

ABSTRACT

Title: God is Change: Ritual Transformation and Constructed Kinship in a Christian Maternity Home

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This paper describes the experience of residents and staff members in a Christian residential maternity program, in the Midwestern United States. The ministry serves single mothers who are both pregnant and experiencing homelessness, providing them with shelter, “life-skills” classes, and emotional and spiritual support. Synthesizing ethnographic fieldwork and interviews, this thesis explores themes of kinship and faith as they relate to the residents’ and staff’s experience in the program. As residents progress through the program, they are invited to adopt a Christian lifestyle that will help them transform their lives from economic and social precarity to stability. This paper explores this transformation as a Turnerian rite of passage, with the staff and ministry structure acting as a ritual guide. This research is presented to offer a contemplative look at the process of constructing kinship bonds, as well as to question the role of Christian faith and ministry in facilitating change for pregnant mothers facing homelessness in the US today.

God is Change: *Ritual Transformation and Constructed
Kinship in a Christian Maternity Home*

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Introduction: Who is Francesca?

It is early on a Thursday morning when I step into the living room of Francesca¹ Ministries, unaware of what changes may have taken place there since I left 48 hours earlier. There is a flurry of activity in the kitchen and dining room as Jasmine and Alyssa hurry to mix bottles of formula, pack lunches and diaper bags, and get ready for work. As I turn down the hallway, my lingering question is answered when I see Isabelle, tiny baby in arms. I'm asked if I'd like to hold the newest addition to the household, only two days old, so his mother can finally take a shower. I happily accept, and we sit together as he sleeps—head nestled into my shoulder. As we wait quietly, I observe the frenzied motion of the morning continue around me. Hannah, eight-months pregnant, heads out to her car to start the day's errands. Shortly after, Alyssa and Jasmine, toting strollers and infants, walk past me with a morning volunteer who drives the ministry van to daycare and work. Soon, nearly everyone has left for the day and a sense of calm settles over the house. The newborn still breathing onto my chest, Isabelle returns looking calmer. We talk briefly about her transition to Francesca from the hospital, and she tells me how nice it is to be home. After a few minutes, and noting the baby is still sleeping soundly, she sheepishly asks if I could continue to watch him while she goes out for a quick cigarette. I remember she was trying to quit, but knowing all she has been through in the last few days, I assure her I don't mind holding him a while longer.

¹ The names of places and people have been changed to protect sources' privacy and confidentiality.

This vignette describes the sensory experience of a typical morning at Francesca Ministries, and is imagined out of the many mornings I spent there over the course of my fieldwork. While reflecting on my time spent at Francesca Ministries, I have been searching for what is *true* in this work. Like many things in the field of anthropology, there is no straightforward answer. As an ethnography, this account is as accurate to my memory and understanding of events as I am able to express. Still, my understanding is filtered through the lens of my own human experience—as anthropology, like psychology or medicine, requires one human to interpret the subjective experience of another, sifting it through layers of very specific knowledge to produce a common understanding. What I find most truthful about this field, and why I believe anthropology can offer insight into the multifaceted realities of life at Francesca Ministries, is the discipline’s willingness to hold contradiction, to sit with outliers and cradle the uncertainty that arises when attempting to understand human culture and meaning. This work knows that many things are true at the same time. Here, I have done my best to respect, challenge, and hopefully begin to understand layers of the Francesca women’s² experience.

I offer this interpretation with the utmost respect for the women who live and work at Francesca. I value and honor their commitment to growth and their constant seeking towards transformation. Their decision to reveal their hopes and also their pain to me is not taken for granted. It should be noted that this project was not intended to document the

² In this paper, I will uniformly refer to my interview participants as women, since the staff and adult residents I met at Francesca all identify as women and use female gender pronouns. This is not to imply that all childbearing parents in the US identify as women, nor that the issues of single motherhood described here solely apply to woman-identified parents. However, these larger issues of gender and parenting lay outside the immediate scope of this thesis.

apparent realities of life at Francesca, but rather to examine its undercurrents—to uncover the tides of interactions and moments that make up the place.

Francesca is both a discrete physical location, a spatial environment, as well as a complex set of ideas, concepts, and value systems that residents encounter. As a ritual center, Francesca marks a physical space where change occurs. Francesca also acts as an agent in facilitating that change. The women inside its walls are being formed by the space, while also forming the place and each other as stakeholders in the Francesca Residential Program³. While the staff take responsibility for assisting in this formation, primary accountability is placed on a unifying concept of God⁴, which is granted ultimate authority over the process of transformation. All the while, the residents at Francesca are molding and shaping their children, with the support of their Christian⁵ faith—in a manner laid out by the Francesca program itself.

In undertaking this thesis project, I hoped to understand how program staff meticulously construct Francesca, using social work methodologies and religious doctrine, to facilitate a lifelong change in their clients, and how within this rigid structure, a spiritual faith can enter and under the right conditions, perform the transformative work desired. By observing the impact of these methodologies, I am seeking to untangle the emergent structures from the constructed and to understand the symbiotic relationship held between these two realms. I want to understand how women who have spent their lifetime in flawed

³ Hereafter called the “residential program”.

⁴ When discussing the idea of God in this paper I use proper nouns, as a reflection of my participants’ faith in the Christian God. The pronouns “He” and “His” are used to identify this God because for my participants, He is not an abstract idea but an active character in their experience within Francesca Ministries.

⁵ In this paper “Christian” will be used to denote interdenominational Christianity, as defined in the Francesca Ministries Statement of Faith found in Appendix B.

and even traumatic relationships can build genuine trust and love with strangers. I want to know if and how the client⁶ is transformed. This research seeks to understand the transformation of trauma into hope, as it is held by the women of Francesca—how histories of trauma and neglect lend way to healing in the liminal space. I hope to demonstrate the lasting redemptive power that the process of pregnancy and motherhood offered to this community of women, and also to question the temporal limits of that change.

I intend to simultaneously examine how a small staff of women, deeply committed to their Christian faith, assumed the responsibility of guiding residents through their transformation at Francesca. I hope their stories add complexity to understandings of Christian discourse around women's agency in birth. I will explore what it means for these women to invest emotional energy and love into the Francesca family and also maintain the professionalism of a social service worker.

The close community formed at Francesca is designed to be temporary for its members. Family bonds that are essential in the program are allowed to weaken quickly after the transformation is complete. Life at Francesca is liminal, suspended in time between the client's old life and the new one to follow. It is the space between *pregnant to mother*, *addicted to clean*, *poor to stable*, *fallen to saved*.

Background & Methods

My fieldwork took place at Francesca Ministries from May-September of 2017, with occasional follow up visits through November of 2017. During this time, I worked as a

⁶ Participants in the program are referred to as either "clients" or "residents". Both terms are used by Francesca staff.

volunteer in the ministry's residential program. I am trained as a doula to offer prenatal and labor support to birthing parents. I planned to offer this support to the residents while conducting interviews and observation in the ministry. Throughout my time at Francesca, my role fluctuated between babysitter, minivan-driver, confidant, interviewer, birth doula, and friend. Two or three days per week I would spend the day driving residents to and from work in the ministry van; babysitting the residents' children while they did chores or took evening classes; driving residents to run errands; going shopping or to cash paychecks at the corner store. I was present at different times of the day, and participated in dinner conversations, morning meetings, and periodic blessings for the women and their babies. I witnessed transitional moments in the community, such as the welcoming home of a new infant, the addition of a new resident, and also the exit of residents from the program.

Upon entering the ministry, I planned to separate my roles as a volunteer and an ethnographer. For the purposes of confidentiality, and respect for the women's privacy, I will only be discussing what they disclosed to me during formal interviews. Still, the daily interactions I shared with residents and staff have undoubtedly impacted how I interpret what they have said. I conducted formal interviews with two current residents of Francesca, and with one former resident who had recently left the program. I also interviewed three full time staff members. I recorded the interviews, scrubbed the data of identifying information, and transcribed the recordings verbatim. While looking over these transcription files, central themes emerged, many of which were different than the ones I thought I was looking for. My intent was originally to look at the staff members' own cultural ideas about homelessness, pregnancy, and birth as distinct from the residents' cultural ideas about these things. I

hypothesized that the staff would act as cultural brokers, navigating these differences in order to help the women they served effectively. As detailed by Jezewski, cultural brokers bridge and mediate the gap between one set of cultural ideas and another (2001). While I did notice instances of cultural brokerage and negotiation, the emergent themes that governed these interactions were kinship and faith, rather than cultural difference. After noticing these two themes emerge—kinship and faith—I reviewed my notes and interviews to understand how these themes played out in the structure of ministry and the relationships formed there.

My daily volunteer activities allowed me to become familiar with the components of the ministry program, and with the individual staff and residents. While the interviews allowed me to go deeper in my questioning of notable themes, they also offered the interviewees a chance to have their story heard. In a private interview setting, participants with whom I had already built trust were able to share more freely about the hardships they faced before and during their time at Francesca. Staff as well shared personal reflection on their time working in the ministry. The interview process was essential to understand the women's experience in depth and draw out emergent themes in the conversations.

Certain experiential moments were also critical to understanding Francesca. As trust between the residents and myself began to form, I was able to offer them support through the challenges of pregnancy and new motherhood as a doula⁷. Having the opportunity to support one new mother as she transitioned into life with a newborn, I witnessed the bonds of family being formed firsthand. In sitting with another resident through her labor,

⁷ According to DONA, a doula is, "a trained professional who provides continuous physical, emotional and informational support to a mother before, during and shortly after childbirth to help her achieve the healthiest, most satisfying experience possible".

breathing and encouraging her through contractions and the eventual delivery of her child, I witnessed her Christian faith in action, surrounded by family both given and chosen. In writing this thesis, I present a theoretical argument about Francesca, grounded in anthropological theories of kinship and faith, but I also present an interpretive account of my experience there. I see truth reflected from both directions.

Setting

Francesca Ministries is a small transitional living shelter and residential program located in the Midwestern United States. The ministry runs as a non-profit organization, housed in the rented nunnery of a local Catholic church. While the ministry is not affiliated with the church, they have had a lease agreement for eight years and maintain a positive, working relationship with parish. Francesca Ministries identifies itself as an interdenominational Christian ministry, and emphasizes the Christian faith as the heart of its mission to serve pregnant women facing homelessness.

Francesca can house up to 8 clients at a time, with their babies. Clients must be at least 18 years old, and may not bring any additional children to live with them, due to space constraints in the ministry. They must be drug and alcohol-free, and be deemed psychologically stable enough to live in a group setting. Clients typically come into the program soon after they learn they are pregnant and need somewhere safe to live. Some are facing abject homelessness, others are in living in temporary shelters, or in a housing situation that is deemed unsafe for any number of reasons.

Becoming a resident at Francesca is not a simple process. First, prospective residents call the ministry to explain their need for housing. Most are placed on a waitlist until a space

opens up. They must agree to follow all of the program guidelines and to participate in the Christian home life set up by the ministry. A prospective resident need not already have a strong Christian faith, but she must be open to participating in morning prayer, evening bible study, and weekly church service while a part of the program. In order to do these things, she must not be a practicing member of any other religious tradition besides Christianity.

If a prospective resident meets these initial guidelines, the staff invites them to come to the ministry for an interview. The interview process is extensive and can last two or three hours. The interview process clarifies and reiterates that the Francesca program is not just set up as a shelter, but a program to facilitate change. The clients must demonstrate her willingness to work towards her goals, and truly be seeking to change her life and open to faith as a key component of that process. Staff uses the intensive interview process to try and pick out clients who are a good fit. As the Executive Director explained:

We're getting better at bringing in the clients who truly do want change, not just the client who wants a stop and flop. And they want my Section 8 [housing]. We're not the place for those ladies.

Francesca staff expect the residents to work hard to reach mutually agreed upon goals. While these goals might look different depending on the client's situation—her employment history, age, level of education, and her personal goals all come into play—Francesca requires that the goals move women in the direction of independence as they become new mothers.

Another defining structural element of the ministry is the length of the program. There is no set limit on how long women can stay, but ideally a client will stay in the home for two years in order to receive the most benefits. A model client would enter while

pregnant, and learn how to care for themselves and their baby prenatally. The staff expects residents to use their prenatal period preparing to be good, stable mothers. Depending how far along in their pregnancies they are, they would be encouraged to pursue employment and/or schooling. After giving birth, the residents enter a six-week postpartum period that gives them time to rest and bond with their new babies, then gradually ease back into a normal, productive routine (Appendix A). After the postpartum period they will go back to work and/or school, while also continuing to help with chores at the house, and participating in evening classes⁸ at Francesca.

The residential program is broken into “phases.” Phase 1 consists of a 60-day probationary period, where the new client may acclimate to the program, and establish herself in the routines and procedures of daily life there. Near the end of this period, residents submit a request to move forward with Phase 2. As a part of this request, the client meets with staff to determine appropriate goals for herself, as well as a weekly work plan to move towards those goals and the expected outcome of self-sufficiency. In Phase 2, the resident becomes a full member of the house, and is expected to abide by all of the program guidelines. She must routinely check in with residential staff about her goals and make adjustments where necessary. The final stage at Francesca is Phase 3, the transitional living period. In order to move into Phase 3, a client must be in the residential program for at least six months. She must have either obtained employment or be enrolled in school. Either way, she must have at least \$700 in her savings account. With these accomplishments, as well as

⁸ These “life skills” classes cover a range of topics including nutrition, money management, exercise, infant massage, child care, and CPR. They are taught by volunteer instructors with whom Francesca partners. The classes are mandatory for residents who have not taken them before.

having no policy infractions on record for the past 45 days, a resident may move into the final phase. With phase 3 status comes additional freedoms and responsibilities. The resident's curfew is extended to 10pm, with one missed dinner per week allowed. Twice per week she may leave Francesca on a day pass, and she may also leave the ministry overnight on Fridays, and on holidays. After overnights, the resident must submit to a drug test. Finally, up to five percent of her savings may be withdrawn once per month to make ministry-approved purchases.⁹

During the program, the residents' finances are closely overseen by Francesca staff. Each resident must develop a budget, and carefully document their income and expenses under the supervision of the staff. As long as they have food assistance or an income, residents must pay \$35 per week into the grocery fund. From phase 2 onwards, residents continue to buy groceries and also pay 25% of their income, up to \$100 per month, as a residential fee. This fee is held by the program staff, and returned to them upon exiting the program as long as no damage to the ministry property has been incurred. In this way, the residential fee serves a dual purpose, both as a savings program and a security deposit. Samantha, Linda, and the board of directors design these policies to teach financial responsibility to the residents while they live at Francesca. At the beginning, residents have limited control over their money, and by demonstrating responsibility in other aspects, and meeting savings goals, they are allowed more freedom in the management of their personal finances.

⁹ Examples of ministry-approved purchases include professional clothing for work, car insurance payments, or driver training fees (Francesca Residential Program Policy Manual).

Another important aspect of Francesca Ministries is they exist to support their clients in finding what they consider a “life-affirming choice” for their pregnancies. For the ministry staff, this means they will never counsel for abortion, because to do so would go against their spiritual and moral beliefs. Still, they do recognize the many barriers their clients face, and the enormous investment of money and energy that goes into raising a child. For this reason, the ministry program provides physical, emotional, and spiritual resources to pregnant mothers who may otherwise be unable to carry their pregnancy to term. For some of the residents I spoke with, Francesca was integral in their decision to give birth to and parent their babies. Others had already decided to follow through with their pregnancies, and Francesca provided them with the resources to do so.

For the purposes of this discussion, I will examine the pro-life commitment of Francesca as separate from its popular media characterization as a polarizing political viewpoint. Rather than a debate in the abstract about biological development in utero, I understand Francesca’s pro-life stance as an internal value system and a culturally-specific way of thinking about the construction of kinship. The events taking place at Francesca transcend the typical language of choice, because the women I interviewed all felt that the resources and support offered by Francesca had allowed them to choose to mother their babies. For this particular group of women, the support from Francesca ministries had offered them more choice, not less. In the logic of the Francesca Ministries program, forming a new family is central to their mission of transforming residents’ lives. The program acknowledges the barriers a woman faces when pregnant in the midst of financial and social

precarity. With this understanding, staff seeks to transform clients out of this precarious situation with by offering physical and spiritual support.

Participants

With the structure of Francesca lightly outlined, I now turn to the individuals who helped me to understand its dynamic form and its shape. I spoke with Linda, the Executive Director of the ministry, to understand the logic and intention behind the residential program. Linda is lively and outspoken, a former manager at a bank and the wife of a Lutheran minister. Her job is to oversee the ministry in its entirety, along with the board of directors. I also spoke with Samantha, the Residential Director, who came to Francesca from a career in the infant mental health and social work fields. The last staff member I interviewed was Ruth, the warm, inviting house-mother, with a deep faith and a blunt yet unassuming sense of humor. Ruth is a mother and grandmother in her own right, and in the ministry fills these roles with the residents and their babies. She helped me to understand the integration of the program structure into the daily lives of the residents she cares for. She also helped me to comprehend the enormous personal investment she and the other staff make in order to have a meaningful impact on the residents' lives. Although we were talking about work, all of the staff interviews were personal, prompting both tears and laughter in turn.

To understand the lived experience of the Francesca program, I interviewed two current residents, and one who had left the program. Hannah, a young, first-time mom, was late into her pregnancy when I met her. An avid reader with an infectious sense of humor, Hannah had been living at Francesca for three months when we first spoke. She had moved

into Francesca out of her childhood home, where multiple family members struggled with drug abuse. She herself had been to multiple rehabilitation programs and had finally gotten clean when she learned of her pregnancy, right before moving to Francesca.

Jasmine, also a young first-time mom, had been living at Francesca for fifteen months—longer than any of the other residents. She had a young child, who was just learning to crawl around the house. She had been previously living with her grandmother, who became very ill around the time she learned of Jasmine's pregnancy. Faced with the option of moving into a house that was already full with her mother, her three sisters, and her six nieces and nephews, Jasmine began to seek out alternatives with the help of a trusted mentor. She learned about Francesca and moved in soon after.

Finally, I interviewed a former resident, Chandra, in her new two-bedroom apartment. I offer Chandra's narrative as a small case study of one woman's full Francesca experience from start to finish. She had left the Francesca program seven months earlier to move in with her mother, and had just recently gotten an apartment of her own through the federal "Section 8" housing assistance program. When we spoke, she was relieved to be in a place of her own that she could afford. Before moving to Francesca, Chandra had a stable job and was living with her grandmother. She had been casually dating a man, but soon after she became pregnant, the relationship ended. Although she was surprised, and a bit afraid, Chandra did not consider terminating her pregnancy. Describing the decision to me, she explained:

I just knew, I'm about to go down the roller coaster. I saw all the curves and all the—just everything. I had the money for an abortion, that's what was crazy. [The baby's] dad really hated that I didn't get an abortion. He was like *you know, we're not together, we're just doing this and I don't understand why you would keep the baby,*

like who does that? Why would you keep the baby when you know I'm not going to be the one for you? But I was like, because I want to be accountable for my actions.

Me and him both were over 21, nobody drugged us, we were in our right minds, conscious, and I wanted to be responsible about the situation—that's me personally. And he was just like, *why wouldn't you just get an abortion and get it over with?* I knew that was something that could be forgiven but I knew it was something that I could never take back, you know what I mean? So I decided to keep her, and it was a journey.

Following the news of her pregnancy, Chandra faced a series of difficult circumstances leading to her eventual experience of homelessness. Her grandmother relapsed in her addiction, and her pregnancy became medically complicated, making her too sick to work more than a few hours at a time. On multiple occasions, the security guards at her job had to help her across the street to the nearby emergency room. Eventually she had to stop working altogether. She was forced to look for new housing near the end of her pregnancy:

I see she's [Chandra's grandmother] going back to her relapse, and I'm like 7 months pregnant. I know I'm not making enough money to pay rent, and that was my first thought—to start thinking about shelter. Once I stopped working, I had applied to cash assistance, food stamps and things like that, and I was getting like \$200 every two weeks. That wasn't enough to like get an apartment. And I found Francesca literally when I was due, thank God.

Chandra had a phone interview with the Francesca staff, and her water broke the next day. After a long and painful labor, and eventually an assisted delivery, Chandra was a new mom with nowhere to go. While she was in the hospital, her grandmother had been evicted from their apartment. Chandra came home with 40 stitches from the traumatic delivery, and found the apartment packed up with a dumpster of their things on the street:

I came home and could barely walk. I had all these stitches, and the baby she was only like three days old. I was just sitting there like *oh my gosh*, the baby didn't have no crib, she didn't have anything. They had put the garbage dumpster out front. Like the big dumpster, that means they're about to come and throw all of your stuff out. I

didn't want them to like come with me and the baby, and they like lift the bed up or something. I just really needed to get out of there.

So all I had was my car, and I had already spoken to Francesca, so I thought *I'm just going to drive out there*. I had to do something, I can't stay. But I wasn't supposed to be driving. I was stitched up, and I was like, I didn't know what else to do, you know? I was limping, I was so padded up, it was crazy.

So I drive out there, I just went straight to the basement, I had an interview. They were just talking to me and I was crying the whole time. I was just sad; I couldn't believe I got my baby in this situation.

Chandra spent a few nights with a friend while waiting to hear back from Francesca. She wanted to stay at her mother's house, but with various other family members staying there, her mom didn't have space for Chandra and the newborn baby. Almost a week later, they moved into Francesca:

Finally, the baby had a crib, I was so happy, there was a crib and there was a bed for me, it was just such a blessing. I could be in the kitchen with multiple people and warm a bottle up! The kitchen was big. I was just so grateful. And then when you first had your baby you could be on rest for two or three weeks. So everybody was cooking everyday and I just could sit at the table and eat. It was a relief when I finally got to Francesca. I was finally able to lay down. But, the thing was, because I had been doing so much, I ended up back in the hospital.

A lack of stable housing meant Chandra had to move frequently during her first few weeks postpartum, when ideally she would have been on bed rest. Securing shelter, while also caring for a newborn and healing from a serious physical injury from the delivery was an incredible challenge. Even once she was safely at Francesca, the physical trauma to her body made it very difficult to adjust. She had not been able to heal properly, and ended up in and out of the hospital. On top of this stress, her baby also had colic, and cried inconsolably throughout the day and night. These factors collectively made it very hard for her to be

comfortable at Francesca. She was unable to complete most of her chores in the house, and felt guilty leaving her crying baby with the evening volunteers:

Once I got there it was really hard for me to complete the program because of the way I didn't let my body heal. Then my baby, she was colicky, so she cried all the time and it made me depressed when I was there. We had morning meetings and worship at like 7:00 in the morning and I was crying because I just went to bed at 6:00 and now y'all are waking me up saying I have a meeting. It was driving me crazy.

I felt like they [Francesca staff] were supportive the best way they could be, but at the same time they have a purpose for what their program does and they have to meet those standards. That's why they've been so successful. There were times they would let me sleep during productive hours, but eventually I had to do the requirements. I felt like they supported me but at the same time they still had to hold up their standards.

After Chandra had been at Francesca around three months, her mother moved into a larger house. Chandra also began to get calls from her old job, asking her to come back to work with a flexible schedule. Since she felt the Francesca program was not meeting all her needs, she agreed to move into her mother's new house on a trial basis. The ministry allowed her to stay there for two weeks, and would let her come back if she wanted to. The individual support and assistance her mother provided were just what she needed to rest and to heal:

It was so nice, I had so much extra help. My mother kept the baby and I just slept. And Francesca was great, they were calling checking in on me to see how it was going. My mom had the baby and I slept. My mom had that grandmama touch I guess, because she had that baby in her sleep. I was just like, yes. I just slept. I needed so much help. And Francesca gave me help, I just needed extra help—like extra extra help. And that's why I ended up having to leave the program.

Chandra ended up staying at her mother's and leaving the Francesca program after three months there. She was able to work at her job one day per week, then two. When we met, her daughter was seven months old and Chandra was working half-time. Her rent was calculated based on her income, so she was feeling much more secure and positive about her

future. She emphasized repeatedly how retelling this story still shocked her. Homelessness, she told me, was not something she thought could happen to her. With some distance from the experience, she explained:

Some of the stuff I say I can't even believe I went through it and can still smile and be able to say, *God can bring you through*. I really believe that God is able to open up a door for you and He uses the right people and He will provide.

Despite the harrowing situations she described, Chandra was full of energy and maintained a positive outlook throughout our conversation. She emphasized that you can never really know what someone is going through, but that she hoped sharing story her would impact someone else. She thanked me repeatedly for listening to her story, and explained:

I know when people hear my story they'll probably be like, *You went through all that? And yeah there was plenty of times when I cried at night, like Lord why, what's going on?* But to be able to go through something and come through it and be able to share your story with somebody, it really can change somebody's life. Because when I see people who tell me what they've been through, I just be like, *Wow, there is a God that can get you strength*.

I highlight Chandra's story in particular because having been a part of the Francesca program and moved on from it, she was able to reflect on her experience with a unique perspective from the women still living in the ministry. Even though she was only in the program for a few months, she has a valuable perspective to offer:

When you go to Francesca, even if it's not for a year, sometimes your journey there is short. But it still impacted me. I didn't even complete the program, but they were there when I needed them. At the time, my mom didn't have a space for me, so where was I going to go? They gave me enough time and they gave her enough time to get herself together where she was able to help me. When you get there you take from it, you learn from it, and you grow from it—whether that takes two weeks or a year or six months, as long as it impacts you in some type of way. So that's how I look at it, they impacted me and my baby in just those two to three months. They changed our lives, and that impacted me and I'm so grateful to be connected to them.

Now that she has found more stability, Chandra was willing to share her story all the way through, knowing there is a happy ending and a way forward. Each resident at Francesca is unique, but Chandra's story demonstrates the process someone must go through to come to Francesca and also the precarious circumstances that can put someone in the position of needing shelter and support. Finally, Chandra wanted her story to be heard, and I hope these pages can bear witness to her experience and that of all the women who make up Francesca Ministries.

Conclusion

In the following chapters, I imagine Francesca Ministries as having three layers. First, as a physical landscape, the ministry home is the skeletal structure of Francesca. This space is acts as the stage where the Residential program is enacted between Francesca's staff and clients. Then, upon this material structure is draped the substance of the ministry. Interactions between staff and clients unfold in this landscape, while old relationships are contested and new identities are forged. Finally, the last layer is the spiritual essence of Francesca, characterized by the ritual process it's members participate in. The faith expressed by the women of Francesca is galvanized through the rite of passage they go through together in the ministry. The spiritual layer of Francesca is rooted in an interdenominational Christian perspective which guides the women's actions and sense of evolving identity as they move through the residential program. In this thesis, I will examine each layer in turn, to offer a picture of how the Francesca Ministries program is both organic and constructed.

Chapter One: Constructed Reform

The stated mission of Francesca is to assist single pregnant women and their children by introducing them to the teachings of the Christian Bible, while equipping them to be economically independent. The ministry aims to do so by mentoring clients and guiding them to form healthy parent-child relationships. Francesca's mission statement, "We aspire to be a catalyst in promoting relationships based upon the love of Christ," begs the question as to what a "relationship based upon the love of Christ" looks like in practice. While Christianity is an expansive concept, the ministry program defines itself as interdenominational, with central beliefs that are defined by the program staff. When new clients, staff, or volunteers enter the house, they must agree to uphold these central tenets¹⁰ while a part of the ministry (Appendix B).

Through their mission statement, Francesca staff not only assume the responsibility of defining a Christ-like relationship but also for catalyzing this type of relationship between members of the residential program. This responsibility creates a dynamic where proper Christian family relationships are prescribed to the residents in order to ensure a specific outcome upon completion of the program. Relationships centered in the Christian tradition are seen as the only lasting solution to the various difficulties women face, including trauma, emotional instability, drug use, financial insecurity, and the myriad of other challenges that are symptomatic of poverty in the United States.

¹⁰ The use of the word Christian from this point will denote a professed belief in and adherence to these central tenets, as this is how the ministry staff uses the term.

The program instructs women how to create a good Christian family, in order to transform their lives. It is implicit in the house that despite the work a resident may do to obtain employment, graduate from school, or properly feed and care for her infant, she will not have made the necessary transformations without accepting and building relationships rooted in Christian love. Linda, the executive director emphasized this point to me, saying:

If they are not emotionally healed and free with faith, and with Jesus being involved in that, then they leave here with a band aid, and they leave here creating more broken children. You can put them on their feet, but if they're not finding emotional healing—in their mind and in their souls—they're going to leave and this situation will continue. There are so many things that root to those traumas, that root to those molestations, and rapes, and verbal abuses, and the incredible traumas that they have gone through in their lives, often from very young ages.

The traumas that Linda describes create very real challenges for the residents at Francesca. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how the construction of a middle class household structure is prescribed by the Francesca staff an initial step to overcoming those challenges, and trace the historical lineages of their prescribed model.

A Model Home

Francesca is a built physical landscape, upon which the program staff constructs family relationships, and feelings of home. Francesca fosters a home-like environment to facilitate the transformation of their clients to be self-sufficient. Here, it is important to note the meaning of self-reliance as understood by the Francesca staff. This is an internal self-reliance, as well as an economic independence. The program balances a practical desire for the residents to have enough financial independence to care for their families and lead a stable middle-class lifestyle, without erasing the need to rely on God and a faith community.

Expanding on the Protestant theology behind this distinction, Pamela Couture, a historian and theologian explains:

An ethic of care through shared responsibility allows room for the psychic empowerment of self-sufficiency by locating it within the larger context of interdependence (1991: 168-169).

This strategy for promoting self-reliance through community was originally implemented by the socially conservative homes for unwed others and other “fallen women” that opened in the late 19th century, and the later feminist “battered women’s” homes of the 1970s. As a transitional living shelter, Francesca’s model is the descendant of these two movements’ structurally parallel efforts to transform the lives of the women they housed.

In the late 19th century, the evangelical Protestant movement opened dozens of homes for unwed pregnant mothers in the United States. These homes, notably the Women’s Christian Association’s *Retreat*, opened in 1869, held the “goal of the conversion of urban youth to evangelical Protestantism and middle-class respectability. A female board of managers oversaw the Retreat and hired the “Christian matron in residence” (Morton 1998: 63). The Retreat, and homes like it, were constructed to save “fallen women” and return them to grace through belief in Jesus (Morton 1998). Like Francesca, these homes housed a group of single mothers along with a live in staff member, and were run by a small staff of religious women. The shelter was modeled as a home, and was intended to teach residents how to properly manage a household. According to Morton, “The homes attempted to recreate a familial setting in which a woman could be taught the vocational skills to earn an ‘honest’ living—almost always in domestic service—and she could also learn intangible values of ‘true’ or respectable womanhood” (1988: 63).

Unlike Francesca, these shelters were designed to be institutions. Their allusions to family and home were utilitarian, not social. In her exploration of the 19th century social reform theories that developed into these institutions, Barbara Brenzel characterizes the reformers' hope that "the girls would be bound in their new home by cords of love rather than imprisoned by bars" (1980: 202). Social reformers saw the institution as necessary to manage "wayward" women and girls into compliance with middle class social norms, in line with puritanical values of time (Brenzel 1980). The structure of the institution masqueraded as a home, to convey these domestic values to the "gentler" sex (Brenzel 1980).

Take as evidence the architecture of the Lancaster girl's reform school, constructed in 1856, which was not only the first reform school for girls in the United States, but also the first "family-style" institution (Brenzel 1980: 196):

A small stone chapel was built in the center of the grounds as a symbol of the school's mission. The girls' living quarters reflected the two goals of the founders. Each girl had her own room, although the size of the rooms and the layout of the sleeping quarters made them appear cell-like. Yet, there was pleasant common living and recreational space. Girls learned domestic skills in the ironing rooms in each cottage. In spite of this homelike atmosphere, however, the square, red brick building appeared less like the neighboring homes than the New England academies of the era. In this institution the girls were to be sheltered, educated, and gently incarcerated (Brenzel 1980, 202).

This homelike structure acted as a gilded layer over the gentle incarceration characteristic of an institutional setting. As I will describe below, the Francesca Ministry home is strikingly similar to the Lancaster reform in layout and design. However, despite structural similarities, I argue that the Francesca program employs an evolved approach in their philosophy of social reform, which empowers the clients as agents in their own transformation. The

foundation for this approach can be found in the women's movement's "battered women's" collective shelters of the late 20th century.

Emergency women's shelters were first organized in the United States in the mid-1970s, predominantly to assist women fleeing domestic violence and abuse. A product of the feminist movement, these "battered women's" shelters provided emergency services to women escaping traumatic situations in the home (Tierney 1982: 207). As awareness of the problem spread, and the movement against domestic violence grew, more and more shelters were opened by independent women's organizations, starting with the Women's Advocates, Inc. in 1972 (Tierney 1982). These early shelters provided food, clothing, and temporary housing along with social support and often legal services. They were housed in residential homes and apartments, staffed by women active in the feminist movement who volunteered their time to support the resident women. (Saathoff & Stoffel 1999). The first Women's Advocates shelter was purchased with private donations and set up as a collective home in 1974 with bedrooms for residents, a shared kitchen and living space, as well as administrative offices to run the operation (Wies 2008: 222). The main need that founders identified for these women was a safe place to stay, and the shelter provided this to survivors of abuse. The shelters existed to provide physical resources and communities of support so that domestic violence survivors could continue to move towards independence. The shelters were largely secular, and treated residents as a member of a community. The groups that ran the shelters advocated for legislative protections to protect survivors of domestic violence. Their approach sought to reform the social and legal system rather than reform the individual women in their care.

This grassroots component of the battered women's movement was successful in elevating their call for systemic reform and by the late 1970's legislation and public funding became available to aid victims of domestic violence (Tierney 1982). The once informal shelters began to rely on resources and funding offered by public agencies, who preferred to fund programs with a professional social service image, rather than the grassroots activism of the first battered women's homes (Tierney 1982). The professionalization of these early activists' work brought domestic violence shelter advocates into the sphere of social service work (Wies 2008). In Wies' evaluation of this shift she observes a change in "the nature of the ideology of domestic violence advocacy from 'women helping women' to that of professional advocates helping women who are victims" (2008: 221). She argues that this shift towards professionalization reinforced an unequal balance of power between domestic violence survivors and the shelter advocates (Wies 2008).

In summary, the "battered women's" shelters and "fallen women's" homes were similar in form, with biologically unrelated women in need of housing and support operating a model household together as a sort of surrogate family. However, the two models diverged in their approach to supporting the residents in their unique needs, and in facilitating their reform. In the earliest unwed mothers' homes, women were deemed deviant for becoming pregnant out of wedlock. Groups like the Women's Christian Association constructed the homes to enable them to "save" young, lower class women from their own moral deviance. These organizations believed that rather than giving up their babies for adoption, unwed mothers could be transformed and morally rescued by the "sanctity of motherhood" (Morton 1988: 63). In the domestic violence shelters of the 1970s-80s, battered women were

seen as victims, not perpetrators of their problems. Therefore, liberation from patriarchy, as opposed to the control and structure of religion, was needed to transform their lives.

In my analysis of Francesca, I find ties to both frameworks—where clients are empowered to take control of their lives and actions, but only within the structure and logic of religion. Beyond their surface similarities in form, both the history of battered women’s shelters and of fallen women’s homes are useful to understanding the logic of the Francesca Ministries residential program as it seeks to transform the lives of single, pregnant women today.

The Structure of Francesca

Like their historical counterparts, the residents at Francesca each have their own small bedroom—plainly furnished bed, crib, and dresser—which they can decorate as they wish. The common area is modern but comfortable, with couches, chairs for rocking babies, and a television hooked up to all of the major streaming video services. A large dining table fills the central space, where residents gather daily for morning meetings and family-style dinners. The kitchen holds the wide range of food items one might expect to find in the American home—packaged snacks, boxes of hamburger helper and pasta, fresh fruits and vegetables, loaves of sliced bread, boxes of cereal, cans of chicken and tuna. Art featuring bible verses in script fonts and phrases like “faith” and “family” decorates the walls.

Walking in the door for the first time, the space could belong to any middle-class Midwestern family. However, upon further inspection, previously overlooked details emerge. A binder by the door reads “volunteer/teacher sign in”. Small white security cameras are mounted throughout the common spaces. An assortment of high chairs and baby swings line

the far wall, and a collection of several brands of infant formula can be found on the kitchen counter. A baby changing table is set up in the corner, with another in the shared bathroom.

With the living space upstairs, and a hallway of offices downstairs, Francesca architecturally delineates the residents' home from the administrative space for full time staff. Upstairs, in a suite off of the living room, is a separate apartment, bridging this divide. The suite is home to Ruth, Francesca's live-in house mother. Her space is off-limits to residents, as is the administrative hallway unless they have a meeting with a staff member. The house mother apartment is both inside and outside of the of the resident's living space, but exists in the realm of the home, while the staff offices exist in the realm of administration and programming.

With the physical components of the home in place, the Francesca program is designed to model the activities in an idealized home setting, which residents are intended to recreate when they leave and set up their own homes. Residents each perform daily and weekly chores to keep the common space clean and organized. Each resident cooks dinner a different night on a regular schedule. Meals are planned in advance, and grocery trips are organized and carried out by pairs of residents each week. Standard forms and schedules are provided and monitored by the program staff to facilitate these processes. This regimentation and regularity was new for many of the residents, who before coming to Francesca had not lived in such a structured environment. Overall, residents were amenable to the household tasks required of them. Still, maintaining such an orderly living space was complicated by the range of other challenges demanding their attention. Chandra, who was

living in her own apartment when we spoke, explained to me that even the simplest tasks are a challenge when also caring for a newborn:

I've been trying to take my trash out for the longest but I have to do it while (my daughter) is asleep...you need help with everything when you're a single parent. The simple things like cleaning up your house aren't simple when you have a baby. They want to be in front of you all the time, even while you're in the bathroom.

Despite the practical challenges of doing chores while pregnant or with a newborn, the programmatic function of this requirement is both practical for maintaining the home and part of the “life skills” training Francesca provides to its clients. Chandra’s comment gives insight into one of the many reasons a single mother might be unable to live up to the standards of domesticity set by the Francesca program. A messy home, a take out dinner or unwashed laundry—characteristics which the residential program would seek to reform—may simply be the product of time constraints or other logistical challenges.

Keeping the house clean is one of many lifestyle reforms the Francesca program seeks to make. Food and nutrition is another major concern of the program staff. Residents are understood as lacking the proper nutritional knowledge to make healthy food choices for themselves and their children. This arena is interesting because food buying is one of the aspects of life at Francesca that the residents have the most control over. Groceries are purchased every week when residents pool their food assistance money to buy items from an agreed upon list. Typically, two of the residents go to the store to purchase the food. The groceries that residents purchase together are supplemented by donations from a local food pantry and the occasional donation of food left over from a meal at a local church.

Because the grocery money is coming from the residents’ own governmental food assistance, Francesca staff cannot dictate what types of food the residents purchase and cook

for dinner. Every night a different resident cooks dinner, so the weekly meal plan becomes a reflection of the residents' collective food likes and dislikes. After being present for many dinners in the house, I got a sense for some of the most popular dishes. Chicken alfredo with broccoli and potatoes, ground beef tacos, *zuppa*—a rich Italian stew with sausage and bacon in a cream base, to name just a few. Generally, residents were happy with the food their housemates prepared. Whether or not they liked the food, residents were required to be home at dinner time to share the table. The practice of cooking and eating together models a domestic practice where families eat dinner together— a value that the program staff stressed, but that is often lost amidst busy schedules in the modern American household. Since the 1950s, family dinner has been popularized as a hallmark of American family life. In structuring the residents' days around such an event, the Francesca program adds shared meals to its list of domestic life values imparted onto residents.

The emphasis placed on mealtime aligns the ministry with the mid-century domestic values of the “fallen women’s” homes described above. Throughout American history, the structure of mealtimes has been closely tied to class. In her exploration of American dinner tables throughout history, historian Jannet Flammang explains:

Social reformers (of the early 20th century) used home economics to “improve” how working-class families had their meals...The working class was systematically exposed to lessons in what a middle-class family mealtime looked like. Transformations in food production and distribution enhanced the consuming power of the working class, which adopted the middle-class model of family meals (2016).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, these were the very same social reformers who opened institutions for “fallen women”. In assuming that domestic life is something that could be reformed, domesticity was brought into the realm of morality in the mid-19th century (Lippy &

Williams 2010). This moral culture of domesticity conflated middle and upper class home life with righteousness. Therefore, domestic social reform meant to reform the lifestyles of working class women to the domestic patterns of their wealthier counterparts in a manner which conflates morality with class status. Flammang describes the economic logic behind this moral argument for family dinner, whereby working class families are problematized for not ascribing to middle class dining practices (2016).

At Francesca, the program staff use a similar logic to reform the food habits of the residents. Linda explained to me that she hopes the program will soon be able to buy food for the residents so staff will have more control over nutrition and meal planning:

The food—that's our next project. Next year we're taking over all the food, we're going to get money to support that. There will be no more (food assistance) usage, so that we can take over the food and start getting nutrition figured out. Because as long as the (food assistance) is involved, they (residents) are in control and they can tell us what to do with it. We need to teach good nutrition. Cheetos are not a cheese group, as much as they've told me that.

The staff's belief that they need to teach good nutrition by taking control of food buying assumes that they, due to their own class and cultural positioning, are best suited to convert the residents to an "acceptable" diet. While I am sure each staff member has witnessed residents making unhealthy food choices, it is hard to imagine what busy mom hasn't eaten breaded chicken or Cheetos with dinner at some point. Still, what is most noteworthy here is the idea that if staff controls the food buying, residents will be able to learn proper nutrition. The moral authority rests with the program staff to structure an environment conducive to reform, free from the temptation of government-subsidized Cheetos.

A Christian Home

The format of the Francesca program requires residents to begin their day in prayer. The women gather at 7 AM to pray together and talk through plans for the day ahead. These meetings provide a rare moment of peace amidst the busy schedules of eight women and four newborns. After the meeting, residents eat their breakfasts, feed their babies, load strollers and rush off to daycare, jobs and doctors appointments. In the ministry van, which shuttles the residents who don't have transportation to these various locales, the radio hums out contemporary Christian rock music on Smile FM. Later, after dinner, the residents might be scheduled to attend Bible study or "holy yoga" with one of the volunteer teachers. These classes are mandatory, along with the CPR, birthing, and infant massage classes that the volunteer teachers provide throughout the week. All residents, besides those on postpartum leave, are required to attend church services on Sundays. The women can choose which area church to attend, as long as it falls under the wide umbrella of Christianity. Many of the women, including Hannah and Jasmine, attend services together at a large interdenominational church near the ministry. Jasmine sometimes attends another large nondenominational church across town with her "auntie," but she has to make that arrangement ahead of time with the Francesca staff. One way or another, weekly service is an important element of life at Francesca.

To be accepted into the program, a client must be open to participating in these activities, and be actively seeking to grow her Christian faith. A large part of the application and interview process is meant to determine if a woman is really seeking this relationship with God, not just looking for a roof over her head. The staff feels they can evaluate which

potential clients are truly seeking change, and are prepared to put in the work it takes to make that change for themselves. The staff knows that a potential client must be seeking the Christian family practice on her own and must be willing to put in effort to create it for herself and her child.

For purely logistical reasons, the staff must be very selective in choosing which clients to bring into the program. The need for comprehensive housing and support through pregnancy is unfortunately widespread. With only eight rooms available, the program is designed to produce a deep and lasting change, not just a place to sleep. The ministry staff all described a shift in recent years, when the application and interview process became more rigorous to make sure applicants really are seeking a Christian home environment and are seeking change on their own initiative. As Linda explained:

I began to understand that we'd better be more sure of our client than less. We really dig into that interview to push and see, and understand who's in front of us. Is their desire real? And that usually comes with some hoops to jump through. If you don't want to jump through the hoops, *see ya*. They even excuse themselves, like *a curfew? I can't just come and go? I have to actually work 35-40 hours on furthering my life?* They excuse themselves. And the ones who trick us don't last 2 months.

Linda felt that the increase in selectivity, despite making the interview lengthy, has helped to bring God back to the center of life at Francesca and contributed to a more peaceful living situation:

It's changed the dynamic in the house. I really do believe—because we're a Christian faith-based organization—all of this is coming together because we've moved more back to putting God at the center of this place. I feel the peace that I haven't felt in a long time. You just feel it when you walk through the house.

The hypothesis presented to me by Linda and the other staff is that the focus on Christianity as the heart of life at Francesca has created a more peaceful and effective residential program. As Samantha explained:

What we see is the most impactful is it's not about Church on Sunday it's about how you live and how you handle conflict, and how you care for others. It's about how you live, not just a couple hours—or several hours—on Sunday.

This Christian lifestyle is expected to be supported by all of the staff, volunteers, and residents at Francesca. Volunteers are asked to fill out a statement committing to support the statement of faith outlined by Francesca, which covers central Christian tenets such as a belief in the Holy Trinity—that Jesus is the son of God the Father, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born to Mary, the Virgin (Appendix B). Volunteer applicants are invited to deepen their own faith while working at Francesca. I was included in many prayerful moments with residents, both to celebrate joyful moments and also to ask for strength and guidance on difficult days in the house. These policies are designed to ensure the space inside the house remains consistent in its Christian message and can allow the residents to successfully practice a Christian lifestyle while forming their new families.

Conclusion: The Structure for Change

As I will explore in the following chapter, the philosophy of change that the residential program uses requires residents to be active participants in their transformation, however it is deemed necessary to have certain structural elements in place for the transformation to be possible. Over the span of almost two centuries, that essential structure has hardly changed. Francesca is inextricably linked to the reform institutions of the 19th and 20th centuries through its traditional arrangement, with Christian staff members leading

women to the “right” way of living. These staff members are invariably a product of middle class values around domesticity and the home, meaning that residents are positioned to learn middle class values in the domestic landscape. At Francesca, residents model the functioning household they are meant to reproduce once they live on their own. With the domestic landscape set, the Francesca program is able to serve its primary function, creating the relationships which allow the institutional house to transcend this category and become a home.

Chapter Two: Chosen Family

In order to understand how the Francesca residential program differentiates itself from the model of institutional “fallen women’s homes,” I will consider the potential for relationships that staff build with residents to comprise bonds of kinship. If Francesca were merely an institution, I would expect care relationships to be strictly professional, and to serve a clearly defined function in the recovery or reform of the client. If Francesca were an institutionalized shelter with only the facade of a home, staff would set strict professional boundaries separating their work life from their personal and family relationships. At Francesca, the conditions for such professionalism do exist. Staff members hold titles common in the social work field such as “residential director,” “caseworker,” and “human resources director,” which allows for a clear professional delineation of roles and duties to emerge. In this chapter, I will highlight how the staff transcend their ascribed roles in order to perform the real work of reform and transformation with their clients. I also argue that by entering into such a relationship, bonds of kinship are forged which prompts the residents to evaluate all of their family relationships, and ultimately impacts the family structure they will create upon leaving Francesca.

Cultural Kinship

Whether kinship is rooted in culture or biology is a central debate in anthropological research. While new understandings about the interconnectedness of biological expression and cultural influence have recently allowed reconciliation between opposing sides to begin, the finer points of the debate are somewhat outside the scope of this thesis. Still it is

important to note that my analysis takes a position in favor of the nurturance theory of kinship, in line with David Schneider's *Critique of the Study of Kinship* (1984), and expanded upon by students of Schneider, including Roy Wagoner and Susan McKinnon. In his book framing this central debate in the study of kinship, Max Holland's argument clearly synthesizes both the sociocultural and biological foundations for kinship, and reconciles those viewpoints, asserting that "social bonds are mediated by various social and contextual cues rather than genealogical relationship" (2002: ix), a statement which is in fact supported by the biological principles he lays out. He therefore strengthens the nurturance theory of kinship built by Schneider, McKinnon, and others through their ethnographic examples (Holland 2002; Schneider 1984; McKinnon 2001). As Holland demonstrates, "what cues social bonding for (an) infant is not genetic relatedness per se, but the very process of receiving care and being looked after, responded to and nurtured. If this is the case then actual genetic relatedness is obviously irrelevant to the formation of the bond, and to the expression of social discriminations that accompany that bond" (2012: 196). The kinship bond is thus seen as an active relationship, one which can be applied to the genetic relative, or if found unsatisfactory can be sought from others in the community who offer support and nurturance (McKinnon, 2001).

According to Holland, the earlier kinship theories of the 1950s and 60s utilized "biologically-framed yet culturally-specific concepts about kinship that had dogged the study of social relationships and interaction" (2012: 3). The ethnocentricity of Western anthropologists contributed to this misuse of biological kinship to describe human attachment behavior as a universal phenomenon. Holland's argument demonstrates that the

equation of kinship with biological relatedness in the US constitutes a specific cultural point of view, and does not mean that biological relatedness is any more universal to kinship theory than shared food or cohabitation is in other cultures.

So then, what does this argument mean for the Francesca women's culturally specific view of kinship? As Jasmine and Hannah both explained to me, there are certain acts of nurturance a parent must perform in order to be considered adequate in their role. These residents recognize kinship in a relationship of shared nurturance rather than shared genetic substance (McKinnon 2001; Holland 2012). Francesca residents talk about these obligatory acts of nurturance implicitly, and highlight when they are lacking, as well as when they are performed by individuals with whom they do not have a bond of shared substance. First I will discuss how the Francesca program is structured to model these family relationships, just as it is constructed to model proper domestic life. Then I will examine how the modeled relationships can in practice come to function as kinship for the Francesca residents, by virtue of shared nurturance.

Family by Design

The residential program is designed to guide residents towards a new family structure, one that is informed by the non-denominational Christian values of the staff who structure and facilitate it. When new residents enter the Francesca program, they must read and sign a "covenant"¹¹ agreeing to uphold Christian values while a member of the home, and to follow a set of policies laid out in the Residential Program Policy Manual. The policies also offer a framework for integrating the residents' old conceptions of family and

¹¹ This agreement is called a covenant, meaning a formal agreement between the client, the ministry, and God.

relationships—deemed unhealthy by the ministry’s standards—into this new conception of family during and most importantly after life at Francesca. The policies are designed by the residential director in consultation with the other ministry staff, and approved by board of directors. In creating this programming, Samantha, who has directed the residential program for four years, reflects that while the needs of every client are different, first and foremost, Francesca offers a stable and safe place to live. In the previous chapter, I discussed the various ways Francesca makes itself “secure and stable”, resting on middle class domestic values and a structured routine. Samantha emphasizes that the rigid structure and security at Francesca is a baseline, which makes it possible for residents to let down their guard and start to build trusting relationships—the true work that Francesca staff hope to accomplish. Reflecting on the staff’s role in facilitating that process, she explained:

This is a safe place, where you feel comfortable. You don’t have to worry about someone stealing from you, or physically hurting you. That sort of security comes first. Then, inside of that, is a home. With our house mom, and then the other full time staff, we’re a consistent part of the family. It’s a family of support; we all have different personalities, and ways we relay that, but it’s a community.

Here, Samantha lays out some of the support she feels the program must provide in order for strong family relationships to emerge. She uses this framework to approach designing a program which creates the feeling of supportive family for the residents. This understanding of the program as a surrogate family is shared by the rest of the staff. Linda, the Executive Director of the ministry, understands the structure in much the same way. She explained to me the importance of modeling the home and family life she hopes the residents will adopt with their own children:

What's important is ensuring we're a home. We don't want it to be an institution because you can't sit down and teach someone family and home. You can sit in a class all day long and learn what mom has to do, but the best way to know what mom does is to have a mom in the house. And that takes us from being an institution to really being a home.

Both Samantha, Linda, and the other staff members I spoke with shared an understanding of the ministry as a home for the residents, rather than an institution. They saw it as their job to facilitate supportive relationships between themselves and the residents, in order to model a functioning, Christian home, which they hoped in turn that the women would create with their children after leaving the program.

When explaining this layered approach to building relationships at Francesca, both Linda and Samantha emphasized the importance of the house mother's role. The house mother is a live-in staff member who to both monitors and mentors residents in the house. This role is another structural element of Francesca with roots in the 19th century homes for "fallen women." The Lancaster girls reform school, introduced in the previous chapter, became a model for later reform homes specifically for unwed mothers. One of the central principles in constructing these homes was the idea of *in loco parentis* which entrusted the institutions to lead their charges in the same way a parent would (Brenzel 1980: 201).¹² The "matrons" at Lancaster acted as surrogate parents for the school's charges (Brenzel 1980: 201). Still, although they assumed the responsibilities of guiding and disciplining their charges, the matrons' role was as part of an institution and did not claim to replicate the

¹² *In loco parentis* has a complicated legal history in the US in regards to institutions of higher learning as well as in institutions whose charges are deemed unable to make decisions for themselves. Here, I use this principle to describe the philosophical leanings of guardianship that the homes for wayward girls assumed, not necessarily a legal doctrine.

bonds of motherhood. In contrast, the Francesca program does intend for the house mother to form close relationships with residents and act as a mother not only in form but in substance. This programmatic element differentiates the house mother from other staff members and opens the door for bonds of kinship to emerge.

In Francesca, the role of de facto mother falls to Ruth, the house mother. A former businesswoman who now lives full time at Francesca, Ruth projects a calm and indiscriminate warmth which the residents are clearly drawn to. Because of her consistent presence in the residential space, Ruth is the best suited out of the staff to form close relationships with the residents. Her title itself is labeled as kinship, which reflects the intentional programmatic design of her position, implying a maternal relationship with both the adult residents and their babies. She eats dinner with the residents, offers advice and encouragement, and spends most evenings attending classes, overseeing chores, or just watching TV with the residents. The babies all respond to her with great affection, and giggle when she smiles at them. In the fourteen months since she moved into the ministry house, Ruth told me Francesca has become not only a job for her, but a home. Ruth described her close relationship with the residents, saying:

It comes kind of naturally because I develop bonds with the girls. It's not that I'm a better person than [the other staff], I'm just here more. My presence, that alone creates a bond. I feel like these girls would do anything for me, I'd do anything for them. It's really good, my heart is here with these girls. It's become family, I really am grateful for that.

Ruth is certainly present in the living space the most consistently out of the staff, making her physically available to the residents. This fact alone allows familiarity and trust to build authentically with them. As part of the residential program, her role is also constructed,

designed by other staff members and the board to present a culturally specific idea of motherhood to the residents, during their transitional period at Francesca Ministries. Ruth knows this, and must integrate the authentic relationship she builds with each resident into the logic and structure of the residential program:

You have to keep authority, but it's not a lordship over the women. That's something I've tried to always stay respectful of. I treat the girls like my daughters. I feel motherly towards the girls. It's different not having raised them, we don't have those years of relationship. It's a short time to be coming alongside and building that trust which I think is remarkable, especially considering some of them haven't had that sort of trust in their life before.

Here, she highlights her position as a maternal figure, but also the distinctions between her role, and that of a biological mother—a position which holds great significance for American women, who rely on experienced women from older generations to provide emotional and informational support throughout the childrearing process.

The importance of intergenerational support is widely documented in anthropological literature, and is particularly important to low income and minority women in the US (McDonald and Armstrong 2001). When these intergenerational networks are not able to support the young, single mother for any reason, a surrogate support network then becomes necessary. Francesca Ministries functions as such a network, providing the housing, child care support, information about pregnancy and childrearing that the extended kin network would otherwise be responsible for. Ruth, as the symbolic mother, performs support duties typical of an older generational woman in these kinship networks.

The importance of Ruth's position in the home, as the mothering role model whom the women are meant to emulate with their own children, is recognized and encouraged by the other program staff. As Linda explained:

What I love about Ruth is that these moms are actually experiencing a mother like they never had. And it's helping them to develop, to be better mothers than they are. She helps them know that they're good mothers, because most of them have had traumatic if not horrible experiences with mothers in the past.

The program structure clearly delineates staff roles in order to create a dynamic where relationships with clients are defined by professional standards of operation. The house mother position allows intimacy and trust to develop authentically, but still within the program design. Administrative roles held by the residential director and executive director claim responsibility for different aspects of the program, overseeing the ministry's function on a macro scale. The differentiated roles require staff members to set personal boundaries—boundaries that would not exist in a typical kin relationship.

These differentiated and bounded roles are most apparent when viewed through the experience of birthing. In her role as house mother, Ruth has been present at many of the residents' deliveries. For many of them, few or no other relatives were present during the labor. A laboring American women typically relies on her mother and partner to give support during the birth process. Therefore, Ruth's position as a mom is solidified when she steps in as the primary source of labor support. She is the right age to be many of the residents' biological mother, and has a biological daughter near to their age. In describing the experience of supporting a resident she is especially close to through labor, Ruth tearfully recalled:

During her contractions she would just hug me. Like sitting with her arms around my waist crying into me. And I remember holding her thinking, what an honor I have, you know? What an honor to be here. And it's bittersweet; it's this honor that you feel. You want to really be present and there for that person. But it's hard. In my mind I remember thinking, *there's a mom that's missing this*. Thinking, *how sad, that's a relationship that's broken in some way, and they're missing this*. Thinking of my

daughter, how different that experience was. So as much as I love being there for them, my heart aches that they don't have their natural parents there.

The self reflection in this statement shows that while Ruth acknowledges the substance of her relationship as kinship—she is the one filling the role, and is a mom based on her actions and relationship—she is also aware of the biological relationship that is culturally supposed to offer that type of support in labor. She distinguishes herself, a parent by nature of her actions, from a natural parent. Even without the claim of biology, she does not shy away from calling herself a mom to the residents with whom she shares that special role. She acknowledges that like any relationship, the bond of kinship is predicated on action, and mutual attachment:

I do see myself as a mother in this role, definitely to the younger ones. The older ones it depends. One in particular I think has longed for a mother figure in her life and there's been an attachment there. Where another a little older I would think of myself maybe as an aunt, again it's the willingness of each girl to open up and their desire for each kind of relationship too. It's not forced on anyone.

While the relationship has to form organically, the Francesca program does lay the foundation for them to emerge. These relationships are encouraged most strongly between Ruth and the residents, while other staff demonstrate care and nurturance in different ways.

Linda, who oversees both the administrative and residential aspects of the ministry, must set boundaries in her administrative role, while also forming genuine bonds of trust with the residents. Samantha interpreted the structure of staff roles to me by saying:

The beauty here is that everyone is super capable and gifted for the role that they're in. So when each of us is filling our roles well, not that there's not overlap, but there are specific things that each resident would talk to a specific person about.

Linda, who has a deep commitment to the residents but views those relationships through a professional lens, understands Ruth's job to be a mother to the residents as distinct from her own role. I had asked Linda if she ever went to support residents in labor. She told me that although she would enjoy sharing that experience with them, the role belonged to Ruth:

She owns that one lock, stock, and barrel now. They are together every day. They want mom, they need mom. (Ruth) is mom. (The woman) who was here before, mom. That's who they need. Going into delivery room, you have to have a real good ongoing relationship with that person because you're going to bear everything. And you have to trust them and you have to feel comfortable in that. They know me well but I think that the person they know best, and would want there, is mom. And that role, as much as I would love it, I have to keep it away from me. It doesn't belong to me and it should not ever get mixed up. As much as I would love it.

According to her explanation, Linda sees her role as professionally different from the role Ruth holds with residents, and therefore sets different personal boundaries for herself. In this way, the relationships she does have with residents, however authentic, are intentionally formed within measured parameters.

Similarly, for Samantha, who comes from a social work and human services background, Francesca is a job. It's a job she is very invested in and cares deeply about, but unlike Ruth she can go home at the end of the day to a space separate from Francesca and work. Samantha's job is focused on administrative duties, so she spends much more time in her office space than she does in the residential areas. Her relationship to the residents is caring, yet carries much more professional tone than Ruth's. Samantha is aware of this, and in many ways has defined her role in a way that creates emotional distance between herself and the residents. This type of bounded relationship is most common in the professional social work and human services model of support where Samantha's training and work

experience are rooted (Wies 2008). When I asked Samantha how she separates the emotional work of Francesca from the rest of her life, she told me:

You can ask any of the present staff but I probably have some of the strongest boundaries of anyone that works with the residents. That means that prior to having a staff cell phone, none of the residents had or have my personal cell phone number. I have pretty strong boundaries. I think just naturally I set those because of my training and who I am, and I have that sort of administrative lean just naturally. There's some safety in that for me too, mental safety and order.

Still, what was most interesting about this conversation is the way Samantha framed these boundaries, and the rigid structure they create, as ultimately allowing for more freedom and enhanced relationships to exist within them. She explained:

With order and structure and a very strong foundation in place as far as the program and there's clear foundation and understanding and communication, I see which is a big part of my job right now, but once that's in place there will be these good guidelines to move within which will free me and all the staff to focus more on relationship, and bringing down some boundaries because those things are in place and consistent and understood and communicated, there's a freedom in that.

While she is dedicated to the residents, and shows her commitment to them by putting effort and energy into creating strong programming for the ministry. Her impact is felt through these programmatic choices. Her interactions with residents fall into the realm of professionalization, with the formality of an office and a scheduled meeting time.

I think her statement speaks to the freedom Samantha finds within her strict boundaries, and also says a great deal about the philosophy of the Francesca program as a whole. That within a bounded, controlled environment, there is freedom for relationships to emerge and space for love and faith to transform. But more on that later. With the other staff taking on more of the administrative and operational burdens, demonstrating love in a manner appropriate to their roles, Ruth is able to sit squarely in the role of house mother,

where she sets very different boundaries from the ones Samantha holds. One afternoon, after a particularly tense day in the house, Ruth told me:

When you have a relationship like a mom you don't walk through the house with your kids and think, well I'm off duty. Sometimes I set that boundary, so when someone says *I need some shampoo* I say talk to the other monitor on duty but when someone says *I had a really bad day*, when there's a true need and it's *I need my mama*, you're never off duty.

That a mother is never “off duty” is one of the central indicators we can use to distinguish kinship ties from more professionalized support roles. Kinship in the ministry is both organic and constructed—while residents and staff form very real bonds, these bonds must be mediated and facilitated into the logic and structure of the program itself. Furthermore, even though the program sets up a framework for kin relationships to form, the ways in which they emerge depend on the individual resident and their own multifaceted experiences with family.

Enacting Kinship

We know that genetic relatedness does not necessarily equate to kinship, and that Eurocentric assumptions about kinship do not point to universal truths about support or relatedness. Here, I am interested specifically in the kin relationships held by residents and staff at Francesca Ministries. Each of the informants I interviewed was coming from an American culture which places cultural importance on consanguineal ties, or blood-relations, as kin. These ties are seen as inalienable, to the point they may be characterized as cruel but unavoidable—where one can leave, change their whole life, yet still be tied to the people who raised them. As one resident said with pointedly, “family is family”. Still, looking further into anthropologists’ work on kinship relationships, specifically in the United States, it becomes

apparent that while blood ties may be inescapable, kinship is functionally created through shared nurturance (Schneider 1984; McKinnon 2001).

The duality of the kinship terms suggests that a *mother* is both fixed by blood ties, but predicated on action. A mother may be a blood relation, but a mom is the woman who feeds, raises, cares for, and offers support to you. By holding these two iterations of the word side by side, Jasmine can explain to me that her birth mother was “her mom, but not a *mom* mom” to her. She held the privileged role of biological kinship, but did not satisfy the requirements of nurturance for Jasmine to consider her a mom by her actions. Therefore, kinship must be enacted. Motherhood can be coded and communicated through culturally held symbols. The staff at Francesca understand kinship in a specific cultural sense and as it is predicated on specific actions, feel that they can teach these behaviors to their clients in the hopes of them creating strong kinship bonds to remedy the inadequate examples they learned from in the past.

At Francesca Ministries, proper kin relationships are taught primarily through modeling. While Francesca is structured as a transitional living program, the relationships formed there are what make it a home. One of the residents, Hannah, had only been in the house three months when we met, but was already forming strong relationships at Francesca:

With the staff and the girls, you bond. I’m a pretty sociable person, and pretty loving and caring, so I have an easy time with getting to know people most of the time. We’ve become like a little family. We’ve got the new girls, but they’ll find their comfortable spots and we’ll all just click and get along. As of right now everything’s gravy. All these girls, I couldn’t imagine my life without them now—and these precious little babies.

The residents use varied, and sometimes conflicting, frameworks to describe their relationships within the program. For example, Hannah uses highly affectionate language to talk about the importance of the Francesca women in her life, but she consciously distinguishes between her biological family and her support network at Francesca. Throughout our conversations, she highlights the importance of her biological family, despite their many shortcomings:

He's coming into a big old mess. I love them all but, there's going to be a lot of stuff he's going to see and I'm going to try to protect him—but you can't always protect him from everything, right?

I mean I grew up around it, I saw it. It started at a very young age and I think it had a lot to do with where I ended up, because it was learned behavior. So I don't want him to have to go through that.

She characterizes her previous home as chaotic, with drug use enabled by various members of her immediate family. While she herself was recovering from addiction, she found Francesca as a way to exit that environment of dysfunction, if not primarily for herself, then for her son. Still, she kept frequent contact with members of her immediate and extended family, and expected her mother and aunt to be present at her delivery. Hannah's desire to protect her infant son from the negative aspects of her previous home life, coupled with her insistence that she loves and maintains attachment to her family there, demonstrates the inherent value she places on biological family relationships regardless of their perceived dysfunction.

Not all of the residents share Hannah's regard for their given families. Like Hannah, Jasmine came to the ministry early in her pregnancy seeking a home that offered more stability than the familial home in which she was living. She too saw her pregnancy as

prescriptive of a move away from her biological family, whom she deemed inadequate to support the needs of her child. Jasmine identifies a lack of sufficient support from both of her biological parents, as well as her step-father. She describes their physical presence, but notes a lack of emotional support and affection among their inadequacies:

I mean, I had my mom but she wasn't really like, a *mom* mom. And my dad, he was there but he wasn't like, emotionally there for me. And I had a step-daddy, but it was just him and my mom who were together.

Before she moved to Francesca, Jasmine was living with her biological grandmother, but she became ill around the time Jasmine found out she was pregnant. Becoming pregnant was a moment that catalyzed an evaluation and subsequent restructuring of Jasmine's relationship to her family. Jasmine told me that while receiving news of her pregnancy was an important and defining moment for her, her family treated it as an unremarkable event. Their reaction, or lack thereof, made an impression on Jasmine who explained:

I chose to come to Francesca so we could make a better future for us. Even though we're away from my family, I'm doing something better here. My daughter, she is my *family* family. The rest of them, they're my family but she is like, my own. I chose her over them.

Here, Jasmine makes a clear delineation between the blood ties with her immediate and extended family and the closer tie she feels with her daughter, her own. For her, the framework of relatedness justifies her move away from her childhood home, in pursuit of creating a more fulfilling and operative relationship with her infant daughter.

This choice, the decision to form a new family unit, is an essential element in the Francesca residential program. While Jasmine and Hannah both frame their decision to move to Francesca as their only viable option, they were in fact choosing to forgo what they saw as a nonfunctional kin relationship in pursuit of building a new family structure with

their child. Removing themselves from their existing family structure was a necessary precursor to forming this improved family, and Francesca existed as a separate space to facilitate that transformation.

It seems that some of the residents interpreted their relationships at Francesca as kinship, while others interpreted them through the lens of professionalization. Each accepted the program's offered support in a manner that fit her unique situation. For Hannah, who found her biological kin relationships lacking, but not wholly insufficient, the staff support was supplementary, and offered her a temporary assistance through which to establish her own family unit with her son. She expressed deep affection and gratitude for the support received, but was not inclined to integrate her relationships there as kinship. This may be because she had not cut ties with her mother, father, brother, and aunts, and attributed significant importance to these relationships. Jasmine, on the other hand, had determined the relationships with her mother, father, and sisters insufficient to support her in her childbearing process. This vacancy in support may have made her more willing to accept the staff at Francesca as constituting kinship.

What is most pertinent in the Francesca context, however, is the naming of these relationships. The staff at Francesca Ministries use kinship language in a fictive manner to construct the residential program as a family and a home, whereby naming job positions and living structures with kinship terms (e.g. "house mother" and "Francesca family"), they created a framework for an actual kin relationship to emerge. Residents, in turn, adopt this terminology to varying degrees and utilize kinship language to fit their own individual understandings of family. It is clear that residents place significant importance on whom

they bestow kinship labels. If kinship is a relationship based in shared nurturance, specific criteria must be met to earn a kinship title. The name “house mother” is an honorific title constructed by the Francesca program, but Ruth becomes “mom” to certain residents through her relationship of shared nurturance with them. Jasmine’s biological mother is given that role by biology, and American culture recognizes her relationship of shared genetic substance. Still, without shared nurturance and love, she isn’t really a mom to Jasmine. That a role is constructed in a certain way is important, but the substance of that role must emerge through the shared actions of both parties.

Residents like Jasmine, who choose to adopt relationships built at Francesca into their own kinship network, talk about Francesca as being part of their family:

I think of it as a family, I don’t kinda look at it as a shelter, because I still don’t believe it’s a shelter. I just think it’s one big house with a lot of girls and babies, and we’re family.

In thinking about the program structure, one thing Jasmine told me she would change would be to allow Ruth to take her child out of Francesca on outings so they could bond more as grandma and grandchild, “since she’s the grandma.” Jasmine clarified that this privileged role would not be appropriate with the other staff, “but like just her, because she’s the house mom”. In this request, Jasmine is navigating the boundaries set by the Francesca program and demonstrates that the close bond she shares with Ruth is actually viewed as part of a kinship network, as opposed to the more professionalized support roles the other staff play.

When I asked why Jasmine thought of Ruth in this way she told me:

She just, she really shows that she loves me and my daughter. Growing up, I really didn’t get no love from nobody, so that’s something I appreciate and don’t take for granted.

From this statement, we learn that Jasmine does think of her new kin relationship with Ruth in comparison with her own mother. Although the category of mother by birth is fixed, it lacks substantive action. Jasmine highlights the genuine love and support she feels coming from Ruth as justifying the privileged relationship of kin, calling her mom and allowing her to care for her own child. This relationship is comprised of reciprocal love and nurturance, as distinct from her birth mother, where the relationship is present only in form not function.

Conclusion: The Francesca Family

Even as residents and staff talk about Francesca as being like a family, the use and meaning of that language changes depending on the substance of the speaker's relationship to other people in the ministry. Samantha calls Francesca "a family of support" for the residents, but that does not mean she thinks of the residents as a part of her own kinship network. Linda talks about how the residents "always know this is home" but again, would not and does not frame the ministry as her own home. Notably, while residents are being guided to create their own family units, and some form kin relationships with the staff, none described the other residents as sisters or any other kin relation. This too speaks to the functional purpose of the family roles Ruth and some of the other staff experience. As described before, the staff roles are rooted in the professional practice of facilitating the creation of family bonds, and less in the personal practice of occupying those kinship roles. Still, each member of the staff interprets her role in that process differently. Some, like Ruth are open to taking on the emotional weight of a mothering relationship, while others build their relationships more cautiously. These differing boundaries are all intended model

mutual and respectful relationships which Francesca hopes the residents will in turn adopt and use to form relationships beyond the walls of Francesca Ministries.

Chapter Three: Faith in the Liminal Space

As the previous chapters have demonstrated, the Francesca program is intricately constructed to assist women facing serious social and economic challenges in transforming their lives to a place of stability. The question I have sat with the most since beginning fieldwork at Francesca is, *How do women who have faced adversity, social neglect, and broken relationships, form deep community, and even family, with a staff of well-meaning Christian ladies whose lives, at first glance, are so different than their own?* So much of the program was left to chance—a house full of mothers and babies should be loud, chaotic even. Women facing homelessness, coming out of prison, recovering from drug use, or distanced from family, should be closed off and hard to work with. But somehow, this was not the case. The ministry home was calm—peaceful even. The women were warm, and if a bit guarded at first, were kind and open. The babies were happy and comfortable with each person in the house. Despite the careful construction of the program, it seemed no amount of goal-setting, financial management or educational support could account for these outcomes.

What I eventually understood, after talking with the staff, was that they all believed the professionally structured aspects of the residential program were not the true catalyst of reform. The staff believed and acted on their belief that God was working through them, that He was in control and would ultimately lead the ministry and its residents where they were meant to be. Residents also put ultimate responsibility with God, and invoked His wisdom when faced with a challenge or circumstance they themselves could not control.

The work that Francesca does can be understood as a rite of passage, where the ministry exists as a liminal space, both physically and symbolically (Turner 1969). Only when

separated from their normal, secular life can the agents and processes of change impact the residents. The staff acts as a guide through a ritual process, and the resident leaves Francesca as a new version of herself, with an altered social standing in the secular world, and a transformed understanding of her place in that world. Anthropologist Robbie Davis-Floyd has already written about how pregnancy acts as a rite of passage in the United States (2003). Here, I build on her analysis to explain the process of transformation that takes place at Francesca Ministries.

The Rite of Passage

At Francesca, spiritual and social transformation occurs simultaneously. In Van Gennep's original conception, a rite of passage initiated members of one social group to join another (1909). He distinguished the secular realm of everyday life from the sacred realm, where transformations occur. The ritual process described by Van Gennep and later expanded upon by Turner, is made up of three stages (1909; 1969). In the first stage, initiates are separated from their existing social group, just as the Francesca residents leave their failed relationships, and previous lifestyles behind upon entering the ministry. Next, initiates enter the "liminal" period where they are neither a part of their old social group, nor are they a member of the new group (Turner 1969: 95). Francesca residents leave the social group of poor single mothers, or "fallen women", when they decide to enter Francesca Ministries (Morton 1988). While residents at Francesca, they are neither homeless, nor are they established as independent members of respectable middle class society. Finally, after the liminal period comes "re-incorporation", where initiates assume their new identity and

reenter society (Turner 1969: 94). In the case of Francesca residents, this new identity is one of self-sufficiency and respectability as a “normal” American mother.

The Sacred, Liminal Space

The Francesca staff understand the ministry as part of the sacred. As such, the ministry exists to honor and serve God. In exchange for faithful service, God protects the ministry, and facilitates the ritual process for residents. For this reason, women hoping to become residents, and enter the class of initiates, must agree to live a Christian life in service of the Christian God. Linda explained to me that while a potential resident does not necessarily need to have a strong Christian faith upon entering the program, she cannot actively practice another faith and be a resident at Francesca:

If someone were to come from another faith, such as a Muslim, and wanted to practice that faith on this property, we will not allow that. Because this property is a Christian property, and if we say that this is His ministry that He’s given us to do His work, then to have the worship of another god here would be in violation of our relationship with the One it is who founded this place.

In Linda’s understanding, the practice of another religion would be antithetical to the program’s structure and intent. The transformation simply wouldn’t work. She emphasizes the physical property as sacred, given to the ministry for the purpose of facilitating spiritual transformations. For the same reason, staff and volunteers must also uphold the principles of Christian faith while on ministry grounds, as discussed in Chapter One. In thinking about Francesca as a sacred space, this requirement fits squarely within the logic of the ministry. Ritual requires shared belief in the process of transformation. As a liminal space, Francesca exists to facilitate the ritual process for their community of believers.

The social relationship formed between initiates is a central element in the Turnerian ritual process. Turner calls this relationship “communitas,” or the state of connection experienced in the liminal phase of the ritual process. In this state, initiates are separated from the secular, or the non-sacred. Here, individual initiates have shared status in the liminal space, and may submit to the general authority of ritual elders (Turner 1969: 96). I propose that this bond of “communitas” is what allows individual residents at Francesca to live together in relative harmony. Any social or cultural differences they may have had in the secular realm of their old lives is set in the liminal space of Francesca. In the ministry they are equals, under the ritual authority of the Francesca program and the staff. Their identity as initiates supersedes the racial, class, and social identities they held before the separation phase. Now they are marked as either Francesca residents or not Francesca residents, defined by their transitional status. One way Francesca residents talk about this feeling is by calling Francesca a “family.” As discussed earlier, the Francesca family is symbolic, and distinct from the kinship bonds created between certain members of that family. I believe staff and residents both use the language of “family” to describe the experience of “communitas” in a culturally familiar way (Turner 1969: 96).

The staff, acting as a guide, lead residents through this liminal state. Unlike social workers, who belong to the secular realm and are present only in professionalized settings, Francesca staff share the spiritual belief that is central to this ritual process and are able to act as a partner and guide through the process of transformation. They act as the ritual elders Turner describes, and the residents of Francesca are meant to model their actions and respect their authority, trusting that the process is oriented towards a common good (1969).

Residents are meant to accept all of the program rules and guidelines presented by the staff. Some of these rules, such as the curfew and restricted access to alcohol and drugs, would not have been accepted in their previous stage of life. Here, however, “the authority of the elders is absolute, because it represents the absolute, the axiomatic values of society, in which are expressed the *common good* and the common interest” (Turner 1967: 99-100). The initiates must believe the elders represent the common good, which in the case of Francesca is laid out by the Christian principles of the ministry. They adhere to the elders’ guidance, trusting it will lead them through the transformation and bring them into their new identity. Much of the identity transformation taking place at Francesca rests on the women’s status as single mothers. Francesca understands its purpose as being to transform the residents from deviant, and dependent women into respectable and self-reliant mothers.

Guiding Single Motherhood

As single mothers, the Francesca residents hold a unique position in the realm of the American Christian family. Historically, and to this day, low-income single mothers occupy a place of social and economic vulnerability in the United States. The factors contributing to this vulnerability are interwoven but can be broken down into four threads:

Women are relegated to a secondary status in U.S. socioeconomic system; they bear heavier economic and emotional responsibilities with less access to economic resources; they are less able to compete for higher places in economic structures because responsibilities of care for dependents conflict with availability for economic competition; and the macroeconomic processes of advanced capitalism have depleted the communities where they most often live (Maddalena 2013: 150).

While the situation of unwed motherhood deviates from the traditional two-parent family set forth by the book of Genesis, Christian teachings propose charity and generosity must be

extended to the poor and vulnerable, and that only God himself can judge humans' deviance from the biblical teachings. This relationship creates programs and charities like Francesca intended to serve vulnerable populations, such as low-income single mothers, and lift them out of poverty through a variety of different methods.

As a members of a socially disadvantaged population, the Francesca residents are also served through public social programs in the US. The economic and social vulnerability that low income, single-mothers face is used to justify a level of oversight and regulation unique to their demographic in the United States. The residents at Francesca are not exempt from such regulation. Throughout their pregnancies, they interact with agencies who monitor their progress and circumstances, claiming jurisdiction over the women's private lives. These agencies claim jurisdiction over the women in their pre-ritual identity as deviant and dependent women. In their passage through Francesca, initiates are meant to become independent of these regulatory agencies.

Each resident at Francesca has a different set of circumstances and decisions that led her to the place of single-motherhood. What they hold in common is a dedication to becoming independent, stable caretakers so that they can continue to maintain an active mothering relationship with their children. They are tasked with refuting cultural assumptions about low income, single motherhood through their actions and achievements, in order to demonstrate their adequacy as mothers. In *Class Differences in American Kinship*, Schneider and Smith discuss how lower class family structure as a whole is often blamed for continuing a cycle of poverty. They refute the idea that, "there is a poverty population, trapped in an endless cycle of welfare dependency, in which poverty produces a

disorganized family system, which in turn ensures that people brought up in it will be incapable of breaking out of poverty” (1978). Rejecting this functionalist approach, they argue that there are cultural and economic factors to which kinship systems must respond, and these bonds are tested and remade by poverty.

Lower class kinship networks are not defective versions of middle class kinship. Rather, “the forms and values of lower class life are...related to the contexts of social existence in which the lower class find themselves, but it is an extremely dangerous myth to suppose that if the family structure of the lower class were different then poverty would disappear” (Schneider and Smith 1978: h). In reshaping family structure, the Francesca staff are not attempting to eliminate widespread poverty, but they are purporting that for their clients a Christian family structure is essential in order for any other type of healing and reform to begin—be it financial or otherwise. Samantha and other staff members repeatedly expressed that they cannot force change upon any woman; they only support her in reaching mutually agreed upon goals. Still, if poverty in the US is a social as well as a financial status, then Francesca’s assertion is that a Christian family structure will fundamentally make it possible for impoverished women to overcome both the financial and social challenges they face. In this way, Schneider and Smith’s observations are crucial to understanding the kinship construction happening at Francesca, and how their model fits into the larger cultural narrative around both class and kinship.

In the broader cultural narrative, the lives of low income, single parent families are largely monitored and overseen by social support agencies. Again, Francesca residents are not exempt from this oversight. While the biological relationship of *mother* that Francesca

residents hold with their child is fixed, their ability to continue mothering their child can be subject to interference by the State. One role Francesca Ministries plays is to legitimize the low income, single parent family structure in the eyes of agencies such as Child Protective Services, who are allowed to monitor and, if deemed necessary, to make changes to the family arrangement. Francesca grants the residents a level of respectability and legitimacy within the broader culture, and qualifies as an adequate home to these regulatory agencies. The Francesca staff are aware of this precarity, and prescribe the Christian family model as a remedial form of stability.

Low income, single parent households are expected to submit to this oversight in exchange for necessary social support services. For low-income women to receive assistance from programs such as Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (SNAP); and Medicaid, they must provide a great deal of personal information to those agencies. Pregnancy and childbirth offers State agencies a particularly convenient time to observe and monitor low income families. Khiara Bridges studies the ways in which the bodies of low income women of color specifically are managed and regulated throughout their pregnancies in the US (2011). She demonstrates how these women's pregnant bodies are framed as unruly and therefore must be carefully monitored and regulated:

[The system of regulation] renders the poor woman's body itself to be inherently suspect, problematic, and unruly. It discloses its confession only to then disguise it anew: by blaming the victim as being sickly, uncared for, and dangerous. This is the paradigmatic gesture that moves from an indictment of poverty to a castigation of the "culture of poverty" the poor are imagined to create and inhabit (Bridges 2011: 100).

The system of social agencies that is tasked with managing the pregnant bodies of low income women is vast and pervasive. This is not to say that these agencies do not offer important and often essential services to the clients who utilize them. However, low income, publicly-insured clients often have little choice but to accept these services and all that comes with them. The agencies may thus be seen as imposing surveillance and management over the lives of their clients, who submit themselves to be monitored and surveilled in exchange for necessary services (Bridges, 2011).

Each of the residents I spoke with at Francesca were utilizing some combination of federal aid through Medicaid, WIC, and SNAP benefits as well as support from local and state sponsored agencies. During my time at Francesca, I was impressed by the sheer volume of paperwork and appointments the residents had to work through on a daily basis. Navigating these systems was no easy task, as in order to receive benefits residents might wait for several hours a week in administrative offices and on follow up calls to case managers at each agency. I hypothesize that eventually, these demands become inconvenient, but routine—creating a dynamic where Francesca clients, like many other low income women, must routinely prove their own worthiness to receive necessary support. In doing so, they must provide the state with intimate details of their diet, medical history, employment, parenting style, routine, and many other facets; therefore exposing themselves to scrutiny and speculation that is not imposed upon wealthier women. The Francesca program posits that by becoming transformed as a financially independent single mother, the residents will be socially validated in their new identity.

Surveillance, coupled with the absolute necessity of support services, produces a sense of latent anxiety for the Francesca residents. On one hand, the fear that they might miss an appointment, a form, or a deadline and thus risk losing necessary aid creates a hyper vigilance around managing schedules. On the other hand, inquiry into the client's fitness as a parent creates further stress and apprehension about allowing the service agencies to gather information about her situation. As mentioned previously, the Ministry house offers a level of stability in the eyes of Child Protective Services (CPS) that the women might not be granted if they were living on their own. However, the implication that custody is not fixed, and is subject to state interference, in itself produces a sense of precarity for mothers who are already doing everything in their power to prove their commitment to being a suitable parent to their children.

Recognizing the residents' frustrations with many of the bureaucratic structures they interfaced with throughout their pregnancies, I was interested to know how the ritual guidance of Francesca compared to the interference of the public institutions. It seems that despite any parallels, Francesca creates an environment of support and care that is rarely experienced in the public service setting. If the intention of social service agencies is to monitor and manage the symptoms of poverty, the ministry's intention is to transform what they find to be the root causes of those symptoms. Both problematize and seek to repair the inadequacies of the client's lifestyle, but the residents of Francesca relate to the ministry with stark contrast to other treatment and social service settings they experience. Hannah, who had been clean and sober for many months when I met her, had been through several rehabilitation and recovery programs before coming to Francesca. She described her past self

as a troublemaker, who routinely challenged rules and structure when they were imposed upon her. This surprised me a bit, as I knew her to be a compassionate, light-hearted, and gentle person. I asked her how she found the guiding policies of the Francesca program compared to her previous experience in a ¾ house.¹³ Hannah described the support she received there in terms of its utility. It was lacking compassion and what she interpreted as genuine care for her wellbeing:

When you're comfortable in a place and it feels like home to you, rules just don't affect you like they would before. In the places I went before I had to conform to what they wanted and that's not something I thought I needed to do- I could manipulate and adjust the system and they would have to cater to my set of rules. But that's not the way it is. You're going to have rules everywhere you go and it's just easier in an environment where you know they have your best interests at heart.

They [recovery treatment centers] set the rules because they don't want you coming home jacked out of your mind. There's no bonding there—it's every man for himself. There are the same tendencies you had when you were in your addiction except people are sober. People have the same behavior they had before; they're just clean. There's no way to bond with anybody. There's no way to feel comfortable in that environment and it definitely always made me want to act out. If they don't care about me, why should I care?

Not that everybody has to care about me, just I was alone. And here I don't feel alone. I feel the presence of God and I feel loved. I have people that genuinely care and you can tell. It's not an act to get what they need or want from you. I guess that makes it a little bit easier to follow the rules.

While Hannah and the other residents expressed surface level frustrations with some of the stricter policies at Francesca—as it is frustrating to be told you cannot go to the store because you did not fill out the proper form on time—they all accepted these restrictions as coming from a place of genuine support and desire to help them grow. The ministry staff was largely

¹³ A ¾ house is a sober living home for those exiting drug treatment programs and transitioning back into their life outside rehabilitation. These facilities are less rigid than halfway houses, which often have very strict curfews and policies. Still, ¾ homes typically require residents to submit to regular drug testing and maintain a curfew, and may also require participation in regular 12-step program meetings and other counseling (DrugRehab.org 2017).

effective at communicating their genuine intent to support the residents, and presented the curfew, rigid scheduling, and other program rules as measures in place to ultimately support the best interest of the women and their babies. Their actions were accepted as supporting the common good (Turner 1967:50).

The Heart of the Matter

According to Turner, the *sacra* of the liminal space are the essential pieces of knowledge revealed to initiates to complete their transition (1967: 51). The *sacra* are what the ritual is all about, they allow initiates the understanding to move from an old identity to the new identity. Turner advises that to uncover the *sacra*, one must pay attention to what is shown, what is done, and what is said throughout the liminal period (1967: 51). After observing and reporting on these three items of study throughout this paper, I understand the *sacra* of Francesca to be the knowledge and practices which allow residents to form a spiritual relationship with Jesus.

This is demonstrated first by what is said. Residents are told from the first phone interview that in order to enter Francesca, they must be open to beginning a relationship with Jesus through an adoption of a Christian lifestyle. Later, as residents they must read the sacred text of Christianity, and listen to spiritual leaders at weekly church service and daily morning prayers. Secondly, the importance of this faith relationship is demonstrated through what is shown. In the previous chapters, I described how relationships are modeled through the example of the Francesca staff. Residents are shown how to have a relationship with Jesus by watching the staff pray about everyday decisions, thank God for daily blessings, and offering up hardships to Jesus. I witnessed these interactions between staff members and

Jesus as a daily occurrence at Francesca, as I'm sure residents also did. Modeling this personal relationship with Jesus shows residents the importance of forming their own spiritual bond with Him. Finally, what is done at Francesca reflects the loving relationship residents must form with God in order to be transformed. If the ministry house is a sacred space that exists to glorify God, as Linda proposed, then the actions of caring for it and its inhabitants is a tangible demonstration of what a loving and respectful relationship with Jesus should look like. The work residents do to care for the house, and the work staff does to care for the residents, all point to the caring relationship and sacrificial spirit residents are meant to embody in their growing faith.

These *sacra*, while difficult to pinpoint, explain the otherwise unexplainable. The liminality, the anti-structure of Francesca is what makes its program possible. In this ritual transformation, the human relationships formed would be meaningless without this eternal relationship of faith. In the logic of the Francesca ritual, it is this relationship that explains all of the unexplainable things. It explains why Jasmine, who felt betrayed by her mother, can parent her child with such dedication and patience. It explains how Chandra, who didn't have a home to come to from the hospital, could smile through the retelling of her story and tell me she was blessed. It explains why Ruth would dedicate her whole life to serving women she had never met, and would mother them as her own. Ruth understands this intuitively, and in trying to articulate this sacrum she said:

I get all of these wonderful things, and I have this wonderful chance to not only impact their lives but to see Jesus through them (the residents) —to understand more about support, presence, grace, love. Things that you don't think matter mean so much—a touch, a prayer, a hug. Someone that is there after they had a really bad day, after they failed. And to say you love them just the same, I won't judge you. I love that God is using me for that to just guide, to pray with them and just be a presence.

This lack of judgment, the understanding and grace are qualities not often extended in the secular realm, especially to those who society has already determined to be deviant. In the liminal space, where old identity and social custom does not apply, such grace is afforded and here extended to support the formation of a relationship with Jesus.

Conclusion: The Crisis of Reincorporation

After the ritual process is complete, initiates are reincorporated into the secular realm, bearing their new identity (Turner 1969). For Francesca residents, this means leaving the ministry and moving out on their own. Ideally, they would have stable employment, have completed some level of education, own their own car, and become a stable parent. Most importantly, they would have developed a strong relationship with Jesus to rely on in any difficult times ahead. There is no set time for how long the transformation at Francesca should take. Therefore, staff and residents often disagree on when they are ready to leave the ministry.

If the most basic function of Francesca is to provide safe housing, some residents feel that once they have secured safe housing outside of the ministry, it is time to move on. Most of the residents apply for government subsidized housing, commonly referred to as *Section 8*, shortly after moving into Francesca. If her application is approved, the woman might move into the apartment before the ritual process is complete. This dynamic frustrates the staff members, and was brought up repeatedly in our interviews. Linda had already witnessed this happen with previous residents and explained:

What ejects them out of here, and it is like an eject button, and it comes too soon, is the Section 8 housing. When I first got this role it (housing) took a long time to get,

but now it's like a Pez dispenser. It's actually working very well and kicking in after 6 months. You can't change a lifetime of hurt, trauma, and lack of information in 6 months. And that (the housing) isn't a good place. It's going to provide them housing, but not everything they need to be able to live there, to make good decisions, and to be able to figure out how they are going to take care of this baby, get a babysitter. Everything falls apart when they leave if there isn't something done here.

This messy transition out of Francesca is the result of a halted ritual process—a reincorporation before the initiate is fully transitioned.

Linda and the other staff are focused on how to keep residents in the residential program until they are deemed ready to be on their own in the secular realm. They felt the current residents had a better chance of completing the process than previous clients, and that this was a good sign for their program. One resident, who had been in the program over a year, was close to being offered Section 8 housing. Linda hoped she would take an alternative route and move into a home built by a nonprofit organization that she could actually own herself:

There's a really strong possibility she could have a house next year on her own. And deserves it, she's getting things set up right. She bought a car, it's good. But if that Section 8 housing comes, that is going to be a crisis. Because in theory if she doesn't take it, she'll lose it. But she's not ready. When that stuff comes they're not ready. Ready is being able to make money, having an ability to get to work, to get around, to be in a place where they feel safe and are able to make good, sound decisions, having life skills.

The staff is caught in the trap of secular social services. They see the offer of subsidized housing as meddling in the residents' ritual process. Their solution to this premature incorporation into the secular realm was proposed by Linda, Samantha, and Ruth. They hope to see the ministry expand into owning a transitional apartment building, where residents could move after completing the residential program. Linda presented this vision, saying:

The vision is another home, but like an apartment complex where they live, because they love each other. They become like a sisterhood. Imagine if they could live together for another year in apartments with almost no rent, and save even more money.

Expanding upon this vision, Ruth added:

They'd have a place and they'd still have kind of a guide there for them and they'd be doing it more on their own but not being just cast away. I think that's a hard step for the girls to just leave, now. It's hard for the girls, especially the younger ones if they've never lived on their own.

An apartment living situation would allow the ministry to manage the reincorporation phase of the ritual process, ensuring the residents are fully ready to be reintegrated into society in their new identity as self-reliant Christian mothers.

In employing Turner's framework, specifically his concept of liminality, we can understand the Francesca staff's role in facilitating both transformation and reform for the residents. As spiritual guides, the staff is believed to be working for the common good, which gives residents a reason to trust and follow their guidance. Only as a liminal space, separated physically and in a separate community from the resident's old lives, can the structure of Francesca work as it is designed to. Despite any appreciable changes the residents make in their lives, the ritual process suggests that these external changes will be without meaning, unless the client leaves having a strong relationship with God. In the liminal space, these spiritual relationships form alongside kinships, friendships, and professional relationships which provide residents with a support network as they work towards becoming "self-reliant" at Francesca.

Conclusion: God is Change

In thinking about the conclusion of this thesis, I am forced to consider the effect of liminal space on myself as an outside observer. My role at Francesca was to observe, not to influence the environment with my presence, but I am struck by a quote by the author Octavia Butler who said, “All that you touch, you change. All that you change, changes you. The only lasting truth is change. God is change” (1993). In Butler’s futuristic work of science fiction, *The Parable of the Sower*, this phrase becomes the basis for a new religious understanding. Here at Francesca, I think it encompasses the theory of transformation I both observed and was simultaneously brought into. Although I was not an initiate in the ritual process of Francesca, I was changed in many ways through my time there. I began my fieldwork cautiously—careful to say the right things and make good impressions. I was striving to show my worthiness to be present as a volunteer and an ethnographer. I felt separated from the staff and residents there, certain my life experience and perspective was starkly different from theirs. Slowly, through many small conversations, and shared moments playing peek-a-boo with the babies, I was able to begin peeling back layers of stereotype, stigma, and easy answers to reveal the complexity of their experience.

When I began this project, I thought I was learning about birth support. As a new doula, passionate about supporting birthing people, I was eager to learn how the staff and volunteers worked through layers of cultural difference to support the birthing parents at Francesca. I planned to investigate physical and emotional support techniques, coping strategies for living with so many other new mothers and babies, and reactions to the

support being offered at Francesca. I wanted to know about birth, as it was understood by the residents in contrast with the staff, assuming they came from different cultural understandings about birth. What I failed to recognize at first was that Francesca, as a liminal space, created its very own culture, where outside perceptions of motherhood and birth did not fully penetrate the ministry walls.

Going into this project I did not plan to study kinship or faith. In my early interviews, I asked questions about birth support practices and instead of breathing techniques, I found prayer. Instead of doulas I found stories of aunts and ministry volunteers and WIC counselors offering breastfeeding support. I found non-relatives being called “mom” and “grandma”. The agent of transformation was not just people, it was faith and kinship.

I was changed by this realization, as I felt it emerging. I had to re-examine my assumptions about the process of transformation at Francesca. It wasn't just women learning job skills and having empowering birth experiences. It was care and nurturance—the kind that family can provide. The residents weren't talking to me about a financial goal they reached or a job they were offered, they were describing an experience of love and family. In order to study these themes, I had to look at the possibility of ritual transformation, and began to understand the Francesca program as a rite of passage.

In order to do so, I had to take the women's Christian faith seriously and examine its tangible, relational effects on their lives. Francesca does not exist to provide homeless pregnant women with job skills, nor does it exist to manage their savings accounts and grocery shopping lists. Francesca exists to support their clients in forming a close,

sustainable, and lasting relationship with the Christian faith. In their ministry, Francesca staff have seen this relationship guide clients through unspeakable traumas and hardships. When a resident loses custody of a child, or faces the death of a loved one, Francesca recognizes the powerful reassurance that comes with believing in an all-powerful God, who protects and always has a plan. This relationship brings comfort and reassurance to both residents and staff in these hardships, and offers a shared language with which to console one another in the ministry home.

This faith binds the Francesca community together and lays the groundwork for a shared culture despite class, racial, and experiential differences between the individual staff and residents. Prayer services to bless the babies and their mothers offer a special time for each member of the house to offer words of encouragement, praise, and hope for the residents. Weekly church services bring the residents together outside of the ministry for the shared purpose of worshipping in community with others. While it is not my role as an anthropologist to speak to the internal effects of an individual's spirituality, at Francesca I had to grapple with the shared experience of Christian faith and its effects on the community.

I also grappled with kinship. While I knew families were being formed by birth in the ministry, I had not expected to see kinship grow between staff and residents. The intense care the staff goes beyond the requirements of a professional support role. I had to find the right language to describe the constructed role of house-mother alongside the acts of nurturance Ruth exhibits in this role. I started out calling this relationship "fictive kinship" but after more research and consideration, realized there was nothing "fictive" about it. At

Francesca, kinship is enacted. Family by blood or birth holds their right to be called family only if they can play the part. Otherwise their relationship is only a title, a term of reference. If Ruth fulfills the actions of a mother, she may earn the right to be thought of as kin, and any of the staff might earn this title through their actions of care and nurturance.

Finally, I began to understand the ministry as a dynamic being which could be broken down into three layers. First, the skeletal structure of the building itself. Francesca's architecture is rooted in historical significance, tying the ministry to Christian reform schools from as early as the 19th century. The physical space of Francesca is intentionally replicate a middle-class American household, symbolic of the life Francesca hopes residents will lead once they exit the program. Second, stand the relationships and kinships that make up the life and flesh of the ministry. The residents' daily interactions with the space itself, and the inhabitants' interactions with each other are what give Francesca its dynamic presence. Understanding how these relationships were intentionally deconstructed and emerged organically from the skeletal structure was important to understand the ministry as a whole. Finally, the spirit of Francesca is what animates all the other pieces and gives them meaning. This is the shared Christian faith, which is stated in many conversations there and silently underscores the rest. These three realms—the physical, relational, and spiritual—merge to form Francesca as a place, an agent, and an idea.

A trinity in its own right, Francesca Ministries offers insight into the care and dedication needed to fully support women facing economic and social precarity in the intersection of homelessness and pregnancy. From this work, it is clear that support, whether it be physical or spiritual, is essential for these new mothers to make choices that would

benefit themselves and their babies after leaving Francesca. The places where residents have the most agency is in choosing to join the Francesca program and trust their model. They find agency in their decisions to trust in God to lead them through their challenges. They find hope in the promise of a better future for their children, and choose Francesca to facilitate this desired growth.

By interacting in the space of Francesca, I undoubtedly may have influenced the lives of these women in imperceptible ways. By doing so, I was changed in turn. I was challenged, softened, and invited to believe in their change. God is change.

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Appendix A: Postpartum Summary Chart

Post-Partum Summary Chart

Category	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Rest	Rest, bond, sleep	Rest, bond, sleep	Rest, bond, sleep, work on routine	Rest, bond, sleep, work on routine, nap less	Rest, bond, sleep, work on routine, nap less	Rest, bond, sleep, work on routine, nap less	Bond, work on routine, nap only between 12-1 pm
Chores	None	None	Meal prep.	Light chore assignments, including meal prep.			
Classes	Not required	Not required	Not required except Infant Massage, if available	Required			
Room Check	None	None	None	Required			
Weekly Schedule	Not required	Not required	Required to be turned in by Wed. this week	20 productive hours required	25 productive hours required	30 productive hours required	35 productive hours required
Morning Meeting	Not required but invited	Not required but invited	Required				
Staff Meeting	Shortened meetings	Shortened meetings	Resume regular meetings				
Appointment Outings	Must be pre-approved						

Category	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	
Visitors	Encouraged according to policy							
Curfew	In place according to phase guidelines							
Dinner Attendance	Not required but invited	Not required but invited	Required					
Dress Code	Excused from pajama policy only	Excused from pajama policy only	Required in entirety					
Church	Excused but invited to listen/watch on TV				Required			
Babysitters	First preference for sign-up							
Doula	If available, schedule appt. within 2-3 days of return to home	If available, schedule 2 nd appt.	If available, schedule 3 rd appt.	If available, schedule 4 th appt.	If available, schedule 5 th appt.	If available, schedule 6 th appt.	If available, continue visits	
Complete Edinburgh Scale	Required							
Government Agencies	-Notify DHS of birth (fax & phone) - Schedule WIC appt.	Address areas as needed				Follow up if Soc. Card for baby not yet received	Address areas as needed	
Medical Appointments	Provide staff with appt. paperwork and any restrictions				Schedule doctor appt. regarding return to work	Provide staff with appt. paperwork and any restrictions	Provide staff with appt. paperwork and any restrictions	
Childcare preparation	None	None	Plan for payment of daycare registration fee	-Complete daycare registration (physical, shot rec., review & sign handbook) -Review daycare closed days & create plan for daycare/ contact employer regarding schedule	Request schedule from employer upon doctor approval to return to work	Address areas as needed	Address areas as needed	

Appendix B: Statement of Faith

The Bible, as originally written, was inspired by God and is therefore free from error. It constitutes the only infallible guide for faith and practice for Francesca Ministries. There is one God, the creator and preserver of all things. He exists eternally in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

People are lost sinners and cannot see the Kingdom of God except through the grace given by having saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ made possible through the work of the Holy Spirit. Without saving faith man is in a state of sin and under a spiritual death sentence. Jesus Christ is the eternal, only begotten Son of God, the Father. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He is true God and true man and is the only mediator between God and man. For our salvation, He lived a sinless life and died on the cross in our place, shedding His blood for the forgiveness of our sins. On the third day, He rose from the dead in the body which had been laid in the tomb. He ascended to the right hand of the Father where He reigns now as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. He applies to man the work of Christ, promoting a new birth and growth to maturity in faith. He gives to each spiritual gifts for the building up of the Church, his family here on earth; and also for the Church's constant renewal in truth, wisdom, faith, holiness, love power and mission to bring the good news of salvation possible through Jesus Christ to all the world.

At the end of time, Jesus Christ will personally and visibly return in glory to raise the dead and bring salvation and judgement to completion. All those who believe in Him shall live with him eternally and those who do not believe in him will be condemned to an eternal suffering and death.

Human life has absolute value, a statement that is based on the fact that God created man in His own image and is the author of all life. As the Lord's creation, we are fearfully and wonderfully made. God is overseeing the development of every unborn child and for that reason, Francesca Ministries supports the sanctity of life from the moment of conception unto death and will always strive to encourage and promote "life" decisions, whether individual chooses parenting or adoption.