AFTER CONVERSION:
GENDER, MODERNITY, AND THE REGENERATION OF CHRISTIANITY ACROSS
THREE GENERATIONS OF INDIGENOUS EVANGELICALS IN HIGHLAND ECUADOR

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an ethnography of the contested process of religious change across three generations of indigenous evangelicals in the Ecuadorian Andes. This process, which I term re-generating Christianity, involves negotiating the legacies of mass conversion in shifting sociocultural contexts in and through generational and gender relations. Based on fifteen months of anthropological fieldwork conducted in the Colta Lake region of Chimborazo Province, this dissertation reveals how the dramatic social transformations generated by conversion in one historical context spur continually-emergent religious tensions over time along the lines of generation, gender, family, and community.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Colta was the setting of a mass conversion of Kichwa-speaking indigenous peoples from Catholicism to evangelical Protestantism at the hands of North American missionaries. Coinciding with Ecuador’s watershed period of agrarian reform, religious conversion signified collective liberation from socio-economic, ethnic, and gendered oppression for first converts. It meant adopting a set of “modern” promises that only future generations could fully realize. This dissertation focuses on the first converts’ children and grandchildren—men and women of the “second” and “third” generations—in today’s fully indigenized evangelical movement. Combining discourse analysis with an examination of ritual performance, this dissertation explores how younger evangelicals in Colta today experience, narrate, and embody indigenous Christianity in relationship to collective memories of the pre-conversion “sad life,” the expectations of their elders and pastors, and the pull of the contemporary “world.”

Raised evangelical in an era of rising identity-based politics, higher rates of schooling and social mobility, engagement with Western feminist ideologies, and heightened exposure to
global, consumer culture, members of the “second” and “third” post-conversion generations in Chimborazo have begun to challenge the religious movement from within. Increasingly critical of the unmet promises of their elders’ conversion, younger believers negotiate their ongoing commitment to the Kichwa Church by re-defining “threats” to Christianity as opportunities to re-vamp local evangelical practice and, in the process, contest age and gender hierarchies. In these ways, younger evangelicals play a crucial role in re-generating Christianity, or imbuing an inherited religion with renewed relevance in ways that enable its central tenets to be both re-worked and re-lived in a post-conversion era.

       Drawing on three main bodies of scholarship—anthropology of Christianity, gender and feminist studies, and Andean ethnography—my longitudinal and cross-generational approach to mass-converted religious identity contributes to anthropological understandings of the lasting social effects of religious conversion in Latin America. Re-generating Christianity, I show, is an ongoing, non-linear, uneven, and intergenerational process that challenges scholarly assumptions about the nature of evangelical conversion as individuating, monolithic, and static, and as entailing clear temporal and social breaks. Finally, my work illuminates the ways in which shifting evangelical practices in the Andes intersect with the rise of local feminisms, the internal politics of indigenous movements, and the social construction of youth and generations.
To Lucas and Marcos
In loving memory of Professor Nancy Abelmann (April 24, 1959 – January 6, 2016)
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This dissertation would not have been possible without the collaboration of members of “San Mateo” and “Christ King Church.” Though I shall not mention names here in order to protect anonymity, I am forever indebted to them for their support, prayers, and openness to share their lives with me. I am particularly appreciative of the family who housed me during my fieldwork in 2002, 2007, and 2010. They made me feel welcome in their home and community and assisted in any way they could with my research. They were patient in fielding my questions, good-humored when I inadvertently breached local norms, and encouraging when I felt lonely and frustrated. Our daily conversations over hearty meals around the kitchen table were an invaluable component of my research. I am also honored to be godmother to two children in the community.

In addition, I wish to thank the directors of CONPOCIECH and COPAEQUE for speaking with me and permitting me to explore their archives and attend events. I am particularly indebted to the teachers and students at CONPOCIECH’S New Life Women’s Bible Institute for allowing me to observe classes, conduct interviews, participate in the choir, and give a speech at the International Women’s Day event.

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University of San Francisco in Quito was a fantastic Kichwa language tutor and also provided transcription services.

Two organizations in Ecuador kindly sponsored my research in 2010. The Gender and Culture Studies Program at the Latin American Faculty of Social Science (FLACSO) offered me institutional sponsorship, which enabled me to attain research funding and a visa. The Indigenous Foundation for Development (FUIDE) offered access to their archives, interviews, and the opportunity to take part in events. FUIDE affiliates who played a particularly important role in supporting my research were: Julián Guamán, Gerónimo Yantalema, Margarita de la Torre, Fabiola Yantalema, Pedro Chille, Carmen Moyolema, and Luis Chuquimarca. I am also thankful for the contacts that Francisco Rhon Dávila, executive director at the Andean Center of Popular Action (S. Centro Andino de Acción Popular), gave me in 2002 and 2007.

In addition to the people already mentioned, a number of friendships made my time in Ecuador very special. In 2010, Vaniolky Losada Leon was my emotional rock and salsa-dancing buddy. Thank you, Patricia Espinosa Artilles, for introducing us. Washington and Marita welcomed me in their gorgeous home on the outskirts of Riobamba on many occasions. Thank you, Shannon Curl for first introducing me to their son, Fabian Granda, in 2002.

Several anthropology professors at the University of Illinois were instrumental in my intellectual formation. At the very top of this list is Professor Andrew Orta, my advisor. With his incredible expertise and knowledge, Andy has shaped my work immeasurably. I took two courses from him, Religion and Society, and Andean Ethnography. By working with me to describe my research project and its significance, Andy helped me to cultivate an approach to generational difference, religious change, and indigenous modernity that will contribute to Andean Studies and the Anthropology of Christianity.
Moreover, I could not have asked for a more supportive and gracious mentor than Andy to guide me through each step towards attaining the Ph.D. degree. Always available when I needed him, Andy addressed my concerns with solid counsel; he presented the options thoughtfully, and always trusted me to make the final decision. He handled administrative tasks related to my research project with speed. He also accommodated my unique family circumstances, which required writing my dissertation while living in another state. He provided editorial suggestions and constructive feedback on multiple drafts of each dissertation chapter. I credit Andy with ensuring my success in receiving fellowships. Under the pressure of impending deadlines due to my own time management issues, Andy’s efforts over the years to revise my writing and write letters of recommendation at the eleventh hour have been nothing short of Herculean. Well before I officially became his student, he made pursuing graduate study possible by encouraging me to apply for a Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship to study Quechua.

Another professor that I hold in high regard is Dr. Nancy Abelmann. When I took her methods course, I found her to be the most engaging discussion facilitator I had ever encountered. Her vibrant voice came across in her writing as well, and her feedback on my research proposal drafts served me immeasurably. Unfortunately, shortly after my dissertation defense, Nancy passed away from cancer. That she managed to attend my defense over the phone despite her illness is testament to how much she cared for her students. True to form, however, Nancy did not go lightly on me during the defense. In fact, Nancy interrupted my rather long-winded presentation to ask, “What’s surprising about your research?” I was stunned by the question, but knew instantly I should have been focusing on the answer all along. Nancy’s influence went beyond imparting her expertise in research methods and theories of social transformation, class, gender, and family. She challenged me, as a person and as a scholar, not to
be mired down by the details, but to be bold. Not perfect. Bold. She pushed me to find a scholarly voice—to make simple, yet forceful, claims. I am humbled that Nancy believed in me. As I face the unknown in terms of my career, I hope, in some way, I can still count on her guidance.

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Fellow students in the anthropology program at the University of Illinois provided camaraderie and friendship, especially Kate Grim-Feinberg and Pilar Eguez Guevara. Members of my writing committee read initial drafts of most of the chapters in this dissertation: Kate
Grim-Feinberg, Pilar Eguez Guevara, Monica Santos, Anthony Jerry, Sarah Rowe, and Jennifer Zovar. In particular, Kate’s editorial eye and Pilar’s critiques shaped many parts of this dissertation. When I was a prospective student, Julie Williams and Isabel Scarborough greatly influenced my decision to attend the University of Illinois. They were a source of advice and support throughout my graduate studies. Thank you to Isabel for housing me during my trip back to Illinois to defend my thesis.

The seeds of this dissertation project were planted long before I became a doctoral student. Professor Jerome Levi at Carleton College first piqued my interest in indigenous peoples in Latin America when I took his undergraduate course, Idioms of Inequality in Latin America, in 1997. Encouraging me to pursue graduate students in anthropology, he described Elizabeth Brusco’s (1995) work to me and suggested that I pursue research on the relationship between evangelical conversion and gender in Latin America. In 2002, Professor Tod Swanson encouraged me to do M.A. research on this topic in Chimborazo. Members of my M.A. thesis committee at the University of Arizona helped shape this project in its early stages: my advisor, Dr. Ana Alonso, Dr. Kevin Gosner, Dr. Tod Swanson, and Dr. Linda Green. Dr. Gosner and Dr. Elizabeth Ogelsby were particularly supportive in helping me get in to a Ph.D. program. I first considered applying to the Ph.D. program in Anthropology at the University of Illinois thanks to Professor Emeritus Norman Whitten, whom I met at the Andes and Amazon Field School in 2005. He convinced me that Illinois was the place to go, and that I should work with Professor Orta. Dr. Michael Uzendoski was also encouraging.

Funding from a variety of sources enabled me to conduct research and write my dissertation. My research began in 2002 with the assistance of a Hewlett Summer Travel Grant awarded by the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Arizona. At the
University of Illinois, a Tinker Field Research Grant from the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and a Summer Field Research Grant from the Department of Anthropology enabled me to conduct preliminary dissertation fieldwork in 2007. My dissertation research in 2010 was assisted by a fellowship from the International Dissertation Research Fellowship Program of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) with funds provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. I am grateful to SSRC for organizing a conference for fellowship recipients to share our research. The conference sparked lasting friendships and, hopefully, future collaborative efforts. For dissertation writing, I received a Block Grant from the Department of Anthropology at the University of Illinois in 2011. I benefitted greatly from a Dissertation Completion Grant provided by the Graduate College at the University of Illinois for the academic year 2013-14.

Central to my research was learning Quechua/Kichwa, and key sources of funding enabled me to do so. In 2005, Arizona State University gave me a Teacher Fellowship to study Kichwa at the Andes and Amazon Field School directed by Tod Swanson. In 2006 and again in 2007, I received an academic-year Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS) from the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at the University of Illinois to study (Peruvian) Quechua. My professor, Dr. Clodoaldo Soto, provided a solid foundation in grammar, vocabulary, and conversation that served me well when I made the transition to Ecuadorian Kichwa.

I wrote this dissertation while living in Tucson, Arizona. I would like to thank the Southwest Center at the University of Arizona for sponsoring my affiliation as research associate. Dear friend, UA Professor Maribel Alvarez, went above and beyond to support me during the writing process, starting with providing the very desk and chair I used in my home
office. She coordinated my research affiliation with the Southwest Center. She provided funds to pay for a book editor to review a draft of the dissertation. The editor, Barbara Seyda, offered poignant feedback in the kindest of manners. My dissertation improved dramatically as a result. Specifically, I wrote Chapter 4 in response to her suggestion that I bring out women’s experiences more so as not to reproduce, in my own dissertation, the same silencing of women as in the Kichwa Church.

In the midst of writing this dissertation, I had two children. Writing would not have been possible without the help of friends and family. After each child was born, my older sister, Jennifer O’Brien, dropped everything in her busy life to fly out to provide help. Patricia Espinosa Artiles organized meal rotations. My mother-in-law, Regla Albarrán Miller, has never turned down an opportunity to babysit even though she herself is trying to finish a Ph.D. dissertation. My children adore their abuela. Thank you to Beatriz Angulo, whom I depend on so much, and who has done an amazing job of taking care of my children on a daily basis. Regla and Beatriz have also been instrumental in our efforts to raise bilingual children. Thank you to the excellent teachers at Desert Spring Children’s Center for their work with Lucas this past year.

Despite all of this child care help, I struggled with writing. My friend Omotayo Jolaosho provided me with the resources that enabled me to finally finish the dissertation. Tayo funded my work with Rachel, the self-professed “benevolent bully” I desperately needed. Working with Rachel fundamentally shifted my way of approaching writing. With her daily nags, I was finally able to produce a full, defensible draft of the dissertation. I am humbled by Tayo’s generosity and promise to pay it forward.

It took me many years to write this dissertation. Too many. Fortunately, those closest to me did not give up on me. A special thanks are in order to my parents, Albert O’Brien and Mary
O’Brien, for their unconditional love and sage advice throughout my life. As retired professors, their many years teaching have been a source of inspiration for me. In addition, they helped cover child care costs, without which I would not have been able to write this dissertation.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband, Leonardo Albarrán, with whom I share the many joys of life in the form of travel, salsa dancing, and raising children. Unfortunately, Leo bore the brunt of all of my dissertation-related stress. Not an academic himself, I do not think he knew what he was getting into when he married one. He should be commended for assuming the bulk of the financial responsibilities of our family. I think he is probably happier than anyone that it is finally done.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIECH: Association of Indigenous Evangelicals of Chimborazo (S. Asociación Indígena Evangélica de Chimborazo). Now CONPOCIIECH.

CIET: Indigenous Center of Theological Studies (Centro Indígena de Estudios Teológicos). It is now called Superior Institute of Andean Studies (Instituto Superior de Estudios Andinos).

COMICH: Indigenous Movement of Chimborazo (Movimiento Indígena de Chimborazo)

CONAIE: Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador)

CONPOCIIECH: Confederation of Evangelical People, Organizations, and Communities of Chimborazo (Confederación de Pueblos, Organizaciones, Comunidades e Iglesias Indígenas Evangélicas de Chimborazo). Formerly AIECH.

COPAEQUE: Council of Quichua Ecuadorian Pastors of Ecuador (Concilio de Pastores Ecuatorianos Quichuas del Ecuador). I refer to it as “Pastor Council” throughout the dissertation.

FEINE: Board of Indigenous Evangelical People and Organizations of Ecuador (Consejo de Pueblos y Organizaciones Indígenas Evangélicas del Ecuador)

FUIDE: Indigenous Foundation for Development (Fundación Indígena para el Desarrollo)

GMU: Gospel Missionary Union (Union Misionera Evangélica)

IERAC: Ecuadorian Institute for Agrarian Reform and Colonization (Instituto Ecuatoriano de Reforma Agraria y Colonización)

INEC: National Institute of Statistics and Census (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos)

UBL: Latin American Bible University (Universidad Bíblica Latinoamericana)
NOTE ON LANGUAGE

San Mateo, my fieldwork site, is a multilingual speech community. Linguistic aptitude, choices, and use are mediated by age differences as well as gender, both in worship and non-worship contexts. Many elders, and, in particular, elderly women, are monolingual Kichwa speakers of the Central Highlands dialect, though their Kichwa is heavily influenced by Spanish. For this reason, people say they speak chawpi chawpi (a Kichwa phrase meaning half-and-half or in the middle) or Kichwañol (Kichwa + Español). Most middle-aged adults are bilingual (Kichwa and Spanish), though the Spanish they speak is heavily influenced by Kichwa grammatical structure and phonological patterns.

“They don’t even speak the same language.” That is how one U.S. missionary, living in Ecuador for more than forty years, described generational differences between indigenous youth and their elders in Chimborazo today. Youth speak mostly Spanish in public, but say they understand Kichwa. “I understand it but I don’t speak it” I often heard young adults say. The Spanish that youth speak is more influenced by mainstream-mestizo Ecuadorian Spanish than the Spanish of their parents and grandparents. Youth often mix Spanish and Kichwa when making jokes amongst each other, a phenomenon that has also been noted by Mendoza (2000) in the context of Peruvian youth speaking Quechua. These age and gender differences play out in worship contexts as well, with the female choir singing primarily in Kichwa and the youth choir singing a mixture of hymns in Spanish and Kichwa.

Since the 1980s, a group of indigenous linguists and activists in Ecuador have called for the standardization of Kichwa through bilingual education initiatives and state policy reforms (Wroblewski 2012). Standardized Kichwa or “Unified Kichwa” (S. Kichwa Unificado) represents efforts to strengthen pan-ethnic native identity and historical interpretation in Ecuador.
by purging Kichwa of its Spanish influences, offering a new lexicon to replace Spanish words and establishing a standardized Unified Kichwa alphabet that would level regional variations (Wroblewski 2010:67).

The choice of using and advocating either a standard or nonstandard variety of Kichwa now acts “as a distinct identifier of a native Ecuadorian’s specific social position,” reflecting particular ideological orientations (Wroblewski 2012:65). The question of Unified Kichwa as an appropriate writing system in Ecuador is particularly vexed amongst indigenous Christians of Chimborazo. In Chimborazo, evangelical religious leaders, for the most part, reject Unified Kichwa, opting to maintain the spoken and written forms of their elders, what they refer to as Old Quichua (S. Quichua Antiguo).¹ Chimborazo’s evangelicals target Unified Kichwa’s urban/elitist underpinnings, as well as its “phonological foreignness, lexical artifice, and morphological unintelligibility” (cf. Wroblewski 2012:65). Old Quichua, by contrast, is considered “native, authentic, and meaningful” despite the fact that it is influenced greatly by “Spanish lexicon, phonology, syntax, and morphology” (cf. Wroblewski 2012:65, 68).

Evangelical elders also see Unified Kichwa as a threat to religious meaning. Old Quichua, in their view, elicits deeper reverence, more emotion, connection to the spiritual realm, and semantic understanding than Standard Kichwa. The Bible, translated into Old Quichua, was a successful evangelizing tool in the early years. At first, native preachers used a 1954 translation of the New Testament into Quichua. In 1973, a new translation of the New Testament into the Chimborazo dialect, headed by the Gunther Schulze of United Bible Societies translation team was published (Klassen 1974; Muratorio 1981b:515). Initial converts worked closely with North

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¹ “Authentic Kichwa” is another term used.
American missionaries to translate the Bible in their native language. An elder who worked with missionaries to translate the Bible into Old Quichua says doing so helped him to “internalize the Word of God.” Since its inception, the Kichwa Evangelical Church has emphasized Old Quichua, conducting services and religious radio broadcasting in the Chimborazo dialect. The Kichwa Evangelical Church has a strong oral tradition due to its emphasis on congregational singing.

Younger evangelical professionals, on the other hand, following the initiatives of bilingual education in the late 1980s, consider Unified Kichwa to be getting back to a more authentic non-Hispanicized Kichwa. Elderly evangelical opponents of Unified Kichwa view its embrace by younger people as a form of disrespect towards all of the translation work they did.

Spelling Conventions in the Dissertation

In writing this dissertation, I am faced with the decision of whether or not to use the Unified Kichwa alphabet. Since my research project identifies with Chimborazo’s evangelical Christians, it might well follow that I should write using the Spanish alphabet, in which case I’d write the name of the language as Quichua, not Kichwa. However, I have chosen to follow the conventions of Unified Kichwa in my spelling.

My decision is based on two factors. First of all, evangelicals are not unified in their rejection of Unified Kichwa. Chimborazo’s youth grew up exposed to Unified Kichwa attending bilingual and intercultural schools, and often know how to write in both orthographic systems: Old Quichua and Unified Kichwa. Chimborazo’s adult bilingual educators are also trained in Unified Kichwa. Efforts to maintain Old Quichua in light of Unified Kichwa reflect not only a

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2 Introduction to Ecuador Highland Quichua or Quichua in Ten Easy Lessons is a teaching guide written by missionary Ellen M. Ross (1963) geared towards teaching English-speaking missionaries. The text was written with the translation help of Pastor Samuel Charco, although he is not listed as an author or acknowledged in the text.
particular religious identification (e.g. conservative Christian) but also a particular social class
and generational/age position among evangicals. To the extent that my research identifies with
evangelicals of younger generations, it makes sense for me to write using the standardized
variety.

Secondly, I use Unified Kichwa spelling because, like indigenous youth, it is how I
learned to spell the language. Furthermore, my research assistants were mostly local evangelical
educators, linguists, and students. They transcribed interviews using Unified Kichwa. I thus spell
words out using the conventions of Unified Kichwa (e.g. k instead of guí, or w instead of huí),
conventions that have the added benefit (for a native English speaker) of following the spelling
conventions of Standard English. I follow the following Kichwa-Spanish dictionaries: *Kichwa:
Yachakukkunapa Shimiyuk Kamu* (2009) [Kichwa Dictionary for Students] and *Shimiyukkamu
Dictionary].

Otherwise, I attempt to represent the ways in which my informants speak in the
Chimborazo variant of Kichwa, complete with Spanish gloss terms (e.g. fiesta) and local
morphemes (e.g. unifying suffix pish instead of pash). Spanish gloss terms that are
“Kichwañized” so to speak are written as they are pronounced (e.g. uras instead of the standard
Spanish spelling horas, dius instead of dios). When quoting from the primary texts of the
Kichwa Evangelical Church, which are written in Old Quichua, I maintain the original spelling.
These texts include the hymnal published by CONPOCIECH—*Sumaj Diosta Cantanami

When Kichwa speakers, particularly elders, spoke to me in Spanish, certain Spanish
phonemes were often mispronounced since Kichwa has fewer vowel sounds than Spanish
(Kichwa has three—\(a, i, u\)—while Spanish has five—\(a, e, i, o, u\)). Nonetheless, excerpts of transcriptions of oral Spanish on the part of elders follow the written conventions of standard Spanish.

For readability purposes, I have translated all quoted speech in the dissertation into English. I indicate the language in which the utterance was originally spoken: K indicates Kichwa, S indicates Spanish, and K/S denotes code switching. I include concepts or phrases in Kichwa or Spanish that I found difficult to translate, or that were especially telling or meaningful in their original language, in parentheses.

**My Language Skills**

I began fieldwork on this topic in 2002 already fluent in Spanish. My skills in Spanish were honed through eight years of formal study of Spanish language and literature, two years of immersion in Costa Rica, three years of teaching the Spanish language, and daily conversation with native speakers. Through formal study, coupled with daily use of the language at my field site, I attained a proficient level of Ecuadorian highland Kichwa. I took highland Kichwa classes for the first time at the Andes and Amazon Field School located in Napo, Ecuador. As a Ph.D. student at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, I took two years of Ayacucho-Peruvian Quechua funded by two consecutive academic year FLAS Fellowships awarded by the Center for Latin American Studies. During my year of intense fieldwork in 2010, I took Kichwa classes at the Casa Indígena in Riobamba as well as private lessons from a language instructor in Quito. Despite these efforts, my Kichwa is not as strong as my Spanish, and my verbal communication skills in Kichwa are not as strong as my written. Therefore, when interviewing elderly Kichwa monolingual speakers, I relied on local research assistants to help interpret (Kichwa-Spanish) during the interview, transcribe, and translate the interviews into Spanish.
Oftentimes, research assistants were younger relatives of the interviewee; the interview itself was often revelatory of intergenerational differences.
CHAPTER ONE,
AFTER CONVERSION: RE-GENERATING CHRISTIANITY IN CHIMBORAZO,
ECUADOR

This dissertation is an ethnography of the dynamic and contested process of religious change across three generations of indigenous evangelicals in the Ecuadorian Andes. This process, which I term re-generating Christianity, involves negotiating the legacies of mass conversion in shifting sociocultural contexts in and through internal tensions deriving from age and generational differences as well as gender hierarchies. My dissertation is based on fifteen months of anthropological fieldwork conducted between 2002 and 2010 among families inhabiting a rural highlands community called San Mateo in the Colta Lake region of Chimborazo province. The region was the setting of a mass conversion of Kichwa-speaking indigenous peoples from Catholicism to evangelical Protestantism at the hands of North American missionaries in the 1960s and 1970s.

As one of the earliest and most dramatic cases of mass conversion in Latin America, coinciding with Ecuador’s historical watershed moment of agrarian reform, the case of indigenous Christianity in Chimborazo has garnered much scholarly interest, prompted by the early ethnographic research of Argentinian anthropologist Blanca Muratorio (1980, 1981a, 1981b) in the Colta Lake region. As intriguing as this mass conversion is, though, it only tells us one part of a complex and ongoing story (cf. Keller 2005). The case I examine in this dissertation shows that social transformations generated by mass conversion have led to new and continually-

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3 I have given pseudonyms to the names of specific communities in Colta.
emergent religious tensions over time along the lines of generation, gender, family, and community. These post-conversion tensions are as intriguing as the conversion itself, if not more so.

For first-generation converts, religious conversion signified collective liberation from a “sad life” (K. llaki kawsay) of socio-economic, ethnic, and gendered oppression and entailed adopting the “good life” (K. alli kawsay), or a set of collective, modern promises such as literacy, schooling, upward social mobility, and new forms of relatedness. First converts looked to future generations for these promises to be fully realized. My dissertation focuses on men and women of the “second” and “third” post-conversion generations who grew up in Christianized households. I explore how they experience, narrate, and embody indigenous Christianity in relationship to the collective pre-conversion “sad life,” the expectations of their elders, and the promises and “threats” of the contemporary moment.

One evening during my fieldwork in 2010, I was conversing with my host mother, Marta, in her kitchen. Marta is a 48-year-old evangelical woman whose father was one of the first converts to evangelical Protestantism in Chimborazo Province. Our conversation turned, as it often did, to the topic of generational change. Marta told me that as a young girl she would wake up in the middle of the night to find her mother and father kneeling and weeping in prayer outside. Her semi-literate father labored to read the Bible at all hours of the day and night, she recalled with awe. “[We] observed the sacrifice [of our parents],” she told me in Spanish. “But our children? What are they watching?” she asked rhetorically. In that moment, we happened to glance over at her two teenage children. They were sitting in the living room, eyes glued to the television. “The television!” Marta declared, in response to her own question. We both laughed.

Marta evokes a common generational narrative among Kichwa’s evangelicals.
Chimborazo’s “first generation” converts were steadfast in their new faith despite limited means and literacy skills and in the face of violent Catholic opposition. By contrast, “third” generation youth represent a pendulum swing towards religious apathy and material-secular orientations. In many ways the beneficiaries of elders’ struggles, today’s youth possess academic skills to read the Bible with ease but watch TV instead. Youth index disenchantment, not just with religion itself, but also with the affective connections to elders and the past upon which local religiosity is based. As a “second generation” evangelical and a member of today’s parental cohort, Marta finds herself mediating these two extremes. Though I know Marta to be highly critical of missionization and her parents’ conservative gender and religious ideologies, she holds on to this childhood memory of her parents’ religious devotion, just as she holds on to the religion in which she herself was born and raised, and which she hopes to see embraced and lived in turn by her own children.

Fifty years after mass conversion, many Kichwa believers today lament what they perceive to be a deep crisis of religious reproduction. Over time, the uneven and unmet promises of their elders’ conversion and adoption of religious modernity have come into sharp focus for younger believers. A dramatic post-conversion and post-hacienda period of growing indigenous identity-based politics, increasing levels of schooling and rural-urban mobility, engagement with Western feminist ideologies, and intensifying exposure to global, consumer culture beginning in the 1980s and continuing into the present have provided members of the second and third generations the tools with which to question key tenets of their parents’ and grandparents’ conservative evangelical identity.

And yet, fascinatingly, most remain committed to the religion. I argue that the varying modes of questioning, doubting, disenchantment, contestation, critique, embodiment, and
innovation of younger evangelicals—as well as the ways in which elders, in turn, cast youth as “threats” to Kichwa Christianity—do not spell the demise of evangelical religiosity, as a cursory analysis of Marta’s comments might suggest. Rather, these conflicts and the ways they are debated, experienced, and performed give this inherited religion renewed relevance for local believers, enabling its central tenets and dialectics to be collectively lived and practiced in a post-conversion era. It is this contentious, perpetual, and historically-embedded re-generation of Kichwa Christian identity that I aim to focus on here.

My longitudinal and cross-generational approach to mass-converted religious identity, thus far unprecedented in the scholarly literature, contributes to anthropological understandings of the lasting social effects of religious mass conversion in Latin America. Re-generating Christianity, I show, is an open-ended, non-linear, uneven, and collective yet highly contested and power-laden process that challenges scholarly assumptions about the nature of religious conversion, modernity, language, and personhood as individuating and monolithic. As a fully indigenized, post-mission, multi-generational church in the global South engaged in an uneven process of “Pentecostalization” (Brahinsky 2012), the Kichwa Church in Chimborazo offers a unique opportunity to study these processes.

GMU MISSIONIZATION IN CHIMBORAZO

In predominantly Catholic-identified Ecuador, Chimborazo province (see Figure 1 and Figure 2) is the birthplace of the indigenous evangelical movement. Chimborazo province has a population of 458,581 inhabitants according to the 2010 Census (see www.ecuadoren CIFRAS.gob.ec). It has one of the largest populations of indigenous-identified people in Ecuador (38% of provincial population, see Fascículo). Chimborazo’s natives belong
to the Kichwa nation\(^5\) and are descendants of Puruhá “people” (S. pueblo) and speak Kichwa. Colta Canton is located in the Northwest part of the province between the Western Cordillera and Yuruquies Hills (Tolen 1998). Its population is 44,971 people (Población y Demografía, INEC, www.ecuadorencifras.gob.ec), the majority of which (87.38%) identifies as indigenous (Memora Técnica 2013).

In 1953, the Gospel Missionary Union purchased the missionary station in Sisapamba, Colta.\(^6\) The Gospel Missionary Union was a church-planting missionary agency based in Kansas City that brought together individuals from various churches for international missionary work.\(^7\) Seventh-Day Adventists (SDA) (from 1918-1933) and Christian and Missionary Alliance missionaries (from 1933-1953) had occupied the station prior but were largely unsuccessful in baptizing new converts or erecting local churches (Klassen 1974; Maust 1992; Muratorio 1981b; Nickel 19--:77). Henry and Patricia Klassen, Mennonite Brethren from Canada (Klassen 1974:169), were the first GMU missionaries to arrive at the Colta-Sisapamba station; locals say the “gospel arrived” when they did. A succession of North American GMU missionaries joined them between 1954 and 1992. One middle-aged man I spoke with jokingly referred to Sisapamba as a “gringo factory.”

From 1954 until the early 1960s, GMU missionaries in Colta focused their proselytizing efforts on building structures and offering services in the Kichwa language previously

\(^5\) Thirteen indigenous nations (S. nacionalidades) exist in Ecuador.
\(^6\) GMU had two other missionary stations in Chimborazo prior to Colta-Sisapamba: in Caliata (founded 1902) and Pulucate, Colta (founded 1950) (Maust 1995:57).
\(^7\) George Fisher, Director of YMCA in Kansas, founded the Gospel Missionary Union in 1892. Fisher sought to evangelize the world through missionization. GMU had been operating in Ecuador since 1896, after General Eloy Alfaro assumed the presidency and enacted liberal laws to guarantee freedom of worship in Ecuador (Nickel 19--:14). The faith mission was originally named the World’s Gospel Union and was later renamed Gospel Missionary Union in 1901 (see Padilla 1989:186). The GMU missionaries started out proselytizing along Ecuador’s coast, but soon “felt the burden” of reaching the highland Indigenous populations, lamenting that they were servants to the “white population” and “not permitted to learn to read” (Nickel 19--: 24). GMU is now named Avant Ministries: http://avantministries.org/.

GMU evangelizing progressed slowly at first (J. Klassen 1974:106). The first four believers were baptized in 1954. By 1962, 55 believers in Chimborazo had been baptized. The years between 1964 and 1980 proved to be ones of rapid growth in new converts. Baptisms increased to 330 by 1966, then to 480 in 1967 (Klassen 1974). By 1977, some 8,054 indigenous people had been baptized (Muratorio 1981b:515). Colta was the site of one of the very first evangelical churches, Harvest Church, built in Sisapamba in 1961. In 1968 there were 11 churches; by 1972 there were 50 (Klassen 1977).

In 1967, indigenous evangelicals formed their own organization, the Association of Evangelical Indians of Chimborazo (AIECH), the first of its kind and one that served as a model for other regional and national organizations. Reflecting the growth of the indigenous evangelical movement as a whole and its embrace of various sub-categories beyond the individual Indian convert (i.e. peoples, organizations, churches, and communities), the organization is now called CONPOCIECH. In 1992, having long turned over all church administrative and leadership duties to local leaders, GMU missionaries left Colta, declaring their work with the Kichwas there done.8

Today, the vast majority of Chimborazo’s native population is evangelical Christian, though accurate numbers are difficult to attain.\(^9\) There are at least 750 Kichwa churches in the region. They are indigenous-run and most are organized under the regional organization, CONPOCIIECH. There are approximately 250 indigenous pastors in Chimborazo represented by the national organization COPAEQUE, which I call the “Pastor Council” in the dissertation. Kichwa churches can be found across rural and urban areas in Ecuador as well as in Colombia, Venezuela, and the United States (specifically, New York City and Minneapolis), as indigenous believers have migrated and set up local congregations (Andrade 2004). According to Guamán (2002), following estimates given by FEINE, evangelicals represent 60% of the total indigenous population of Ecuador. Evangelicals remain in the minority in Ecuador, with a recent government survey showing Catholics to represent 80.44% and Evangelicals 11.30% of the population (Primeras 2012).\(^10\)

Despite the national and international breadth of Kichwa Christianity, the old GMU mission complex in Colta continues to be an evangelical hub and place of historic significance, drawing in evangelicals from all over for consultations with CONPOCIIECH or Pastor Council leaders, meetings, Bible institute classes, and regional gatherings (See Figure 5). In 2010, Pastor Council leaders held a large tent gathering to declare the province the “capital of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.”

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\(^9\) Regional evangelical leaders claim that as much as 80% of Chimborazo’s indigenous population in Chimborazo is evangelical, but others outside of the movement say the percentage is exaggerated.

\(^10\) In 2012, INEC (Instituto Nacional de estadística y censos) surveyed five major cities in Ecuador on religious affiliation and the results were: 80.44% Catholic; 11.30% Evangelical; 1.29% Jehovah’s Witness; 0.37% Mormon; 0.29% Buddhist; 0.26% Jewish; 0.12% Spiritism; 5.9% Other. Ecuador has not followed the Pentecostal trend to the same degree as other countries in Latin America such as Brazil, Chile, and Guatemala, with only 30% of evangelical Protestants in Ecuador identifying as Pentecostals (Goffin 1994).
Contested Christianity: GMU Missionary Teachings and Shifting Denominational Influences

Most Kichwa pastors today uphold GMU missionary teachings. GMU missionaries themselves represented different Christian denominations (e.g. Mennonite, Baptist, Brethren). However, they shared conservative, fundamentalist tendencies (Guamán 2006:28), specifically: doctrine of personal salvation, biblical literalism, strict asceticism (no drinking alcohol, no dancing), and separation between “things of God” and “things of the world” (Andrade 2005). “The world” includes Catholicism and other Christian denominations. Since the initial period of mass conversion, however, post-conversion generations have challenged some of these mainline GMU orientations associated with first converts.

In the 1980s and 1990s, “second generation” evangelicals started to embrace a more holistic brand of evangelical Christianity challenging earlier assertions of the supposedly sinful character of secular practices: higher education and professionalization, political involvement, ecumenism, women’s public organizing, and traditional aspects of indigenous culture (Andrade 2005). A small group of second-generation scholars and activists residing in Riobamba were especially influenced by Catholic Liberation Theology.

At the helm of younger practitioners of this “second” generation in the 1980s and 1990s, the Kichwa Church also began appropriating and Christianizing “secular” ideas and practices during worship services, not unlike some of the fundamentalist “re-voicings” or cultural morphing taking place in conservative Protestant Churches in the U.S. during the same period of time (see Harding 2010:346). These included “sociocultural programming”—singing competitions, Bible verse competitions, dramatizations, sports tournaments, Mother’s and Father’s Day celebrations—that blur the lines between (secular) entertainment and ritual (cf. Jones 2012b).
Another post-conversion manifestation of GMU/Kichwa Christianity is currently unfolding (since the early to mid-2000s) and is associated with the proclivities and initiatives of today’s youth, or the “third generation,” who advocate a more charismatic, urbanized, mixed-ethnic church mediated by new forms of global Christian pop culture and media. Since the start of the twenty-first century, mainline rural Kichwa churches have undergone a charismatic revival of sorts (Andrade 2004). The Kichwa Church maintains GMU missionary doctrine and self-labeling while at the same time opening up to Pentecostal-inspired worship genres and styles such as songs of praise, clapping, spontaneous exclamations, and choreographed dance (though rejecting most other aspects of Pentecostal worship and doctrine). Leaving the politicized identities that characterized their parents’ “holistic evangelicalism” to one side, younger evangelicals are now seeking what they take to be a deeper spiritual and personal connection to God through new ritual and textual practices.

Until recently, most Kichwa evangelicals assumed GMU was a denomination. In 2010, regional leaders identified the church’s lack of denominational identity to be a problem, and started discussing affiliating with a particular denomination. Though the Kichwa Church strongly identifies with its mainline GMU theological conservative past, it has also grown to adopt a plethora of other religious and secular ideologies, practices, and symbols. In the first decade of

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11 In the U.S., fundamentalists have historically rejected Pentecostalism and its more “experientialist” and “ecstatic” approach to religious experience (Robbins 2004:123). In Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity, believers receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit, speak in tongues, heal others, and prophesize. Believers “moved by the spirit” during a worship service shout, weep, dance, fall into trance, and speak in tongues (Robbins 2004:120). Starting in the 1960s, mainline Protestant and Catholic churches in the U.S. began opening up to the gifts of the Spirit. Charismatic Christians, however, often differ from classic Pentecostalism in key ways such as not speaking in tongues.

12 In addition to charismatic worship styles, some institutional aspects of Pentecostal Churches are becoming more appealing to Kichwa evangelicals, such as the fact that pastors receive salaries and can be women. Robbins (2011) notes that one of the keys to the global success of Pentecostal churches are their “thriving” and socially productive institutions, which surpass those of their competitors and make it possible to carry out religious and social promises.
2000s, for example, regional leaders began a controversial practice of working with the Anglican Church to name some Kichwa pastors “Reverend.” In 2010, religious leaders began donning elderly pastors honorary degrees in ceremonies that involved secular symbols such as formal graduation robes.

In everyday talk, Kichwa evangelicals eschew denominational differences and refer to themselves as believers (K. krikkuna, S. creyentes). The term evangelical (S. evangélico)—following conventions shared by most Latin Americans—is also widely used among Spanish speakers. The terms Christian (S. cristiano) or Protestant (S. protestante) are less commonly used amongst Kichwa speakers. Although evangelical converts were Catholic at one point, conversion is not understood by elderly first converts as a matter of changing religious beliefs but rather believing for the first time. Catholics, in their eyes, are “non-believers”) and are not considered Christians. Most believers do not refer to their faith as a religion but rather as “God’s Word” (K. Diospak Shimi, S. La Palabra de Dios) or “the gospel” (S. el evangelio).

13 BACKGROUND ON SAN MATEO

As I imagine happens frequently at the launch of an ethnographic project, serendipity lead me to my research site (cf. Gottlieb 2006:58-59). In 2002, I traveled to Ecuador for the first time to conduct thesis research for my Master of Arts degree in Latin American Studies. I knew I wanted to study gender and evangelical conversion among indigenous people in the Andes, but had little idea where or how. At a domestic violence workshop for women organized by FEINE, the national organization of indigenous evangelicals in Quito, I struck up a conversation about my research with Marta from Chimborazo province. “My father was one of the first indigenous converts,” she informed me. “Why don’t you come stay with my family for a few weeks? You

13 Missionaries themselves did not call it a religion: “The staff [at the GMU school] claims that they do not teach religion, ‘only the word of God’ in the form of biblical stories, drawings, etc.” (Andean 1965:80).
can interview him.” And so I did. I would return to live with her, her husband and their two
children for six weeks in 2007 while doing pre-dissertation fieldwork, and yet again for twelve
months in 2010 to do dissertation fieldwork.

My initial contacts in Chimborazo—Marta and her family and community in Colta and a
group of evangelical scholar/activists living in Riobamba—brought me immediately and full
force into a much different facet of evangelical identity than I could have imagined from my
prior scholarly readings on conversion. My initial informants were highly educated adults who
were born and raised evangelical. They described themselves as “second-generation”
evangelicals, or as the “new generation.” What they had to say intrigued me. I recall sitting with
Marta and her husband Daniel in their dark kitchen on my first evening in Colta. We talked well
into the night, and much of our conversation revolved around all of the ways in which they were
questioning their own religion, its missionary legacy, its gender ideologies, their local church,
their fellow evangelical community members, and the disenchantment of youth.

Three thousand meters above sea level in the Ecuadorian Andes, Marta’s community, San
Mateo, is one of several evangelical indigenous communities situated around Colta Lake (K.
Kulta Kucha, literally Duck Lake) in Canton Colta, Chimborazo Province (See Figure 3). San
Mateo has approximately 200 inhabitants and 70 households.\textsuperscript{14} The community’s houses are
interspersed among small farming plots where potatoes, barley, broad beans, quinoa and
highland tubers are grown (Muratorio 1980; Tolen 1998). Households maintain pigs, sheep,
cattle, rabbits, and guinea pigs as a source of cash income. On the lake’s grassy shore, locals—
mostly elders and women—graze donkeys and other animals with a view of snow-capped

\textsuperscript{14} According to a community census I conducted in 2010, San Mateo consists of 191 residents and 70
households. Numbers are not entirely accurate because some heads of households declined to participate
in the census.
Chimborazo Volcano to the north (See Figure 4). The air is cold and dry, with temperatures rising during the day due to the sun’s strength at the Equator, then falling to freezing at night.

Though rural and picturesque, Colta\textsuperscript{15} is far from remote. According to elders, Colta Lake formed long ago when merchants traveling on mules from Cuenca to Quito decided to rest. Setting down a large saucepan made of bronze, the travelers began to prepare lunch. A sudden downpour quickly buried the saucepan deep in mud and created the lake. Colta Lake is enchanted; people have fallen in, so rumor goes, and either died or lived to tell about glimpses of an immaculate city. If you listen carefully at night, I am told, you can hear the distinct echo of rock pounding on metal.

These days, the Pan-American Highway, which connects the Americas from Alaska in the north to the southern tip of Argentina, bisects residential areas to the west and the Lake to the east. Buses coming to and from Cuenca to the south and Quito to the north barrel down the wide, two-lane highway. The colorful “My Town” (K. Ñuca Llacta)\textsuperscript{16} bus chugs down the highway at a slightly slower clip, making Cajabamba, the cantonal municipal center 3 kilometers away, and Riobamba, the provincial capital 18 kilometers away, easily accessible. Train tracks serving the Trans-Andean Railway, though not in service in 2010, border the edge of Colta Lake, parallel to the Pan-American Highway. Using bus services or their own cars, San Mateo residents leave their community daily to run errands, go to the bank, attend meetings, check Internet, work, or attend high school or university classes in Riobamba.

I found the community of San Mateo in Colta to be particularly suited to address

\textsuperscript{15} Scholars refer to the indigenous communities surrounding the lake as the Colta Lake Zone (see Andean 1965). Locals call the lake area “Colta,” although technically Colta is the name of the entire canton. In this dissertation, I talk about Colta in terms of the Colta Lake Zone. I write Colta Canton when referring to the canton as a whole.

\textsuperscript{16} Indigenous evangelicals addressed ethnic discrimination and exploitation in Ecuadorian society by forming a transportation cooperative (Ñuca Llacta). They also created a savings and credit cooperative (Minga Limitada) (Guamán 2002: 33).
questions of generational revoicings of indigenous modes of evangelical Christianity and modernity across time. In fact, many of these changes are writ onto the physical landscape. As one steps off the bus onto the edge of the Pan-American Highway at the entrance to the twin communities of San Mateo and Sisapamba, a few features of the built environment symbolizing the history of evangelical Christianity in the area are hard to miss. An enormous, white evangelical church dominates the entrance to the left. It was built by Sisapamba’s evangelicals in 1980 to replace an older church behind it, built in 1961. Straight ahead down the road and atop a small hill, two two-story cement homes once occupied by GMU missionaries overlook Sisapamba and Colta Lake below. Other remnants of the mission complex remain as well: an old school house, a kitchen and dining hall, and a small chapel. It is no wonder Marta describes her hometown as “heaven’s gate."

The community of San Mateo was built, literally, atop the ruins of an old hacienda (large landed estate) of the same name. It came into existence as the direct result of a critical watershed moment of modernity in the rural Ecuadorian countryside, the passing of the Agrarian Reform Law of 1964, which broke up the traditional hacienda system and transferred ownership of small landholdings to indigenous people (Muratorio 1980; Tolen 1998:170). Haciendas had dominated Chimborazo province from the colonial period through the mid-twentieth century, contributing to the oppression of an indigenous majority at the hands of a white, landowning minority (Casagrande 1981; Crespi 1981; Lyons 2006; Thurner 1993). After agrarian reform, newly-evangelized families from neighboring Sisapamba and other lake communities purchased land and built residences there. The community of San Mateo developed as a predominantly evangelical-identified subsection of Sisapamba.
Since its inception, San Mateo has been the site of rapid social change. In the 1980s and 1990s, the community grew in size and population and began organizing to attain better services from the local municipal government,\(^\text{17}\) including potable water, electricity, paved roads, and light posts illuminating the streets. San Mateo’s development initiatives capitalized on IERAC’s urbanized plans. IERAC agents modeled the layout of roads and structures for the future community after an urbanized town or suburb (S. ciudadela) (Historia), allotting space for a church, a soccer field, a cemetery, a secondary school, and a community center.

Subsistence agriculture and pastoralism are still practiced but are no longer the economic mainstays they once were due to the shortage of arable land. Land parcels received during the agrarian reform were small (only about .33 hectares on average) and have only decreased in size over time due to subdivision for inheritance. The land is not of a high quality, and soil degradation, erosion, and overuse have presented further challenges (Cruz 1999; Gellner 1982; Muratorio 1980).\(^\text{18}\) Problems of this nature have led to a high incidence of migration to the Ecuadorian coast and to other countries, particularly Venezuela and Spain, where migrants typically work as merchants (S. comerciante).

San Mateo, though, has remained an attractive destination in its own right for people coming from more remote communities of Chimborazo. Its bilingual secondary- and post-secondary teacher training school draws in students and teachers from around the province. San Mateo is known as a community of professionals:\(^\text{19}\) teachers, principals, bilingual education

\(^{17}\) San Mateo started out a neighborhood (S. caserio; precomuna), or a group of residences with no legal, organizing power. In 1980, with 26 residences, it became a Comite Promejoras. In 1996, San Mateo became a Committee of Community Development (S. Comite de Desarollo Comunal).

\(^{18}\) Another environmental problem is the drying up of Colta Lake. The weaving of mats (S. esteras) using reed (S. totora) gathered from Colta Lake to be sold in Riobamba’s market was once a major economic activity and is now obsolete.

\(^{19}\) What constitutes a “professional” identity for indigenous people in Ecuador is somewhat different than in the U.S. Certain professions have a much higher status amongst indigenous people in Ecuador than in
administrators, bankers, managers, librarians, receptionists, and drivers. A historical account of San Mateo written by community leaders reads:

... This sector of the Canton has become notably involved in the processes of evangelization, education, and active participation in politics and the democratic life of the Ecuadorean State. Because of evangelization, indigenous communities have radically changed their way of life by not consuming alcoholic beverages and celebrating fiestas, [activities] which undermined family finances, impeding access to the education of children until the 1980s.²⁰

In 2002, San Mateo split from its parent evangelical community, Sisapamba, as a result of tensions among members of Sisapamba’s Harvest Church (more on this in Chapter 3). San Mateo became its own, separate, legal community and formed its own congregation, Christ King Evangelical Church. In the tensions unfolding between the two evangelical communities, generational dynamics come into play, writ onto each community. San Mateoans see their community and their church as more urban, youthful, professional, open to women’s participation, and progressive in contrast to the older community and church of Sisapamba. As we shall see, while San Mateo embodies the post-hacienda transformative promises of evangelical conversion, it also exemplifies many of religious modernity’s unmet promises.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

In order to examine the language, bodily, ritual, and memory practices of Ecuador’s indigenous evangelicals and how they reflect and produce emergent Christian subjectivities and

the U.S. For example, teachers have a higher status amongst indigenous people, historically marginalized from the profession, than in the U.S., where teaching is socially and monetarily valued less than professions such as doctor and lawyer. Also, drivers with a professional license are also considered “professionals.”

²⁰ Evangelicals may be overstating the correlation between religion and upward social mobility. Results from Ecuador’s 2010 census show a high level of poverty in Colta. For a critique of the ways in which scholarly literature on evangelical Christianity in Latin America has oversimplified the relationship between religion and upward social mobility, see Annis 1987; Goldin and Metz 1991; Martin 1990; Stoll 1990. As Comaroff and Comaroff (2005: 21) write, “the modernist dream of infinite progress is constantly mocked...by [neoliberal capitalist] conditions that disenfranchise many people from full waged citizenship in the nation-state.”
tensions along the lines of generation and gender, I relied on various anthropological methodologies for gathering data. One of my primary field methods was participant observation, or the study of people through daily, intimate, long-term engagement as they go about their lives, otherwise known as “advanced hanging out” (Gottlieb 2006:49).

I conducted participant observation amongst families. I lived in one multi-generational household composed of a married couple and their two teenage children. The four of us ate dinner together every evening in their kitchen and often conversed well into the night. Members of the community and church treated me as an honorary member of this household. 21 When I reported to mandatory community meetings that they were unable to attend, community members considered me their replacement, and did not fine them for not attending. I also brought home leftover food from gatherings, as expected of family members. 22 I frequently interacted with the husband’s and wife’s parents, siblings, and nieces and nephews and their spouses and children living in the community. I took part in family work projects such as harvesting crops.

My ties with other families in the community were strengthened through being a co-mother (S. comadre) and accepting newborn babies—members of the fourth generation—as godchildren. I also served as a “ring godmother” (S. madrina de los anillos) at a young couple’s wedding. These fictive kin ties were made official in locally meaningful ways such as eating an entire roasted guinea pig indicating my acceptance of the responsibility of godparentship and signing legal paperwork at the civil registry. 23 I attended community meetings and offered a hand

21 Although I felt welcomed and cared for by this local family and members of their extended family, nonetheless, there were moments of intrafamilial struggles in which extended family members were, quite understandably, more guarded with me and in which I felt it best to take a step back from the situation.
22 Marta and Daniel would not let me pay them rent, but I contributed to household expenses by purchasing groceries and cooking for them, and providing grocery money, as well as making good on other favors.
23 Though godparenthood has roots in Catholic practice and was discouraged by GMU missionaries, it continues to be practiced today. Godparents are supposed to be evangelical and take part in a “children’s
during community work projects (K. *minka, maki mañachi*), such as picking up trash. I walked in civic parades as an honorary member of the community. At the request of community authorities, I designed, conducted, and shared the results of a community census. Per the request of the youth, I taught English, dance, and ultimate Frisbee, and played on the girls’ soccer team.

In San Mateo, I observed religious gatherings at Christ King Evangelical Church, which has an active membership of around sixty people and no official pastor. A core group of San Mateo’s extended families make up the church membership. Christ King does not have an official church building; congregants gather in people’s homes, the elementary school, or the auditorium. In San Mateo, Christianity is a full time endeavor. Religious practice is an integral part of daily and community life, occupying most of local residents’ time apart from work and/or household and agricultural tasks. This rigorous religious schedule might well be considered a carryover of GMU missionary efforts to keep the converted busy and entertained at all times so that they would not be tempted to “return to the old life” (Centro 1997:35). In addition to more formal religious gatherings, prayer marks the beginning and end of most daily tasks, including meals and agricultural and recreational activities.

I attended weekly religious services. The main service takes place on Sunday afternoons, with a less-attended service on Wednesday evenings. On Saturday afternoons, families take turns hosting a small, more intimate “family service” (S. *culto familiar*) on their patio, followed by offering soup, a hearty plate of rice, potatoes, and a protein, and a hot herbal tea. I sang along with the ladies at female choir practices on Tuesday evenings and traveled with them to their choir competitions. On Friday evenings, the youth gathered for their service. I sat in on liturgical dedication” (S. *dedicación de niños*) for the newborn baby at the church. My new co-parents looked past the fact that I was not evangelical and, perhaps conveniently, did not organize a “children’s dedication” while I was still in the field.

Pastor Samuel Charco is Christ King’s de-facto pastor when he visits. Otherwise, lay leaders preach and administer the church.
dance rehearsals and watched their performances. I helped prepare food and decorations for special church events such as weddings and baptisms. I sat in on the classes youth took in preparation for these events. I tagged along with families on a number of marriage proposals. I also attended—and participated in—wakes. I used a combination of audio recording, video recording, and note taking in these venues.

In addition to participant observation, I conducted in-depth, qualitative interviews with approximately one hundred men and women in Chimborazo. I started out each interview asking my informants to tell me their life history, with special attention to the role of religion in their lives, then asked follow-up questions and more targeted questions as the interview progressed. With permission, I recorded interviews using a digital audio recorder and selectively transcribed them. I used the “snowball method” following networks of family and social affiliation—to expand upon my pool of informants.

Evangelical generations correspond to relative age categories in the present: elder, adult, and youth. My informants included elderly first converts aged sixty and older, mid-aged adult children of the first converts in their forties and fifties, and young adults in their late teens, twenties, and early thirties. Due to IRB limitations, my formal interviews and observations were limited to youth who were 18 years of age or older in 2010 (i.e. born before 1992). In San Mateo, I focused on a handful of familial clusters and tried to talk to related members across descent lines—grandparent, parent, and grandchild. Along with most anthropologists, I do not take generation to be a concrete or fixed label or objective category in which individuals fit according to purely quantifiable identifiers such as birth date. I allowed self-identification and discursive
positioning, familial and church roles, and conversion experiences—not strictly chronological age—to guide how I categorized informants for the purposes of my analysis.25

Living in such close proximity to the CONPOCIIECH compound (former GMU headquarters), on any given morning, I woke up to the ringing of bells and the rustling of indigenous evangelicals gathered from the entire province and beyond. For four sessions of five days each, I attended the New Life Quichua Women’s Bible Institute and interviewed teachers and female students. I also attended public gatherings: large conferences, general assemblies, Bible workshops, and commemorative acts that took place on the grounds there. I interviewed religious authorities such as pastors and organization leaders. I also spent time in the organization’s archives, analyzing documents that date back to AIECH’s first handwritten meeting notes from 1966.

In addition to my research in Colta, I conducted interviews with and taught English classes to second-generation “progressive” evangelicals in Riobamba working with an ecumenical, indigenous non-governmental organization named FUIDE (Indigenous Foundation for Development). Their perspectives and academic scholarship figure prominently in Chapter 3.

I kept daily field notes and, upon returning from the field in January 2011, I coded the field notes and interview transcriptions, and wrote memos using guidelines presented in Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995). In my analysis, I follow linguistic anthropological approaches to discourse analysis and language as a form of social action (Ahearn 2012; Farnell and Graham 1998; Silverstein and Urban 1996) to analyze speech events such as collective and personal

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25 Many elders do not know their birthdates or their ages. Traditionally, birthdays are not celebrated in indigenous communities, although this is changing among younger folks. Schooling and other state-lead population management techniques have influenced age category naming. The government currently uses terms such as “senior citizens” to issue pensions and bonds. The 2008 constitution emphasizes “adolescent” and children’s rights.
conversion narratives, preaching, debates, instruction, story-telling, and jokes. This approach aligns with literature in the anthropology of Christianity that underscores the saliency of talk and language ideologies to Christian subject formation (e.g., Harding 2000; Keane 2007). While some ethnographers of contemporary Christianity underscore the need to examine “what Christians really do” rather than “what Christians say they do” or “what pastors tell Christians to do (or not to do)” (O’Neil 2010: xv), I do not draw this distinction between speech and action. In saying what they do and what others should do, even if—especially if—what they say is not backed up by actions, Christians are doing something of social significance.

I couple this focus on the social effects of language use and textual practices in the first half of the dissertation (Chapters 2-4) with an examination of related forms of embodied action during performance events and ritual activities (Csordas 1994; Farnell 2002; Hoenes 2011; Mahmood 2005) in the second half (Chapters 5-7), specifically youth worship styles, female liturgical dance, and wedding dramatizations at funeral wakes.

**Ethical Considerations**

A few aspects of my identity affected the kinds of relationships I established while doing fieldwork, and hence the kind of data I was able to collect: my age, my U.S. nationality and whiteness, and my lack of religious affiliation. I was 34-years-old and married during my 2010 fieldwork. People perceived me as younger than I actually was and single because my husband did not accompany me to the field and I did not have children yet. People called me “Miss.” (S. señorita), not “Mrs.” (S. señora). Like other youth, I was a student, spoke fluent Spanish but not fluent Kichwa, and enjoyed playing sports. Nonetheless, as for my informants, my age subjectivity was relative and somewhat malleable. Sometimes people addressed me with terms of respect used for older people: (e.g. mama, tía, madrina). They congratulated me on Mother’s
Day even though I was not a mother yet: a “future mother” they reasoned. Walking with San Mateo residents in a civic parade once in Cajabamba, they had me stand in the old woman line, and wear dress that symbolized what women used to wear in the region.

San Mateoans, for the most part, embraced my presence in their community. They referred to me affectionately in Kichwa as “our Katie” (K. ñukanchik Katy) or its equivalent in Spanish “friend Katie” (S. amiga Katy). They were accustomed to interacting with people that looked like me, a white woman from North America. A steady stream of Gospel Missionary Union missionaries from Canada and the U.S., many of them women, began living there in the mid-1950s. Since Agrarian Reform in 1964, people in the area interacted with government agents, Peace Corps volunteers. A few female foreign anthropologists, including Cornell University researchers (Maynard 1966), Blanca Muratorio (1980, 1981) and Regina Harrison (1989), among others, lived with local families. Marta’s house has always been open to others. Her parents offered up their home for evangelicals fleeing violence; they used to sleep lined up on the floor in the common area during the initial years of religious persecution.

Because I look like the missionaries, many people assumed I too was evangelical Christian. I was upfront about the fact that I am not, although many slipped and called me “sister” (S. hermana) anyway. When new acquaintances inevitably asked—“Are you a believer?”—I would explain, awkwardly, that I was raised Catholic but now do not profess a faith or attend a church. Most San Mateo residents seemed to accept this fact; they did not try to convert me and were generous with their prayers on my behalf. Marta’s father, the area’s first convert and a veritable straight shooter, was the most persistent. Every time he would visit from Quito, he would ask me when I was going to be “reborn.” When I expressed my reticence, he would laugh and say “just go on with your devil” (S. Vaya no mas con su diablo).
Although my research benefitted greatly from my acceptance in San Mateo, my close ties with people directly involved in events leading to the community’s separation from Sisapamba made conducting research in Sisapamba and Harvest Church challenging. Although I had originally planned to conduct research equally in both locales, I realized early on that no matter what I said or did, Sisapambas would understand my allegiance to lie with San Mateo. Harvest Church congregants are religiously more “conservative” (more hardline GMU followers) than Christ King. As such, they expressed more concern about my lack of religious affiliation. Sisapamba’s suspicions of me dissipated somewhat about midway through my fieldwork, when they selected me to play the role of “bride” in a wedding dramatization at a Sisapamba wake (see Chapter 7 for more detail). For months afterwards, Sisapamba residents would see me from afar and call out “bride!” in good humor and then strike up a conversation. Nevertheless, I did not establish the level of rapport there as I did in San Mateo.

Although my non-believer status affected the level of rapport I could establish with some, I also found that it opened the door for people to express critical perspectives and made it possible to examine multiple evangelical subject positions across divergent lines of generation and gender. When younger evangelicals articulated their reservations concerning the religion in which they were raised, I could identify with them on a certain level, for I too had rejected the religion my parents wanted me to follow as a young girl (Roman Catholicism). I am also at greater liberty to comment on the darker side of indigenous Christianity—to explore in writing, even, that there is one—than local scholars who maintain familial and communal ties to the church. This is not a position of power I take lightly. In fact, in writing the dissertation I struggle with the ethical ramifications of writing about “open secrets” (S. secreto a voces) such as gendered violence and youth indiscretions, as well as the deep-seated tensions that pit
evangelicals against one another. In the dissertation, I use pseudonyms for people and places and alter identifying information to protect people’s anonymity.

**SIGNIFICANT LITERATURE AND MY CONTRIBUTIONS**

*Anthropology of Christianity: Continuity vs. Discontinuity*

Over the past two decades, a burgeoning body of ethnographic literature on global Christianities has coalesced around a subfield called anthropology of Christianity (Cannell 2005; Robbins 2003; Robbins 2014). This scholarly interest reflects a recent phenomenon happening across the global south, including Latin America (Stoll 1990; Martin 1990; Steigenga and Cleary 2007) as well as many parts of Africa and Oceania: waves of converts leaving mainline churches and joining evangelical ones as a result of Western missionization or evangelization. The anthropology of Christianity is a self-conscious comparative endeavor addressing issues borne out of the complex processes by which Christianity is adopted in various historical and cultural contexts (Cannell 2006, Robbins 2004, Meyer 1998; Van der Veer 1996).26

Anthropological discussions of Christian conversion wrestle with a tension between sociocultural continuity and discontinuity. Many anthropologists approach conversion to evangelical Christianity as a “point of rupture,” separating converts from their pasts and the surrounding social world of family (Bialecki et al. 2008:1144; Cannell 2006; Keane 2007; Robbins 2004; Meyer 1998; Van Dijk 1992). Conversion promises converts a brighter future through participation in modern society (Robbins 2001), and incorporates converts within

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26 A broader approach to this subfield, which I take in this literature review, includes studies on Catholicism (See Cannell 2006; Engelke and Tomlinson 2006; Harris 2006; Orta 2004) as well as ethnographic studies on Christian missionization and its effects that pre-date the anthropology of Christianity conceived as such. The field itself is only about fifteen years in the making (Robbins 2014).
“dualistic schemes” that Christian affiliation continually reinforces through “rituals of rupture” such as baptism and the strict asceticism of daily life (Robbins 2004:128; see also Harris 2006).27

Going against this grain, other scholars disagree with the notion that evangelical Christianity is a stable and self-contained system that makes a sharp break wherever it is adopted (Bialecki et al. 2008; Scott 2005). Scholars emphasizing continuity argue that Christian missionary activity—though globalizing and universalizing—is localized in complex ways that reveal a “process of accommodating the new religion to local culture and conditions” (Kipp 1995:871) and that make continuities with pre-conversion cultures possible (Harris 2006).28

This central tension between continuity and discontinuity maps onto a set of other themes prevalent in the social scientific discussions of Christianity: the relationship among Protestant conversion, modernity, and the individual. Van der Veer (2008) discusses missionary conversion projects as an instantiation of the emancipatory project of modernity. Similarly, for Keane, the “moral narrative of modernity” that Protestantism promotes stresses transformation, progress, interiority, devaluation of tradition, abstraction from material entanglements, and sincerity (Keane 2007, Robbins 2001). This strong association made between Protestantism and the core ideologies of modernity stretches back to Max Weber’s well-known thesis on the relationship between Protestantism and the spirit of capitalism (Weber 2001[1930]).

Part of the “break” entailed by Christian conversion and related projects of modernity is thought to be the separation of the individual from collective social identities.

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27 Joel Robbins’s work focuses specifically on Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity, though many of his arguments might be applied to non-charismatic forms of Evangelical Christianity such as GMU/Kichwa Christianity and Catholicism. A good deal of literature on the Manichean framework of Christianity connects back to early Catholic evangelization in Latin America (e.g. Harris 2006).

28 Syncretism is one such model of continuity used to describe popular forms of Catholicism practiced in Latin America. Harris (2006:69) defines syncretism as when “two distinct religious traditions are joined in a new and creative synthesis.” Another model is the “theology of inculturation” as adopted by Catholic missionaries working among the Aymara in Bolivia (See Orta 2004).
Van der Veer (1996), for instance, relates conversion to the European development of modern notions of personhood. For Keane (2007), Protestantism’s paradigmatic subject is the autonomous, conscious individual in relationship to a supernatural agent; the subject, “freed” from kinship bonds, “tradition,” “culture” and acting according to his own “will,” undergoes self-transformation towards greater personal integrity. Conversion is often cast as primarily an “individual process” (Buckser and Glazier 2003: xi) triggering a “partial abandonment of social and cultural forms oriented toward the collective in favor of individualist models of social organization” (Bialecki, et al. 2008: 1141; Robbins 2004).

At the same time, scholars underscore that the relationship between Protestantism and modernity is highly ambiguous in practice (Cannell 2006; Harding 2000; Keane 2007; Meyer 1998). In contemporary Ghana, for example, Pentecostal discourse encourages church members to “make a complete break with the past,” including family ties, in exchange for a “new, individualist identity” (Meyer 1998:240). However, through discourse and ritual practice Pentecostalism actually heightens remembrance of the past in a way that allows for members “to address the gap that exists between aspirations and actual circumstances” (Meyer 1998:340). Harding (2000) shows that Protestantism’s relationship to modernity can shift across time.

Further troubling clear-cut associations between conversion and modernity, a growing body of work in the anthropology of Christianity challenges categorical assumptions about the individuating force of evangelical conversion and piety (Elisha 2011; Bielo 2009; Sarró 2012). In his ethnography of morally ambitious Christians in the U.S. megachurches, Omri Elisha (2011) argues that, although seeking a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that transcends the social is undoubtedly a key feature of born-again subjectivity, believers also stress an ethos of relationism; their relationships with each other and outside their community of faith are “vehicles
of redemption.” One’s close and intimate bond with Jesus Christ should be mirrored in human intersubjectivity (Bielo 2009) and one’s sincere spiritual re-birth evidenced in social interactions (Elisha 2011:20). Relational practices built into church practices such as small group meetings, furthermore, provide the opportunity for born-again selves to be socialized into shared standards of religiosity.

**Indigenous Protestantism in Ecuador**

The scholarship on Kichwa indigenous conversion in Ecuador addresses these analytic tensions between continuity and change, modernity and tradition, and collective versus individual orientations. First, as indicated above, Protestant missionization coincided with a major land reform initiative in Ecuador in the 1960s that was part of an effort to usher the nation more fully into a post-colonial modernity. With widespread sociocultural and economic transformations as a backdrop, converts regarded religious conversion as a vehicle of social transformation, and a way of rejecting Catholicism’s colonial traditionalism and ethnic subordination (Crespi 1981; Muratorio 1981b).²⁹

Second, despite its clear connection to social transformation and modernity, anthropologists working in the Colta region emphasize Kichwa conversion’s collective rather than individualizing nature (Andrade 2004; Muratorio 1980b; Tolen 1995). Muratorio (1980b:523) noted that recruitment of new converts took place “predominantly along kinship lines.” Missionaries were surprised that entire families often converted together (J. Klassen 1975). Likewise, Uzendoski (2003: 144) notes in the case of indigenous believers in Napo that they have maintained “a relational focus on creating and interacting with webs of kin” in their evangelical practices. Rural Kichwa churches are intergenerational and familial spaces that

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²⁹ For a similar analysis concerning other areas of Latin America, see: Annis (1987); Orta (2004, 2008); Stoll (1990, 1993); Warren (1989); Watanabe (1992).
maintain norms of Kichwa relatedness. That religious conversion transpired collectively goes against literature that casts conversion as disrupting corporate forms of Catholic identity.

Third, the Kichwa evangelical movement unsettles the claim that religious conversion is “against culture” (Dombrowski 2001) or entails an outright rejection of traditional cultural practices. Scholars commonly refer to the movement as “indigenous Protestantism” (Andrade 2004). While converts rejected certain practices associated with Catholicism such as drinking alcohol and dance, evangelical Kichwa churches and communities also became spaces for reimagining indigenous identity. For one, GMU missionaries took a surprisingly “culturalist” line early on, advocating for a “Quichua Christian Church on Quichua levels and on the basis of the Quichua Culture” (Klassen 1977:171). Missionaries went about training a non-professional Kichwa lay pastorate to preach “the Gospel as their own to meet the needs of their own people” (Klassen 1977:172) and administer local churches on their own. Local lay leadership helped promote the localization of evangelical identity and practice. This missionary approach contrasted with the “complex system of formal ranked offices of ritual sponsorship” characteristic of the traditional fiesta and Catholic Church hierarchies (Muratorio 1981b:527) and, according to Henry Klassen (1974), was more readily embraced by younger men.

Working with “native intermediaries” (cf. Meyer 1996:206) and equipped with some anthropological training, missionaries sought to provide some degree of continuity in the form of “functional substitutes” (Klassen 1974), or spiritual practices such as informal family gatherings, large camp meetings, and weddings thought to effectively meet the “social needs” (e.g. sense of belonging and fraternity) of disparaged cultural practices without any of their negative effects

(e.g. hangover, financial debt). Functional substitutes also took material form such as non-alcoholic beverages in lieu of alcohol during “formal acts of reciprocity and hospitality” (Tolen 1999:38; cf. Keane 1996).

During worship services and other gatherings, local markers of indigeneity, including dress, language, and music, were encouraged. Kichwa believers engaged in culturally-appropriate forms of fellowship and relatedness including food preparation and exchange and mutual help (Andrade 2004; Muratorio 1980, 1981; Swanson 1994; Tolen 1995, 1999). Believers extended reciprocal ties of mutual aid among family members to other “brothers and sisters of faith” under the principle of faith siblingship (Muratorio 1981b). Scholars say these continuities lead to ethnic revitalization (Muratorio 1980 first makes this case; Gros 1999; Kanagy 1990; LaPorta 1993; Roseberry 1989; Santana 1990; Stoll 1990; Swanson 1994; Tolen 1995 all follow suit).

In these ways, the Kichwa Church has served as a vehicle for cultural-ethnic reproduction and socialization for younger generations. However, as we shall see in this dissertation, the ideologies and practices of indigenous Christianity have shifted across time as future subjects of the church have re-imagined “indigenous Protestantism” and its corresponding links to traditional culture, the “promises” of modernity, and family.

**From Rupture to Re-Generation**

Although the Pauline model from the New Testament is reflected in conventional views of conversion as a sudden, deliberate, non-reversible, and unrepeatable event that transforms the

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31 Missionary projects involve not just the translation of texts and concepts, but also the translation of local practices (cf. Jolly 1996; Keane 1996; Orta 2002). Orta (2002:727) writes: “Central to the processes of missionization and conversion is the production of mutual intelligibility and translatability through the privileging of specific dimensions of commensurability.”

32 See Chong (1998) for a comparable discussion of the Korea ethnic church as an institutional vehicle for reproducing Korean culture and values among the second generation of Korean-American evangelicals.
convert’s inner self (Steigenga and Cleary 2007:7; Van der Veer 1996:14-15), ethnographic studies of Christianity can illuminate the ways in which becoming Christian is an always incomplete project (Coleman 2003; Engelke 2004; Jolly 1996; Uzendoski 2003; Van der Veer 1996). Religious affiliations are fluid and shifting across the life course (Green 1993; Gill 1993) and motivations for conversion differ from motivations for long-term religious involvement and commitment (Keller 2005).

Attuned to the fact that affiliating with a new religion is often the start of a much longer, multi-generational process (Kipp 1995:871), others take a more historical approach to the idea of conversion as process, showing that change and continuity in relationship to Christian missionization can take a variety of forms across time (Stewart and Stathern 2010; Stathern and Stewart 2008) depending on such developments over time as shifting denominational influences (Kipp 1995; Ryle 2010); “the fluctuating and conditional desires of different generations of people with regard to the directions in their life” (Kipp 1995:871; Stewart and Stathern 2010:x); or “emerging cultural identities and concerns ... in relation to the nation-state and larger world” (Uzendoski 2003:145). This long-term process can entail changes in “the religious system itself” (Kipp 1995:871; Uzendoski 2003).

Approaching conversion as an open-ended process raises salient questions about the possible connections between (future) generations and evangelical subjectivity (Biello 2011:5; Keane 2007:153). Steignanga and Cleary (2007:13) speculate, for example, that in places with a long-standing evangelical presence in Latin America such as Guatemala, “many evangelical churches may have a majority of parishioners that are second- or third-generation Protestants.” However, with some notable exceptions (e.g. Chong 1998; Lyons 2001, 2006; O’Neil 2010; van de Kamp 2012) anthropologists of Christianity have not addressed generational dynamics in
much depth. Though anthropologists focusing on the Kichwa evangelical movement describe it as “multigenerational,” they do not employ an analytics of age or generation (Uzendoski 2003; Tolen 1995). In the present ethnography, I build on approaches to conversion as process to highlight the specific role of generational narratives, practices, and differences in the shifting imaginaries of indigenous Christianity in Ecuador.

The analysis I present in this dissertation moves “beyond conversion” (cf. Keller 2005), and beyond the purview of converted individuals to examine localized evangelical identity as a multi-generational process involving an ongoing interplay between change and reproduction and individualism and relatedness (cf. Elisha 2011). Looking beyond the analytics of rupture, I focus on indigenous evangelical identity as it is sustained in the wake of a mass conversion. In underscoring evangelical re-generation over bifurcated notions of either discontinuity or continuity, I mean to ask how believers themselves challenge and reproduce “indigenous Christianity” across time. What happens in particular communities of long-standing faith when the radical discontinuities spurred by conversion in one historical moment become the religious traditions inherited by future subjects of the church in the next? These questions require seriously considering the centrality of family and community relatedness, power relations, and tensions to evangelical subjectivity.

Thus approached, contemporary multi-generational Kichwa Christianity challenges scholarly assumptions regarding both the centrality of a radical conversion to evangelical subjectivity, as well as its predominantly individual character. Robbins (2004:120) writes, “People are not born into the evangelical faith but must ‘voluntarily’ choose it on the basis of powerful conversion experiences.” While true for first converts, post-conversion generations are “born into” (the religion) more so than “born again.” Just as Keane (2007:153) notes in the case
of Calvinists in Sumba after a mass conversion in the 1960s: the religion has “became the presupposed background in which subsequent generations came of age... and their own Christianity not the result of personal conversion per se” (cf. Keane 2007:153). Similarly, religious identity for second- and third- generation evangelicals in Chimborazo is, at least to some extent, ascribed. Growing up in Christianized households, they have not embraced the religion or approached church “rituals of discontinuity” (Robbins 2004:127) from a position of voluntary choice involving a clear break from one’s past and family relationships.

Pastors, church leaders, and elders find themselves in somewhat of a bind in the task of reproducing evangelical Christianity across generations. On the one hand, in Chimborazo, social pressure to follow the Gospel in locally defined ways (inseparable, for example, from indigenous identity and forms of relatedness) plays a crucial role even more so now that entire communities claim to be “100% evangelical.” Believers understand heeding and submitting to authorities, elders, and men to be biblical mandates and ways to honor God. On the other hand, believers also maintain that religious identity is not supposed to be obligatory or the result of social pressure. Rather, one’s motivation to convert, remain committed, and act appropriately should be internal and self-monitored (i.e. based on one’s own will, effort, and feelings) and the result of knowing the Gospel.

Today’s faithful elders would like to see the movement progress as they initially envisioned it, and they wield influence and authority in ensuring that be the case. Ironically, the Christian emphasis on rupture, when carried out across time, also represents a critical opening for younger evangelicals to make an inherited religion newly relevant in their own ways. The recursive dualism of evangelical Christian subjectivity (e.g. past/present, spiritual/material, modernity/tradition), as taken up among post-conversion generations in Chimborazo, compels a
framing of self, generation, time, and space in terms of new ruptures that mark differences among Kichwa Christians. Evangelical subjects situated differently with regard to generation, gender, family, and community stake varying claims on what it means to be Christian. Younger evangelicals in Chimborazo are less strictly bound to the defining characteristics of religious subjectivity for first converts, including an emphasis on conversion, evangelizing, religious separatism, textual literalism, and strict asceticism.

In examining these tensions at the heart of Christian re-generation, my research contributes to recent work in the anthropology of Christianity that brings internal heterogeneity, tensions, critique, and schisms in religious life to the forefront of analysis to unsettle the idea of Christianity as a stable, self-contained system (Bialecki and Hoenes 2011; Bielo 2011). Inspired by M.M. Bakhtin (1981), recent work in the anthropology of Christianity has proposed dialogic approaches to Christianity (Biehlo 2011; Garriot and O’Neil 2008: 383) to better understand vital “problems posed by Christianity to Christians themselves.” As Garriot and O’Neil (2008) indicate:

The dialogic quality of Christianity is present within formal debates among scholars and other religious elites, as much as it is in the everyday practices by which an individual attempts to live as a ‘good Christian’, or rejects this pursuit in favor of other life projects; it is present in the tensions and resonances that abide between different kinds of Christianity, as well as between Christianity and other forms of religious practice; it is there as individual Christians, churches, sects, denominations and so on move forward in relation to a particular understanding of the past; and it is there in moments of doubt and certainty that make up the biography of religious individuals and institutions.

Following Mannheim and Tedlock’s (1995) dialogic approach to culture, recent dialogic approaches to Christianity show the religion to always be "an emergent phenomenon, made and remade through moments of interaction and encounter rather than a cultural object filled with a particular content" (Garriot and O’Neil 2008:388).
Also bringing religious tensions to the forefront is the relatively new “study of Christian critique and schism as social processes” (Robbins 2014:S163; see Biehlo 2011; Handman 2014, Bialecki 2014, and Humphrey 2014). Biehlo (2011:198) argues that cultural critique, often leading to schisms and the formation of new evangelical identities, is “a foundational condition in the study of Christian culture, history, and identity.” Along the same lines, Bialecki (2014:S195) and Robbins (2014) note that religious schism may be rooted in the Christian tendency to endorse aspirations that can never be fully realized; the continuing problem of “unrealizability” opens up the possibility at all times for internal critique in Christian communities.

What sets this case apart from other studies of Christian critique and schism, however, is that the younger Kichwas I worked with are not breaking off entirely from their home church to form a separate movement. Rather, they are actively remaking the Kichwa Church. Central to the process of re-generating Kichwa Christianity, then, is not solely rupture, conflict, and difference on the part of younger generations but also their ongoing commitment—despite their various critiques that might suggest otherwise—to the shared, collective ideals and aspirations of the movement. We can see this in the ways in which members of post-conversion generations continually negotiate, recycle, and update key religious problems, tropes, values, memories, practices, and forms of sociality established during the initial conversion period in their shifting discursive and worship practices. Though Kichwa Christians perpetuate dualisms, they also actively bridge them in the ways in which they strive to relate and interact with one another as indigenous Christians within the local structures of family and community.33 The case at hand

33 As other ethnographies of relatedness in the Andes show (Van Vleet 2008:1), conflict and “bonds of belonging and affiliation” go hand in hand.
reveals relatedness (along the lines of family, marriage, gender, generation, and community) to play a crucial role in the reproduction and transformation of religious identifications.

In bringing an analytics of age, generation, and relatedness to bear on scholarly understandings of post-conversion Christianity as an ongoing process, I draw on a rich corpus of anthropological literature on generations. Anthropologists use generation in a variety of ways in their work. For some, generation refers to an age or historical cohort made up of people at a similar stage in the life cycle “who have lived through a time period together and have developed some kind of shared consciousness” (Abelmann 2003; Lamb 2001). Others approach generation more in its genealogical or kinship-based sense, as a kinship-related descent relationship between parents and their children (Lamb 2001:6043). Anthropological literature on generations in both of these senses is useful for exploring the central problematics in the anthropology of Christianity as I have presented them, particularly regarding issues of change vs. continuity and the internal heterogeneity and fault lines within Christian communities.

In classic functionalist sociological and anthropological studies, operating under more static notions of “social reproduction,” generation was understood as a vehicle for transmitting and reproducing tradition and culture, assuming the stability of social systems (Cole and Durham 2007). Following Mannheim’s (1952) seminal work, anthropologists today show the role of generations in mediating processes of cultural and historical change ethnographically (Cole and Durham 2007; Lamb 6045; Yurchak 2006). Anthropologists have used a generational lens to fruitfully explore such diverse topics as social mobility (Abelmann 2003; Newman 1993; Ortner 1998), popular memory (Collins 2006; Lyons 2001, 2006), alternative modernities (Rofel 1999), sexuality and gender (Cole 2010; Muratorio 1998), youth projects and subjectivities (Berliner 2005; Durham 2004; Greenberg 2014; Sharp 1995, 2002). Cole and Durham (2007:17) propose
the term “regeneration.” The term, as they use it, emphasizes the ways in which intergenerational relations, while powerfully intimate in terms of everyday relationships between parents and their children, or between elders and youth, are also shaped by—and help shape—wider historical, political, economic, and global processes.

Cole (2010:7), however, cautions against an analytic approach to generational change that takes society as “being crosscut by generations representing powerfully divergent values, beliefs, perspectives, and agendas” with each generation “dividing off” from and surpassing a previous one in linear fashion. Imagining generations in this way is actually “a product of particular culturally shaped choreographies of past and future, including conceptions of historical progress that emerged in Europe in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries” (Cole 2010:6; see also Rofel 1999). Core (2010:7) points out that viewing generational change in this way leaves unexplored “the actual relationships between their actions and temporality more broadly— young people’s ongoing and varied relationships to the past, present, and future.” Just as in the case of scholarly understandings of conversion, tropes of radical change and rupture can prove excessive in related scholarly discussions of generation, especially in reference to youth.

Many cultural groups use emic generational categories in organizing social relationships and difference, “taking some notion of genealogical succession within the family and extending it to think about broader social relations” (Lamb 2001:6044). I came to the question of generation in my research primarily for that reason: it is a category of significance to Kichwa evangelicals themselves. 34 Coinciding with this view that generation is “a salient idiom through which people frame their life circumstances and identities” (Lamb 2001:6045), I see generation as a window into how indigenous evangelicals categorize and negotiate religious differences and

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34 Generational constructions are significant in other evangelical communities as well. See O’Neill’s (2010) analysis of a neo-Pentecostal “generational imagination” in Guatemala.
relationships as well as how they see their religious identities in relationship to the past and the future, as well as to wider sociocultural, religious, and economic changes.

Building on Cole and Durham’s (2007) idea that it is impossible to divorce youth from the intergenerational transformations of which they are a part, my analysis does not focus solely on any single age group or generational cohort. I see the perspectives and actions of elders, middle-aged, and young adult evangelicals to be responding to each other, and, in the process, constructing other relative age categories discursively. Following Durham’s (2004) notion of age as a relative category and a social shifter, I also see generational categories as indexing a host of other constructions and identities beyond generation itself (e.g. rural and urban; sacred and worldly; Old Quichua and Spanish; indigenous and mestizo; then and now; and conservative and liberal). Considering these multiple generational subject positions, how they mutually constitute each other, and how they index social, spatial, and temporal dialectics is integral to the story of re-generating Christianity I am telling in this dissertation.

Re-visiting Christian language ideologies and Practices

A prominent thread within the anthropology of Christianity is the study of Christian language ideologies. Much of this literature, however, builds off assumptions about conversion’s individualism and takes the Christian “individuated sincere speaker” as prototypical (Bialecki and Hoenes 2011:583). The collective yet internally heterogeneous and contested dynamics of Kichwa Christianity, however, yield a variety of forms of discourse and language/semiotic ideologies warranting analysis.

35 See a section of Anthropological Quarterly (2011, Vol 84, No. 3) devoted to showing that Christian semiotic forms do not always emphasize “sincerity, interiority, intimacy, intentionality, and immediacy... and a privileging of the referential aspects of language” (Bialecki and Hoenes 2011:580). Multiple and competing claims to the prototypical Christian “individuated sincere speaker” exist among Christians. Christian language use is creative and unstable (Bialecki and Hoenes 2011:583).
The conversionist story of self-transformation, for example, has long been regarded as “the typifying discursive act for this religious culture (Bielo 2011).” However, public narratives of collective conversion and social transformation are dominant and highly privileged forms of speech among Kichwa Christians in Chimborazo, in addition to personal conversion narratives. The “sad life” and mass conversion pasts are constantly remembered in collective, co-produced ways in which the elderly first-convert experience serves to organize collectively shared social, religious, and historical experiences. Evangelical native historicity\(^{36}\) thus plays a critical role in producing generational and gendered differences and hierarchies; as Chapter 2 shows, public commemorative activities solidify male, elderly religious authority as “gospel heroes.”

Generational narratives also key in on different—albeit still shared in a sense—forms of Christian belonging and subjectivity tied to collective actions and projects. In this dissertation I take generation to be produced by discursive acts and other cultural and semiotic processes that draw the lines “along shifting axes of perceived sameness and difference” (cf. Wroblewski 2012:65). Talk about generations—“the stories people tell themselves about what some imagined entity called ‘a generation’ is doing” (Cole 2007:15)—as well as generational ways of talking and acting—do important social and subject-making work in evangelical communities.

Davis and Harré’s (1990) concept of “positioning,”\(^ {37}\) can be usefully applied to understanding generational discourse without mistakenly lodging social actors into discrete generational categories. Positioning means speaking and acting in line with jointly-produced story lines in “concrete occasions of language in use” that position another as well as oneself.

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\(^{36}\) Historicity refers to the historical consciousness of ethnographic subjects, or emic interpretations of critical events and persons in the past. Nabokov (2002), building on the field of ethnohistory, uses historicity in reference to “Indian ways of history” in North America. Hirsch and Stewart (2005:262) use the term historicity to refer to the “ongoing social production of accounts of pasts and futures” and its implications in the present, which should be understood ethnographically.

\(^{37}\) Compare to Erving Goffman’s (1997) notions of frame and footing.
(Davis and Harré 1990:43). Through positioning in social interactions, individuals are “constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices in which they participate” (Davis and Harré 1990:46) and yet positioning is also “a resource through which speakers and hearers can negotiate new positions” (Davis and Harré 1990:62). Positioning in language use carries illocutionary (social) force. The generational positions I explore in this dissertation are socially productive—not just in terms of stirring up friction—but also in terms of doing the bridging work necessary in re-generating (collective) Christianity.

Though the anthropology of Christianity’s emphasis on language practices in producing Christian subjectivity is sophisticated and influential (Harding 2000), a number of scholars have convincingly argued (Lurhmann 2004) that the field should consider ritual life (Lindhardt 2011), bodily practices and ideologies (Brahinsky 2012; Hones 2011; Orta 2000) and Christian expressive culture and creative ministries (Jones 2012b) more fully. Such an analysis is especially missing in the literature addressing the Kichwa evangelical movement and Protestantism in Latin America more generally, where macro-level, sociological, or narrative-focused explanations of conversion reign predominant. Moving beyond a sole focus on forms of talk is especially important in understanding women’s and youth roles (cf. Elisha 2011), since both women and youth tend to participate most actively in the context of collaborative musical performance and less in individual speaking roles (e.g. preaching).

Furthermore, my analysis of the co-produced, humorous, and embodied renditions of the collective “sad life” performed during wakes rituals challenges assumptions in the literature about the central role of sincerity and intention in Christian language ideologies, since an actor’s speech is not meant to be taken as a reflection of his or her own sincerity and intentions. The ritual itself provides needed insight on the performance (and performative) modes by which
indigenous evangelicals bridge temporal, religious (Evangelical/Catholic), community, family, and age differences and conflicts.

**Gender and Feminist Scholarship**

To further contribute to scholarly understandings of regenerating Christianity, I draw on literature in feminist anthropology and feminist scholarship more broadly. Gender is virtually unaccounted for in the scholarly literature on Ecuador’s indigenous evangelical movement (with Uzendoski 2003 and Illicachi 2014 as notable exceptions). Following Susan Harding’s (2000) argument that gender differences are crucial to the production of born-again Christian subjectivity, I take gender to be crucial not only in the instance of conversion by also in the social process of evangelical re-generation. Emergent forms of Kichwa Christianity and the ways in which they are publically debated are intricately tied to gendered identities, tensions, and transformations.

Gender is a reoccurring (sub)theme in the Anthropology of Christianity, particularly in the literature on Protestantism in Latin America. Scholars address the relationship between evangelical conversion and gendered transformations in problematic ways, however, when they overemphasize the “individualizing force” of evangelical rupture and modernity as “empowering” to women, able to critique social hierarchies and gender relations (Bialecki et al. 2008:1148). This kind of approach is ubiquitous on the literature on Pentecostalism set in Latin America (e.g. Brusco 1995; Drogus 1997; Eber 1995; Goldin and Metz 1991; Hallum 2003; Mariz and Machado 1997).

This approach fails to fully account for the ways in which the religion enforces, normalizes, and institutionalizes new forms of patriarchy and women’s sexuality in the church and in marriages and families, that enable modalities of agency and resistance that cannot be
reduced to an individual-Western liberal subject “freed” from social bonds and obligations (Mahmood 2005). It also fails to take into account the religion’s unmet gendered promises—e.g. that conversion re-orient men to the domestic sphere and prompts them to stop abusing alcohol and therefore stop abusing their wives—as carried out and experienced over time. In the case at hand, I show gendered violence was dramatically reduced among Kichwa evangelicals in the initial conversion period, but it is more common than one would assume among second- and third-generation Kichwa evangelicals.

In addition to an analytics of age and generation, we need a feminist analytics to address the question of evangelical patriarchy and the modalities of agency and resistance that it enables without falling prey to a “romance of resistance” (Abu-Lughod 1990) or imposing a liberal-secular feminist analytics on women’s activities (Mahmood 2005)—even though, as I address in Chapter 4, it is all too easy to do with a religion such as evangelical Protestantism that promises women’s emancipation as a key cite of rupture. As such, this dissertation joins a number of scholars of religion attempting to understand women who pursue practices and ideals embedded within religions that officially accord them a subordinate status (Braude 2004; Keane 1997; Klassen 2004; Mahmood 2005) and how they “negotiate the conditions of their submission” (Elisha 2011: 23; see also Chong 2008; Frederick 2003; Griffith 1997) by not simply transgressing but also enacting and inhabiting ethical norms and moral principles (Mahmood 2005:188).

Feminist, post-structuralist approaches to the questions of agency and resistance are especially useful in this regard. Judith Butler (1997) argues that agency is not a property or possession but an effect of the “enabling constraints” of organizations, institutions, and communities that constitute subjects; however, the formative limitations that set the scene for the
agency of the subject are always open to “further and unexpected delimitation” (Butler 1997:139). Butler follows the work of Michel Foucault, who argues the paradox of subjectivation is that the process by which one becomes subjected also constitutes the conditions for the exercise of one’s agency. (Indeed, the same scholarship can help us understand challenges to other forms of power and authority such as gerontocratic power).

Evangelicals work within hierarchical gender structures that both constrict and enable them to contest the gender ideologies of their parents and grandparents. This dissertation addresses primarily two ways in which this “further and unexpected delimitation” of evangelical patriarchy can be analyzed in the case of Kichwa Christianity. My discussion of an emerging indigenous evangelical feminism, for example, contributes to scholarly insights on the multitude of feminisms. Feminism is not one monolithic project; it is not necessarily always on the side of the west or the radical left (Castro and Hallewell 2001), nor is it necessarily always secular (Smith 2008) or explicitly formulated as such (Arrendondo 2003; Hurtado 2003). Secondly, the ways in which young female liturgical dancers work to make their dance a legitimate form of evangelical piety in the face of male disapproval is another example of how evangelical women “negotiate the conditions of their submission to (male) pastoral authority” (Elisha 2011:23). In both of these examples, female agency and resistance do not rest on individualizing ideologies or practices divorced from male authority, familial bonds, or indigenous collective identity.

Following earlier calls among feminist anthropologists to move away from an “anthropology of women” (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974) to an “anthropology of gender” (Di Leonardo 1991; Lewin 2006; Moore 1988; Stockett and Geller 2006) my project also contributes to scholarship that connects gender and related vectors of social inequality and difference such as ethnicity (e.g. Cervone 2002; Crain 1996; Lyons 2002; Prieto et al. 2005) and age and generation
(Rofel 1999). The female religious subject in the Kichwa church is neither singular nor monolithic.

Given the age- and gender-based structure of Kichwa Church activities, it is nearly impossible to examine gender without factoring in age, and vice versa. In the Kichwa Church, women and youth are locally salient social categories of difference operating within a larger multigenerational community of male and female believers. Church services differentiate believers along shifting axes of gender and age, with women of all ages doing the choir singing and food preparation, young single women doing the liturgical dancing, young single men the instrument playing, and primarily elderly or adult men the preaching. During a given multigenerational service, various formations perform church hymns on stage in addition to the women’s choir, including individual households, the co-ed youth group, and those who arrived “late” to service.\(^\text{38}\) Within the gender- and aged- based hierarchy of the Kichwa Church, the main leaders are the male pastor and seven elected adult male deacons serving with their wives. The adult women’s choir, the young female liturgical dance troupe, and the youth group all have their own leaders. Church activities reinforce gender and age hierarchies, but also give semi-autonomous space for women and youth to develop and express distinct modes of piety.

**Andean Ethnography**

Classic ethnographic studies of the Andes focus on continuity rather than rupture, representing discrete villages in terms of fixed traditions and stability and as somehow outside the flow of modern history (see Isbell 1985 and Platt 1986 for examples of the classic approach; see Orta 2004 and Starn 1991 for critiques). Classic ethnographic writing on the Andes has reproduced a dichotomy in which Occidental, urban, and mestizo stand in opposition to highland,

\(^{38}\) I noted that few church goers ever arrive at the exact start time of the worship service. Congregants are charged with being late if they arrive much later than the majority.
rural, and indigenous. This approach has been superseded by anthropological research since the 1990s examining indigenous Andean communities as dynamically engaged with national and global frames of meaning and power (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2009; DeTemple 2012; Goldstein 2004; Orta 2004; Rappaport 2005).

This unsettles approaches to indigenous Andean communities as “other” or bound by stable traditions, opening up to research on the work of local activists and grassroots intellectuals (Rappaport 2005; de la Cadena 2000) and visions and projects of alternative modernity in the region (DeTemple 2012). This research has shifted scholarly thinking about “Andean culture” as less the “expression of primordial mountain traits” and more “the product of visions that people continually rework in ongoing processes of innovation and recombination” (Starn 1991:85; see also Orta 2001). In my work with a small network of “second generation” evangelical “progressives” living in Riobamba, for example, I noted that they reproduce ideas about resilience and value of “the Andean world” (S. lo andino), connecting it to communal, agrarian life and in continuity with the pre-conquest past; however, they do so in the service of pushing the Kichwa evangelical movement in new theological, political, and social directions.

Many ethnographies in this new vein, however, continue to give evangelical Christianity in the region short analytical shrift, choosing either to downplay the influence of evangelical groups and/or treat their perspectives and aims as “fundamentalist” and therefore isomorphic— even anthropologists working in Ecuadorian provinces where the evangelical presence and influence is strong (e.g. Lyons 2006). Evangelicals in Ecuador have long served in the “repugnant cultural other” role (Harding 1991) for scholars and indigenous Catholic activists

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39 Related literature on alternative modernities—not focused on the Andes per se—likewise shows the often unstable, contested, impartial ways in which modernity plays out and is culturally imagined and experienced outside of Euro-American contexts. Literature on alternative modernities challenges the assumption that modernity is an autonomous movement within nation-states, producing homogenous effects and forms of subjectivity the world over (Knauf 2002; Rofel 1999:12; Serematakis 1994).
alike, who criticize them for their (seemingly) wholesale rejection of indigenous cultural practices and activism, embrace of a privileged, “modern” subjectivity, and conformity to the national-political status quo (Andrade 2005).

Representations of evangelicals as monolithic, a-political, separatist, and following missionary conservatism in predictable ways over time have been debated and challenged in some of the scholarly literature on Latin American Protestantism (Steigenga 2010; Stoll 1990).

Though (Catholic) indigenous criticisms of their evangelical counterparts may be warranted to some degree, my data on contemporary evangelical identity in the region confound many of these stereotypes. My generational analysis of the indigenous evangelical movement aligns in key ways with wider trends in the Andes, including the growing social mobility and symbolic capital of indigenous leaders and intellectuals; the articulation of indigenous modernity or cosmopolitanism; the internal fissures of indigenous movements and micro-politics of communities; and the enduring relevance of ritual practices (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2009; Corr 2010; García 2005; Goodale 2006; Lyons 2006; Orta 2004; Rappaport 2005).

In particular, my research has met a key need in the literature to further understand the perspectives and practices of today’s indigenous youth, whose “amalgamated rural/urban identity” as Starn (1991) puts it, is often superficially understood (cf. Salomon 1981). The evangelical tensions across age I examine here are one manifestation of—and response to—a growing social and cultural gap between elders and youth felt and experienced among indigenous Catholics in Ecuador as well (e.g. Lyons 2001, 2006). Indeed, commentary on the strong “crisis of youth rhetoric” that characterizes discourse about youth in other sociocultural contexts in which anthropologists work (Comaroff and Comaroff 2005) would suggest that such

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40 Robbins (2007) notes a long history of anthropologists sidelining Christians in their research.
a multigenerational approach of this nature meets a need in anthropological literature more generally (Cole 2010).

In examining the re-generation of Christianity, we gain critical insights not only into the dynamics of the religion itself but also how religious identity connects to other sociocultural processes of reproduction, change, and historical memory in the Ecuadorian Andes and beyond. Taking this new approach to evangelical Christianity, my dissertation asks the following questions: What new generational subjectivities and tensions have the transformative promises (and corresponding disappointments) of evangelical conversion engendered among evangelical Christians in the aftermath of mass conversion? How does the internal heterogeneity of indigenous Christian communities—reflected and produced in various modes of critique, questioning, embodiment, and ritual performance—shape the religious institutions, practices, and ideologies from which they emerge? How do these shifting imaginaries and practices of indigenous Christianity—reflecting an ongoing, multigenerational social process—connect to and in turn help shape related identifications in the Andes along the lines of gender, kinship, and indigeneity?

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

I begin the dissertation by examining elderly experiences and memories of conversion during the initial conversion period, which spanned the mid-1950s to the early 1980s. Chapter Two, “Train Tracks to Heaven: Elders, the “Sad Life,” and the Transformative Promises of Evangelical Conversion,” draws on interviews and observations of public history-making events to examine the ways in which Colta’s elderly first converts talk about religious subjectivity, morality, and promise in terms of collectively overcoming the suffering and hardship associated with the past “sad life.” In narrating their adoption of the “good life” and
corresponding “transformative promises” (Robbins 2001) of evangelical conversion such as education, material progress, and improved relationships, elders produce a particular kind of heroic generational consciousness against which they define and disparage today’s younger evangelicals as “threats.”

Chapters Three and Four examine the social effects of mass conversion from the perspective of middle-aged adult men and women. Chapter Three, “Generating Critique: Second-Generation Evangelicals in the Post-Missionary Era,” analyzes how second-generation indigenous evangelicals articulate and enact new forms of critical religious subjectivity through discourses of generational breaks. Ironically, education and other “transformative promises” of evangelical conversion provided certain members of this generational cohort with the tools to contest key facets of their own parents’ conversion and the GMU missionary past. While “new generation” actors and discourses bring to light, as well as contribute to producing, ideological fissures within Kichwa churches, organizations, and communities, I underscore their critical role in the re-generation of Christianity as mediators between two age cohorts and the discursive extremes each represents.

Chapter Four, “Gendered Transformations: Marriage, Feminism, and Open Secrets” focuses specifically on the gendered effects of evangelical conversion over time from the perspective of middle-aged married women. Local believers—as well as many scholars of Christianity—tout women’s empowerment as a positive effect of mass conversion. I show that women have not benefitted in the same ways as men from evangelical promises in Colta. Schooling and literacy aspirations have excluded women, until relatively recently. Women’s lack of education relative to their husbands, along with new patriarchal ideologies espoused by the Kichwa Church itself, correspond with increasing rates of marital abuse, divorce and separation.
Beginning in the 1980s, problematizing evangelical patriarchy became the basis for the emergence of new forms of critical religious agency, including feminist interventions, among Kichwa female believers.

In Chapters Five and Six, I return to elders’ accusations against youth summarized in Chapter Two and problematize them based on an analysis of the narratives and ritual action of evangelical youth. Chapter Five, “Youth Reconversions: Changing Self and Church After Apostasy,” explores the re-conversion narratives of young men in San Mateo who experienced a period of backsliding. In narrating their personal crises and moral struggle to change, youth recycle a set of interrelated religious and cultural scripts while also re-framing “the world” as opportunity in ways that allow them to carve out a viable collective youth identity and distinct worship style within the Kichwa Church.

Chapter Six, “Embodying Christianity: Between the Word and the World in Female Liturgical Dance,” focuses on female liturgical dance, which has risen in popularity in Kichwa Churches since the early 2000s, much to the consternation of self-identified conservative male pastors. I begin by analyzing public and classroom debates about female liturgical dance to show the heavy symbolic weight young women’s bodies hold for the Kichwa church as well as the ways in which older male authorities silence and infantilized young women. The chapter then shifts to analyze liturgical dance in terms of the lives, perspectives, and performances of the young female dancers themselves. In striving to make liturgical dance a legitimate corporeal expression of indigenous evangelical piety, female dancers both reproduce and challenge the ideologies and textual practices espoused by their conservative, male pastors.

Chapter Seven, “A Time to Laugh: Death, Humor, and Haunting” examines the humorous, playful re-enactments of past (Catholic) weddings performed by Colteños at house
wakes. Wake humor, which I take to be a form of local historicity involving remembering and communicating historical knowledge in embodied/sensorial ways across generations, has social effects in evangelical communities today. House wakes are sites of “haunting” (Gordon 1997) in which believers address the disappointments of evangelical identity as lived in the post-conversion era through the idiom of past “sad life” drama. An analysis of wake games thus concludes the dissertation by returning to the core issues involved in re-generating Christianity, including historical memory, gender, sexuality, relatedness, generation, and religious authority.
Figure 1: Map of Ecuador (Rowe 1998)
Figure 2: Map of Chimborazo (Rowe 1998)
Figure 3: Birds-eye view of Colta Lake and surrounding villages (photo taken by author, 2010)
Figure 4: Chimborazo Volcano and the Pan American Highway (photo taken by José Lema Chimbolema, 2010)
Figure 5: Former Gospel Missionary Union Station, now CONPOCHIECH headquarters in Chimborazo (photo taken by author, 2007)
CHAPTER TWO,
TRAIN TRACKS TO HEAVEN: ELDERS, THE “SAD LIFE,” AND THE
TRANSFORMATIVE PROMISES OF CONVERSION

“It was a sad, sad life, that time before becoming evangelical.
llaki llaki kawsay karka, chay hurakuna manarik envangelicakuna tukunakushpaka.

Thank God everyone ... is now evangelical.
Kunanka ña diosolopagui ... tukuy evangélica

There are hardly any Catholics.
cazi mana tiyan católico,

For that reason everything has changed now, every aspect of life.
chaymunta cazi kunanka  tukuy cambiado libre kawsay,

We’ve been completely transformed.”
tukuy cambiado ña kashkanchik
   -- Cristina, 60 years old, converted in 1968

In 1954, GMU missionary Henry Klassen made his first indigenous friend, a 17-year-old young man from Sisapamba by the name of Samuel Charco. Samuel remembers Klassen offering him a warm drink and talking to him about the Book of Apocalypse and hell. Samuel was not convinced at first. It wasn’t until he suffered an accident while working construction in Guayaquil that he decided to convert. The accident almost cost him a few fingers. At the clinic, when they told him they’d have to amputate, he remembers praying: “Lord, [if] it’s true [that] you live, don’t let them amputate my fingers. If you live, talk to the doctors [tell them] not to cut [my fingers]. If you do not permit them to cut [my fingers], I promise to keep studying and spreading your Word.”

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Missionaries garnered rapport with potential converts through food exchange. First converts literally “ate up” or came to desire what the “Western” cookies and candy missionaries offered. Samuel recalls, at the age of 17, stealing a pancake that the missionaries had cooked. “I don’t care if it’s a sin. I am going to eat one,” he said to himself. The missionaries later taught him to make pancakes, and his grown daughter now makes the same recipe for her children. Missionaries also cemented social relations by involving themselves in the everyday affairs of community members well beyond the religious sphere, doing favors such as helping people to secure land during the agrarian reform, providing rides to Quito, offering local jobs, helping deliver babies, teaching new ways of constructing homes, and suggesting uncommon names (besides the usual José or María) for newborn children.
Samuel Charco was Sisapamba’s first convert. After studying the Bible for a few years, Samuel started proselytizing and soon became what Meyer (1996:211) has called “indigenous social carriers” bringing GMU missionary doctrine “home to their people.” He was baptized in Colta Lake, and then became Colta Radio’s first indigenous preacher, broadcasting music and religious messages. He was ordained pastor. He led efforts to create an indigenous evangelical organization, AIECH (now CONPOCIECH), and served as its first president.

When he was around the age of 23, in 1960, Samuel Charco remembers having a vision about the future, a vision that only subsequent generations could fulfill. “I want to see indigenous people as professional drivers, teachers, and lawyers someday,” he thought to himself. At the time, only a small percentage of indigenous children in Colta attended school, and the vast majority of adults were illiterate. Samuel had a fourth grade education. Soon after he converted, he began working with missionaries to start literacy classes for fellow youth and translate the Bible into Kichwa.

Joel Robbins (2001) takes modernity to be a “set of linked promises” involving the struggle over adopting a different kind of future through personal and social transformation (2001:902). Robbins argues that modernity “in its Christian guise” takes this form among the Urapmin of Papua New Guinea (2001). Robbins draws on the work of Bjorn Wittrock (2000), who argues that modernity is as much about conceptual or cultural changes as technological or political, entailing a set of “promissory notes,” or desires and expectations held by a community (2000:55) that give rise to “new conceptualizations of human beings and their ability to act individually and collectively about their place in history as well as about the proper forms of polity and social belonging” (2000:37).

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In 1965, around 90% of the Colta Lake region population was illiterate. Only around 15% of school-aged children (ages 6-15) in the Colta Lake Zone attended school (Andean 1965).
Kichwa believers talk about conversion’s promises in terms of attaining the “good life” and overcoming a previous “sad life.” For Kichwa converts, “good life” promises were never just about either becoming “modern” or becoming “believers.” Local modernity combined aspirations towards becoming “modern” (e.g. free from slavery, educated, possessing material items, and upwardly mobile) and aspirations to “live the gospel” as believers. The “good life” was collectively achieved, dependent on familial and community relationships and relating to one another in new ways. Note, for example, the inclusive pronoun in the excerpt from Cristina’s narrative above: “We’ve been completely transformed.”

First converts envisioned the transformative promises of conversion to lead not just along a forward-looking path of indigenous self-determination, material progress, and educational advancements, but ultimately toward eternal spiritual salvation. This point was reinforced to me by Samuel Charco, now 73-years-old. I grew to know him and his wife Dolores quite well during my fieldwork. Although they live in Quito, they remain official community members and often visited and stayed with their daughter Marta and son-in-law Daniel. Pastor Samuel is respected in San Mateo and beyond as a man of great wisdom and religious conviction. Pastor Samuel is short-statured, his hair grey. He walks slowly, with a limp due to abuse endured as a child, often with Bible in tow. Not a man of means, he dons a simple shirt and pants.

In one of our many conversions, Pastor Samuel Charco brought up his train metaphor. Speaking Spanish slowly with a Kichwa accent and grammar structure, he said: "I always talk about train rails, right? Do the two ever intersect? No, they don't. And that's how it is in our life-our spiritual life never intersects with the worldly... Accepting the Lord and studying the Bible is one path, but studying in the professional realm is another." Although Samuel Charco advocated formal education, which he claimed religious conversion and indigenous leadership made
possible, he still maintained that in death, the worldly rail stops short. Only the spiritual rail keeps on going, all the way to heaven.

This chapter examines the collective “transformative promise” (Robbins 2001) that evangelical Christianity represents for Colta’s believers. Drawing on life history interviews with elders in San Mateo as well as public tellings of the origins of Kichwa conversion in Chimborazo, I analyze elders’ personal and collective narratives of the initial conversion period (1954-1980). I examine how elders contrast their own religious experiences with youth religiosity of present-day Chimborazo. Elders’ mediated reflections on the mass conversion past create a narrative template defining religious subjectivity and modernity for all Kichwa believers. Elders’ memories reinforce distinct generational subjectivities in Chimborazo today: a touted elderly victim/hero subject on the one hand, and its antithesis, the disparaged youth subject.

The chapter reveals a central paradox of re-generating Kichwa Christianity explored throughout this dissertation: since mass conversion, new generational tensions, divisions, and subjectivities have emerged among indigenous believers. Emergent tensions appear to threaten the promises attached to mass conversion from coming to fruition in the ways they were initially envisioned. However, the tensions are themselves products of the transformations generated by mass conversion carried out over time; they are also productive in the present in the sense of enabling central tenets of Kichwa Christianity to be dynamically reproduced across generations.

Most of the elders I spoke with were born in the 1920s and 1930s. They were in the seventies and eighties when I interviewed them in 2010 (some also in 2007). The eldest person I interviewed was around 90 years old.
MAKING HISTORY, MAKING HEROES

In 2010, “making history” was an explicit goal of public events organized by the religious leaders of CONPOCIIECH and the Pastor’s Council (COPAEQUE), many of whom are “second-generation” evangelicals. Camp meetings, or “conferences” (S. *conferencias*) as they are known, take place underneath a large, white tent outdoors. They last all day and late into the night for a period of two to three days. They draw in thousands of believers from Chimborazo and other provinces. Combining Bible study, worship activities, preaching and testimonies, singing contests, and social activities such as sports, conferences have been an important ritual and evangelizing activity since the initial conversion period (Muratorio 1980). Though once events used primarily to convert and marshal believers, large tent gatherings now serve as important venues for history making.

During the Pastor’s Day Weekend tent conference held at the CONPOCIIECH and Pastor Council headquarters in Colta in late October 2010, Pastor Council leaders declared Chimborazo “the capital of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.” The location of the event itself was important, given its historical significance as the site of the old GMU missionary compound. Talk of origins and elderly heroism bolstered leaders’ declarations of Chimborazo as the “gospel capital.” In 2010, “making history” at public events like the Pastor’s Day conference involved

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44 I suspect Pastor Council efforts to “make history” in 2010 were motivated in part by the fact that leaders were finishing out their four-year-term and looking to get re-elected. They told me their primary motivation was the imminent death of first converts and the importance of honoring people while they are still alive.

45 Some evangelicals distinguish between conference (S. *conferencia*) and campaign (S. *campañas*). Conferences take place during the day over the course of three days and include worship services, Bible study classes, meals and socializing. Campaigns take place in the evenings and involve choir competitions with prizes, instrumental band performances, and preaching. During the initial conversion period, camp meetings were “functional substitutes.”

46 Pastor Council leaders associated Chimborazo with a long list of firsts: the Bible was first translated in Kichwa; the first indigenous people converted; the first Kichwa churches were erected; the first Kichwas were baptized; the first indigenous radio station was created; the first evangelical cemetery was erected; the first indigenous evangelical organization was formed; the first Kichwa pastors were named; the first
two interrelated projects: retellings of the origins of the Kichwa evangelical movement as autochthonous history and the stated intent to organize something novel for future prosperity, with “future generations” and youth as the intended audience.

In these events, religious leaders publically declared elderly first converts “gospel heroes” and “founding fathers.” In their first-hand experience of the “sad life,” elders today embody the moral virtues of having suffered, worked hard, and overcome adversity. They represent themselves and are represented as self-determining, humanized subjects who, in adopting the gospel, collectively and individually freed themselves from the oppression and shame of a racist, sexist, and impoverished past. They got a major religious movement underway through their own blood, sweat, and tears, in the face of religious “persecution” for their new beliefs. The missionary/missionized encounter was remembered as something these “founding fathers” adopted, asserted local control over, and made their own from the onset.

Though Pastor Samuel Charco was held in disfavor by religious leaders for many years after defecting to the Assemblies of God in the 1980s, he was wholeheartedly re-embraced in 2010. Pastor Samuel’s presence at all of the events served as a kind of living index of the movement’s origins, personifying all of its firsts. Religious leaders used his presence and accounts of the past as teachable moments. In 2010, Pastor Samuel Charco received an honorary

Kichwa hymnal was created; the first school for indigenous evangelicals were formed; the first clinic for indigenous evangelicals was built; the first Kichwa transportation cooperative was formed; the first Kichwa savings and loan cooperative was formed; and the first Kichwa biblical institute was formed.

47 The activities were male-centered. CONPOCIECH and the Pastor’s Council did not publically recognize women as gospel heroes. The physical abuse women experienced in their marriage as a result of converting before their husbands was not recognized, much less considered “persecution.” I will discuss the gendered aspects of religious conversion, modernity, and memory in Chapter 4.

48 For related literature on victim/victor tropes and their effects in other sociocultural contexts see Fassin and Rechtman (2009) and Sodal (2010).

49 This, perhaps, reflects emerging openness within the Kichwa movement to accept Pentecostalism, a trend I will discuss further in Chapters 5 and 6. Pastor Samuel maintains the speech patterns typical of elderly, indigenous pastors and leaders following the GMU line. Speaking in monotone, he does not use the altered tonality typical of Pentecostal preachers, who often go from “screaming and crying to whispering and laughing” throughout the course of a sermon (Lindhardt 2011:231).
academic degree for his lifetime service to the Kichwa Church. The newly constituted School of Theological Biblical Sciences under the Pastor’s Council conferred the degree of Doctor in Biblical Science-Pastoral Ministry onto approximately twenty elderly male pastors in total in 2010.

**THE “SAD LIFE” PAST**

“Father Master, Father God, Thank you God, beloved Father Master
It’s true our past was a sad, sad life Lord
Father we have seized our good life because you chose us, you selected us”
-- Ana, age 67, converted in 1963

Ana, age 67, began our interview with this prayer (see Appendix for full prayer). She and her husband have been believers since 1963. In 2010, we sat on sofas in their living room in San Mateo, my digital recorder on the coffee table between us. The trope of seizing “our good life” is ubiquitous in various genres of speech, including prayer, religious testimony, and church hymns. Colta’s first converts and leaders understand religious conversion in terms of overcoming the “sad life” (K. *llaki kawsay*). When speaking in Spanish, speakers gloss the Kichwa term “*llaki*” as shameful (S. *pena*) or sad (S. *triste*) and “*llakikuna*” as suffering (S. *sufrimiento*). When elders in Chimborazo reference the past as “sad,” they index the oppression and poverty

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50 Not all of the “original” converts I interviewed were celebrated publically in this manner. The other two members of Sisapamba’s first converts—the “three young evangelicals”—were not celebrated victim/heroes at these events despite their substantial efforts during the initial conversion period.

51 The conferral of honorary degrees to elderly pastors is a new practice representing the initiative of Pastor Council leaders. Although not within the scope of this chapter, I will briefly note that the practice generated a great deal of controversy. It was intended principally to honor elders’ service and increase their “self esteem” and it came with some useful practical benefits in terms of receiving government benefits. However, it was criticized in a number of ways: for copying hierarchical status markers of the Catholic and Anglican Churches, for being an attempt on the part of second-generation leaders to “buy out” their elders, and for the apparent incongruity between the degree and elders’ actual levels of education and ways of speaking.

52 Kichwa speakers also refer to the pre-conversion past as “old” and “dirty” (K. *mapa*) and the post-conversion life as “new” (K. *mushuk*)
experienced by indigenous peoples at the hands of white-mestizos, namely the owners and overseers of the haciendas, landowners, store and bar owners, and priests (K. Tayta Amitu) during the hacienda era of Ecuadorian history. Since Colta’s first converts were young or newly married when they converted, this “sad life” hacienda period coincided with their childhoods and young adulthood: “Our youth time” (K. ñukanchik wambra timpu). This section provides a brief overview of the historical exploitation that elders’ narratives of the “sad life” index.

According to the racist and nationalist discourses of Ecuador’s white mestizos during this period (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2002:649), indigenous people were considered irrational and lazy—“blindly following agrarian custom” (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2002:649). Agrarian reform agents, anthropological researchers, and missionaries alike cast indigenous peoples in the area as downtrodden. The title of Cornell University’s ethnographic report on the Colta Lake zone prepared in collaboration with IERAC in 1965 was entitled “Indians in Misery.” The first sentence of the report reads: “In few other regions of Ecuador does one find so high a percentage of Indians living under such extreme conditions of deprivation as in the Colta Lake zone” (Andean 1965:i). Another writer commented that “These people... have been slow to respond to anything new. An oppressed society, they live inside a shell of resistance to everything outside of their culture” (Nickel 19--:130).

When Canadian missionary Henry Klassen first arrived at GMU missionary headquarters in Colta in 1954, the land on which San Mateo sits today was a large landed estate (S. hacienda) on which twenty-two indigenous resident laborers (K. huasipungueros), cultivated wheat, barley, 

53 Non-indigenous people in Ecuador are called blancos (whites), mestizos (meaning of mixed European and white ancestry) or blancos-mestizos. Indigenous people are called indígena (Spanish term for indigenous) or runa (Kichwa term for person). Indio (Indian) is considered derogatory. In Chimborazo, the term Puruhá has gained more popularity recently as an identity term for indigenous people living there (Lyons 2001). In this dissertation, I refer to the highland indigenous people I worked with as indigenous or Kichwas.
alfalfa, and potatoes, and pastured animals for a small wage and the use in usufruct of a parcel or more of land on the hacienda (Andean 1966). Henry Klassen wrote in a later publication that the Kichwa Indians he first encountered were “needy, ignorant, drunken, and down-trodden human beings” (Klassen 1974:165). At the time, Chimborazo province was considered one of the poorest and most oppressive regions of the Ecuadorian highlands. Haciendas had dominated the province from the colonial period through the mid-twentieth century contributing to the oppression of an indigenous majority at the hands of a white, landowning minority (Casagrande 1981; Crespi 1981; Lyons 2006; Thurner 1993).

Sisapamba community members were neighbors, not residents, of the hacienda. According to the Andean Indian Community Research and Development Project (1966), Muratorio (1980), and oral history interviews I conducted, some Sisapamba residents owned and cultivated their own land. Others were sharecroppers (S. partidarios). Some planted and harvested plots of land owned by white/mestizo families. Most indigenous men worked outside of the community on a temporary basis (Andean 1966:51), making meager wages as day laborers at sugar mills on the coast or in match factories in Quito.

Meanwhile, women and older family members remained in the communities conducting agricultural activities (Muratorio 1980: 512). These activities included raising animals such as sheep, pigs, cattle, mules, chickens, and guinea pigs, as well as planting and harvesting broad beans, potatoes, and barley, and collecting reeds from the lake (Andean 1965). Some women worked for the mestizo landowners and missionaries doing domestic work. Women remember the agricultural work of “our indigenous life” (K. ñukunchik runa cultura kawsay) as physically challenging. Preparing meals involved a considerable amount of labor. Mama Rosa used to get

54 Yanaperos were workers who paid a yearly amount to pasture their own animals on the hacienda and collect straw. Yanaperos worked 1-2 days per week on the hacienda for the daily wage of 15.6 cents (Andean 1966:49).
up at 5 a.m. to toast and grind barley, wash quinoa, and prepare lunch to bring the fields for
lunch. Another woman remembers the difficulty of her daily tasks of picking up straw, drying
grains and potatoes, and doing laundry by hand.

Although Sisapambans were technically “free” Indians (Andean 1965), they acutely
recalled the abuse and exploitation they experienced by white-mestizo landowners, renters, and
overseers of the hacienda. Landless and unemployed, Mama Serafina and her husband subsisted
on the leftover grains of others’ harvests. Serafina painfully recalled approaching mestizo
landowner Alejandro Martinez to ask to farm some of his land. “Get out of here you naked butts!
Get out of here you nits!” he yelled at them.55 Elders recall fearing the hacienda overseers (S.
mayordomos), who rode horseback with twitch (S. acial) in hand, patrolling the hacienda limits.
They often hit and intimidated Sisapambans. If an animal inadvertently crossed into the
hacienda, the overseers forced the owner to work on the hacienda or pay a fine to get it back
(Andean 1965). Elders also recalled hacienda overseers snatching items of clothing they were
wearing.

Sexual abuse of young indigenous women on the part of hacienda owners was common,
according to some former San Mateo hacienda laborers whom I interviewed. One hacienda
owner in particular, Gallegos, was rumored to have had sexual relations with women from
neighboring towns. He would order others (e.g. alcades, mayordomos, or regidores) to bring her
to him. Before bringing her to Gallegos, they would bathe her outside in the well. One former
San Mateo hacienda laborer told me Gallegos would sometimes live with these women and have
babies out of wedlock with them. Women on the San Mateo hacienda were scared of him for this
reason.

55 “Naked butts” (K. lluchusikis, pilisikis) means impoverished people who lacked material possessions.
According to the elders whom I interviewed, the Catholic Church contributed to poverty by obligating people to participate in annual festivals. To pay for the high cost of the fiesta sponsorships, people sold their land, their animals—“even their children.” People become indebted to white-mestizos, who owned local stores and bars and sold the liquor needed to celebrate fiestas and Catholic rituals such as weddings. In 1965, Sisapamba had four stores. Knowing that indigenous people needed cash for religious fiestas and rituals, whites lent money on credit and charged a 2% interest rate.

Fiesta celebrations, Catholic rituals such as weddings and funerals, and Sunday masses were occasions of heavy drinking. On Sunday mornings, people would walk to attend church in Sicalpa. They would attend the fair in Cajabamba to purchase or sell food. On the walk home, churchgoers would share snacks and alcohol with one another or stop at the various bars along the way. “One of the most common sights on most any day, but especially on Sunday, is the number of drunken men and women staggering home or lying in the road between Cajabamba and Colta” (Andean 1966:82). Inebriation also contributed to violence and in-fighting among indigenous people.

Elders also cited insufficient schooling opportunities as part of their oppression vis-à-vis whites. In the late 1930s-1950s, many of today’s elders were of school age but did not attend primary school. Elders claimed that indebtedness precluded their parents from putting them in school. Elders explained that their parents saw school as the domain of powerful white people, such as the landowners and hacienda administrators. “It’s not like we’re white and studying at

56 The festivals included those in honor of patron saints and the Virgin of Balbanera, as well as Palm Sunday, Easter, Christmas Eve, and Carnival. These fiestas died out in the 1970s as more and more people converted to evangelical Protestantism.

57 For anthropological interpretations of the importance of drinking practices to social relations in indigenous Ecuador and other parts of Latin America, see: Abercrombie (1998); Butler (2006); Lentz (1999). For an ethnographic analysis that deals specifically with indigenous evangelicals in Chimborazo, see Swanson (1994).
school is (what we do),” one elder remembered his father telling him. “No, what we do is graze sheep, plant crops, look after little animals and that’s how we live. Why would I send [you to school]?” Attending school was seen as a lazy activity.

**AN AUTOCHTHONOUS HISTORY: RELIGIOUS CONVERSION AND INDIGENOUS MODERNITY**

Although first converts often expressed gratitude to missionaries for first communicating the Word, they underscored indigenous agency in the process of “true transformation.”

> God worked through indigenous people themselves, they said, to spread the Word of God, defend converts from persecution, and build churches. During the 1960s, a time of great socioeconomic transformation in Ecuadorian history, first converts also played important roles in carrying out agrarian reform, creating regional organizations, and providing new educational opportunities to indigenous people (Bebbington 1990, Muratorio 1980, 1981b). Contemporary recollections of the active role first converts played in these new socioeconomic changes reinforce an understanding of evangelical conversion as directly linked to upward social mobility, as well as one firmly rooted in the idea of “indigenous self-determination” (S. autodeterminación indígena) (Uzendoski 2003), a term defined in Whitten and Torres (1998: 9) as “the assertion that indigenous people ... must speak to New World nation-states in modern, indigenous ways which they themselves will determine.”

After Ecuador’s Agrarian Reform law of 1964, the laborers of San Mateo Hacienda acquired land at a higher altitude in Upper San Mateo and went to live there, leaving San Mateo Hacienda land up for grabs. Though in the minority at the time, Sisapamba’s evangelicals were

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58 Samuel Charco thought missionaries downplayed the role of local actors and took credit for what indigenous converts themselves actually did in their published material (e.g. Maust 1995).
59 After agrarian reform, all of the mestizos sold their land to the indigenous people and left the area.
the first to purchase parceled out land. Evangelicals were motivated to work with IERAC
government agents and other outside agents (e.g. Cornell researchers and Peace Corps
volunteers) because they wanted to secure a space to build a church and cemetery since Catholic
priests prohibited evangelicals from entering the Catholic Church or burying their dead in the
Catholic cemeteries in Cajabamba and Sicalpa. One evangelical sought land for the purpose of
constructing a secondary school. Evangelicals constructed their own houses and plots of land to
farm there as well. One elderly pastor claims evangelicals got involved in agrarian reform
because they “were a little bit more open-minded” than Catholics and “had more legal savvy and
knowledge of laws.”

Evangelical organizations were another early expression of “indigenous self-
determination” (cf. Uzendoski 2003). In 1966, Samuel Charco and other influential male first
converts formed the Association of Evangelical Indians of Chimborazo (AIECH), the first
indigenous evangelical organization in Ecuador (Lucero 2006:37). AIECH played a crucial role
in post-agrarian rural institution building (Lucero 2006:37). Working with agents of Ecuador’s
Agrarian Reform in 1964, AIECH leaders secured land for church buildings and burial grounds
(Muratorio 1981b:517). AIECH played a critical social role in protecting and defending the
rights of persecuted evangelicals. AIECH also fomented a group of indigenous male religious
leaders to whom the missionaries would eventually turn over all church affairs. Samuel Charco

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60 One first convert estimated that only around fifteen or so people were evangelical at the time.
61 Early on (late 1950s-early 1960s), evangelicals buried their dead on GMU grounds. The plots are
unmarked today.
62 Once the hacienda regime broke down, white-mestizo administration in the countryside disintegrated,
creating a “power vacuum” and paving the way for the emergence of indigenous grassroots organizations
representing a “new ethnotransformation” (Zamosc 2003:53). In the aftermath of agrarian reform, more
indigenous communities were legally established, along with more cooperatives, associations, women’s
groups, and student’s groups (Clark 2005).
63 To further combat ethnic discrimination and exploitation in Ecuadorian society, indigenous
evangelicals formed their own transportation cooperative (Ñuca Llacta) as well as a savings and credit
cooperative (Minga Limitada) (Guamán 2002:33).
was very active in leadership for the first ten years. He served as the organization’s president from 1968-1970 and 1972-1973 and as vice-president from 1970-71 and as secretary from 1976-1977.

An important vehicle of “indigenous self-determination” fostering liberal ideas and practices (cf. Uzendoski 2003), and one that I want to stress in this section as particularly important to my informants, was education. First converts, working with GMU missionaries, provided literacy skills to youth and adults and schooling opportunities for indigenous children. Starting in 1956, first convert Samuel Charco worked with missionary Elizabeth Dilworth to offer literacy classes to youth. He saw literacy instruction as a way to make the gospel grow and motivate the youth to convert and attend church. Twelve male youth from Sisapamba attended the classes in the late afternoons. Tayta Miguel attended the classes in 1957, when he was 24 years old, despite his father’s disapproval. Like other students, he attended in secret and converted in the process of learning how to read and write.

The illiterate or marginally literate adult population who converted but never attended school became (semi) literate after conversion through literacy classes and also through reading the Bible itself. Daniel’s father, Tayta Rafael, only studied until the second grade as a child. As a converted, married adult, however, he studied at a Bible Institute for three years (1962-64, at the age of 33); through reading the Bible he improved his reading and writing skills. Many elders also claimed to have taught themselves how to read by laboring through biblical passages. Samuel Charco spent three years dedicated to teaching himself the Bible “whether he had the ability or not.” He described a laborious process of reading the Bible slowly with a blank page in front of him, where he would write anything down that he understood.

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64 Samuel Charco was one of few Sisapamba residents who was literate. He attended the local Adventist school until the fourth grade.
65 IERAC agents offered educational opportunities to those who worked closely with them.
Pastor Samuel considers himself self-taught in biblical study. Samuel said he approached Henry Klassen on numerous occasions with questions about the Old Testament. Klassen would respond (In Samuel’s words, speaking Spanish): “Why are you studying if you don’t understand? What’s in the Old Testament is already in the past. It’s not for these days.” He’d deflect, saying: “We only read the New Testament. Go and ask Mary” (another missionary). At first, Samuel accepted this answer, thinking “well because he’s a gringo he knows a lot of things.” After a while, though, Samuel grew frustrated. At one point, he threw his Bible across the room, never wanting to read it again. His wife reasoned with him: “No, Samuel, if he doesn’t want to give an explanation, be calm and you will understand with time.” He picked up the Bible again two months later, he told me, but “I never went back to ask the mister (saying the English word “mister” in exaggerated, mocking tones).”

In 1961, GMU missionaries opened an elementary school for children at the Colta missionary compound (Andean 1966). The Atahualpa School was a boarding school, with students attending three months out of the year from surrounding communities. Day students from Sisapamba also attended the school. Atahualpa School combined biblical study in Kichwa in the mornings and afternoons, with secular learning in Spanish during the day (Muratorio 1981b: 515). According to Klassen’s adult son, whom I interviewed in 2010, it started out with some twenty children but grew to around forty students. The school later became “fisco-misional” and non-missionary teachers began teaching there along with missionaries. The school

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66 Another one of Colta’s “three young evangelists” also felt resentful that missionaries did not teach them the Bible well. He told me he didn’t think Klassen was hospitable enough, that he did not engage in reciprocal relationships such as inviting people to his home and offering them food. When he decided to become a Jehovah’s Witness, Klassen rejected him: “You no longer belong to GMU. You’re a Witness now.” He had wished Klassen would leave: “go back to your country already” he wanted to tell him.

67 Boarding students paid a small monthly fee. Older students worked to pay room and board by working on projects in groups such as embroidery, making peanut butter, shredding coconut, cleaning school grounds, and cooking.
eventually shut down in the late 1960s. Evidently, more schools had been constructed in rural areas and there was less need for a boarding school.\textsuperscript{68} Agrarian reform in 1964 facilitated other schooling opportunities. Anthropologists from Cornell University founded a grade school on San Mateo Hacienda in 1965. One of the hacienda storerooms served as the first-grade classroom. In San Mateo, this elementary school along with a daycare stand on the ruins of the old hacienda, marking in symbolic fashion the post-hacienda promises of education and literacy, and the receding but ever-present memories of the hacienda times.

Literacy and schooling opportunities bolstered the growth of the indigenous evangelical movement. Samuel Charco befriended two of the youth taking his literacy classes. They became known throughout the area as the “three young evangelists.” Students of Atahualpa went on to become influential evangelizers, first to non-converted members of their own families; missionaries considered the school children they taught to be instrumental in reaching “unsaved homes” (Klassen 1977:167). Eventually, Atahualpa students became pastors and religious leaders. One of Colta’s first Kichwa pastors (ordained at the age of 24 in 1971) and founder of FEINE in 1982, Pastor Francisco, attended the school beginning at age 7 (1954); he attended intermittently before graduating at age 17.

Literacy and formal education was not just a means to conversion, but also a “means of empowerment” (cf. Kirsch 2008, 2007). One second-generation progressive remarked to me that learning to read, write, and control information was “the most powerful weapon that could exist at that time” for indigenous people. At the time of her research, Blanca Muratorio (1981b:520)

\textsuperscript{68} Klassen’s son told me that when his father first went to the Ministry of Education to indicate his desire to provide educational opportunities to “Indians,” government officials balked. They said, “You stupid North Americans. If you think those Indians can learn, you come in and you teach ‘em, ya know, you will see pretty soon that those Indians are just nothing but animals and cannot learn. You gotta teach them with a whip.”
noted that “formal schooling was [just] becoming a new symbol of prestige among Protestant leaders and young people” (Muratorio 1981b:520). Toting a Bible around provided believers with a sense of dignity, in that it showed to outsiders who once monopolized information, education, and religious interpretation, that they could read (Muratorio 1981b:521).

The evangelical ethic of savings and abstinence from alcohol produced socioeconomic effects including accrued savings enabling access to education, houses, and land parcels (Centro 1997:41). Due in large part to their close relationships with missionaries who had these items, converts were the first in the area to own bikes and cars. One initial convert went on to become the first professional indigenous chauffeur after three years of schooling in Guayaquil.

Missionaries showed different ways to construct homes. In place of straw-roofed huts with rammed earth walls, dirty floors, no windows, and a short 4-foot-high front door (Nickel 19-:27), those who purchased hacienda land built two-story cement block homes with windows and zinc roofs. Indigenous people were first exposed to this type of construction by the types of structures missionaries built. The first families to build such homes (in the late 1960s) were criticized for acting like mestizos or rich people.

The Kichwa “conversion to modernity” (cf. Van der Veer 1996) probably did not transpire in ways GMU missionaries expected. GMU missionaries did not preach a “prosperity doctrine” (Coleman 2000). Their teachings emphasized the goal of salvation rather than bettering the material conditions of everyday life and the embrace of an ascetic lifestyle. They discouraged

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69 Muratorio (1980:526) notes that Protestant peasants in Colta changed their consumption patterns but do not have a much higher standard of living than their non-Protestant counterparts.

70 In some cases, missionaries provided supplies, labor, and money to rebuild old homes for families that were very poor.

71 Mud walls and straw roofs make for warmer homes, however. I was talking to Mama Rosa’s 54-year-old adult son in his two-story cement home. He complained how cold his house was and told me his mother told him that straw homes were warmer. As a child, he slept on the floor on straw with bayetas as blankets.
converts from attaining college degrees, fearing that higher education would lead believers to stray from the church. Nonetheless, by erecting hospitals, clinics, and schools, introducing new types of housing, and employing local converts, they, along with first converts, also facilitated improved socioeconomic conditions in the rural countryside.72

ELDERLY NARRATIVES OF COLLECTIVE TRANSFORMATION

Given first converts’ involvement in key socioeconomic transformations of post-hacienda Ecuador, it is perhaps not surprising that they narrate initial conversion as overcoming “sad life” problems through material and social progress. In their view, spiritual change made social, intellectual, and material change possible. The “arrival” of the gospel to Colta was a crucial turning point: “If God hadn’t made that change, if the gospel hadn’t arrived,” 56-year-old Luz mused to me once, “who knows what people would be like... drunk, their children uneducated.”

Elders narrated mass conversion as enabling a kind of collective “freedom” from exploitation, enslavement, and related forms of past suffering and hardship (cf. Uzendoski 2003).73 Elders did not consider themselves inherently immoral or sinful prior to conversion, but rather “slaves” to an unjust system in which they were forced to engage in detrimental behaviors and rituals and that contributed to a life of indebtedness and abject poverty. Says one elder, “Indigenous people were slaves of fiestas, slaves of the priests, slaves of vices such as drinking and fiestas. (They) lived in total poverty.”

During the Pastor’s Day conference weekend, which I mentioned earlier in this chapter, leaders sold a documentary film they produced with the help of a young indigenous evangelical cinematographer originally from Chimborazo. The film, which compiled oral narratives of the

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72 The effects of Christian conversion do not cleanly reflect missionary discourse; stated intentions and effects are quite separate points of analysis (see Drogus 1997).
73 These ideas echoed the liberal ethos of the time in Latin America (Uzendoski 2003:136, see also Bastien 1994 and Padilla 1989).
history of evangelical Protestantism, took up tropes and images of slavery. The video began with a ten-minute reading of an excerpt from *Boletín y Elegia de las Mitas* by Ecuadorian white-mestizo poet César Dávila Andrade. The poem, written in 1956, criticizes the process of Spanish conquest and colonialism. A series of images of colonial art from the Americas depicting kneeling or cowering Indians before European priests with whips and swords, as well as laboring Indians, accompanied the poem reading. Images of black slavery in the U.S. south were also used.

To contrast with this period of slavery, one first-convert pastor made a connection to the Gospel of John Chapter 3, where Jesus told Nicodemo to be born again. “That’s what happened with indigenous peoples (*S. pueblo*). Indigenous peoples were born again.” The pastor then went on to describe himself as both a disciple of Christ, who “liberated (people) from the slavery of Satan,” and a disciple of Simon Bolivar, who “liberated (indigenous people) from Spanish chains.” Having freedom and self-control from exploitative relationships became “the basis for their newly acquired self-respect and dignity” as “civilized Indians” (Muratorio 1981b:519).

Elders also understand mass conversion as raising consciousness and awareness of oppression and poverty. After conversion, people started asking themselves, “Why am I like this? What state are we indigenous people in? How are we going to improve (ourselves)?” Metaphors of awakening and sight are commonly used to describe transformation to rationality and consciousness. Gualán (1995:31, my translation) writes:

> The year 1955 [*sic*]... the enslaved Indian wakes up from the dark to the light, when he encounters the truth of Jesus Christ. That’s how the life of the Indian started to change and since that year indigenous people start to experience the life of God’s kingdom in freedom of thought, knowing the good and the bad, and recognizing that he used to be enslaved in his moral, social, cultural, and economic life...

With “spiritual eyes,” one elder told me, “the intellectual part opens.” God showed “another way
of seeing,” “another way of thinking,” and “another way of life” many told me. Evangelical medical doctor Bacilio Malán (2004:9) writes that missionary efforts enabled rural communities to “awaken from sleep (S. letargo).” One first convert told me, “Now we make sense” (S. ya tenemos sentido).

According to Rodrigo Montoya (1990:85-109), the importance of “eyes” to knowledge and power in the Andean Quechua-speaking world dates back to the colonial period, when Spanish colonizers first introduced writing. During his fieldwork in the southern highlands of Peru in the 1970s, Montoya found ubiquitous references to darkness and lightness and illiterate people as lacking eyes (K. mana ñawiyuq). Parents would send their children to school to “open their eyes” or “wake up.” Montoya argues that this points to the indigenous internalization of the “contemporary myth” of school as a civilizing project. 74

Elders also see conversion as a way out of de-humanizing poverty. Elders say that during the hacienda period they lived “like animals.” Having no control over their selves and lives, no knowledge of texts, in some cases no shoes or clothes meant that they lived “like sheep” or “like pigs.”75 One elderly pastor, one of the first to convert and proselytize the religion in the 1960s, told me that he did not start out talking right away about the Word of God. He spoke first about “how we lived like pigs, like animals.” He would ask his potential converts: “Do you want to live this way? “Do you want clean clothes like this? Do you?” Only after that would he go on to say, “We shouldn’t drink. God is love and when we accept our Lord Jesus Christ, he lives in us and will change our life”

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74 Ethnographic and historical material from other cultural contexts suggest the salience of symbols of sight to ideas and projects of modernity. Meyer (1996:footnote p. 223) notes that the Ewe term for civilization is nku vu or “open eye.” Other anthropologists of Christianity have noted the central metaphors of light and dark deployed among the Christians they study. See Jolly (1996:252).
75 This echoes white, racist, and nationalist representations of highland Indians in Ecuador at the time as mute or dumb in the imagery of domesticated animals (Weismantel 1988:152).
Elders associate material improvements in the community with accepting Jesus Christ. Serafina told me that after converting in 1957, her living conditions drastically improved. In the early part of her marriage, before she and her husband converted, “there was a lot of sadness,” she said. Her husband came from a poor family; he describes his childhood in terms of being hungry, cold, and lacking clothes. When they were first married, they lacked clothes, cooking utensils, and food. "My God (K. ñuka Tayta Amitu) has provided clothes, grains, everything,” she told me. Elders said that whereas they used to believe the Virgin provided abundant crops and money, they now think God does this.

Ironically, embracing material progress as a particular manifestation of spiritual transformation through conversion involved rejecting what they saw to be the materiality of Catholic worship practice: the idea that saints “give our life, gives water, rain, grains.” Indigenous evangelicals, by contrast, see themselves as worshiping a “living God.” They characterize Catholic saints as dead, “made with human hands,” and powerless in their materiality to punish or make miracles happen.

One elderly first convert illustrated this idea by telling me a story about children who discovered that the “saints” their parents worshiped were actually not alive. One day when their parents left to go to town, the children opened up the plaster saints propped on the windowsill. They wanted to see if there was blood inside. Instead, they found concrete and wires. When their parents returned, they asked where the saint was. The children told them: “What do you mean this is a saint? It doesn’t have flesh.” The parents were distraught: “Children why did you do that? It’s miraculous. It’s a saint.” The children replied, “No, it’s not. It’s just plaster and wires.”

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76 Religious conversion, however, was not a rags-to-riches scenario. Indigenous people working for Catholic mestizo landowners lost out on work after becoming believers.
77 According to Mama Rosa, there used to be agricultural abundance in the area during “the time of the Virgin.” According to local Catholic lore, the Virgin used to live in the area.
LIVING THE “GOOD LIFE”

Along with expectations for social and material progress, an equally important and related component of the promise of conversion to local elders is the ideal of “living the gospel” through acting and relating to one another as indigenous Christians. If conversion in the sense of adopting modernity “freed” religious subjects to achieve social and economic progress, then it is this other spiritual aspect of living a “changed life” (S. *vida cambiada*)—the other rail on the train tracks to use Samuel Charco’s metaphor— that for elders will lead to the ultimate goal: heaven (K. *hawapacha* or *Diöspak llakta*). Living the gospel did not mean giving up indigenous identification, cultural values, and rural livelihoods but rather establishing some degree of commensurability between Christian ideologies and local, indigenous forms of morality. It meant fulfilling one’s social responsibilities as a member of a church, a community, and a family.

Serafina, one of the first women in Sisapamba to convert, remembers Mary the missionary promising her access to the “good life.”

“[Mary] said no, you have to become a believer Serafina. You are not behaving well [K. *Kan mana allita rurashpa purikunki.*] I said, yes, I’m not acting well. I served as a festival sponsor two times. For that reason I drank too much. I got drunk. I was that way. I will not do that I said. [She said] No Serafina you have to become evangelical. I will help you. This life is good.”

In Kichwa, “to live” (K. *kawsana*) or “to walk” (K. *purina*) are emic terms for habitual practice (cf. Weismantel 2001:285). When used in conversation they emphasize continuous behavior and action. For example, one initial convert described her conversion in this way:

“While walking this way, we became believers.” “Walking this way” to her meant going to house worship services, listening about God, and singing songs. Conversion, therefore, meant not just adopting a doctrine or set of beliefs per se, but adopting particular modes of continuous action in daily life, such as abstention from drinking and attending church. Rather than changing beliefs
instigating new actions, informants talked about changing actions leading to internal changes (glossed as conviction, attitude, consciousness, feelings, thoughts, or beliefs). Through action, conviction and religious maturity grew.

Time set apart from agricultural or domestic duties, specifically dedicated to worship is required to live the gospel. “We live praying to God and heeding God” (K. Diosta manchashpa Diosta kasushpa kawsakunchik). Practicing the faith for elders includes daily prayer, listening to evangelical radio stations and memorizing hymns, and attending church services. As Catholics, people did not attend church often, sometimes only for Christmas, Easter, or Palm Sunday. Evangelical believers are expected to attend worship service throughout the week.

Belief in God and following God’s mandate through action are understood to go hand in hand (i.e. action without sincere thoughts and belief without action are equally problematic). Actions reflect moral values such as sincerity. Pastor Samuel Charco considers tardiness to church service a form of insincerity in that you said you would be somewhere at a certain time but your actions do not back up what you promised. Action without sincerity is unacceptable; attending church once a week to “save face” (S. aparentar), for example, is highly criticized.

Living the gospel also means relating to others according to Christian principles of love, protection, and obedience. First convert Mama Rosa remembers learning from the missionaries that children should obey and respect their parents and that parents should love and demonstrate affection towards their children. Mama Rosa remembers missionaries telling her to help, respect, and obey her elders because in that way you respect and obey God. “Those who do not obey their parents do not obey God because we parents are like molds of God.” Mama Rosa says whatever she learned from the missionaries, she taught to her family members.
First converts did not understand missionary lessons about respecting God and others, and not getting drunk, to contradict the teachings of their own elders. Quite the opposite; some claimed to find in biblical texts lessons first taught to them by their parents. One middle-aged woman, who converted when she migrated from a Catholic community to Sisapamba in the 1980s, told me that the moral teachings of her Catholic parents and grandparents—not to lie, not to steal, to work hard, to obey your parents and elders—can be found in the Bible: “...now that I’ve got the Bible it’s the same- everything that they said is in the Bible.”

Furthermore, first converts capitalized on indigenous moral and cultural values and practices such as hard work and polite speech while proselytizing. As he embarked on evangelizing in the early years, Samuel thought, “I have to go out there [to evangelize] with the flavor of the people, not the gringos.” An effective way to do this, he found, was retelling a moral parable he overheard his godparents tell when he was a young child. In 2010, Samuel told me the story at the kitchen table with his daughter present. Although she must have heard the story a hundred times already, she listened intently, teary-eyed.

Samuel was around the age of five or six years old. It was the 1940s, decades before GMU missionaries began proselytizing in the area. It was nighttime. Houses didn't have windows then, he recalled, and the only light that shone was a kerosene lamp that people used until electricity reached homes in the 1980s. "Child go to sleep," said his godparents. "Let's tell stories about God," they said to each other, thinking Samuel was asleep. Lying still with the

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78 Pastor Samuel Charco was raised by his godparents, who raised him after his mother passed away a few months after his birth. Samuel Charco’s godparents were Catholic at the time, though they lived close to the Adventist mission and had ties to some missionaries.
covers over his head pretending to be asleep, Samuel listened intently. Samuel remembers the story they told this way:79

A long time ago, the Lord lived on this earth. One day, he found some farmers planting potatoes. He asked, "What are you planting?" The farmers answered with humility and respect. They said, "Oh My Lord we are planting potatoes. Maybe God will bless us." Jesus Christ responded, "Good, good, that's how you have to work. When you work, God multiplies it. God blesses it. Tomorrow come back to see how things are progressing (S. rodear). When you plant something, you have to work. You can't leave it be."

Jesus Christ then approached another group of farmers planting potatoes. "What are you planting?" he asked. These farmers responded impolitely. They showed no respect. "Shit Face, leave us alone," they told him. "Why do you have to know what we're doing? You have no right to know. We could be planting rocks or thorns for all you care." Jesus responded, "OK, go right on ahead with what you’re doing.” He gave the same advice to the first group of farmers: “But don't leave your crops alone. You have to come back to see how things are going."

When one of the polite farmers returned to his field the next day, he found the potatoes in abundance, already ready to be harvested. He went back home to tell his wife, "Mami, that wasn't just any man, that was God! A miracle has happened. The potatoes are ready to be harvested already!" His wife said, "You're crazy. That's not possible. Just yesterday we planted the potatoes!" The husband responded, "No really, it's true, let's go gather the potatoes." So along with their helpers, they returned to harvest the crop they had only planted the day before. They all said, "It's true that God has performed this miracle."

When one of the rude farmers returned to his crops the next day, he found a field full of rocks and thorns. That's when he realized that the man who had stopped by the previous day was the Lord. The man told his family, "We're stupid for not showing respect in our speech. That man that came by yesterday was God. Now our land is full of pure rocks and thorns.” He said to his children, "You have to treat people carefully, with respect and obedience."

Samuel Charco is not sure how his godparents first heard the story. He guessed it was a story told to them by Franciscan priests and that his parents adapted the story line to make it seem like it happened locally. Samuel Charco says he thought to himself, "How do these elders know this story? There must be some book where this is written down. I would like to find that book and read it." Samuel Charco believes God wanted him to listen to that story, that he had already been chosen by God at a young age to be a prophet and take on pastoring as his life’s

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79 Samuel told this story to me many times with some different variations. The dialogue comes directly from Samuel Charco’s narratives, but in places I synthesize the series of events.
work. When Samuel Charco did eventually convert after GMU missionary Henry Klassen exposed him to the Bible, this was the story he would tell to potential converts. Then he’d say: "The Lord once roamed the earth just like that. Today he can touch us in our hearts."

The gospel Samuel Charco wondered about as a young boy, and that he would one day embrace as a young adult, was already planted, so to speak, in the stories of his godparents for Samuel to hear. The message—God rewards sincere and respectful speech towards others, and hard work, and faith in God, with positive and abundant results—evokes various biblical stories and passages (e.g. 2 Corinthians 9:6 and Galatians 6:7) as well as the indigenous ethic of working hard in the fields and respecting others through deferential and humble speech. By making this story—and biblical parables focused on agricultural livelihoods (e.g. Luke 15: The Parable of the Lost Sheep)—the cornerstone of his proselytizing, Samuel Charco delivered a message people could relate to. He transformed indigenous morality, or the value placed on polite greetings and the “struggle” (S. lucha) of agricultural work into something quintessentially Christian. If in greeting people properly you are greeting God, as elders say, then not respecting others in speech is a direct affront to God.

MEMORIES OF RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

Elders emphasized the valiant sacrifice, suffering, and struggle involved in conversion. One convert said, “God’s Word in no way entered (the community) easily.” The process of mass conversion was difficult. Speakers also referred to the “persecution” they experienced following conversion during the first two decades of the movement (1954-1974) in terms of llaki kawsay. Ana says, “The time of becoming a believer was really, really sad...we suffered.”

Initial converts say they were the object of “dirty speech” (K. mapa shimikuna). Catholic community members considered them evil heretics and said they possessed devil’s tails (K.
gachuyuk, chupayuk). Other verbal taunts included accusations of being “free masons” (K. mazonkuna), “communists,” “lazy,” and “stupid” (K. upa, or mute, idiot). Death threats and physical violence accompanied insults. Following the lead of Catholic priests and community authorities, community members threatened to beat or burn initial converts to death in public.\footnote{Missionaries were also physically attacked and threatened (see Nickel 19--).}

In addition, family members often expressed their disapproval by rejecting related converts, hitting them, or not attending their evangelical weddings. Pastor Juan Carlos’s elders at the time downplayed his decision to become a believer by saying he was just a crazy, traumatized young man.\footnote{Narratives of evangelical persecution suggest that Catholics rejected and victimized them for no reason and do not consider the ways in which conversion itself broke up social relationships and might have felt like a rejection to Catholics.}

Insults and threats of violence did not stop Samuel Charco or other first converts from preaching. In the early days, this required walking everywhere, no matter how far, and no matter how many “thorns and rocks”—literally and figuratively—one encountered on the road. Samuel recalls going out into communities to talk about the Word of God and having people unleash their dogs on him. When the dogs would get near him, he’d say “Lord watch after these dogs.” That he was never bitten is proof to him that God was protecting him.

Elders recall this adversity as strengthening their faith and lessening the temptation to “return.” Walking around the community receiving dirty looks from people, said one first convert, made him “harden up” (K. sinchiyana). When his father and siblings rejected him for converting, he declared: “I can’t return. I’ll die evangelical.” Serafina was beaten up by her husband for converting and accused of sleeping with missionaries. One day her aunt said, “Baby return (to Catholicism). They are making you suffer too much. Serafina replied: "No, aunt. Even if he (my husband) hits me or does whatever I am not going back (there). I am with my God."
First convert memories of “problems” and suffering strengthening religious conviction live on in some of the Kichwa hymns sung in the church. Pastor Francisco was one of the first indigenous people to be ordained pastor. He was also a songwriter and musician. After a near-death experience, he wrote a hymn in Kichwa called “My Savior” (K. Nuka Kishpichikka).

My Savior will never leave me,
Ñuca quishpichijca mana caruyanchu,

Wherever I go He goes with me,
Maita purijpipish ñucahuanmari rin,

//Wherever I go I go with Him,
Maita purishpapish Paihuanmari rini,

I go with Him wherever I go.//
Paihuanmari rini maita purishpapish.

When I confront danger,
Huañuchinallata ñuca rucujpipish

He guides me, he protects me,
Paimari pushahuan Paimari huaquichin

//When I experience grave problems
Jatun llaquicuna ñucata japijpi

God gives me power.//
chata apanata Apunchij Jesus cun.

Local believers know the story behind this hymn. I asked Francisco to tell me his account. Along with a female missionary, he traveled to the community of Balcalli, where “the gospel was just beginning to enter,” to conduct a baptism. Pastor Francisco was attacked by a group of locals: “I remember that they grabbed me and that they were hitting my head and body with sticks. That’s what I remember. But I don’t remember it hurting at all.” He was left unconscious at the side of a river and woke up to find himself covered in blood and dirt. He hid behind a bush. People passed him by, assuming he was dead.
Still alive, he eventually gathered up some strength and started walking; a missionary accompanied by some authorities found him and transported him to Colta’s health clinic. He could barely move, his entire body covered in bruises. The missionary had also been abused; she had broken teeth and had evidently been abused sexually. Francisco said people tried to take off her underpants to “see if she was a woman or a man.”

At the health clinic in Colta, a missionary read Francisco a biblical verse, Philippians 1:29: “For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him.” For Francisco, this meant that God does not just give the “pretty life” (S. la bonita vida) but that “...he also gives suffering.” After this experience, Francisco wrote the lyrics to “Our Savior.” Francisco said his religious devotion was heightened in light of this experience of persecution.

**COLLECTIVE PROMISES**

In this chapter, I have discussed the “good life” as a set of promises, ideals, and changes attached to the first conversion period and remembered in the present. In the hopes of the first generation of converts, becoming a believer meant freedom from oppression and the potential to act as rational, modern, human subjects with God-given agency—to become literate, to buy land, to work with outside agents, to organize, to save money, and to build churches and new homes. This set of promises, as I have shown, does not reject indigenous rural livelihoods and cultural values but instead recasts them as central to Christian subjectivity and liturgical practice in some fashion. The “good life,” as narratives of persecution underscore, was not easy to attain. “Living the gospel” requires constant vigilance and practice, even suffering.

These facets of the transformative promise of evangelical conversion have set the standard for local religious subjectivity. While gospel heroes are held up as embodying that
standard, their personal stories of suffering and triumph are not just theirs. They have come to signify a collective story that all believers regardless of age or gender connect to in some fashion. As Connerton (1989) and Halbwachs (1980) argue, memory is social, anchoring people in collective, shared experiences in the present. “Making history” events such as the Pastor’s Day Conference are productive social processes that align people’s memory in collective fashion. In the post-conversion context of contemporary Chimborazo, the boundaries between individual religious testimonials and collective historical consciousness are blurred. In the 1970s, public testimony among Kichwa converts involved a new believer recounting “his previous life as a sinner” (Muratorio 1981b:519). Today, those same converts are “mature” believers and part of a mass religious movement now over fifty years old. The past they tell is not just a personal one but also a collective story of victimization and redemption. 

Tolen (1995:91) notes that in Chimborazo, conversion is “the point around which all accounts of local history turn” and is spoken of in terms of collective transformation of communities rather than individual experiences of salvation. Elderly experiences and memories of the initial conversion period thus indicate a great deal about what it means to Kichwa believers to be a good religious subject. Certainly, being and continuing to be a collectivity of believers is vitally important to them.

YOUTH AS INTERNAL THREAT

The first convert promise of attaining the “good life” depended on—and continues to depend on—the collective nature of conversion and the actions of future generations in religious reproduction. Some of these desires and promises—at least among particular subjects of Kichwa churches and communities—have been realized in subsequent generations in rural communities

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82 Religious conversion was not just about individual transformation. Many of the elders with whom I spoke were not former drunks themselves and did not have personal experience with sexual abuse on the part of priests or hacienda owners. All had witnessed or heard of these issues from family members or neighbors.
such as San Mateo and in the Kichwa evangelical movement in general. Atahualpa School and other rural schools offering schooled literacy in Spanish in the 1960s were instrumental in enabling future social mobility among younger evangelicals, many of whom today are, or aspire to be, teachers, lawyers, and doctors.

Already by the 1980s, however, first converts say the glorious initial period of mass conversion, of spiritual unity under missionary guidance, had come to an end, and a period marked by rebelliousness, disobedience, and hypocrisy took its place. The 1960s and 1970s were decades of rapid growth of Kichwa converts and churches and fervent religious commitment. Said one elderly pastor: “That era no longer exists. There are evangelicals but not changed lives.” Youth coming of age in the 1980s were the ones who first lost “all interest in the things of the church and the Lord” (Malan 2004:14).

If elders’ experiences and memories of attaining the “good life” create the standard by which Christian subjectivity is defined today, as I suggest, then on all counts youth might be considered “off track.” In fulfilling their elders’ expectations of educational advancement and material consumption, third-generation youth have apparently taken some of the initial conversion transformative promises too far—so far, in fact, that some of the pre-conversion “sad life” problems have re-emerged; youth are “returning to what it was like before.” Youth aspirations toward the material or the “modern” have led them to stumble in carrying out the spiritual and collective nature of living the Christian “good life,” at least in elders’ eyes. The threat to evangelical Christianity is now internal. It’s no longer the non-convert as in the initial conversion period, but the very own children and grandchildren of Chimborazo’s “gospel heroes.” Indigenous evangelicals are in the midst of a deep crisis of religious reproduction.
The laborious efforts of first converts made the “freedom to study” and social mobility possible for future generations. Elders complain, however, that youth have taken the freedom and agency made possible to them by the conversion of their elders too far—outside the moral prescriptions of religious and cultural norms regarding hard work, obeying, respecting, and greeting one’s elders, and abstention from alcohol and parties. Youth today “do whatever they feel like” (K. kacharishkakuna), said one first convert. They “don’t remember God, if there is or isn’t one. They just go about their business,” said another elder. Whereas elders would strictly monitor youth’s comings and goings in the past, today youth follow their “own pleasures”. In fact, youth love playing sports so much that they are often accused of worshiping soccer more than God. They “dedicate themselves to material things.” Daniel’s father Rafael told me he thought youth were so “free” in their behavior (i.e. “doing whatever they want”) that they are slaves once again, not to owners anymore but “slaves to the devil.”

Contrasting evangelical life today with the difficulties and suffering he experienced, one initial convert said, “Nowadays it’s easier to be Christian because no one says anything or beats you up for it.” Samuel Charco mused in a public speech once that nowadays, “wherever we want to go we go peacefully in a car.” Overcoming the suffering was part of the “transformative promise” of conversion. However, elderly narratives of conversion and persecution also suggest that difficult experiences made them value the religion more, demonstrating and heightening their religious commitment. Samuel Charco suggests that things being easy (K. hawalla) has

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83 In the mid-1960s, Colta became a regional soccer hub. According to Pastor Samuel Charco, soccer enthusiasts from across the region would gather to play games on the community’s soccer field. Pastor Samuel Charco was the soccer tournament director until the mid-1970s. Like other “functional substitutes,” the goal of soccer, he said, was to distract people from getting drunk and “wasting their money on fiestas” (Fieldnotes, 2.19.2010). However, worship service was always the priority. Pastor Samuel Charco remembers interrupting games to take the ball away so that soccer players would attend the church service that was about to start.
backfired in a sense, “Nowadays for youth everything has been easy. I get sad sometimes feeling they haven’t valued anything.” Another former CONPOCIECH president remarked at a “Founding Fathers’ Panel” that “because there is not as much persecution today, the church has become weak. Persecution is what keeps the church going.” One woman remarked that in contrast to elderly people who “want to be by God’s side more... youth... are healthy. They have a job. They don’t suffer so they have doubts and the potential to fall.”

In defining the ethics of living the “good life”, elders stress the importance of not only declaring one’s faith in the face of adversity but also “living the gospel.” Youth, in their perspective, have taken religious freedoms—the ability to declare oneself evangelical without repercussion—for granted. Although they identify as evangelical, their lived experience does not reflect it, so elders say. They’re “lazy.” Though academically prepared, they are not interested in reading and studying the Bible, attending church, or becoming pastors. Youth are evangelicals by name only (K. krik nishka, S. dichos cristianos). Elders disparage what they perceive to be a striking incongruence between speech and action as hypocritical and insincere. In so far as “true transformation” is made manifest in one’s actions, youth have not been truly transformed. They are not “living Christianity” and therefore will not be saved.

According to elders, educational progress, which often involves rural to urban migration, has contributed not just to a decline in religiosity but also to the loss of indigenous values. One elderly first convert complained that nowadays young people finish school and immediately go out looking for a job, often outside of the community and outside of the province. Before, when everyone engaged in agricultural labor, family relations were closer, he thought. Newlyweds would live with their parents. Now youth no longer have time to spend with their family members. Given their urbanized lives, youth relate more and more with Spanish-speaking youth
and many end up rejecting indigenous identification and language as a result. Samuel Charco, for example, wants his grandchildren to know three languages, including Spanish and English. But first they should know their native tongue Kichwa.

Elders feel that the freedom and autonomy of youth threaten familial relationships. They feel youth do not greet them properly in public. Proper greetings to elders are supposed to be both verbal and visual. Because they may not be able to hear or see well, one should take off their hat, give one’s hand to shake, and say a greeting loudly. These days community members use greetings in Spanish and often with Kichwa vowel sounds (e.g. buenos días is pronounced buinus dias) along with a hand shake. Elders complain that youth pass by without saying anything, or perhaps barely mutter a greeting.

Youth orientations to urban, mestizo life and relationships and the decline of proper greetings signify not just a discord in elder-junior social relationships but also an indicator that youth are not being good Christians. To identify with rural community and church life and indigeneity is to identify as truly Christian. Missionary denouncements during the initial conversion period of certain cultural practices such as drinking and traditional healing are not considered losses by elderly pastors such as Samuel Charco.

TRANSFORMATIVE MEMORIES

In light of the perceived “threat” of youth to indigenous Christianity, elders and adults frequently geared their sermons and public speeches to youth, assuming that youth are unaware of or do not value the history of the Kichwa evangelical church because they did not personally experience the mass conversion process. Religious leaders seemed to think origin narratives and elderly first converts could “animate” or motivate youth to “value and discover their goal to
serve God.”

The Pastor Council Secretary, who emceed the Pastor’s Weekend Saturday night events, pointed out elders such as Samuel Charco in the audience between choir performances. He would excitedly say things like, “Look at how many historical figures there are here and we don’t even know it, young people! ... We the new generation have seen our heroes of faith of the Quichua church!”

In one particularly illustrative moment during the Pastor’s Day weekend, the Pastor Council secretary called up Pastor Samuel and asked him how old he was when he first started doing the radio. He quickly found someone in the audience of that age, 22, and called him up on stage. Pointing to him but facing the audience, he said, "more or less this is how Pastor Charco looked when he was first on the radio.” Then, turning to the young man, he said, "you have been privileged to meet the first radio broadcaster of Colta Radio!” When the young man said he was also a radio broadcaster, the pastor says, delighted, “now why don't you two hug.” Instead, Pastor Charco, in good humor, tried to physically pick up the young man, who was taller than him. The audience erupted in laughter.

By “making history” in this fashion, the Pastor Council secretary also hoped to curb overzealous youth who do not give credit to first converts or who think they are the “heroes of the gospel.” At a “Founding Fathers” panel organized by CONPOCIIECH, Samuel Charco prefaced his historical narratives with: “We should see this, we should know this. It is highly valuable. Don’t devalue it [the growth of movement] saying that it has been easy.”

In the more intimate spaces of community and house worship services, Samuel Charco also made history in this co-produced fashion. During Sunday worship service one afternoon, for

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84 According to a magazine published by COPAEQUE for distribution at the Pastor’s Day Conference, one of the stated goals of declaring Chimborazo the capital of the gospel is: “To demonstrate the origin of the seed of the Word of God to authorities, peoples and nationalities, professionals, and contemporary and future youth with the goal that they value and discover their goal to serve God.” (Concilio 2010: 8, my emphasis).
reasons not entirely clear to me, Samuel Charco’s sermon began not with a Bible verse, but with his recollections of the Adventist missionaries who lived in Colta-Sisapamba prior to the GMU missionaries. In impromptu fashion, he invited his older sister, Colta’s oldest living convert, over 90 years old, up to speak. Pastor Samuel reasoned, “We have to take advantage before the elders (K. yuyakkuna, literally “knowledgeable ones”) leave [die] in order to learn, to understand each other.”

We were gathered for service that windy afternoon outside a newly-married couple’s home. As Mama Rosa made her way slowly to the front, Marta turned to me, tears in her eyes. “Are you taping this?” she mouthed to me. Samuel Charco had wanted Mama Rosa, who raised him since he became an orphan at three weeks old, to tell the congregation a funny story from their childhood involving getting scared by a toy rat at the missionary house where Mama Rosa was a domestic worker. Instead, Mama Rosa launched into an emotional “sad life” narrative, which captivated the multigenerational audience. The adult women in the audience interjected with light-hearted questions; they asked her what her courtship to her late husband as a young woman must have been like, carrying Samuel Charco on her back all the time. But each time Mama Rosa carefully steered the conversation back to the “sad life” past, the difficulty of the early days as first converts, and the figure of Samuel Charco.

After about an hour of this, Samuel Charco began his exegesis of the San Mateo 5:13-16: “You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world.” To illustrate its meaning, he returned again to talk about their shared past.

Remembering I say, where was there a house with windows? The devil kept us in the dark, right? But now, what has happened? Change. Our hearts, our thoughts, everything has changed. Our houses, our bodies. Our bodies are clean. Our clothes nice. Why? Because God gave us light.
Following through with the metaphor of lightness and darkness, Samuel Charco gestured toward Fernando Yuquilema, an 80-year-old former hacienda laborer sitting in the audience. Though blind and partially deaf, Fernando is a regular at Sunday service and often rushes to get to service on time. He leads the congregation in hymn once each worship service, standing on stage with cane in hand. Though illiterate, he begins by reciting one of the over seventy Bible verses he knows by heart (according to his estimates) from listening to the evangelical radio station HCJB “Radio de Sembrador.”

He then sings, off key and skipping verses, while believers in attendance do their best to follow along.

Samuel Charco pointed out in his sermon how Fernando uses the cane to see, to feel out whether there’s a hole or a stair or an obstacle. He needs it to walk. By contrast, Pastor Samuel pointed out, “We have eyes that see well. We have good ears to listen well. We should learn well.” Implicit in this statement is Samuel Charco’s view that unlike elders, youth are able-bodied and mentally capable. They are “free” from oppression and religious persecution. There is no reason why they should not be living the gospel. Yet Pastor Samuel made it clear in his sermon the “sad life” continues to exist today. He said, “We speak [these things], we speak, we know, we listen, but we don’t live it just as it’s said. We don’t practice as it says [to]. We don’t practice. That’s why a bit of sadness exists.”

Public memory work of this nature—to remember the sad life-cum-good life period of initial conversion, recognize the struggle that particular actors endured during that period, and “make history” for future generations—utilizes “good life” memories and promises of the initial conversion period in the service of reaching youth and tackling the re-emerging “sad life” of today. Elders’ narratives become not just memories of past transformation, but transformative

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85 For many illiterates, biblical knowledge is self-taught through continuous listening and prayer, rather than reading.
memories—memories used to “animate” or transform youth. Elders become double “gospel heroes,” both in the sense of their role in the initial conversion period and in the sense of their moral authority in the present to retell history in order to convince youth to stick with the religion.86

Pastor Samuel’s sermon that afternoon ended in a call to action. “So let’s live as Christians brothers and sisters! “Let’s make light of dark!” He called out the names of some of the community’s young female soccer players in attendance. “Just as you kick the ball? Handle the Bible just like that, too! So do it! You all should get motivated!”

CONCLUSION

For elders, a whole life has been lived, and death is imminent. Elders complain of their eyes and their ears not working like they used to, of not having the same strength and spirit (S. ánimo) they once had to attend church, assume leadership roles in the community and the church, or perform domestic and agricultural tasks. Their minds aren’t as sharp as they once were, they say. They say they’ve become “lazy.” When Ana was younger, she says her faith was so strong that she would attend family worship services even if it was raining and cold outside. These days, if her body aches on a rainy day she misses worship service. Samuel says he prays that he’ll die by the age of 80 years old. He’s decided “that’s when my service, my work ends.” Many elders feel they’ve put their time and hard work in, and that their salvation is guaranteed. Now more than ever, conversion’s “set of linked promises” hinges on subsequent generations to fulfill the promises in ways first converts feel they could not and cannot.

86 In these ways, evangelical elders today are exercising the kind of moral authority elders once held in the pre-conversion hacienda era. See Lyons (2002) for a discussion of respect and other moral norms taught by elders to juniors among indigenous Catholics in Chimborazo during the hacienda period. According to Lyons (2006), elders often gave moral advice to young people (K. wamra, musu). They advised not to drink and not to get involved in fights because the girl you might marry could be watching you. The custom was to kneel down and greet elders and leaders (S. cabildos) and recite prayers.
Kichwa believers today, however, face an uncomfortable reality looking back on the past sixty years since conversion. “God has made many changes,” Pastor Samuel Charco said to me once as he reflected on the past sixty years, “but now due to a lack of leadership [people] are returning to debauchery. Now people worship soccer more than they worship God. The beginning, the sacrifice, wasn’t for all that,” he lamented. The changes made possible by religious conversion appear to be a contributing factor in Christianity’s threatened demise. Today’s re-emerging “llaki kawsay,” ironically, is in some ways an effect of religious conversion.

Lauren Berlant (2011:2) discusses the “good life” as a “moral-intimate-economic thing” at the center of the project of “relations of cruel optimism.” Berlant defines “cruel optimism” as “the attachment to conditions of possibility whose realization is impossible or too possible” such that “something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing” (Berlant 2011:1-2). In the case at hand, the hard work of the first converts in embracing conversion’s transformative promises made “freedom” and “ease” possible for younger generations. However, first converts did not anticipate that their laborious efforts to leave the “sad life” would play a role in making the good life too possible, in a sense, for today’s youth. Ironically, the changes made possible by religious conversion as experienced in future generations appear to be enabling the re-emergence of the old “sad life,” threatening Christianity’s demise.

The rest of this dissertation examines different manifestations of the tensions generated by the project of reproducing evangelical identification and its “transformative promises” across generations. As we see in the generational tensions between elders and youth illuminated in this chapter, Kichwa evangelicals continually address this paradox by reliving and reworking past/present, sad life/good life, and material/spiritual dialectics in discourse and practice and in
relationship to one another. As we shall see, conversion did not, in effect, represent a definitive “liberation” from the “sad life” across time. Nor did it impact all Kichwa in the same ways. Conversion, rather, has become the basis for new tensions and subjectivities among evangelicals along the lines of age, generation, and religious ideology. “Transformative promises” such as education and upward social mobility have been neither fully nor evenly experienced. Some of these promises proved hollow in time for certain kinds of religious subjects (especially women).

In these “good life” desires and struggles to attain them, then and now, we can understand Christian subjectivity to be in a constant process of emergence. As Fischer (2014:2) writes

... perhaps the good life is not a state to be obtained but an ongoing aspiration for something better that gives meaning to life’s pursuits. In this view, striving for the good life involves the arduous work of becoming, of trying to live a life that one deems worthy, becoming the sort of person that one desires.

As this chapter suggests, for Kichwa evangelicals, defining and seizing “our good life” is a process that continues long after the mass conversion period. It hinges on generational tensions and the continued recycling of the conversion conjuncture through historical memory and “sad life” tropes and practices. Understanding these dynamics necessitates a longitudinal, generational, and ethnographic approach to scholarly understandings of religious conversion and modernity.
CHAPTER THREE, GENERATING CRITIQUE: SECOND-GENERATION EVANGELICALS IN THE POST-MISSIONARY ERA

“Young people... said it wasn’t just about God. We live in a world of injustice. If we do not protest, who will?” (Ricardo, second-generation evangelical).

“We are the generation of holistic renewal” (Malan 2004)

The period after the initial mass conversion period (mid 1980s-early 2000s) marked a shift in evangelical Christianity in Chimborazo away from an initial mystical and other-worldly phase to a more political and civic one (cf. Lancaster 1998). Younger, more educated believers within Kichwa evangelical churches, organizations, and communities began to challenge GMU missionization and champion what they consider to be a “holistic” (S. integral) brand of evangelical Christianity integrating the spiritual, political, economic, cultural. Riding this “second wave,” younger evangelicals embraced actions, principles, and relationships that had once been considered worldly threats to indigenous Christianity. They became university educated, got involved in party politics (Andrade 2007, 2005; Guamán 2006; Lucero 2006), sought development initiatives in their communities, re-embraced Andean indigenous principles and values, forged relations of religious ecumenism, and spread “feminist” ideas.

In this chapter, I showcase the perspectives of evangelical actors behind such re-imaginings of Kichwa Christianity to examine narratives, spaces, and projects of “critical detachment” (Anderson 2000) emerging from within indigenous Christianity. 87 Anderson defines “critical detachment,” as “a set of historically situated, modern practices that aim to objectify

87 A comparable example is Biehlo’s (2011:30) analysis of “de-conversion narratives” among Emerging Evangelicals in the U.S., or their self-conscious critique of conservative evangelicalism. De-conversion narratives involve a “turning from” orientation rather than the “turning to” orientation, as is typically noted in conversion narratives. Like my informants, Emerging Evangelicals have not jettisoned the faith but rather self-consciously intensified their religious identity and commitment in the process of deconversion.
facets of human existence so as to better understand, criticize, and potentially transform them” (62). Forms of cultivated detachment, which she defines as “aspiration to a distanced view,” problematize norms and “open up new possibilities of reconceptualization and new spaces of action” (62).

Amongst Chimborazo’s evangelicals, generation is critical to discourses and projects of critical detachment. In their qualitative analysis of the indigenous evangelical movement entitled “Perspectives on Kichwa Protestantism from the Point of View of the Evangelized,” a group of evangelical indigenous scholars explain that ideological changes within the Kichwa Church operated along generational lines:

“The first [current in the indigenous evangelical movement] is conservative, fundamentalist, and defensive of missionaries and quichua powerholders (S. caudillos), [who are] in the majority... represented by the first generation of believers... Whereas the second current could be characterized as more open, critical, and indigenist (S. indigenista), tied to the proposals of the Indigenous Center of Theological Studies; this sector is represented by the second generation of believers who have academic preparation” (Centro 1997:44, my translation from Spanish).

The “second current,” comprised of “the second generation of believers who have academic preparation” challenged the following pillars of GMU Christianity as “fundamentalist” and “conservative:” otherworldliness, strict asceticism, dogmatism, literalism, suspicion of indigenous “culture,” and chain-of-command teachings (specifically as related to male headship and female submission, as described in Chapter 4).

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88 Anderson’s idea of critical detachment has parallels with Webb Keane’s (2007:52) discussion of objectification—“the capacity to step outside and scrutinize.” However, unlike Anderson, Keane (2007:70) considers skepticism of religion to be quite common and not necessarily an effect of “secular modernity.”

89 Along with “generation,” other meta- categories of analysis typical in the speech of younger generations in Spanish, which are not as prevalent in the Kichwa speech of elders, include: “religion,” “culture,” “Andean,” “conservative,” “liberal,” “ideology,” and “gender.” See Keane (2007) on the emergence of “religion” and “culture” as categories of analysis.
Drawing on interviews I conducted as well as texts written by evangelicals analyzing their own movement (See Centro 1997; Malan 2004; Gualan 1995; Guaman 2002, 2003, 2006), I analyze the ways in which “second-generation” evangelicals “started to question” their own religious communities and histories in and through generational narratives, projects, and distinctions. The “second-generation” evangelicals I focus on include those living in San Mateo as well as a small activist intellectual network of “second-generation” indigenous evangelicals (born late 1960s -1970s to first converts) living in Riobamba, whom I refer to as “progressives.”

To be sure, not all believers born into converted families in the 1960s and 1970s are critical of their religion; however, those that do “question” use generational positioning to articulate and enact new forms of religious subjectivity and modernity. As I explain in Chapter 1, I take generation to be a socially- and historically- constructed category of difference and identity. By positioning oneself (and others) in generational terms, local believers reflect on—and produce—multiple subject positions and new forms of collective identification in their religious movement. Emphasizing ideals of relatedness along the lines of age and horizontal social ties, second-generation evangelicals say things like “We are the new generation” and “We are the generation of holistic renewal” (Malan 2004).

Anthropological literature on generation and age tends to focus either on elders or youth. Yet, middle-aged evangelicals— the “not so old and not so young”—as one informant put it, are critical to understanding the reproduction of Kichwa Christianity—what I call its “re-

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90 When I asked them what name I should call them, I received some creative answers. One said, “Just call us the crazy ones. That’s what they call us.” When I suggested the term “liberal” to one, he responded: “not liberal (S. liberal) but free (S. libre)...free of prejudice!”

91 Even those who are not “second generation” evangelicals in the strict sense of the term (born to already converted parents) also identify with “new generation” discourses. For example, one San Mateo resident was the first in his family to accept Jesus Christ; his parents converted after him. Nonetheless, born in 1963, he identifies with the same age/generational cohort.
“second generation”—in the post-missionary era. To best understand this process, second-generation critical reflexivity should not be understood, I contend, solely in terms of a “break” (from the past, from one’s elders, from one’s natal community, not even from certain “fundamental commitments” [Bilgrami 1992] to one’s inherited religion and the “transformative promises” that accompany it). Rather, second-generation critical detachment produces both the break and the bridge. As children of first converts and today’s parents of contemporary youth, “second generation” evangelicals find themselves uniquely positioned in an intermediary role. They mediate not only two distinct age cohorts but also the discursive extremes each represents: religious fervency of the elders and disenchantment of the youth. Though critical questioners of their religion, they are also committed believers concerned with today’s youth just like their elders. Their aim is ultimately one of integration and mediation of extremes along the lines of spiritual/secular, old/young, rural/urban, and conservative/progressive.

**BORN IN THE “GOSPEL CRADLE”**

Like other evangelicals now in their thirties, forties, and fifties whose parents had converted to evangelical Christianity during Chimborazo’s initial period of mass conversion (1954-1980), Marta refers to herself as a “second-generation evangelical.” Marta was born in 1962 to Pastor Samuel Charco and Mama Dolores. Her husband, Daniel, was born in 1961, also to two of Sisapamba’s first converts, Tayta Rafael and Mama Serafina.

Marta and Daniel grew up in Sisapamba during what’s considered the heyday of missionary activity there. Marta’s childhood home is situated next to the missionary compound, where over twenty GMU missionaries lived at one point, giving Marta the sensation that she was raised “in the gospel cradle” (S. en la cuna del evangelio). Marta and Daniel were involved in church-related events from the time they were kids. They played alongside missionary children.
They attended Sunday School run by the missionaries, who enticed young believers with drinks and goodies. They raised their hands to “accept Jesus Christ” in the presence of missionaries around the age of seven or eight years old.

As children, Marta and Daniel were the first in their families to graduate from elementary school and high school. As single young adults, both pursued employment and educational opportunities in urban areas outside of Colta. Daniel, for example, graduated from Atahualpa School and went on to high school. After serving in the military, he returned to Colta to become a teacher, graduating from Colta’s Jaime Roldos Aguilera Institute. After marrying in their late twenties, they settled in San Mateo, occupying Marta’s father’s old home.

I first met Marta and Daniel in 2002, when they were in their forties and rearing two children, the next generation of indigenous believers locally known as the “third generation.” Marta and Daniel no longer saw a vibrant religious scene when they considered the old missionary compound and the believers who lived nearby. In 1992, the Gospel Missionary Union pulled missionaries out of the Colta station for good. Marta and Daniel say that, as a result, they felt abandoned and ill equipped to meet the enduring challenges of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and domestic abuse in their community. Simón Gualán (1995:34) reiterates this sentiment, writing that “...the missions... left us orphans and did not prepare us to live in unity.”

Over the past twenty years, CONPOCIIECH leaders have done little in the way of upkeep at their rural Colta headquarters. The old Atahualpa School now serves as a classroom for biblical study and other regional and national gatherings. Adult bodies cram into the small wooden desks missionaries built five decades ago. Insofar as the built environment indexes God’s hand in indigenous social progress for Kichwa believers, the cracked windows, crumbling

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92 A new group of missionaries arrived later. They were more directly involved in development and technological interventions in the community. They related primarily with the youth.
walls, and chipped paint of the old Atahualpa School tells a story of new priorities, and unfulfilled promises. It is a story that puts the triumphant declaration of Chimborazo as the “gospel capital,” in an ironic light.

Marta and Daniel see their fellow believers “saturated” by gospel messages and no longer “hungry” for more. In 2002, San Mateo split from its parent community, Sisapamba. It sought legal status as an official community separate from Sisapamba. Up until then, San Mateo residents had considered themselves members of the community of Sisapamba. They paid community dues, participated in collective labor projects, and attended meetings. They helped construct the new church building for Harvest Church in 1980 and attended the church, serving leadership roles. Nonetheless, tensions had been brewing between San Mateo and Sisapamba since at least the 1980s and 1990s, and came to a head among members of Harvest Church in the early 2000s. San Mateo residents left Harvest Church and formed a new church named Christ King Evangelical Church of San Mateo. The road leading from the Panamerican Highway through Sisapamba to the GMU station no longer seemed to lead to “heaven’s gate;” rather it came to mark the battle lines of a bitter fight dividing local believers. In the early 2000s, tensions

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93 In a comparable example, Colloredo-Mansfeld’s (2009:651) attributes the “invidious segmentation of provincial society” to neoliberal decentralization, class inequality, and racial ideologies. For other works that connect contemporary community fission and fusion in the Andes to longer standing patterns of Andean dual organization, see Moliní-Fioravante (1986) and Orta (2013).

94 Nonetheless, tensions had been brewing between San Mateo and Sisapamba since at least the 1980s and 1990s, when San Mateo began initiating local development projects that benefitted their sector of the community. Things blew up in the early 2000s, when Sisapamba solicited funding from the municipal government of Cojta. Sisapamba declared its community possessed a church, school, secondary school, and commentary. When San Mateo residents insisted that these structures technically fell within the boundaries of San Mateo, Sisapambans accused them of seeking ownership (S. adueñar) of Sisapamba community property. Tensions came to a head in Harvest Church. At the time, six of the seven deacons lived in San Mateo. After the pastor disposed of all of the church deacons from San Mateo because of these problems, San Mateo residents left Harvest Church and eventually formed a new church named Christ King Evangelical Church of San Mateo.
were palpable, marked by the absence of greetings between members of the split communities, as well as outright arguments and physical fights.

In the midst of all of these concerns, Marta and Daniel and other members of Colta’s middle-aged parental cohort worried that the “third generation” had lost ties to it all: to God, to the Kichwa Church, and to the first generation. In response to all of these dynamics, they, and other members of their age cohort say they “started to question” aspects of the religion in which they were raised. Here’s Marta’s explanation (from an interview in 2007):

Why did I start to question? ... I look at the youth. I look at those of my generation. I see men and women who perhaps do not follow the gospel with much seriousness, with commitment. My parents stay with it because they suffered that persecution. They put up with- they suffered a lot to evangelize. Persecutions, marginalization, oppression. In spite of all of that they continued with the gospel. But what is happening with us? And what will happen with our children? I’ve had that concern for a while now. But now I see with a little bit more clarity- I can see why I was questioning...

...Why is there not a serious commitment [on the part of] our generation, men as well as women, to the gospel? What happened is that the missionaries brought the gospel but they brought [it] with their culture, with their way of believing, with their way of praising God, with their way of seeing God as Americans. But they did not give us a seat at the table [to ask]: “Let’s see, it’s this way, what do you think? What do you believe? Look at it as peasants as rural men and women ... as farmers, pastoralists. What do you think of the Bible? What do you understand?” There was no space to analyze. Just “women be subject to your husbands” for example that topic or “you have to be saved. You have to believe in Christ. You have to accept the Lord to be saved to go to heaven” but they never said why. That was a form of oppression...

...I’m not against the gospel. I’m not against [the missionaries] bringing the gospel. I want that to be clear. I’m against [the fact that] they have not had us analyze in that moment [of initial conversion]. For that reason it’s now “How many want to accept the Lord?” “I want to accept the Lord.” But what depth is there? What does it mean? Why do it? For what reason? That’s what I’m trying to say.

...Perhaps I mean our generation and not my parents’ generation. My parents’ generation- even though they didn’t analyze [things] they lived the persecution, the mistreatment. So they had that commitment to keep going. But our parents also did not open-they didn’t give us that space of analysis: what to do, how to keep it going....

... It’s for that reason that the gospel is often times in label or title [only] and not inside, not in the living....
Second-generation experiences such as Marta’s raise a critical question for anthropologists of Christianity concerning how religious subjectivity is reproduced over time, and, especially, after a dynamic period of mass conversion. If conversion from Catholicism and surviving the resulting religious persecution was how the first generation became ardent believers and made Christianity theirs, what experiences or processes would facilitate the same for evangelicals born into the religion?

Taken at face value, Marta's comments paint a somewhat dismal picture of religious community and practice and the directions in which youth might be taking it. But we can look at Marta’s speech practices in another way: as enacting a particular kind of generational positioning—critical questioning—that is ultimately productive or re-generative in the sense that it shows her continued investment in the religion. Marta’s rhetoric of questioning does more than raise an issue for consideration, such as the idea that GMU missionaries and first converts did not teach indigenous believers to analyze critically. The very act of questioning enacts a solution to the problem she identifies (cf. Harding 1987:167; cf. Biehlo 2011). “Generating critique” (i.e. analyzing and questioning the movement and its colonial legacies and enacting new alternatives based on generational subjectivities) enables second-generation evangelicals to internalize Kichwa Christianity, live it, and make it their own.

**RE-NARRATING THE EVANGELICAL PAST**

For first converts, mass conversion in the 1960s and 1970s was liberating (see Chapter 2). It marked a triumphant, linear march to progress. Religious conversion solved ethnic, economic, and gender problems and forms of oppression against indigenous people during the hacienda era. All social issues could be solved through proper evangelization and fervent religiosity, so they thought. Critical second-generation evangelicals turn this historical narrative on its head.
Although they recognize positive aspects of religious conversion, they also consider the negative ones as well. Through alternative narratives of GMU missionization and the transformative promises of religious modernity, second-generation questioners pave the way to decolonizing Kichwa Christianity and breaking down GMU paradigms of otherworldliness, which they see as contributing to an enduring “sad life” present.

In re-narrating GMU missionization and the evangelical conversion of their elders, second-generation evangelicals claim that 1) GMU missionization was another form of colonization and oppression of Kichwa indigenous people, systematically violating and negating “the right to [indigenous, religious] self-determination” (the first being the Spanish Catholic colonization of the 1500s) (Centro 1997: 55); and 2) social and economic inequalities (e.g. discrimination, poverty, environmental destruction) persist in the present due in large part to GMU otherworldliness and its legacies.

One of the primary means of oppression was epistemological: GMU missionaries controlled and “colonized” indigenous converts through literacy practices and the Bible (see also Kirsch 2008; Riemer 2008). They did not encourage indigenous people to reason and think analytically. Marta asks:

> Why didn’t they [the missionaries] make us analyze? Why did people have to listen to the gringos and accept everything that they said as the truth? Why didn’t they [advocate for] Andean theology? Why didn’t they relate [anything] to the mother earth [K. pachamama]? Why didn’t they relate [anything] to human rights? Because knowing that we were oppressed, marginalized, they oppressed us even more using the Word of God... the Word of God is goodness. It’s justice. It’s respect. But...they weren’t respecting us.

Of particular importance to critical second-generation evangelicals is that missionaries did not contextualize the Gospel in terms of “indigenous reality” or “cultural values” (see also Gualán 1995: 33). Marta uses the metaphor of a potted plant: “And I say well our land is here. [The
missionaries] brought a potted plant and they put it here... their own plant in their own pot. So we said “that pot is pretty. That plant is pretty. Okay.”

Furthermore, missionaries cultivated lay pastoral leadership but did not provide professional theological training. GMU missionaries also discouraged secular study beyond elementary school, envisioning indigenous people “in the countryside their whole lives” (Centro 1997:48). Henry Klassen himself came from a rural Mennonite Brethren and had little formal education (See Guamán 2002: 28; Klassen 1977).

By imposing a strict and extreme set of rules of personal conduct and asceticism, GMU missionaries also did not allow indigenous people to think for themselves. One progressive scholar calls missionary ethics the “ethics of no”—“no smoking, no drinking, no going to parties...no, no, and no!” Missionaries rejected local practices such as drinking without offering concrete reasons, other than that doing so was bad in the eyes of the Lord. Marta told me:

When I was questioning I remember I felt anger. I said but why is it that the gringos ... had to say no no no no without giving a reason... For example I have understood that anything in the extreme is sinful. If you eat too much, that’s a sin, and if you don’t eat anything, that’s also a sin. But if you eat what’s necessary, that’s pleasing to God. So the reason was lacking, the reason why not to drink. So I think that’s what bothered me.

Marta made it clear to me in our conversations that she was not against the gospel or the fact that missionaries brought the gospel. However, instead of just saying “don’t drink, don’t smoke, don’t dance” Marta thinks the missionaries should have taught moderation, trusting that indigenous people could come to their own conclusions even though they were illiterate.

According to second-generation activists, mass conversion was not the triumphant, linear march of progress and “liberation” that it signified for their parents. Social and economic inequalities (e.g. discrimination, poverty, environmental destruction, lack of development) persist in the present. GMU missionary dualistic ethics precluded believers from sufficiently
meeting enduring “sad life” social and economic inequalities. These issues cannot be solved through evangelizing or religious salvation only. One progressive told me he thought if the Kichwa church continues to place emphasis on dualisms and otherworldliness, it will become obsolete. Second-generation perspectives challenge a dominant narrative, reproduced both locally and in scholarly literature, about social change since conversion, holding that conversion solved all the problems of “the sad life.”

According to Malan (2004:13, my translation from Spanish), GMU missionaries and first-converts ignored “development, education, and material advances thinking that the coming of Jesus was near” and thought that poverty or lack of material possessions on earth did not matter because one will be rich in heaven. Marta made a similar point by bringing up the lyrics of a popular hymn in Spanish: “There up in heaven I will walk; dressed in white I will walk”. “But what about now? It’s on this earth that we have to fight, as friends, through solidarity, addressing problems and needs ... [such as] water, land, food, unemployment, poverty, nutrition.”

Marta says that the “previous generation only talks of heaven.” She says her father’s generation “believed in God. That’s it.” Although her father, Pastor Charco, recognizes the importance of education and social mobility, his train track metaphor maintains a spiritual/material dichotomy—the idea that “the material and the divine should never mix”—by visualizing the spiritual and material on separate rails. He privileges salvation as the most important destination and the spiritual path (i.e. belief in God, accepting Jesus Christ) the only one that will take you there. First converts and pastors follow GMU missionary ethics, which emphasize strict asceticism, personal salvation, and the afterlife over “things of the world,” including practical skills to gain employment and political participation. “But what about the
physical and the mental?” Marta wonders. “They have taught us that you have to pray to God but they never taught us to make bread. They never taught us about nutrition. They just said pray to God. He will provide. It’s true. One has to pray to God but ... [also] you have to work in order to eat.... I also talk about God but I like to work holistically. Health, employment, the economy, politics ...”

Rather than envisioning two parallel train rails, one of which leads to eternal salvation, second-generation evangelicals began asserting the need for “holistic salvation” (S. **salvación integral**) beyond the strictly moral or spiritual. One should live one’s faith in the here-and-now “in integral form, taking into consideration social, economic, and spiritual dimensions” (Paredes and Arroyo 1995:5). One progressive defined holistic personhood as: “... living spirituality ... based on his own life experience (S. **vivencia**), his own culture, his own cosmovision, his own roots and his customs, also in his own struggle ... in terms of politics, economics, religion. Being a new person means developing in a holistic manner.” To live as whole spiritual persons means getting involved in academic, political, and development activities. These principles of holistic living, personhood, and salvation constitute a new, shared, and collective generational identity.

**MERGING THE POLITICAL, SPIRITUAL, AND CULTURAL IN PUBLIC LIFE**

Critical actors backed up their visions of a new, integrated, and contextualized approach to Kichwa Christianity with concrete projects, initiatives, and practices in regional and national political, academic, theological, economic, and religious arenas as well as in their communities and everyday lives. Second-generation evangelicals began to involve themselves in public life and seek structural solutions for social problems rather than relying on evangelizing and strict asceticism as the solution to all social problems.
Political Awakenings

GMU missionaries frowned on political participation and taught first believers to respect authority as Paul wrote in the letter to the Romans (Andrade 2007:166). By the late 1990s, however, evangelicals had redefined political activity as a way to serve others in the name of Jesus Christ (Andrade 2005). At first, the evangelical-based national organization FEINE, formed in 1980, was concerned primarily with defending the “Sacred Scriptures.” FEINE came to play a critical role in uprisings and later national electoral politics, particularly since Marco Murillo, a university-educated man in his thirties representing a “new generation of indigenous leaders,” assumed the presidency (Lucero 2006:39). FEINE now promotes cultural, social, economic, political, and spiritual development through political participation, equality, and improved access to resources.

In 1996, indigenous evangelicals formed a political party named Amauta Jatari, later renamed Amauta Yuyay, meaning “Wise Thought” in Kichwa. In 2004, three indigenous evangelical mayors were elected in Chimborazo—in Colta, Guamote, and Alausi cantons—and various indigenous evangelicals won provincial council seats (Andrade 2007:168). When Pedro Curichumbi won the mayorship in Colta (2000-2004), it was the first time an evangelical had become a public authority in the canton. His re-election (2004-2008) represents the first time a

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95 The first indigenous national congressman (Izquierda Democrática party) was evangelical, a pastor and translator working closely with GMU missionaries. He was elected in the 1980s.
96 Andrade (2007:165) claims that when evangelicals finally entered the political arena via FEINE, Catholic-based CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador) considered their demands to be out of place and character. CONAIE leaders accused evangelicals of being opportunists, allying themselves with whomever was governing at that time in order to gain access to public works and leadership positions. My informants in Colta have a different take on CONAIE. Indigenous evangelicals became disillusioned with CONAIE after participating in political protests in the 1990s. They say evangelicals were the primary ones participating in uprisings in the uprisings in Chimborazo at first but that they grew resentful because they did not feel all their hard work in protesting was recognized by CONAIE leaders. Evangelicals accused CONAIE of working for the good of their own leaders and their own leaders’ communities. The relationship between CONAIE and FEINE is far too complex to do justice here.
mayor was re-elected in the history of the canton. At the national level, the former president of FEINE, Marco Murillo (a second generation evangelical) was elected provincial congressman (S. Asambleista Provincial) in 2009. The evangelicals of Chimborazo can boast two members of the National Assembly, two mayors in Chimborazo, and one former mayor among the ranks of successful regional- and national-level politicians.

Evangelicals claim they have always been important actors within the indigenous movement (Guamán 2002, Centro 1997) and related activities: uprisings, marches, dialogues, state administration, and political party representation. My Colta informants emphasize their participation in the 1994 uprisings against the government’s new Agrarian Reform Law, during which thousands gathered on Sisapamba’s soccer field and people blocked roads for fifteen days. According to Guamán, the indigenous evangelical involvement in a later uprising in January and February 2001 was particularly influential (see Guamán 2002:34).

Progressives, Ecumenism, and Indigenous Theology

GMU missionaries discouraged religious ecumenism and encouraged converts to separate themselves from Catholics. When younger indigenous evangelicals began migrating to urban areas, they were exposed to various different churches and denominations, including other Protestant missions, mestizo evangelical churches, the Charismatic Catholic church, Theology of

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97 Pedro Curichumbi ran the municipal government with a strong evangelical identity, focusing on principles of consensus, citizen participation, and transparency (of budget and resource allocations). Ricardo noted proudly that Pedro Curichumbi actually implemented these principles at the local level before they became ones guiding the reformed national constitution under Rafael Correa. Andrade (2007:169) paints a much more negative picture of evangelicals in terms of what they did to municipal projects and initiatives from the previous administration and their political clientalism.

98 Andrade (2007:166) is more pessimistic. She writes: “Even though there has been a process of self-reflection and self-criticism concerning the questionable legacy of the missionaries, some inculcated behaviors and values come out in critical moments” (my translation from Spanish). Andrade goes on to discuss 2006 protests against the signing of the Free Trade Agreement with the U.S., when the evangelical base supported protests in Chimborazo, but evangelical leaders defended the free trade agreement.

99 The law called for the privatization of water to increase production of non-traditional export crops at the direct expense of peasant production (Selverston-Scher 2001).
Liberation, and Pentecostal Churches (Malan 2004). Exposure to different Christian denominations appears to have played a role in emerging challenges to GMU Christianity.

Riobamba progressives are migrants from evangelized rural communities whose lives converged in Riobamba in the 1990s when they were in their twenties, working on their high school and university degrees, and studying theology.\footnote{Compare to Joanne Rappaport’s (2005: 22) analysis of activist and intellectual networks “that have expanded the localized scope of the indigenous community…”} Liberation Theology, in particular, played a crucial role in the critical subjectivity of progressives. Many progressives hold degrees in theology along with (secular) high school and university degrees. Progressives received their theological training at Universidad Biblica Latinoamericana (UBL) in Ecuador (extension classes) and San Jose, Costa Rica in the 1990s. UBL takes an ecumenical approach and advocates the methodologies of Latin American Liberation Theology: reading scriptures “starting from the historical reality and transcending the dualism of spiritual experience” (Duque 2008:156). UBL is committed to “gender, racial, and economic justice” (Duque 2008:160).

In the 1990s, efforts to define evangelical Christianity in a holistic manner through promoting “indigenous theology” emerged across Latin America (de la Torre 2002: 34). The Latin American Congress of Evangelization (S. Congreso Latinoamericano de Evangelización, CLADE III) met in Quito in 1992. The congress theme was “The Whole Gospel for All Peoples from Latin America” (S. Todo el Evangelio para todos los Pueblos desde América Latina). In June 1994, the Consulta sobre Teología Indígena met in Perú. Twenty-three indigenous leaders from Ecuador, Perú, Bolivia, and Chile met to discuss the evangelical church among indigenous peoples.

Following these trends, progressives promoted new textual practices based on the cultural identities and principles of Andean indigenous peoples, “reading the Bible with Andean eyes.”
his two books published in the early 2000s, progressive Julián Guamán (2002, 2003) targets the fundamentalist and moralistic tendencies of the indigenous evangelical movement and argues that it needs to be based on “indigenous theology,” not on Western, missionary dogma. One of the major problems progressives have with GMU fundamentalism is that: “it doesn’t permit contextualization or biblical interpretation with Kichwa eyes or vision. It rejects the use of exegetical and sociological tools to read and study the Bible, because ventures to use these interpretive tools are considered attempts against the Bible’s infallibility” (Centro 1997, my translation from Spanish; see also Guamán 2002, 2003). “Our faith and theology should reflect, explain, and meet these challenges head on” (Centro 1997:53, my translation from Spanish).

Despite the GMU legacy of colonizing indigenous people through biblical literacy practices, “[t]he appropriation of literacy [also] containe[d] within it its own subversive potential” (cf. Kirsch 2008:11). Rejecting the more literalist interpretations typical of their parents’ generation, younger believers incorporate native, de-colonized, and feminist meanings into religious texts. 101 New textual practices thus become the basis of activist projects of social justice, gender equality, cultural revival, and religious reform.

Progressives seek inspiration for an Andean reading of the Bible from ideas about personhood and relatedness from “our culture”:

... basing ourselves first in the principles of cosmovision like the relationship of complementarity. For us co-existence is fundamental. Making a bridge is fundamental. Balance is fundamental—reciprocity, complementarity. From there read the Bible, from there do theology, from there do the liturgy.

Progressives contrast ideals of “holistic personhood” in “our culture” with the “antagonistic dualism [of Western Christianity]” (Centro 1997:53, my translation from Spanish). Although

101 According to Collins and Blot (2003:4), literacies are “intrinsically diverse, historically and culturally variable, practices with texts” (Collins and Blot 2003:4). Among indigenous Christians, multiple literacy modes exist, including biblical, theological, secular/schooled, electronic/computer, and corporeal. Each is associated with different generational and/or gendered subjectivities.
Andean philosophy and Western Christianity both rest on dualisms, progressives make a distinction between dualistic evangelical doctrine, in which one entity is considered superior over another (e.g. man/woman, spirit/body, good/bad) and Andean dualisms operating according to the principles of reciprocity, complementarity, and relationality.

For example, progressives evoke romanticized principles of Andean gender complementarity, glossed as kari/warmi in Kichwa (man/woman). Kari/warmi represent separate but equally valued male and female categories that form a unified whole. Gender complementarity is expressed in spatial organization and the sexual division of household labor (see Allen 1988; Harris 1978; Isbell 1976). One progressive told me, “for indigenous people complementarity is essential; man exists only when there’s woman, hot/cold, big/small, all of that is not marking a distance but a complementarity.” He explains further that in “the Andean world,” the relationship with others within the community and with nature (K. pachamama) is holistic, not about an individual, transcendental relationship with a monotheistic God as in the Christian religion.

Reading the Bible with “Andean eyes” involves finding points of convergence between the Bible and indigenous knowledge and experiences. The activist project is one of inculturation in discovering Christian truths in their own cultural traditions. For example, the agrarian context of the Bible can be compared to people’s lived realities of pastoralism and poverty in rural communities. Jesus’s healing can be compared to the midwifery practices of “our grandparents.” Natural elements mentioned in the Bible (e.g. John Chapter 9 when Jesus leads blind man to sacred water) can be compared to the importance of water in Andean practices.

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102 A similar kind of theology of inculturation in which Christian truths are discovered in other cultures is promoted among Catholic missionaries in Bolivia (see Orta 2004:3). However, there are several key differences between Catholic missionization and progressive intellectual work and organizing. For one, progressives go against the grain of church pastoral ideology, whereas the ideals of inculturation are used by the Catholic Church as official pastoral ideology in the evangelization process.
Notions around the Christian God can be compared to people’s ancestral notions of spiritual beings.

It is possible to read the Bible “with Kichwa eyes” and still maintain an evangelical identity because “the Andean culture is not exclusive. It’s able to enter into dialogue with other cultures. It doesn’t reject. It finds complementarity.” The progressive activist project is focused on re-introducing the principles of complementarity to find more of a balance between “the Andean” (S. lo andino) and evangelical Christianity that would make for a more “holistic” indigenous Protestantism.

Progressives have spread this new theological approach through a variety of means. In 1993, ringleader of the progressive vision, Gerónimo Yantalema, started the Indigenous Center of Theological Studies (CIET) to promote an “indigenous hermeneutics of the Bible.” It was the first university-level indigenous theological department at the university level in the country (Centro 1997:43). CIET began as a department of CONPOCIIIECH; it was later moved to FUIDE and it now operates under the name Instituto Superior de Estudios Andinos.

One former student of CIET, a migrant to Riobamba from a rural parish, describes the experience of taking CIET courses as “free[ing] myself of everything they had ever filled my head with.” He had been kicked out of his local congregation, where his parents were deacons, for participating in dance, sports, and local festivals. He found acceptance among like-minded “crazy ones” of his age cohort in a similar process of self-evaluation.

Progressives also disseminate their approach through workshops and courses provided to youth in their rural communities as well as to religious leaders and pastors in organizations such as CONPOCIIIECH and FEINE. They have been influential to an extent. Between 1998 and 2000, a series of national congresses of pastors held by FEINE tackled the issue of indigenous
culture and evangelical Christianity. Attendees vowed to “privilege culture and gospel” (Guamán 2003: 104). However, progressives have not influenced pastoral training provided by CONPOCIECH or the Pastor’s Council over the long term.

**Crossing the Evangelical/Catholic Divide**

In addition to theological activities, progressives were also instrumental in redefining relationships with Catholics and indigenous Catholic practices by forging religious ecumenism in their sociopolitical and economic activities. Although most indigenous evangelicals are loyal affiliates of the Board of Indigenous Evangelical People and Organizations of Ecuador (FEINE) and Amauta Yuyay, progressives cross the evangelical/Catholic divide in their social organizing and political participation by affiliating themselves with the Catholic-based Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) and its political arm Pachakutik. By 2010, progressives had gone national and international, gaining prominent political posts such as national assemblyman and Foreign Policy Advisor at the Ecuadorian embassy in Spain. In 2010, some progressives had left Pachakutik to support Rafael Correa’s political party, Alianza País.

In 1995, progressives founded one of Chimborazo’s first indigenous non-governmental organizations (NGO) called The Foundation for Indigenous Development (FUIDE, Fundación Indígena para el Desarrollo).¹⁰³ FUIDE promotes “holistic development”, gender equality, environmental sustainability, social justice, and research. The services it provides to rural, indigenous communities include intercultural educational programs and services benefitting young children and parents; educational scholarships for youth; community development projects in the area of organic products and farming; and services to the handicapped. Though

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¹⁰³ In 2010, my research was sponsored in part by FUIDE. At their request, I assisted the organization by getting donations of early childhood education materials for their programs. I also offered weekly English classes and translation help. Most of the progressives I originally met in 2002 no longer worked at FUIDE because they had gone on to secure prestigious political positions elsewhere, though they continue to hold positions on FUIDE’s directing board.
most employees of FUIDE are evangelical, the organization embraces ecumenism in its work with rural communities.

One can look at the speech and ritual practices of FUIDE employees for examples of how Catholic/evangelical dichotomies are broken down; despite being primarily evangelical, they refer to each other as “friend” or “mashi,” a term used only in the Standardized Kichwa dialect. Most Kichwa-speaking evangelicals, including most in Colta, do not call each other “mashi” but rather “brothers” or “sisters” (of faith). The term indexes one’s Catholic indigenous affiliation and connections to CONAIE politics (historically associated with Catholicism). Although I never had an opportunity to witness them gather to worship, I was told of services they organized at their office in Riobamba that incorporated Catholic indigenous symbolism. When I accompanied them to conduct outreach activities with teachers in Otavalo, they went out to a discotheque at night.

**CONTEXTUALIZING THE “SECOND CURRENT”**

In his classic work on the role of generations in mediating process of cultural and historical change, Mannheim (1952) describes “fresh contact” as the social and historical process by which youth come into contact anew with accumulated heritage and take a novel, distanced approach to the proffered material, an awareness of a process of de-stabilization (Mannheim 1952:301). Following Mannheim, anthropologists since the 1980s have recognized that “coming of age at particular moments creates telling fault lines through which meaning is transformed” (Rofel 1999:22; Rosaldo 1980; Yanagisako 1985; Ginsburg 1987, 1989).

This “second current” in the Kichwa Church reflects the changing political, economic, and religious landscape of Ecuadorian society in the post-hacienda era (Tolen 1999), particularly post-1980s. Kichwa Church and organizations have never operated in a vacuum.
Correspondingly, their new embrace of principles such as “holism” and “Andean” or “indigenous” come not just from within the religious movement itself. Indigenous evangelicals were engaged in and instrumental in similar changes in post-hacienda society as their Catholic counterparts (e.g. rural to urban migration, education, professionalization, politicization). By engaging in these wider trends and making their engagement consistent with their own religion, indigenous evangelicals found the tools to counter old GMU missionary ideologies.

One critical factor was the emergence of an upwardly mobile “middle class” of educated indigenous leaders and professionals in Ecuador, including bilingual educators, leaders and organizers, university students, small business people, and artisans (Meisch 2002). Since small landholdings in the countryside after agrarian reform were insufficient to sustain a household, many indigenous people migrated to cities to pursue other economic activities besides agropastoralism (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2004; Macas, et. al 2003; Centro 1997:39). Indigenous people took advantage of new educational opportunities there (de la Torre 1999). In the late 1980s, the bilingual education movement took off to promote Kichwa language and literacy. It was an important training ground for many indigenous leaders today (Collins 2004: 52; Selverston-Scher 2001). Barry Lyons’s (2006) ethnography of Chimborazo’s indigenous Catholics shows how new opportunities for youth to go to school and read the Bible in the decades following agrarian reform profoundly altered elder-youth power hierarchies.104

In Ecuador, NGOs, including faith-based organizations increased after the “development decades” of the 1950s-1980s (DeTemple 2012:2). A more localized and “needs based” approach to development focusing on “whole person” language flourished after the 1980s (DeTemple

104 In the hacienda era, elders were thought to possess supreme knowledge based on life experience. They gave moral instruction and instilled respect in younger generations through ritualized corporal punishment (Lyons 2006).
Development organizations of all types (state, NGO, religious, secular, foreign, national), including World Vision (Lucero 2006:43; Stoll 1990) and Map Internacional (Guaman 2006) have been highly active in impoverished central Chimborazo (Tole 1999:36) since the 1960s. In the 1980s, while in her twenties, Marta worked for MAP Internacional, a “nonprofit charity promoting total health and hope” in underdeveloped regions of the world (see http://www.map.org/). Through MAP Internacional, Marta first learned about the concept of “total health” (S. salud integral), or the idea that health involves spiritual, intellectual, and physical wellbeing. These new ideas would serve as the basis of her questioning of the “previous generation.”

Another critical and related factor was the political-ethnic resurgence of indigenous peoples in the 1990s. Ecuadorian intellectuals and politicians were traditionally elite white-mestizos (de la Torre 2006). Upwardly mobile indigenous people in Ecuador have become the “organic intellectuals” of Ecuador’s indigenous movement (Silverston-Scher 2001). They have headed the “increasing prominence of indigenous organizations and issues in the national political arena” since the 1980s (Tole 1999:36). The political-ethnic resurgence of indigenous peoples took the form of large-scale and very effective national uprisings beginning in the

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105 DeTemple (2012:69) defines “alternative” development as “development strategies that privilege bottom-up local initiative, implementation, and independence over top-down modernist models based on Western teleology of progress.”
106 According to Guaman (2006:28), MAP Internacional is an NGO that was created in 1954 to provide basic medical assistance, and the prevention and eradication of diseases. Later on the organization promoted community health. It started out working with indigenous evangelical organizations, communities, and churches but now also works with the state and other non-religious entities.
107 Rappaport (2005) and de la Cadena (2000), following Italian Communist theorist Antonio Gramsci’s distinction between traditional intellectuals and organic intellectuals, understand indigenous intellectuals in Latin America to be “organic intellectuals” in their role in “nourish[ing] the imaginings of emergent working-class groups” in a struggle for hegemony (Rappaport 2005:11). Rappaport and de la Cadena broaden the concept “intellectual” to include not just traditional academic figures but any producer of subjugated knowledge (de la Cadena 2000:275).
The Catholic-based CONAIE (Confederation of Ecuadorian Indigenous Nationalities) formed in 1986 and has been the most visible organization in Ecuador’s indigenous uprisings. After CONAIE formed a political arm named Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik\textsuperscript{109}-Nuevo Pais in 1996 (Whitten et al. 2003:210), indigenous leaders began to successfully move “into the halls of power” (Whitten 2003:x) through election to government posts such as congressman, prefecturate, mayor, and provincial councilman (de la Torre 1999; Colloredo-Mansfeld 2004:197; Pallares 1999; Zamosc 2003).

As opposed to the once dominant ideology of mestizaje (see Whitten 1981), this new rising indigenous middle class and group of politicians in the Ecuadorian highlands has not sacrificed indigenous identity (Black 1999). Although racist attitudes persist in Ecuadorian society (de la Torre 1999:01; Zamosc 2003:52), indigenous people have maintained traditional dress and hairstyles, articulated their own projects of nationhood, and represented “being Indian” as something dignified, respectable, and worthy in the public realm (Weismantel and Eisenman 1998).

**WAKE UP: RECYCLING FIRST GENERATION TROPES AND DESIRES**

While generational tensions among evangelicals today are a reflection of post-1980s Ecuadorian society as we shall explore in this section, they are also a product of the promises, institutions, ideologies, and forms of morality that mass conversion and Christianity itself brought about. In narrating generational differences, second-generation evangelicals reproduce similar tropes of religious modernity as their first-convert parents in their efforts to break from

\\textsuperscript{108} Communal organizational processes instigated as far back as the 1930s with the Ley de Comunas of 1937 (Lucero 2003; Macas 2001), and inter-communal provincial organizing since the 1970s, and regional and national organizations since the 1980s (Clark 2005) paved the way for the large-scale national protesting of the 1990s.

\textsuperscript{109} Pachakutik is a Kichwa term for “the return of space time.”
As I discuss in Chapter 2, in the initial period, first converts defined themselves as “modern” in relationship to non-convert indigenous Catholics by relating religious change to rationality, forward thinking, and social liberation and progress. They use metaphors of sight and awakening to link initial religious conversion to evangelical Christianity with other material/modern processes such as land ownership and schooling.

In their narratives, younger, critical questioners do the same, this time in relationship to their older, first-convert counterparts. They cast themselves as “seeing” agents and their elders as “blind” in their adherence to missionary conservatism. For second-generation evangelicals, tropes of sight and sightedness index their educational and political “consciousness” relative to older generations and serve to reinforce generational differences. When I asked Daniel about generational differences in an interview in 2007, he told me:

Talking about the first generation. There’s a lot of respect for the religion. A lot of fear. Fear not of the gringos but of God. Now with the second generation. It’s as if a little bit of the respect, the fear of God has been lost. [Katie: Why?] Because a lot of times we analyze from an educated point of view. So people of this second generation are no longer how should I say it like a blind person. Rather, they have their own thoughts, their own ways of acting. [Katie: What are the thoughts? How are they different?] It emerges that one should not be a slave. [Katie: slave of?] Of many things. Let’s say for example that I am no longer a slave of the pastor. I can’t be a slave of the church. I can’t be a slave of deacons, in that sense. Or rather, what emerges is a form of libertinage.

Daniel goes on to say: “Back then indigenous people were a little bit blind. They didn’t know anything about politics.”

Believers also map modern tropes related to generational distinctions (e.g. open eyes, lucidity, newness, youth, and progressiveness) onto space. This is apparent on multiple levels:

from the vantage point of urban-dwelling progressives looking at Colta as the “center of

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110 Bilgrami (1992:841) notes a similar phenomenon in the area of Islamic reform: “moderate Muslims' fundamental commitment to a doctrine that contains features that are often effectively invoked by the absolutists whom moderate Muslims fundamentally oppose.”
colonialism,” Colteños’ self-perception of being more educated than other cantons, San Mateo in contrast to Sispamba, and Christ King Church in contrast to Harvest Church. To start, urban-dwelling progressives construct rural space along the lines of conservative/progressive, with communities more newly evangelized and more distant from the GMU missionary hub considered to be more radical. Progressives construct a religious activist geography by locating the “new generation” vision in places peripheral to the Colta missionary compound. Progressives themselves hail from rural communities peripheral to GMU missionary stations, such as Cebadas, Guamote.

In the progressive view, Colta is a conservative stronghold. One progressive, Minister of Culture, dropped me off in his car along the road leading from the Panamerican Highway to the old missionary compound after driving me to a carnival parade in Guamote. As we approached the turn off to “The Association,” he asked in jest, “Are you sure you want us to drop you off at the center of colonization?” (Referring to GMU missionaries as colonizers and surrounding inhabitants the unwittingly colonized). With a wink and smile he pressed on: “Why is it that you want to research the colonizers again?”

Colteños, for their part, imagine themselves as more modern and progressive than other cantons of Chimborazo. Metaphors of sight and wakefulness are also employed to imagine Colta as more educated and professional than other cantons of Chimborazo. One evening in 2010, Marta, Daniel, and I were in their kitchen listening to the radio. On the radio, Colta’s Catholic

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111 Parallels can be drawn here to Catholic missionaries in Bolivia and their construction of an “Andean pastoral geography,” wherein outlying Aymara hamlets were “sites of indigenous (Christian) authenticity in contrast with central towns and cities” (Orta 2004:113).
112 A celebration that lasts several days in February.
113 While driving down the Pan-american highway with an indigenous Catholic priest, we passed the entrance to my field site. He broke into an impromptu mock Kichwa hymn: “All believers go to heaven; all Catholics go to hell.” The lyrics targeted the conservative Evangelical position on salvation, that Catholics are not Christians and will not be saved.
mayor, Hermes Tayupanda, a graduate of Colta’s own Jaime Roldos Institute, stated that the canton had the distinction of being home to more professionals than any other canton in Chimborazo. “Is that true?” I asked Marta. “Yes,” she replies. Daniel chimes in. “People in Alausí [another canton in Chimborazo] are only just beginning to wake up.” I clarified, “Oh, so Colta already woke up?” “Yes,” Marta says with certainty, “We are awake.” Colteños attribute their wakefulness to evangelical conversion.

San Mateo residents, for their part, imagine their community as progressive and exceptional relative to their evangelical counterparts in Sisapamba. San Mateo is a young community relative to Sisapamba, having broken away from its parent community Sisapamba in 2002. Correspondingly, San Mateo residents see themselves as younger, more educated, more urban, more successful in politics, and more religiously progressive than neighboring Sisapamba, even though both are considered evangelical. Sisapamba residents are supposedly older (due to younger residents migrating to other places) and focused more on agricultural and commercial (business) pursuits than education.

San Mateo’s Christ King Church goers differentiate themselves from Sisapamba’s Harvest Church in a similar vein: as more open to giving opportunities to women and to youth. Since splitting from Harvest Church, members of Christ King have intentionally not appointed a pastor. Instead, local lay leaders take turns preaching, with the occasional visit from Marta’s father. They see their church community as challenging some of the age and gender hierarchies that characterized their participation in Harvest Church. Youth and women are given more roles: directing, picking up offerings and tithes, preaching. Daniel says: “We are open in that way. Our church is the only one that has given space for women, starting with girls all the way up to elders. We give them the opportunity to learn to express and defend themselves.
San Mateo residents cast Sisapampans as people that “don’t understand anything.” They are “stupid” for not taking advantage of agrarian reform to purchase land and “poor” and resentful as a result. In the 1990s, San Mateos say Sisapamba thwarted their efforts to develop and urbanize the community (e.g. put street lights up around the football field). When the two communities split, Sisapambas (mockingly) called San Mateo residents “New Life” (K. mushuk kawsay). They countered San Mateo’s actions by using Christian tropes of modern and religious subjectivity to challenge what they perceived as San Mateo’s excessive sense of superiority and desire for social progress.

San Mateo residents continue to organize to receive government bonds and housing under the administration of Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa since 2007, further setting them apart from neighboring Sisapampa. As a result of their participation in the MIDUVI (Ministerio de Desarrollo Urbano y Vivienda) government program, thirty-one MIDUVI houses were erected in the community. MIDUVI residences are uniformly built, small, concrete, square constructions consisting of a kitchen, living room, and two small bedrooms, and, as is customary in indigenous communities, a bathroom set apart from the main home. By contrast, in Sisapamba no MIDUVI homes exist.

San Mateo continues to see itself as an exceptional community made up of students, professionals, and important public figures.  

Community leaders aspire to keep improving their community by making it a multi-faceted epicenter of religion, education, sociopolitical organization, and tourism. In 2009, a gigantic auditorium fit to accommodate up to five hundred people, built to promote “art, culture, and education” and bring in people from all over the province was built atop the land IERAC had designated for a community center under a

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114 Even community members with little or no formal education reiterate this idea of San Mateo as made up of educated professionals.
Community president who was also a provincial councilman (2005-2009)—Ricardo Guacho. Community leaders’ visions aligned with Colta mayor’s plans to make Colta Lake a tourist attraction by building a boardwalk and playground and charging an admission fee to enter. In 2010, plans were in the works to build a large dining hall serving students at the local teaching institute.

According to one community leader, San Mateo’s vision of catering to tourists and visitors is a dream that comes especially from young people.

...*The little old people don’t see any longer.* They say no, no, we are fine. What for? But people who are studying, professional people, already have another way of advancing ... Because they’re growing physically and psychologically, youth have another vision that needs to be incorporated. We have to incorporate it so that youth and adult thoughts are balanced” (my emphasis).

San Mateo’s newly elected 25 year old president, Gerardo Mora Sanchez, embodied this youth vision in a 2010 PowerPoint presentation to the community:115

> We are trying to take this community to new levels, from an average community [focused on grazing animals] to an educated *ciudadela*, educated in the sense of managing trash, educated in the sense of generating income not just for individuals but for the benefit of the community... We don’t want to be the typical community that only cares about assessing fines and that’s it. We want to take people in this community to a level in which we are knowledgeable, learning new things every day.

> “Times have changed,” Oswaldo says to the men and women who had gathered in the schoolhouse that day. Whereas land and animals once defined power and wealth in the countryside, he explained, today knowledge and information are crucial. “We have to point in that direction” he says. He suggested health, cooking, accounting, and water/environmental management classes. Gerardo reminded the community that under Rafael Correa’s education

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115 The fact that Gerardo was elected community president in the first place reflects the community’s efforts to integrate the voice of youth more. Community leaders used to be older adults, for the most part. Perspectives and opinions of the youth were generally not taken into consideration during community meetings. This was because experience was valued, something that usually came along with age.
reforms, a B.A. degree was not enough anymore, that people needed doctoral degrees now to get and keep their jobs.

Gerardo also announced that San Mateo’s goal this year would be to change its name. As residents first began populating the area after agrarian reform, the community became known as Lower San Mateo, to distinguish it from a community populated by x-huasipungueros at a higher elevation called Upper San Mateo. With the name Lower San Mateo, Gerardo says, “we are putting ourselves down” and “it hurts our self esteem.” Most community members agreed with the name change, not wanting to be “below” or inferior to anyone. Soon after I finished my fieldwork, leaders succeeded in officially changing the name to San Mateo Valley. Following the community’s vision of itself as urbanized, the community also began a project to give each of its small roads an official name and a street sign.

In all of the aforementioned examples, tropes of seeing/blind; colonizer/colonized; free/slave and young/old are recycled and mapped onto generations and rural spaces to produce difference and breaks among indigenous evangelicals. We can make sense of these dynamics if we consider second-generation critique to be, in some key respects, an effect of the “transformative promises” of evangelical conversion and the ways in which the conversion process benefitted some indigenous people in certain locations more than others. In other words, the conditions making critical subjectivity and newly modernizing projects possible were set in motion and facilitated by the process of mass religious conversion and religious modernity itself. Second-generation critical perspectives are enabled—at least to some degree—by the very same processes, ideologies, and subjects they problematize.

Not all indigenous believers benefitted from the promises of Christian modernity to the same degree. Chimborazo’s “questioning” evangelicals have benefitted the most from mass

116 Traditional Andean spatial norms of binary complementarity take on a different connotation.
conversion’s “transformative promises.” Age is a critical factor; as those who were children during the initial conversion period were the first age cohort to attend school full time and become literate at a young age, enabling them to become more formally educated than their parents (as well as most Kichwa pastors, who tend to be older, and who were not encouraged by missionaries to become professionally trained). They were the first in their communities to attend high school, attain university degrees, and become professionals. Second generation evangelicals view educational experiences as enabling their cultivation of critical detachment and new forms of sociopolitical action. Daniel, for example, is a high school teacher and principal with a B.A. in Intercultural Bilingual Education. His parents, by contrast, have no formal schooling and are illiterate. Adult graduates of Atahualpa School in Colta such as Daniel feel their early schooling at the hands of missionaries was crucial to their advanced studies, careers, and success in public life.

Children involved in early schooling and church leadership activities honed public speaking skills, which they used to their advantage in public life as politicians and leaders later on in life. Marta says she developed her “strong voice”...“opening the way for other women” when she taught biblical lessons over the radio. As a pastor’s daughter with public speaking skills, Amauta sought her out to run for political office in the 1990s. (Marta ran twice for provincial councilwoman, but was not elected). Gerónimo Yantalema, evangelical progressive and national assemblyman in 2010, also attributes his leadership capabilities to his leadership experiences in the evangelical church.

In addition to early schooling and church experiences, university studies were crucial to critical subjectivity. Ricardo, a middle-aged San Mateo resident with two university degrees told me: “University sensitized us and so we changed the discourse and we started to influence
[others in saying] that you have to participate in the state because the country is everyone’s not just one small group of people’s.”

Even talk of “Andean eyes” is a reflection of the progressives’ privilege indexed in the modern trope of sightedness. Progressive critique stems from the privilege of having attained advanced university and theological studies and involves naming indigenous practices and values in a language and lexicon with which most community elders are unfamiliar (cf. Rappaport 2005) and that index religious and political identities seen as contrary to evangelical identification. Of their own admission, progressives have “assimilated things that the west has theorized about the Andean world (S. lo andino).”

Community and church members in San Mateo, for example, do not use concepts such as “Andean” or “cosmovision” in religious or everyday speech. One time I asked Daniel’s father, a first convert in Sisapamba, what he thought pachamama (nature) and pachakamak (God) meant. He responded: “I don’t know. [Pachamama] means this world I think. Pachakamak I don’t know. We don’t understand those words.” Progressives argue that Andean philosophy lives on in indigenous communities, in practice: it’s “not in the discourse but in the doing.” You can find “cosmovision” in the “way of life:” how children are raised, how people relate to animals and plants and nature, how food is shared during social events, and how songs are sung in Kichwa.

In addition to factors of age, certain communities benefitted more than others from agrarian reform efforts and the promises of Protestant modernity. Social frictions that lead to tensions between San Mateo and Sisapamba stemmed from the uneven process of agrarian reform and evangelical conversion. Those who converted first and had close relationships with
outsiders such as missionaries, government agents, and volunteers were the first to purchase hacienda land.\footnote{GMU missionaries supported agrarian reform endeavors (Gellner 1982:141).}

According to my elderly informants in San Mateo as well as Cornell University investigators working in collaboration with IERAC at the time, most Sisapamba residents were reticent to purchase land (see Andean 1965: 65-66).\footnote{The Cornell University report calls Sisapamba residents “indifferent” to development in general. “This community is completely lacking in public facilities,” the report reads (Andean 1965:65).} Sisambans thought the government was deceiving them: that these outside agents were really out to steal their children, or that they would charge more for or collect taxes on the land later on, or that they would promise parcels of land and accept down payments only to later take it away. Some didn’t want to bother, anticipating that the hacienda would come back eventually anyway and that efforts to purchase land would be in vein.\footnote{That social conflict occurred between factions of indigenous peoples over agrarian reform complicates a simplistic indigenous vs. white/mestizo conflict narrative. On some haciendas in Chimborazo actual battles- with guns, death-- took place over the parcels of land, with IERAC agents and indigenous peoples in favor of land re-distribution on the one hand and those manipulated by the hacienda owners not to get land on the other.}

They perceived purchasing land as something evangelicals and people of means did. Miguel Quishpe, one of the three “young evangelists,” remembers Sisapamba residents saying things like “We are poor. God is poor. We also have to stay poor.” Another elder remembers them saying “Those evangelicals need [the land]. We are poor. We don’t want it.”\footnote{Former huasipungueros did not have to pay anything for the land. Those who purchased land during this time claim they did so at a reasonable price. Land could be purchased on credit and paid back within five years.}

One Catholic Sisapamba resident claims that the root of today’s divisions can be traced back to the fact that certain first converts received financial support from missionaries. This created resentment on the part of non-believers as well as later converts. Elders have passed on these old resentments over financial matters to their children. The idea that evangelical families
received financial support directly from missionaries is refuted by many of my informants. However many first converts benefitted economically from their close relationships with GMU missionaries. Missionaries hired evangelical converts to treat patients at the clinic, paying what was considered a generous wage at the time. Missionaries also hired first converts to do jobs not common among indigenous peasants at the time such as disc jockey and Kichwa-Spanish translator.

As descendants of those who benefitted from close relationships with missionaries, Marta and Daniel are considered more privileged than others in San Mateo; they possess envied material markers of success such as a car, computers, more than one home, and more than one store, and they have also completed more formal education than most. This uneven process of agrarian reform and evangelization created conflicts and stereotypes that are reproduced to this day.

Christian mass conversion thus has fractal effects in future generations. Irvine and Gal (2000:37-39) define fractal recursivity as a semiotic process in which “an opposition or contrast that operates at one level is projected onto another level” (Ahearn 2012:275). Webb Keane (2007:50) applies the concept fractal recursivity in his discussion of reform movements: “each reformer is capable of projecting onto the older institution vices similar to those against which the earlier dispersion had earlier defined itself.” Fractal recursivity is an effect of Christian modernity playing itself out internally over time, creating distinctions amongst indigenous evangelicals. As Wardlow (2002) argues, modernity requires the external distancing of “others” as non-modern; this can happen within particular social groups as well.

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121 Missionaries paid 5 sucres per day, whereas the going rate for wage labor in the areas of constructing buildings and wells was 25 cents per day, not even 10 sucres per week.
Rofel (1999:7) argues based on her fieldwork on women workers in China’s silk industry that “the very idea of generational differences”—that of a group of people related horizontally in terms of shared experiences based on a linear idea of history and cultural notions of vertical ties through kinship “overcoming and surpassing that which came before”—“emerges ... simultaneously with the pursuit of modernity.” Modernity’s meta-narrative of progress values the “continuous production of the new” (cf. Seramatakis 1994: 21). Once resisters of the status quo and agents of change in their own right, first generation converts in Chimborazo now represent the status quo in the eyes of their children and grandchildren, that which needs to be surpassed and overcome.

Religious critique among younger generations is a discursive construction that should not be seen as necessarily reacting to an already existing, steadfast religious conservatism on the part of elders, but rather playing a role in producing it. Second-generation critique defines “first generation” ideologies as orthodox, conservative, anti-modern, and “blind.” However, first converts are not necessarily non-critical, “blind,” a-political, or anti-modern followers of GMU doctrine only concerned with God and getting to heaven- at least that is not how first converts see themselves or construct their own histories.122 As I delineate in Chapter 2, religious conversion gave first converts critical language to collectively critique and address the harsh social, ethnic, and economic oppression of the time. Perhaps “second current” questioning has lead evangelical gatekeepers to articulate the GMU fundamentalist/conservative position as “truth” more loudly to counteract what they take to be emerging “heretic” and “liberal” viewpoints that threaten it.

122 As Mannheim (1952:297) claims, it is false to assume that younger generations are “progressive” and the older generation *eo ipso* conservative; the intellectual or practical orientations of youth are not determined by biological age but rather made manifest in certain social and cultural contexts. Furthermore, generations constantly interact.
Pierre Bourdieu (1977) offers a way to look at this phenomenon: challenges to “doxa,” or the taken-for-granted, self-evident and undisputed established order can lead to a shaking up of the “field” (heterodoxy), as well as a hunkering down and protecting of the barricades (orthodoxy). Doxa’s “truth” is only revealed “when negatively constituted by ... competing discourses” on the part of dominated classes (Bourdieu 1977:168-169): “The dominated classes have an interest in pushing back the limits of doxa and exposing the arbitrariness of the taken for granted; the dominant classes have an interest in defending the integrity of doxa or, short of this, of establishing in its place the necessarily imperfect substitute, orthodoxy” (169). Orthodoxy exists only in so far as it opposes heterodoxy and rejects the “competing possible” as blasphemies.

READING GENERATIONS “WITH ANDEAN EYES”

Thus far this chapter has focused on the breaks that second-generation critical detachment produces across time, rural space, and families. One might conclude that the social effects of such discourses are divisive: producing multiple breaks, subject positions, differences, and tensions. While this is true to an extent, such a conclusion is too simplistic. As I argue in the previous section, second-generation evangelicals reproduce key tropes of rupture that their elders used to justify mass conversion in the first place; in this sense, the break ironically carries out the religion’s “transformative promises.” In self-consciously breaking from the “first current” to create a more “holistic” Christianity, however, their ultimate goal is to build a bridge: integrate that which they see divided in two by the first generation along spiritual/secular lines. In their generational narratives, interactions, and movement across space, second-generation evangelicals move rather fluidly between opposing perspectives and positions in an attempt to integrate them.

123 I owe this insight to Linda Seligmann’s (2012) discussion of Bourdieu in her essay in Restless Anthropologist (Gottlieb 2012) on the changes the “field” of anthropology has undergone in the span of her intellectual lifespan.
In this section, I explore further the ways in which second-generation evangelicals see themselves as mediators of difference between “first” and “third” generations and related binaries: old/young, rural/urban, illiterate/highly educated, religious/secular, saved/lost. Second-generation evangelicals are typically fluent in multiple languages and dialects (Old Quichua, Standardized Kichwa, and Spanish). They seek urban opportunities and maintain ties to their rural communities and churches, either by living there (in the case of San Mateos) or visiting frequently (in the case of Riobamba progressives). The anecdote with which I opened the dissertation is a prime example. In summary, Marta and I were in her kitchen, in the same house in which she grew up. She was looking outside the kitchen window recalling how as a young girl she would often find her parents deep in prayer outside there in the early hours of the morning. As she was talking, she happened to glance over at her teenaged children watching the T.V. in the adjacent living room.

One aspect of this interaction that bears emphasis is Marta’s awe of her parents as “gospel heroes” (Chapter 2) and nostalgia for a time when believers took prayer and religious devotion so seriously. I witnessed this emotion and admiration on the part of adult evangelicals repeatedly during the course of my fieldwork. One afternoon while walking down the road in San Mateo with Daniel, we stopped to observe Tayta Fernando, the 80-year-old blind and semi-deaf former huasipungero I introduce in Chapter 2. Tayta Fernando was sitting outside of his home, by himself, praying loudly in Kichwa as he did more than once every single day. Daniel also expressed admiration for his father-in-law Samuel Charco. With respect to his struggle against persecution and his leadership: “Who am I?” he asked the congregation just after the CONPOCIIECH event honoring the first pastor. “My father-in-law was such a well-known man. He served so many people. Everyone knew him. Who am I?” Daniel once filmed his father-in-
law writing a sermon at his home in Quito. In the video, Pastor Samuel is crouched over an old typewriter, typing slowly, squinting to see the page. Daniel came to me, excited to show me the video he had taken. “This is what I mean by the religious conviction of our elders,” Daniel and Marta seemed to say at every turn.

Despite their self-criticism (*S. autocriticarse*), questioning, and skepticism, second-generation evangelicals remain deeply connected to the paradigms and relationships they seek to criticize. They still identify as evangelical and as members of the same religious community and family to which they were born and raised. “I’m not against the gospel,” Marta reminded me while explaining why she started to question. Marta and Daniel are church leaders and participate actively in most weekly church activities. In 2010, Daniel and Marta were deacons of Christ King Church; Marta participated in the women’s church choir. Marta often brings up the metaphor of a sifter in our conversations, acting out the motion with her hands as if sifting flower, meaning that she strives to hold on to the good parts of the religion and discard the negative ones. Nostalgia for the early years of the evangelical movement and awe and emotion towards their elders are expressions of what needs to be kept close and dear in the process of critical detachment.

Marta’s narrative carries rhetorical force, though, primarily because of the stark contrast drawn between her religiously devoted parents and her T.V. watching teenaged children. Her concern is over the reproduction of evangelical identity across generations. Chimborazo’s evangelical parental cohort is situated in the middle of this process of religious decline. Marta explains it this way: “My father’s generation believed in God, that’s it... My generation has questioned a little bit but they haven’t gone beyond questioning. They’re stuck questioning... the
third generation has lost the first generation’s spiritual faith in God. The third generation has lost the thread. Not all have.”

Inhabiting this middle position between two age cohorts, I don’t see second-generation evangelicals to be “stuck” as Marta suggests, but rather strategically shifting their age and generational affiliations depending on context. Durham, building on Evans Prichard’s work on Nuer age sets, argues that youth is a relational category, a “social shifter” (Durham 2004). In one context, Marta paints a romanticized picture of first-convert elders, taking on more of the elderly position. In another, she distances herself from their parents’ (supposedly) un-critical or “blind” adoption of an imposed religion, taking on more of a youth position. In fact, whenever I would ask Marta or Daniel which age ranges the category of “youth” applied to, they would often joke and avoid the answer by saying that even though they were in their late forties, they still considered themselves quite “young.”

During one evening of the Pastor’s Day Conference, 48-year-old Marta took the stage to discuss her father’s legacy. She gave an emotional and impassioned speech in Kichwa in which she took on the “animating” role of elder speech (see Chapter 2) to offer moral guidance to fallen youth believers. On another occasion, however, while helping me interpret from Kichwa to Spanish during an interview with Tayta Fernando, Marta took on the voice of youth. Marta was helping me explain to the man the importance of disseminating his life experiences to younger generations in the form of a book. She said, “Elders know and act. We youth do not act. We do not practice anything.” By saying “we youth”, Marta relates to an age cohort that’s not technically hers in talking with the much older elderly man.

Marta’s experience also shows that where one stands in the dual committed/critical dialectic can also change across one’s own life course. I saw this over the course of field research
visits spanning eight years (from 2002-2010). For example, I first met Daniel and Marta and the Riobamba progressives and learned of their “questioning” in 2002. It was the height of “second current” critique and projects. In 2007, when I returned to conduct preliminary dissertation research, I expected to continue hearing Marta’s criticisms. I didn’t. Surprised, I asked Marta why she thought that was.

“It’s like that questioning stage ... already passed,” she said. Searching for the right words to express this shift, she says that she’s now found “interior peace.” Her goals are no longer seeking “power,” but rather “tranquility.” “I feel cured,” she told me—cured, I suppose, of the anger and indignation she had felt in 2002 when I had first met her. And then she went on to reiterate a version of the ethics of living well I had come to hear so often during my fieldwork. She stressed the importance of harmonious family relationships over material goods: “You see how we live,” she says. “We don’t have anything, material things I mean. We don’t possess a lot of things but we thank God. You see that we have peace at home, tranquility, solidarity, understanding, familial unity, [and] mutual assistance in the family.”

Several life changes contributed to Marta’s shifting perspective. In 2002, Marta’s resentment of GMU missionization stemmed from the fact that she felt she lacked practical skills to gain stable employment because the missionaries did not teach believers, as she puts it, to “make bread” or “to fish.” By 2007 her change in perspective had to do, in part, with feeling older and being busier. She had full-time employment as the mayor’s assistant and was finally chipping away at her university degree online. With no more time for political campaigning or leading Bible workshops for women, Marta focused on finding “internal peace” through church attendance.

I often heard indigenous speakers temper upward mobility narratives with statements that emphasize humility and poverty. Marta and Daniel possess a vehicle, several computers, and a newly constructed, vacant home further up the hill, but continue to live in an old home that is in shambles.
I noticed a similar “shifting” dynamic among progressives as well. Though they live in Riobamba and/or Quito, where they became educated and currently pursue professional and political careers, they visit their rural communities and churches frequently on the weekends and on special occasions such as Carnival or evangelical conferences. Although religion has become less and less the platform progressives use to make social change given their success in national political arenas, most progressives still go back (and are invited) to speak at CONPOCIIIECH and COPAEQUE events and workshops. In dealing with regional and national evangelical organizations, progressives downplay their critical discourse to maintain ties with their “brothers and sisters of faith.” Progressive Julian Guaman’s (2002, 2003, 2006) published works are a case in point. His books are more informational than critical because, he explained to me, he feels indebted to the evangelical religion and FEINE and sees his books as tokens of gratitude.

Another progressive—lawyer and assistant to a national assemblyman—became a pastor in 2010; he and his wife had spent years as de-facto pastors at their local church in a remote community of Guamote, implementing some progressive, feminist, and semi-Pentecostal perspectives. As part of his ordainment ceremony at his local church, which I attended, elderly, established pastors tested his doctrinal knowledge. His answers, to my surprise, reproduced the conservative/fundamentalist doctrine he so vehemently opposed as a member of the “new generation.” In 2010, other progressives seemed to have gone the opposite direction: decidedly disassociating themselves from the evangelical movement. I asked one such progressive if he still considered himself evangelical: “I’m not Protestant. I’m protesting!” he joked (S. no soy protestante; estoy protestando).

I have indicated the limitations of an analytical framework that focuses solely on generational breaks or gaps. Progressives offer us an alternative to consider. Earlier in the
chapter I explain how progressives use “Andean logic” such as complementarity and wholeness as a textual strategy, what they call “reading the Bible with Andean eyes.” Reading with Andean eyes is not just a textual strategy for them, however; progressives use Andean philosophy as an analytical framework to understand contemporary social and religious relationships. As I have shown already, progressives apply “Andean logic” to re-situate the mass conversion past as a disruption of the ideal of complementarity. GMU missionization represented a confrontation between two logics (Andean and Western Christian) in which aspects of Andean spirituality (e.g. traditional medicine, music) were condemned as sinful (and therefore inferior).

Progressives also apply “Andean logic” to make sense of the contemporary conflict between religious fractions within the Kichwa evangelical church. One progressive explained complementary opposition to me during an interview in 2007 by drawing two parallel circles with a horizontal line connecting the two. Human beings and the ayllu, he explained, are the bridge (K chacana) that provide balance between pachakamak or God (the circle on the left), which is abstract, and Pachamama or (mother)land) (the circle on the right), which is concrete. In Andean philosophy, hanan (above) and urin (below) can be represented in the parallel circles as well, he said. He explained that hanan is good spirit and the urin is bad spirit, but that there isn’t a concept of negative or positive. Both are necessary, he emphasized. Balance is important. Finding the bridge is important. He said,

In our churches there is an aggressive tendency but there is always a negotiating tendency...According to the [religious] leaders, we are the urin because we are critical...In our perspective, they [the conservative fundamentalists] are urin because they do not share our indigenous schema; they have adopted the external. Even so, we co-exist because sometimes we give workshops to pastors even though they call us liberals...In reality we need each other because if there wasn’t a conservative line we couldn’t be critics.
Similarly, CONAIE (seen as atheist or “Satan” in the eyes of conservative pastors) and FEINE have to co-exist, he says, in order to strengthen the indigenous movement as a whole. Even within FUIDE, he notes that some people have adopted more radical perspectives than others. Under the right leadership the two perspectives can co-exist in a balanced way within the same organization. In their view, the basic structure of the Andean cosmovision philosophy “lives on, if only in a secret manner” in regional and national political movements and urban NGOs, as well as rural communities.

Andean philosophy as an analytical framework can be further applied to understanding generational tensions and conflicts in the second-generation process of creating alternative ways to imagine Kichwa Christianity. In making this case, I do not mean to reproduce “Andeanism” common in traditional ethnographies of the Andes. As Starn notes, “Andean culture thrives…but it is never the expression of primordial mountain traits, so much as the product of visions that people continually rework in ongoing processes of innovation and recombination” (Starn 1991:85). Orta (2000:200), for example, argues that Bolivian indigenous activists use the concept of ayllu (community) less as something that has survived from the past and more as “a hint of an emergent alternative modernity” and “an alternative space of sociability” in reimagining Bolivian society. Second-generation questioning evangelicals are by no means a homogenous group. Some are more “conservative” than others. As such, many would take issue with calling dynamics within their movement and communities as “Andean.” Nonetheless, a commonality I see shared is a desire to find balance between two extremes, though their ways of talking about and seeking that balance differ, and who or what represents the extreme viewpoint to them differs.

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125 Orin Starn (1991) defines “Andeanism” as the non-indigenous representation in ethnographic writing that portrays contemporary highland peasants as “other” and outside the flow of modern history.
Pastor Cesar Macas, for example, is critical of progressives because he thinks they have gone too far in their critique. Pastor Cesar equates the progressive vision with Liberation Theology, which he calls “super wrong” in that it doesn’t “maintain the doctrine into which we were born.” He wants to maintain the conservative, fundamentalist, missionary doctrine in which he was “born” but combine that with “indigenous cosmovision” and semi-Pentecostal worship practices. Pastor Cesar, nonetheless, agrees with the progressive idea that, despite ideological differences, indigenous evangelicals seek to find balance, unite, and resolve differences. After reading Susana Andrade’s (2004) ethnography, Pastor Cesar thought she got that core element of indigenous Protestantism wrong in her analysis. According to Pastor Cesar, Andrade did not approach her analysis from “the indigenous perspective.” He told me: “The indigenous perspective is that no matter what happens we stay unified. We fight on the corner, but come back here [together]. In the West it's not that way, you separate and that's it. But here [among indigenous people] it’s not like that.”

Similarly, one San Mateo resident sees conflict between Sisapamba and San Mateo not as an anomaly but rather characteristic of indigenous evangelical relations. She says, “evangelicals always get mad, fight, and then afterwards ask for forgiveness and they end up okay, friends. That happens a lot.” By 2010, efforts were being made on both sides of the dispute to reconcile, or at least maintain cordial interactions. “Wake games,” which I discuss in Chapter 7, are another example of efforts to resolve differences between Sisapambas and San Mateos.

What, then, would an “Andean reading” of the religious and generational gaps, breaks, differences, tensions, and conflicts I have discussed thus far in this chapter look like? We would have to leave Pastor Charco’s train tracks metaphor aside for the moment and instead entertain the “bridge” (K. chacana) metaphor that one progressive invoked. Critical questioning and
related projects represent and produce not just a (generational) break but also a (generational) bridge: the break in a sense, *is* the bridge. Second-generation discourses and projects represent the centrifugal forces that (re)produce binaries and the centripetal forces that ensure their mediation.

**“WE ARE PROFESSIONALS!”**

In this chapter, I have examined the nature of second-generation critique, historicity, and subjectivity emerging between the mid-1980s and the early 2000s and explained the forms of political and religious action that fueled and accompanied it. When I conducted my dissertation fieldwork in 2010, it was clear that what was once prohibited is now celebrated as a direct result of mass conversion and indigenous church leadership.

In public, regional events organized by CONPOCIIECH and the Pastor’s Council that I attended in 2010, second-generation professionals and politicians indexed God’s greatness and the achieved evangelical promise of liberation from oppression and slavery. During a CONPOCIIECH event to commemorate elderly leaders, a former president of AIECH used the fact that the evangelical movement had more professionals now to indicate that, “We’ve surpassed the life of slavery. We’ve left it (behind).” “Thanks to God,” he said in Kichwa, “an engineer is directing (the panel), a doctor is archiving documents. How great is God!” In the past, getting ahead meant becoming literate. These days, he said in Kichwa, “To get ahead we need professionals.”

The “doctor” he referred to is Pastor Cesar Macas, one of the Kichwa church’s youngest and most academically-prepared pastors and leaders. Representing the second-generation cohort, Pastor Cesar embodies the “integrated” approach. He pastors a Church in Chimborazo, holds a leadership position on the Pastor’s Council, assists a national assemblyman in Quito, where he
lives and pursues an MA degree in Family Psychology. Despite being too young to have experienced the early years of CONPOCIECH, he served on a panel of elderly pastors to discuss the organization’s history. While the first-convert pastors gave personal accounts in their speeches, Macas provided a systematic overview of the history of the movement (broken up into five stages) based on his own research. The moderator introduced him by reading Pastor Cesar’s entire curriculum vitae out loud.

During an interlude of a chorus competition at a Pastor Council weekend gathering, Cesar Macas was the emcee. He called all “professionals” up on stage in order to say a prayer before collecting the offering. Although only a small group or five or six men approached the stage, he announced excitedly: “we [evangelicals] are professionals!” He also said, “We even have an assistant to the governor! Look at that! Our team is complete!” On Sunday, evangelical indigenous politicians from around the region and nation—usually considered too “liberal” or marginally evangelical—were invited as honored guests to speak. In these ways, indigenous professionalization and politicization is framed within a collective “moral narrative of modernity” (Keane 2007).

Although politics and education are now embraced (though not un-ambiguously) by believers of all ages as evidence that God exists, conservative religious teachings and literal textual practices and the social actors who espouse them (i.e. older, male pastors) remain dominant in Kichwa churches and religious organizations. The “neurological centers” (Centro 1997) for the conservative position are CONPOCIECH’s biblical institutes and theological

126 Even though political participation and education are widely accepted now, people still worry that moderation will be breached, and that all-too-easily, political, economic concerns and lax moral practices will tip the balances in the opposite direction. Believers whispered to me, for example, that an event around the election of CONPOCIECH’s next president at Colta headquarters, felt too much like a political rally. Colteño believers support evangelical political participation but are still concerned that politicking will lead to further divisions and competition among evangelicals along party lines. “Pastors with political motives” are a major concern; most Colteños think pastors should not become politicians.
seminaries, which impart GMU Christian doctrine to aspiring pastors, women, youth, and Sunday school teachers. Second-generation initiatives and individuals promoting indigenous cultural traditions and principles, non-literal biblical exegesis, and gender equality remain highly ambiguous, worldly “threats” and are silenced and policed in religious speech in churches and organizations. The contemporary polemics around young females performing liturgical dance in Kichwa churches, which I explore in depth in Chapter 6, show this to be the case into the present.

CONCLUSION

Generational narratives and identifications enable second-generation evangelicals to articulate new ways of decolonizing Kichwa Christianity. Their approach is one that departs from the “train track” metaphor of their elders to integrate the spiritual, political, socioeconomic, and cultural. Second-generation evangelicals re-narrate and destabilize dominant narratives of missionization, conversion, and related “transformative promises.”

However, the process of critically re-generating Christianity on the part of the first age cohort to be born and raised evangelical in Chimborazo is, ultimately, not best understood in terms of breaks, or “generation gaps.” Generational identifications reflect a particular moment of transformation in post-1980s Ecuador, but, as I see it, they are also effects of the tensions, relationships, and subjectivities emerging out of the process of initial mass conversion itself. Second-generation evangelicals are deeply embedded in and committed to the religion they critique; those who “question,” in fact, benefit from a more privileged position deriving directly from the political and economic entailments of the first conversion.

Second-generation evangelicals’ affective and cross-generational familial ties and their commitment to the religion in which they were raised continue to run deep. Critical reflexivity
does not hinge on leaving behind one extreme on the binary for another but, instead, building a bridge between the two. In this way, through critical detachment second-generation evangelicals attempt to make the inherited religion *theirs* as well as more relevant to the youth coming of age in the contemporary moment. These youths constitute a “third” generation adults fear is rapidly leaving the religion in pursuit of other sorts of “modern” desires (e.g. technology, Westernized fashion trends). As we shall see in Chapter 5 and 6, however, adult evangelicals (just like their own parents in a sense) fail to realize that the work of critically re-generating Christianity cannot just come from them as parents. It has to emerge from the youth themselves.

Before turning to youth religious subjectivities and practices in Chapter 5 and 6, the next chapter continues to focus on middle-aged evangelicals and the ways in which they experienced, contested, and benefitted from (or, as the case may be, did not benefit from) the religious and modern ideals passed on to them by their elders. In Chapter 4, I examine the distinctly gendered dynamics of this generational process of evangelical reproduction and analyze a key aspect of second-generation questioning: feminist critique.
CHAPTER FOUR,
GENDERED TRANSFORMATIONS: MARRIAGE, FEMINISM, AND OPEN SECRETS

“The Quichua woman in the Christo-Pagan pagan culture was barely one level above a donkey... In Christian circles the woman’s position and role has been transformed. Yes, she still works in the field but not as a beast of burden. She still bears children, but not because of having been used and abused during the last *fiesta*. She still handles the small plot of ground and cares for the animals while her husband weaves, or works in town, but now she works as an equal, not as unpaid slave. Her daughters now go to school too. She has much more say in family and group decisions” (J. Klassen 1975:148).

In a short subsection of his thesis entitled “Liberation of the Indian Woman,” Jacob Klassen (1975:148) suggests that one of the sociological “benefits” of mass conversion is “the consideration for and treatment of women.” In a similar vein, an indigenous evangelical leader of the Kichwa Church writes: “it’s worth noting that the Indian that beat his children and his wife now not only loves them but also educates his children in [both] secular and spiritual [realms]” (Gualán 1995:32).

Among indigenous evangelicals in Colta, women’s “liberation” from the past oppression of the pre-conversion hacienda era is at the core of evangelical narratives of conversion and religious modernity. The dominant narrative of “transformative promises” maintains that family life and Kichwa women’s social status improved after conversion to evangelical Christianity. Domestic violence was eradicated, so the dominant narrative holds, and indigenous girls, along with boys, began attending school. San Mateo, a community considered “100% evangelical” and highly educated, embodies these gendered promises.

By all accounts, domestic violence was once widespread in Colta. Elders recall that “before knowing the Word of God, men treated women really poorly” and that women lived as “slaves.” Adults over the age of fifty or so witnessed spousal abuse frequently. They recount typical acts of violence such as a man striking his wife on the head with a club or her face with
his fist. Battered women suffered broken limbs, bruised faces, and swollen eyes. Believers blame male drinking for physical violence. Anxieties over women’s sexuality fueled male rage. Serafina told me about her aunt’s husband. She recalled how he used to hit her aunt with a rod, screaming, “You’re like an old slut! Of course I’m hitting you!” According to Pastor Samuel, women regarded religious conversion as a strategy to be “liberated from the oppression of physical blows.”

In addition, religious conversion ostensibly improved women’s social status by making schooling available to girls, as J. Klassen’s ideal sketch above of the converted Kichwa woman and her daughter alludes to. When missionaries first started the boarding school in Colta, they noted that only boys attended. They encouraged girls to do so as well (Klassen 1977:167). Missionaries saw themselves breaking local gender ideologies of Kichwa women as “the beasts of burden with no soul and no ability to learn” (Nickel 19-:104) or of not needing education because of their primary duties of household chores and working in the fields (Klassen 1977:167). According to Muratorio (1981:519), young evangelical women no longer covered their faces with the woolen shawl. They were more open to speaking directly to white mestizos and speaking and singing in public than other women in the area.

What about first converts’ daughters and granddaughters today? J. Klassen’s description of “liberated” female converts whose daughters “now go to school too” begs this question. This chapter tells a more complex story of adult women as subjects of evangelical families and churches. I explore their vexed encounters with the promises of marriage, social mobility, and

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127 Men are associated more with the consumption of alcohol than women in the Andes. While both sexes drink, a man’s relationship with other men is affirmed through drinking. His ability to hold his liquor marks him as a man, and, through alcohol, “friendships and agreements are sealed and kinship is acknowledged” (Weismantel 1988:188). My Colta informants said both men and women drank heavily during fiestas, weddings, and funerals but that male drinking in particular lead to violent behavior against women as well as among men themselves.
evangelical identification in San Mateo. I draw primarily on interviews I conducted in 2002, 2007, and 2010 with married (or divorced) women in their thirties, forties, and fifties living in San Mateo. Many are originally from Sisapamba and daughters of first converts, although a few women were raised Catholic in another canton and converted to evangelical Protestantism.

Consider the testimony of 47-year-old Adelita, the daughter of first converts who attended Atahualpa School as a girl. Like many women, she struggled with abuse and infidelity in her marriage. Adelita married the son of influential first converts at age 16, in the early 1980s. Adelita had high hopes for happiness in her marriage, at first.

...I thought that the oath we made before the altar- we said until death do us part so I had a lot of confidence in him in everything. As the head of the household he is responsible for his wife, for his children... I supported him a lot throughout his studies, so that he could be- could get a bit more educated... I didn’t ask for the income he earned for myself like other women. With my [own] sacrifice, my work, I helped out a lot [financially]. But this is what happened: when that problem started, he decided to leave his home. He left with it all: with his degree, with his things, with his education. After twenty-five years of marriage I was left with nothing. I was left in the streets like I was an employee whose boss never wanted to pay her a cent. I felt totally abandoned on the street. I felt like a prostitute without knowing who the father of my children was. I felt totally abandoned...

Adelita and her husband, a teacher, served as church deacons during the 1990s. When they were accused of pocketing money for a church library project, her husband was forced to resign. Problems in Adelita’s marriage began around that time, she says. Her husband abused her psychologically and physically. He told her that he had married her without loving her and that he had originally wanted to marry another girl. Then he had an affair, a problem Adelita described as “like being in hell.” Meanwhile, Adelita felt the Kichwa Church shamed her and offered little support. Eventually, Adelita and her husband divorced. Or rather, “He got divorced,” Adelita clarified. “I didn’t want to. Before God we are still husband and wife.”

128 In indigenous communities, it was common to marry at this young of an age. Young women today put off marriage until after they have finished their studies.
Adelita, a graduate of Atahualpa School as a girl, was not able to go on to attend high school. Her parents could not afford to send her. Despite the fact that missionaries encouraged girls to attend school and high school, the promises of religious modernity such as professionalization and upward social mobility were not equally attainable for all girls in the post-hacienda era. Instead of attending high school, Adelita moved to Colombia where her parents lived and worked. Adelita returned to Colta to marry the son of first converts. Her in-laws had opposed the marriage because their son had some high school education and she did not. In her marriage, Adelita sacrificed her own schooling to ensure that her husband could finish his high school degree. As higher levels of education became more valued in marriage partners in Colta, women’s relative lack of education relative to their more professional and formally educated husbands has generated marital conflict. After their separation, Adelita felt “left with nothing.”

In present-day San Mateo, fifty years after the initial conversion period, adult women attempting to follow GMU missionary and pastoral expectations, such as marrying fellow evangelicals and heeding male authority, nonetheless experience conflict in their conjugal relationships. Some of the problems they experience, such as domestic violence and husbands not providing for household financial expenses, were supposedly eradicated with mass conversion. Other problems, such as infidelity and divorce, were ostensibly not issues in the pre-conversion or initial conversion past but believers feel they are on the rise now in indigenous marriages. Whether the forms of conflict are new or old, the adult women I interviewed reiterated that “indigenous women suffer.”

Marital problems are Colta evangelicals’ “open secrets” (S. secreto a voces). It’s like that Mexican soap opera named Small Town, Big Hell (S. Pueblo Chico Infierno Grande), Marta
explained to me once. First-hand accounts in interviews and informal conversations among women provided insight into these “open secrets,” i.e. what is known by most but kept under wraps in public discourse. Open secrets include who is cheating on whom, who is or was at one point abused in their marriage, who really wanted to marry whom but didn’t, who is separated or divorced and why, who is secretly a few months pregnant at the time of her wedding. In bringing forth some of these “open secrets,” I aim to avoid reproducing in the dissertation the same silencing of women’s experiences and contestations that Chimborazo evangelicals produce in official rhetoric. Conversion’s promises, which I discuss in Chapter 2, are often publically imagined, narrated, and remembered in ways that do not reflect women’s lived experiences. Women are not publically touted “gospel heroes,” not given honorary degrees for their church service.

Examining adult women’s experiences from an intergenerational perspective expands on an underlying argument of this dissertation, which is that the process of evangelical reproduction across time has generated new kinds of religious tensions and subjectivities among evangelicals. I have discussed some of the generational ramifications. Now, I turn to their distinctly gendered contours.

A “FEMINIST UTOPIA?”: SCHOLARLY MISCONCEPTIONS

Scholarly literature on evangelical conversion and gender in Latin America suggests that women’s lives improve when behaviors valued and practiced primarily by men in pre-conversion culture—such as adultery, gambling, drinking, and fighting—are prohibited by the new church (Brusco 1995; Drogus 1997; Eber 1995; Goldin and Metz 1991; Hallum 2003). Lorentzen and Mira (2005:69) ask their readers provocatively: “have we stumbled onto a feminist utopia?” They list the effects of evangelical conversion as “[i]increased participation of men in the home,
public roles for women, challenges to conceptual dualisms, harsh criticisms of U.S. consumerism and hyperindividualism, and help with child care.”

Elizabeth Brusco (1995) calls Colombian Pentecostalism a strategic “women’s movement” that transforms gender subordination by promoting female interests and desires and raising the status of women. Evangelical Christianity also domesticates men, argues Brusco (1995) and others (Mariz and Machado 1997; Uzendoski 2003), by re-orienting male desires to the conjugal relationship, family, and household and cultivating “feminine” qualities of submissiveness and obedience. Although the present study offers one of the first gender analyses of Kichwa conversion to GMU Christianity in the Ecuadorian highlands (along with Illicachi 2014), Muratorio (1980:523) mentions in her seminal work that Protestant conversion helped reduce violence among family members and lead to greater male participation in domestic chores and agricultural labor.

In an article that surveys the anthropology of Christianity, Bialecki et al. (2008:1139), citing literature focused mainly on Latin America, argue that Christian conversion contributes to women’s “empowerment” by shifting obligations away from “lateral social bonds among consociates toward dyadic bonds between an individual and a divine alter.” Doing so makes “relationships with both human peers and superiors become less important than an individual’s relationship with God.” Bialecki et al. (2008) claim that the tenets of Christianity override the obligations of social relationships, empowering converts to challenge social hierarchies (2008:1147). Mariz and Machado (1997) also argue that Pentecostalism undermines machismo

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129 Whether wittingly or not, scholars suggest that evangelical Christianity can bring about the kind of change that Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (1974) advocate in *Woman, Culture, and Society*: Men should be more integrated into the domestic sphere, while women should be able to participate equally with men in the public realm. Many have subsequently challenged Rosaldo and Lamphere’s main thesis, including Rosaldo herself (1980). However, Lugo (2000) and Diaz Barriga (2000) show that ideologies based on a domestic/public distinction, as well as male incorporation in “domestic” spaces, continue to be relevant in Latin America.
in practice by underscoring individualism—the “new woman” or “new man”—according to moral codes of behavior.

Such depictions of evangelical Protestantism as a “feminist utopia” might surprise scholars who cast evangelical Christianity in diametrical opposition to feminist struggles worldwide (bell Hooks 1984; Mohanty 2003; cf. Smith 2008). Yet, the idea of an autonomous, intentional, willful modern evangelical female subject, “liberated” from tradition and culture, resonates surprisingly well with ideas about personhood and agency furthered by secular-liberal, western feminist scholarship.130 In scholarship that looks for the religion’s “latent liberatory potentials” in an effort to make it more palatable to feminist sensibilities (Mahmood 2005:6), the religion is seen as a conceptual and practical resource for women who are free to choose it, then recode it in accordance with their own interests and agendas. This recoding, Mahmood argues, is the site of women’s “agency.” In the case of evangelical Christianity, this collusion between Protestant subjection/subjectivity and that of secular-liberal feminism, when met with a scholarly “romance of resistance” (Abu-Lughod 1990) and determination to cast converts as “agents” (Asad 1996), leads to a certain depiction of converted women as possessing an interior agency allowing them to contest “machismo” of their own volition.

Evangelical conversion and the Kichwa Church in Chimborazo has indeed served as a

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130 The idea of “indigenous woman as victim of her own culture” is a global trope that justifies a brand of western feminism linked to whiteness, liberal rights, modernity, individualism, and freedom (Newdick 2005; Volp 2001). It involves reducing the “multiply constituted self to a gender identity posited as the site of liberation from culture” (Newdick 2005:74). It means giving up indigenous cultural markers for the “rights-bearing” Third World woman (Newdick 2005). The trope has played a role in debates about a range of cultural practices, such as African female clitoridectomy (Volp 2001), Muslim women’s wearing of the veil (Abu-Lughod), and widow sacrifice in India (Spivak 1988). Missionaries and colonial officials have justified rule in places like the Middle East and India by representing colonized women as the victims of traditions (Abu-Lughod 1998; Spivak 1988). The idea of the woman indigenous victim subject has also been used to derail indigenous political projects in Latin America (Newdick 2005) and justify war in Afghanistan (Abu-Lughod 2002; Scott 2002). The trope has likewise manifested itself in Christian missionary projects that disparage elements of indigenous “culture.”
powerful form of social critique, destabilizing gender ideologies and practices that were and are particularly detrimental to women in Kichwa indigenous communities. Yet, were there hidden costs or unanticipated limitations or consequences related to the evangelical project of “liberating” women? In what ways is the Kichwa Church itself seen as contributing to the problem of women’s oppression? As the rest of the chapter will demonstrate, conversion opened up new possibilities, to be sure, but was never simply or definitively, “liberating” to women, neither during the period of initial conversion nor in the long term.

Scholarly representations of female converts as “liberated” and “empowered” rest on problematic assumptions regarding both evangelical conversion and feminism alike. First, evangelical ideologies, practices, and institutions subjected women to new patriarchal ideas, such as male headship and women’s submission, as well as new forms of sexual discipline and control “even as they undermined other forms of patriarchy” (cf. Abu-Lughod 1998: 9). Though evangelical patriarchy does not determine women’s practices and experiences in any total sense, it does have real social effects on women (and men) growing up in evangelical households.

Second, evangelical Christianity in Chimborazo is not the “individualizing force” some anthropologists of Christianity make it out to be (e.g. Bialecki et al 2008). Cultivating religious subjectivity is a deeply social, intergenerational process. One’s religious identification is expressed and “lived” through relationships with others. These relationships are modeled after Christianity’s hierarchical ideals—religious subjects heeding God and secular authority; children heeding their parents; wives heeding their husbands—and are often negotiated with local, pre-conversion forms of relatedness and feminine and masculine subjectivity. As Uzendoski (2003:142) writes, “Evangelicals, like all Runa, are not only individuals; their identities are packed in the social relations that make up their person. They must live the
contradictions” (Uzendoski 2003:142).

Third, scholarly depictions of evangelical communities as “feminist utopias” erase the necessity for a gendered critique of the religion (cf. Smith 2008). For this reason, perhaps, local religious feminisms are virtually unaccounted for in the anthropology of Christianity. Brusco (1995), Mariz and Machado (1997), and others argue that the transformative potential of Pentecostalism to reform gender roles is achieved in practice without a conscious attempt to dismantle patriarchy; gains in women’s rights are “unintentional consequence of an increase in male duties” (Mariz and Machado 1997:49). In fact, Brusco suggests that evangelical Christianity is more effective than “self-conscious” feminist organizing precisely because it is not perceived as an overt way for women to gain supremacy over men.

As this chapter will illuminate, however, Kichwa believers in Chimborazo, in particular educated women of the “second generation” or the adult/parent age cohort, have indeed seen the need for a “feminist” critique. Since the 1980s and 1990s, some adult women and “second generation” evangelicals have claimed that in fact the Kichwa Church and evangelical Christianity contribute to patriarchal ideologies and practices in indigenous families and churches. Their arguments imply that evangelical conversion did not offer the sure-fire solution to women’s oppression.

The challenge for feminist anthropologists of Christianity, then, is to expand notions of female agency beyond the assumptions underlying secular-liberal feminism and evangelical Christianity alike.\(^{131}\) Evangelical women’s solutions to oppression and abuse are sought through, and made possible by, continuing to work within an evangelical Christian framework and holding on to conversion’s “transformative promises,” notwithstanding the fact that these are the

\(^{131}\) In her ethnography of women in the Islamic revival movement in Egypt, Mahmood (2005), for example, argues that suffering and self-esteem can be considered practices and modalities of agency for women living under the pressures of a patriarchal system and demands of heterosexual monogamy.
same institutions and promises that are sources of silencing, oppression, and exclusion. As we shall see, the “enabling constraints” of Protestant institutions and organizations in Chimborazo make local feminist critique possible, opening up the religion “to further and unexpected delimitation” across generations (Butler 1997:139).

I will return to this question of indigenous evangelical feminism at the end of the chapter. Before doing so, I review some of the new gender and sexual norms and practices GMU missionaries and first Kichwa pastors advocated during the initial conversion period in light of domestic violence and marital relationships, as well as how these norms and practices have been taken up by women in subsequent generations.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSION AND MARRIAGE IN THE INITIAL CONVERSION PERIOD AND BEYOND

Religious Conversion, Domestic Violence, and Male Headship

Evangelical conversion held a “promissory note” specifically for abused wives and children: getting the men in their lives to stop drinking and resorting to violence. In my interviews with elderly women, I learned that evangelical conversion was a strategy for some against domestic abuse in the initial conversion period, but far from a quick, definitive fix. Some first converts, in fact, experienced heightened abuse by their husbands after conversion. Some indicated that male drinking and abuse disappeared only “little by little” over time. Nonetheless, conversion held the long-term promise of a reprieve from domestic abuse.

Before GMU missionization, domestic violence was handled primarily within families. Women would defend themselves or their mothers from abusive husbands with the help of other family members. They would tie the drunken abuser up on the floor and hit him. Other strategies included the abused wife’s parents talking to the abuser’s parents. Sometimes male family members of the wife would hit the abuser. Occasionally, Catholic or civil authorities stepped in.
Sometimes the man would be taken to the priest, who would punish the abuser with a whip or rope. Sometimes the man would be brought before government authorities and be fined and put in jail for a week.

Sisapamba’s first female converts- Mama Rosa and Mama Serafina- actually experienced domestic abuse as a direct result of declaring their conversion before their husbands. Mama Rosa’s husband beat her when he was drunk for “hanging out with the gringos” (K. *gringokunapakman purinkí*, literally “you walk for the gringos”). He forced Mama Rosa to accompany him to fiestas and demanded that she recite the Our Father and the Ten Commandments.

When Mama Serafina converted, her husband was away working along the coast. When he returned, he began hitting her as soon as he caught wind that she had converted. After she was baptized, Serafina recalls her husband going after her, announcing that he was going to keep drinking even though she was evangelical. She recalls him lifting up her skirt yelling “you’ve become evangelical.” He was ostensibly looking for evidence that she had had sexual relations with the missionaries. Non-believers accused female converts of sleeping with the missionaries and being “sluts” (K. *waynandiras*). Some suspected that the missionaries raped indigenous women.

Mama Rosa and Mama Serafina attended church in secret and consulted missionaries about what to do. Mama Rosa would wait until her husband passed out drunk to sneak out of the house to attend church. “Help my husband,” Mama Serafina begged the missionaries. The missionaries visited her home frequently and offered her husband good and drink until he finally converted, a few years later.\(^{132}\)

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\(^{132}\) When I interviewed Tayta Rafael in 2007, however, he denied ever hitting his wife. “Some men hit their women but I didn’t thanks to God. We didn’t have that (kind of) problem.
In the initial conversion period, men were the first affiliates of AIECH. However, women in general were “more open to accept or to know the truth” than men, according to Pastor Samuel Charco. Given what happened to the likes of Mama Serafina and Mama Rosa, married women often waited to declare themselves evangelical until after their husbands had converted.133 Meanwhile, they would consult with missionaries and evangelical leaders in secret hoping they would convince their husbands about the Word of God.

According to several older informants, men did not give up drinking (and presumably abuse) immediately after converting but rather “little by little.” Samuel’s wife Mama Dolores says her father frequently got drunk and abused her mother. GMU missionaries started visiting the family’s house in the 1950s. Dolores and her siblings believed that listening to the evangelical hymns missionaries played on the record player would make the abuse stop. Dolores said, however, that even though her father was “listening to the Word of God,” he kept drinking for a year or longer. Mama Rosa, for her part, says it was not until her husband got baptized that he gave up drinking and abusing her for good.

The expectation conversion carried of being “liberated from physical blows” in Pastor Samuel Charco’s words had one major condition for women: submission to their husbands. Missionaries urged wives to obey their husbands if they wanted a good marriage free of abuse. As Burdick (1990) shows in the case of Brazil, evangelical Christians regard submissiveness and obedience on the part of wives as the solution to domestic violence. According to Mama Cristina, a grandmother in her sixties, when an evangelical pastor marries a young couple he advises something along the lines of:

133 In AIECH’s Libros de Afiliación 1966-1976, which I found in the CONPOCIEECH archives, the first twenty-nine affiliates are men. The first woman was not inscribed until 1968. After the first few years, membership according to gender evens out, so that by the end of 1976, 390/710 or 55% of the inscribed new members (390/710) were men and 45% (320/710) were women.
Husband don’t hit your wife. Take good care (of her). Don’t mistreat (her).
*karipish kanpuk warmita ama makachun. Alli cuidachun. Ama malratchun.*

(He) says this is the woman God has given (you).
*Kayka Dios kushka warmimi nik.*

Also women should follow what your husband orders
*Warmipish kusataka paypuk mandashkata cazuna kanchik*

And he says God has given the husband.
*Y Dios kushka kusami nik*

You shouldn’t challenge (him). You shouldn’t talk back he says.
*Mana mana kariyana, mana respondina nin.*

... The Bible says both the husband and the wife to obey (each other)
*Bibliapi willan kusapish kazuchun, warmipish kazuchun*

As long as the men abide by Christian principles of protector and provider, women shouldn’t “challenge” men, or literally “become men” in Kichwa (K. *kariyana*). The biblical passage most frequently cited to substantiate these ideas is Ephesians 5:22-24, which reads: “Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.” Colossians 3:18 is also cited: “Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.” Missionary and pastor interpretations of key Bible passages such as these that could be memorized held a great deal of weight among first convert women given their illiteracy.

When I asked Cristina if the Bible says that the man is the head, she replied definitely: “It says the husband is your head. The husband is your head. For that reason... it says you women should live obeying your husband.” Mama Rosa agreed as well, drawing a connection to wifely

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134 See Lyons (2002) for a more in depth explanation of the cultural meaning of “to become a man” (K. *kariyana*).
domestic duties. Mama Rosa thought that wives should wake up early, before their husbands, to cook for them: “The husband is the head. We women do chores.”

In the early years of the movement, Mama Dolores guided other women as a choir director, though she does not consider that “preaching.” I asked her what advice she gave to women who were being mistreated by their husbands. She responded in Kichwa, “Well I also say that it’s our fault that they hit (us).” It was the woman’s fault for not respecting or listening to her husband. Dolores said that wives should heed their husband as they respect and fear Jesus Christ. However, if the mistreatment is excessive and not the woman’s fault, then women do not have to obey (k. kasuna) their husbands, she qualified.

Elderly Kichwa women with whom I spoke in Chimborazo did not challenge or qualify the male headship/women’s submission gender ideology. First convert women seemed to see themselves as affirming and demonstrating their Christian identity and relationship to God through defending and enacting gender principles of male headship. When I asked Cristina if she agreed with the idea of men as the head, she replied enthusiastically in Kichwa: “Yes! Because of being evangelical we agree. To show that (we are) believers. Demonstrating that (we are) believers, we have to obey the husband.” Furthermore, few elderly women with whom I spoke thought women should be pastors.

**Missionization, Marriage, and Sexual Morality**

I asked first converts what missionaries and pastors preached about marriage. Besides the biblical model of male headship and women’s submission, GMU missionary lessons on Christian marriage discouraged “stealing” and emphasized religious endogamy. They emphasized sexual norms including pre-marital sex and monogamy.\(^\text{135}\)

\(^{135}\)To a certain extent, indigenous ideals of distinct gender roles, heterosexuality, short courtship periods, and lack of divorce in rural, indigenous communities were all more or less compatible with Christian
Missionaries and early pastors discouraged the common courtship practice among indigenous Catholics of “stealing” women for marriage, which involved coerced sex in some cases. A young woman would go out to pasture animals or work in the fields. A group of men solicited by the groom would arrive to where she was and take her away for the night. The girl’s parents and relatives, who often arranged the marriage, would ask her if she wanted to marry. If the girl did not want to do so, her family members would threaten her, often with physical violence, until she agreed to marry the man who “stole her.”

Mama Rosa recalls going out to the fields one morning as a single woman to dig up potatoes. One of the alcaldes approached her, claiming he was there to take her under the priest’s orders to serve him. She says, speaking in Kichwa, “the alcalde suddenly grabbed me around my waist ...and tangled me in his arms, refusing to let me go. He carried me. They took me to get married. That’s how I was married.” Unbeknownst to Mama Rosa, her parents had made an agreement with the young man’s parents. Mama Rosa says she did not like the idea of people telling her whom to marry.136

Another elderly woman similarly recalls the alcaldes picking her up against her will while she was threshing quinoa, then being “locked away” in the convent. After the proposal, brides were expected to serve the Catholic priest for one month, conducting agricultural and domestic labor, before marrying in the Catholic Church. Brides also took indoctrination classes. They were taught to recite prayers such as the Hail Mary and the Our Father and do the sign of marriage ideologies. Some local marriage practices that were particularly frowned upon by missionaries included patrilocal residency and living with one’s in-laws after marriage because of the exploitative relationships between in-laws and daughter-in-laws. This chapter focuses on sexuality in the context of male-female relationships.

136 Mama Rosa says she was pressured by older men in her family such as her uncle and her future in-laws to marry her husband. One day before her “robo,” Mama Rosa went out to collect grass. A man approached her and told her she should marry his cousin Lorenzo. Mama Rosa got angry. She yelled back: “Why do you go around telling me marry marry .... Maybe there’s another girl who wants to marry him. Why don’t you make him marry her?”
the cross. One elder who served along with two other brides-to-be recalls that learning involved a lot of fear. If a student didn’t recite the prayers adequately, the instructor would pull her ears and hit her, yelling “understand!” According to elders, priests sexually abused brides during this time. One elder claimed that if the bride had trouble learning, sleeping with the priest would get her out of having to take the exam. The priest would say something along the lines of “give me your body for [in lieu of] the exam.” These rumors are so widespread that Samuel Charco claimed, “some say the first baby [to be born] is the priest’s, not the groom’s.”

Missionaries emphasized endogamy: marrying within one’s religion and social status. One elderly woman recalled missionaries teaching that “a cow that knows how to plough shouldn’t be tied up with another cow that doesn’t know how.” As Catholics, potential mates were considered primarily on the basis of their family’s material possessions and how hardworking they were in the fields. As evangelicals, religious identification was crucial. Catholics had to convert and be baptized in the Kichwa Church prior to marrying an evangelical.

For single women with marriage on the horizon, being evangelical at the time offered an alternative to some of the more injurious marriage practices tied to the Catholic Church. However, the pressure to marry a fellow evangelical also put single women in a vulnerable position. Because not many men were evangelical at the time, Dolores had to leave her community in order to marry a Christian man. Although her future husband, Samuel Charco, was known to be a good man, she refused to marry him at first for over a year, fearful that she might be susceptible to abuse or mistreatment if she lived outside of her own community.

Cristina, who was a single young woman of 18 when her parents converted, held off converting for a year out of concern she would not be able to find a suitable marriage partner. Her Catholic family members warned her: “Don’t become evangelical. You are single. Who will
marry you if you become evangelical?” She converted anyway, and eventually found an evangelical man to marry. Her Catholic family members did not attend the wedding, however, which Cristina recalls with much sadness today.

In cases where one spouse had converted and the other not, missionaries encouraged the non-believer to convert. Married couples sometimes converted together on the spot. After her husband raised his hand during church service one day to accept Jesus Christ, Mama Ana did so as well so as “not to be left behind.” Mama Carmen, on the other hand, refused to convert after her husband, Tayta Fernando, did. Mama Serafina intervened. She told Tayta Fernando, “brother it’s not OK to be with a woman who’s not a believer. It’s like you’re living with a sick person.” She and Tayta Fernando dragged Mama Carmen down to Harvest Church and made her raise her hand. Afterwards, Mama Carmen says she went back home angry, saying to herself “how could they do this to my good life?” Eventually, Mama Carmen accepted her new identity. Fernando says, “Now the two of us, she a believer and me too, we walk (as) believers.” These examples show that women did not always pre-meditate male conversion, nor was conversion always the wife’s specific desire.

In terms of sexual norms, missionaries and early pastors discouraged pre-marital sex and having children out of wedlock. In the early days, the Kichwa Church, pastors, and elders of that time strictly watched and enforced sexual codes. A young and single man and woman seen speaking to each other alone would be ordered to marry. Couples who were suspected of having had sexual relations prior to marriage, particularly in cases of bride “stealing,” or who married without their parents’ approval were disciplined and not permitted to marry inside the church. They would get married on the soccer field adjacent to the church instead.137 This was the case

137 This sanction was approved in 1985, according to AIECH meeting notes found in the CONPOCIIECH archives.
for several of the middle-aged women I spoke with. Eventually church leaders became concerned that having weddings on the soccer field reflected poorly on the Kichwa Church. This particular form of sanction was phased out later.

Missionaries and first pastors also regulated interactions between men and women during worship service. According to Mama Rosa, men and women used to sit in separate rows in the early Kichwa Church. Missionaries were also careful when interacting with local women. Kichwa girls were not allowed to ride in the front seat of the car next to a missionary in the driver’s seat.

Missionaries also encouraged monogamy. Mama Serafina told me the following:

The missionaries Henry Eduardo and Virginia said
*$Chaytaka Don Enrique Don Eduardoka nik Señora Virginia nik*

Don’t get another husband.
*ama hapinkichik shuk shuktik karikunataka.*

There’s only one husband.
*Ña shuksolo karimi kan.*

Don’t fall in love with another. Don’t get together.
*Ama shuktikwanka ama emanorankichik. Ama tupanakunkichik.*

God has made only one, with only that one- You should be with only one.
*Dioska ña shuksolota rurashkaka chaysolowanmi- Shuksolowanmi kana kankichik.*

Woman together with her husband is how it should be.
*Warmintik kusantikmi kana kan nik.*

Like that. Thank you God for that.
*Chayta. Chayta diosolaqui Dios.*

As I explain in Chapter 2, men in Colta frequently took jobs along the coast due to the lack of local employment in Colta. Missionaries thought husbands and wives should live in close proximity to one another. Accordingly, they discouraged the temporary migration of men to cities. Missionaries often offered male converts jobs locally so that they could live with their
wives. These ideas continue to circulate today; while participating in one of Sisapamba’s collective work projects, several of the older women asked where my husband was. When I said he was in the United States, they mused that not only must I be cold at night but that he was probably cheating on me.

In the early period, CONPOCIIECH (then AIECH) leaders involved themselves in the marital transgressions of organization members. In the CONPOCIIECH archive, handwritten meeting notes from the 1970s referenced moral transgressions of Kichwa believers in their marriages and the sanctions accorded to them. Problems included women having lovers, men not wanting to live with their wives, men mistreating a family member, and men getting women pregnant and not wanting to get married. Apparently, marital problems of this nature were brought up during the meetings and leaders decided upon proper sanctions such as expulsion from the church. By 1979, CONPOCIIECH’s president began deflecting intimate issues of this nature to pastors and local churches.

With this background information on new gender and sexual ideologies of GMU missionization and the Kichwa Church and organizations in mind, let us now turn to examine Kichwa evangelical women’s experiences of marital problems stemming from domestic abuse, infidelity, and abandonment after the initial conversion period, in the second-generation or adult age cohort.

OPEN SECRETS: WOMEN’S NARRATIVES OF MARITAL SUFFERING

In the initial conversion period, intimate, married life was a dramatic site for realizing the transformative promises attached to mass conversion and demonstrating one’s evangelical identification. Marriages and families continue to be intriguing sites in which the promises,

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138 Source: Section 3 Documents entitled Libros de Actas: Metodo de Ordenacion Cronologico in Conpociech Archives: “CONPOCIIECH” Levantamiento, Sistematización, y Procesamiento de Gestión Documental
struggles, drama, and disappointments of evangelical identification play out and “sad life” suffering rears its ugly head again. By examining open secrets and their gendered implications we uncover the dynamics of Christian relatedness, sexuality, and generational reproduction as they are “lived” (cf. Uzendoski 2003).

As Uzendoski suggests, “[it] is in the social action of marriage and sexual cultural politics that Evangelical women’s selves are most at risk” (2003:142). Uzendoski (2003:142) argues that evangelical Protestantism in Napo, Ecuador “produces acute contradictions for feminine personhood, contradictions that adversely affect women’s reputations in the church and the community.” The church dictates that women should marry “pure” men. However, they are hard pressed to find such men. Men find strict asceticism difficult to maintain; they often become “fallen” (K. urmashka) during the course of marriage, as drinking is one of the primary practices associated with masculine personhood. Women are subsequently blamed for not keeping their men pure and are considered “fallen” by association. Feminine personhood depends on marriage and severing relationships from one’s natal family, Uzendoski argues. Paradoxically, marriage also puts women and their evangelical femininity and religious subjectivity constantly at risk.

How widespread physical domestic abuse is these days in Colta is difficult to quantify, in large part because it is so silenced. San Mateo elders and adults agreed that physical abuse is not readily visible as it was in the past; no one I interviewed admitted to witnessing it recently. Most agreed, following the dominant narrative of conversion’s transformative promises, that women’s lives have improved with religious conversion in this regard.139 To the extent that physical spousal violence was still an issue today, it was more so in Sisapamba than in San Mateo, according to many San Mateo residents. Even adult women who had personally experienced

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139 One elder thought that domestic violence waned after the initial conversion period but that it has increased in more recent years. One adult woman thought that physical mistreatment was eradicated but not psychological.
physical abuse in their marriage perceived their experiences as the exception rather than the norm.

Nonetheless, women’s experiences of mistreatment by their husbands and/or their in-laws, which more often than not emerged during the course of interviews, call into question the assumption that mass conversion eradicated domestic violence.\textsuperscript{140} Esther, the 52-year-old daughter of first convert Mama Serafina, a highly educated professional living in San Mateo, boasted to me that domestic violence was virtually eradicated among families in San Mateo. Nonetheless, she once admitted to me in hushed tones: “I used to suffer a lot with my husband.” As it turns out, her evangelical husband insulted and beat her when they had problems conceiving a child in the early part of her marriage. Rumor has it that he recently cheated on her with another woman. Furthermore, in 2010, Esther’s 16-year-old daughter was physically abused by her Catholic boyfriend, who hit her, scratched her face, strangled her neck, and threatened to kill her because she wanted to break up with him.

Women’s narratives indicate, in short, that spousal abuse continues. It encompasses a variety of forms: physical, psychological, and marital infidelity.\textsuperscript{141} Interestingly, contrary to the accounts of first convert elders, as well as the conclusions of Uzendoski, adult women do not cite

\textsuperscript{140} Evangelicals in San Mateo underscored that women, not just men, were to blame for marital problems. In fact, one trend I noted was that women were often implicated in some way in perpetuating the marital discord of other women. One adult woman whose husband cheated on her and left her, nonetheless ostensibly provided a space for her brother in her home to cheat on his wife with his lover. Another adult woman, whose former husband cheated on her, was ostensibly having an affair with a married man. I found women’s sexual behavior to be a source of much speculation.

\textsuperscript{141} In this chapter, I focus on cases of women whose husbands cheated on them. However, I was aware of a few cases of women who cheated on their husbands. In one case, the woman left her husband and children to live with her lover in the city. She and her husband were deacons of Christ King Church at the time and had to renounce their position. Women’s infidelity is seen as an effect of women’s “liberation” to the negative extreme, sometimes referred to as “libertinage” (S. libertinaje).
male drinking as a primary factor in the abuse. Now, I turn to some specific accounts. I already introduced Adelita’s story in the introduction. Here, we will learn more about Eva, Ruth, and Caridad.

“At this moment my life is very sad because I don’t live well with my husband.” This was the first thing Eva, age 34, told me during our first interview in 2010. Eva was born and raised in Sisapamba in an evangelical family and is the granddaughter of the area’s oldest living convert, Mama Rosa. At the time of our interview, Eva had just fled an abusive marriage to a fellow evangelical from Sisapamba, whom she wed in 2005 at the age of 28.

The nature of the abuse in Eva’s marriage was primarily psychological. “He would tell me I was ugly, that I wasn’t beautiful, that he had other girls.” Her husband wasn’t around much. He spent the bulk of the year working in Colombia. When he was in Colta, Eva felt he acted closer to his sisters and his mother and father than to her. He did not give her money.

Eva’s in-laws, though they were Harvest Church leaders, also mistreated her, an experience a number of newly married women shared. Missionaries encouraged married couples to establish their own household apart from the husband’s natal family. Residence patterns after marriage were traditionally patrilocal. Eva lived with her in-laws in Sisapamba. She was ordered to help out with agricultural tasks and was expected to do so all weekend long. She cooked for her sisters-in-law and served them. “I felt more like an employee than a wife.”

Eva says she tried “to live exactly as the Bible says” in her marriage, meaning heeding her husband. Following Christian principles of male headship, she “respected him” and “obeyed.” “When he spoke I remained quiet and sometimes (even though) I wasn’t at fault, I apologized...” But she could not keep this up for long given how she was being treated.

142 This contrasts with Uzendoski (2003:140)’s conclusion that indigenous men in Napo put their wives at risk primarily because they have a hard time following norms of abstention from alcohol due to the ways in which cultivating masculine values depends on drinking.
Eventually, she says, “I didn’t obey. I talked back already. I fought with him.” Eva’s marital conflict led her to think: “We don’t value what we learn. [We] make mistakes... We are unable to live exactly as the Bible says.”

The last straw for Eva was when she got pregnant with her son. Her husband ordered her to get an abortion. He no longer wanted more children. He accused her of cheating on him. Finally, his demands for an abortion prompted her to flee the marriage with the support of her mother and sisters living nearby in San Mateo. Eva is now living in San Mateo near her mother’s home with her two small children, ages four and one. He does not recognize his son as his own. For most of 2010, Eva held out in hopes that her husband would repent and return to her, recognize his son, and give him his last name. When her husband finally did contact her to ask for forgiveness, Eva was suspicious that his primary motivation was to get out of having to pay child support. They eventually did divorce. Eva has no plans to re-marry because re-marrying after divorce is like committing adultery, according to Bible.

On the same day I first interviewed Eva, I interviewed her co-worker, 53-year-old Ruth. “I used to suffer, just like Eva [is now],” admitted Ruth. Originally from a community outside of Colta, Ruth met her husband when she was 23 while attending a literacy course at the Colta missionary station. Her husband had been evangelical since childhood. She was raised Catholic and “became evangelical in order to marry,” she says. Ruth almost separated from her husband when her children were young because of what she described as his angry outbursts and physical abuse. He took on a lover when her youngest son was small. Ruth says her husband’s behavior improved after their eldest son married and their daughter-in-law lived in their home. “He keeps changing little by little,” she claimed. However, Ruth admitted to me towards the end of our first
interview that her husband still had affairs. “For that reason I have suffered a lot.” Ruth remains married and living with her husband.

Like Ruth, Caridad, 46 years old (born 1964), was raised in a devout Catholic family in another province. She married at sixteen years of age in the Catholic Church, then moved with her husband to Colta in the early 1980s so he could study at the teaching institute there. She converted in 1989, her husband three years after that. When I interviewed Caridad for the first time in 2002, she claimed that her husband had changed after converting. Early on in their marriage, Caridad caught him with other girls. During those difficult times she considered both leaving him and taking her own life. After converting, he told her: “I promise before you and God that I am going to change.” According to Caridad, their marriage did change; there was more affection and open communication.

When I interviewed Caridad again in 2010, however, she explained that her husband had been seeing another woman for at least the past four or five years. Although Caridad’s husband now had a prestigious job administering a secondary school, she complained that he never gave her any money for household expenses. When their son married that year, Caridad covered all expenses. Meanwhile, she worked in the fields and sold food at the high school to meet basic household needs.

Religious leaders are supposed to intervene to help resolve cases of marital abuse, disagreements, infidelity, and abandonment among members of the church congregation. However, mistreated women of the adult age cohort today claim religious leaders did not adequately address their problems.

Although Harvest Church deacons and pastor talked to both Eva and her husband, they were unsuccessful in getting him to change his behavior. Her husband “didn’t listen,” Eva said.
Since fleeing her in-laws’ household in Sisapamba, Eva attends Christ King Church in San Mateo with her children. She carries her one-year-old boy in a sheet slung over her back each Sunday afternoon service. Eva participates cautiously, unsure whether she should even attend church or not given her marital issues. She feels judged by others. Christ King does not have a local pastor with whom she can consult on such matters and she put off speaking with Pastor Samuel Charco during one of his visits to San Mateo because of the shame she felt.

Adelita sought advice and mediation from religious leaders but says she did not receive the support she needed. Rather, she felt ridiculed and blamed for her marital problems by the local pastor, her neighbors, and community leaders. Adelita’s resentment of the church goes back to the circumstances of her wedding. Adelita met her future husband at the age of 15, while she was visiting her grandparents in Colta (recall, she was living in Colombia with her parents). Adelita says that pastors saw her and her future husband having a conversation and ordered them to marry immediately. Church leaders made them marry on the soccer field because they thought they were already “united” (a.k.a. had already had sex). Adelita felt offended and singled out; she thought other couples in similar situations were allowed to marry at the altar.

Ruth, once the church choir director, has stopped attending church altogether. Ruth’s husband, in an interview I had with him, said their marital problems stemmed from the fact that his wife was Catholic and converted just to marry. However, Ruth told me she wanted desperately to attend church service and to sing in the church choir. However, her husband will “not let her” (S. no quiere mandar). He does not think she should be at the altar because of their marital problems.
THE EDUCATION MYTH: GENDERED EXCLUSIONS

Exclusion from access to literacy and schooling and processes of upward social mobility has adversely affected women in their marriages, precipitating or exacerbating the issues discussed in the previous section. In Chapters 2 and 3, I discuss how conversion’s “set of linked promises” included literacy, schooling, and upward social mobility for indigenous peoples. These “collective” processes played a role, ironically, in marking generational differences among evangelicals due to a literacy and schooling gap between “first” and “second” generations. Attaining formal education was, and continues to be, highly gendered; many women’s lives are marked by a rising *gendered* literacy/schooling gap since the initial conversion period. As Collins and Blot (2003:7) point out, “exclusions, resistances, and forms of gender, race, and class domination” disrupt the “official story” of expectations around the transformative powers of schooled literacy and modern education.

Boys and men benefitted more directly from the spread of modern schooling in rural Chimborazo after agrarian reform and mass conversion. The difference in education levels between evangelical men and women in Kichwa communities is most marked in the oldest generation. Many male elders today have at least a couple of years of formal schooling and are proficient in Spanish to some degree; female elders typically have no formal education at all, are illiterate, and Kichwa monolinguals. Dolores’s father, for example, sent her brothers to get an education at Atahualpa School in the 1960s after the family converted, but not her nor her sister. Her brothers went on to become professionals while Dolores and her sister are illiterate, do not speak any Spanish, and performed agricultural and domestic labor their whole lives.

Real transformation in the arena of schooling was expected to be realized amongst those children who were school-aged during the period of mass conversion. The educational levels of
today’s middle-aged cohort of women (30s-50s), however, are quite mixed. Some women had the opportunity to attend elementary and high school when they were girls during the initial conversion period. Although Mama Serafina was illiterate, and Tayta Rafael only had a few years of formal education, they sent their first-born daughter, Esther, to Atahualpa School. She was the first girl to attend school in the area. After graduating from elementary school and working for the missionaries as a domestic worker, nanny, and Kichwa tutor, Esther began attending the local teaching institute at age 15. “I want you to be in the future maybe a teacher or, if not, a nurse, or, if not, a secretary [something] but I want to see you in an office working,” Esther remembers her father saying. Esther is now a bilingual educator and has worked for the government since 1992. She attained the coveted status of working in an office.

When Mama Serafina and Tayta Rafael started sending Esther to school, they were heavily criticized: “Why do you have to put your daughter in school?” people would ask. “She’s a woman. She has to stay at home. Doesn’t she have something to do? Doesn’t she need to care of the animals? Women are for staying at home. She is not mestiza. She’s not a señora.” School was seen as a male-only space. By the 1970s and 1980s, social opinion on the issue of sending girls to school had changed. The definition of a “good woman” was expanding from “hard worker” in the fields to one who “knows.” Tayta Rafael would tell his daughter Esther: “I want you to be a good woman. I want you to know.” The qualities of a desirable marriage partner shifted accordingly. Klassen (1977:167) indicates that once Atahualpa School was up and running “…the boys that had some education did not want to marry illiterate girls.”

Despite higher value placed on educational pursuits among evangelicals, for various reasons such as a desire to marry young, financial limitations, cultural expectations, and
lingering fears of the government, girls raised in evangelical homes did not always finish elementary school or attend high school or university, at least not in an expeditious or consecutive manner. In households struggling financially or in which fathers were absent due to separation, divorce, or death, older daughters often assumed the work responsibilities to ensure that their brothers completed their studies. This continues to be the case.

Marta, for example, graduated high school in Quito in the early 1980s. She had reached a level of education most girls her age had not. Her father Pastor Samuel Charco encouraged her to go on to university. “You have to study. You have to reach high...You have to be someone in your life,” Marta remembers him saying. Yet even she felt she had to give up studying so her younger brothers could have the funds to do so. Her parents were poor. They had no land, just a house. With her father’s meager pastor salary, they were barely able to put food on the table. “I can’t get ahead by myself. My brothers also have to get ahead,” she thought. When Marta graduated high school, she became a vendor in the informal sector instead of going to college. When talking about this during an interview, Marta began to cry. I asked why she was crying. “Because I didn’t reach my father’s goals. They wanted me to be a doctor and I didn’t make it.” Marta finally pursued online university courses part time when she was in her forties.

Eva is another example. She grew up in a poor family with nine brothers and sisters. Her father, son of first convert Mama Rosa, attended Atahualpa School and worked as a construction worker as an adult. However, when he passed away from brain cancer when Eva was a girl, her family was left in dire financial straits despite considerable good relations and financial help from the GMU missionaries. As soon as they were old enough, Eva and her sisters took jobs as domestic workers, sacrificing or delaying their own schooling so that their brothers could go to

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143 Mama Rosa, for example, did not send her daughters to school because she thought the government took girls away to sell or ship them off to other countries.
school and high school.

Women who did not finish their schooling before marriage depended on the support of their husbands to do so after marriage. Things worked out in Esther’s case. She went against her parents’ wishes and married her boyfriend at age 17, before finishing high school. Before agreeing to marry, she told her husband he would have to put her through school. She was fortunate that her husband followed through on his promise to pay for her secondary school studies. Esther finished high school in Riobamba and got her diploma. She surpassed her husband’s level of education.

For other women, lower educational levels relative to their spouse instigated marital strife (see de la Torre 2002:32). Recall the story of Adelita I introduced in the beginning of this chapter. Like Adelita, Caridad is not as formally educated as her husband. Caridad, who grew up in a Catholic community, has a third grade education. She married young, at the age of 15. In reaction to her husband’s recent infidelity, other women in the community blamed Caridad, not him. They quipped that she did not have the same level of education that he did. Like Adelita, Caridad sacrificed her own educational opportunities in order to support her husband’s. In reality, Caridad desperately wanted to go back to school. In fact, she went to secondary school briefly but had to quit while her husband worked on his Master’s Degree. Her children were still in school and she had neither the money nor the time (due to domestic duties) to attend classes. To make matters even more difficult, her husband did not support her educational aspirations.

144 Everyone told me that Esther was the last woman in the area to be “robbed” for marriage. Technically she was, but the circumstances were different in that the man who “stole” her was already her boyfriend. He robbed her because Esther’s parents disagreed with the marriage and wouldn’t let Esther out of their sight. Esther’s parents’ desire for her to be a professional was so strong that they used physical abuse to prohibit her from marrying.
145 I also heard the opposite: educated women’s aspirations to participate in politics and non-governmental organizations instigated marital strife.
Adelita, Caridad, and others are disparaged by their husbands and fellow community members for not being educated enough; the fact that their domestic, agricultural and commercial work makes their husband’s pursuit of educational opportunities financially possible is little recognized. Furthermore, women often assume the financial burden of ensuring their children meet their educational goals, making adult women critical, in fact, in ensuring upward social mobility across generations. Several women complained their husbands had employment but did not give them money for household and child-related expenses. In those cases, the mother made ends meet and sent their children to school by engaging in work in the informal sector such as cooking or selling food at CONPOCIECH headquarters in Colta in addition to their agricultural and domestic obligations. Such activities, of course, further prevented them from studying. Ruth, for example, only has an elementary school education because her mother died when she was young. She tried going back to school after marrying and having three children, but had to stop. Her husband did not provide enough financially; all of her money had to go to educating her sons: “I suffered in order to provide for them...I want them to get ahead.”

In the case of divorce and separation, women are left in an even more precarious financial situation, with few employment opportunities to pursue given their relative lack of education. With only an elementary school education, Eva supports her family on a meager salary as a childcare worker (S. madre comunitaria, literally “community mother”) at the community daycare center. Her estranged husband works in Colombia and does not support her or their children in any way. To make matters even worse, Eva’s job was threatened in 2010. Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa began instituting new laws that would require workers to have a certain level of education in order to keep their jobs. Eva would need to go back to school to keep her job as a daycare worker.
GENDERED CONTESTATIONS

Having already discussed the nature of marital abuse in evangelical families today and the extent to which women’s exclusion from educational opportunities has exacerbated it, the rest of the chapter concentrates more specifically on adult women’s contestations of evangelical patriarchy. I show how they situate the Kichwa Church and religious organizations as contributing to the problem of women’s marital “suffering,” silencing, and oppression, rather than offering the definitive cure-all. Beginning in the 1980s, problematizing evangelical patriarchy and re-valuing women’s lives and contributions to church and society became the basis for the emergence of new forms of critical religious and gendered agency among Kichwa believers in Chimborazo.

The New Life Women’s Bible Institute, a department of CONPOCIIECH, represents an early challenge to evangelical patriarchy in the Kichwa Church, though one that might reflect the dominant “conservative” position today. According to information from the CONPOCIIECH archives, the Institute was created in 1985, under the initiative of wives of male pastors and religious leaders. They formed the institute to object to women’s secondary role as “listeners” in the Kichwa Church and the ways in which “nobody has been concerned about them.” New Life began offering systematic biblical courses for women in order to “get the women of Chimborazo ahead” so that they could more confidently “share God’s message” as teachers, wives of pastors and deacons, choir directors, and mothers. The Institute considered the “spiritual, social, conjugal, intellectual, and leadership development of evangelical indigenous women in Chimborazo province.”

Around the same period of time as New Life, the 1980s, a more renegade avenue of gendered critique I call “feminist” (for reasons I will discuss later) emerged, led by younger,
more academically-prepared women working with faith-based organizations and NGOs. Through small workshops for evangelical women in towns across Chimborazo, female leaders attempted to “raise consciousness” among evangelicals on issues such as women’s rights, gender equality, and domestic violence. Their workshops have challenged women’s oppression and silencing in the evangelical church, families, and society at large. As committed evangelicals, though, these leaders work within the same evangelical framework to do so, using Christian principles (e.g. “Christian home”) and a woman-centered reading of the Bible. Following the trend of what I call “holistic evangelism” among second-generation evangelicals (see Chapter 3), female leaders began offering instruction on matters of health, nutrition, and creating new socioeconomic projects (e.g. raising guinea pig, growing quinoa, early childhood education) along with biblical reflections and social consciousness-raising.

Before I examine these perspectives and projects in full, however, information about gender roles in the Kichwa Church is in order. In the Kichwa evangelical church, women are not officially named pastors or deacons, although, as far as I understand, there is no official decree dictating this be the case. Pastors, religious leaders, and believers substantiate women’s official exclusion from leadership and preaching roles by citing biblical passages on women’s submission such as Corinthians 14:34, which states: “Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says” (New International Version, biblegateway.com). Though aware that other Christian denominations such as Assemblies of God allow female pastors, Kichwa pastors say this has not been the case, nor should it be, in the indigenous church.

Pastors defend their position against female church leaders by reproducing gender stereotypes. During one youth workshop at Harvest Church (on the topic of social justice) a
conservative male pastor responded to one female college student’s inquiries about gender equality in the Kichwa Church. The young woman wanted to know why women could not be named pastors and deacons. The pastor reasoned with her that the “qualities” and distinct “values” of each gender should be respected.

“Of course we are all [made] in the image of God but our tasks are very different. For example the man is the head of the woman and the woman is his compliment [...] She’s his [her husband’s] helper, right? [...] But being more than her husband can’t be done. [...] sisters have the qualities of a woman. Dress should be that of a woman. They walk like women, talk like women, act like women. So I can’t say she should act like a man. No.”

The Harvest Church pastor, also in attendance at the youth workshop, chimed in: “ [...] men think and women feel,” he said definitively. Perceptions about women’s inferior intellectual capabilities (an effect of the highly gendered process of evangelical social mobility, as I describe in the previous section) bolster arguments that women should not be allowed to be pastors or that they are ill equipped to preach to the congregation as a whole.

Harvest Church’s pastor went on to defend his position that women should not serve as deacons or pastors by reproducing ideas about female sexuality tempting men. He suggested that male deacons and pastors are not exempt from sinful thinking; if a young girl seeks advice from a pastor, the pastor should avoid being alone with her in the office, he remarked. He thought that because many Hispanic and Pentecostal churches allowed female deacons and pastors they must fall prey to “temptation.” “Perhaps for that reason [i.e. to avoid sexual temptation] God himself through his Word [said] seven men as principle deacons, right?” he argued further.

Women’s leadership opportunities in the church as a whole depend on masculine mediation, a trend in the Andes not exclusive to evangelical circles (see de la Cadena 1991).

146 For literature that addresses the issue of male speech and women’s silencing in public contexts in the Andes such as community meetings see Arnold (1997); Cervone (2002); Harris (1980); Pape (2008).
147 For a discussion of the negative impact of Kichwa women’s lack of formal education on their political participation in Ecuador see Cervone (2002).
Women may preach to the congregation only if given the go-ahead by a male leader, or in the case of the absence of a qualified man. When their husbands are appointed a church role, wives serve alongside them. They are called “pastoras” and “diaconisas” in Spanish. However, they are understood to play a subordinate role as “helpers” to their husbands. However, often their responsibilities are quite extensive; they fill in for their husbands during meetings and services and offer advice and prayer to members of the church who visit their home.

Because of the masculine mediation of women’s leadership, a husband’s indiscretions by extension have the potential to delegitimize his wife’s. Despite the fact that Caridad’s husband does not like to attend church, and despite awareness of his infidelity, he has been elected church deacon on several occasions due to his high professional social status in the community. Caridad attended all of the meetings in his place and did all of the work, but received none of the official credit. Eventually, Caridad decided their legitimacy as deacons was at risk; she encouraged him not to take on any more leadership roles. This meant that her leadership avenues were cut off as well, though she still participated in the church choir and taught marriage classes for young couples planning to marry.

Women’s strongest sphere of influence in the Kichwa Church is among other women. Baptized women of all ages and all literacy and education levels participate and assume formal responsibilities as members of the church choir. Since the initial conversion period, the female choir has not only been essential to worship service (cf. Uzendoski 2003), but it has also offered an important space for women to advise one another on the “Christian family,” such as respecting one’s husband, taking care of children, and managing the household.
New Life Women’s Bible Institute

In 2010, I attended three New Life Women’s Bible Institute’s one-week sessions and interviewed students, instructors, and leaders. Students gather from all over the province at CONPOCIECH’s Colta headquarters to attend classes Monday through Friday. Most reside in Colta for the week. All meals are provided. There are four levels. New Life goals have remained virtually the same since its inception. The Institute’s current president, daughter of one of the region’s conservative pastors, told me the role of the institute is to “value women” and give them the tools to take on leadership roles in the church. When I asked what women get out of the classes, she said that the instruction helped women to “demonstrate change in their family” according to principles of the “Christian household” such as treating one’s spouse and children well and providing education for their children. In fact, one of the most common reasons women themselves gave for their participation was to seek better family lives. This follows some of the original goals of New Life: “We believe that the instruction we offer (will) help the indigenous woman develop her attitude and aptitude before society, thinking especially in family understanding and harmony as true Christian families.”

New Life provides productive avenues for women to attain biblical knowledge and develop leadership skills. The Institute serves students who generally do not have much if any formal secular or theological education. Since women’s perceived intellectual capacities and lack of biblical knowledge justify their “submission” and “silence,” gaining access to coveted forms of speech and knowledge is an important step for improving women’s participation in the church.

Nonetheless, New Life is also a setting in which conventional views about the role of women in church and family are re-asserted, both in the highly conservative doctrine taught and

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148 Source: Archivos de Conpocieiich Section 4 Miscelaneo.
in the way classes are taught. For one, students prepare themselves to be “teachers” and do not strive to break the Church’s gendered leadership paradigm. Students are encouraged to memorize biblical passages; they are not encouraged to think analytically or question gender ideologies of male headship and female submission, either in the family or in the church. In their quest to improve homelife according to Christian principles, women see themselves as instigators of family problems due to their “rebelliousness;” thus ideologies of wifely submission and male headship are perpetuated as solutions to marital strife, even when the women themselves are the ones being abused.

While women assume all leadership roles in running the Institute, most of the classes are taught by male instructors. In my observations, I found that some male teachers infantilized female students and spoke condescendingly to them (see Harding 2000 for comparable discussion of “gender-stratified address” that upholds public male authority in the context of U.S. fundamentalist preaching). One male instructor taught his female students in parentese, as if talking to small children. He used excessive diminutives (e.g. *Para mañana bien memorizaditas*), high pitch, and marked each syllable with exaggerated intonation (e.g. *matri?* [pause] *monio*). One lesson consisted of having students color in their workbooks. He walked around the classroom, instructing the women how to color between the lines and underline Bible passages. “Really slowly,” he kept saying. “We are going to learn really slowly.” At one point he looked at me, smiled somewhat apologetically, and said “This is going to take a while.”149

_Feminist Interventions_

I first met Marta, the daughter of Samuel Charco, in 2002. She was among twenty-two indigenous female leaders gathered at a workshop organized by FEINE in Quito to learn about

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149 Although I was uncomfortable with the way this instructor spoke to his female students, to my surprise, many of the students told me he was their favorite instructor at the Institute.
Domestic Violence Law 103, passed in 1995, and reflect on gender relations in their families, churches, and communities. Marta stood up at one point, I remember, Bible in hand. In reference to attending workshops, she stated confidently: “My husband had to accept it when I told him ...I am going to go, instead of, give me permission to go.”

Marta has spent her life challenging normative gender roles. As a young girl, she was called “man like” (K. karishina) by her grandmother for “going about in the streets” instead of dedicating herself to the domestic realm.¹⁵⁰ Marta got a high school education in Quito, where some of her relatives lived. She was subsequently employed in Ambato as a public health educator for Map Internacional, which fomented Marta’s Christian feminism as a single woman in her twenties. In her grandparents’ view, Marta was “learning to be lazy” by working in the public sector. Marta did not agree: “Why can’t we [women] have the opportunity to go to the city, to work in offices, to go out and find a job?” she wondered. “Why not? Why can’t that be our right, too?”

Marta also defied cultural gender expectations by marrying relatively late in life by local standards (in her late twenties). Marta remembers her mother Dolores saying to her future husband: “My daughter is educated, so, when you marry her, let her work.” She and her husband fought early on in their marriage. They nearly separated due to infertility issues and her desire to take charge on matters considered to be her husband’s duties (e.g. finding an apartment to rent). When she fled to her father’s home in Quito, Samuel Charco advised her to return to Colta: “You have to learn how to be a hen” he said, “because roosters fight amongst themselves and end up hurting themselves. One’s a winner and the other’s a loser. To avoid that, you have to learn to be

¹⁵⁰ This expression “karishina” refers to women who do not know how to do rural, domestic labor considered women’s work, such as grinding food by hand.
a hen.” Marta took her father’s advice to heart, but nonetheless insisted that her husband share in domestic duties and that he support her desire to earn money.\footnote{I lived in Marta and Daniel’s household for twelve months. Marta’s husband Daniel cooked and cleaned perhaps more than customary. He cooked when his wife was busy at her job or doing homework. One evening, Daniel cooked most of the dinner because his wife had a deadline to meet for seminary. He was craving soup. He made it. Marta joined him at the end to make the salad.}

Marta has also pushed gender boundaries in the public sector. She started running for political office in the 1990s at a time when women were not well represented in that arena. She ran twice for the position of provincial councilwoman in the 1990s. Later, she served as the county secretary for Amauta for six years (2001-2007). Since 2007, Marta has worked for the Municipality of Colta, first as the mayor’s assistant, now as a librarian. Marta says the practice she attained speaking in front of others due to growing up Christian and her status as a pastor’s daughter benefitted her when it came to political campaigning and seeking employment.

Marta is one of a small number of second-generation evangelical female leaders I met in the field who embody and articulate what I term a “feminist” perspective within Kichwa Christianity. Amongst Chimborazo’s Protestants, feminist interventions are largely “un-named” and “underground” (Hurtado 2003)—not institutionalized nor organized. As is common in the case of “other feminisms” (see Abu-Lughod 1998: footnote p. 265; Hurtado 2003; Mahmood 2005), Marta and other indigenous women reject “feminist” as a self-label. To Marta, feminism is a term used by non-indigenous people. It also has an immoral connotation, referring to women’s “libertinage” or wanting to “live however I want,” as Adelita put it, and engage in all the immoral behaviors men engage in such as drinking alcohol and adultery. Feminism also carries the negative connotation of women wanting to “be the head” vis-a-vis men or “take their place”—certainly not the stated goal of any indigenous Christians.
Though the evangelical “feminism” I discuss in this chapter is unlabeled as such, and the term itself is locally disparaged, I consider use of the term here to describe gendered critique to be important in terms of de-stabilizing “feminism” as a secular category and location in the west.

Far from fixed across time and space, feminisms are “complex, multivalent, and contradictory” (Volp 2001:1199). Furthermore, use of the term in this context challenges false notions of indigenous women as either 1) not in need of feminist analytics (because of religious conversion’s liberatory and empowering potential for women or romanticized notions of gender egalitarianism in indigenous culture), or 2) always and already anti-feminist because of their identity as conservative Christian (cf. Smith 2008). Rather, indigenous evangelical feminism involves carefully negotiating the three transnational tropes and projects—the “indigenous,” the western/secular “gender rights” and the “Christian.”

Marta says that unlike some secular-professional mestiza women espousing their version of feminism in Ecuador, she has “lived reality” and “shared everyday life” with rural women. Such encounters have shaped her critical approach to gender relations. Marta recalls one instance when she was using Western, feminist gender rights discourses in teaching a class on gender to women in a remote, rural community. She was talking about “finding our identity, our space, and rights [as women].” Midway through Marta’s speech, an elderly woman stood up and took off her shoes and held them up. Marta remembers her saying, in Kichwa:

Sisters, can you see these shoes? Can you put the right shoe on the left foot? What are you women looking to do? Be the head? Put yourself in the man’s place? What we as women have to do is find our own place and from that place find what we need to do. Do you see my shoes? My left shoe. It’s ripped. What does that mean? The right is good; the left is broken. What do you think, that I could possibly walk confidently, without embarrassment? No, because my shoe is not okay. What does this mean? We as women have to fix the left shoe so that it is [in working condition] like the right, because one shoe alone is not okay. They have to be together and equal” (my emphasis).

The woman’s metaphor of left and right shoes indexes the man-woman relationship of equality
and complementarity noted in Andean society: “complementarity of roles based on different positions in horizontal space” (Yupanqui 1995:130, my translation from Spanish). The woman, however, does not romanticize this ideal; she recognizes that the female entity is broken and needs to be fixed.

Marta’s feminist vision, accordingly, underscores the notion of being together and maintaining values of relatedness. Women and men should be “together and equal”: “Equal” to counter how women have been oppressed, abused, and neglected relative to men. Marta says, “a coin has two sides: the man’s side and the woman’s. The man’s side has been emphasized, but where’s the woman’s side?” The notion of togetherness emphasizes the idea of each gender walking side-by-side (or, two sides of a coin) while maintaining difference.

As with other second generation “progressives” discussed in Chapter 3, Marta and like-minded female evangelical leaders in Colta and across Chimborazo privilege the Bible in order to posit alternative readings of it. They contest the idea of female submission through the citation, exegesis, and contextualization of “problem passages” (cf. Smith 2008:134) from the Bible, passages typically used by (male) pastors to “argue for the subordination of women to men” and their silencing.

One alternative reading of Ephesians 5:22-24 suggests that its key message is men’s responsibility to love and treat women well. Margarita de la Torre is a 38-year-old “progressive”

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152 Kari/warmi (man/woman) is embodied such that the female part is the left side of a pair (such as an eye, a hand) and the male part is the right side (See Allen 1982; Harris 1978; Isbell 1976; Platt 1986)

153 Romanticized notions of complementarity have been challenged in numerous ethnographies for not adequately capturing violence against women, women’s inferior position to men, and women’s exclusion from public authority in indigenous communities (see de la Cadena 1991; Harris 1978; Pape 2008). Whereas some progressives claim that Andean complementarity is in the doing and not the saying in rural communities, the “feminist” viewpoint claims the exact opposite; indigenous cosmovision is discursive and not practiced (see de la Torre 2002:11).
with a Master’s degree in theology from UBL (de la Torre, M. 2002, 2007). She breaks the passage down in the following way. She starts out by saying men are being compared to Jesus while women are being compared to the church. But what’s Jesus’ relationship to the church, she asks. If Jesus gave up his life for the church, and men are like Jesus, then men should also dedicate their lives to women, without insults and without mistreatment. Both husbands and wives should be faithful and understanding to one another.

Another critical reading of the Bible interrogates the meaning, implications, and context of being “subject” to husbands. Whereas some might interpret being subject as being inferior and a servant to the husband, Marta claims being subject means subjecting oneself to mutual love, respect, and communication: supporting your spouse (S. compañera idonea) and receiving the same in return. In turn, men as “head” have to hold up their end of the deal: to care for their women as Christ does for the Church, not mistreat them. “So I question, it’s true that [women] have to be ‘subject’ but in what sense? Subject to someone who is drunk or misspends money?” In other words, women should not have to endure spousal abuse or male misconduct.

Feminist readings of this passage also bring up the importance of contextualizing biblical passages. “In what context were they talking about women being silent? To whom did they say? Where did they say it? Who said it? That analysis has not been done.” Marta is critical of blanket statements assuming women should be silent and acquiescent to men in to all situations.

A related intervention that indigenous female preachers and leaders make towards increasing women’s “value” is a woman-centered reading of the Bible. Examples of women in the Bible who are prophets, fighters, and leaders of other women (such as Ester and Ana) are

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154 Like other progressives and second-generation evangelicals, Margarita combines academic and theological studies with NGO, political, and church-based activities.
used to justify women’s leadership capabilities and underscore the importance of getting involved to make political and economic changes (see also Yupanqui Quicaña 1995).

In Marta’s workshops, she emphasizes principles of female self-realization and self-esteem, rather than submission. Genesis 1:27 is a crucial counter-text to Ephesians 5:22-24 and Corinthians 14:34 used by Marta to convince women they do not have to be obedient and submissive to their husbands. Genesis 1:27 reads, God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (New American Standard Bible 1995). Marta says “we [women] are like God because God created us according to his image and likeness” and therefore “we are not like what ... men say we are, that we’re not worth anything, that we don’t serve any purpose.” Marta accuses the Kichwa church of sinning; because it has done little to address how women have been treated as “a joke, less than a person, like an animal,” it has not followed the biblical principle that “God created us all in his image.”

Questioning female domesticity is a critical part of fomenting self-realization for Marta. When Marta challenges how women are understood to be “only for the kitchen, the children, the animals, the husband, and nothing more,” her critique feels reminiscent of second-wave feminist critique of 1950s housewifery. In 2007, during one of our interviews Marta got out one of her workshop handouts and read out loud from it. “Wife and woman. Am I anything else in life? Who am I and for what reason do I live?” Marta says she would pose questions like these to her workshop participants. She would ask them to also draw a self-portrait or look in the mirror. If the women were reticent to draw or look at themselves, she’d say, “Didn’t God make you?”

155 This contrasts with traditional studies of gender relations in the Andes that have focused on peasant socioeconomic contexts in which both men and women participate in agricultural labor together. In Colta, there is also the conceptualization of rural women of the past working the fields as physically strong, carrying loads and babies on their backs, and “not cowards.” In agricultural labor, “women used to work the same as the man.” With the decline of rural, agricultural activities in favor of educational, professional, and commercial pursuits, so too did has women’s social position (de la Cadena 1991).
encourage them. When Caridad accompanied Marta to one of her 2007 workshops, she summed up Marta’s teachings like this: “Why do women have to stay at home? [Why does] the woman have to dedicate [herself] to her husband? To domestic things? ... if we are children of God, we have to value [ourselves]”

The approach of revaluing women through raising “self-esteem” has become fairly common and accepted today in church and CONPOCIECH-sponsored events geared towards the female population. Teachings reinforcing the self-authorizing female subject as the site of transformation take up axioms of both secular, Western feminism (e.g. autonomous and free subject, particularly in relationship to “machista” tendencies of one’s culture) and individual Protestant ethic (e.g. one’s personal relationship with Jesus Christ, one created in image of God).

In 2010, I attended a New Life Women’s Bible Institute event organized to celebrate International Women’s Day called “First Meeting of Women: Raising the Self-Esteem of Women and Christian Music Competition” (my emphasis). On Saturday, mestiza women from “We for Equality” (S. Nosotras por la Equidad) spoke before a female audience of about one hundred indigenous women. Illustrating this “self-esteem” focus, they had each member of the audience close their eyes and reflect on their “happiest time.” Although special church and organized events honoring women such as International Women’s Day and Mother’s Day have their appeal, one could argue that they end up placating women without directly addressing church patriarchy or gendered violence and inequality.

**Feminist Geographies and Temporalities**

“Feminist” interventions since the 1980s have hinged upon a distancing from the past and from the previous generation, including a construction of parental ideologies and practices as anti-modern. The gendered contestations I discuss in this chapter, then, can be situated as part of
larger project of second-generation “critical detachment,” which I discuss in Chapter 3. Consider the following ways in which today’s adult-cohort of women in San Mateo talked about “our parents’ ideology”:

“...Women didn’t know how to do anything except cook, clean, nothing else.” (Adelita)

“Before, women didn’t work. They just took care of the house and the kids, the land, the animals, and nothing more.” (Caridad)

“Women couldn’t talk, women couldn’t have an opinion, just men have to decide and order women [around] and only women have to receive orders. Before that’s how it was” (Caridad)

“Women had to be submissive to their husband. Always. Always. For anything they had to ask their husband. For anything. They never had a voice and a vote to be able to analyze, comment, critique... There wasn’t gender equality at that time.” (Esther)

“Women didn’t used to know how to nourish [themselves] (S. alimentar). Of course they knew how to cook our traditional foods. Our food is machika, barley rice, potatoes, fava beans. But now it’s changed. Now [women] know how to cook rice, soup. Now they use carrots, lettuce, vegetables. Before they didn’t know [about] that. Just onion, oil, salt and nothing more.” (Esther)

In these examples, women of the past, including converted women alive today, are seen as completely oppressed in their domestic roles, rural life, submission to their husbands, and lack of “modern” knowledge. Women’s conversion as a strategy against domestic violence in the initial conversion period was not considered a form of feminist social critique (or an example of contesting male authority) in its own right. In these sorts of constructions, women do not accord value to elders’ traditional forms of gendered knowledge such as natural medicine, midwifery, and cooking.

Adult women see their elders as faithful evangelicals, not in need of religious conversion, but rather in need of the equality and “self-esteem” teachings to which they have been exposed through the new organizations and institutions marking their lives in contrast to their parents’ lives. In 2010, Esther wanted to hold a worship for San Mateo’s elderly population in order to
“break the barrier” of their ideas that “we can’t do anything [as women]”, that “we women don’t have value”, that “we only serve for household [duties] and that we have to be subject to the husband.” Rather, Esther wants to teach them that “we are all equal ... and we should value ourselves. God has made us all equal.”

Generational differences are constructed geographically as well. Colta’s female leaders espousing a critical gendered perspective focus their teaching efforts not just on elders but on women living in more remote rural communities and churches. In 2007, Marta was asked by a non-indigenous evangelical women’s organization to give a series of workshops in a rural locale south of Colta, on the usual topics: human rights, domestic violence, and “the situation of women,” along with biblical reflections. When I followed up with Marta (from the U.S.) to asked how her workshop went, she expressed great frustration by the lack of uptake of some of her “rights and self-esteem” discourses. She reiterated to me that the women she encountered were uneducated and not “conscious of their reality.” According to Marta these women accept unquestionably the idea that their husband is the head of the family and that they have to follow him. These women fear that not being “subject” to their husbands or seeking work or educational opportunities will lead to divorce. They want to keep their families together.

According to Caridad and Marta, this is how women used to be in Colta. That began to change in the mid-1990s. Still members of Harvest Church, Marta teamed up with Caridad to organize a church women’s group. Marta and Caridad observed that women were often just the listeners during church services and meetings because they were “scared to speak” and not encouraged by men. The pastor of Harvest Church objected to the formation of a separate women’s group. “What for?” he told Caridad. “Women are at home, they’re listening, it’s not like there are no men to teach.” Caridad thought pastors were wrong for silencing women: “I
have seen also some mistakes [on the part of the pastors saying] that women shouldn’t talk, that
women shouldn’t lead [others] when men are present, that women shouldn’t have a work, that
only the man has the power because the man is the head.” Marta and Caridad met in homes at
first with just a few other women. Marta would talk about women’s rights; Caridad would reflect
on the Bible. They combined biblical study with the making and selling of embroidered work
such as handbags (K. shigras). Though heavily criticized, they persisted; the pastor eventually
gave the women a space inside the church to meet.

Caridad says that as a result of their efforts, she has seen a change in women: “They raise
their hands now. They say what they feel now. They are more at peace.” Furthermore, women’s
participation in worship services in the Kichwa Church has increased. In addition to choir
singing, women participate more during meetings, serve the role of cantor, read from the Bible,
roles that were closed to them prior to the 1990s. Female church leaders play a central role in
organizing church “sociocultural programs” (i.e. special events in celebration of Mother’s Day,
Father’s Day, Day of the Dead, Palm Sunday, Easter) involving drama performances, group
games, and sports.

When Caridad and Marta and the rest of San Mateo’s community members split from
Sisapamba and formed Christ King Church in the early 2000s, they decided to allow even more
opportunities to women and youth. Christ King, for example, has elected unmarried and
abandoned women as church deacons. Today, Marta, a member of Christ King Church, is a lay
preacher and cantor. In 2015, she graduated from an Assemblies of God seminary after taking
classes for nearly five years. Marta is open to becoming a pastor in the future. Esther claims that
Christ King Church gives equal participation to men and women, as well as adults and youth,
because of people’s “secular education.” “We do not minimize women because education tells us
that (they’re) all the same. We give equal participation to everyone.” Esther, for example, thinks education has exposed believers to principles of gender equality: “Education is what has made us wake up our minds and not be without valuing women.”

It should be noted, however, that Marta’s feminist visions are radical even for adult women living in semi-urbanized Colta. Whereas Marta asserted during the domestic violence workshop at FEINE that she does not ask permission from her husband to do anything, most women with whom I spoke, even abused women and those espousing a “feminist” vision, uphold more conservative ideologies of male authority in marriage. Caridad sums up how entangled evangelical identity and upholding male authority is: “The Lord is happy when we heed our husband because [in that way] we are heeding God.” Marta thinks wives should communicate with their husbands about their activities but not ask for permission. Esther thinks, however: “If your husband isn’t in agreement, as decisive as you are, you can’t go out.” Fortunately, Esther’s husband has been fine with her studying and holding leadership positions. The times she was working away from Colta and her husband requested her to quit her job and come back, she did.

In Colta, women’s critical views on church male authority generally stop short of arguing that women should be allowed to be pastors. While Marta believes women should have equal access to education, career opportunities, and leadership positions in the church such as pastor, Caridad and Esther hold more traditional views than Marta on male authority in the church. Esther does not think women should be pastors: “God gave men that authority.” Esther even dislikes that pastor’s wives are called “pastora,” as they have not earned the title through formal religious study.
WHERE’S ISABELA?

Marta and Daniel returned home one night, frantic. Daniel had just received a phone call from his brother-in-law, who said to him: “Prepare the big pots! Your niece is going to get married!” Daniel’s 15-year-old niece, Isabela, had gone missing the night before. Everyone assumed she had gone off with her boyfriend, a Catholic boy from another town. If indeed she was with him, it would be a “sure wedding”—one that would need to be planned with lightning speed.

Isabela was one of the best students in her high school class, with dreams of traveling to the U.S. to learn English. She was enrolled in church baptism classes at the time, and was a member of the liturgical dance troupe. “Isabela? Our Isabela?” I asked, confused. The next few days were tense as Isabela’s extended family sorted out her whereabouts, the implications of her actions, and who was to blame. As it turns out, Isabela ran away from home following a fight with her older sister. She hadn’t gone off with her boyfriend, and she wouldn’t have to quit her studies and marry him. Even so, the speed with which everyone involved made that assumption struck me. As this scenario unfolded, I felt like I was witnessing a slice of local history play out dramatically before me: the young, “stolen” brides, the hasty weddings, the rumors of abuse on the part of Isabela’s boyfriend, the fights between potential in-laws. And yet Isabela’s disappearance also seemed indicative of young women’s greater freedom and social mobility these days. I wondered: How much has really changed? How do mothers perceive the lives of their daughters given their own experiences of suffering and abuse?

All of the women I interviewed are actively rearing the next generation of evangelical Christians, many of whom are young adults. Although “good life” evangelical promises have not always come to fruition for adult women in their own lives and marriages, the women remain
committed to them through the expectations they place on their children. Adult women today see academic preparation, women’s employment in the public sector, and urban migration as critical to changing gender relations and ideologies in the church, family, and society. Eva wants her children to be professionals. She says, “Even though I don’t have anything like that, I’m nothing, but my children, I don’t want them to be like me.” This includes her daughter, whom she wants to “be someone in life.” Caridad has placed her hopes on her children: “I have the hope that they (my children) will get a job and be able to defend themselves and not suffer like me.” Mothers spoke with great pride of their children who had university degrees or who had become professionals.

In addition, women hold on to the gendered promises of religious identification, even if their own participation in the Kichwa Church and steadfast faith failed to save their marriages. They want their children to live and relate well as Christians. Despite her abusive marriage to an evangelical man, for example, Eva still believed in the promise of the gospel to make good men. In fact, she wants her son to be “close to God” and a pastor so that he doesn’t end up like his father.

Mothers in Colta see their daughters living much different lives on a daily basis than they did growing up. Whereas they grew up with no light and no running water and their main responsibilities growing up were making clothes, preparing food from scratch, and tending the fields, girls these days “live consumed by school and studying.” They do not know much about rural life and women’s domestic duties. Instead of getting up early to prepare food, they stay up past midnight to finish their homework. Women see their daughters as having greater freedom and social mobility nowadays. “How times have changed!” Marta said. “Now girls have the liberty to wear pants, to play soccer!” Young females’ movements were once highly monitored
by parents and elders. Marriages used to be arranged by the parents with no input from the
couple. Isabela’s mother Esther has a different vision for her daughter. “I can’t oppose it. It’s my
daughter’s decision. I am not going to live [her life]. Rather, my daughter will make a home.”
She wants her daughter to introduce her boyfriend, even though he is Catholic, so they can get to
know him.

Adult women share with other community and church members concern over evangelical
reproduction and some of the directions in which their children’s lives are heading.
Adult women perceive problems involving sexual morality and marriage that go against
missionary and elderly teachings to be on the rise among the young adult age cohort. These days,
pre-marital pregnancy is much more common than it was in “old times.” One young woman told
me, “Even though we are evangelical we don’t practice what the Bible says. The Bible says not
to fornicate but today couples marry because the woman is pregnant.” A bride walking down the
aisle pregnant in a church ceremony is frowned upon, though apparently pretty common.
Educated with a scholarship at an elite college in Quito, Lupita, Marta’s daughter, planned to
marry in her late twenties after she finished a graduate degree and started her career. She went
back to Colta after studying abroad in the United States at age 21, and ended up getting pregnant,
rushing to marry, and setting up a household with her husband there.

Such concerns have lead women to think about the past and rural life in nostalgic ways as
a period and space of greater morality, turning the tables on the rural/urban geographies upon
which evangelical feminism is based. Caridad said to me:

Times have become difficult. In the past, in the countryside, there was a lot of
reverence to God. There weren’t bad things. Now everything is about the T.V., the
computer, the Internet. Life gets sick. These days people focus on sex more than
anything. Neither men nor women respect themselves. They go to the city and get
contaminated. They go to high school in Riobamba, a contamination. They start using
drugs. They even change sexes! Sometimes youth drink liquor amongst themselves.
Technology such as videos, television shows, cell phones, and the Internet are considered bad influences on youth, contributing to their rebellion and sexualization in contrast to a past in which sex was a taboo topic.

Adult women in the middle-aged parental cohort, like other “second-generation” evangelicals, mediate two age cohorts—elders and youth—and the two extremes they represent for women’s lives: the “oppressed” lives of women of the past, who supposedly only cooked and cleaned and were submissive to their husbands, on the one hand, and the excessive freedom or “libertinage” of their daughters, who supposedly know nothing of rural life or the past and, instead, are exposed to a host of morally-corrupting influences. As part of the second-generation process of “critical detachment” that I discuss in Chapter 3, the adult women I feature in this chapter react to the continuing presence of “sad life” problems in their communities and church by pulling away from the GMU missionary and first-convert past while also holding on to it dearly through nostalgic constructions of all that was once good and is now lost in their daughters’ lives.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that evangelical Christianity is not the panacea for women or families it is made out to be in local narratives and in scholarly literature. The Kichwa Church and its gender and sexual ideologies contribute to evangelical women’s enduring abuse and oppression. This reality has not gone unquestioned by Chimborazo’s female believers; new critical perspectives and projects on the part of evangelical women leaders and “feminists” have emerged since the 1980s and 1990s.

In the initial conversion period, first convert women in San Mateo regarded religious
conversion, relating with missionaries, church participation, and adopting Christian gender ideologies as effective (albeit gradual) ways to address male drinking and domestic abuse. They do not discursively challenge principles of male headship and female submission, for doing so would be in essence to denounce their relationship with God upon which such principles hinge. Adult women’s narratives of enduring marital “sad life” suffering, precipitated and exacerbated by women’s exclusion from realizing some of conversion’s “set of linked promises” over time, such as schooling and upward social mobility, contrast sharply with dominant narratives that tout evangelical women’s “liberation.” The experiences and narratives of adult evangelical women in Colta expose the fallacies of Christianity’s “transformative promises:” (e.g. to be educated, to attain a tranquil family life free of abuse).

The next two chapters of the dissertation turn to consider the perspectives of Colta’s young adults. Marital suffering did not appear to precipitate a spiritual crisis on the part of the women I interviewed. However, as we shall see in Chapter 5, some of the women’s children experienced spiritual doubt as a result of their family life, prompting them to backslide as young adults. Gendered “sad life” suffering and exclusions in indigenous families, church, and communities are silenced in official evangelical rhetoric and history making, but they have profound affects not only adult women but also on the ways in which Colta’s young adults approach their own religious subjectivity.
CHAPTER FIVE,
YOUTH RE-CONVERSIONS: CHANGING SELF AND CHURCH AFTER APOSTASY

Twenty-four-year old Alejandro remembers asking his grandfather for money when he was growing up. “When you get older,” his grandfather would say to him as he handed him the cash, “I want to see you become a professional, to take advantage of this sacrifice that we’ve made for you.” Alejandro’s grandfather, Tayta Miguel, is an agricultural worker and one of Sisapamba’s first converts. He grew up in a Catholic household where, Alejandro says, “all his parents did was drink; the little money they did have was wasted on hard liquor.” Like many of his counterparts, Tayta Miguel experienced physical violence and social ostracism for preaching the gospel. Going against social and religious norms of his time, he gave up alcohol consumption and attending annual festivals and sent his children to school.

The youth of today, in Tayta Miguel’s eyes, have it easy. They “live like kings” by comparison. In San Mateo, they enjoy modern amenities such as running water, electricity, cars, clothes, cement homes, and accessible public transportation. They are free to talk about God without fear of persecution. They are academically prepared. Alejandro says, “It’s as if... the ones that fought back then... handed to us- the youth of today- everything on a silver platter (S. ya todo servido)- so that we could just work with no difficulties.”

As I explain in Chapter 2, for first converts, conversion to the “good life” meant adopting promissory notes (Robbins 2001) that only future generations could fully redeem. As elders see it, now is the time for youth to reap the benefits of their struggles in the initial conversion period. To use Samuel Charco’s train-track metaphor, they should be riding along both tracks of the train toward salvation: not only becoming professionals but also continuing to share the Word of God. The grandchildren of Chimborazo’s first converts have—or at least are striving to make good—on one of these rails; they are pursuing high school and university studies in far greater numbers.
than preceding generations.\textsuperscript{156} However, believers are concerned that youth have lost their religious commitment in the process.\textsuperscript{157} Many elders and adults in Chimborazo characterize today’s youth as dangerously swayed by the “worldly” life of carnal and material desires. Kichwa believers take the “world” to be any practice or institution deemed “secular,” including cultural practices associated with the pre-conversion past, contemporary popular culture, and non-GMU Christian practices including Catholic and Pentecostal. Youth ease and freedom of movement, pleasure-seeking, and urban/mestizo orientation, so the dominant narrative holds, pose an internal threat to local social, religious, and family relationships.

San Mateoans say that youth in their late teens and twenties started “going down the wrong path” in the early 2000s. Though evangelical youth were not converting to Catholicism or any other religion, they appeared to be losing interest in attending church. They began to experiment with drinking and partying. The San Mateo youth that I spoke with internalized this representation of themselves as threats to Christianity, failing to cash in on all the promissory notes handed to them. One young woman, who helped me interpret (Kichwa/Spanish) an interview with her aunt and uncle, said: “I think the elders (S. gente antigua, literally “ancient people”) have suffered too much. Nowadays we have so much freedom, too much freedom, and we don’t take advantage of it at all.”

“Crisis of youth rhetoric” is not unique to Chimborazo’s evangelicals; the adult-centered representation of youth as problems is prevalent the world over, particularly in a neoliberal age (Cole 2010; Comaroff and Comaroff 2005:28). Religious circles mobilize their own “crisis of youth rhetoric.” The issue of U.S. “millennials” losing their religiosity and leaving evangelical

\textsuperscript{156} Many of the young men I spoke with were not able to finish university studies in a consecutive or timely manner—or at all (at least not yet)—due to economic reasons and the need to hold down a job. The young men I interviewed held a variety of jobs: taxi driver, bank teller, construction worker.

\textsuperscript{157} Most Kichwa pastors are older. Youth do not view becoming a pastor as a viable occupation because it pays so little. They say they do not want to live in poverty like their elders.
churches has been a focus of recent social science research and cultural commentary.\footnote{The issue of young Christians leaving the church is one that evangelical churches in the U.S. also encounter (see Kinnaman 2011). A recent Pew Research Center poll found that, following the trend of Millennial adults (born after 1980) being less religious than their elders, U.S. Hispanic millennials show lower rates of religious affiliation and commitment than older Hispanics. See Martinez, Jessica and Michael Lipka, “Hispanic Millennials are Less Religious than older U.S. Hispanics.” (http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/05/08/hispanic-millennials-are-less-religious-than-older-u-s-hispanics/). Chimborazo’s youth generation (born 1980s-1990s) corresponds roughly to what are considered “Millennials” in U.S. generational tropes.} However, as Comaroff and Comaroff (2005:28-29) underscore, “talk that portrays the predicament of the younger generation in monochromatically bleak terms” needs problematizing as do “statement(s) of unqualified optimism” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2005:29). In this chapter, I problematize local evangelical youth-as-threat discourses by privileging youth as “cultural actors whose experiences are best understood from their own point of view” and whose actions are not religious violations but “agentive interventions” into ongoing sociocultural and religious change (Bucholtz 2002:533ff).

Alejandro is one particularly dramatic case. Unbeknownst to his grandfather, Alejandro rebelled against the religion when he was sixteen-years-old and attending high school in Quito. He became a self-professed “rocker.” He began abusing alcohol and drugs and attending gothic rock concerts and satanic rituals. When I first met Alejandro in 2010, however, he had embraced anew “God’s path” and was serving as Harvest Church’s Youth Director. He played electric guitar in a church band, aptly named ConverZion after the band members who, as Alejandro puts it, “returned to the Christian life after sin.”

Drawing on this example of Alejandro and other young men from San Mateo who also recently returned to the church, this chapter will show how young adults _re_-convert after a temporary period of backsliding. What are the social and religious effects of their re-conversions? How do they narrate and negotiate their return to the church and the familial
relations tied to it? What sorts of changing modes of Christianity do youth push for and perform in terms of their participation in the Kichwa Church once they are active again (or in terms of enticing back fellow dis-affected youth)? How do they assert themselves as the “passionate generation,” as the title of one youth conference I attended at Harvest Church suggests?

To address these questions, my analysis draws on interviews conducted with young men from San Mateo/Sisapamba, although my conversations with youth from other areas of Chimborazo point to a much wider trend. I also draw on my participant observation and audio and video recording in youth worship services, workshops, and baptism classes. The four young men I concentrate on in this chapter—Alejandro, Luis, Jonathan, and Marcelo—were born between 1980 and 1986 and range in age from 24-30. Our interviews and informal conversations were conducted in Spanish. For the purposes of this chapter, I concentrate primarily on male apostasy and re-conversion.159

In the first part of the chapter, I analyze and contextualize youth personal narratives of backsliding and transformation in relation to their parents and grandparents and their communities of origin. In the final part of the chapter, I shift focus to analyze youth worship styles in church performance as another modality of re-conversion: re-signifying “worldly” signs as Christian in ways that reproduce traditional forms of indigenous evangelical expression as well as carve out a new youth religious identity within the Kichwa Church. Youth are

159 My research shows that girls also grapple with spiritual challenges: dissatisfaction with church services, not getting along with their parents, and getting pregnant before wedlock. However, in general, they see themselves as more committed Christians than boys. Since they do not fall so dramatically “off the wagon” by local standards, they do not narrate their experiences as (re)conversions. In some families, gendered expectations for girls continue to revolve around household and farming activities; they are expected to help out their mothers at home and do not have the same amount of free time that boys do. Girls’ relatively limited access to urban schooling and mestizo and non-evangelical peer groups compared to boys of their age cohort (at least until fairly recently) may also play a role. If girls study in the city, they tend to come home right after classes, whereas boys are not expected to do so. Girls are more controlled than boys out of fear of their daughter getting pregnant.
particularly receptive to the emergent charismatic revival of Kichwa Churches, influenced as they are by urban churches and electronically mediated global evangelical youth culture.

By examining youth narratives and worship practices in tandem, this chapter shows how young evangelicals reproduce local tenets of Christian identity and piety, including ascetic morality, the morality of difficulty and struggle, personal change, and indigenous cultural expression. Youth update these principles based on their experiences navigating “worldly” spaces, social interactions, signs, and media influences coming from outside of rural, indigenous evangelical circles, specifically their urban, schooling, multi-ethnic peer group, and non-GMU Christian experiences. In this process, youth reframe the “world” as productive opportunity instead of threat. In re-establishing not only their personal faith but also family, community, and church relationships in the process, youth see themselves not only as actively changing on a personal level, but striving to change the Kichwa Church as well.

FROM AN “ETHICS OF NO” TO AN “ETHICS OF YES” (AND BACK AGAIN) IN SAN MATEO

April 4, 2010. On a bright, clear, brisk Easter Sunday afternoon, members of Christ King Church and I sit outside after worship service on the outer edges of the grass in a loose circle formation, sipping hot soup prepared by members of the women’s choir. Isabela, one of Christ King Church’s liturgical dancers, is seated next to me. Across the way, her grandfather Tayta Rafael sits next to his age mate, Tayta Fernando, on blue plastic chairs, both wearing ponchos. Midway through lunch, two of Isabela’s older male cousins—young adult sons of the Church president and grandchildren of Tayta Rafael—saunter in. They have missed culto entirely. As they intersect our large circle, crossing the grass en route to the outside kitchen, Isabela whispers to me sarcastically: “Here comes the new generation.”

When Isabela said this to me, I knew exactly what she meant. Given the circulation of “open secrets” in San Mateo, I had already heard a great deal about Isabela’s older male cousins

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160 According to O’Brien (2012), “leverag[ing] cultural trends for the gospel’s sake” is an intervention younger Christians in the U.S. are also making vis-a-vis their elders.
during the course of my fieldwork from their parents, aunts, and uncles.\(^{161}\) Luis, who walked into worship service late that day, was attending baptism classes and in the process of “change.” But his recent past was notorious.

When he was around twenty years old and pursuing university courses in engineering in Riobamba, Luis began to drink alcohol and go to discotheques. Luis continued living in San Mateo at the time and admits to leading a group of youth in San Mateo to drink, party, and attend Angel Guaraca concerts.\(^{162}\) “A father leading believers and his son leading drunkards!” Luis laughed at the absurdity. He was the son of a prominent religious and political leader in Colta and grandson of Mama Serafina and Tayta Rafael. “All of my grandparents and my parents are evangelical Christians and they have been good people but they say there’s always a black sheep and I guess that was me.”

By all accounts, Luis’s younger brothers were even worse. Luis says the strictness of his parents and his fear of their harsh physical punishment prevented him from getting into alcohol during his high school years. But his parents got more and more lax with age. Luis’s other brother, 20-year-old Francisco, attends university in Riobamba. He admitted to drinking and going to parties with his Catholic friends. “Is that okay in terms of your religion?” I asked him once. I was helping him and his family harvest quinoa and we were sitting alone at the end of the day. He laughed and replied bluntly, “I’m not a good Christian.” Angel, Luis’s younger brother, is an 18-year-old a high school student known to sneak into his room late at night after drinking heavily. I asked Angel if he considered himself evangelical. He hesitated to answer. I probed,
offering some alternatives. “Catholic?” He didn’t say anything. “Nothing?” He thought about it some more. “I’m somewhere in the middle,” he finally said.

Youth drinking behaviors signify to local believers a return “to what it was like before.” That’s how Luis’s, Francisco’s, and Angel’s mother put it to me. Rather than cashing in the “good life,” they are returning to the “sad life” that elders had so painstakingly struggled to move beyond. Isabela’s ironic comment—“here comes the new generation”—in response to her older male cousins missing worship service and then sauntering in late captures this sense of generational doom. She seems to be saying: if that’s the “new” generation, then we’re all in trouble.

“Ethics of No” and Functional Substitutes

In the initial conversion period, GMU missionaries worked closely with lay leaders such as Samuel Charco to establish “functional substitutes” for indigenous Catholic material and cultural practices understood to impede the “good life” (Klassen 1977:172; Klassen 1974: 86-88). Missionaries and leaders planned activities such as large tent revivals to coincide with the dates of annual Catholic festivals such as Carnival. They planned informal family gatherings featuring a phonograph or cassette player for listening to Bible stories, learning new songs, and memorizing Scripture. Samuel Charco worked hard to encourage sports such as soccer as a way to “get people out of the darkness” of wasting money and getting drunk. “Functional substitutes” also replaced the “material media of sociability” (cf. Keane 1996:153) during social events. During church wedding celebrations, for example, weakly-fermented chicha not strong enough to inebriate or commercial soft drinks took the place of alcoholic drinks. This way, GMU missionaries and first converts felt they could maintain norms of reciprocity and sharing drinks and food among indigenous peoples without any of the negative effects of inebriation.
One progressive I spoke with called this the “ethics of no.” However, I suggest in Chapter 2 that strict asceticism was not simply about prohibition, negation, or loss, but rather creative production. As the years unfolded, functional substitutes—the church service itself, as well as new material media circulated amongst evangelicals—have become the basis for cultural-ethnic reproduction and socialization for younger generations of Kichwa Christians. As the opening vignette to this section suggests, every major religious gathering involves mass amounts of traditional cooking and distribution of food and drink to all present.

Food and beverage exchange is also one key way in which local historicity is produced. After one civil wedding ceremony of a San Mateo couple in Cajabamba, the attendees gathered to each lunch outside on the roof of a nearby building under construction. A woman walked around with a pail of chicha, distributing it in plastic cups to attendees sitting in a large circle on benches. When it came around to Ricardo, Christ King’s church president, he did not take the cup. Instead, he jokingly said: “After you.” This directive prompted the woman to drink the chicha herself before pouring him another cup, which he accepted and drank. People laughed. Marta, my host mother, explained. “Our parents have told us,” she said, that mestizos who sold chicha to indigenous people would urinate and defecate into the chicha. People would often be so inebriated that they would not notice. People started saying “after you” before accepting a drink. Jocular drinking practices such as these recycle “sad life” practices for younger generations and contribute to the overall conviviality of the post-wedding celebration.

Ethics of Moderation and the “Second Generation”

In post-1980s Ecuadorian society, living a life separate from Catholics was not feasible for younger indigenous evangelicals whose school and work endeavors made engaging with non-evangelical (Catholic) expressions and practices, including civic parades and drinking alcohol,
obligatory. When evangelical mayor Pedro Curichumbi re-introduced traditional cultural festivities to Colta during his tenure in the 2000s, adults commented that the events caused otherwise devout evangelicals to backslide.

Daniel and Marta never witnessed their parents drinking, and were told to refrain from drinking by their parents. However, in coordination with the emergence of a more “holistic” Christianity as promoted by the second generation, they have come to live by an ethics of moderation rather than an “ethics of no.” Daniel occasionally drinks beer to settle his stomach after a large meal. On special occasions such as birthdays, Marta and Daniel offer each member of the extended family present small cups of alcohol. When their daughter Silvia turned eighteen, her grandfather, aunts, uncles, and cousins were gathered in the living room. After dinner and cake, Silvia took out and dusted off two bottles of wine she had gotten at a university wine tasting event. Everyone present was on board with opening the wine bottles and tasting it. However, since people rarely drank, no one had a bottle opener on hand. Marta and Daniel’s attempted to open the bottles with a knife and rolling pin, but eventually gave up, unsuccessful. Family members settled on sharing some whiskey. They poured each person a small shot. Even Daniel’s brother-in-law Ricardo, church president at that time, took a shot of whiskey. I asked Marta: “isn’t it a sin to drink?” She responded, “No. Sin is anything in extreme. Everything in moderation.”

Following the second-generation “ethics of moderation,” adults have raised today’s youth without the strict discipline common of generations past. One middle-aged mother of four children doesn’t believe in prohibiting behaviors, reasoning that it would make her children act out more. She encouraged them to experiment with drinking when they were curious about it during their teenage years. She told me, “If we prohibit [something] they are going to do a lot of
bad things in secret and they fall even worse.” She says, “God says anything in moderation.”

Although today’s parental cohort adopts more of an “ethics of moderation,” abstinence from alcohol remains pivotal to the ethos of San Mateo as a “100% evangelical community.” Youth see their community of origin in this way, as the stronghold of ascetic morality in contrast to the shared Catholic past, as well in contrast to contemporary Catholics. Luis described social change since mass conversion in this way: “We no longer drink or have parties.”

He went on to say: “We don’t have parties but [for] Catholics, if there’s no hard liquor, there’s no party.”

**Ethics of “Yes”: Youth Urban/Rural lives**

If first converts adopted an “ethics of no,” and second-generation evangelicals an “ethics of moderation,” perhaps youth apostasy is aptly described as an “ethics of yes”—saying “yes” instead of “no” to drinking alcohol, drugs, friends, and pre-marital sex, at least for a period of time. Luis told me that when his Catholic university friends in Riobamba would exclaim “Let’s go get drunk! Let’s go dance!” he would go along with the crowd. “Let’s go!” he’d respond enthusiastically. Believers consider age to be a contributing factor in backsliding; as an adolescent, one is most susceptible to temptation and sin, so they say. Elders say they’re “little old ones” now, and that they are no longer tempted to steal, drink, and have affairs.

The changing social experiences of youth, which take them outside of San Mateo at precisely this “tempting” age, are a critical factor in their backsliding. Mass conversion and the

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163 In 2010, I did not witness any public drunkenness in San Mateo or gatherings where inebriation was a goal, although I heard about a few youth parties involving drinking alcohol after the fact. I did witness a public display of drunkenness on the part of an evangelical from Sisapamba. I was sitting on the grass in front of Sisapamba’s meeting hall along with members of that community during Carnival. An inebriated man drove his truck recklessly towards us down the Pan-American highway, screeching to park near where we were all sitting. He got out of the driver’s seat slurring his speech, talking loudly, and stumbling about drunk. On another occasion, I was offered a cup of wine by a Sisapamba Catholic while walking down the road that separates the two communities.

164 One middle-aged father thought youth is also a period in which finding a relationship with God is easier because one is not bogged down by familial and work responsibilities and obligations.
shift away from subsistence agriculture as the economic mainstay in Colta have come with new expectations for younger people related to university education and capacities to hold an office job and otherwise circulate in larger towns and cities. One’s pre-adult status corresponds now to a period of high school and university in ways it did not before among indigenous people. Youth attend high school in Riobamba, the provincial capital, 15 kilometers distance. The community’s central location facilitates this type of mobility; it borders the Pan American highway, where buses to the city abound. Some travel, or aspire to travel, as far as Quito, to pursue educational opportunities. One young woman in the community, for example, attended the University of San Francisco, Quito on a full scholarship and went to study English in the United States.

Youth navigate secular, urban schools and workplaces outside of San Mateo and return to the community at night or over the weekends. In San Mateo, their drinking and partying must be done clandestinely. Many youth thus live dual rural/urban lives, though they imagine the two as vastly different social fields having different “representational economies” (Keane 2007; Engelke 2011). Representational economies shape the ways in which faith is experienced and communicated. Representational economies are “sign systems at play in any given social field...There can be times and places...when Christians do not want to sound like Christians, or look like Christians...because it hinders the kind of public work they want to do” (Engelke 2011:708). In some contexts, “the representational economy is stacked up against the signs of faith” (Engelke 2011:709).

In educational and work spaces outside of San Mateo, Evangelical young men become part of mestizo and mixed-ethnic male peer groups—what Robbins (2004:129) refers to as the “male prestige sphere of drink, adultery, and popular Catholic ritual investment” that signifies the
“world” to believers.\textsuperscript{165} Many of their peers are not evangelical. Some are Catholics, Jehovah’s Witness, Mormon, or Atheist. Youth say these new social relationships established outside of the community with Catholic classmates, co-workers, and romantic partners made maintaining an ascetic code of conduct challenging.

Some of the young men felt targeted as evangelicals by their Catholic, mestizo classmates, who were in the majority. Catholics at his university, Luis said, would taunt him by saying things like “oh you’re a brother. You don’t drink you don’t dance you don’t smoke you don’t do anything.” Evangelical identification in this social context became the basis for old racist interactions with mestizos/whites who historically subjugated indigenous peoples thinking that “we can’t do anything,” that “we’re like animals” and indigenous people are only useful for working [in the fields].”

To avoid social marginalization and establish friendships, my informants began to deny their evangelical identity and church/community teachings around ascetic morality and accept offers to drink alcohol and go out to discotheques. Luis’s uncle, a church leader and lay preacher, taught him that evangelicals had to be strong and not be embarrassed to say they’re evangelical in public. Young men either declared to their peers that they were Catholic or denied identification with a particular religion.

New romantic interests also played a role in youth backsliding behaviors. Many say they started dating Catholic girls, going against 2 Corinthians 6:14 and adult advice to “be with someone that’s Christian,” and that this contributed to partying behavior because they attended

\textsuperscript{165} Ethnographers note the gendered nature of drinking in the Andes. Men are associated more with the consumption of alcohol than are women. While both sexes drink, a man’s relationship with other men is affirmed through drinking. His ability to hold his liquor marks him as a man, and, through alcohol, “friendships and agreements are sealed and kinship is acknowledged” (Weismantel 1988:188). The data presented here show that this continues to be the case long after mass conversion supposedly eradicated alcohol abuse. See also Jennings and Bowser (2008).
dances and drank alcohol alongside his girlfriends. During his period of backsliding, Luis broke up with his evangelical girlfriend (now his wife) and impregnated another girl in the interim. Going against his parents’ wishes and “indigenous custom,” though, he did not marry the girl.

Marcelo was offered a scholarship by local missionaries to attend biblical seminary in Quito in his early twenties. Marcelo began to backslide when, during his second year of seminary, he took a job and started interacting with co-workers who “did not know Jesus Christ.” Marcelo married a Catholic woman whom he met in Quito. When relating with his Catholic in-laws, Marcelo always accepted the alcoholic drinks they offered him. When his father-in-law made disparaging comments about evangelicals, Marcelo never said anything to defend the religion.

Although alcohol was forbidden growing up, youth still grew up in an environment in which sharing drinks and food with others cemented social relationships. Their understanding of the social effects of drink sharing, carried over from their community lives and applied to a new “representational economy” in which establishing peer relationships was important, perhaps outweighed their reticence to abide by the strict code of moral conduct in which they grew up.

The youth I interviewed adopted a more moderate position regarding strict ascetic morality than their elders even after returning to the church after a period of apostasy. In terms of the “ethics of no,” most of the young men I spoke with say drinking in moderation is acceptable, using the Bible to back up their perspective. Marcelo continues to drink around his in-laws when he visits them in Quito. In the Bible, Jesus even had some wine, Marcelo reasoned in one of our conversations. But all of the negative consequences of getting drunk and “losing your mind” are sinful. Jonathan says, “God says that... anything in excess is bad.” Therefore, having one beer is not necessarily a bad thing. On one occasion, I entered the bedroom of one of Jonathan’s

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166 His desire was to attend university but his family did not have the money to send him.
younger brothers, a high school student. I was struck by one image: the walls of his bedroom lined with dozens of empty beer cans.

Since reconverting, Alejandro and Luis have taken more extreme positions, saying they have given up alcohol completely. Yet their advice to those who do drink revolves around more medically based and economic reasons for not drinking—not because it’s a religious mandate. Alejandro still goes along with his university friends to parties; he explains to his friends, “I come from these ideologies—well my grandparents and everything.” He light-heartedly encourages his friends not to drink due to the negative effects on their bodies and their pocket books. He aims to convey the message that drinking is bad but not in a way that will make them “feel bad” (i.e. not in a way that would threaten his friendship with them). Luis now talks to the same youth in San Mateo that he used to pressure to drink and dance, trying to convince them to change. “What do we get out of [drinking]?” he asks them. “We’re misspending money. We’re destroying our bodies...It’s not good for us.”

“CHANGE IS NOT EASY:” THE MORALITY OF STRUGGLE

As we have seen, for first converts, mass conversion provided critical language to address the harsh social, ethnic, and economic oppression of the hacienda era. Second-generation adult evangelicals used the critical language of discontinuity to critique their elders and GMU missionaries from within the religious movement itself, advocating for a more “holistic” Christianity and a less strict code of ethics. Youth, by contrast, have turned the language of religious discontinuity into a deep moral criticism of the self. Youth internalize, live out, and overcome the collectively held, disparaging representations of youth in deeply personal ways. Their own breaching of personal morals and ethics is their suffering, amounting to a kind of palpable existential angst.
To describe their backsliding and return to the faith, youth resurrect the personal conversion narrative, a standard Christian discontinuity narrative whose rhetorical force seems to have skipped the second generational cohort in Chimborazo. Though the young men do not talk in terms of converting to a new religion (or converting back to an old one), they emphasize the need for “change” in the sense of personal change in a positive direction (i.e. they did not consider backsliding to be changing). Like the conversion of their elders, they see change transpiring both internally (involving a changing attitude, feelings, and renewed faith in God) and externally in terms of changed behaviors (e.g. sobriety, reading the Bible, attending church).

Though younger generations have not suffered in the same ways their elders have, they would disagree with the characterization that they have it “easy.” Youth narrate personal “change” as a slow, difficult, circular, and ongoing “process of becoming” (Biehl and Locke 2010) strong believers, or mature religious subjects. In this way, younger evangelicals recycle enduring tropes of struggle to reframe and revalidate their own religious identity.

Youth narrated the process of backsliding as a kind of tumultuous liminal or grey space between the otherwise black and white “dualistic schemes” of Kichwa Christianity (i.e. either you’re saved or not saved). When I asked youth to talk about their recent backsliding past, they did not report finding pleasure in the sybaritic life they lived for a while. They emphasized how tormented and confused they felt throughout this period in their lives. While living in Quito pursuing his college degree, Alejandro started attending church again, but says he lived a double life for a while:

...I would be going to church and at the same time going to the discotheques, reading the Bible and at the same time drinking beer until the moment I decided to leave all of that but it was a constant battle...
When he started taking baptism courses, Alejandro began to have nightmares in which an ominous male figure looking over his bed at night threatened to take him away. One week before baptism, Alejandro began praying to God during the nightmare, asking for his forgiveness. Nonetheless, the nightmares continued. “The devil doesn’t want to let you go for all the bad things you’ve done,” his pastors told him. The night before getting baptized, Alejandro had his last dream. In the dream, he was running, scared in the desert. It was dark, and he was being followed. He tripped and found himself at the edge of an oasis. A person embraced him from behind. He heard, “I’m with you now all of this is going to end I love you.” From there on out, Alejandro says, he was no longer plagued by nightmares. Even after getting baptized, though, Alejandro admits it was difficult for him to give up alcohol.

Katie: ...When you got baptized did you immediately stop drinking and doing drugs all of that or did you continue?

Alejandro: It was difficult. It was like I served two bosses. Of course I would go to church but still do what I was doing. Or rather it was difficult for me but just like it says in the Bible either you’re hot or cold there’s no lukewarm or anything and I said am I doing good or bad [...] Yes it was difficult for me but I don’t even know when but I stopped doing it...

The young men I spoke with emphasized pivotal moments of conviction or clarity offset by numerous “roadblocks” experienced despite intentions to change, such that their pathways back to the church seemed long and winding. Rather than a clear endpoint, their accounts stress a series of catalysts to change in their lives. Consider Jonathan’s story.

...What I can tell you about myself is that I have has a lot of things to endure and learn. First I came from a Christian family but my father and mother had serious problems when I was in high school... My parents separated. I had something to do with that, some conflicts with my father, fights with my father ... What happened, happened, but my mother was always faithful to God and the Bible. She would share the Bible with us and all of that. When I was a boy a liked to sing, to listen to what she would say. It was like listening to stories for me but after those things started happening, my parents separated I already started to doubt. I said why? If God says that he writes the destiny and he knows what will happen to you then God already knew that this would happen. He brought me here to live this. Those were the questions that I asked myself and from then on I started
to doubt already. I started to say no- we are here because we are here period. And then it was so painful to see my mother suffer economically- suffer because she couldn’t do it all herself. And so I also got really depressed and I started to do things that I regret now. I started to do drugs- not drugs but alcohol. I started to go out with friends, you know. What I did was bad.

At one point during his period of parties and drinking, Jonathan decided to “start over again with God” and “take the place of his father.” He started to improve his relationship with his family and take on odd jobs to help out his mother and younger siblings out financially.

...but then I felt like when I was trying to find God [again] problems just got worse. I started to fight with my mother with my brothers and sisters...I said why- why if according to what my mother taught me I’m acting in the correct way why are things turning out bad. Maybe I’m not chosen by God. Maybe I’m not pleasing in the eyes of God. So I said I might as well just go back to how I was before and I returned to what I was before. Maybe parties, alcohol, girlfriends, friends, disobeying my parents. I returned to all of that...

Jonathan said a turning point for him was that a fellow San Mateo resident—manager at a bank cooperative—told him about a job opening and encouraged him to apply. Nervous while waiting to be called in for the interview, two elderly strangers approached him and told him not to be afraid. “God is by your side,” they told him. Jonathan said this gave him “strength” to go through with the interview. He got the job. “From then on I think that’s when I started to change.”

Even then, change was not immediate. His co-workers would invite him to parties and he would go in order not to be left out. Like Alejandro, Jonathan began to have recurring nightmares involving a black presence trying to strangle him.

... I would always wake up screaming and I couldn’t sleep. I was scared to tell my mother because who will believe me. I worked up the courage one time to tell her and she told me that perhaps I am going down a bad path and that I’m doing things that I should and I’m not living according to God’s will and she was right because in reality I wasn’t doing that...

The next time he had the nightmare, he remembered his mother’s advice to get up and start to pray.
...I got up and turned on the light and I started to pray. I said that I wanted to change that I didn’t want to return to who I was before. I started to change a little bit. I started to not drink a lot... When my friends would invite me I would make up excuses. I would say you know what I have to out with my girlfriend or right now I’m helping out my mother I’ll be right there wait. I distanced myself a little bit...

Even so, Jonathan continued to struggle and receive contradictory spiritual signs. He told me about numerous occasions in which strangers approached him at work, inviting him to their churches. As it turned out, attending other churches is what finally made Jonathan decide he wanted to get baptized. I return to this in the following section.

Luis, for his part, said he “started to change” after a personal conversation he had with God in which he asked for forgiveness at the age of 21 or 22 while praying with his cousin. He got back together with his girlfriend (now wife). Luis began taking baptism classes at Christ King church in 2010. Luis described the baptism classes and the ritual of baptism as a kind of “call to change,” a transformative personal experience in which he changed what he described as his negative, impatient, angry, melancholic attitude and became more patient and calm. The classes also helped him to accept that evangelical identification was a pivotal aspect of his identity: “where I’m from, who I am, and where I’m going.” In 2010, Luis and others from San Mateo traveled by bus to Baños to get baptized in a river. In the moment of submergence in the water, Luis told me he thought: “I am going to leave behind all of the bad things that I have done; from here on out it’s a new life.”

Although the re-converted young men I spoke with had reached some resolution in their lives by the time I spoke with them, and many had been baptized and were planning on doing so soon, they still considered change an ongoing process. In fact, many of the young men expected that challenges to their faith would actually increase after baptism. The possibility of “falling” again is ever-present. “There are a lot of things that day by day you have to change little by
little,” Jonathan told me. “And I am scared,” he admitted, “because right now I’m telling you all of this and maybe tomorrow God says okay you’re fine but now I am going to test you... to see if you pass.” When Luis talks to the group of young people he used to encourage to drink alcohol, he tells them: “I invite you to change. I’m going to change. I have to keep changing.”

**Elders’ Personal Conversion Narratives**

Elders tell their collective stories of discontinuity “from the endpoint of ultimate conversion”—in this case ultimate mass conversion—some fifty years after the fact. For this reason, their narratives can appear more teleological in trajectory than the youth narratives. One example of this is the collective “total change” narrative I discuss in Chapter 2. This distance between experience and narrated experience erases some of “the uncertainties, oscillations, and the contestations of the process” (cf. Jolly 1996:245).

Nonetheless, my life interviews with elders reveal that moments of backsliding and doubt figured into their religious biography as well. Religious conviction was not fully realized the moment one accepted Jesus Christ, but rather cultivated over some time. The Kichwa gloss for “conversion”—becoming a believer (K. krik tukuna)—offers a useful emic lens (see also my discussion of the use of Kichwa verbs “to live” and “to walk” in Chapter 2). In Kichwa sentence structure, the conversion moment occurs gradually over time, literally in the midst of continuous action. Tayta Fernando said: “In those days I lived becoming a believer,” he says (K. Chay punllakunami ekik tukushpa kawsarkani).

As I describe in Chapter 4, elderly female converts discuss their husbands’ giving up alcohol abuse as gradual. Male converts took their time giving up drinking, a process that often extended well after their official conversion experience. Tayta Fernando admits that he went

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167 Most elderly converts that I spoke with do not share this fear of falling again at any moment. They seem confident about eternal salvation given their life work dedicated to the Word of God.
back to being a drunk at one point after becoming a believer. He started drinking again when his
daughter became a godparent to a child whose father was not a believer and they had to make
chicha in celebration. He continued drinking for several months after that. Looking back on this
period of backsliding he says, “This however didn’t seem at all good to me.” Marta, who was
helping me interpret from Kichwa to Spanish asked: “Ahh, inside yourself?” He replied, “Right.
Inside myself.”

Fernando sought Pastor Samuel Charco’s help, saying he had “become a drunk” again and
that he wanted to “become a believer again.” Samuel Charco helped him do so, advising him
against hitting his children and telling him to pray to God for forgiveness. It was only after his
backsliding experience, and after going back to Samuel Charco to re-convert, that Tayta
Fernando stopped drinking for good, not after the initial conversion experience itself.
Backsliding lead him to spiritual strength and maturity or conviction—to “live becoming
strong.”

Even steadfast elderly figures such as Pastor Samuel Charco went through periods of
spiritual doubt. As a young adult, already familiar with the Bible, Pastor Samuel went through a
period of about three years of asking himself “in my heart” after he already knew what the Bible
said if he wanted to continue. “Will I leave or will I stay?” he asked himself. Samuel told his
daughter Marta (who told me) that at one point in his life, he had a lot of questions about GMU
Christian teachings. “How could God have created everything?” Eventually, he gave up on the
questions and settled on saying “God exists, period.”

Younger than Pastor Samuel, Pastor Francisco Mullo was exposed to the religion at an
even earlier age as a student of Atahualpa School, and says he accepted the Lord easily. After

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168 My research assistant interpreted Tayta Fernando’s words—sinchiyashpa sinchiyashpa kawsashpa—into Spanish as he “converted into a mature evangelical.”
getting married, though, Francisco says he began to question his faith. “Is it true or not?” Like some of the young men I talk about in this chapter, God was personally revealed to him through visions of light at home at night. Lying in bed alongside his sleeping wife one evening, he had a vision of Jesus Christ. A shining light appeared inside his house and a voice said, “Francisco, preach the Gospel.” After “the Lord was revealed” to him, he was much more motivated to evangelize.

“WORLD” AS OPPORTUNITY

Although influences in the urban, school and work sphere outside of their rural, evangelical, indigenous community and local church “tempt” or confuse the young believers, they are also the source of personal and collective religious regeneration. Chance interactions with strangers and events experienced outside their natal community—“in the world”—catapulted their process of change and enticed the young men back to the faith as well as to their community and family.

I attended youth worship service one evening at Christ King dedicated to the topic of baptism. Jonathan, working methodically from a print-out, guided the others present—his younger brother, another young man, and a young woman—in discussing the topic. The story of how he got that print out, and why he was motivated to talk to fellow youth that evening about “starting to change, first by doing what the Bible mandates, honor our parents” illustrates these ideas.

While living on his own for a job in the outskirts of Riobamba, Jonathan was approached by a Christian stranger at work who invited him to his church, a mixed indigenous/mestizo church. He asked Jonathan if he was Christian, and Jonathan replied, “I’m neither Christian nor Catholic but I believe in God.” He went to the man’s church, to an evening of biblical lessons on
baptism, and described his surprise when the teacher asked questions and he did not know how to answer them. “Right there in that moment I felt like a child, someone who didn’t know anything and during that class [the teacher] taught us about baptism... and I liked that class so much that it convinced me that I also had to do [get baptized].”

...That night I prayed I said, “God I have tried to follow you but I have not been able. I have promised not to fail you but I haven’t been able to do that either. And I don’t know what you want for me but here I am. Do with me what you want...”

The next day, he was invited to another church and he went. The preacher’s message of living in peace with God because no one knows when they will die resonated with Jonathan. He and his co-worker went out to eat afterwards and were robbed at gunpoint. This convinced Jonathan that he had to die in peace, and in order for that to happen he had to re-establish good relationships with his family and community members, beginning by asking for forgiveness.

Alejandro had a similar experience. He was living in Quito during his period of apostasy, not wanting “anything to do with God” at the time. While sitting in a coffee shop one night, an Argentinean man approached him. “God wants to give you another chance,” the man told him, “almost as if he knew my life already” Alejandro mused. “Why?” Alejandro asked. “Why would God want to be with me if I don’t want to be with him?” The person invited him to his (mestizo) church, where missionaries also attended. Alejandro reluctantly went. He was surprised that churchgoers embraced him despite the fact that his hair was long and he was dressed entirely in black in gothic rock fashion. Alejandro started attending regularly. He got baptized there.

Right before getting baptized, Alejandro planned to attend his last Goth rock concert in South Quito. His favorite band- Celestil de Quito- was slated to perform. He and his friends got themselves ready, putting on their makeup and leather pants, but at the last minute decided not to go because it was raining.
...With my friends of that time we put make up all over our faces. We put on our boots our leather pants and all of that. I had my hair long and pulled back like that and we were ready to go like that. If people from here had seen me, shit, they would have disinherited me [laughs] just like that it was a Saturday ... it started to sprinkle and we said, “Shit the rain is coming. For nothing I say we got our makeup on...” It started to rain more and I said, “Shit I can’t anymore...”

It turns out the concert’s indoor venue had caught on fire that night, and several musicians and concertgoers had died. For Alejandro, this meant God was with him, that in fact He had never left him. He considers his music ministry a kind of repayment to God for saving his life.

In their narratives, youth recognize signs of the presence of God in some of their horrible experiences “in the world,” or in the urban-secular spaces they narrate. Youth interpret these events as signs that the same God they prayed to as children was always already there, despite all of the “bad” things they were doing at the time. Youth experiences with backsliding make God immediate and asceticism newly relevant to them in the contemporary moment. “World” is not a threat but an opportunity in another sense; sharing a personal account of alcohol abuse or other worldly problems produces Christian personhood (Harding 2000). In order to share a testimony, you need to have had some experiences doing “bad things” in the world and then changing. A Facebook status update by ConverZion RockBand illustrates this idea of problems as tools.

Problems are not coincidental. It’s not like God doesn’t love you, or that you don’t matter. Problems are tools that enable you to construct your own experience... they serve to help others who are going through what you did.

I would add to this that problems are tools in their subsequent narration. In short, the experience of apostasy gives youth the authority to speak. My conversations with young evangelicals who were still in their liminal/experimental state tended to be rather short and superficial without the familiar before/after testimony in which to talk about their backsliding.

Narrating problems according to particular local and global religious scripts is an evangelizing “tool” to reach out to other youth. Alejandro told me that his experience has been
“a tool to converse with youth to say that not everything is lost that when one decides to fight or when one leaves things in God’s hand anything is surmountable and everything can stop.” An “easy” life without problems or personal change is not as effective in narrating Christian identity. One youth leader who never had problems with alcohol, in fact, stressed to me how he wished he had—in order to have a more effective testimony to share with his students during Bible study.

To avoid accusations of hypocrisy or following through with church rituals only out of a sense of obligation to family members, individual re-conversion testimonies carry weight for young men with a backsliding past. Through testimony, one establishes one’s sincerity in taking on religious action and clinches one’s re-commitment to the church. Leading up to his younger brother’s wedding, for example, Marcelo delivered his testimony to Christ King Church at a Sunday afternoon service. Although Marcelo had been living on the straight and narrow and attending Christ King since his return to San Mateo, he could not work up the courage to share his testimony publically in front of the church until he was asked by his younger brother to be the godfather at his church wedding. Although I was not present on that afternoon, I heard accounts of his mother, crying in the audience as he stood on stage at the podium reading his testimony. Marcelo showed me what he had written afterwards. At the end of his testimony, Marcelo reaches out to other youth, saying:

Young brothers and sisters let’s not be two-faced if we want to follow God there will always be roadblocks and problems let’s not look at others in what problems they fall into but rather let’s help one another as children of God let’s learn not to criticize others and let’s demonstrate with our attitude that we are children of God.”

FAMILY, CHURCH, AND COMMUNITY

For youth, religious identity and family relationships are tightly bound. “I came from a Christian family”; “I was born in a Christian family”; “I am offspring of a Christian family”
often heard them say in describing their lives to me. My informants describe their grandparents and parents as highly devout, inculcating in them songs, biblical passages, and the importance of going to worship service and sharing the Word of God. Their childhood memories consist of avidly attending Sunday school and church, listening to biblical stories, and learning from their parents and grandparents to fear God, live a “good life,” and treat others with respect. Some felt they were raised more by their grandparents given their parents’ busy work lives. They publically accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior in church between the ages of 7 and 12.

Avoiding Church, Avoiding Hypocrisy

Fueling youth religious dissatisfaction with the religion and their backsliding, however, is a growing disillusionment, as they get older, with the adults in their lives and the extent to which they do or do not “live Christianity.” Evangelical conversion to the “good life” promised improved social relationships, but did not necessarily pan out that way over time. Today’s youth have witnessed this fall out of “good life” promises in their families and community first hand. Alejandro grew resentful towards God and began to abuse alcohol and drugs, he says, when his parents divorced. His parents fought constantly and his father drank. Jonathan also began to doubt God after his father committed adultery and abandoned the family to live with another woman in a different community.

I often heard youth charge the adult Christians in their lives with hypocrisy. By hypocrisy they refer to the incongruence between Christian ideals of strict asceticism and relatedness emphasized in talk on the one hand, and people’s actions on the other. According to him, members of Harvest church, who also fight amongst themselves and criticize each other, are only “so-called Christians” or “Christians in quotation marks.” As Alejandro points out, “being Christian isn’t just about talking about God. It’s about practicing what the Bible says.” Youth
criticize pastors who “talk with one hand and steal with the other” or pastors known to have committed adultery. Some adults go to church on Sunday afternoon exclaiming “Alleluia”, Jonathan complains, but on Monday morning, “they forget they’re brothers and sisters (of faith)” if a sheep crosses into one’s land to eat.

Furthermore, male youth began breaking away from the church and experimenting with drinking and partying around the same time that San Mateo and Sisapamba split, breaking up the once-vibrant Harvest Church. Alejandro was particularly disappointed by the separation of San Mateo from Sisapamba, which he saw as a problem instigated “among our parents.” Nonetheless, it was the youth of the two communities, Alejandro notes, who suffered the consequences.

San Mateo youth target fellow youth for hypocritical behavior as well, such as for getting married in the church on a Sunday and getting drunk with their friends the next. In fact, the young men’s decision not to participate in church activities was motivated by not wanting to appear hypocritical. Jonathan explained:

...Ever since I was young I have understood what the Bible is; ever since I was young I have known that with God you don’t play around; God knows what you are doing; so I said why would I go? I’d just be a big hypocrite...

During their “yes” period, youth avoid attending their community church or attend but only the bare minimum (Sunday afternoon multi-generational service) and under parental pressure.

Youth backsliding is an effect of the ways in which conversion has played out over time in families and communities. Youth respond to the internal tensions arising within families and churches in the 1990s and early 2000s by doubting the faith in which they were inculcated as children.

Re-Embracing Family, Church, and Community

Youth narratives are deeply personal descriptions of overcoming doubt and struggle, but
their experiences of backsliding and “change” are not just individual affairs. As Uzendoski (2003:142) writes:

Those who live within an Evangelical community ... are obligated to live within it, even if they are fallen ... Despite the fact that an Evangelical has fallen,\(^{169}\) he or she cannot simply become Catholic. Evangelicals, like all Runa, are not only individuals; their identities are packed in the social relations that make up their person. They must live the contradictions.

In the case at hand, youth experienced backsliding as a direct affront to their communities and elders; even so, the nature of their (narrated) torment suggests the continual weight that familial expectations played in youth lives. In re-establishing a relationship with the divine, young (re)converts re-embraced family, church, and community relationships.

In the classic sense of conversion as an individual affair, conversion marks a break with the surrounding social world and familial pasts (Meyer 1998; Robbins 2004:127). For young adult evangelicals growing up in Christianized homes, the opposite is the case: drinking and partying goes against the teachings and advice of church-going elders and family members in their community of origin. For evangelical youth, breaking with “the world” becomes a matter of re-embracing childhood teachings, family, community, and church for youth. For the young men, doing what the Bible says means honoring and obeying one’s parents and maintaining positive familial relationships; in fact, giving up vices and attending church are interpreted as actions that honor one’s parents. As Jonathan says, “Honoring our parents in my view is something simple. By just avoiding all of those bad things related to alcohol and drugs every parent I believe would be happy.”

In the process of “change,” youth say they start to remember biblical verses and moral guidance from the missionaries and their parents and grandparents. Marcelo started to doubt if

\(^{169}\) Uzendoski describes “the fallen” as: “converts who either have not fully realized the conversion process or have briefly separated from it” (Uzendoski 2003:142).
God existed when he was around 18 years old, around the time he was deciding whether or not to go to the seminary in Quito. Praying to God for guidance, he recalled Philippians 4:13, “I can do all this through him who gives me strength” (New International Version, Biblegateway.com) “I knew [this verse] from memory,” Marcelo says, “because we repeated it a lot in Sunday school.” Jonathan says because his mother taught him who God was, there was no way he could get too off track. All he had to do was remember what he had been taught as a young boy. When Jonathan’s started dating Catholic girls, he remembered what his mother had always told him—“light and dark do not mix”—and finally understood what she meant.

Re-conversion for Chimborazo’s youth involves re-integration into family and rural community and church-going life. All four of the young men I focus on in this chapter are back living in or near San Mateo. Most are evangelizing other youth and/or attending the local church regularly. Marcelo’s desire to “change” motivated him to move back to San Mateo with his wife and child. After surviving a drunken brawl while out with his co-workers one night in Quito, Marcelo began to pray to God to thank him for his protection. “From that moment on,” Marcelo says in his written testimony, “I started to change...I started to stop drinking little by little but it wasn’t easy.” In making this decision, Marcelo imagined his old homeland as a space where he would not be tempted to drink and party and he could leave his vices behind once-and-for-all. Indeed, ever since moving back, Marcelo says “everything started to change.” He was finally able to “forget about drinking.” With the support of his sisters, he began attending church again. Although his wife is Catholic and has not yet accepted Jesus Christ, he saw a change in her, too, after moving back to San Mateo. She’s “more interested in knowing God,” he says.

Christ the King Church worship services provide opportunities to re-solidify close kin
relationships through coordinated acts of familial forgiveness. During a special worship service for Mother’s Day, for example, I watched as youth embraced their mothers lovingly and at length, burying their heads in the crock of their mother’s neck, sobbing. Intimate conversations took place in whispers between mother and young adult child during the long embrace.

A critical turning-point for many youth is the decision to finally get baptized. Baptism is a “ritual of rupture” (Robbins 2004) that makes one a full member of the church. Parents expect their children to be baptized sometime in their young adulthood, once they are responsible enough to make a conscious decision, but well before they have to be baptized, say to have a church wedding. But as we shall see, baptism is far from an individual affair; family obligations and relationships—maintaining ties to one’s natal family as well as forging new ties through marriage—play a crucial role.

For initial converts, baptism followed “accepting Jesus Christ” pretty uneventfully for them. Middle-aged evangelicals were baptized as youth once they reached a certain age; their skepticism emerged after they were already baptized. Younger evangelicals today, on the other hand particularly young men, see baptism on the horizon but choose to delay it in favor of a continued period of experimentation. Some youth take baptism as indicative of their commitment to being Christian so seriously that they to put it off; they are scared or feel unprepared to go through with it, and “change” their behaviors accordingly.

Many young men, both disaffected and re-converted youth, understand their pre-baptized state as providing leeway in which to disengage from the church even though they had already “accepted Jesus Christ” at a young age. Angel told me he would not even consider getting baptized until he was at least 22 years old. When his father, the church president, suggests it, he says he’s not ready to give up all of the “bad things” he does. Plus, he says he feels too “lazy” to
attend church. He prefers to watch T.V. Angel’s brother, 20-year-old Francisco, attends university in Riobamba. He said he was thinking about waiting one more year before taking baptism classes. “Why wait?” I asked. “Because I want to enjoy [life] just a little bit more.” He admitted to drinking and going to parties with his Catholic friends. “Is that okay in terms of your religion?” I asked. He laughed and replied bluntly, “I’m not a good Christian.”

Even those seeking “change” in their lives are gun shy about getting baptized. Jonathan planned to get baptized, but he wanted to proceed slowly to make sure he went into it with a sufficient amount of knowledge and preparation. What seemed to make youth ready more than anything was the prospect of getting married and starting a family. Even youth who are disaffected from the church, or wish to marry someone who is Catholic, desire a church-sanctioned wedding. In order to plan a church wedding, both parties and their godparents need to be baptized.

Jonathan’s sister, who is older than he is but not baptized yet, told me that when she approached the church president to talk about taking baptism classes, his initial reaction was “Why? Are you thinking about getting married?” Jonathan’s sister was deeply offended by the church president’s comment. But it points to a common assumption (or fear) held by adults and church leaders.

Baptism is a process that takes some time and coordination. Classes go on for at least a month; classes need to be coordinated by lay leadership once enough young members of the community express a desire, then one has to take a four-week baptism class offered by lay leaders at the church. If a young evangelical’s fiancé is Catholic (from another town), he or she will announce their conversion to Christ King church members during a Sunday afternoon service, then get baptized shortly thereafter. Marriage is like the last pit stop; if you’re not
baptized by then, you better do so, and fast. Luis and his wife were married in civil court. They took baptism classes together, then finally had their religious wedding, which took place in San Mateo’s auditorium.

In addition to prompting youth baptisms, the prospect of marriage also motivates godparents of the couple, usually the groom’s father (or elder brother if the father has passed), to re-integrate into the church leading up to the wedding if they haven’t been attending church. Family members of the bride and groom rely heavily on their fellow churchgoers in preparing for the wedding, and if they haven’t been going to church on a regular basis, they will not be able to draw on that social network. Tayta Fernando’s middle-aged adult son, who had defected from the church, made a comeback for a period of time leading up to his son’s engagement and church wedding so he could legitimately serve as the godfather of his son’s wedding.

Believers look disapprovingly on baptisms and church weddings conducted out of a sense of familial or community obligation rather than “conviction.” But it is quite common, says Marcelo, for evangelicals to do things “out of custom only, because their parents are evangelical or their grandparents are evangelical.” I can think of various examples of non-baptized, disaffected male youth getting their girlfriends pregnant, then feeling pressure to get married so as not to make their parents, church leaders, look bad, then getting baptized quickly before the church wedding, then never returning to church.

To avoid accusations that one’s decision to get baptized is calculated rather than the expression of one’s inner faith and commitment to the church, adults urge their children to get baptized before any problems in their life arise and well before they are of marriageable age. Jonathan’s mother told me: “I pray to my God that [my children] do not get baptized just to get married but rather already before marriage.”
The evangelical church wedding is an important religious rite of passage for “third generation” believers—perhaps more so than for first-convert elders. Many of today’s elders were married in the Catholic Church, but not in the evangelical church. (Either they got married before converting or married in the Catholic Church after conversion to please non-converted family members). Uzendoski (2003) claims weddings in Napo are occasions where evangelicals frequently “fall.” This was the case during the initial conversion period for some first converts in Colta. I noted the opposite in the contemporary moment; weddings provide social pressure and impetus to return to the church.

In Kichwa communities, marriage is the central marker for adulthood status. Because young adults do not live on their own, marriage marks going from the household of one’s parents to making your own life. In terms of the religion, it is the real test of faith, or whether you are going to follow the Gospel. When I asked Tayta Rafael about his grandsons and their rebelliousness when it came to the religion, he said: “It’s only after the children get married that you can really see which children are following [the gospel] well and which are not.” Marriage and raising a family is an important turning point in one’s “conversion career” (Gooren 2007) or evangelical life span.

**Youth Views on Religion and Church Practices**

For various reasons—spiritual, social, and familial—disaffected young evangelicals in Chimborazo return to the church and go through with the requisite “rituals of rupture” on the road to becoming an adult and mature evangelical. When they re-embrace the church, however, they do not adopt the same views on religious practice as church elders and leaders.

First of all, youth shy away from religious labels and the strict dogma separating evangelicals from Catholics that GMU missionaries and their elders drew. “We all worship the
same God,” is one common refrain. Jonathan decided to see for himself what Catholic masses were like and he concluded that “it [our faith] was pretty much the same.” Evangelicals often accuse Catholics of worshiping images, but Jonathan thinks that when Catholics pray to an image, they are actually demonstrating faith, a faith that is essentially the same as his. Youth say they did not re-embrace “religion,” but rather a personal relationship with God. “God is not a religion. It’s a relationship” the son of first converts explained to me. “The Bible does not say that religion saves [you].”

Youth also considered church teachings to be repetitive; in Jonathan’s view, pastors and church preachers concentrate too heavily on teaching through parables (e.g. the Good Samaritan). Jonathan, Marcelo, and others said they are disappointed by the level of Biblical instruction they receive by their church elders. According to one middle-aged progressive, youth are dissatisfied because they seek more advanced textual exegesis. Since their soccer games scheduled for Sunday afternoon prevent them from attending Sunday afternoon service, Jonathan and Marcelo organized a small group of male youth from San Mateo to get together early Sunday mornings before sunrise for a separate Bible study where they could each participate in group reflection on biblical passages without having to rely on a pastor.

Youth say they were left without answers when they approached their elders for guidance during critical moments of doubt. Jonathan mentions that when questions came up for him such as “who made God and where did God come from?”, no pastor has been able to answer him adequately. “There’s no answer to that question; the devil puts those questions [in your head] so that you doubt Him [God],” one pastor had told him. For the pastor, questioning and doubts meant lacking faith.
Youth frequently expressed to me their ongoing dissatisfaction with typical forms of worship during Kichwa Church services. What was once new and novel has become old and familiar to them. Employing the same language first converts once used to justify breaking from Catholicism, for many youth, going to church and the religion itself has become a “custom” or “tradition.” They described worship service as monotonous and repetitive. Alejandro described what it was like to start attending Harvest Church again after living and attending church in Quito for a period of time.

When I got here I started to go to the church [Harvest Church]- of course it was a little bit difficult for me to get used to it in the sense that city life is different than country life. (Katie: In what way?) In that city life is a little bit more active and dynamic. It’s more open. By contrast, here life in the countryside is a little bit reserved, static. They are always in the same circle going around and around in place or rather they don’t look for alternatives to improve but rather get stuck in the same the same. For example the worship services. It’s always the same routine. For example they arrive to church pray sing pray sing collect offerings and bye nothing more. And it’s just like that a routine. The same as always. ... It’s like they’re scared of change. But if one has an idea and says let’s do this they say you know what that’s bad. That’s not what the Bible says. They’re very rigid. They’re very shut off.

Alejandro said the services at the church he attended in Quito, a non-indigenous church frequented by missionaries and people from other countries, are more dynamic and participatory. Worship services were dynamic and included games in addition to preaching and songs.

As Youth President of Harvest Church, Alejandro says he received a lot of criticism on the part of adults for forming a rock music band. Church deacons would say things like “You make a lot of noise.” Alejandro says that when he and his band mates felt like rehearsing in the church, no one would give them the keys. Alejandro tried to start a new a mime choreography group and a puppet ministry, but his attempts were thwarted by (older) church authorities. Alejandro said Harvest Church worship services used to be more dynamic—“when we were

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170 This is another example of fractal recursivity in speech of younger generations. For a discussion of this point in relationship to second-generation evangelicals, see Chapter 3.
children”—but that it’s not anymore—“little by little things got colder.” Alejandro renounced his position as Youth president mid-way through his term in 2010, stopped playing in the band, and started attending a Kichwa Church in Riobamba instead of Harvest Church (He didn’t feel comfortable attending Christ King because of the rift between the two churches/communities). Alejandro’s efforts now go towards getting a Music School ministry (including biblical study) off the ground in San Mateo that integrates youth from churches across Colta and Riobamba.

At Christ King Church, authorities claim they are more open and cater more to the “modern” proclivities of youth styles and practices than Harvest Church. Christ King Church leaders say they seek to involve youth more with activities and performances. Ricardo says in Spanish,

...in church also only elderly people used to be in charge of directing, of picking up offerings and tithes, of preaching, adults... but lately, here, we, since we [split from Harvest Church] have integrated youth, children, like this practically so that they can be learning too.

Members of Christ King, particularly women involved in “sociocultural programming” make an effort to get youth involved in different, creative activities. During one late-night vigil that I attended, Christ King congregants held a Bible verse competition, in which a Bible verse was announced and individual players (mostly youth with adult onlookers) tore through pages in the Bible to find it first. These activities take typical practices (e.g. looking up a Bible verse) and imbue them with a kind of competitive or humorous entertainment value.

**BECOMING THE “PASSIONATE GENERATION:” YOUTH WORSHIP STYLES**

March 23, 2010. On the first evening of a weekend-long youth conference at Harvest Church, I join youth and a spattering of adults to attend a worship service. Alejandro joins other members of Harvest Church’s youth ministry’s rock band named “Conversion Band” (S. Grupo ConverZion) on stage. Donning a black dress suit, white collared shirt, and tie, he plays the electric guitar along with two other electric guitarists, one percussionist, one lead singer, and two back-up singers. Two female backup singers join them, wearing stylish vests over short-sleeved blouses paired with anakus, their hair halfway pulled up. As the band performs popular
International Christian music with Pentecostal roots, Spanish lyrics are projected on the front wall. A member of the youth group films the event to later produce an event DVD. As the band plays, I look over to see some believers in the pews standing with raised arms, closed eyes, tears forming. They sway back and forth. Projected from a laptop computer onto the upper wall of the church, the title of the youth conference flashes: “First Gathering of Youth: The Passionate Generation.”

Distinctive youth styles are another means by which youth draw upon the “world” as opportunity to cultivate Christian conviction and make an inherited religion relevant in the contemporary moment. In the rest of this section, I focus on how youth draw on semiotic and aesthetic registers not understood to be from local Kichwa church-based repertoires to turn the tables on adult representations of their styles and practices as threatening or lacking conviction. Through a process of “semiotic resignification” (Bucholtz 2002 in reference to the Birmingham School Tradition such as Willis 1977 and Hebdige 1979) youth resubvert the secular or worldly meanings assigned to global Pentecostal music, mestizo fashion, Spanish and English language, and new media technologies to perform their generational “passion.”

In negotiating the fundamentalist Christian ethnic church of their elders with selected aspects of charismatic modes of piety and performance, youth carve out a new aesthetic-based politics of religious style that cross-cuts indigenous/mestizo and rural/urban dichotomies.

Colta’s grandparents and parents read youth styles and practices of dress, speech, and technology as threatening to the reproduction of Christianity and indigenous life ways, in so far as local Christianity is integrally tied to the history and reproduction of indigenous language and

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172 Older people are considered more religiously fervent and committed, but lacking secular knowledge. Younger generations have formal (secular) degrees, but are thought to be lacking religious conviction. Both age cohorts seek legitimacy in the Kichwa Church by performing the opposite. As I discuss in Chapter 2, older people accept hierarchical titles such as “reverend” and degrees such as honorary doctorates to validate their experiences. Younger folks demonstrate their “passion” through liturgical performance.
cultural expression. In their view, youth lack religious conviction because they are pulled by materiality—what’s “in fashion” (S. de moda). Daniel described “third generation” rebelliousness to me by talking about everyday dress: black T-shirts with gang- and drug- related graphics; provocative and tight clothing showing off girls’ belly buttons. His own daughter rarely wore an anaku and spoke little Kichwa. Daniel and Marta’s daughter said to me, “My mom wants us to be like them but she doesn’t understand. We live in another era.”

While conducting fieldwork, I saw youth in a different light. At church service on Sunday afternoons, believers wear graphic T-shirts, but ones that say “Jesus: Specialist in Healing Hearts.” On Friday evenings, youth gather and blast recorded pop music from speakers, but it’s Christian rock they’re listening to. Daniel’s son watches a DVD late one night, but it’s a documentary featuring a young Christian girl from the Ecuadorian coast telling her account of coming back from death. Youth in attendance at a youth workshop flip through cell phones, but they do so to look up Bible passages. They download popular music on their MP3 players, but the tune is Christian Reggaeton. They graffiti their notebooks, but they etch out with the word “Jesus.” And adults embrace youth practices, too; Marta’s cell phone ring interrupted our interview in 2007. The ring was set to a chipmunk voice reading of the Lord’s Prayer in Spanish. With these series of revised images, we get a taste of the social and cultural practices that shape youth religiosity today.

In order to understand the significance of the worship and performance styles in my description of ConverZion rock band’s performance above, and the daily religious orientations adopted by youth, we need to take a step back and look at the wider context and history of the Kichwa Church. As a strongly ethnic-identified church, the Kichwa Church has a history of showcasing symbolic representations of indigenous identity and culture: music, dress, language.
Still today, multigenerational worship services cater to elderly and traditional-conservative forms of rural Kichwa evangelical piety. These include two weekly services at the church (a well-attended Sunday afternoon service and a less-well attended Tuesday evening service); an early prayer meeting at dawn on Sundays; and intimate family services in people’s homes on Saturday afternoons. In these spaces, the dominant language used for prayer, preaching, and singing is Kichwa. Adult evangelicals carry Bibles and church hymnals with them, even if they are illiterate. Most congregants at a typical Sunday service don local indigenous garb. Social interactions follow local norms for greeting and departing: for greetings, a soft handshake and “good afternoon” for departures, a soft handshake and “until tomorrow.”

In terms of musical expression, a cantor or two lead congregants in a long series of congregational hymn singing, mostly in Kichwa to native tunes and some in Spanish. Many know the songs by heart or follow along in the Kichwa hymn book “Songs to God Almighty” (K. *Sumaj Diosta Cantanami*). Singing is a cappella, or with one or two accompanying instruments such as a guitar, a keyboard, or an accordion. Choirs of various formations (female choir, youth, individual families) take turns singing a hymn on stage, standing still and straight in horizontal lines. Congregants sit quietly in their chairs, and stand, sing, and clap only when cued by the cantor(s).

Music was central component of GMU missionization, and continues to be central in Kichwa worship services. Music met missionary evangelizing goals and parameters set for good “functional substitutes” because it offered effective autochthonous avenues for spreading the Word. Introducing new media technologies of that time, GMU missionaries enticed new users to listen to the Bible in their language. Pastor Samuel Charco worked the record player for the missionaries at the health clinic in Colta. He played recordings of biblical stories in Kichwa. When listeners heard a voice speaking their language coming from the record player, they thought it miraculous and a form of fortune telling (S. *adivinar*).

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173 The 2007 publication features nearly 700 hymns in Kichwa and 341 in Spanish.
174 Pastor Samuel Charco worked the record player for the missionaries at the health clinic in Colta. He played recordings of biblical stories in Kichwa. When listeners heard a voice speaking their language coming from the record player, they thought it miraculous and a form of fortune telling (S. *adivinar*).
converts by playing records of Christian songs and dramatized Bible story readings in Kichwa (See Centro 1997:30-31; Klassen 1974: 86-88) in people’s homes and at local clinics. Mama Dolores first heard the Word of God when she was a girl and female missionaries came from Pulucate by horse to cure her mother’s infected foot. Missionaries played records and family members gathered around to sing hymns. One verse has stuck with Dolores all of these years: "Christ gives life; Christ will never leave you."

GMU missionaries taught local talent how to sing and play musical instruments. Young people then formed musical bands and used music and dramatization to spread the Gospel (Muratorio 1981b:516). The young, local talent—songwriters—began creating their own Christian hymns in Kichwa set to local rhythms. Kichwa Christian music was widely disseminated on the radio, mimeographs, and hymnals (Malan 2004:13). When AIECH took over Colta radio from the GMU missionaries in 1975, Kichwa converts began introducing “national music,” a musical genre that had been prohibited as “worldly” (Andrade 2007:157). Musical rhythms and genres typical of a Kichwa Church service came about in ways once highly contested, but have become the basis for the reproduction of Kichwa rural evangelical identity.

Esther and other members of her age cohort began promoting “sociocultural” programming in the 1980s and 1990s. These include special religious services dedicated to secular holidays typically celebrated by white-mestizos in Ecuador such as Mother’s Day as well as choir competitions and sports tournaments as part of a weekend-long religious event. Initially, Harvest Church’s pastor was against sociocultural programming. He said, in Esther’s recollection, “No, you all are doing wrong. You are doing [something] against the evangelical

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175 For more detail on the “modern media” used by GMU missionaries in evangelizing, such as record players, films, and radio programs, see Centro (1997).
176 As Tolen (1999:22) points out in her work on evangelicals in another area of Colta Canton, singing contests “draw on the now-global conventions of talent shows and pageants” (Tolen 1999:22). For instance, a panel of judges ranks the choirs based on a set of criteria such as appearance.
religion. Those Catholics—those that don’t know—who do things like this.” Esther says “little by little” the pastor’s and members’ attitudes changed. According to Esther, a middle-aged choir director, second-generation efforts paved the way for today’s youth to be “at liberty to give any kind of event that they want to.”

New, “modern” worship styles emerged amongst the youth group of Harvest Church in the late 1990s. During Friday evening youth services, youth started to favor singing “upbeat music in Spanish,” notes Rita, founder of CK Dance Ministry. Because the elders did not know how to play the accompanying music to these new songs, the youth began singing to pre-recorded tracks from outside of the Kichwa evangelical context. Meanwhile, some of the young men of Harvest Church learned to play electric guitars and drums and started their own bands. The structure of the Church itself enables youth worship/performance styles to flourish. There is a separate youth group with its own governing board and spaces in which to collectively worship on their own terms.

During their own religious services on Friday night and during youth conferences, youth worship and interact in ways that make for a distinct “semiotic space”—what they deem “modern.” At youth services such as the one I describe above, youth preach and sing primarily in Spanish. The use of new media technologies also distinguishes youth from adult-centric services. Youth project Bible verses and song lyrics onto a screen, or look up Bible verses on their cell phone. Converzion rock band seeks inspiration not from the Kichwa hymn book, but from global Pentecostal music, and they amplify it to the highest decimal. Young performers—band musicians, singers, liturgical dancers—don either matching “western” (white-mestizo) fashions, or highly-stylized forms of Andean indigenous dress. Youth events encourage more effuse

177 Rita calls this “happy music in Spanish” (S. exaltaciones).
178 In 2010, a small group of male evangelicals from San Mateo and Sisapamba, including Alejandro, were starting their own music academy in San Mateo.
bodily expressions. Liturgical dancers grace the stage with flowing, exaggerated movements. (See Chapter 6 for a more in-depth discussion of body movement). After youth services such as the one I describe here, youth of both genders linger. They hug each other, and laugh and tell jokes informally with their arms around one another.

In the absence of missionary agents personifying the “arrival” of the gospel as it did for first converts, youth find inspiration for their distinct worship styles from urban churches in Guayaquil, Quito, or Riobamba that are often associated more with charismatic forms of Christianity. Urban/charismatic worship performance styles that “blur the boundaries between entertainment and ritual” (Jones 2012b) are especially appealing for indigenous evangelical youth. During the Harvest Church youth service, various groups and individuals went up on stage to give special performances, including liturgical dance groups, soloists, and duets. One act was a young male Christian rapper from Riobamba named Mr. Roca rapped in Spanish while his young female back up dancer—wearing tight jeans and a tank top—danced seductively next to him. To add to the concert-like feel of it, the rapper gave out free DVDs of his music to those in the audience who yelled the most enthusiastically. (Full disclosure: my host sister and I won the free DVD).

Youth also gain inspiration for their worship styles by tapping into an electronically-mediated global evangelical youth culture (Comaroff and Comaroff 2005:25). “Contemporary worship style” is the term used in the U.S. to refer to worship styles originating in the

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179 Pentecostal churches in Chimborazo have existed in Chimborazo since at least the 1970s (Andrade 2004). Chimborazeños erected the churches after migrating to the Ecuadorian coast and to Colombia (Andrade 2004). According to Andrade (2004), Kichwa Churches located in urban areas such as Guayaquil and Quito, though not affiliated with Pentecostalism per se, are nonetheless more open to charismatic expressions of faith—such as shouting out exclamations “Glory to God” and “Hallelujah,” or crying and other emotional outpourings—than rural churches.
charismatic movement and adopted by a range of churches and denominations.\textsuperscript{180} “Contemporary worship style” includes popular folk and rock musical genres performed by church bands playing electric instruments. It involves drama sketches, videos, and both choreographed and improvised dance.\textsuperscript{181} A brief Google search on the Internet indicates the origins of the songs in ConverZion’s repertoire. “Open My Eyes, Lord” (S. \textit{Abre mis ojos oh Cristo}) was originally recorded by Hillsong United, a megachurch in Sydney, Australia. “You Are All Powerful” (S. \textit{Eres todo poderoso}) was originally recorded by Costa Rican Pentecostal singer Danilo Montero, pastor of the Spanish-speaking ministry of the evangelical, charismatic megachurch Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas. “I Have Come to Tell you” (S. \textit{Te Vengo a Decir}) was originally recorded by Marcos Witt, an American raised by missionary parents in Mexico who later became a pastor of Lakewood Church. San Mateo youth like to listen to the music of the band “Generation 12” and attend their concerts. The band is based out of the Colombia-based Pentecostal movement named G12, short for “Government of 12.”\textsuperscript{182}

How youth draw on outside influences in staking out a viable youth-based identity in the Kichwa Church is only half of the story. Just as young evangelicals enact and narrate self-transformation by recycling their elders’ religious and cultural scripts, so too do they draw on longstanding modes of performance and indigeneity in pushing for changing modes of worship in the Kichwa Church. Bucholtz (2002:542) writes that youth often draw on “diverse and overlapping sources and contexts,” including one’s own cultural background, to create new youth styles. Among first and second generation immigrants, Bucholtz (2002) calls this “neo-

\textsuperscript{180} (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contemporary_worship, accessed 8 January 2013)
\textsuperscript{182} According to its website, G12’s mission is to evangelize, create disciples with “Jesus in their hearts,” and promote personal transformation through the “power of Jesus’s blood.” The “strategy and vision” of G12 emerged within the Iglesia Misión Carismática Internacional in Bogotá, Colombia—a church that professes to being the largest in Latin America with more than 200,000 members. For more information on the band, see http://www.generaciondoce.com/, accessed 16 October 2012.
traditionalism.” Locals have a gloss for this in Kichwa, “half of this, half of that” (K. chawpi chawpi). Although the term is often used in relationship to how people code switch in their speech, the concept also applies to youth religious expression.

Youth practices do not involve a wholesale embrace of mestizo-ness. I attended one youth “cultural service” at a Kichwa Church in Riobamba that made a conscious effort to recuperate indigenous cultural expression among youth. All young attendees were supposed to arrive dressed in traditional garb from their hometowns. Many of the youth arrived with mixed styles and were admonished by the emcee for their typical dress of “a little bit of rural, a little bit of urban” (S. un poco de campo un poco de ciudad). The evening included hymn singing in Kichwa and Spanish with video presentations, choruses, dramatizations of biblical parables and messages, and young male Andean folk-Christian bands playing traditional instruments. There was even a competition for best-dressed. Youth leaders emphasized “pride” in cultural diversity “under one God.” As we shall see in the next chapter on liturgical dance, youth continue to find value in reinforcing—albeit quite self-consciously—highly stylized folkloric representations of local indigeneity.

Furthermore, Kichwa hymns such as “My Savior” continue to hold resonance for youth (see Chapter 2). Written by a local pastor and musician after having survived an act of religious-based violence, the lyrics index local religious values linking conviction, pain, and suffering. The hymn has been translated into various languages including English and Spanish, and has been adapted to alternative rhythms such as Christian rock and Reggaeton. ConverZion band thus imbues “My Savior” with a “modern” twist—same lyrics, translated into Spanish, and set to rock rhythms.
Narratives of discontinuity continue to hold resonance as youth re-engage with the church and create distinctly youth worship styles. Take, for example, the name Harvest Church youth chose for their Christian rock band: “ConverZion.” I asked the band leader once why they chose the name. “Conversion means change,” he explained. “We [the band members] were going down a bad path and we changed. Now we aren’t.” But the language and spelling of the band name—Spanish instead of Kichwa, in which a play-on-words is embedded—Zion instead of Cion—also indexes youth proclivities for novel or stylized language use in this way.

CONCLUSION

The pain and suffering that mass conversion supposedly surpassed in favor of ease and liberty for future generations can never be fully surpassed in subsequent generations. For Kichwa evangelicals, struggle overcoming pain and suffering heightens religious conviction, facilitating spiritual maturity, or “strong living.” Now that all indigenous people are already evangelical, elders and church leaders keep this struggle alive in the present by producing younger generations as internal threats in their discourses. “Unfaithful youth” keep ever present the need for evangelizing and conversion. Conversely, youth re-create, overcome, and, indeed, narrate the “sad life” and change for themselves through backsliding and re-converting. Re-conversion narratives seem to be especially significant for this youngest generation, for they are the most removed from the suffering of the hacienda era itself. While middle-age adult evangelicals have childhood memories of social oppression, and draw on those memories in their religious testimonies, today’s youth do not. Having grown up in an upward socially mobile, semi-urban “100%” evangelical community, they have the stories their elders have told them, but have not experienced the pre-conversion “sad life” themselves.
Seen in this light, youth apostasy is not a direct threat to indigenous Christianity in Chimborazo, but rather integral to the dynamic reproduction of religious subjectivity, piety, and relatedness. The experiences of young indigenous evangelicals in Chimborazo show that it is not enough to be born into a religion; religious “change” needs to be made relevant, experienced, achieved, and performed throughout one’s life course in each subsequent generation. Religious identity has been said to unfold over the course of an entire lifetime (Gill 1991). This chapter goes further in showing that it also unfolds across generations—and never in ways that can be controlled by elders or predicted. To understand youth religious lives we need to contextualize them intergenerationally; conversely, in order to understand Christian “re-generation” we need to ethnographically examine believers situated differently according to age, generation, and life cycle. This chapter also shows how changing ritual practices are central to the processes of re-generation.

Regarding his struggles with Harvest Church and adult church leaders, Alejandro often seeks advice and support from his grandfather. With an eye towards future generations, Tayta Miguel encourages his grandson to “just keep going forward even if people criticize you.” Alejandro says his grandfather tells him:

...hopefully in the future you all will be big eh not in the sense of being famous but big [in the sense of] sharing the Word. You [plural] can’t leave behind the next generation and ... when [the next generation] is scared you too can [encourage them] to follow in our path...

In the next chapter, I continue to examine youth worship styles with an analysis of female liturgical dance and the ways in which fundamentalist religious values are inscribed on gendered bodies as well as how young women express piety and resistance. Embodied piety was a central of GMU missionization, and continues to be central to the ongoing production of gender and aged tensions in the re-generation of Christianity.
CHAPTER SIX,
EMBODYING CHRISTIANITY: BETWEEN THE WORD AND THE WORLD IN
FEMALE LITURGICAL DANCE

“And now we have our youth from Christ King Church here to perform a dance,” announced the master of ceremonies in Kichwa to a large crowd of believers gathered in San Mateo’s auditorium for a wedding. Members of Christ King (CK) Dance Ministry lined up on stage. Ranging in age from 19 to 26 years old, the six female dancers donned matching Otavaleño-style blouses, white shawls (K. bayeta), green embroidered belts (K. chumbi), and black skirts (K. anaku). The song “Wake Up” (S. Despierta) by Bolivian folk singer Fernando Torrico cued. Facing out in circle formation, the dancers tapped their right foot to the beat, then turned to each other, arms raised, and back out again. Dancers then moved to face the audience in linear formation and began to pantomime the song lyrics. The lyrics called for people to “wake up” for Jesus is calling them to open their hearts and unite with fellow believers to walk with Christ.

Since the early 2000s, Christian liturgical dance has gained popularity among Kichwa youth, particularly among young women, as a new, “modern” form of creative ministry (cf. Jones 2012b; cf. Shipley 2009). Dancers understand their flowing gestures—a raising of the right arm with palm facing up for “Jesus” or hands over the chest and pulsating for “heart”—to give heightened meaning to Christian lyrics. They strive to praise God, and, at the same time, entice disaffected male youth back to the church.

Liturgical dance, however, is the source of much controversy. As the dancers performed that afternoon, the visiting pastor present to officiate the wedding ceremony sat behind them on stage watching stoically. He stared into space for much of the song, then clapped unenthusiastically at the end. A self-professed “conservative” evangelical, Pastor Raul prohibits
liturgical dance in his own church, which is located in a neighboring town. Conservative pastors strive to maintain GMU and first-convert teachings, which condemn dance as “sinful.” They consider liturgical dance, and by extension the women who engage in dance, as dangerously secular, sensual, and immoral.

Dancers who embody “Wake Up” song lyrics urge Christians to come together united in Christ. Ironically, liturgical dance challenges any romanticized notion of a unified community of believers (cf. Pype 2006). It reveals deep intra-group distinctions along the lines of religious ideology, generation, and gender. Liturgical dance is a “potent source of debate” (Garriott and O’Neill 2008:381) for Kichwa evangelicals in Chimborazo. It reflects and produces multiple claims on appropriate Christian interpretive and liturgical practices.

This chapter explores how CK dancers, in the face of such controversy, work to transform dance into a legitimate modality of indigenous evangelical cultural expression and, in so doing, legitimize themselves as religious subjects. Dancers creatively engage in charismatic “body logics” (Brahinsky 2012) and forms of popular Andean expressive culture originating outside of the context of their local Kichwa church. They do so in ways that attempt to conform to local modes of evangelical morality and the literal textual/interpretive practices of their older, male pastors.

To demonstrate this process, this chapter provides historical background on GMU approaches to bodily movement and performance. I then analyze pastor discourse about dance, focusing on data gathered during a CONPOCIIECH public debate about liturgical dance and a music class for students at the New Life Women’s Bible Institute. I follow my examination of the metacultural commentary on dance with the perspectives of liturgical dancers themselves regarding their dance choreographies. Discussions about dance involve a struggle over
representation, a task that objectifies the young female body as “sexual” and therefore secular.\textsuperscript{183} However, much more in terms of the body as subject is at play, necessitating an approach that goes beyond representation to look at embodiment and its social effects (cf. Csordas 1994).\textsuperscript{184}

My approach to liturgical dance follows anthropological studies that take dance to be a productive form of sociopolitical action (e.g. Mendoza 2000; Orta 2000; Pype 2006; Reed 1998) as much as an expression of morality, poetics, or religiosity (Throop 2009). The “dynamically embodied action” (Farnell 2002:38) of liturgical dance, I argue, is a powerful tool of both religious expression and gendered contestation in which young women “talk back” to their conservative male religious authorities (cf. Mendoza 2000), asserting themselves as agents of regeneration in Kichwa churches.

**BODY MOVEMENT AND WORSHIP STYLES: FROM GMU MISSIONIZATION TO PENTECOSTALIZATION**

This section provides a historical overview of Kichwa bodily practices, particularly how they shifted with mass conversion and continue to shift under the more recent influence of charismatic Christianity. My approach follows Desmond’s argument (1997: 32) that “by looking at dance we can see enacted on a broad scale...socially constituted and historically specific attitudes toward the body in general, toward specific social groups’ usage of the body in particular, and about the relationships among variously marked bodies.”

In Chimborazo today, evangelicals associate dance with the past “sad life” of Catholicism and drunkenness. In my interviews with them, elderly converts lamented the shame and sadness of their dancing and drinking pasts. They cited alcohol’s bodily effects, such as drunken bodies sprawled out on the side of roads and highways. They also associated the hacienda past with

\textsuperscript{183} For more on the relationship between gender and dance, see: Cowen 1990; Daly 1992; Heath 1994; Wagner 1997.

\textsuperscript{184} For pertinent studies on embodiment and religious subjectivity see Csordas 1994; Griffiths 2004; Lester 2005; Mitchell 1990; Orta 2000.
daily rituals of subordination in interactions with white-mestizos, which included such bodily practices as kneeling and removing one’s hat (Crespi 1981; Guevara-Gil and Salomon 1994; Lyons 2005).

Before mass conversion, dancing was a central component of festivals honoring Catholic saints as well as Catholic church ceremonies, such as weddings.\textsuperscript{185} As my older informants described it, dance involved shuffling one’s feet and moving in circular fashion in small groups to music.\textsuperscript{186} GMU missionaries, however, strictly forbid converts to dance.\textsuperscript{187} As scholars in the anthropology of missionization suggest (Comaroff 1991; Harkin 1994), missionary prohibition of dance is part of a larger project of bodily reform.

For Chimborazo’s new converts, the body became a central site in which to achieve and demonstrate spiritual and social change. GMU missionaries provided medical attention to people suffering due to illnesses and accidents. Healing was not only a missionary opportunity to proselytize, but also a physical validation of the gospel’s power and truth. Furthermore, Muratorio (1981: 519) writes that Kichwas embodied ascetic values by “inflict[ing] on himself or herself a series of taboos and prohibitions to transform his or her body into a ‘clean temple’ where God can dwell.” Emphasis was placed both on hygiene and internal purity by adopting new practices of sobriety and sexual restraint.

In the early days of the religious movement, evangelical worship services were spaces in which ideas about the reformed body were enacted. In contrast to Catholic services, Kichwa evangelical services were “…stripped of overt, imagistic, and sacramental material… and the

\textsuperscript{185} For an overview of the anthropological literature on fiestas in the Andes, see Rogers (1998).
\textsuperscript{186} Movements of the hips and butt, as sometimes practiced in liturgical dance today, are not considered typical indigenous forms of dance from the pre-conversion era.
\textsuperscript{187} Henry Klassen’s adult son told me he did not think his late father would have approved of liturgical dance due to his Mennonite background.
spiritual realities [were] not communicated through sensuous, nonlinguistic means” (cf. Harding 2000:37). Bodily restraint and control were emphasized. My elderly informants told me that preachers would deliver sermons while standing in one place, facing the congregation. Believers would remain seated, still, and quiet during the service. Everyone was supposed to be doing the same activity, such as singing and praying, at the same time. Compared to services today in which people can sit “wherever, however,” Mama Rosa remembers the congregation sitting in rows separated according to age and gender. Church was not a place to gossip, laugh, or tell jokes, elders remembered; it was for praying and listening to God’s word. Missionaries taught members of the female choir to stand uniformly still, with erect posture and arms resting alongside one’s body, in lines facing the audience, eyes gazing forward.¹⁸⁸

Since the early 2000s, Pentecostal/charismatic forms of global, evangelical expressive culture (seen as mestizo or non-indigenous) have begun to influence Kichwa worship practices.¹⁸⁹ I first encountered these popular trends in worship style during my pre-dissertation fieldwork in 2007, when I attended a choir competition in a large hall in Cajabamba accommodating hundreds of audience members. The cantor, a non-indigenous evangelical visiting from Guayaquil, shimmied, danced, and shouted into the microphone on stage like a rock star. His outfit for the night played up local dress with little regard for gendered cultural conventions; he wore a man’s poncho and a woman’s traditional white hat.

Though bodily stillness and stiffness remain highly valued modes of expressing

¹⁸⁸ See also Hoenes (2011:623) on bodily stillness as an expression of moral authority in the musical performances of Maya mainstream Catholics in Guatemala, in contrast to the Charismatic Catholic performance of songs in Spanish.
¹⁸⁹ Though originating in early twentieth-century North America (Robbins 2004:120), Pentecostal doctrine (Robbins 2004), ritual sociality (Robbins 2011) and bodily practices (Brahinsky 2012) have spread quickly across cultural barriers and its institutions flourish locally (Robbins 2011) such that the majority of adherents today live in the global south (Robbins 2004, Lindhardt 2011).
reverence and piety in Kichwa churches, Kichwa believers have begun embracing some components of what Brahinsky (2012:221) has called “Pentecostal body logics.” It is now acceptable for congregants to clap to songs and raise one’s arms. Liturgical dance, and its outward expression of spiritual emotion through body movement, has risen in popularity. In his work on Pentecostals in the U.S., Brahinsky (2012:225) defines “Pentecostalization” as the process by which “Pentecostal practices increasingly permeate the broader Christian culture globally.” “Pentecostal body logics,” according to Brahinsky (2012:221), are “highly portable sensory dynamics” that travel easily across boundaries, such as denominational ones, to create a “culture of sensation” wherever they are newly situated. In the case of Kichwa churches, much like Brahinsky’s example of PK, a “Pentecostal sensory ethos” (Brahinsky 2012:233) has infiltrated liturgical practice through global musical and performance genres diffused across national and international mass media channels.

Kichwa evangelicals in Chimborazo continue to reject most aspects of Pentecostal-charismatic ritual life (Andrade 2004; Muratorio 1981). Faith healing, exorcism, speaking in tongues, and prophesying make most of the Colteños I know—including youth—uncomfortable for apparently lacking sincerity and indexing a return to Catholic “sad life” drunkenness. Marta, who sat next to me during the choir event, told me she thought the charismatic cantor’s theatrics were excessive. She wondered if he was being sincere or merely seeking fame and popularity.

Charismatic worship styles in the Kichwa Church are much more intentionally coordinated than in a typical Pentecostal-charismatic service. Pentecostal body movement is

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190 Liturgical dancers themselves claim that there was a lot more reverence back when they were girls, in the sense of more collective enthusiasm to worship together. Rita told me that she and her sisters often remark: “It’s no longer as bonito [nice] as it used to be.” Believers go to conferences primarily to compete or to win prizes rather than to worship.

191 According to Bloom (2007), “praise dance” has made a resurgence in part due to the rising influence of Pentecostal and charismatic worship. Pinpointing the exact origin of liturgical dance in Chimborazo merits further investigation.
largely individual, improvised, and spontaneous in nature (cf. Pype 2006), although several scholars have argued that there is more intersubjective coordination to Pentecostal ritual spontaneity than one might assume (Lindhardt 2011)—akin to what Mahmood (2001) calls “rehearsed spontaneity” in her analysis of Muslim prayer. In the Kichwa Church, the pastor or cantor often explicitly requests audience participation such as standing and clapping.

Furthermore, Kichwa Church services are more formally organized in structure than a typical Pentecostal services emphasizing spontaneity, informality, and emotion over formal and prescribed ritual. The floor is not offered to “all those who the Spirit calls” (Andrade 2004:120). Rather, service is highly scripted, with a designed time for each activity (Andrade 2004:257), though time itself is relatively flexible. People assigned to their roles beforehand serve as cantor, collect the offering, or give a sermon.

Liturgical dance plays a key role in mediating the competing values and bodily practices in the Kichwa Church. On the one hand, liturgical dance carries forth longstanding, local expression of evangelical ethics, piety, and indigeneity. Self-consciously choreographed and rehearsed in groups, liturgical dance reproduces performance modes typical of the Kichwa Church’s adult female choirs and congregational singing. It showcases collective uniformity, albeit with the body as the communicative vehicle more than the voice. On the other hand, liturgical dance is considered “trendy” (S. de moda) or “in vogue” (S. en voga). Drawing on new forms of global Andean and Pentecostal popular expressive culture, it is circulated among youth outside of church scenarios via highly-coveted forms of digital media (e.g. DVDs).

As Desmond (1997:31) notes, “[m]ovement style is an important mode of distinction between social groups... [i]ts articulation signals group affiliation and group differences, whether consciously performed or not. Movement serves as a marker for the production of gender, racial,
ethnic, class, and national identities” (Desmond 1997:31). In the case at hand, changes in movement styles in the Kichwa Church correlate strongly with generational identifications. While older believers privilege stillness and bodily control when it comes to ritual expression, today’s youth embrace different somatic practices in seeking what they consider to be a more emotional, intense, and infectious spiritual experience.

**History of CK Dance Ministry**

Women’s singing has long figured prominently in Kichwa worship services. Following Harrison’s (1989) assertion that women are the primary agents of song in Kichwa culture, Uzendoski (2003) writes, “It is my sense that the Runa see singing as an elevated and powerful form of prayer and worship, not as an ‘adjunct’ to those worship practices led by men” (Uzendoski 2003:144). Christ King boosts a multi-generational women’s choir lead by an all-female directorate. The choir performs at the local church and travels to regional choir competitions. Accommodating older, monolingual members of the choir, songs are memorized and sung in Kichwa. Typically, the women perform wearing the traditional indigenous garb of Chimborazo. The women’s choir also plays crucial roles organizing mutual help and preparing food for weddings and other church-related events.

Before San Mateo residents left Harvest Church, a group of young girls decided to form their own choir. They differentiated themselves by singing “more modern” songs in Spanish and using their hands to sing. Not long after, the idea to form a liturgical dance group emerged. Noting how the young men were getting “off track,” the girls thought engaging people’s bodies, not just their hearts and minds, with a “different kind of message,” would make the church more appealing to boys and entice them back to church. At first, the Harvest Church pastor was opposed to the idea of liturgical dance. When San Mateoans separated from Harvest Church in
2001, however, the three sisters of the Mora-Sanchez family were finally granted permission to
form a dance troupe. Pentecostal and charismatic-oriented individuals, including Pastor Samuel
Charco, supported their dance practice early on.

In 2010, six dancers, many of whom were related, made up Christ King Dance Ministry.
Mora-Sanchez sisters Lourdes, 22 years old, and Elena, 20 years old, were the troupe’s leaders,
taking over for their eldest sister.\textsuperscript{192} Mariana, 25 years old, and Sofia, 23 years old were also
sisters. Finally, Alexandra, age 19, and Yanet, age 20 were cousins.\textsuperscript{193} All high school graduates,
a few were pursuing university studies. A couple were working as domestic workers in
Riobamba. When not in school or working, the young, single women would help their families
by doing household chores such as cooking and laundry, agricultural activities, and taking care
of younger siblings.

Most of the young women of CK Dance Ministry are the children or grandchildren of the
area’s first converts. They grew up evangelical, in families that enjoyed close ties with the North
American missionary residents.\textsuperscript{194} Most of the dancers accepted Jesus Christ around the age of
10 and were baptized around the age of 15, much earlier than my male informants, who appear to
be putting off baptism (See Chapter Five).\textsuperscript{195} The dancers are active members of Christ King
Church. They spend much of their free time engaged in religious activities such as rehearsing
with the dance troupe, attending the local worship service, traveling to youth services, and

\begin{itemize}
\item Their older sister Rita founded the group, but has since stopped performing. Typically, young women
stop performing when they get married or start having children. At the time of writing, 2015, Lourdes and
Elena were married and living outside of San Mateo.
\item Another pair of sisters, Isabela and Ivana, quit following conflict over their lack of attendance at
rehearsals. Isabela, age 16, was embroiled in controversy due to a tumultuous relationship with her
boyfriend. She left the group but subsequently returned. Her sister Ivana married, had a baby, and did not
return.
\item The Mora-Sanchez family is an exception. Though the girls grew up evangelical in Colta, their parents
were Catholic before migrating to canton Colta in the early 1980s.
\item Lourdes reached both milestones younger than the others; she accepted Jesus Christ at the age of 7 and
was baptized at the age of 12.
\end{itemize}
helping to organize church events such as weddings. Most CK dancers are also leaders and active members of San Mateo’s girls’ soccer team.

Most CK liturgical dancers participate in the church women’s choir along with their mothers. Perhaps in part influenced by their younger counterparts, adult female choir singers move more now than they used to. Depending on the beat of the song, bodily movements include slowly swaying back and forth, clapping, stepping to the beat in place, and light bouncing in place. Holding up visual/material props such as small Bibles and flowers are also more common these days.

Nonetheless, the growing emphasis on body movement among the young women has created some tensions among women of different ages in the choir. During one of CK choir’s rehearsals, for example, liturgical dancers taught the older women more complicated footwork for an upcoming wedding performance. The older women attempted to follow the young women’s steps, but found it difficult. “We can’t do it,” one of the older women complained (K. mana valinchik from the Spanish verb valer or to value as if to imply we do not have value). Nonetheless, they ended up trying to do so. The results were disastrous. Choir members’ movements were not in sync and they received much criticism for their uncoordinated performance.

**DEBATING DANCE**

In this section, I examine the metacultural commentary on liturgical dance among church leaders. Debates about liturgical dance revolve around a set of interrelated concerns: textual

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196 Mendoza (2000:218) noticed a similar dynamic among Peruvian Tuntuna dancers. The author noted that women, especially older women, had a harder time than men in performing the basic steps and turns. Mendoza attributed this difference to degrees of exposure to sports. “One can see that athletic movements have also been part of the lives of the younger women from an earlier age than the older women. This I believe has had to do with the more limited opportunities of formal education that women had before the 1970s” (Mendoza 2000:218).
interpretation, affect, body movement, and female sexuality. Talk about liturgical dance reveals not only generational differences, but also gender ideologies and hierarchies.

My analysis draws on two speech events. The first was a public debate organized by CONPOCIECH, which I attended and audio recorded. The debate took place in Riobamba on a sunny Saturday morning in January 2010 underneath a large tent. The event was part of a larger event entitled “First Encounter of Evangelical Indigenous Churches and Peoples of Chimborazo Congregated in Gratitude for Great Blessings.” Seated on a raised stage facing an audience of hundreds of believers, the all-male panelists included two church leaders in favor of dance—an indigenous pastor and a mestizo pastor—and two against it—an indigenous pastor and an indigenous educator. Audience members expressed their opinions by clapping, responding “Amen!” or voicing their opinions softly to those seated close by. The second speech event was a class I observed and audio recorded entitled “Church Music” at CONPOCIECH’s New Life Women’s Bible Institute in Colta. The male instructor is a “conservative” pastor who vehemently opposes liturgical dance as well as any form of charismatic worship, including applause.

Through their discursive practices, male pastors set and control the parameters for acceptable bodily movement (cf. Desmond 1997:32). They also reinforce male religious authority in the church through the reproduction of gender stereotypes as well as the silencing of women. In the speech events themselves, the ideal and privileged speaking subject is male. Women’s perspectives are often absent, minimized, or rejected. As we shall see in the following section, it is within this discursive framework and its gendered effects that liturgical dancers defend and self-monitor their own bodily performances.

**Doing “What the Bible Says”**

Opposing sides of the liturgical dance issue agree on two major points. The first is that
worship practice should follow biblical text rather than the “world.” Kichwa believers take the “world” to be any social practice or institution associated with the indigenous pre-conversion past, contemporary popular culture, and non-GMU Christian denominations such as Catholicism and Pentecostalism. Both parties assert that the Bible is clear on the matter of dance; they reiterate key biblical passages and interpret them in literal fashion to justify their positions.

Pastors for and against liturgical dance, then, uphold a common language ideology, which is that actions should follow words (especially the “Word of God”). The second major point both sides agree on is that God should be the intended audience of liturgical action, not people. Although both sides agree on these two central points, they vehemently disagree about which forms of bodily expression are biblical and God-oriented.

In the CONPOCIIECH debate, Pastor Abel argued passionately against liturgical dance. He referenced 2 Samuel 6:14, when King David and the Israelites brought the Ark of the Lord to the City of David. David “was dancing before the Lord with all his might.” Pastor Abel also referenced Exodus 15:20, when María the prophet lead other women in playing tambourines and dancing after Moses and the Israelites crossed the Red Sea.

... the Word of God is really clear. It doesn’t say dance (S. danzad). It’s not a command please...I think we should understand that. Dear brothers and sisters [the Bible] says clearly...Maria danced (S. danzó). David danced (S. danzó).The word itself is finished... it doesn’t say anywhere in the Word of God you (pl.) will keep dancing but rather he danced. Historical facts...

By stressing the past preterit forms of the verbs, Pastor Remache argued that these were all historical accounts rather than mandates for the church.

Furthermore, critics of liturgical dance (S. la danza cristiana) consider la danza to be

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197 Miriam in some versions including Nueva Version Internacional
198 Future progressive—“you will keep dancing” is used as imperative in Ecuadorian Spanish.
199 Along similar lines, Pastor Carlos Guamán argued to his class that since dance is only mentioned in the Old Testament and not the New Testament that it is not a church mandate.
synonymous with *el baile*. *El baile* is associated with the choreographed steps of Catholic *comparsas* or “ritual dance associations” whose members “sponsor the annual festivity of a particular Catholic image and perform costume dances in his/her honor” (Mendoza 1998:165, 179). Pastor Abel explained:

> ...When [the Bible] says danza it wasn’t a *comparsa*...please. Danza was jumping in the same place. It wasn’t how they organize *baile* or *danza* with steps today. If in that moment the person [who] was guided by the spirit jumped? That was dignified. It wasn’t dance making turns. Neither did it involve men and women. Rather it was done in individual fashion. So I personally agree that if someone wants to *yell*, say Glory to God, Alleluia [and] jump? I think that’s biblical. But not the comparsa.

For Pastor Abel, the choreographed nature of liturgical dance is especially problematic because rehearsed steps and turns imitate “what the world does.” For Pastor Abel, only individual, vertical movements (*S. saltar* or jumping) that express spontaneous feelings of happiness arising in one’s heart due to the immediate workings of the Holy Spirit are “biblical.”

In his “Church Music” class, Pastor Carlos took an even more extreme position. For him, all forms of dance, including individual, spontaneous jumping, are oriented to the “world” rather than to God. Only subtle body movements such as “lowering your head and saying Lord you are the only one; I don’t even have eyes to see” express reverence. Pastor Carlos told his students about a time he attended a church service and found the whole congregation and the pastor dancing. The churchgoers were “enjoying life,” Pastor Guamán told his students disapprovingly. The only thing missing was a glass of alcohol in people’s hands, he had thought. In fact, Pastor Carlos was so offended that he decided to go play soccer instead. Pastor Guamán told his class: “God doesn’t need [dance] brothers and sisters; God’s not a clown.” Conservative pastors have a particular problem with dance performed inside the church. When I asked one first convert about liturgical dance in one of our interviews, he stated: “David didn’t dance in the temple. He danced out of victory... but not in the temple.”
Supporters of liturgical dance also cite key biblical passages to justify their positions. Commonly cited biblical verses used in support of dance include Psalm 149:3, “Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with timbrel and harp,” and Psalm 150:4, “Praise him with timbrel and dancing” (New International Version, www.biblegateway.com). Pastor Sergio, the only mestizo on the CONPOCIIECH debate panel, referenced 2 Samuel 6:14.

... I completely agree with what the Bible says, that dance [S. danza] is victory. Dance is restoration. I completely agree with what the Bible says, that dance is attracting the presence of God [Audience member shouts Amen.] I completely agree that dance is synonymous with spiritual joy.

Although he came up with the opposite conclusion as Pastor Abel, Pastor Sergio was just as confident about the Bible’s clarity on the matter.

At the CONPOCIIECH debate, Pastor Julian Sisa did not agree with his conservative counterparts that dance is inherently “worldly.” Speaking in Kichwa, Pastor Julian referenced 1 Samuel 18:6, when women sang and danced after David killed Goliath. “The women danced [K. danzarkakuna] praising God out of happiness saying thank you God, saying there’s no one like you; you killed that big one.” For Pastor Julian, liturgical dance is one way among many to thank God for “saving you and me in the name of his son Jesus Christ.” Pastor Julian also mentioned raising your hands, bowing your head, closing your eyes, and doing a turn as acceptable forms of bodily movement.

Pastor Julian further argued that liturgical dance can praise God as long as God is the ultimate motivation and recipient. Pastor Julian encouraged dancers to “dance with understanding” (K. intindishpa rurashun, literally “understanding let’s do it”). He said, “Let’s return to the Word of God in order to understand while doing, not looking at what others are doing while doing it.” He encouraged dancers to be self-reflective, asking themselves: “Whom should be praised? Whom should we worship? For whom are we raising our hands? For whom
Pastors on both sides of the debate agree with Pastor Abel that “one has to practice [their faith] exactly as the Bible says.” However, those in favor of liturgical dance point out that the church changes and adapts to the times. CONPOCIIECH’s president, for one, does not oppose liturgical dance; he believes “keep[ing] up with the times” will help keep members. In response to Pastor Abel’s argument that Jesus never danced, Pastor Sergio brought up the example of applauding, which he noted is practiced in Kichwa churches even though “no biblical passage says that Jesus applauded.” Pastor Sergio underscored how liturgical practices have even changed in the short time (relative to biblical time) that Kichwa churches have existed. He reminded audience members that Kichwa believers who applauded in church in the 1960s were hit with sticks and stones. Nonetheless, “the church ended up [accepting] applause.” Furthermore, Jesus never engaged in choir festivals and radio programs, but these are all considered appropriate in Kichwa churches today.

“*My Heart Knows*”

Another point of contestation is the role of emotion in spiritual expression. Feelings are an important aspect of being a sincere believer for Kichwa evangelicals. A non-believer, for example, is thought to have a “hard heart.” However, debates on liturgical dance reveal disagreement over whether or not such feelings—of joy, happiness, and gratitude—justify dance.

Those in favor of liturgical dance emphasize emotional experience and its bodily expression in addition to biblical justification. For Pastor Julian, knowing is not only a cognitive endeavor; it has an emotional component. The heart can *know*: “my heart and your heart know for whom we are doing it, why we are doing it, and where we should do it.” In his perspective, dance is moral as long as it comes from the heart. By contrast, in the debate, Pastor Abel emphasized
text-based rationality over emotional “understanding.” “We have to rationalize things well,” he said. “We have to understand the Bible well—the biblical passages—so that we can interpret and tell the truth.” Pastor Sergio retorted by saying that indeed the heart is central to textual exegesis. It is impossible to understand the Bible without “opening your heart like a parachute.” He said, “We have to open our hearts in order to receive God’s things,” including the Bible. While many conservative pastors do not rule out the importance of feeling the Holy Spirit, they claim that such feelings only spark spontaneous movements, not choreographed ones.

For Pastor Carlos, taking the most extreme position before his class, emotions tied to bodily charismatic practices are fleeting, in contrast to true and enduring feelings of conviction. They are indicative of a disturbing trend away from the “doctrine of sin and its consequences” and towards “emotionalism.” Emotionalism, for Pastor Carlos, explains the tendency for youth to seek inspiration from “the world” rather than the Bible. The sudden popularity and fast circulation of liturgical dance can be contributed to this rising emotionalism. In a similar vein, an elderly pastor I interviewed thought liturgical dance was indicative of the “very cheap and very easy evangelism” of youth—a far cry, he thought, from his own evangelizing efforts in the late 1960s. “I was kneeling in order to [evangelize] with the power of God. With the power of God I spread the gospel. It wasn’t me. It was Jesus,” he told me.

**Gender, Dance, and the Silencing of Women**

The tension between interpreting biblical text in literal fashion, on the one hand, and expressing emotion bodily, on the other, carries implicit gender ideologies. As Reed (1998: 516) has noted, “discourses of dance are often rooted in ideas of natural gender difference.” Many Kichwa pastors and believers I encountered associated men with cognition and women with emotion. They often referred to corresponding body parts: head for men and heart for women.
The ways in which text and cognition are privileged over emotion and bodily expression in the Kichwa Church thus have implications for gendered power relations.

Liturgical dance commentary also reveals and reproduces stereotypes about female sexuality, specifically that women are objects of the male gaze and that they are responsible for men’s inability to control their own sexual desires. This may not come as a surprise, as dance has been outlawed in a number of Protestant Christian contexts out of fear of women and bodily passions (Reed 1998; Wagner 1997). A common point brought up to argue against liturgical dance in the Kichwa Church is that women’s moving bodies, dressed in particular ways, provoke “carnal desires” among male believers and shift male orientation from God to the sensuous female body. Exaggerated movements of female breasts, butts, and hips are particularly critiqued.

At the CONPOCIECH debate, Pastor Abel told the audience about going to preach at an evangelical conference (S. campaña). During one of the liturgical dance performances, a dancer lost her footing and fell backwards. Pastor Abel lamented that her “whole body- her intimate parts” were on display for the audience. Pastor Abel also told the story of watching a liturgical dance troupe perform wearing Bolivian “miniskirts.” Pastor Abel thought the young men in the audience could see the girls’ underwear:

And the boys what do they say: “Let’s see this girl what [color] underwear is she wearing? This one has on black. This one blue.” They think that’s praising God. Where’s the Bible? Where’s the Word of God?

Like Pastor Abel, Pastor Carlos portrayed women as objects of male gaze. Pastor Guamán told his class that women and men do not share the same “mentality.” Women, he claimed, do not think about sensual things. He asked his female students, “Sisters (S. hermanas, of faith) have you ever at any point seen a man as something sensual [saying] look how handsome I like him?”
The women giggled. Pastor Carlos continued, “but that’s how men are hermanas even when they’re married. [They say] look at that pretty one look at how she moves. They don’t even look at her face.”

For pastors who oppose dance, “sensuous” female movements and male distractibility lead to a slew of moral transgressions, including adultery, sexual abuse of young girls, teenage pregnancy, and the sexual objectification of women. José Moyolema, a teacher who argued that dance is “the cause of everything bad” during the CONPOCIECH debate, reminded the audience that a liturgical dancer was once kidnapped and raped in Imbabura province. The unmarried status of most liturgical dancers makes their “sensuality” even more dangerous.  

Public debates and classroom instruction on the topic also reinforced male religious authority in the church through the silencing of women. During the CONPOCIECH debate, no women and no liturgical dancers spoke publically. In Pastor Carlos’s class, women’s perspectives were often minimized during conversations between the pastor and his female students. For example, Pastor Carlos asked his students what they thought motivated the prophet Miriam to dance in the Old Testament. Araceli said she thought joy (S. alegría) stemming from receiving God’s help in crossing the Red Sea prompted her to dance. Pastor Carlos then asked what the motivation was for people to dance in the church today. Araceli responded:

**Araceli:** ... that woman [Miriam] danced out of joy because God- and also nowadays there’s some joy- I don’t know something [students giggle]

**Pastor Carlos:** [scoffs] it sure is something, isn’t it

**Araceli:** in that mom- [students giggle] of course it’s just that I don’t understand [giggles]

**Pastor Carlos:** In my view here it’s simply just an emotion and it’s not because they (really) feel it.

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200 Once married, dancers usually drop out of the dance troupe.
From speaking with Araceli outside of class, I knew she supported liturgical dance. Yet, in this conversation with the disapproving male pastor she hedged: “...there’s some joy - I don’t know something.” Pastor Carlos’s reaction, along with student laughter, suggests that this “something” was immoral. Araceli ended up corroborating Pastor Carlos’s underlying suspicions of women’s sincerity. She also downplayed her own perspective by saying “I don’t understand.” Later on, Araceli was more confident. She asserted carefully that surely at least some dancers “adore [God] with their whole heart.” One day after class, though, when both Araceli and Pastor Carlos were not present, I asked the rest of students what they thought of liturgical dance. They all scoffed and reiterated how morally wrong it was.

Some pastors are even more directly dismissive of women’s perspectives on the matter. A CK dancer once told me about a time she approached the Pastor Council president during his public consultation hours. She had hoped to talk to him about the troupe’s desire to produce a liturgical dance DVD. Before she could, he said: “If this is about dance, [S. la danza] just turn around and leave.”

After nearly four hours of debate, audience members attending the CONPOCIECH debate began to chant “conclusion! conclusion!” However, no consensus or resolution on this hotly contested topic was reached on that day. At the time of writing (2015), no official sanctions have been made against liturgical dance. Though the “authorizing discourses” (Asad 1993) on dance set the boundaries of proper worship and situate men and women in particular ways, CK dancers capitalize on the ambiguous stance taken by the organization to carry on with their performances.

[201 In some sense, the debate itself backfired for the organization. The pastors’ laborious efforts to prove the infallible and transparent nature of the Bible in effect demonstrated how interpretable biblical text actually is.]
“THE PASTORS DO NOT KNOW OUR HEARTS, SO THEY CAN’T STOP US”

The final sections of this chapter pivot to consider more fully the perspectives of Christ King liturgical dancers. In this section, I summarize some of the ways in which the dancers defended their practice—and themselves—as pious in light of the criticisms waged against them. Liturgical dancers are positioned to defend their practice through discursive and bodily modes of self-regulation. Pastors in support of liturgical dance warn dancers not to dance however they want.\(^{202}\) Rather, dancing should be done with understanding and knowledge. They encourage dancers to articulate why they are dancing and for whom. Thus, liturgical dancers are well-versed on the matter. During rehearsals, troupe leaders Lourdes and Elena coach their members on “what we want to do and what is our objective and why we’re doing it.”

The CK dancers’ self-monitoring is, in a sense, a bi-product of CONPOCIIECH’s anti-regulatory stance on liturgical dance. Though “a matter of principle in its own right,” the lack of official regulation also produces effects in subjects of the church in that it “serves as a means to further the development of self-consciousness” (cf. Keane 1996). As in the case of the Marapu, “the need to justify themselves has forced them increasingly to assume the dualistic and functionalistic terms presumed by Christian discourse” (cf. Keane 1996:160). The pressure that dancers feel to conform to conservative evangelical morality thus resembles “disciplinary power in which subjects are schooled to self-surveillance more than coerced from without” (cf. Boddy 2007:63)

Like their pastors, dancers referenced key biblical passages in support of dance. Lourdes

\(^{202}\) CONPOCIIECH president Nicolás Chimbolema said that “a lot of times because of lack of knowledge they dance just however they want.”
mentioned Psalm 150:4, a biblical passage that, to her, shows “how we should praise God.” She told me “that’s where it says that we should praise him with tambourines, with the harp...through dance (S. danza).” Typically, dancers recite biblical passages in unison at the beginning of their performances, following a similar practice in the choir. Prior to dancing to “Wake Up” at the wedding celebration, the dancers recited Proverbs 31:30: “Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised” (Proverbs 31:30, www.biblegateway.com). On their DVD, biblical passages appear on the bottom of the screen throughout each song. However, biblical exegesis does not feature as prominently in the dancer’s discourse as it does in pastor discourse.

One of the major criticisms of liturgical dancers is that they dance to impress a human audience out of vanity. CK dancers argue that their talent is God-given and that they dance for God. A well-choreographed and coordinated performance, they told me, is pleasing to God because it is a way of showing humility and gratitude to God for the ability to dance. Lourdes said,

We always say for example [that] the fact that we can move our hands, we can move our feet, that’s a blessing from God so to show our gratitude we keep dancing and doing it well with our hands and with our feet.

The girls distinguished their dance from that practiced for “fun” in bars. They stressed, “what we do we do for God knowing that he will receive us.”

Furthermore, dancers emphasized their sincere intentions by saying they danced “from the heart.” When I asked Lourdes what it was like to perform in front of a pastor who was vehemently against liturgical dance, she said that once she begins dancing, she forgets about who

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203 This verse is part of a longer epilogue in which King Lemuel urges husbands to honor their noble wives.

204 On the importance of feelings to belief, see Mitchell (1997). On the relationship between heart sincerity and Christian subjectivity in the Andes, see Allen (1982), Arnold et al. (1992) and Orta (2000).
is in the audience and concentrates solely on the song lyrics and her hand gestures. “[The
pastors] do not know our hearts, so they can’t stop us because they don’t know what we’re
feeling or why we’re doing it,” she said. While pastors cannot say for certain what dancers’
intentions are, according to Lourdes, God does know each girl’s feelings are sincere. Lourdes
cited Titus 1:15—“To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not
believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted” (New
the dancers as sincere believers and conservative pastors as the impure, corrupt, and unbelieving
ones.

CK dancers also emphasized the divinely inspired nature of their gestural choreography.
Once a song is selected, the dancers gather together to listen to the lyrics and God inspires
pantomimes (S. mímicas). Elena, in charge of gestural choreography, told me she feels her hands
move “all by themselves” when she first listens to a song. Lourdes claimed that God also gives
her sister Elena guidance to direct the other girls: “God gives her the feeling of no let’s change
the hands. Let’s do it like this.” The dancers’ emphasis on pantomimes makes sense given that
many religious authorities consider hand and arm gestures to be more acceptable than other
forms of bodily movement. After hours of lecturing his class on the immorality of dance, Pastor
Carlos briefly mentioned hand gestures as the only aspect of liturgical dance that was remotely
acceptable to him, explaining “some of [the dancers] emphasize song lyrics through bodily
expression, which is fine.”

Finally, the girls related their body movements to spiritual experience. They see
themselves as demonstrating spiritual feelings of gratitude and love through their dance. Lourdes
told me that when she performs, she first and foremost *feels* the song lyrics in her heart.
I always concentrate on the lyrics that we’re singing and I’m singing with my voice but also in my heart. I’m feeling it. And when I move my hands it’s like I want to like explain the song and try to get through hand movement- make them understand more of the lyrics.

Metakinesis is a term in dance literature that refers to the process by which “emotional experience is carried within the body so that the dancer conveys the emotion to the observer” (Luhrmann 2004:519). The girls said that their body movements came from “feeling” the lyrics. As Luhrmann (2004:518) notes in the case of U.S. evangelical Christians seeking an intimate relationship with God, experiencing the gospel in bodily ways can make a stale Christian message newly felt and more alive.

In making their case for dance, CK liturgical dancers do not challenge the truth-claims and text-centeredness of GMU Christianity. Rather, dancers cite both textual and emotional/spiritual reasons for dance, and do not see a contradiction between the two. Ultimately, their viewpoints reiterate that textual knowledge is not the sole basis of evangelical Christian identification, and that the body can be a useful tool in worship and evangelizing. In the next section, I look more closely at how dancers embody song lyrics in a performance context.

**EMBODYING CHRISTIANITY**

Ensuring that liturgical dance praises God and conforms to Christian ascetic morality requires considerable self-monitoring on the part of the dancers (cf. Throop 2009). Liturgical dancers attempt to bring their stated intentions in line with the expectations of their elders and male pastors. However, striving to make sure that the dance conveys Christian meaning goes beyond speech practices. It also involves bodily self-disciplining techniques such as careful selection of song text and dress and literal somatic interpretation of lyrics through gestures. Therefore, extending our focus to the ways in which dancers *embody* Christian text through
their dance is needed if we are to fully consider young women’s religious subjectivities in light of the controversy surrounding liturgical dance.

Liturgical dance is a multi-modal practice involving the dynamic interplay of vocal and action signs. Bonnie Urciuoli (1995) breaks up action signs into subsets including body actions (dance), hand actions (signs), vocal actions (sound), and inscribed actions (writing). Although Urciuoli argues that each subset makes up a system, she suggests that action signs do mix and match. It is precisely this mix-and-match nature of liturgical dance that dancers creatively play around with in their choreographies, creating “a different potential for enacting a self” than the text-based verbal arguments for and against liturgical dance on the part of pastors (Urciuoli 1995:191).

As Urciuoli points out, some societies regard certain types of signs as more legitimate systems of meaning or as having a higher status than others. Euro-American societies, she mentions, “privilege speech and text... the systems most displaced from the body.. so that the public self that counts most is the self that can be spoken or written... Especially privileged are the most textlike aspects of speech—the referential—in which context (which is embodiment) counts least in the creation of meaning” (Urciuoli 1995:191).

Until recently, semiotic approaches in the anthropology of Christianity have also privileged speech and textual analysis over extralinguistic sign systems such as dance and music, ignoring expressive performances other than preaching and evangelizing (Bialecki and Hoenes 2011). Liturgical dance is a unique bodily modality of Christian piety in that the dancing subject moves to song text and music but does not speak.\footnote{Some liturgical dancers sing along softly with the lyrics as they perform gestures and body movements, but their voices are not heard over the pre-recorded music accompanying the dance.} Liturgical dance enables anthropologists to take their analyses of Christian semiotic ideologies, forms, and practices beyond speech events,
and from the strictly discursive to incorporate the somatic.

Christian song lyrics are undeniably central to liturgical dance. However, dance is more than a bodily expression of text. The interplay liturgical dancers establish among text, musical genre, and movement means that the body and “the world” are reinterpreted by women as tools, or ways to achieve heightened meaning and spiritual experience, for themselves as well as for others. While dancers attempt to conform to the interpretive textual practices of their elders and male pastors, my research shows that they also effectively reconfigure the body and Andean popular culture as legitimate “mediums for witnessing” (cf. Jones 2012a). Through choreographed forms of bodily expression, liturgical dancers adeptly manage the Kichwa evangelical tradition of ascetic discipline and control on the one hand, and the rising ecstatic, global, “modern” influences of charismatic worship style, on the other (Robbins 2004:126).

In addition to interviews, the following analysis draws on liturgical dances I filmed in churches, where performances are common during special services such as weddings, Mother’s Day services, and youth gatherings. I also examine a DVD that CK Dance Ministry produced of their dances performed outside of the church context. At the time of my fieldwork, the dancers were in the early stages of producing the DVD. They were hiring filmmakers, practicing choreography, raising money, and coordinating outfits. They released the DVD in 2012. A colleague of mine visited Ecuador and brought a copy back to me. On the DVD, dancer adapted their choreographies to accommodate the various outside venues. Nonetheless, their hand and arm gestures remained consistent with that of the church performances.

*Embodied Literalism: Doing What the Song Says*

Coordinating hand and arm signs to song text is one of the primary ways dancers ensure
liturgical dance has Christian meaning. As a kind of prophylaxis against pastoral criticism, dancers claim to move exactly as the song says—“dancing the Word” as U.S. evangelicals might put it (Elisha 2014). Dancers somaticize sung text in literal fashion through indexical and iconic “relations of resemblance” (cf. Jones 2012) between Christian referents and hand/arm gestures. These action signs remain constant whether the language is Kichwa or Spanish. However, the order in which the signs are performed corresponds to the language’s syntax.

“Embodied literalism” (Coleman 2006:49) is particularly obvious when song lyrics reference parts of the body. For example, dancers sign HEART (two hands beating over chest) for “heart.” The TEMPLE sign (index fingers pointing to each temple) indicates “to think,” “thoughts,” “head,” “reason,” and “to understand.” The EYE sign (hands touching near eyes) indicates “see,” “wake up,” and “admire.” The MOUTH sign (hands touching mouth) indicates “praise,” “sing,” and “shout.” When lyrics involve either taking to or talking about God, dancers point upward. The JESUS/GOD sign, for example, is an upward arm movement with palm facing upward, head looking up. Dancers use the admonitory sign NO (index finger wagging back and forth) in the verse “He doesn’t ask for silver or gold.”

Dancers also perform song text using their bodies in iconic fashion. Dancers walk around in a circle pumping their arms to the lyrics “let’s walk.” They raise both arms upwards to the lyrics “raising my hands towards the sky.” In the song “Wake Up,” to lyrics that say God is the light “of my path,” dancers make two lines facing each other to make a path between them, then raise arms outward to indicate the direction of the path. In “Wake Up,” dancers embody Jesus.

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207 Dancers also use the HEART sign in non-literal ways, to pantomime referents such as “miracle,” “to live,” “life”, “I” and “me,” “spiritual,” “commission.”

208 Poetic lyrics (e.g. “You are the potter; I am mud in your hands”) are more loosely interpreted in body
in iconic fashion by signing CROSS (arms stretched out horizontally).

A central tenet of Christian mission ideology is that the truth is contained in the written word (Crpanzano 2000; Keller 2005). The dancers’ literal mode of conveying words through the body suggests a one-to-one correspondence between the words or components of a phrase and the meaning of the gestural choreography. Therefore, dancers’ textual somatization mirrors at least to some degree the literal textual practices and ideologies prevalent among conservative indigenous Christians in Chimborazo. However, “embodied literalism” (Coleman 2006: 49) is impossible. Translating text to movement, given the change in modality, goes beyond repetition or emphasis; it requires transposition (Shoaps 2002). While the semantic content of vocal and action signs may be nearly identical, the form in which they are conveyed is not. Because of conservative evangelical body ideologies of the body, particularly the female body, conservative pastors are unlikely to see past the communicative medium used—the body—no matter how pious the dancers’ intentions.

Furthermore, a particular aesthetics guides the ways in which the dancers stylize their gestures as grand and flowing. Although more research is needed to verify the influence of liturgical dance movement style, Kate Grim-Feinberg, an anthropologist who studies Peru suggested one influence could be Andean folklore music videos. However, when I showed a video clip from the CK Dance Ministry DVD as part of a paper presented at the 2014 annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association, a fellow panel member said he was reminded of Hawaiian hula dancing. Furthermore, the translation of lyrics to body movement is highly idiosyncratic, with each dance troupe creating their own bodily action signs.

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209 My point here is related to Coleman’s (2006:49) exploration of “examples of language that rely upon an ideology of literalism but do not necessarily constitute literalism as it is conventionally understood—indeed, they implicitly subvert or supersede its implications.”
While dancers do “what the song says” to an extent, it is certainly not all they see themselves doing. Body movement accompanied by lyrics is also a tool to achieve spiritual legitimacy. Through gestures, dancers demonstrate their personal faith by locating the self in relationship to God. The SALVATION sign, in which dancers trace the sides of their own bodies downward, is one example. In “Let’s Praise” (K. Tucuicuna Alabashun), when lyrics state “only he saves us,” dancers sign JESUS/GOD (he), HEART (us), and SALVATION (saves). In these ways, dancers use their own bodies to indicate that they are saved.

The gestures, then, are not just an expression of belief, but a method of attaining spiritual legitimacy. In her study on the narrative strategies of Fundamentalist preachers in the U.S., Susan Harding (2000) argues that “speaking is believing.” For the liturgical dancers, moving is believing. One CK dancer told me that when she thought about the song and did the pantomimes it occurred to her that “God really does exist.” Whereas the means toward spiritual legitimacy is testimony for Fundamentalists, liturgical dancers seek a more Pentecostal or “sense-based,” corporeal mode of legitimacy (Brahinsky 2012:229).

Dancers also take on the role of a preacher through dance. Dancers see liturgical dance as a form of evangelism, what Brahinsky (2012) has called “corporeal evangelism.” As a preacher might do through speech at the pulpit, dancers address a collectivity of believers through inclusive gestures. Accompanying the lyrics “everyone let’s praise [God],” dancers’ arms extend out and then in as if to include the audience. In the song “Wake Up,” when the lyrics say “brother give me your hand,” dancers face the audience and extend their right arm outwards towards the audience, then grasp each other’s hands. The song continues: “united in Christ let’s walk.” As a good Christian should, dancers do what they preach. Forming two small circles, the dancers face each other and touch each other’s hands.
Andean Christian Semiotics: Creative Self-Regulation

Regarding global trends in “evangelical expressive culture” such as magic, Jones (2012a) suggests that “[t]here is a fascinating relationship between secular culture and the expressive potential of the gospel, which Evangelicals cultivate in tremendously creative ways.” However, like Christian performers of other creative worship genres, liturgical dancers wrestle with a number of spiritual challenges when filming and performing in public (cf. Jones 2012a). Even though God is the ultimate intended audience, CK dancers still strive to reach a human audience. As we know from the literature on performance in linguistic anthropology, “the meaning of any performance is contingent on audience reception and co-construction” (Jones 2012:195; see Briggs and Bauman 1992; Duranti 1986). The dual spiritual/human nature of the audience means the girls must not only think of themselves in deference to God, but in terms of how other believers see them. As concerns about appearance, impression management, and marketability emerge, dancers become vulnerable to criticisms of self-glorification.

The dancers respond to this conundrum through coordinated forms of self-regulation. They carefully choose songs, dress, and body movements from contemporary popular, secular culture that they think will be read in positive ways by their audience. As Femenias points out, “Bodies are not passively inscribed by signs, they are inscribed by people who select items of material culture from a restricted range of options and arrange them according to imaginations that are shaped by historical developments” (Femenias 2005:27, quoting Weston 1993:13-14).

First, dancers self-monitor their relationship to the “world” in their selection of

210 One conservative Evangelical Pentecostal Church in Valparaíso, Chile gets around this conundrum in an interesting way (Lindhardt 2011). Choir members sing in front of the pulpit facing the audience. When the song is over, they turn around to face the pulpit. Then, both choir performers and audience members applaud to God. This sets the choir performance apart from a secular play or concert, in which performers usually receive applause. “...[B]y thanking God rather than the performers, human creativity is strategically neglected and church members are reminded that only God can make good things such as beautiful singing happen” (Lindhardt 2011:227).
appropriate songs for their dances. The young women admitted they preferred upbeat praise songs (S. alabanzas) over the melodic melodies of traditional Kichwa hymns. However, the song’s potential to facilitate Christian meaning within multigenerational and multilingual Kichwa Churches holds priority over trendy beats. Andean Christian folk songs, particularly those with Kichwa lyrics, are popular for church performances, both in terms of facilitating meaning and their beat conducive to dance.\textsuperscript{211} When I asked Lourdes and Elena what their favorite song was, they both said “Let’s Praise” (K. Tucucuna Alabashun) by Nuevo Amanecer from Otavalo, Imbabura. The chorus goes:

\begin{verbatim}
In the name of Jesus let’s all praise
Only He saves us (x2)
He doesn’t ask for silver or gold
He only asks for our lives (x2)
\end{verbatim}

Lourdes emphasized that the song’s Kichwa lyrics are what she most liked. In Spanish, she explained them to me: “God does not care if we have money, if we study, if we work, if we earn a good salary; he only wants us to put Him first and give [Him] our hearts.”

The founder of CK Dance Ministry, Lourdes and Elena’s sister Rita, said that body movements tied to Christian songs in Kichwa are less likely to be misunderstood by an audience than those accompanying songs in Spanish, particularly songs set to the “mestizo” rhythms of rock or Reggaeton. In our interview, Rita criticized a liturgical dance troupe from Riobamba she once saw perform. They wore all black clothing and danced to a rock song, she explained. She then mocked their dance by singing “na na na na na” and bouncing up and down on the sofa. “You can’t even understand what they are singing,” Rita complained. CK dancers do perform to Spanish rock songs. Their repertoire includes a song by Christian rock band Hillsong United.

\textsuperscript{211} Most of the songs in CK Dance Ministry’s repertoire feature Christian Andean folklore music. The artists include Fernando Torrico from Bolivia, Wiñay Marka from Bolivia, Nuevo Amanecer from Otavalo, Ecuador and Inspiración Divina from Chimborazo, Ecuador.
from Sydney, Australia. Rita reminds her younger sisters Lourdes and Elena that if they select songs in Spanish with “mestizo” rhythms, they should be extra careful that their movements are not too “exaggerated” so as to communicate a “good message.”

Moving to spiritual lyrics helps make what otherwise might be glossed as “secular” body movement divine (cf. Pype 2006:311). However, the body is also a tool dancers use to make secular lyrics more Christian. It is common practice for soloist singers in the Kichwa Church to adapt the lyrics and beat of popular romantic songs about heterosexual love to indicate the relationship between believer and God. Unlike Estrellita and other soloists, however, liturgical dancers cannot change song lyrics, as they rely on pre-recorded music. The lyrics to one of the songs in CK Dance Ministry’s repertoire, “Turn on the Light of my Heart” (S. Prende la luz de mi corazón) by Mexican American rock singer Annette Moreno, for example, might be interpreted as a love song about a woman longing for a romantic interest:

All I have, all I am is because of you... if you tell me okay this way, that’s where I am going to go, what I most wish for is to fulfill my dream of living close to you... my heart wants you today.

The song contains no references to God, Jesus, salvation, or believers. However, when dancers interpret the personal pronoun “you” somatically, they use the GOD/JESUS sign. By raising the right arm or raising both arms, God becomes the implicit addressee.

Liturgical dance, however, cannot always rely on literalist somatization of text. Musical

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212 In one of her songs, soloist Estrellita took the lyrics of a song by the Bolivian band Los Kjarkas and changed pronouns and tense to address God in the present. She changed the lyrics “[She] was the flower of my life the light of my soul” to “You are the light of my life you are the light of my soul.” Not surprisingly, Pastor Carlos disapproved. After playing an excerpt of Estrellita’s song for his class, he explained why he was against it. First, the song lyrics are not inspired by Christian doctrine. They do not mention “any term that might be perceived as religious,” Pastor Carlos quipped. Secondly, upbeat songs like these instigate body movement, such as clapping. For Pastor Carlos, body movement means Satan is at work. “Satan makes [you] move,” he asserted (S. hace mover Satanas).
intros and instrumental solos do not feature sung text. In these lyric-free moments in the dance, CK dancers move across space and use their lower extremities more. For example, during the no-lyric introduction of “Let’s All Praise,” which I analyzed from their DVD, dancers performed a cumbia step (right foot back, left foot back) that involved hip movement. Though CK dancers say they are careful not to employ the “exaggerated” hip movements of popular dances that could be interpreted as “sensuous” and therefore “of the world,” they become more vulnerable to indexing secular identifications during sections of the music with no lyrics.

In addition to song selection, another bodily disciplining technique that dancers use to monitor their orientation to the “world” is their selection of dress for church performances. In the Kichwa Church, evangelical singing contests require performers to don traditional dress (S. ropa típica) representing “a local and strongly ethnicized past” compatible with evangelical doctrine (Tolen 1999:22). Dancers follow this convention. When I asked Lourdes why the girls wore traditional indigenous dress during their performances, she said, “Because that’s the culture here.” When I asked her sister Elena the same question, she responded, “because we’re women.” Following gendered expectations of women in the Andes as reproducing indigenous identity and cultural traditions in more heightened ways than men (Femenias 2005: 21), liturgical dance performances showcase both indigeneity and femininity in this manner.

The connotations that dress holds for women’s sexuality was reinforced to me during an

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213 Tolen (1999:49) calls singing contests a “distinctively Evangelical variant of folkloric performance: only songs and modes of comportment that are compatible with Evangelical doctrine are permitted.” Public performances in costumed dance are now common among Colta’s evangelicals (Tolen 1999). Tolen posits that their greater acceptance can be attributed to the age and maturity of the religious movement itself. The fact that most have converted gives some leeway with which to perform dance, as long as it is redefined as folklore. In performing songs and dances in costume, Tolen (1999:24) says Pulucateños see themselves evoking specific aspects of local history. It is a stylized image of their own past, put on especially for that occasion, “and yet Pulucateños are also self-consciously working with conventions and images of indigenousness that come from elsewhere.”
informal discussion I had with some youth from Harvest Church. A few days prior, the youth had invited a male Christian Reggaeton artist from Riobamba to perform at a youth service. The singer performed alongside a young woman dancing hip-hop, dressed in a revealing top and tight jeans. In discussing the controversy this sparked, our conversation turned to the kind of reaction that indigenous girls wearing tight skirts or pants provoked in young men. One young man, member of Harvest Church’s youth rock band, admitted that when he passes girls wearing tight clothes walking down the street, he turns around and looks at her butt.

To avoid the male sexual gaze, CK dancers select dress that conforms to local standards of evangelical sexual morality. Wanting to give naysayers no reason to speak negatively, CK dancers rarely perform wearing the traditional skirt (K. anaku) of Chimborazo, saying it is “too tight” and too provocative. Instead, they wear the less form-fitting anaku from Otavalo province, which they claim enables more movement. They also wear Otavaleño-style blouses, which are considered fashionable and sold ubiquitously in local markets in Chimborazo. By wearing Otavaleño dress, dancers do not see themselves as rejecting a Chimborazeño identity; rather, they perceive Otavaleño dress to be more “elegant” and formal and thus appropriate for church performances.214

CK dancers also wear understated colors and few embellishments so as not to be accused of calling too much attention to themselves. They usually perform in churches wearing white blouses and dark-colored anakus. Lourdes told me that sometimes the girls in the troupe want to add more color and embellishments to their outfits, but Lourdes discourages this so as not to be

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214 On a daily basis, the young women usually don school uniforms, jeans or sweatpants, boots, and sweaters or warm vests. Many of the young women also wear Chimborazo anakus on a daily basis, though they tend to choose anakus made of thinner, synthetic material than the heavy wool material of their mothers and grandmothers’ anakus. For church services, young women usually put on the anaku. When the girls do wear anakus, they usually wear sweaters and jackets rather than shawls. They rarely wear the traditional sandals (K. alpargatas) with the anaku, opting for western-style sandals or high heels instead.
“just like [secular] dances \(\text{(S. las danzas cualquieras)}\) trying to call attention with bright colors.”

CK dancers do not limit their evangelizing efforts to rural church venues. In producing a DVD of their dances, the young women strive to reach an even bigger audience. On their DVD, CK liturgical dancers take their performance of femininity and indigeneity in highly creative directions while still managing to stay within the parameters of evangelical morality. The DVD features an edited montage of the group dancing to songs in different forms of indigenous and “Western” style dress, across rural and urban spaces. Utilizing a modern medium of technology unavailable to previous generations, CK liturgical dancers showcase and contribute to producing a Christianized brand of cosmopolitan and translocal Andean indigeneity.

The DVD follows the Andean folklore music video genre featuring bucolic and romantic images of the Andes.\(^\text{215}\) In filming the DVD, CK dancers traveled to various locales outside of Colta. The dancers are immersed in natural elements such as rivers, grass, and mountain slopes with some of Chimborazo’s most spectacular natural features such as Chimborazo Volcano and Ozogoche Lakes in the background. In one scene, the women dance barefoot on rocks in the flowing Puela River. In another, they dance across rocky cliffs. And, in yet another scene, the dancers can be found dancing on the slopes of a mountain, wind blowing the plants around them.

On the DVD, the dancers don four different outfits that index local Chimborazo indigenous identity. Three of the outfits pay homage to indigenous dress commonly worn by their grandmothers in the past: long red earrings, white hats, anaku with additional cloth in front (K. chankalli), and bare feet. The other features everyday forms of indigenous dress worn by young women in the present, such as the Chimborazo-style blouse (square neck), Chimborazo-style anaku, beaded bracelets, and sandals (K. alpargatas). In addition, three outfits were directly

inspired by Otavalo, with blouses and anakus typical of the region. I believe one outfit was characteristic of women in Alausí: brown skirt to the shins, white blouse, and white sandals.

Dress and visual imagery on the DVD index modernity and urbanity as much as the past and rural space. Urban contexts are also featured in the video. The troupe dances in urban parks such as Sucre Park in Riobamba, with onlookers in the background and cars passing by. They dance at night with city lights on the background. They dance on the edge of highways and on a bridge. Their “western” dress includes a uniform of black tie-died pants, white sneakers, and pink cotton T-shirts with Christian graphics. Another non-indigenous outfit they donned included a white blouse, short flowy red skirts, and white sandals.

This montage approach showcases the kinds of ways in which the dancers move not just their hands and arms or bodies across a church stage, but also across urban and rural spaces. The young dancers embrace these multiple facets of their own cultural identities through both bodily movement and geographic mobility. Like Mendoza’s (1998:168) informants, CK dancers do not live entirely urban or rural lives. As they break down rural/urban spatial dichotomies, dancers also overcome, in a sense, the sacred/profane ones.

**CONCLUSION**

By way of conclusion, I return to the image that began this chapter, of CK liturgical dancers dancing in the face of a disapproving conservative male pastor. Pastor metacultural commentary on dance makes verbal contestation on the part of the dancing women difficult, if not impossible. Yet dancers continue to dance. In so doing, they transgress conservative religious norms more so than possible solely through narrative practices.

The global success of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity in the global south is widely acknowledged in recent anthropological scholarship (Robbins 2004; Simon 2000). However, less
is understood about the neo-Pentecostalization of post-mission religious movements with fundamentalist roots in the global south. The case of liturgical dance backs up the notion that Pentecostalization can play an important role in opening up new possibilities for young women (cf. Eves 2010; Riesebrodt and Chong 1999).

In transforming dance, a practice once rejected as sinful amongst indigenous Christians, into a legitimate modality of indigenous evangelical cultural expression, young female dancers have become key agents of Christian re-generation. Their form of corporeal evangelism draws on Pentecostal body logics to offer new ways to relate the textual, the somatic, and the spiritual within Kichwa churches. Dancers creatively mediate the boundaries between spiritual and secular worlds by engaging in cultural practices and modes of piety outside of the local context of their churches and making them acceptable through discursive self-regulation and bodily disciplining techniques. Dancers negotiate ideals of Christian femininity and popular Andean indigenous forms of identification to challenge conservative religious ideologies and gendered and aged hierarchies in Kichwa churches.

Nonetheless, the women and their dances are not resisting gendered conservative religious ideologies in any sort of total sense. As feminist scholars have argued, women’s agency entails reproducing/submitting in some sense to the evangelical patriarchal order. Because the dancers seek legitimacy within the ideological and social boundaries of the Kichwa church, one that is still predominately conservative, they must make their discourse and body movements consistent with local understandings of what it means to be a good, female Christian subject, understandings that rest on modes of self-discipline and literal interpretive practices.
CHAPTER SEVEN,
A TIME TO LAUGH: DEATH, HUMOR, AND HAUNTING

“There is a time for everything... a time to be born and a time to die...a time to kill and a time to heal...a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance...a time to tear and a time to mend...”
(Ecclesiastes 3, New International Version, BibleGateway.com).

In house wakes for the recently deceased, Colta residents gather to perform games and skits called “wake games” (S. juegos de velorio). These games mark a time of laughing and dancing within the overall funereal context of sorrowful mourning. As actors in the impromptu skits, evangelicals exchange mock alcoholic drinks, pretend to be drunk, and dance. Husbands throw mock punches at their wives. Insults, pranks, and practical jokes are met with raucous laughter. Sexual innuendo, double entendre, and mimesis are key aspects of wake play.

During the first wake I attended, in February of 2010, I watched amazed as the soft-spoken deacon who usually plays the accordion to a reserved congregation of Kichwa evangelical believers at Harvest Church prepared to play the role of a Catholic priest. We were gathered late at night inside the home of the deceased’s son-in-law, with the open casket in one corner. Those present crowded around a small space on ground level that would serve as a stage. Trying out objects that could pass for sacred vestments, the mock priest finally settled on wearing woman’s embroidered purse (K. shigra) on his head. He pulled a sack over himself, mimicking a cassock. He tied a woman’s embroidered belt (K. chumbi) around his waist. He

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216 More serious mortuary rituals in Colta include placing items and food the deceased loved during his lifetime inside the coffin; a funeral procession in which the coffin is carried from the home of the deceased to the burial site the day after death; and ritual bathing in Colta Lake of the deceased’s close relatives (S. lavatorio, K. armayta rurana) the day after the burial to “wash away the sins committed against the deceased and to make sure that the soul proceeds on its way to heaven” (Maynard 1966:52). All of these activities involve sorrowful wailing.
trew a white scarf over his neck to simulate a priest’s stole. Water in a plastic cup simulating holy water and a barley leaf branch to be used for blessings were among the items the priest placed atop a small, wooden table that served as a makeshift altar. With his dress and paraphernalia set, the priest’s speech and body postures transformed. Raising both arms, he sang in deep tones: “AAAAmeeeeeeeen.”

In this chapter, I analyze two house wakes that I attended in 2010, one of which I video-recorded, as well as the video recordings I watched of two previous house wakes. I also draw on my interviews with elders and wake skit actors. I concentrate on the most popular skit performed during house wakes in San Mateo and Sisapamba, the mock wedding. Actors are selected on the spot to play the roles of priest, sacristan, alcalde, bride, groom, and parents of the bride and groom. Mock weddings involve a varying number and order of scenes, but generally start with a Catholic Church inauguration of newly elected alcaldes and end with a Church wedding ceremony and celebration. One of the longest scenes takes place midway through: a marriage proposal in which the two sets of potential in-laws convene at the home of the bride. The wedding skit shines a spotlight on the themes of family, gender, sexuality, and youth carried out across this dissertation. The mock wedding skit is, therefore, this dissertation’s last act or “grand finale,” where all the various elements of previous chapters make a dramatic reappearance for final exploration and analysis.

Cross-dressing and gendered mockery, especially of men dressing up as women, is common during contemporary fiestas such as carnival. Wogan (2004) writes about a similar case of priest parody in which markers of Indianess become vestments or symbols of the priest’s authority during funeral rituals in Salasaca. Wogan (2004:108) sees this kind of imitation or “vigorous appropriation” of Catholicism as a way in which indigenous peoples can “wrestle control of Christianity from whites while reshaping it to meet he needs of Indian peoples.” Sometimes distinct games or skits are incorporated within the course of one mock wedding skit. One wedding skit I saw included an additional scene of the priest visiting a sick man. Elements of the “dog” game, which Maynard (1966) describes as a separate wake game, are incorporated into scenes where people visit homes, such as the “sick man” and the proposal.
In Part One of this chapter, I relate ideas and practices around death, ritual play, and marriage in Colta to anthropological research conducted in other areas of the Andes as well as other parts of the world. I also historicize wake games in Colta, indicating how wake practices, actors, and the motivations and meanings behind wake games have changed since mass conversion.

In Part Two, I analyze wake skits in Colta as sites for the production of social memory. Wake humor, as a form of indigenous historicity, plays a critical role in the recycling, reenactment, and reframing of “sad life” tropes and practices for younger generations who were not raised during “sad life” times. In my analysis, I provide examples of verbal play, including sexual innuendo, double entendre, and euphemistic language. I examine humor as indexing and parodying the past, allowing actors to unearth, so to speak, past oppressive ethnic, racial, and gendered ideologies and abusive interactions tied to hacienda-era Catholic identification. Transgressive allusions to sex, along with physical humor such as trickery and mock violence, elicit great laughter, enabling actors and spectators to reframe past trauma as pleasurable and amusing. Humor is highly effective in engaging the audience, bringing those present at the wake face-to-face, not only with the past, but with each other. Following scholars who emphasize the ambiguity of humor (e.g. Black 2012) and parody (e.g. Drewal 1992) as potentially both a transgressive form of resistance and as constitutive of power, I examine humorous interactions both in terms of how they both destabilize and reinforce race and sex/gender ideologies from the hacienda-era, pre-conversion past.

In Part Three, I consider the effects of these dramatic enactments of the past on social relations today, particularly how wakes unsettle temporal lines separating the past and the present. By examining actors’ temporal slippages, I show how wedding skits not only mock the
past but also expose and resolve social anxieties and fissures that continue in the present. For example, far from creating social distance between evangelicals and Catholics due to the skits’ stereotypical representation and caricature of Catholicism, evangelicals and Catholics participate alongside each other and view wake games as bringing people together in fellowship and solidarity.

Anthropologists analyzing wake games in the Andes have done so in the context of indigenous Catholicism (e.g. Corr 2010). Corr, who has written extensively about wake games in Salasaca, claims evangelicals no longer play wake games. This dissertation builds on Corr’s research to ask what funeral practices involving parody of Catholic rituals and authority figures might mean in the rapidly changing social and religious landscape of Chimborazo, where most indigenous people are evangelical.

PART ONE: DEATH AND MARRIAGE IN THE ANDES

Anthropological literature on death shows that parody, humor, laughter, and play during wake and other funereal rituals are common across various cultures (Block and Perry 1982). Scholars have noted the ubiquity of “merry wakes” involving pranks and games in Ireland (Scheper-Hughes 2011) and Newfoundland (Narváez 2013). According to Narváez (2003:114), traditional Newfoundland wakes “keep the dead alive” through licentious behaviors and the experience of *vitalizing* bodily pleasures “in clear opposition to the hegemony of official religion” and clerical authority. Memorial services in Ghana and among Ghanaian immigrants in New York City, as well, involve large gatherings that begin with religious blessings, ceremonies, and speeches and end with dancing and libations until the early morning hours (Dolnick 2011).
In the Andes, the practice of festive mimicry involving priest mockery during funerals is common (Corr 2010; Lyons 2005). In Salasaca, boys imitate adult fiestas during wakes. Playing alcaldes and priests, the boys enact the January inauguration of new alcaldes during the Catholic mass (Corr 2010). For Corr (2010:83), boys imitating adult fiestas during wakes reflects “intertextuality characteristic of Salasacan expressive culture” in the sense of a play frame being “inserted into somber occasion of a death.” All Salasacan rituals are intertextual in this way, but especially mortuary rituals. Because the fiesta “is the preeminent social act” that brings the community together year after year, performing a mock fiesta as part of the wake means that “despite the death of an individual, the social life of the community will continue” (2010:84).

Wogan (2004:106) and Corr (2010) each write about a funeral ritual in Salasaca called the “Head Mass” (or Mondongo Misa), which occurs at the home of the deceased’s family on the day after the burial. After eating and drinking, two Salasaca men officiate a mass, imitating priests. Corr states that this “appropriation of priestly powers” is thought to effectively send the soul to God. Both Corr (2010) and Wogan (2004:108) stress the significance of the priest’s appropriation of indigenous symbols in his mimetic performance. Wogan (2004) claims priest parody in the Andes shows how indigenous peoples “wrestle control of Christianity from whites” and reshape it in terms of indigenous ritual and identity.

Besides mimetic play, games of chance during wakes have a long history among indigenous highland peoples in the Andes. A ceremonial game called Huayru (or Pisqa) has received the most documentation in Andean literature (Corr 2008, 2010, Gose 1994, Karsten

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220 Mimicry, parody, and ritual intertextuality also take place during festivals such as Carnaval and Corpus Cristi.

221 The priest is an ambiguous figure, even for indigenous Catholics. The Laymi, for example, view the Catholic priest (i.e. sources of power outside Laymi culture) in ambiguous ways, both as “representative of the sun-God” and “a secret evil-doer who steals life-giving fat from the bodies of Indians to use for his own nefarious purposes” (Harris 1982:68). According to local folklore, not even the Virgin of Balbanera in Colta wanted to end up in the hands of the priest.
Huayru is a game with Pre-Columbian origins in which men sit around a circle taking turns throwing a six-sided die made out of animal bone. The thrower receives a hard slap (K. chirlos) on the inner arm depending on the number the die lands on. The game involves pain (arms turn raw and bloody) and heavy drinking. Various scholars of the Andes and beyond have noted games of chance during funeral ceremonies such as huayru, theorizing that through the “repetitive elaboration” and “arbitrariness” of the game, “culture is able to play with and reorder the unanswerable arbitrariness of death” (Harris 1982:51).

**Historicizing wake games in Colta**

In performing wake games and skits, indigenous evangelicals carry out popular aesthetic forms that have a long history across the Andes. In San Mateo and Sisapamba, elders say wake games have existed as far back as they can remember—“since my parents’ time,” the oldest evangelical in San Mateo told me. Nonetheless, wake play in Colta has shifted over time, in part due to mass conversion to evangelical Protestantism.

Elder stories about the origin of wake games focus on the deceased and the fate of his soul, as well as the responsibilities of the living towards the deceased. According to one elder in San Mateo, wake games originated when a traveler happened upon a dead person in his house. The dead person “got up” and requested that noise be made to deter the devils from coming.

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222 Also called Pichca (K. five)
223 Harris (1982) notes that during preparations for the dead among the Laymi ethnic group of northern Potosí, young men play games with sheep knucklebones resembling dice.
224 Several Andean anthropologists have discussed the meaning of soul in Quechua thought and practice (Allen 1982; Harris 1982; Orta 2004). Harris (1982:61) talks about the soul (S. alma) as “the essence of a dead person which survives bodily decay,” interchangeable with ghost or spirit. Allen (1982) describes how almas are thought to travel the year before death and are omens of death, sometimes causing distress to the living. Allen claims the Quechua idea of alma is not the seat of one’s individuality and will, as in the Christian concept of soul. Corr (2008) notes that among Salasacas, the ritual functions of mimesis, parody, and games during wakes serve the soul. Corr’s informants understood ludic wake activities to “make the soul happy” (K. almata cushiyachilla) and send the soul to heaven (Corr 2008:11).
inside the home to take his soul away. It was thought that people who behaved immorally in life by engaging in behaviors such as adultery or excessive drinking would be taken away by devils. The traveler got others to join in a game called huayru and the malignant spirits were successfully kept at bay.

Another version of the origin of wake games focuses on fear of the corpse. A husband holding vigil over his dead wife saw her corpse rise up out of the coffin—going “up and down up and down”—and got scared. Corpses should not be left alone, for they might disappear at the hands of devils, who take away the body and soul together. The man, having to stick around, decided to invent a game called huayru; he threw an animal bone and yelled “vara vara vara vara cuatrooo.” Realizing that the games he played effectively settled the dead and helped the deceased die for good, he told others, who then began to play games at wakes as well. Although the two versions of the origin of wake games differ somewhat, both emphasize the need for noise and for the corpse to be accompanied by the living. Both show concern over settling the corpse, and sending the soul on to its proper destination.

Even though first converts to evangelical Protestantism secured spaces separate from Catholics to celebrate weddings and bury their dead, surprisingly, no “functional substitute” (Klassen 1975:89) or separate space was created for evangelicals in lieu of wake games. Pastor

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225 Mama Rosa confirmed the idea that a dead person could get up and talk to the living: “They say the dead revives himself” (K. chika kawsarillanin wañushkakuna), in reference to the need for games at house wakes.

226 In one of anthropology’s first systematic looks at death ways cross-culturally, Metcalf and Huntington (1991) note that funerals are noisy affairs in many parts of the world. Funerals among the Berawan of central northern Borneo, for example, draw crowds for drinking, socializing, percussion, and games.

227 As Gose (1994) notes, the Quechua word for cadaver, aya, also refers to the alma before burial, thus maintaining a relationship between alma and the body. Gose shows that “the main object of death rites [in Huaquirca, an agricultural town in Southern Peru] is to break this link and send the alma on to the afterlife.”

228 Soon after accepting Jesus Christ and getting baptized, Colta’s “three youth” married evangelical girls from other communities, and were the first to marry in evangelical churches.
Samuel Charco encouraged wake games in the early days, despite the disapproval of missionary Henry Klassen and the fact that wakes brought Catholics and new-converted evangelicals together. According to one informant, Catholics and newly converted evangelicals worked out their differences amicably during wakes; evangelicals were served bread and Catholics alcohol. Over time, as more and more people converted, soda and water replaced chicha and trago, and actors only pretend to be drunk. These days not even Catholics drink alcohol during wake games, at least not when evangelicals are present.

That wake games continue to be practiced today is even more surprising considering that many mortuary and memory practices associated with the pre-conversion past and with Catholicism are met with circumspection on the part of evangelicals. In September 2010, the one-year anniversary of Daniel’s mother’s death was approaching. Daniel and his sisters discussed holding an evangelical worship service in her honor, but decided against the idea because they thought doing so would too closely mirror Catholic memorial services. Likewise, on the Day of the Dead, evangelicals expressed ambivalence about visiting the local cemetery, as was traditionally the custom when they were Catholics. Several evangelicals told me they would not visit the cemetery because they thought it would lead to “senseless” crying.

Although wake games survived mass conversion, so to speak, local understandings of the ritual effects of wake games have changed. Wake games today are still supposed to generate a great deal of noise and laughter. The focus, however, is on the living: keeping friends and family

229 From what I gather, missionaries did not attend the wake game performances.
230 Indigenous peoples in the area would exchange food with the dead on the occasion. Allen writes, “Runa communicate with spiritual beings through mediating substances: cooked food, alcohol, coca” that are offered in a variety of ways- blowing, burning, force feeding. Evangelicals reject the idea of communicating with spiritual beings through mediating substances such as food.
231 On the morning of November 2, I asked one elderly woman if she planned to visit the cemetery that day. She responded: ‘I will not go just to cry.” In contrast to Catholic practices of feeding souls at the cemetery or remembering the deceased during masses, I often heard evangelicals say one should be fed and recognized while still alive.
awake and present at the house all night long so that they can cheer up the bereaved. Pastor Samuel said, “Nowadays, we evangelicals don’t do it so much with that belief [in the devils] but rather to calm or alleviate the pain of the bereaved.”

Colteños say they accompany the deceased and his or her family members at a wake as an act of solidarity and fellowship, one that should be reciprocated.

In addition to changing ideas about the effects of wake games, the repertoire of “games” has changed as well. By the 1980s, evangelicals had stopped playing huayru altogether, considering it too violent. Elders recall strikes on the arm as being painful and causing a lot of bleeding and bruising. The wedding skit has taken huayru’s place for the most commonly played wake game in Colta today. Whether or not other games are played in addition to the wedding skit depends on the number of people present and their energy level. However, at the very least, the wedding skit must be played.

The origin of mock weddings at house wakes in Colta is unclear. My elderly informants say wedding skits have always been part of the repertoire. However, scholars describing wake games in Sisapamba in the 1960s and 1970s (e.g. Maynard 1966, Hartmann 1974) do not

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232 At the June wake, the bereaved family members were not actually watching the skits; they were in the kitchen (a separate building) conversing quietly.
233 Rachel Corr (2008) argues that play and mimesis during funerals in Salasaca is both comic relief and sacred ritual to ensure the soul makes it to the afterlife. The Colteños I interviewed emphasized the humorous aspect of wake games and downplayed its religious significance.
234 One informant told me that in his hometown of Miraflores, wake games were outlawed before mass conversion, when people were still Catholic, due to the excessive violence.
235 One wake skit I observed that also spoofs Catholic practices and ideologies is called Toro Prioste or Bull Sponsor (Maynard 1966:50 calls it the San Miguel fiesta). Sponsors (S. priostes) were couples that sponsored saint fiestas during a given year (Lyons 2006:107). In the skit I saw, a man played a saint. He was seated on a chair with his arms crossed and wore a straw wreath around his head. Actors playing sponsors kneeled down before him, calling him a “miracle worker.” In the midst of impassioned prayer, they waved candles dangerously close to his face and hat, causing the actor to duck and pull back so as not to get burned. They went to kiss his hands and legs, but bit him instead. The saint yelped and squirmed in response.
mention a mock wedding. The closest is Maynard’s (1966:50) description of a game called “the priest” involving a male actor wearing women’s dress (K. *anaku*) imitating a priest and conducting activities related to a religious fiesta (e.g. mass, procession).

Whether or not wedding skits were conducted before mass conversion in the form they are today, the new emphasis on games other than huayru, especially mock weddings, has opened up more space for youth and female participation. The huayru game used to be open only to adult male players and spectators due to the excessive drinking and violence. Once the huayru game was no longer played, more youth and children started attending the wake games. However, Maynard (1966), writing about wake games in the Colta Lake region in the 1960s, states that women were joking and laughing audience members, but did not participate directly. In wedding skits today, however, women and youth participate as actors.

Elders and adults worry that wake games will die out in subsequent generations. Some elders complain that wake game nights are shorter than they used to be. Games used to be played all night long, until sunrise. These days, fewer skits are performed on a given evening. People are more reticent to volunteer as actors. Pastor Samuel jokingly called such folks “fearful butts” (K. *pinki siki*). An elderly Catholic told me he did not think wake games were as good anymore.

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236 Maynard (1966), writing about the Colta Lake zone, mentions “the priest,” “the feast of St. Michael,” “chirlos,” “the cat,” and the threshing game. Although “the priest” involves priest mimicry—imitating what the priest does during a religious fiesta—there is no mention of a mock wedding. Except for “the priest,” the descriptions for each game match what informants have described to me, or what I have seen in person, although each game is called by a slightly different name today. Hartmann (1974) includes the transcribed oral testimony of a Sisapamba resident, who mentions the games “huairu,” “dog,” “cat,” “confessing to the priest,” “trilla,” and “the feast of St. Michael.” The game “confessing to the priest” involves a mock priest going to visit a sick man on a horse. In Sisapamba today, the wedding skit incorporates elements of both “the priest” as described by Maynard (1966) and “dog” and “confessing to the priest” as described in Hartmann (1974).

237 Harris (1982) and Corr (2010) describe wake activities in Bolivia and Ecuador respectively as highly gendered. Among Salasacas, women and children do not participate in the men’s games that take place during the wake (e.g. “the rooster,” a game involving jumping off a roof) because of the roughhousing. According to Harris (1982:53), people play different roles in all of these activities based on gender, age, and closeness to the deceased. Women, children, and close kin are most vulnerable to the ghost, who tries to seize another person for company on its journey. They do not join the vigil.
because most people are evangelical. Drinking used to give people the necessary stamina to stay up longer, he thought.

For these reasons, elders worry that once expert players such as those designated to play the priest die, so too will the games. To avoid forgetting wake skits as a popular aesthetic form, a few in Colta have suggested video recording the funniest and most knowledgeable actors in a staged wake game outside of the funeral context.\textsuperscript{238} One Sisapamba resident said this idea was not well received by authorities due to anxieties about re-enacting the “old games” (K. ñawpa pukllay). San Mateo leaders were more open to the suggestion.\textsuperscript{239}

Along with wake games, other funeral rituals have changed since mass conversion as well. The priest used to play an integral role in “aid(ing) the deceased on the road to heaven” (Maynard 1966).\textsuperscript{240} He would cover the coffin in holy objects such as a black cloth and silver cross. The funeral cortège used to travel 4 kilometers by foot to the Catholic Church and cemetery in Sicalpa, the parish capital, where the priest would give a blessing and say mass. They would make various stops along the way, such as at Balbanera Church, to “pray for the soul of the deceased” and drink chicha or aguardiente. Mama Rosa remembers men and women becoming so inebriated that they had to be carried along with the coffin. One time she  

\textsuperscript{238} Proposals to perform skits outside the context of a death rite further substantiate the idea that wake games have lost their religious significance for Colta’s evangelicals. Among Canelo Kichwas, by contrast, wake games cannot be discussed outside of a wake “for fear that a deceased soul will return” (Corr 2008:16, citing Whitten 1976:140).

\textsuperscript{239} You can see the use of media in the case of other (wake) rituals that cease to exist in some cultures. Similarly, the tricks and fun of traditional Newfoundland wakes no longer take place, but a Newfoundland dramatic group called CODCO performs wake and corpse humor in television series (Narváez 2003:139). According to Warren (1992), as quoted in Tolentino (1999:51), “cofradia rituals in a Maya community in Guatemala have been selectively revived by a Catholic Action group as community theater.” The imbedded ritual loses its original ritual function and becomes a way to reinforce adult’s memories and teach youth.

\textsuperscript{240} Robin (2005) describes the priest’s role in mortuary rituals among indigenous Catholics in Peru as indispensable, as he is considered the most direct intermediary between the world of the living and the world of dead Christians.
remembers the coffin was dropped, and the deceased dead body and head hit the ground.

Processions today cover much shorter distances since there is an evangelical cemetery in Colta.

**Death and Marriage**

Courtship games and mock weddings are common during funeral practices in the Andes, as well as in other parts of the world.\(^{241}\) In these ways, funeral rituals bring forth issues of the biological and social reproduction of the group.\(^{242}\) As Metcalf and Huntington (1991) note, the common appearance of “life values of sexuality and fertility” in funerals shows how “the moment of death is related not only to the process of afterlife, but also to the process of living, aging, and producing progeny” (1991:108). Andean scholars note that only married adults “have achieved full social identity” (Harris 1982:63) and being part of a pair is the ideal social model (Robin 2005). Single people are thus ambiguous social figures in that they are not yet considered full adult members of society.

Rachel Corr (2010) and Harris (1982) note that the social identity of the deceased—particularly his or her marital status—factors in to how they are celebrated at death.\(^{243}\) Because only married adults “have achieved full social identity” (Harris 1982:63), when unmarried young

\(^{241}\) For non-Andean examples of the relationship between courtship and celebrating the dead: Narvaez (2003) notes that courtship and sexual relations, as well as dancing and pranks, are part-and-parcel of the pleasures of Newfoundland merry wakes. The pranks performed by men during house wakes can be seen as a form of youth courtship, or of trying to impress young female spectators. Kligman (1988) analyzes "death-weddings," or symbolic weddings performed for the deceased in the case of untimely deaths such as the death of an unmarried person of marriageable age in Transylvania.

\(^{242}\) Examples abound in the Andes of ritual marrying as part of other rites as well, such as during festivals. During sheep marking ceremonies on San Juan and Carnival, male-female pairs are painted red and forced to chew coca. People say they are “getting married.” These ceremonies “ensure the health and fertility of the animals” (Allen 1982:190).

\(^{243}\) In Colta, I was not aware of wake practices changing according to the deceased’s marital status (both wakes I attended celebrated elderly female widows) or their religious identification. Many elderly evangelicals were married in the Catholic Church and never re-married in the evangelical church.
adults in Salasaca, Ecuador die, they are wedded to a fowl of the opposite sex during the wake. Likewise, in Peru among the Laymi, singles must be buried with a domestic fowl as companion.

Wakes and other funeral rituals address the social and marital status of the living, as well. Wakes in Calca, Peru are festive occasions in which verbal play is often directed at those present who are unmarried—either widows or single—and do not adequately contribute to reproduction. The games involve asking questions (e.g. *juego de preguntas*) that reference sexuality and marriage: “Do you want a son-in-law?” “Do you want a husband?” “Do you want a woman?” (Robin 2005). From Maynard (1966:53) we learn that one of the mortuary rituals performed in Colta in the 1960s included mourners gathering at the deceased’s family’s house to arrange marriages. Widows, widowers, and a few bachelors join the newly widowed woman or man. The *cabecillas* and elders counsel them about getting married and encourage them to get engaged (Maynard 1966:53).

Colteños believe that whoever ends up being chosen to play the roles of bride and groom in the skit will end up getting married (or should get married) in real life, which is why it is important for actors selected as bride and groom to be young adults and single. Wake weddings in this sense directly enhance “the fertility and prosperity of the community” by arranging a marriage (Bloch and Parry 1982:16) in real life. My host parents claim they were wedded as youth during a wake wedding skit, long before their actual marriage. My comadre played a “bride” once. The “groom” in the skit liked her in real life, but she was not interested and went on to marry someone who beat her and from whom she divorced. Everyone says to this day that her mock “groom” would have been a better match for her in real life.

The practices of assigning a marital partner to singles at death and targeting single members of society through verbal play as part of funeral rituals re-instates a particular social
order, according to the authors. The marriage ceremony at the wake, according to Corr (2010:103, 101), “restores the Andean value of a complementary, gendered pair” and reproduces “the holistic nature of Salasacan social life.”

Corr, expanding on discussions by Drewal (1992) on parody, calls the embedding of one rite of passage such as marriage in another, such as a wake or funeral, “ritual intertextuality.” Corr notes that the intertextuality of Salasacan ritual connects different social events, such as marriage and death, to one another. Wakes thus suggest various ways in which marriage and death are related, as metaphorically associated or analogous in structure, content, and function (cf. Kligman 1988:218). One way to approach this relationship is to claim, as Corr does, that both marriage and death bring people together in fellowship and solidarity.

In Colta I had the opportunity to observe and participate in various wedding rituals. I noted that wedding traditions and wakes each incorporate a play frame. In some respects, wakes provide the perfect venue for reproducing these light and social aspects of weddings and proposals; people are already gathered in solidarity. The wake’s ludic frame makes dancing, mock drunkenness, joking, and playing, and physical fighting acceptable.

Marriage proposals also have a light and joking component. The parents of the young man as well as any accompanying friends and family and church deacons pay a visit to the home of the young woman and her parents, bearing gifts such as soda (among today’s evangelicals). I was invited to accompany the proposal party on behalf of the groom on various occasions. The day before the June wake, in fact, I had traveled to Guayaquil accompanying a prospective groom and his parents and church deacons. In preparing to leave the community, the mood was light. Everyone making the trip teased each other, calling each other fictive kin names. Immediately after the bride’s parents accepted the proposal, we headed back to the bus station on
the back of a pickup truck. Those present proceeded to tell sex jokes and laugh the entire way there.

In another example of verbal play tied to weddings, the night before evangelical weddings, the female church choir handles food preparations. On the eve of one wedding I attended, the women told jokes and laughed over the course of hours while peeling vegetables. Although I found it difficult to catch the meaning of all of their jokes, the sexual nature of their humor was hard to miss. The women made sexually suggestive comments regarding phallic-shaped vegetables (e.g. carrots). At this particular wedding, the father of the groom was single. As the ladies were sitting cutting the vegetables, they singled out one of their own, Mama Rita, who was also a widow, and started jokingly calling her “godmother”—what would have been her official role at the ceremony if she had actually been married to the father of the groom. In good humor other men who were hanging around played along, too, coming around to offer her special food and drink. Mama Rita laughed, but seemed embarrassed. At one point, the father of the groom came by. He tapped Mama Rita on the shoulder and said, “Come on. Let’s go pray to God.” (K. Jaku Diosta mañashun). The room erupted in laughter, which lead me to believe this common phrase in religious speech—“Let’s go pray”—in this context was taken as a sexual invitation.

Some wedding traditions involve a great deal of trickery, fun, and game playing, along the lines of wake amusement. One such game is called “making chapu” (K. chapuchina) and takes place at the bride’s home the day after the church wedding. It is a force-feeding ritual involving the newlyweds and their parents and godparents. Colteños find it hilarious. Participants stand around a large table, each with an over-sized, heaping bowl of barley flour in front of them. Other local food and drinks are present on the table as well: sodas, fruit, chicken, potatoes, rice,
and broad beans. Spectators crowd around the table, laughing, and heckling the participants.\(^{244}\) With a spoon, each begins making *chapu* out of the barley flour by mixing it with water. With their hands, everyone takes turn feeding each other, usually by stuffing the food into another’s mouth, or in the case of drink, pouring into their mouth. Afterwards, the newlyweds, their parents, and godparents go around sharing the *chapu* with those who gathered to watch the game.

Both weddings and death are ceremonies that mark dramatic lifecycle transitions.\(^{245}\) In Colta, as elsewhere in the Andes, getting married marks a distinct change in age and social status. Regardless of one’s chronological age, the act of marriage makes you an adult and societal expectations (e.g. assuming responsibilities of working hard) shift accordingly. One middle-aged informant put it to me this way: when you get married you go from being a “snotty-nosed kid” (*K/S. wamra mocosa*) to “Mr. Pickax” (*S. Don Azadón*), or someone expected to assume adult responsibilities and work hard in the fields. This transition is particularly precarious for young women, who are expected to go to live with or near the family of their new husband.

Wakes, of course, also mark a dramatic transition from life to death. As Corr (2008:17) notes, “the soul is between the world of the living and the world of the dead. This in-between state poses a danger to the living, and play mediates this danger” (Corr 2008:17).

The transition of marriage and death share a temporal element as well. Courtship in Colta is traditionally very short, sometimes only a couple of weeks. In the past, young men and women were not to be seen together alone or touching each other, lest there be a “sure wedding” arranged in their near future. Weddings were (and are) typically not planned far in advance. As I describe in Chapter 4, from the female perspective, weddings were often out of her control due to the common practice of suitors “stealing” young women for marriage. Funerals themselves

\(^{244}\) I heard one adult woman heckling the groom for not knowing how to make chapu.

\(^{245}\) See Turner (1979) on how liminal phases of life cycle rituals involve mimesis, parody, and joking.
unfold in similar ways, which, due to the arbitrary and unpredictable nature of death, cannot be planned in advance and need to come to fruition in a short period of time with the church and community’s help. Likewise, mock weddings during wakes are quickly arranged. Steps toward the wedding are enacted with even greater lightning speed, from proposal to wedding in the span of a few hours.

Today, adult control of male-female sociality and sexuality among youth has lessened. The courtship period has lengthened, with the couple usually getting to know each other on their own terms prior to seeking their parents’ approval and planning a marriage. I often heard Colteños talk about the increasing numbers of pregnant brides, suggesting that pre-marital sex is practiced. Nevertheless, short periods of dating leading to quickly planned nuptials are still common. This hastiness has to do with controlling youth sexuality, especially that of young women. Block and Parry (1982) show that female sexuality is associated with death. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, Eve’s temptation brought about death (of Eden) and expulsion from Paradise. This being the case, it makes sense that part of the wake’s “harnessing of death” involves a dramatic ritual that also serves to harness women’s “dangerous” sexuality, so to speak, and make it socially legitimate.

Wake games have been re-configured since mass conversion in ways that address and resolve challenges presented by the immediate context of reproducing evangelical identity across generations. The wedding skit subtly tackles the concerns of parents and youth today around such issues as sexuality, kinship, and generation. While youth manage parental expectations and the desire to get married and becoming an adult, their parents raise concerns about ensuring their children go on to have a happy adulthood in union with the right partner.
Death, Humor and Haunting

Wake games deal in various ways with death, and hence its counterpoint, life. I have already explored ideas around the death of a human being, present at the vigil as a corpse inside an open casket. Stories about the origin of wake games say the “dead” in the form of a corpse can revive itself during wakes, talking to the living or rising up and down from her coffin.

As the accounts of rising corpse during wakes reveal, death is far from final in local Colteño understandings. This is also clear in local understandings of souls. The deceased, referred to as “soul” in Kichwa speech (e.g. “alma Rafael” as English speakers would say “the late Rafael”), is thought to influence the living in dreams, memories, and bodily sensations, sometimes leaving indelible marks on the body such as bruises (see also Allen 1982). Souls also anticipate death; as other Andean scholars have noted (e.g. Gose 1994). Colteños say that just prior to death, one’s soul travels to all of the places he or she frequented in life; the person finally passes away only when the soul has returned from “retracing his steps.” Informants often joked with me that my soul would have a lot of ground to cover just before my death because I was so well traveled.

Catching a glimpse of these roaming souls is both novel and unnerving. One late afternoon at dusk, while sitting at the kitchen table with Marta and her son, we all saw a figure pass by outside the window. We expected someone to round the corner to knock on the back kitchen door, but no one came. It wasn’t a cat. It wasn’t Uncle Lorenzo, who often entered the home unannounced. It was a “soul,” I was told, retracing his or her steps before death. Coming

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246 Harris uses ghost, soul, and spirit as synonyms for “the essence of a dead person which survives bodily decay” (1982:61). Gose (1994:115) defines soul as recording “the body form and moral character of the person as they were developed in life.” For Quechuas in Peru, however, these souls are not the seat of one’s individuality and will, as in the Christian concept of soul (Allen 1982).

247 One young woman told me that the souls of those buried in the cemetery just outside their home visited in her sleep and left indelible marks on her body such as bruising.
into contact with souls is unnerving not just because of its uncanniness, but also because, as Gose (1994) points out, souls can be agents of death as well. For this reason, one of my middle-aged informants said his parents always told him never to answer the door after the first knock, for a soul can call out to a living person by knocking on the door, but they can only do so one time.

Avery Gordon (1997) urges social scientists to describe, analyze, and animate the ghostly or unresolved aspects of social life that continue to haunt the present. Haunting refers to “instances when home becomes unfamiliar, when your bearings on the world lose direction, when the over-and-done-with comes alive, when what’s been in your blind spot comes into view” (Gordon 1997:xvi). Haunting alters the experience of being in time, the way the past, present, and future are separated. Haunting has social effects.

In surviving the historical watershed of mass conversion, wake games have become vehicles for haunting in the sense of selective remembering and transmitting memories of a collective pre-conversion past.248 As I discuss in Chapter 2, indigenous evangelicals in Chimborazo today cast their collective pre-conversion past in terms of the sad life or the racial, ethnic, gendered, and religious abuse and trauma associated with the hacienda period. This sad life reiterated verbally in narrative, song, and conversation is situated as a counterpoint to the freedom, equality, and social mobility mass conversion to evangelical Protestantism ostensibly made possible. Just as the corpse can revive him- or herself, and the soul can come knocking at one’s door, so too do wake skits revive this past trauma and oppression in ways that can make the living uncomfortable, even fearful.

248 Wake skits reduce history to a single narrative. It makes priest sexual abuse seem like it was always the case and doesn’t take into account those who say nothing of the sort happened. The majority of the elderly women I spoke with were not forced into marriage and said they did not experience sexual abuse on the part of the priest when they lived in the convent prior to the wedding; however, they heard these things happened to other women.
Wake performances trigger cultural memories that are “fundamentally embodied”—memories stored in movement, postures, and gestures (Stoller 1995:31). Actors take on a persona through speech, but they also take on postures (e.g. kneeling), gestures (e.g. priest arms, sign of the cross), and forms of spatial movement (e.g. dancing in circle). Invariably, bodies come into physical contact in ways they would not normally: The priest pretends to hammer nails into a “chair” played by a fellow actor on all fours, for example, or the bride’s mother strikes a man on all fours pretending to be a dog. In these examples, the inflicted and suffering body becomes a source of comedy. Physical humor makes the past immediately felt in the present.

Humorous memories are co-constructed during the wake. This “improvisational co-construction” (Black 2012) ensures that those present play a part in mutually remembering and re-conducting the past. However, wake games are not necessarily repeating some “original” past scenario that actually happened or that one experienced, but rather reproducing the memory of funny quips and tricks from other wake skits (which in themselves are embodied remembered versions of the past). Although wake skits are non-scripted, certain kinds of jokes tend to be recycled across different wedding skits because actors know they elicit laughter. The recycled nature of jokes is facilitated by the fact that more experienced actors standing near more novice ones often quietly feed humorous lines to them, which are then repeated. Evangelical adults and elders thus play significant roles in wake performances, not only because they experienced first-hand the “sad life,” but because they have had the opportunity to prove themselves to be sufficiently “clownish” in acting roles in the past.

The ritual intertextuality characteristic of Andean wakes enables past Catholic weddings and proposals, as well as festivals and agricultural activities, to reemerge through parody. For evangelicals, “dead” rituals and activities from the pre-conversion past are not just revived, but
given new purpose during wakes. They are supposed to make friends and family laugh and stay awake. By contrast, evangelicals usually talk about Catholic weddings themselves as serving no purpose or meaning (K. yanga). Elders remember Catholic weddings to span several days of “chicha, liquor, food, dancing and more dancing” just like any other festival. During wakes, converts relive the pleasurable aspects of Catholic weddings and festivals in ways that are not considered sinful. Evangelicals appear not to be rejecting this past so much as momentarily celebrating it.

For younger people, most of whom have never stepped foot in a Catholic church, or attended a Catholic mass, and who certainly did not experience the “sad life” in the way their elders did, wake games provide exposure and opportunities not just to learn about history but relive the disparaged past, either by acting themselves or seeing “sad life” scenarios as they unfold in real time. The next section describes the ways in which ethnic, gendered, and religious violence associated with the hacienda-era past is remembered, contested, and embodied through sex humor during wake weddings.

PART TWO: SEX HUMOR AT ANITA’S WAKE

On the morning of June 7, 2010, Anita María Charco Morales died. She fell and hit her head trying to get off a bus along the Pan-American Highway, just a few hundred meters from her home. A small fire ablaze along the edge of Colta Lake, directly east of her home, announced to the community that a death had just happened. Marta and I noticed the fire as we got off a bus that morning after spending the entire night accompanying a young man from Colta to Guayaquil to ask a mother for her daughter’s hand in marriage.

Born in 1943, Anita was 76 years old and a widow. She was born in Sisapamba and never

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249 Halbwachs (1980) makes a distinction between lived history as intersubjective and constitutive of affective community building on the one hand and learned or official history on the other. See also Orta (2002).
left, dedicating the bulk of her life to agricultural labor such as tending to animals, weaving straw mats, and selling eggs and cow’s milk at local markets. She raised two sons and, although illiterate herself, saw that they attended elementary school and eventually went to the city for further schooling. Her 49-year-old son described her life to me as a sad, impoverished one of “slavery.”

Anita, her former husband, and some of her siblings were among the few Sisapamba residents who remained Catholic amongst a majority evangelical population.\(^{250}\) One of her sons is Catholic, the other evangelical. On the evening of June 7, Evangelicals and Catholics alike from Sisapamba and San Mateo gathered to perform and watch the wake games at Anita’s home.

Even though the deceased and several of her family members were Catholic, an evangelical house worship service preceded the wake games. Outside on the patio of Anita’s home, Harvest Church’s pastor preached in Kichwa. Audience members were seated and still, many of their heads lowered as if drifting off to sleep; the mood was formal and serious. At one point, the Pastor stopped to ask in Kichwa: “Are you all listening?” His question elicited a few softly spoken Amens. The cantor led a slow, religious hymn that all present sang from memory: “Our Jesus will come soon; he will take us to heaven; up there there’s no sadness.”

As soon as the worship service ended, we moved into a room in the house with the open casket and began making preparations for the wake skits such as selecting actors and securing the necessary props. The cantor, suddenly assuming the role of a Catholic sacristan, began calling people to mass, laughing and beating a tin trash can lid with a stick. The mood became noticeably lighter and more dynamic; people were smiling, their eyes open, sitting upright in their seats and making comments.

\(^{250}\) Reportedly, around fifteen families in Sisapamba are Catholic out of a total of 300 families.
Having seen wake games performed earlier on in my 2010 fieldwork, I knew to come prepared with my video camera and digital recorder. I did not expect, however, to be chosen to play the role of the bride. My selection as the bride was a controversial one. People murmured their concerns (so my host brother informed me later) that I wouldn’t be funny enough and that I didn’t speak Kichwa well enough. My relatively distanced relationship with Sisapamba residents likely contributed to their distrust in my ability to play the part. I agreed to participate and was promptly offered indigenous dress to put on over my standard fieldwork attire of blue jeans and a sweater.

Young indigenous men and women who are single and of marriageable age in real life are usually chosen to play the role of bride and groom. Although I was married, older than a typical bride, and not indigenous, my portrayal of a young bride was somewhat fitting. Because my husband was not living with me in the field, and we did not yet have children, people assumed I was single or younger than I actually was (I was 33 years old at the time). Many young indigenous people selected as the bride or groom are themselves first-time actors. Furthermore, many young people playing these roles do not speak Kichwa with fluency or confidence.

Once the skit was under way I was treated like any other novice actor. As part of the co-construction of humor, wake game experts and other players or audience members often direct actors in the skit. The woman who played my mother in the skit, a San Mateo resident, provided guidance by whispering funny lines to me, which I simply delivered out loud. I had already seen a wedding skit performed at another house wake and knew physical humor such as pretend drunkenness and fighting was appropriate. My confusion at certain points about what to do, such

251 An amusing coincidence is that my own wedding anniversary fell on the same day as I played the bride in the wedding wake.
as during the interfamilial exchange of “alcoholic” drinks at the proposal, my clumsiness
donning indigenous attire (e.g. my borrowed hat was too small for my head and kept falling off
every time I got up from the floor) or my mistakes in Kichwa garnered much laughter because
they were read, I think, as effects of my mock drunkenness or as indicative of the kind of cultural
gaps in knowledge and action typical of cosmopolitan youth.

In what follows, I provide examples of sex and physical humor from the wedding skit at
Anita María Charco Morales’s wake as well as another wedding skit I saw earlier on in my
fieldwork. I organize the examples in two sets (not chronological order of scenes). First, I discuss
church scenes featuring religious authorities. Second, I look at home scenes featuring the
marriage proposal and arrangement.

**Playboy Priests and other Power Plays**

The opening act of the wedding skit makes it clear that the hacienda-era past is being re-
enacted. Five men playing the role of newly elected alcaldes walk around the stage pretending to
walk around Sisapamba. The alcaldes (K. *varayuk jarikuna*) were male indigenous leaders that
acted as liaisons between the Catholic Church and the community.\(^252\) They carried staffs of
office (K. *varas*) (Lyons 2006). The alcaldes encouraged people to attend Sunday mass. They
also provided marital advice.\(^253\)

In the opening scene, the alcaldes walk around looking to buy fermented beer (S. *chicha*). To that end, they address various audience members, pretending they are the white-
mestizo vendors that used to live in the community before mass conversion put them out of

\(^{252}\) There were five of them: alcalde mayor, general, fiscal mayor, fiscal menor and tenientillo. The
alcaldes were relatively young, selected a year or so after marriage. They held their position for four
years. For more on the role of alcaldes in Salasaca’s festival sponsorship system as “indigenous
watchmen... enforcing church authority” and morality see Corr (2003:41-43).

\(^{253}\) They would approach feuding married couples and ask them questions to see who was at fault. If the
couple didn’t listen, the alcaldes would punish them with the stick.
business. Pretending to be drunk, the alcaldes then visit the Catholic Church to ask the priest to bless their staffs. In the following examples, the white-mestizo priest, the sacristan, and the alcaldes are interacting with one another at the church.

One of the alcaldes approaches the sacristan at the Catholic Church and asks to speak with the priest. The sacristan says the priest is unavailable because he is “making the bride confess.” In response, the alcalde calls the priest a “ladies’ man.”

Sacristan: What do you want Indian?  
*Imata ninki runa.*

Alcalde: Is the priest here?...  
*Manachu tayta amitu kaypi. ...*

Sacristan: … right now (the priest) is making a bride confess  
... *Kay ratumi noviata confesachikun.*

Alcalde: He’s quite the ladies’ man!  
*Asha bandido kashkaka.*

“Making a bride confess” is euphemistic language that implies the priest is having sex with the bride. The alcalde calling the priest a “ladies’ man” underscores this double meaning.

Throughout the skit, the priest plays up his role as ladies’ man by indicating his sexual interest in the current bride-to-be.

The sacristan’s comment indexes the obligation that brides had in the past to serve the priest for a period of one month prior to the church wedding. Serving the priest involved agricultural labor and receiving classes on doctrine. However, elders claim priests sexually abused brides during this time. The bride would not be allowed to get married until she mastered

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254 Actors refer to the young woman and young man in the skit as “groom” (S. *novio*) and “bride” (S. *novia*) throughout the skit even though they are not technically bride and groom until the mock wedding ceremony at the end.

255 Although a very similar dialogue happened at Anita’s wake, I take this exact dialogue from a different wake I attended. The alcalde better enunciates the joke here, and it garners more laughter than the skit at Anita’s wake. At Anita’s wake, the sacristan claims the priest is making a nun confess, not the bride.
prayers such as the Our Father and Hail Mary. If the bride had trouble reciting prayers, the priest would force her to have sex in lieu of the exam. Pastor Samuel told me, “Some say that the first baby is the priest’s, not the groom’s.”

In the dialogue above, the alcalde affirms priestly authority by referring to him as Tayta Amitu, or Father Master. Among evangelicals today, however, Tayta Amitu refers to God. Addressing the priest in this manner indexes the past, and how the priest used to be regarded as a God-like figure. However, in this example, the alcalde’s use of sexual euphemistic language such as “making the bride confess” also demeans religious authority, exposing improper and immoral priestly conduct.

In another scene, all of the alcaldes stand before the priest while he pretends to register their names in a notebook. The priest impatiently demands the names without proper use of Kichwa suffixes that indicate deference, humility, or politeness. He yells, “Let’s see, name!” (K. A ver shutii!) to which one of the alcalde responds in all seriousness, “Juan Tuksilema.” The audience laughed. Juan’s last name combines a common indigenous surname, Lema, and the root of the Kichwa verb tuksina, which means to nail or screw (something). Here the last name is euphemism for the sex act. The next alcalde announces his name as Juan Get-Up-Quickly Get-Down-Slowly (S. Juan Montaligero Bajadespacio).

In the past, white-mestizo civil and ecclesiastical authorities often mistreated indigenous people when they tried to register names for baptism or marriage (see Wogan 2004).256 Elders recall interactions that took place during the hacienda period between them and mestizos as rife with unabashed submission. Playing around with clever sex names in the priest’s presence is a

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256 This is still a problem in the present. An indigenous friend was mistreated by a white female clerk at the Civil Registry in Cajabamba when trying to register her newborn son’s name. The name was rejected and she left. The clerk’s tone was rude and impatient.
way to counter these past dynamics and make the authority figure look silly. In another scene, all five alcaldes kneel before the priest to get their staffs blessed. The priest is standing facing them. A couple of the alcaldes are kneeling in an incorrect manner, with their backs to the priest, ostensibly because they are drunk. The priest begins to hit one of them to get him to turn around.

**Priest:** Turn around! Turn around! Look over here.
¡Vueltari, vueltari! Kay ñawimun, kaymum.

Reluctantly and slowly turning around, the alcalde says,

**Alcalde:** Priest how could you say (look) over here. You’re rude…
*Tayta amitu maytatik kaymun ninkiri, malcriado.*

Capitalizing on the ambiguity of the deictic “here,” as well as the position of the kneeling alcalde’s gaze relative to the standing priest, the alcalde uses reported speech to insinuate that he has been directed to turn around to look at the priest’s penis. As in the first example of the confessing bride, the alcalde affirms priestly authority to an extent; he kneels in subordination and addresses him respectfully as Tayta Amitu. However, sexual innuendo targets the priest, insinuating his sexual inappropriateness, specifically, in making a homosexual overture towards the subordinate alcalde.

The examples above show how sex humor targets priestly authority, casting him in a negative light. Later scenes showcasing the church wedding ceremony continue to show how sex humor de-sacralizes the religious significance of Catholic space and text, including prayers, chants, and wedding vows. In one such scene, the priest and sacristan stand before a make-shift alter. They chant:

**Priest:** Come Christians…Come in for mass….
*Shamuychikkk criiiitianos... Yaykuy misaman...*

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257 The main female characters in the skit are likewise assigned sex names that play around with the Kichwa word for vagina (e.g. Rafilita, Racancela).
Make (it) enter, make (it) leave... make (it) enter.
Yaykuchi, llukshichi... Yaykuchichik...

Sacristan: Make (it) come in then make (it) go out ...
Yaykuchishpa tikra llukshichichik...

Priest: Aameenn [The priest gives the sign of the cross.]

Audience: Aameeeenn

The priest and sacristan adopt Catholic prosody. The phrase chanted, however, euphemizes the
sex act. The Church is compared to a vagina. It is “screwed,” so to speak, by parishioners
entering and exiting the church. Catholic space is undermined through its feminization. Other
religious material symbols are de-sacralized by comparison to animal and male genitalia. Earlier
on in the skit, the priest’s hat is compared to a “bull’s scrotum” and the indigenous staffs are
compared, through innuendo, to male genitalia.

Most of the dialogue in the skit was conducted in Kichwa. In the past, the white-mestizo
priest and sacristan would have spoken Spanish to each other. However, actors are more
concerned with comedic effect than historical accuracy, or speaking exactly as someone might
have back then. Witty word play is a central component of wake humor, which is why actors
speak primarily in Kichwa, or mix Kichwa and Spanish, so that their humor can be easily
understood. One actor who plays the role of priest likes to place sticks between his upper and
lower lips during the skit to mock how the priest would say mass in Latin. In his performance,
unintelligibility is central to the humor as well as the representation of priests as immoral,
insincere, and deceptive.258

258 When mass was conducted in Latin or Spanish, no one understood what the priest was saying. When
evangelical missionaries explained biblical text in Kichwa, elders I spoke with say they realized the priest
was not actually explaining what the Bible said.
“Can I Borrow Your Sweet Little Cow?” Family Proposals, Youth Sexuality, and Gendered Violence

Between the initial alcalde scenes and the final, mock wedding scene, the audience gains a glimpse into family life through the re-enactment of a proposal. In the proposal scene, the groom’s parents visit the bride’s home to speak with her parents and arrange the marriage. Play fighting between the spouses and the in-laws unfold in dramatic fashion.

At the beginning of the scene, the groom and his parents visit the bride’s parents’ house to ask for their daughter’s hand in marriage. The bride’s father is not present, for he has gone to live and work temporarily in Spain, reflecting a common scenario in real life—male migration outside of the community. As pretext for their visit, the groom’s father asks the bride’s mother politely to borrow their “sweet little cow” (K. vaquillawa), euphemistic language that communicates they are actually there to arrange a marriage but do not want to state their intentions directly. Suddenly, the groom’s father turns to his wife, who had not yet spoken in the skit and yells,

**Husband:** Stupid! ... What are you deaf? Say something! What are you stupid? ¡Muuuda!, ¡Upachu kanki imatik!¡Imallatapish rimayari!!! Nikchachu tukunki.

The man then lunges forward to simulate hitting his wife. The mother of the bride tries to defend the groom’s mother by chastising the father of the groom.

Later, the bride’s father comes home from a trip bearing gifts. To his dismay, when he comes back from his trip he finds visitors at his home to ask for his daughter’s hand in marriage. As he comes to discover why they’re there, he chastises his wife and pretends to hit her. His

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259 In all of the proposal scenes I witnessed, the fathers of the bride return from a trip where they are employed outside of the community. In the 2002 wake, the father of the bride was away in Spain and the father of the groom is in Guayaquil. The assumption is that they are making money there to send back to their wives.
violence may be read as a response to his wife’s inability to follow through on her promise to protect their daughter’s virginity in his absence. Prior to his trip, he had warned his wife not to let their daughter “play with anyone,” a euphemism for having sex:

Husband: Make sure the children aren’t playing with anyone. You too! Cuidado con los hijos que estén jugando con alguien, cuidado usted también esté jugando con alguien.

Spousal abuse in the proposal scene indexes the pre-conversion past, when domestic violence was common due to male drinking and anxieties around women’s sexuality. Insulting name-calling and physical violence reinforce male authority, in ways similar to how white-mestizo actors establish authority in the examples featuring the priest, sacristan, and alcalde. Husbands insulted their wives in ways that mirrored the ways in which white-mestizos abused indigenous people. In performances of spousal abuse, however, the husbands do not actually push and shove their wives, but instead mock doing so.

A later dialogue between the father and daughter reveals the bride is pregnant.

Father: How could you marry this teeny-tiny one? Con ese chiquitito, ¿cómo va a casar?

Bride: (It’s, He’s) tiny but super strong! ¡Chiquito pero bien fuerte!

Father: You already tried it out? ¿Ya hiciste la prueba?

Bride: Yeeees! ¡Siiii!

Father: ... Well then what could I possibly say?... ... ya entonces que voy a decir pues...

The father of the bride uses sexual innuendo to belittle the potential groom. “Teeny-tiny one” is euphemism for penis size and “trying it out” for pre-marital sex. When the bride implies she has had sex with the groom, the father is rendered unable to oppose the marriage.
The parents of the bride get so inebriated that they eventually consent to the wedding. When it comes time for the marital vows, the couple kneel before the priest and receive marital advice.

**Alcalde to bride:** Feed (him) well  
*Alli karanki...*

**Priest to groom:** You’ve got to give it (to her) good...  
*Allita kuna kanki...*

You’ve got to grab (her) really really well  
*Allita allita payta hapina kanki*

You have to conquer (her) well, you have to conquer (her, him) well  
*Allita atinana kanki, alli atinana kanki.*

**Sacristan:** Bathe yourself if you want to serve (it)  
*Armakrinki atindisha nikpika...*

The priest, sacristan, and alcalde assume their position of relative authority to the young couple by providing moral instruction to them. However, their advice is misogynist and racist. Serving food in the first and last line is euphemism for giving and receiving sexual pleasure. The comment “feed him well” is directed at the bride and capitalizes on traditional gender roles in cooking, but also indicates her availability for sex (see Weismantel 1988: 28 on cooking in rural Ecuador as a euphemism for sex).

The sacristan’s comment about cleanliness before “serving it” indexes racial ideologies of the past in which white-mestizos considered indigenous peoples “dirty.” It also indexes the sexual abuse of indigenous women on haciendas. According to an elderly informant, racist notions of indigenous hygiene played a role in the raping of women on haciendas. One particular hacienda owner would choose beautiful indigenous woman with whom to fornicate. The alcaldes would be in charge of bathing her outside near the well before handing her over to the hacienda
owner. Actors in the skit frequently appropriated the “dirty Indian” stereotype into jokes regarding sex between indigenous men and women. In the proposal scene, the father tells his daughter over the phone to make sure her mother is bathed before he arrives back home, implying that they will have sex.

Analysis

As the examples provided above show, sex humor, like other forms of joking, is highly ambiguous (see Black 2012). On the one hand, double entendre on the part of the indigenous characters shows skillful wit and turns those with higher social standing—the priest and his sacristan—into the butt of collective laughter (cf. Armstrong-Fumero 2009). Sexual innuendo and euphemism hyper-sexualize the Catholic priest and church to expose and contest power relations between white-mestizo religious authorities and indigenous people. Nonetheless, sex humor also leaves the indigenous alcaldes vulnerable to mockery or reproach, as the priest often responds in kind. For example, as the priest writes down Tuksilema’s name, he enjoys the last laugh. He mocks the alcalde, imitating the sound of a hammer hitting a nail.

**Priest:** Tuksilema! He says toc toc toctoctoc. He’s nailing (something) he says. ¡Tuksileema! Toc toc toctoctoc ninma, tocsikun ninmari

In this case, the priest uses reported speech to capitalize on the sexual connotation of an otherwise innocent uttering, much like “that’s what she said” jokes in English.

Later, when the alcade accuses the priest of making homosexual overtures, the priest immediately pushes the alcalde to the floor. After a bit more verbal banter, in which the alcaldes conduct themselves inappropriately, the priest accuses the alcaldes of being drunk and orders them all to leave, calling them “useless” (K. patsakkuna) and “stupid” (K. muspakuna). Sex humor creates scenarios that reinforce white-mestizo racial stereotypes of indigenous people as drunk, lazy, and stupid.
The actors’ humor is likewise ambiguous when it comes to sex and gender stereotypes. On the one hand, humor and sexual innuendo on the part of the female actors play a role in destabilizing husband or paternal authority, but the mothers and the bride are often charged with improper behavior in the process. Sex talk in the context of the wedding skit is gendered, both in terms of who delivers the jokes and who is the object of the joke. There are more adult male roles than female ones, allotting men more of an opportunity to play around with sexual innuendo. This is especially the case in the scenes featuring all male actors—priest, sacristan, and alcalde—that index masculine sociability, albeit hierarchized along the lines of race and ethnicity.

Even during scenes in which women play more of a role in the dialogue, female actors do not engage in as much sex talk or verbal banter in the skit as male actors do.\textsuperscript{260} For example, in the wake games I saw, the wives did not use double entendre in response to male aggression. The bride’s mother and the groom’s mother each used insulting language against men, but not necessarily sexual, and their verbal defenses were not met with as much laughter as male sexual innuendo and physical humor. In response to male aggression, the wives did not use sexual innuendo. Rather, the bride’s mother asked in direct and serious fashion: “Why do you live with a man like that? That’s not okay.” In response, the mother of the groom recycled part of a well-known saying in Ecuador—“He’s my husband even if he hits or kills” (S. Aunque pegue aunque mate esposo es). She said, “How could I leave my little husband? I am going to (stay) by his side even if he hits me or kills me.”

Furthermore, verbal play among male actors to destabilize white-mestizo authority often comes at the expense of indigenous women. Sex humor de-legitimates priest authority or inverts mestizo-indigenous relationships at least to a certain extent, but in ways that represent women in

\textsuperscript{260} I was the only actress in the skit that used sexual innuendo.
a negative light, or assigns responsibility or fault to female victims or young women. In the jokes, women are objects of the male gaze, the vagina named and penetrated, the sinners confessing, and the “animal” exchanged in marriage. Female actors do not retaliate in kind. Women were mostly configured as the targets, not the instigators of both sex and sex talk within the drama. The phrase “making a bride confess,” taken at face value, is damaging to the representation of women. It suggests that the female victim is to blame, for she is the one confessing. The playboy priest, on the other hand, is treated with awe on the part of the alcalde, whose tone when calling him a ladies’ man is more admiration than admonishment.

In so far as sex humor is a way to contest or invert relationships of authority and domination, women are not given this opportunity in the same way in the context of the wake skit. In short, sex humor does not appear to destabilize (past) gendered power dynamics quite as effectively as ethnic/racial/religious trauma, such as in the case of the alcaldes vis-a-vis the priest.

PART THREE: WAKE GAMES AND EVANGELICAL SUBJECTIVITY

During the first house wake that I attended, one of the acts involved the “priest” traveling by horseback to the home of a man on his deathbed who was complaining of a “burning penis.” The priest mounted a fellow actor, who was on all fours pretending to be a horse. Suddenly, the horse buckled and the priest, a tall, heavy-set man, crashed dramatically to the ground, his “vestments” dirtied and ruffled. The audience erupted in laughter. Watching wake games for the first time, I felt as if my understanding up until that point of Kichwa evangelicals had buckled just like that horse. Like the actor playing the priest, I was caught off guard, momentarily disoriented. I chuckled along with everyone else.
Reflecting on wake games during my fieldwork always brought up conflicting emotions: a sense of excitement over the novelty of it was always met with an overwhelming feeling that I actually did not understand much about the people I knew in all of their seriousness, piety, and moral righteousness. My informants always abided by a strict ascetic code of ethics in their daily lives and worship activities. They strived to be sincere and transparent in their speech and interactions and to interpret text in literal fashion and avoid “copying the world.” At wake games, however, indigenous evangelicals are at liberty to talk and act in ways that would otherwise call their evangelical identity into question. In fact, the better evangelicals performed moral impropriety at the house wake, the more highly valued their performance was. One question kept coming up: What effects do wake weddings have on evangelical subjectivity in a post-conversion context?

During wakes, mimicry, no matter how crass, does not call one’s evangelical identification in question. The ludic frame of wakes provides a space in which to experience—and talk about—“carnal” pleasures such as dancing, drinking, violence, and sex. Parody and involves repetition and mimicry but with “critical difference” (Drewal 1992). This critical difference reinforces social-temporal difference, as if to say: “This is how we were, but we’re not like this anymore” or “I didn’t really say that, the character I’m playing did.” Sexual innuendo and euphemism deflect responsibility off of individual speakers and on to their interlocutors, who interpret a given utterance in sexual and figurative ways. That wake jokes are often co-constructed, both in the sense of actors being fed funny one-liners and in the sense of needing an interlocutor for successful delivery and rebuttal, further diminishes individual responsibility for otherwise offensive speech.

261 For indigenous Evangelicals “the world” includes anything related to Catholic identification and practice, as Catholics are not considered Christians but secular non-believers.
The past temporal frame of wake skits works in similar fashion. Actors do not have to assume intentionality or responsibility for behaviors and speech because they are supposedly performances of some past character or situation. One time I watched a videotape of wake games with the deceased’s middle-aged adult son. He explained that “stealing women” used to happen among the elders in past times before “people realized, the gospel entered, and people started to go to high school.” Wake game parody in the contemporary post-conversion period supports evangelical narratives about the traumatic and abusive past by painting white-mestizo religious authorities and indigenous husbands in a negative light. That actors only pretend to drink alcohol or mock hitting one’s wife means that the parameters of evangelical morality continue to play a role in wake performances.

**Temporal Slippages and Ghostly Matters**

Maintaining the past temporal frame is crucial to the house wake’s intended meaning of parody and humor. However, actors in the marriage proposal scene often breached temporal and contextual cues by referencing anachronistic objects. During one wake wedding I attended, for example, the soon-to-be bride asked her father, who was leaving to go on a trip, to bring back a cell phone. At Anita’s wake, the father of the bride returned from Spain donning sunglasses and carrying a portable stereo. He began handing out the various gifts he had purchased for his family members. Out of his bag of gifts he pulled out a boom box radio, which he declared to be a computer.  

Furthermore, in each of the wakes I saw, the parents bragged about their child to argue he or she was better than the potential marital partner. Actors made reference to levels of education that indigenous youth would not have had access to in the hacienda-era past. In one wake

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262 By contrast, in the 2002 wake wedding I viewed on videotape, the groom’s father makes an effort to mimic phones of the past by using two plastic cups.
wedding, the mothers went back and forth for a while, trying to one up the other. The groom’s mother said, “My son is an engineer.” The bride’s mother responded, “well my daughter is a doctor.” Furthermore, jokes brought up contemporary generational gaps that may not have been the case in pre-agrarian reform Chimborazo such as the idea that youth are lazy and not involved in agricultural labor. In one wake wedding I viewed on tape, the groom’s father returned from a temporary stay in Guayaquil. He asked, “Son, do you know how to plow already?” The groom said, “Of course not. I spend all day at home.”

I also noted that humor in the proposal scene capitalized on aspects of actors’ and actresses’ actual personalities and physical appearance. This further broke down a strict temporal barrier between (past) role and (present) actor. For example, the young woman who played a bride in one wake wedding rarely wears indigenous dress. Actors in the skit made numerous comments about her not wanting to put on the traditional indigenous skirt. Jokes about her being a “patrona, señorita, mestiza” subtly addressed perceptions of her as well as other youth in the present as not embracing indigeneity and as considering themselves superior to others due to higher level of education. (She was a college student on scholarship at a prestigious university at the time). Likewise, as the bride, my mother in the skit boosted about me having grown up in the United States and speaking English. In one wake wedding, the priest capitalized on the actress playing the bride’s heavy-set stature to call her a “big mama.” The jokes are funny not just because they index the past, but because they ring true for the actors playing that particular role, as well as for youth subjectivity in general today.

Actors also made references, perhaps inadvertently, to their identifications as evangelicals. The groom’s father in one skit made the mistake of calling the bride’s mother “pani,” the Kichwa word for evangelical sister of faith. During another wake, the bride’s mother,
when offered a drink by the groom’s parents rejected it, saying: “Why have you brought that bottle? I’m evangelical.”

Many aspects of the proposal scenes dramatized are funny precisely because people recognize themselves in the situations and characters being mocked. I watched one wedding wake skit on VHS along with the deceased’s adult son and nephew and their wives. The video prompted hours of storytelling about their own proposals. The marriage proposal is one wedding custom that evangelicals continue to practice. Parents are still heavily involved in arranging the marriages of their children to suitable partners. Engagements can be contentious for various reasons, such as when an evangelical wishes to marry a Catholic, or when a bride is already pregnant. Weddings and proposals make for good drama because they often involve some element of secrecy (courting behind the parents’ back), scandal (pre-marital sex and pregnancy), and opposition (particularly on the part of the bride’s mother because she never considers the groom to be good enough and often expresses great emotion at the thought of marrying her daughter off).

Contemporary Colteño life almost imitates the wake game art. When I accompanied the groom’s family to Guayaquil for a marriage proposal, I was told I would surely witness someone in the groom’s party give the pretext of asking to “borrow their little cow.” I was also convinced the marriage proposal would end up in a brawl, as I had seen in wake games. Although there was no physical violence to speak of, the mood at the bride’s house was strained. The groom’s father and the church deacon handled their request carefully and politely. The bride’s mother expressed sadness at the prospect of letting go of her daughter, just like in the skits. Playing the bride, my mother in the wedding skit cried and hugged me. This kind of mourning for the loss of a
daughter to marriage is typical in systems of unilineal descent and patrilocal residence in which women sever relations with their natal lineage.

Slippages in the keying of context that blur boundaries between the past and present, and between self and other, open the wedding skit up to alternative interpretations. These slippages create an interpretive space in which “ghostly matters” (Gordon 1997), or unresolved issues of the pre-conversion past, can be subtly unburied, addressed and resolved in the idiom of Catholicism. The wake wedding skit casts particular light on issues of concern to the evangelical community today in light of reproducing religious subjectivity across generations; these include: lifecycle transitions, gendered and age power relations, parental authority, youth sexual morality, freedom, and regulation, and spousal abuse.

In short, wake games further show that the “ghostly matters” (Gordon 1997), or supposedly over-and-done-with aspects of pre-conversion social and familial life continue to haunt post-convert generations in the largely evangelical and indigenous province of Chimborazo, Ecuador. In blurring the boundaries between past and present, the wedding wake skit and its display of female sexuality and licentiousness, domestic violence, male drunkenness, and abuse of power by religious authorities, becomes a kind of euphemism\textsuperscript{263} for today’s “open secrets” (see Chapter 4). As this dissertation describes in depth, evangelicals are afraid that younger generations are returning to the sinful ways of before. There are emerging concerns about the place of young female sexuality within the church context, as girls are beginning to perform liturgical dance. Secrets circulate around indiscretions in believers’ private lives—namely spousal abuse, adultery, and premarital sex and pregnancy. Indeed, the evangelical actress playing the bride’s mother in one wake skit was beaten in her marriage and is now

\textsuperscript{263} I owe this idea of wake games as a kind of euphemism to members of my dissertation writing group, Monica Santos and Kate Grim-Feinberg.
divorced. Rumors circulate that she is sleeping with one of the married community leaders. Furthermore, there is tremendous controversy over the Kichwa evangelical church beginning to adopt old status markers of the Catholic religion in efforts to restructure the evangelical church.

**Social Effects of the Wedding Skit**

Proposals and weddings bring up familial tensions in dramatic fashion. In one wake wedding I attended, the tensions between the two families escalated into a brawl. However, the last act of the wake wedding resolves any tensions brought up during the skit. It consists of a scene in which the newly married couple, their parents and godparents, the alcaldes, and the priest all join the musicians dancing in a circle, merry and drunk. Through (mock) drinking and dancing, the wedding becomes a space of reconciliation and strengthening social ties.

Wedding skits have social effects beyond the performance itself. As an actress, I realized that the marriage and fellowship enacted in the skit affected the relationships of those present. Within minutes of the skit ending, Sisapamba residents whom I had never spoken with started engaging with me directly, laughing and smiling and calling me “bride.” They wanted me to come back the following night and play the bride again. Their new affection for me went on for months. Walking around town I would suddenly hear someone yell “bride” and start laughing. My role as bride provided a lasting, albeit slight, “in” with Sisapambans, one that I had been unable to achieve prior to the wake. The skit also helped facilitate a relationship with the woman who played my mother in the skit, a San Mateo resident who was somewhat ostracized from the church and community.

My initial understanding of the wake skits was that they caricatured Catholics and deflected sexual licentiousness and racial ideologies of indigenous people as dirty, drunk, and stupid onto Catholics, thus reinforcing the continued saliency of evangelical identification,
historicity, and difference (vis-a-vis Catholics) in the present. As Hoenes (2011:608) points out in his research, the ways in which mainstream Catholics in Guatemala mock the bodily postures of Charismatic Catholics show how “bodily postures function as icons of difference.” As I pressed my evangelical informants on this interpretation, however, they resisted. Otherwise very direct about the ways in which they frowned upon Catholic practices and lifeways, they did not see the goal of wake games as making fun of Catholics, and their intention was not to be offensive to their Catholic counterparts.

Likewise, indigenous Catholics today do not take offense at the skits—quite the contrary. Studies of priest parody in Catholic indigenous Ecuador indicate that the use of mimicry, humor, and play to respond critically to Catholic orthodoxy and authority figures is not a uniquely post-conversion or evangelical form of critical social commentary. The reader will recall that the Anita, as well as several of her living family members and the actors in the skit identify as Catholic. Anita’s son told me in an interview that as a Catholic he is not offended by priest parody during wakes. “It’s not a joke,” he told me in Spanish. “It’s just (a way) to make the bereaved, the deceased family members feel good. It doesn’t intend to offend anyone. Even a priest could be present and he wouldn’t feel offended because it’s a game. It’s about creating a happy atmosphere.” Anita’s Catholic son was not even offended by the fact that evangelicals held a worship service at the house prior to the wake games. He took it as their way of showing their appreciation for his mother, who had donated money to works conducted by the evangelical church in Sisapamba even though she was Catholic.

The dramatic changes in Colta over the past fifty years or so have not just influenced evangelicals, but also the practices and discourses of Sisapamba’s handful of remaining Catholics. Thus, wake games also index the past for contemporary Catholics. Catholicism is no
longer practiced as it was in the hacienda era; Catholic festivals are virtually obsolete in the area. Many Catholics, influenced by evangelical emphasis on education, have pursued high school and university education, becoming professionals rather than farmers and moving out of the countryside. Anita’s son, now 49 years old, studied in Colta’s local missionary school even though he was Catholic. He took Bible classes every day, and went on to become an accountant.

Some Catholics even adopt staples of evangelical discourse to describe their religion and social change within their community. Anita’s son described his mother’s devotion to saints as a belief in “images,” a word I often heard used by evangelicals to disparage saint devotion among Catholics. Anita’s son was quick to point out that all the fiestas of the past “wasted money” and that excessive drinking caused problems: “I say that era was sad because they drank (a lot) and because of alcohol there were problems ... alcohol does nobody any good ... my parents fought (under the influence of) alcohol ... that’s why I say (that time was) a little sad. That was the way they practiced their religion.”

In addition to offering a temporary ecumenical space, wake skits also mitigate intercommunity tensions. In a conversation about the fights and resentments that lead San Mateo to separate from Sisapamba in the early 2000s, Daniel told me this: “When a person dies there can’t be division there. Rather, there’s union and solidarity.” Wakes resolve, if only temporarily, social tensions among San Mateo and Sisapamba residents. At Anita’s wake, several members of San Mateo were present at the wake and invited to participating in the skits. I accompanied Marta and her children to Anita’s wake, and saw how they were included in the performances. On the second evening of wake skits, Marta was invited to play a role in the harvest skit; she had never acted in the skit before, and members of Sisapamba talked her through it in a collegial

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264 Anita attended church in Cajabamba every Sunday. Every year she would leave offerings at the “Santo Cristo” in Cajabamba or the Señor del Buen Viaje” in appreciation for his protection, come back to the community and share food and libations.
spirit. From what I could tell, wake games are far more effective in mending fissures among community members than any church practice of Christian reconciliation.

**CONCLUSION**

In reconciling social tensions among the living, wake skits settle the dead. By combining historical memory and humor, wake skits also (attempt to) put to rest the ghostly “pasts in the present” that challenge the reproduction of evangelical identification across generations. As this dissertation has shown, however, the “sad life” cannot be put to rest for evangelicals. Remembering, embodying, re-framing, and experiencing it is essential to the project of re-generating Christianity for future generations. It is no wonder, then, that the “sad life” comes dramatically and unabashedly back to life in the immediate aftermath of one’s death.
CHAPTER EIGHT,
CONCLUSION

Death is a fitting way to end this dissertation. The Colta evangelicals I worked with frequently talk (and sing) about death, and much of how they’ve chosen to live the “good life” is motivated by their preoccupation with being saved and getting to heaven. Evangelicals in Colta worry about an impending collective death. Members of today’s first generational cohort of converts, the most religiously committed, are aging and passing on. Some fear the reasons for being evangelical in the first place will die along with them. Youth, for their part, appear to be disenchanted with the religion. Given the collective nature of the movement, anxieties about youth become collectively assumed.

On the other hand, I could just as well have begun the dissertation talking about death. It is the occasion of death—the corpse as audience during her own house wake—that brings the “sad life” past most raucously to life for indigenous believers, and allows this past to be transmitted intergenerationally. In regenerating Christianity, the lines between death and new beginnings, sorrow and laughter, disappointment and hope, the break and the bridge are thoroughly unsettled. The various social tensions involved in religious memory and change after a period of mass conversion cannot be understood in terms of rupture only.

In *Death and the Regeneration of Life*, Block and Parry (1982) examine the symbols of fertility and rebirth in funeral rituals. Funerary practices, they argue, control death and its unpredictability and finality by *reviving* resources that are “culturally conceived to be most essential to the reproduction of the social order” (Block and Parry 1982:7). Death in this way becomes social rebirth or regeneration. In the context of their analysis, Block and Parry write, “The ‘good’ regenerative death can only be constructed in antithesis to an image of ‘bad’ death, which it therefore implies. It requires and must even emphasise what it denies, and cannot
obliterate that on which it feeds” (Block and Parry 1982:18). Taking up some of Block and Parry’s language, indigenous evangelicals “cannot obliterate that on which [they] feed.” Rather than threaten or spell the inevitable demise of Kichwa Christianity, I see generational and gendered transgressions as imbuing this inherited religion with renewed vitality and relevance, enabling many of its central tenets and dialectics (e.g. past/present, sad life/good life, material/spiritual) to be collectively re-lived and re-worked in a post-conversion era.

The multigenerational analysis of indigenous Christianity in Ecuador that I offer in this dissertation goes “beyond conversion” to show that the promises and benefits of initial conversion had uneven and fractal effects across time, and were generative of new social tensions and challenges among indigenous evangelicals. To this end, this dissertation has focused on two intersecting lines of analysis: generation and gender.

The first of these concerns addresses generational changes in indigenous evangelical experiences. My dissertation engages closely with the second- and third- generations of evangelical Christians in Colta, Chimborazo, the birthplace of Ecuador’s indigenous evangelical movement. Born and raised in evangelical households, members of these post-conversion generations have come to question key tenets of their parents’ and grandparents’ evangelical identity. This process has engendered a number of productive breaking points, with younger generations staking multiple and competing claims on what it means to be Christian, modern, indigenous, and a gendered subject of the church. I have analyzed the questioning, critique, open secrets, apostasy, re-conversion, and new liturgical practices of younger generations. I have also examined these dynamics in relationship specifically to San Mateo and its break away from its parent community, Sisapamba, in the early 2000s.

Rather than unbridled “breaks,” however, I see these generational fissures in part as effects
of the ways in which Evangelical conversion’s transformative promises have been carried over
time in uneven ways. Education and upward social mobility are some of the main promises of
evangelical mass conversion. Not all benefitted equally from access to urban education,
however. The male children and grandchildren of early converts (who had close ties to
missionaries and took advantage of agrarian reform opportunities) are, as highly educated adults,
uniquely positioned to wage critique in generational terms, and they do this, ironically, by taking
up the same dialectics their elders used to justify conversion to position themselves as “modern”
compared to their own parents and grandparents. At the same time, younger evangelicals
continue to value collective evangelical Christian identity; they articulate new modes of
Christian personhood and agency with and within the local structures of family, church, and
community. They look upon the initial conversion past with a sense of nostalgia and treat their
elders’ fervent religiosity with awe.

A related line of analysis in this dissertation concerns the specific experiences of women in
relationship to marital and church power relations and generational changes. Dominant narratives
of religious modernity in Colta stress the ways in which conversion “liberated” women from
domestic violence and improved their social status. I have shown that evangelical conversion is
not the panacea for women or families it is touted to be in local narratives and in the scholarly
literature. First, because girls have not had the same access to educational opportunities as boys,
even amongst evangelicals, and this leads to tensions in marriages. Secondly, the Kichwa Church
and its gender and sexual ideologies contribute to evangelical women’s enduring abuse and
oppression.

Nonetheless, this dissertation addresses two ways in which the “further and unexpected
delimitation” (cf. Butler 1997) of evangelical patriarchy (cf. Robbins 2004) can be analyzed in
the case of Kichwa Christianity. First, reflections on gender figure prominently in the second-generation holistic challenge from within evangelical Christianity, making way for the emergence of local-alternative Christian feminisms that merge disparate influences—Christian, Western-liberal Feminist ideologies of equality, and Andean principles. Secondly, young evangelical women are adopting new globalized, charismatic styles of worship including Andean liturgical dance in spite of the disapproval of older, conservative male authorities. In both of these cases, evangelical women strategically monitor their new perspectives and practices in accordance with the conservative religious values they inherited as female subjects of the church.

Combining both generational and gendered foci, this dissertation returns repeatedly to the life cycle ritual of weddings and marriages: from the changing marriage ideologies that evangelical conversion brought about in the initial period, to the fallout of those promises as experienced by second-generation women in their marriages, to the role of marriage in enticing disaffected male youth back to the church, to the anxieties around unmarried young women’s sexuality in the debates around liturgical dance, to the dramatic and humorous re-enactments of Catholic weddings in evangelical mortuary rituals. In highlighting the interplay of reproduction and change, the constitution and dissolution of social relations, compromise and conflict amongst families (Klassen 1998), and matters of life and death, weddings and marriages (and corresponding gendered and aged dynamics) have proven critical to understanding contested process of evangelical regeneration.

Although some anthropologists approach religion in terms of power negotiations and relations (e.g. Asad 1993) and others more squarely on the level of meaning, ritual, and aesthetics (e.g. Geertz 1973), this dissertation has tried to bridge these two approaches in the anthropology of religion by examining indigenous evangelical linguistic practices in conjunction
with other semiotic/cultural performance (and performative) spaces less analyzed in the
literature. Extending methodology beyond a sole focus on the social effects of talk has proven
especially important in understanding women’s and youth religious subjectivities, since women
and youth alike tend to participate most actively in the context of collaborative musical
performance and less in individual speaking roles (e.g. preaching). Youth “politics of style” in
male music bands and female liturgical dance troupes warrant scholarly consideration.

By bringing generational and gendered tensions in post-conversion religious communities
to the fore, this dissertation builds on emerging literature in the anthropology of Christianity to
challenge assumptions about Christian rupture, conversion, modernity, and personhood as
individualist in the aftermath of conversion. My cross-generational approach highlights the open-
ended, non-linear, un-even, and collective—yet highly contested—process of reproduction- or
regenerating- evangelical Christianity across time. Looking at this process of post-conversion
religious change offers insights into related social processes in the Andes and beyond. Scholars
interested in understanding the persistence of gendered violence and oppression, the emergence
of alternative feminisms, the critical role of youth in social change, the internal fissures of ethnic
movements, and the pull of “good life” aspirations and corresponding disappointments in the
context of economic precarity (cf. Berlant 2011) will, I hope, find resonances with their own
work.

While this dissertation covers much ground, it has also raised issues that warrant future
research. In particular, taking up threads I introduce in Chapters 5 and 6, future research could
contribute to the burgeoning literature on the “media turn” in religious studies (e.g. Engelke
2010; Klassen and Lofton 2003; Lovheim 2013) by historicizing and documenting
ethnographically more fully the shifting forms, uses, and effects of “modern media” among
indigenous evangelicals (Andrade 2007). Future research could document more centrally the relationship between the Kichwa Church and nearby urban Pentecostal churches, as well as the growing circulation and embodiment of neo-Pentecostal and charismatic ideologies among subjects of the Kichwa Church. Specifically, future work could examine more fully the origins of the Andean liturgical dance phenomenon in Chimborazo. Furthermore, future research could examine diasporic Kichwa evangelical communities beyond Ecuador (Andrade 2004), particularly the dynamics of generations, historical memory, and gender in ethnic churches in the United States.

By way of conclusion, allow me to return to where I began this dissertation—with Pastor Samuel Charco’s train tracks metaphor. As the guiding metaphor for elderly conceptualizations of religious modernity, train tracks point to the ways in which indigenous evangelicals aspire to spiritual, material, and political progress. Despite the linearity of the image of train tracks, however, I show in this dissertation that evangelical subjectivity across the life course and across generations is anything but straightforward. Indigenous evangelicals, in taking up certain generational positionings, draw from contemporary influences to push the Kichwa Church in new directions while also recuperating, rehistoricizing, and reconverting tropes and practices of their pre- and initial-conversion collective pasts. Some younger evangelicals have gotten “off track.” Others have gotten back on again and influenced the course of the train in the process. Riding this intergenerational train to heaven, so to speak, does not mean disappearing off into the individualist/modernist sunset exactly along tracks already envisioned. As I see it, regenerating Christianity entails continually grappling with the religion and its transformative promises in the here-and-now in terms of internal familial, community, and church ties—along tracks that just may, in the end, lead right back home.
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APPENDIX

Ana’s Prayer

Thank you father God. You love us father God.
_Tayta amito yayay dios diosolopaki kuyay tayta amito._

It’s true before our life was sad.
_Cierto ñukanchik ñawpaka llaki llaki kawsaymi karka._

Lord because you have chosen us and you have found us we have attained a good life.
_Señorlla akllashkamanta kan mashkashkamanta ñukanchik sumak kawsayta kapishkamanta yaya._

Thank you God. Thank you lord. Thank you father God for [giving us] our good life father.
_Ñukanchik sumak kawsayta kapishkamanta yaya paki dios paki señor paki tayta amito._

Lord father God you have selected me, you have found me, I used to suffer lord.
_Señor kan tayta diosmi akllawashkanki mashkawashkanki llakipi kawsakukta llakipi purikukta señorilla._

Thank you lord for our niece and our sister Katie for coming.
_Paki papito nukunchik kay ñuka sobrina y ñukanchik hermanita kay Katie shamushkamanta._

Lord thank you we say. I thank you loving father God.
_Señor kan ninchik agradesini kuyak tayta dios._

Anything and everything, may it please you.
_Tukuy imapish kampak munay kachun._

May it not be our desires, may it not be our thoughts lord.
_Ama ñukunchik munashka ama ñukunchik yuyashka kachun señor._

It’s true that we used to live a life of suffering father.
_Ciertomi ñawpaka llaki kawsaypimi kawsak kanchik yayito._

Because you have selected us, because you found us we have a good life.
_Kan akllashkamanta kan mashkashkamantama ñukanchikka sumak kawsayta charinchik._

We live well father God with our children, also with lord Jesus.
_Alajata kawsanchik yayay Dios wawakunawampish señor Jesus._

Lord before when my father and mother would drink we lived a sad life.
_Yayito ñawpaka llakilla ñuka mamita ñuka taytito chasna upyk kakpika._
When we were children, when we were babies, we suffered when our parents would drink and get drunk lord.

_Wamra urapi wawa urapi kuyayllatami ňukunchikka purik kanchik mama taytakuna machaska upiashka purikipika señor._

That’s why you have selected us, you have found us.

_Chaymantami akllawashkanki mashkawashkunki ňukunchiktaka._

I say thank you father.

_Paki nishpami agradisishpa yayito._

Now [we are] here to give a kind of testimony about how we used to live when we were children, when we were babies.

_Kunan kaypi shuk testiomoniota shina parlankapak ňukunchik ima shina ňawpa wamra ura wawa vida kawsashkata purishkata._

I say thank you and I thank you, so shall it be in your name.

_Paki nishpa agradesini kanpak shutipi chasna kachun._