instance of transfer was rhetorically effective. I suggest that using the language of compartmentalization and integration can help students understand the ways that approaches to reading and writing across multiple communities can exist in relation to each other.

I have also offered the terms "marked" and "unmarked" as descriptive replacements for the evaluative constructs "positive and negative" transfer. Students and instructors who are concerned about the stigmatizing effects of openly discussing religion as a factor in students' academic work may find that the language of markedness offers a new and potentially neutral space in which to discuss the rhetorical effects of religious discourses in students' academic writing.

By using reflective assessment practices, instructors can help students be attentive not only to what they *have said* in their writing, but also to what they have *not said*, either by choice or by instinct. As students navigate among shifting and fragmented knowledge-making domains, instructors have a valuable opportunity to help students learn to articulate the relationships among these domains. It is incumbent upon instructors to help students better understand that all members of an academic community will encounter areas of the university in which they are outsiders. Indeed, as students learn to articulate

the rationale underlying their compartmentalized discourses, they will be better able to see and examine the relationships among communities. By the same token, if they are to think constructively about the varied literacy practices in which they engage, students will benefit from learning to articulate the rhetorical effect—and the rhetorical effectiveness—of integrating discourses across communities.

Areas for Future Research

I turn now to the questions that this study raised, and the questions that remain unanswered as I bring my discussion to a close. I offer five questions that I believe may open up areas of exploration that would provide a stronger foundation for our understanding of how religious and academic literacy practices both compete and work together in the classroom.

1. *What do instructors identify as Christian discourses in the academic classroom?* In the section above, I suggested that instructors can benefit from being attentive to Christian discourses that appear in subtle, suppressed, and unmarked ways in students' academic writing. In order to help instructors be attentive in this way, further research needs to be done on when and why instructors might mark some discourses as Christian and not others. Certainly they are likely to identify students' professions of faith and their discussions of participation in academic communities. After all, students want their instructors to mark these discourses. Moreover, as Thomson-Bunn has demonstrated, instructors are likely to mark some conservative political discourses as Christian (Thomson, 2009). But if, as I have suggested, there exist uncontested discursive spaces shared among both academic and religious communities, are instructors likely to identify the implementation of these discourses with a student's religious faith? Future studies of what discourses and literacy practices instructors mark as Christian and why they mark those discourses as Christian would provide a valuable foundation for helping to rearticulate, in new ways, the challenges and opportunities that students and instructors face when religious discourses appear in academic writing.

2. *How do students and instructors understand the relationship between the academic product that students submit and the process used to create it?* I noted above that Nowacek helpfully differentiates between the act of transfer and the paper that

results from it. This study also demonstrates the need to look beyond the text for a deeper understanding of the reasoning (either explicit or tacit) that underlies its creation. Although study after study has demonstrated that writing is performative and that students adopt a range of subjectivities in the performance of academic writing (Bawarshi, 2003; Beaufort, 1999, 2007; Ivanic, 1998; Sommers & Saltz, 2004), the field still knows remarkably little about how instructors and students make sense of the difference between the student who composes and the student who appears on the page. Some questions that might help us better understand this relationship include (but are not limited to): under what conditions do students come to recognize, understand, and exploit the performative nature of writing? Do writing instructors operationalize their awareness that writing is a performative act in the assessment of students' writing? If so, how?

3. How have the geographic metaphors used by composition and rhetoric scholars to describe the relationship between academic and religious discourses limited our ability to understand the relationship between the religious and academic domains of students' lives? In a recent article, Elizabeth Vander Lei highlights the predominance of geographic and spatial metaphors used to describe the relationship between religious and academic domains (Vander Lei, 2014c). Spatial metaphors are also an integral part of the conversation about transfer. The most recent conversations about transfer are focused on the idea that students must take up "threshold concepts" as they learn to write in various academic domains. Even the notion of transfer itself is a conceptual metaphor, implying that learning is located in specific communities and must be moved into other domains.

Throughout this study, I myself have used geographic metaphors. I have attempted to capitalize on narratives of home, exile, and journey, because these metaphors are powerful within the Christian tradition. And yet I have found myself bound by the limitations of spatial metaphors, as they often imply that a student exists only in a single place at any given moment. My struggle with these spatial metaphors aligns me with others who have argued that the notion of "transfer" is not capacious enough to capture the ways that learning takes place among multiple communities. As a writer, I find myself pushing against this restraint through the use of time-related language (such as recognitions of simultaneity) and the language of sound (recognitions of resonance and dissonance). In fact, the language of time and the language of listening are also powerful

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and potentially productive metaphors that one might draw from the religious traditions. As scholars seek to better understand the ways that academic and religious discourses coexist, I hope that they will mine the way that other conceptual metaphors might open up new possibilities for creating conversation among disparate knowledge making domains.

4. *How are students' churh-related literacy practices and discourses inflected by other identity categories such as race, class, regional identification, gender, and sexual orientation?* With a few notable exceptions (Brandt, 2001; Moss, 2001, 2003; Peters, 2005), the vast majority of the literature in the field of composition and rhetoric considers the literacy practices of White Evangelical and/or Fundamentalist students. These students are often middle-class, and they are often located in the Southern United States. As such, their experiences of the relationship between academic and religious discourses may differ significantly from those of students from diverse backgrounds. When I asked Greg and Phil to talk about how race, class, gender, and ethnicity played a role in the construction of literacy practices in the group, they both acknowledged that these factors were significant, but they struggled to articulate how the group's practices were shaped by its identity as a largely white, middle-class group of students.

Students of all religious traditions make their home in our classrooms, and yet we know very little about the literacy-related experiences of religiously engaged students from diverse racial and economic backgrounds. We know very little about how region and regional identity shape religiously engaged students' experiences in the classroom, and we have not yet rigorously examined how gender and sexual orientation affect students' experiences as readers and writers in both academic and religious communities. As composition instructors, we seek to make the classroom a space in which students can learn to appreciate, evaluate, and live as more productive members of their home communities while also integrating into the complex structure of American life in an increasingly global society. If we hope to accomplish this goal, we must develop a deeper understanding of the ways that students in a range of religious communities engage the expectations and practices of academic writing.

5. *How do students from other religious traditions understand the relationship between the literacy practices and discourses fostered in their religious communities and*

those of the academic community? Throughout this study, I have endeavored to be sensitive to the existence of Christian privilege on college campuses across the United States. One of the ways that this Christian privilege manifests is in the preponderance of studies of Christian college students, and the relative dearth of studies about students from other faith traditions. In recent years, scholars have begun to rectify this oversight, and a few studies now exist examining the relationships among composition studies and LDS students (Downs, 2005), and Jewish students (Fitzgerald, 2005), but as a field, we have barely begun the work of understanding the role of religion, and religious pluralism, in our classrooms and our students' writing. With this study, I have attempted to provide a method that might serve scholars seeking an entry point into better understanding the ways that church-related literacy practices and discourses from many different types of religious traditions may sustain or disrupt students' engagement with academic knowledge-making.

Learning My Own Lessons

As I was in the process of editing and revising this study, I encountered a University of Michigan student who reminded me of the need to be perpetually aware of the lessons and suggestions that I have outlined here. I close my study with this anecdote in an effort to show the importance of consistently and intentionally remaining open to welcoming students' beliefs, even when they differ from our own, and of learning from students whose faith may just surprise us.

* * *

In my role as a graduate student, I occasionally help the Sweetland Center for Writing at the University of Michigan when they are in need of additional help in the data collection for research studies. On this particular day, my task was to interview a transfer student about his experiences as a writer at the University of Michigan. I was sitting in my office surrounded by chapter drafts, with pieces of the manuscript taped to the wall behind me when the young man arrived my office for the interview. He sat down in a chair that faces the wall on which pages of my manuscript were hanging. He told me and told me nervously that he wasn't sure what to expect. As I explained the study, and the

process we would undertake, I watched as his attention shifted from my explanation to the pages on the wall. "Can I look at what you're writing?" he asked. "Sure, go ahead," I responded. I told him he was welcome to read while I set up the recorder and procured the informed consent documents.

Within moments of beginning to read the pages, he turned to me and asked what I was studying and why. I told him that I study the reading and writing practices of Christian College students. "Are you …" he began to ask, then stopped. "Yes." I replied. "I consider myself a Christian." He sat back down in chair and leaned forward, as if ready to tell me a secret. "I think I'm one of those students," he told me. He proceeded to tell me his story—the story of a teenager in and out of foster care, of a teenager who dropped out of high school, went to juvie for selling drugs, and somewhere around the age of seventeen began to ask questions about the meaning of life. He enrolled in community college, where he encountered a Christian philosophy professor who shifted the course of his life.

Reluctantly, I turned on the recorder and turned the conversation toward the interview, but he continued to talk about the way faith was influencing his experiences at the University of Michigan. He was a philosophy major, he told me, because of his Christianity, because he wanted to understand, to question, and to think deeply with the people around him. He connects with God in nature, he said, so simply for the joy of being outside he climbs trees in the Diag (Michigan's quad), and plays frisbee with whomever he can find there. As he described his experiences, I heard so many resonances with the students in my study. And then he told me that he was a part of a campus ministry. "Oh really?" I asked. "Which one?"

The ministry that this young man had joined is a local chapter of a ministry that the College Christians at Midwest experienced as closed, certain, and committed to proselytizing. I was astonished. The ministry that this young man had joined—and the students who participate in it—had become a stereotype in my mind, the very opposite of the young man sitting before me. I was humbled by this realization. For all that I have learned about the complexities of students' experiences and the inherent hybridity of their practices, even I had created a stereotype based on the stories of another group of students whom I had come to know and love. This young man, a novice in philosophy,

Christianity, and life at the University of Michigan, exemplifies the importance of understanding how individuals navigate a wide range of institutional expectations. As he talked, he revealed that he had carved out a distinctive niche for himself in each of those communities, allowing them to shape him, but also carrying practices across communities in agentive ways that help him grow as both a Christian and a scholar. He reminded me that we cannot assume we understand what someone believes simply because we have knowledge of an institution in which they participate, and he challenged me to remember that as a teacher and a scholar, I must be open to what I might learn from the experiences of people whose religious perspectives differ from my own. It is my deepest hope that the stories of the College Christians may do the same for others.

<u>Consent to Participate in a Research Study</u>
An Investigation of the Literacy Practices of Religiously Engaged
Christian College Students

Principal Investigator: Melody Pugh, graduate student in the Joint Ph.D. Program in English and Education at the University of Michigan

Faculty Advisor: Anne Ruggles Gere, Professor, English Department/School of Education

Faculty Advisor: Megan Sweeney, Associate Professor, English Department

Purpose: This study will explore the reading and writing habits of Christian college students who regularly attend religious services.

Participation: Melody Pugh invites you to be a part of this study. This study will focus on the reading and writing that you do as a part of your day-to-day life. If you decide to be part of this study, you agree to let me interview you about what you read and write. The first interview will last about one hour. If you participate in the follow-up interview, you agree to send me a copy of an academic paper that was shaped by your Christian faith. In the follow-up interview, we will talk about the choices you made while writing the paper. The follow-up interview will also last about one hour.

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even after you sign the informed consent document, you can decide to leave the study at any time without penalties.

Audio recording: I will take notes during our interviews. I will also audio record each interview. You can ask me to turn off audio recorder at any time. You can also ask that any part of the interview be erased. After the interview, you will be able to read the interview manuscript in order to remove any material that you do not want included in the study.

Confidentiality: You will be assigned a pseudonym so that your identity will not be revealed. When reporting the results of this study, I will remove all identifying information including names of people, places, and organizations.

I will keep all notes and papers in a locked file. All electronic files will be password protected and stored on a secure University of Michigan server, so that the data is protected at all times. I will keep the data for ten years after the study has ended for

record keeping and future research. All of the information I collect will be confidential, unless otherwise required by federal, state, or local law. The Institutional Review Board may inspect these records since they are responsible for monitoring this study.

Risks and Benefits: This study poses no risk to you beyond the risks posed in daily life. Your participation will help me describe the reading and writing that Christian students do when they participate in religious, academic, and social groups. It will also help writing instructors better understand whether or not students see a relationship between the reading and writing they do inside and outside of school.

Participants will receive a $25.00 gift card for participating in the first interview, and a $30.00 gift card for participating in the follow-up interview.

IRB Contact Information: If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, 540 E Liberty St., Ste 202, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210, (734) 936-0933, or toll free, (866) 936-0933, irbhsbs@umich.edu.

Contact Information: Please feel free to contact me or my faculty advisors if you have any questions or concerns at any time about this study.

Principal Researcher	Faculty Advisor	Faculty Advisor
Melody Pugh	Anne Ruggles Gere	Megan Sweeney
melodypu@umich.edu	argere@umich.edu	meganls@umich.edu
(440) 655-2255 (cell)	(734) 647-2529	(734) 647-6761

Participant Consent

By signing below, I confirm that I have read this form and agree to participate in this study. I have had my questions answered and I know that I can ask questions about the study at any time.

_____   _____

Signature   Date

I agree to allow Melody to audio record the interview.

_____   _____

Signature   Date

_____

Printed Name

<u>**Consent to Participate in a Research Study**</u>
An Investigation of the Literacy Practices of Religiously Engaged
Christian College Students

Principal Investigator: Melody Pugh, graduate student in the Joint Ph.D. Program in English and Education at the University of Michigan

Faculty Advisor: Anne Ruggles Gere, Professor, English Department/School of Education

Faculty Advisor: Megan Sweeney, Associate Professor, English Department

Purpose: This study will explore the reading and writing habits of Christian college students who regularly attend religious services.

Participation: Because you are the leader of a small group that is part of a Christian campus ministry, Melody Pugh invites you to be a part of this study. This study will focus in particular on the reading and writing habits of Christian students who participate in small groups that support their faith. If you agree to participate in this study, you agree to let me interview you about the choices you make when you lead the small group. The interview will last approximately one hour.

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even after you sign the informed consent document, you can decide to leave the study at any time without penalties.

Audio recording: I will take notes during our interviews. I will also audio record each interview. You can ask me to turn off audio recorder at any time. You can also ask that any part of the interview be erased. After the interview, you will be able to read the interview manuscript in order to remove any material that you do not want included in the study.

Confidentiality: You will be assigned a pseudonym so that your identity will not be revealed. When reporting the results of this study, I will remove all identifying information including names of people, places, and organizations.

I will keep all notes and papers in a locked file. All electronic files will be password protected and stored on a secure University of Michigan server, so that the data is protected at all times. I will keep the data for ten years after the study has ended for record keeping and future research. All of the information I collect will be confidential, unless otherwise required by federal, state, or local law. The Institutional Review Board may inspect these records since they are responsible for monitoring this study.

Risks and Benefits: This study poses no risk to you beyond the risks posed in daily life. Your participation will help me describe the reading and writing that Christian students do when they participate in religious, academic, and social groups. It will also help writing instructors better understand whether or not students see a relationship between the reading and writing they do inside and outside of school.

IRB Contact Information: If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, 540 E Liberty St., Ste 202, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210, (734) 936-0933, or toll free, (866) 936-0933, irbhsbs@umich.edu.

Contact Information: Please feel free to contact me or my faculty advisors if you have any questions or concerns at any time about this study.

Participant Consent

By signing below, I confirm that I have read this form and agree to participate in this study. I have had my questions answered and I know that I can ask questions about the study at any time.

_____   _____

Signature   Date

I agree to allow Melody to audio record the interview.

_____   _____

Signature   Date

_____

Printed Name

Sample Student Recruitment Email

Dear _____,

Thank you so much for welcoming me to your small group last night. It was great to meet you! I wanted to follow up with you to find out if you'd be willing to participate in my dissertation research study. I've met with a range of students so far from a variety of academic majors, and who are involved in College Christians at various levels.

Here's a little bit of information about my research project: I'm focused on trying to identify the range of reading and writing practices that Christian college students participate in as they go about their daily activities ranging from academic work to spiritual practice, and any other activities that might lead you to do any reading or writing. If you agree to participate in this study, I anticipate that an initial interview would take about an hour to an hour and a half, and will take place in a private meeting room on campus, most likely in either _____ or _____. I will be happy to meet at your convenience, during the week, on an evening, or a weekend. If you agree to participate, you will be compensated $25.00 for your participation in this study.

At the end of the study, we will have the opportunity to discuss the possibility of your participation in a follow-up interview that would ask you to look at a piece of your academic writing that you believe was informed by your academic faith. This interview would allow us to look more closely at what role (if any), your Christian faith plays in your academic work. If you agree to participate in this secondary/follow-up interview, you will be compensated $30.00 for your participation in the second portion of the study.

If you think you'd like to be a part of this study, I would love to set up a time to meet for an initial interview! I'm currently scheduling students for next week and the following week. I'm most free _____.

Thank you for considering participation in the study. I look forward to talking with you further!

Melody

Melody Pugh
Doctoral Candidate
Joint Program in English and Education
University of Michigan

Sample Bible Study Recruitment Email (Group Leader)

Dear _____,

I received your name from _____, who may have talked with you already about my hope that you will be willing to participate in my dissertation research study. My study focuses on the literacy practices of Christian college students. In particular, I hope to identify the wide range of literacy practices that Christian college students engage as they participate in religious, academic, and other social or civic communities.

As a part of this study, I would like to observe first-hand the kinds of reading and writing practices that students participate in as members of religious community. _____ recommended your small group as one that engages in a wide-range of activities that are representative of the kinds of things that students may be doing more broadly as members of College Christians.

I'm writing to ask permission to meet and talk with you about the possibility of observing several of your meetings during the course of the semester. If you and your small group agree to participate in the project, I would love to meet with you talk about the details of visiting your study. The project would also involve me interviewing the members of your small group. As a part of the project, I would like to record and/or videotape up to four of your meetings, depending on what you and your group might be comfortable with. Because I know that small groups are places where students feel free to share the intimate details of their lives, I would like to talk with you about some strategies that I have in mind for assuring that your group has full control over what data you would feel comfortable having me include in the study and what data you would like me to exclude.

If you would be willing to talk about what participation in the study might mean for your group, will you email me back with a few times that you might be willing to meet and talk about the details of the project more fully?

Thank you for your time,

Melody

Melody Pugh
Doctoral Candidate
Joint Program in English and Education
University of Michigan

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Initial Interview (General Literacy Practices): Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

<u>Background Questions</u>
1. Can you please tell me what year you are in school?
2. What is your major?
3. Where are you from?
4. Are you involved in any extracurricular organizations other than CC?
5. Did you grow up in the church? If so, what kind of church did you grow up in?
6. How did you get involved in CC?
7. Why did you decide to join a small group with CC?

<u>General Questions About Reading</u>

The purpose of this interview is to learn more about what Christian college students may be reading and writing. In other words, I'd like to get a sense of what kind of reading and writing you do and why you do it. Perhaps you'd like to start by telling me a little bit about your reading habits. **[Pause for response.] Based on participant's response, below are some possible follow-up questions:**

8. Can you tell me what kinds of reading you do in a typical week?
9. How much time do you spend reading in a typical day?
10. When you choose to read, why do you so? When you choose not to read, what factors play in to that decision?
11. What have you been reading lately?
12. How do you decide what you'll read?
13. Can you tell me about your favorite authors or books?
14. Do you have a sense of why you like these particular books and/or authors?
15. Have you noticed any changes in what you read since you came to college?
16. You mentioned that you're part of another extracurricular organization. Can you tell me what kinds of reading you do in that organization?

<u>Questions About Small-Group Based Literacy Practices</u>
17. Why did you decided to join/not to join a small group?
18. Why do you think other students decided to join/not to join a small group?
19. Can you tell me about the kinds of reading that you do in your small group?
20. Why do you think that your small-group leader has you doing this? Why did your small group choose to read this?

21. What do you think you gain from these kinds of reading activities?
22. Have you and your group ever read something that's challenging to understand? How did you handle the challenge?
23. Have you and your group ever discussed a challenging situation that one of you faced? How did you handle that?
24. Do you see any relationship between the reading that you do in small-group and the reading you do in other groups you're a part of?
25. Will you describe how you approach reading the Bible? How would you compare your reading of the Bible to the way you read other books?
26. What is your preferred medium for reading the Bible? Do you prefer to have the book in front of you? Do you read on your phone or your device?
27. Do you do any writing associated with your small group?
28. Do you contribute the organization's Facebook page?

General Questions About Writing
29. How do you feel about writing?
30. What kinds of writing do you do in a typical week?
31. Can you tell me about something you've really enjoyed writing?
32. What did you enjoy about writing this?

Concluding Questions
33. At this point, I will offer the student a piece of paper on which are written the three questions listed in the methodology section. I will ask the student if any of these three statements applies to his or her experience of academic writing. I will record the students' responses. The sub-questions that follow are designed to account for a range of anticipated answers.
    a. Tell me what you were thinking about when you marked each of these answers?
    b. *If the student responds that only one of the three statements is applicable to his or her experience of academic writing, ask*: Why do you think you always choose to write in this way?
    c. *If the student chooses to reject or complicate the categories created in the statements, ask*: Why do you find these questions inadequate? How would you describe your own experience as a Christian and an academic writer?

34. If the student has assented to two of the three statements presented:
    a. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview about your writing?
    b. For our follow-up interview, I'd like to talk to you about the writing that you are thinking of when you agree that these statements are true of your experience as an academic writer. Could you send me a copy of one paper that you think fits each statement? Also, if you have a copy of the assignment prompt for this paper, it would also be helpful to have you send that. If possible, look over the paper before you come to our next meeting. I'll have two copies here for us to look at while we talk.

Writing and Faith Statements (to be included with first round interviews)

Please indicate—with a Yes *or a* No—*whether or not each statement below applies to you.*

_____ 1. Since coming to college, I have written a paper that I believe had little or nothing to do with my religious faith.

_____ 2. Since coming to college, I have written a paper in which I directly discuss my religious faith or explicitly talk about being a Christian.

_____ 3. Since coming to college, I have written a paper that made me think about my religious faith, or in which I drew on religious beliefs and principles, but in which I did not directly discuss the fact that I am a Christian.

Follow-Up Interview (Faith-Related Writing): Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

General Questions

1. We covered a lot of topics last time we talked. Is there anything you'd like to add to our conversation?
2. *If interviewer has any follow-up questions re: last interview, ask them here.* Last time we talked you told me …
3. You sent me (two/three) different papers. Can you tell me about why you selected these papers?
4. Can you tell me about the class for which you wrote each paper?
5. Do you think you can explain what it was about this class, or this assignment, that led you to write in way that did or did not directly address your Christian faith?
6. Which of your faith communities, academic communities, or extracurricular communities do you think shaped the kinds of thinking you're doing in this paper?
7. How did your instructor respond to this paper? Did you have any conversation about it?

Text-Specific Questions

1. How would you describe the genre of this paper?
2. Have you ever encountered anything like this genre in the reading and/or writing you do outside of school?
3. Can you tell me a little bit about your composing process?
4. (For papers that students identify as directly discussing their faith) Can you point me to a specific place in the paper where your faith perspectives might be visible?
5. (For papers that students identify as not directly discussing their faith) Can you take me to a place where you were pointing to your faith in language that might be visible only to another person of faith?

College Christians Ministry Staff: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

<u>General Questions</u>

1. How did you get involved with CC?
2. How would you describe CC's purpose on Midwest University's campus?
3. What do you think distinguishes CC from other campus ministries at Midwest University?

<u>Questions about Literacy Practices and Literacy Events</u>

1. What is your role in planning large group/small group activities?
2. How do you choose what (your/the) group will study?
3. Why do you think these practices for Bible study are productive for the students you work with?
4. What do you think the students you work with are reading and writing outside of what they do with and for CC?

Select Field Notes from Tuesday March 12	Codes
9:05 It's the week after Spring Break. Tonight, we have our Spring Break destination written our nametags. The opening song is a mashup of "Breakfast at Tiffany's" (I can never remember the name of this band! One hit wonder though …) and "Give a Little Bit," by the Goo Goo Dolls. Everyone's getting settled. Alissa walks by me and leans in to tell me that it's "boyfriend night"– four of her leadership team girls have brought their boyfriends. Apparently a rare occurrence. …	Creating community

Engaging popular culture—for its own sake

Interacting with students from across campus |
| 9:08 Following the opening song, they watch a video of "Penguin Fails:" a rock soundtrack accompanies video of drunken looking penguins slipping off of icebergs or trying to jump on to icebergs and missing. It is pretty funny, I have to say, even though it has nothing to do with anything … | Engaging popular culture—for its own sake |
| 9:10 Nathaniel and Jessica start the program with a skit. They're wearing workout clothes and leapfrogging through the crowd while carrying free weights. They tell the gathered audience that they need a workout to get ready for St. Patrick's day. (Is this a tacit approval/subtle acknowledgment of the fact that a lot of them will spend St. Pat's drinking with their fraternities/sororities?) The "workout" is a relay race in which the students have to eat and drink ridiculous combinations of things like milk and chewy fruit candies, or peanut butter and energy drinks. The students who volunteer to be on the relay teams are Leadership team members and their friends. During the race I look around: It's a large group tonight, and there's a little more racial and ethnic diversity than usual. I see a few students of color, but only a few. | Student-led literacy events

Acceptance of party culture / Interacting with students from across campus

Creating community

Student diversity |
| 9:20 Lexie—the organization's ministry intern—comes up to the front and introduces a new online form where students can submit prayer requests (anonymously if they'd like), and where they can request a meeting to pray with someone. The group sings happy birthday to Jessica (who's still in exercise clothes). | Church-related literacy practice—new media

Creating community |

9:22 Charity (a Senior and a member of the Leadership team) comes to the mic to share her "student story." She reads from several pages of typed text that she brought to the front with her. This is a sub-genre of the testimony that I would describe as the "rock-bottom" testimony: despite the fact that she's been in College Christians since her first year at Midwest, Charity got involved with friends who weren't "healthy" for her and she eventually ended up drinking herself into hospitalization during her junior year. She tells us that this "failure," has taught her to "actively pursue God in a community-based way." She reads a few verses from *The Message*'s transliteration of I Corinthians (which they're studying in Leadership team), then a friend comes up to pray a blessing over her. During the prayer, we learn that the purpose of these stories is to encourage people to be vulnerable enough to bring their struggles to the College Christians community.	Composing for spiritual growth Church-related literacy practice—testimony, Evangelical Acceptance of party culture Church-related literacy practice—Bible Versions CCValue—vulnerability
9:33 The band comes back up to the front and the group sings a crossover song: Howie Day's "Collide."	Engaging popular culture—crossover / Church-related literacy practice—singing
9:37 Greg—the primary campus minister—comes to the front of the room to open his homily-style talk. In this first meeting post-Spring Break, they're continuing their lead-up to the Passion Story, so he's working from the Gospel of Luke in *The Message*. The story tonight is Judas's betrayal of Jesus. Greg's hitting some of his key themes hard. Tonight he's emphasizing: • *The need for community.* He keeps reminding the students about the need to "show up." • *The idea that with a little imagination, Bible stories can easily be applied to their lives.* He asks the students to raise their hands if they've ever been betrayed. He provides a little bit of historical background to the story, but he primarily retells the story in his own words, encouraging the students to understand how "cinematic" the Bible can be. He tells them to "put themselves in the story," so that they can better relate to its messages. • *The notion that Christianity is an orientation toward life rather than a set of behaviors or beliefs.* "Jesus reorients folks in the way in which they choose to live life," he tells them.	Church-related literacy practice—Bible Versions / Message CCValue—Community Church-related literacy practices—Jesuit practice Subjectivity—Christianity as Orientation
9:50 The evening closes with the praise and worship song "Forever Reign" from Hillsong United and intern Lexie sends the students off with a prayer.	Church-related literacy practices—Evangelical / singing

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE CODED LEADER INTERVIEW

Interview with Greg (Ministry Staff Leader)		**Codes**
Melody:	So, that's my story. How did you end up doing this work?	
Greg:	The College stuff?	
Melody:	Yeah	
Greg:	I did a lot of it in Seattle when I was there as the regional Director for College Christians. I didn't do college specifically, but I have a lot of college leaders, middle and high school kids, and it was right by the University of Washington, so a ton of college students. Always loved the energy, the freedom of thought, the way they were willing to risk. They just kept everything light and energetic and it was just fun for me and it just got more fun as I've gotten older.	Multi-tiered ministry format CCValue—fun
	I came here to be a regional director, so I came here to supervise people like me in the eastern part of the state and just wasn't ready to leave the field yet. So then I had an opportunity to start this and seek out college students. I like thinking outside the box. I don't like convention. I think we need to be less conventional for this generation and so, what better place to be.	CCValue—risk
Melody:	Can you unpack that a little bit for me because I think I understand what that means, but one of the challenges I'm having as a researcher (because I'm in this community) is not assuming that we're on the same page. So I may do this a lot.	Linguistic checking
Greg: Sure. Yes, totally fine.		

Melody:	When you say convention and not going with convention, what are you talking about?	
Greg:	There's a way of being Christian that a lot of kids have grown up with and you, you could identify this being this being conservative or reading the Bible and saying, "This is what the Bible says, so that's what it means, so we need to do that." So kids have grown up in that environment and it's been fairly conservative and I think that we misread a lot of Scripture, we've taken it out of context, you mentioned prooftexting. I mean, that is a complete and epic fail for us.	Disposition—certainty Subjectivity--obedience Church-related literacy practice—interpretation / proof-texting
	The educators here who see that are correct in calling that out because most kids don't know the context. What I've tried explore with them and given them the freedom to do is, *what do you really think?* Because they will tell you what they think they're supposed to tell you to be a Christian, but it's not what they really think. What they really think is what we want to get at because they can't be real if they're not going deep into what, secretly, they feel, and then they'll lose their faith two, three, four, five, ten years from now because it's not based on anything.	Awareness of difference--academic Biblical literacy CCValue—honesty CCValue—authenticity
	Like you said, home church stuff, all that stuff that they bring to the table, they just stay in that spot, but it's not what they really think. It's not what they really believe.	Dispositions—stagnation
Melody:	Yeah. Does …	
Greg:	Does that make sense?	
Melody:	Yeah it does …	
Greg:	I don't know if that answers the convention part of it, but there's a way of viewing the atonement that Jesus Christ died for my sins and I'm forgiven, and that's it. There's no exploration of, "Wait a minute, is that the only way to look at it? Is there more? Is that really right?" That's what a lot of kids think and that's what they've been taught and that's what most Evangelical organizations on this campus talk	Church-related literacy practices—interpretation / context CCValue—questioning Dispositions—stagnation / certainty

	about and preach.	
Melody:	Okay, so can we go there? How, for you, is College Christians different? What role is College Christians serving on this campus that's giving them something different?	CCValue—openness / independence Acceptance of party culture
Greg:	I think the niche that College Christians has played is that we are not telling kids what to believe. When I speak on Tuesday nights, I don't tell them to believe this way, or to not have sex anymore, or to not drink. I don't—that's not my language. Now, it might be somebody else's language who speaks on Tuesday nights, but it's not my language. My language is more, "Here is the life of Jesus Christ and what he invites us into." You've got to choose whether you want that or not. But it is a life that is free for you, and it's more of a guiding way with them rather than saying, here is what it means to be a Christian. Because they've heard that.	Language constructing values CCValue— independence Dispositions—seeking Awareness of difference—Christian CCValue—relationship
	The kids that are there have heard that, that are trying to follow Jesus have heard that. The kids that have given it up have heard that. The Catholic kids have heard that. The non-believers have heard that through other people, and so they know that language and that language has not worked for them. So how do we invite them back into an exploration of what it means to be a follower of Jesus, not a Christian.	Language constructing values Role of authorities
	I'm not saying we're that much different than [other ministries] but the way we talk about what we allow kids to say, who we allow them to be, what we allow them … and allow, like we have any control … what we allow them to do. I don't have my leadership students sign a contract that they're not going to have sex or drink. Most Evangelical organizations on this campus will have their leadership students sign a contract.	CCValue—honesty / authenticity
	I don't do that because I want them to tell me the truth. The minute they sign a contract, they will lie. They'll tell me what I want to hear, and I don't want that. I'd rather have them come to me and say they just had sex over the weekend, and we can work through that. What do they really want? "Is	Dispositions—growth CCValue—dialogue

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	that what you really want to do? Because if that's what you really want, then great. Go do that, but not on this team." You could be here and be part of us. If that's what you want to do. If you fall and stumble once in a while, that is a completely different way of being, but if you've decided that every weekend, you want to go out and hook up. Then let's talk about what that means, but let's move you to a different place.	CCValue—exploration / authenticity
	For me, it's all about the dialogue and what they really want, because if they don't know what they really want, then they'll just do what everybody else tells them. I've seen enough of that. I'm kind of exhausted of looking into a kid's eyes and not seeing it.	
Melody:	So, talk to me about with this more exploratory approach, and in particular, I think, with an exploratory approach to understanding the conventions of Christianity, of understanding Theology, right of understanding even the Bible, Right? I'll just ask you this right now, one of the things that I'd like to do, if you're open to it, is record a few of your talks on Tuesday nights, because as I've been listening to you, you do this really interesting thing, and I don't know if you're doing it consciously.	Ways of reading— biblical interpretation
Greg:	I may not know it.	
Melody:	Maybe I shouldn't say it.	
Greg:	No, say it. I like it.	
Melody:	You float in and out. Your talk is a combination of reading the scripture and explaining in your own words the scripture, almost Eugene Peterson-esque.	Ways of reading— biblical interpretation
Greg:	Exactly.	
Melody:	Right.	
Greg:	No questions.	
Melody:	You're very fluidly—you don't ever cue us to when you're moving in between. There is, even in the way you present these talks, are much more	

	exploratory—"I'm going to fluidly move in and out of text." Pros and cons of doing that as you see it, why do you do it, and then once we're there, what are you losing with that?	
Greg:	I'm a big believer in imagining, so I have been influenced by Peterson, no question. When I read the scripture, I am imagining myself there and what would I be doing, what would I be thinking, how would I be feeling, how would this impact me, what kind of shock and awe value would there be? So, before I even get up to speak to students, I'm trying to live in that now, at 50, what would it have been like as a 20-year-old? Where was I as a 22-year-old or a 32-year-old as I read this story?	Ignatian Contemplation
	I think the value, the reason I do it is because I want students to read the Bible, and they don't. They just don't read it because they don't feel like it's relevant. They don't feel like they can understand it. So if I can get them to imagine, they'll read it. I just want them to read it and not be afraid of it. The cons are I could be wrong. I might be missing it. I might be saying something that people … I don't really worry about students disagreeing with me, but maybe other folks who know more about the Bible than I do or think that they know more about the Bible than I do, would think that I'm wrong in leading people down a risky road.	CCValue—relevance Church-related literacy practices—lack of engagement with the Bible Dispositions—novice / growth / humility
	I think that I tightrope that. I'm walking a very thin, thin line. I'm willing to risk that because they're not in it anyways, so it doesn't matter to me. If I can get them in it, we've got a fighting chance. If they don't get in it, then they are trying to figure life out on their own without an anchor.	CCValues—risk

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE CODED STUDENT INTERVIEW (INITIAL INTERVIEW)

Interview with Charlotte		**Codes**
Melody:	Do you think you could do that without coming together to read the Bible or do you think that reading the Bible has something to do with why you're forming a closer community?	
Charlotte:	I think we could do it without—like even the group of people, I think we could do it without reading the Bible but I think that is also, like I said group of people it's because we also have something in common which is our faith. When you put a group of people that have nothing in common, it's kind of hard to form a community I think.	Church-related literacy practices—Bible as honored center of community
Melody:	How would you describe what you get from Leadership as being in relationship to what you get from small group?	Multi-tiered ministry format
Charlotte:	I think small groups are designed to give you a close-knit group of friends that you can lean on to talk about your faith. I hope ours gets to be like that because I have had small groups in the past in high school and everything that were great like that and I felt very comfortable. Then again, we are all from different areas and we don't know each other that well yet, so I don't feel like it's there yet. But I definitely think that that's what they're designed to be like.	CCValue—relationship CCValue—authenticity / vulnerability
Melody:	How will you know if you're getting there?	
Charlotte:	Yeah. I know. I feel comfortable—I think just feeling like we can talk about anything. That's a good question, I'm sure Lexie asks it.	CCValue: honesty
Melody:	I'm sure she does.	

Charlotte:	As a leader.	
Melody:	What do you think about *Jesus Calling*, that you guys have been working your way through in small group?	Church-related literacy practices—*Christian Book*
Charlotte:	I told Lexie this last week that I feel like it's a really good book but I don't feel like it's a good book for a small group only because every day when you read something in it … the daily devotionals are really straight forward and it's good to reflect and everything but I feel like a tougher book, if that makes sense, would be better for a smaller group so that way you can talk through it and ask questions.	Self-sponsorship Institutional sponsorship CCValue—reflection / dialogue / questioning
Melody:	In your mind a book that would be good for a small group would be something that had points that people might disagree on?	Group dynamics—role of disagreement /
Charlotte:	Disagree or question, like not understand. I guess disagree would be an okay way of framing it.	Linguistic checking
Melody:	You're not totally convinced, you don't have to …	CCValue--dialogue
Charlotte:	Maybe just a book—I mean also it could be because *Jesus Calling* each page, each day that you read is a paragraph long so it's not a lot of substance to reflect on and talk about for an hour or a half an hour.	Reading for Spiritual growth
Melody:	Have you ever read something that you would want to read with your small group?	
Charlotte:	Maybe *Purpose Driven Life*. The chapters are longer, you're supposed to read a chapter a day. Other than that I have a lot of books that I've started that I haven't really finished. Have you ever heard of *Not a Fan*?	CCValue—relationship / Group dynamics—role of disagreement
Melody:	I haven't.	
Charlotte:	That's a good book. I've only read the first half of it but that was a good book, maybe that one for a small group.	

Melody:	Have you ever, in Leadership or in small group, had that moment where something was hard to understand and you were trying to figure it out?	
Charlotte:	Only one time actually comes to mind and it was in high school.	
Melody:	Will you tell me about that?	
Charlotte:	Let me think, let me grasp it. It was actually about, and I don't know why it still stays in my mind but one of the of the girls in my small groups had a question about why God, why everything's focused on Him and why although we're not supposed to be selfish he's kind of selfish in that He wants everything to be focused on Him. He wants us to always be thinking of Him and everything. I was like, that's really interesting because it's like completely opposite, we're supposed to be selfless, we're supposed to be servants. Then my leader answered it with, "He knows that's He's best for us so that's why, and He wants the best for us so that's why He does that." It makes sense, but it's still kind of interesting to think about, that it is selfish.	CCValue—creative tensions

Disposition—questioning
Subjectivity—truth-seeker

Disposition—certainty |
Melody:	So both of those things can make sense to you at the same time?	
Charlotte:	Yes. So …	
Melody:	That's really interesting. Do you see any relationship between the way that you approach reading the Bible and the ways that you approach any of these other books that you're reading?	Relationship between literacy practices
Charlotte:	Christian books or schoolbooks?	
Melody:	Let's start with the schoolbooks, or no sorry let's start with the easier one. Let's start with the Christian books and then talk about the schoolbooks.	
Charlotte:	Do I see that way I approach the reading?	
Melody:	Yes.	
		Reading-related

Charlotte:	Yes, I think so. With Christian books, yes.	transfer—near transfer of Christian to Christian
Melody:	In what ways are they similar?	
Charlotte:	In both, when I'm reading them, I'm looking to read something that I can reflect on, I think. I mean that's the main thing.	CCValue—reflection
Melody:	The major similarity, yes.	
Charlotte:	Then with schoolbooks, I don't think—it's mostly just obtaining facts or just reading it because I have to. Is that what everyone, anyone else says?	Reading-related transfer—zero transfer of spiritual and academic
Melody:	Oh yes, I hear that a lot.	
Charlotte:	I'm not the only one.	
Melody:	No, not at all. In fact I had a long conversation with somebody where I got curious, I think I was feeling ornery that day and I was like, so is there anyway a teacher could ever get you to read it because you wanted to? He was like: No.	
Charlotte:	I think it'll definitely, well hopefully, change. Maybe as a senior, when we're closer to our concentration. You know when we're taking classes more towards that but right now it's Chemistry, Organic Chemistry. I don't know how you can think it's interesting, but Biology can sometimes be interesting to me at least. It kind of sounds selfish but it's just like we can apply it to ourselves, we can—thinking about a cell and it's like we have all these cells and this is what's happening on a very small perspective, whereas Chemistry—I just have a hard time broadening it.	CCValue—openness to growth Reading-related transfer—zero transfer of spiritual and academic Reading-related transfer—relevance Characterization of academic knowledge – facts

APPENDIX F: SAMPLE CODED STUDENT INTERVIEW (FOLLOW-UP)

Interview with Lisa		Codes
Lisa:	Yeah. This is much rougher. This is much rougher. I'm pretty sure but it says here, this is—I know we talked about if I had a paper that directly reflected my views and stated it, and then one that maybe didn't state it, but then after reading through this I kind of realized, you can read it, but I talked about like faith and religion, and I don't think I clearly say like I am a Christian and I believe in faith, but it's like very obvious, I think.	Marked writing – identification of
Melody:	But that philosophy paper that you just talked about would be an example of one that doesn't directly state it, but does draw on it.	Unmarked writing – identification of
Lisa:	Correct. I can't exactly remember the wording of the prompt, but it was an argument of the existence of God.	Writing-related transfer--content-to-content / near transfer
Melody:	Okay. That's right.	
Lisa:	And it's very rough.	
Melody:	It's a timed essay. Right? They always are.	
Lisa:	And the last one.	Pressures of school
Melody:	Oh, yes. Definitely, you're like, *okay*.	
[Time Elapses]		
Melody:	Is this your professor's handwriting or your GSI?	
Lisa:	Yes, yes. GSI.	
Melody:	GSI, okay. Yeah this is interesting because you don't really come out and say what you actually believe in this one.	Self-positioning as a writer

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Lisa:	I just felt like a little bit the way I was, like the idea of faith and religion. I felt like I maybe had a um, like, an obvious—how would you say that? Obvious preference of religion compared to the opposition just because of the way it was written.	Academic value--need for neutrality / Church-related discourse—suppression of
Melody:	Okay, let's dive into that because that's actually really, really interesting. So, what, if you were to say, "Okay I think here is where my preference showed." What would you point to?	Marked discourses—church-related language
Lisa:	Definitely this paragraph probably. Like this part, the argument, is the idea that these cannot be fairly explained and one must trust that God is there. I guess maybe that's probably the sentence I think that says it the most and then like the idea of sin, and like this sentence here. But I think—	
Melody:	[reading from paper] "The idea of sin and people having the choice to sin or repent has kept the idea that people have more responsibility alive today."	
Lisa:	I feel like if I would've had more time and if it would've been a paper assigned, I think my views would've been expressed more. And I'm thinking maybe that I see it as having more of a sway one way than you do maybe is because of the reasoning I had behind writing it and like what I *think* I said. And then I'm reading it and I'm like, I didn't really say that.	Impact of genre on marked or unmarked discourses

Problem of intentionality |
| Melody: | Okay, well talk me through what you think you said there because that's actually hugely significant, for the kind of work that I'm thinking about. | |
| Lisa: | The idea of faith and then—I think if I would've written this as a paper for this class, I would've had an example here of like, maybe even an example of the events this week. So like the shooting, people that are like, that have a religious background have their faith in God, like lead them to believe like— not greater good, but—What am I trying to say? I guess I would just, in there, put an example of when you would have, when your faith in God is important and shown that maybe contrast to someone that doesn't believe in God. | Marked discourses— examples including religion |

Melody:	Okay, yes.	
Lisa:	I can't think of a very good example right now. I think it would just be an example of a bad event and believing that there is a reason behind it.	
Melody:	Yeah. Ok.	
Lisa:	"So one must trust in God." Yes, I guess I would just put a more personal touch on these sentences, like one must trust that God is there, and then maybe even branch off to an example there too of like—I guess the way I write my philosophy papers is like, I have this idea and then I'll branch into an example or a situation like: you're driving your wife to the hospital or—just, like, a situation. So I would've put something there. Is that helpful?	Marked or unmarked?—distancing through pronoun use
Melody:	Yeah.	
Lisa:	And then like, an example here of like: God forgives those who steal when they ask for forgiveness. You aren't condemned for life by doing these things or something like that, and I think just writing that would kind of show my beliefs.	Marked discourse—mention of God
Melody:	That's the sort of core idea behind this, whereas what you actually just say …	
Lisa:	…isn't that.	
Melody:	… is just that "hey"—sort of broadly—"there is this idea out there," which anybody could say regardless of what they believe. There is this idea out there and here's how it works. Was the language of sin language that came up in the class?	Marked discourse—church-related language
Lisa:	No. I remember bringing that word in and I was like "this is a different look," and we call it evil in class. Like why is there evil in the world: moral evil and natural evil?	Writing-related transfer—near transfer / conceptual transfer
Melody:	So for you, moral evil is equivalent to sin?	
Lisa:	Yeah. I mean, broadly, yeah I would say that.	
Melody:	Interesting. Because I think that is the one thing	

	here that I see that does make this feel like you have a stake in religion, is this sort of comfort with which you introduce the language of sin and repentance, right?	
Lisa:	Mm-hmm (affirmative). I remember writing that and thinking, "can I say this here? Am I going to get marked down?"	Marked language-sense of risk
Melody:	What would make you think that you would get marked down for saying that?	
Lisa:	I was nervous about this prompt mostly because I remember reading it and like hard determinism and soft determinism was what we were talking about in the class and I remember being the last to talk. I was pretty flustered and I couldn't think of a lot of the stuff that we had talked about in class. So a lot of what I had written was like bringing my personal beliefs and try to mold it into what we had talked about in class. So I don't think, I honestly think if I would've thought about evil and thought about how we had used the language in class, I probably would have used that instead. But from here I was just writing what I knew, I guess, and that's kind of just what came out.	Disposition—certainty (lack of)

Need for neutrality and suppression of religious discourse

Marked discourses - fungible |

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