

MISSIONAL SUBJECTIVITY: NEOLIBERAL HUMAN CAPITAL AND  
CHRISTIAN CAMPUS MINISTRIES

by

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## ABSTRACT

LENNIN CARO. Missional subjectivity: Neoliberal Human Capital and Christian Campus Ministries (Under the direction of DR. GREGORY STARRETT)

Since 2000, the anthropology of Christianity significantly grew in the scholarly literature. However, there remains this odd gap in examining Christians and their activities in college campuses. This paper attempts to fill this gap by doing ethnographic research on Christian campus ministries in a public university in the South. I argue that the ministries' leadership appropriate the neoliberal concept of "human capital" in their discourse and seeks to instill in college students what I call a "missional subjectivity," which is a self that believes it is their personal individual responsibility to produce disciples for Christ to help fulfill the Great Commission and proliferate the world with the Gospel. These campus ministries also provide students with several tracts, brochures, websites, phone applications, and books that I analyze as "technologies of the self" to modify students into more "effective and efficient" disciple-makers by improving their evangelism and discipleship skills.

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## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to Guillermo “Papito” Caro, my grandfather, who passed away during the writing of this thesis.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### The Anthropology of Christianity

The anthropology of Christianity is a relatively new subdiscipline. By this, I do not mean that Christianity is an unfamiliar object of study. After all, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim both examined Christianity as early as the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, a coherent forum for the examination of Christianity as an anthropological object of study did not start to formally develop until after the turn of the millennium (Garriott and O’Neill 2008; Robbins 2003).

In 2003, anthropologist Joel Robbins argued that, unlike the anthropology of Islam, an anthropology of Christianity has not yet developed “for itself.” He wished for a “kind of scholarly community—one in which people working in different geographic areas publish in the same fora, read one another’s work, recognize the relevance of that work for their own projects, and seek to develop a set of shared questions to be examined comparatively” (Robbins 2003, 192). Since 2003, we do find anthropologists studying Christianity around Indonesia (Keane 2006), Africa (Engelke 2004; Meyer 2007; Newell 2007), Papua New Guinea (Robbins 2004), and Guatemala (Hoenes del Pinal 2011; O’Neill 2009; 2015). We also find anthropologists studying Christians in the United States (Luhmann 2012; Bielo 2011; Harding 2001; Elisha 2008; Hackworth 2010).

Inspired by Talal Asad, William Garriott and Kevin O’Neill say that if anthropologists want to make an anthropology of Christianity, then they should approach it as a tradition,

*Rather than debate Christianity's 'cultural content' – Is Christianity essentially other-worldly? Is Christianity essentially individualistic? Is Christianity essentially a-political? – anthropologists should turn their eye towards the kinds of problems Christian communities themselves seem to be preoccupied with. This would allow for the exploration of patterns of problematization in cross-cultural perspective, while also keeping the project rigorously ethnographic (2008, 388).*

In other words, anthropologists should focus on the concerns and debates within Christian communities in relation to their faith. This approach can reveal the power relations among Christians, the production of legitimate knowledge, and ideas of the self among these Christian groups.

However, as much as the anthropology of Christianity has grown over the years, the anthropological study of Christians within college campuses is under-researched. While scholars in other disciplines did approach this, it is usually in relation to challenging secularization theory (Cherry, DeBerg, Porterfield 2000; Dick 2008; Schmalzbauer 2013) or student development and experience (Bryant 2008; Magolda and Ebben 2006; Moran 2007). These studies do not examine Christianity in relation to the comparative project that anthropologists of Christianity strive for. If we are to truly pursue studying Christianity cross-culturally, then I argue that the Christian communities within our familiar spaces should not be ignored. This thesis attempts to contribute to this comparative project by providing an ethnographic analysis of three Evangelical campus ministries operating in an American public university in the South.

I argue that the leadership among Evangelical campus ministries at UNCC appropriate the neoliberal concept of “human capital” to create new tactics and strategies to realize the Great Commission and make disciples of all peoples around the world. Just as neoliberalism transforms people into individualized subjects that are personally

responsible to invest in their own human capital to generate an adequate income (Foucault and Senellart 2008; Read 2009; Gershon 2011), campus ministries aim to instill in college students what I call a “missional subjectivity,” which reconfigures disciple-making as a learnable skill and compels Christians that it is their personal responsibility to partake in it. These campus ministries provide students with various tracts, documents, training programs, websites, and other resources, which I analyze as “technologies of the self” (Foucault 1988) for students to fashion themselves into more “efficient and effective” disciple-makers.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Christianity and Neoliberalism

Recently, there have been a number of studies examining how Christianity interacts with neoliberalism (Meyer 2007; Newell 2007; Comaroff 2009; Elisha 2008; Hackworth 2008). Neoliberalism's diffusion, especially throughout the Global South, continues to bring material change to the political economy, including privatization, financial capitalism, and growing class disparities. As Jean Comaroff argues, Christianity's "developments are not merely endorsements or 'reflections' of free-market forms: they are reciprocally entailed with economic forces in the thoroughgoing structural reorganization" (2009, 32). It is not a simple cause-and-effect phenomenon. It is not a case of the neoliberal economic base determining the religious superstructure. It also does not fit Weber's model of Protestant asceticism preceding a late-capitalism. It is a complex imbrication of ideologies that people can alter and bring together as they make sense of the world.

In the Ivory Coast, Newell (2007) argues that neoliberal ideas of agency and individualism and its tension with kinship obligations penetrate witchcraft discourse among Pentecostals. In effect, "Pentecostal churches become one more arena for discussing the social tensions of capitalism" as neoliberalism diffuses through the region (Newell 2007, 487). In Ghana, Birgit Meyer observes how Pentecostal-Charismatics appropriate neoliberalism by "seizing the consumerist possibilities and media technologies offered by neo-liberal capitalism" (2007, 21). While the accumulation of wealth usually brought suspicion of witchcraft for selfish individualist ends, wealth and

consumption among Pentecostals becomes “a religiously legitimated practice” and an expression for God’s promise for material prosperity (Meyer 2007, 17). In the United States, Omri Elisha (2008) and Jason Hackworth (2010) note how Evangelicals politically align themselves with the conservative right and often support neoliberal policies like privatization and the elimination of the welfare state. Elisha demonstrates how the Protestant imperative for compassion toward the poor often tangles and conflicts with these ideals of accountability and personal responsibility associated with neoliberalism (2008, 183).

Similarly, my analysis of campus ministries also finds this resonance between neoliberalism and Christianity. However, while scholars like Comaroff (2009) and Newell (2007) emphasize this imbrication with consumption, I find that both systems of thought connect around the idea of production. This thesis focuses on how the leadership of these ministries moralize the production of disciples as an individual responsibility for every Christian; this resonates with ideals of neoliberal human capital.

## Neoliberalism

As an economic philosophy, neoliberalism first developed from networks of economists in France, Germany, and the United States during the early twentieth century (Foucault and Senellart 2008, Ganti 2011). “The aim of these intellectuals,” says Ganti “was to oppose what they saw as a rising tide of collectivism, state-centered planning, and socialism” (2014, 91). Early neoliberal scholars like Austrian economist Friedrich August von Hayek argued that fascist regimes like Nazi Germany and Mussolini’s Italy were a result of centralized economic planning (2005, 40). In his influential text, *The*

*Road to Serfdom*, Hayek calls for a modified return to classical liberal principles like private property and free enterprise (2005).

Both neoliberalism and classical liberalism share the idea that the market is a “more efficient mechanism” than the state to meet needs/wants and to ensure human wellness (Ganti 2014, 92). However, unlike classical liberalism, neoliberalism does not believe that markets arise naturally; they need to be forged (Gershon 2011). Hayek argues that the role of the state is to enact the right amount of laws and policies that create competitive markets (Hayek 2005, 45). The state must also be sensitive and responsive to changes in the market and adjust the legal system accordingly to maintain their effectiveness. Neoliberalism is not at all about the elimination of the state, but the constant adjustment for the right amount of state intervention to maintain the free market, which will ensure the welfare of the population.

Throughout the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, neoliberalism was a philosophical alternative to the then dominant Keynesian economics. However, neoliberalism became mainstream during the 1980s once political figures like Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher popularized neoliberal agendas like de-unionization and privatization (Harvey 2005). Prominent scholars like David Harvey (2005; 2011) identify neoliberalism as the current hegemonic political-economic ideology. He argues that neoliberalism is now “the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world” (Harvey 2005, 3). Indeed, neoliberalism is often described as an insidious capitalism; it is the sinister social force that intensifies economic inequality (Franz 2017; Ortner 2016), the dispensability of laborers (Ho 2009), and environmental destruction (Harvey 2011). In such studies, neoliberalism appears to be this thing that sits above and pulls the strings of

societies in favor of the rich and devastating the poor.

However, anthropologists like Ong (2007), Hoffman, DeHart, and Collier (2006), Ganti (2014), and Ferguson (2009) criticize this approach to neoliberalism as a totalizing top-down hegemonic class project. Ganti doubts the usefulness of neoliberalism as an analytical category if it “explains and describes all contemporary socio-political-economic-cultural phenomena” (2014, 90). Similarly, Ferguson argues “to say that all our problems are caused by ‘neoliberalism’ is really not to say much” (2009, 171).

Instead, Hoffman, DeHart, and Collier propose to create an “anthropology of neoliberalism...in which the very definition of neoliberalism is put in question and made an object of investigation” (2006, 9). Instead of examining it as a totalizing ideology, they propose to trace the diffusion of “specific elements associated with neoliberalism—policies, forms of enterprising subjectivity, economic or political-economic theories, norms of accountability, transparency and efficiency, and mechanisms of quantification or calculative choice—to examine the actual configurations in which they are found” (Hoffman, DeHart, and Collier 2006, 10). Similarly, Ong proposes to study neoliberalism “not as a fixed set of attributes with predetermined outcomes, but as a logic of governing that migrates and is selectively taken up in diverse political contexts” (2007, 3). In this perspective, neoliberalism becomes something manipulatable and appropriable by actors with the possibility of producing unexpected results.

My analysis of these campus ministries begins from this theoretical perspective. I adopt Ong’s view that neoliberalism is a “migratory set of practices” and that we should “take into account how its flows articulate diverse situations” (2007, 4). In this case, I examine how neoliberalism interacts with the Christian evangelical campus organizations

in a public university setting.

### Neoliberal Human Capital

In *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault examined neoliberal governmentality in 1979. During these lectures, Foucault analyzed the idea of “human capital” as discussed by neoliberal scholars like Gary Becker and Theodore Schultz. They approach the study of economics as “the science of human behavior as a relationship between ends and scarce means” (Foucault and Senellart 2008, 222). Thus, neoliberals like Becker are more interested in studying the “rationality” of individual activities, of why an individual chooses one action over alternative actions. This rationality is based on the individual’s own self-interest (Oksala 2012, 111).

In this perspective, all individual actions are seen as related to the pursuit of one’s self-interest. For example, Becker understands child rearing as an activity parents choose to do because “children are a source of psychic income or satisfaction” (1960, 210). Parents have children because they find to benefit from it. Becker then proposes that “expenditures on education, training, medical care, etc.,” are analyzable as “investments in capital” that will later yield an income for the individual (1994, 15). Becker coins this as “human capital,” which differs from other forms of capital because “you cannot separate a person from his or her knowledge, skills, health, or values the way it is possible to move financial and physical assets” (Becker 1994, 16).

In other words, “human capital” is “the set of physical and psychological factors which make someone able to earn this or that wage” (Foucault and Senellart 2008, 224). The worker is seen as possessing certain abilities and skills that makes him capable of

performing certain activities in exchange for an income. “Human capital,” then, defines the individual’s body as their own “machine” capable of generating an income (Foucault and Senellart 2008, 226).

A significant consequence of human capital is that it rationalizes individuals as free agents who are personally responsible for their well-being and to take care of themselves through the market (Read 2009; Hamann 2009; Foucault and Senellart 2008; Gershon 2011; Turken et al 2016; Oksala 2012). Turken et al (2016) argue how mainstream print media in Norway and Turkey disseminates neoliberal ideals like individual responsibility. Articles written by “life coaches” and self-help gurus attempt to instill in the reader “a rational calculating self-reliant subject who needs to ‘work on herself’ to achieve success and well-being” (Turken et al 2016, 39). Ilana Gershon argues that neoliberalism encourages actors to view the self as a collection of innate and acquired “usable traits” that can be used as bargaining chips in seeking employment (2011, 539-540). Failure to achieve one’s own interests or at least generate a substantive income indicates ineffective self-management of one’s human capital, including their skill-set (Gershon 2011, 540). In this perspective, the self becomes a project that must be worked on. One’s poverty is blamed on the person rather than social structures like overt/covert racism, structural inequalities, and economic crises beyond the control of any individual.

In this thesis, I argue that such a neoliberal conceptualization of the self as a collection of innate and acquired skills is found in the discourse of these campus ministries. Staff expect Christian college students to develop into productive subjects

participating in the creation of more converts and disciples. They moralize such productivity as inherently good and in line with Christian doctrine.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODS

From October 2016 to June 2017, I studied three distinct Christian student organizations: Impact, Campus Crusade for Christ (Cru), and Ratio Christi. Cru is the largest organization in terms of the number of students attending their weekly Thursday service. The organization was originally founded in 1951 at the University of California at Los Angeles. Now, it is a “global evangelical empire” with chapters across many campuses (Turner 2009, 2). Impact, on the other hand, is not an expansive organization like Cru; it was independently founded at UNC Charlotte. Unlike Cru, which presents itself as a “supplement to the church,” Impact labels itself *as* a church and holds a weekly Sunday service. In contrast to Cru and Impact, Ratio Christi is a Christian apologetics organization that focuses on presenting factual and rational arguments for believing in Christianity. It was founded in 2008 at Appalachian State University and proliferated to other universities like UNC Charlotte in 2009. Their weekly Thursday meetings consist of speeches and presentations concerning topics like the “problem of evil” or Taoism. The background of these three organizations are substantially different: Cru is older and well established, Impact is newer and homegrown at UNC Charlotte, and Ratio Christi focuses on the factuality of Christianity.

This study takes a more linguistic approach in examining the activities of these Christian groups. Susan Harding, a prominent anthropologist of Christianity, wrote a field observation guide for worship services (see appendix A). She directs the researcher to “attend to the words. Protestant rituals are ‘word-based,’ they work through words, not

images or processions or rites as such.” Therefore, I will focus my observations on what people say, who says it, and how they say it. My adoption of this linguistic approach occludes other known approaches, including ones centered on ritual and its effects on the mind found in anthropologist Tanya Luhrmann’s work on Christianity (2012).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I observed a total of around forty different organized events and meetings across three distinct Christian student organizations, including weekly general meetings, services, tabling, leadership meetings, and Bible studies. I collected and archived any material texts distributed in these events. I also conducted formal semi-structured (see appendix B) audio recorded interviews with eleven student leaders (five from Cru, four from Impact, and two from Ratio Christi) and four staff members (two from Impact, one each from Cru and Ratio Christi). I also informally interviewed other student leaders and staff members, usually over lunch or coffee, throughout this period in which I kept notes of our conversations. I supplement data collected through observations, interviews, and material texts with electronically accessible articles, policies, and statements authored by leadership members of these organizations.

All field notes, interview transcripts, informal interview notes, material and electronic texts were entered into a qualitative data analysis software called “ATLAS.ti.” My interpretation method consisted of coding for themes and patterns in these data. Themes found across different types of data were considered significant and worthwhile for further analysis and research.

## CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION

### Campus Ministry Structure

Cru, Ratio Christi, and Impact are officially registered and recognized as “student organizations” at UNC Charlotte. This recognition grants student organizations certain benefits and privileges like the use of university facilities, operational funding, and the ability to participate in university events like the Student Organization Showcase (Student Organization Handbook 2017, 10). This status allows these campus ministries to advertise and hold their events on campus as long as they abide to the policies for student organizations set by UNC Charlotte.

However, it is misleading to label these campus ministries as “student organizations” because college students are not the ones in control. Instead, staff members ultimately determine the everyday operations of these campus ministries. Staff mostly consists of white men and women and are also significantly older than typical college-aged (18-21) students. These staff members are in some sort of legal contractual relationship with the campus ministry organization as either a volunteer or employee.

All three campus ministries organize similar Christian activities like Bible studies, devotionals, discipleship, weekly meetings, outreach programs, and prayer meetings. These activities are usually carried out by “student leaders,” which are a group of students picked by staff members to help run and organize these activities and other organizational operations. By “student leader,” I do not mean officer positions typical of

student organizations like president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer. Exactly as Magolda and Gross observed, these positions are usually filled just to satisfy the university's bureaucratic requirements to register as official student organizations (2009, 86-87). Student leaders are students selected and trained by staff to conduct activities for other students like Bible studies, running the weekly meetings, and discipling other students.

### “Making Him Known”

For these three different campus ministries, creating more disciples is a common objective. They want the UNC Charlotte student body and campus as a whole, both Christians and non-Christian students, to grow closer to God. As Hannah, a Cru student leader, said,

*So, the purpose of Cru, like what we have in our vision, is we're a group of believers who are basically trying to spread the gospel. That's not our vision verbatim, but in a nutshell, that's what it is. We just want to be a group of students who share the Gospel with nonbelievers or believers on campus. It really doesn't matter who it is, we just want to make His name known.*

I commonly heard the phrase “to make His name known” across all three ministries. It is also a tagline on a Cru sign that promotes their weekly meetings (see appendix C). This phrase indicates that the goal of organizations like Cru is to dispense knowledge about God to others. Interestingly, Hannah claims that Cru is disinterested in exactly who receives this knowledge. However, as I will later demonstrate, the leadership of these campus ministries are very interested in specifically reaching college students.

Like Cru, Impact and Ratio Christi also want to tell others about God. According to Marvin, an Impact staff member, “Staff believes that experiencing a relationship with

God is one of the greatest things we ever experienced...we exist on campus because we want people to experience the greatest thing we ever experienced.” Every meeting, student leaders introduce Ratio Christi as a club whose goal is “to have winsome conversations that commend the name of Jesus Christ” and convince believers and non-believers the truth of the Gospel. This includes informing others on evidence for the historical reliability of the Bible, the resurrection of Jesus, and God’s existence.

### The Great Commission

This objective to tell others about God is tied to this idea called the Great Commission. According to John G. Turner, “Evangelicals have long referred to Jesus’s instructions in Matthew 28:18–20 (“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations”) as the ‘Great Commission,’ which functions in evangelical circles as an imperative for evangelism and for foreign missions in particular” (2009, 95). It interprets Jesus’ command to the apostles as a command for all Christians to go out and make more disciples.

While the Great Commission may recall Christians going abroad for missionary work, there also exists this sense that Christians need to evangelize at “home” to fulfill the Great Commission. In a text called *How to Help Fulfill the Great Commission*, Cru founder Bill Bright talks about the need to evangelize at home as well as abroad:

*Where must we go to fulfill the Great Commission? We must go to the whole world. However, Jesus Himself gave us a strategy to follow. Just before He ascended into heaven, He told the disciples, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My Witness both in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Begin to share Christ as a way of life in your Jerusalem – your home, your neighborhood, your campus or classroom, your office, or your*

*factory. Seek ways to present Christ in your community, your state, your nation, which is your Judea, and to help spread His good news to the entire world through your prayers, your financial investments and your personal involvement. (1981, 258).*

Bright interprets this passage in Acts to mean that Christians must also actively evangelize within their own “home” and “nation.” Mundane spaces like one’s own household, workspace, and college campus are conceptualized as sites in need for intervention. Bright calls for Christians to evangelize in these everyday spaces because they are just as important as going out to exotic nations.

James Bielo similarly notes how Emerging Evangelicals, a particular strand of Evangelicals, internalize “the idea of being a missionary in one’s own society” (2011, 11). He argues that Emerging Evangelicals, in following the ideas of British Anglican Priest Lesslie Newbigin, see contemporary America as “by and large a post-Christian nation, not wholly secular but discernably without a Christian canopy” (Bielo 2011, 120). Through this reasoning, familiar spaces and places like colleges and universities become mission sites where Christians must propagate the Gospel.

#### The University as a Mission Site

Though not an “Emerging Evangelical” himself, Bill Bright constructs the American college campus as a mission site in need of evangelism to save students and make them into disciples. In a 2000 *National Religious Broadcasters* interview, Bright said that despite Cru’s growth into international ministries, college campuses are still an important space for Christians to intervene in:

*But, the challenge of the college campus today is absolutely awesome. The philosophy of the classroom of social studies is total decadence, total anti-God,*

*anti-Christ, and anti-Bible. Any person who has anything to do with the secular college or university knows that it's a cesspool. The homosexual agenda controls everything. They're even subsidized by the universities. Christians are ousted wherever possible* (quoted in Gustavson 2000, 23-24).

The idea of college being an anti-Christian space is not new. Since the fifties we find influential figures rallying against universities deemed too anti-Christian. William F. Buckley's 1951 book *God and Man at Yale* accuses professors of trying to indoctrinate students away from their religious beliefs and into liberal ideologies. During the fifties, Bright lamented how "many of our state universities and colleges and other institutions deny the deity of Christ, the Bible as the Word of God, and offer not so much as one Christian course in their curriculum" (quoted in Turner 2008, 41). In line with Cold War rhetoric, Bright stated that "communists were making an impact on the campus" of UCLA and that Christ can combat the communist threat on the minds of the youth (quoted in Turner 2008, 45).

Nevertheless, the current staff and student leaders do not express such a strong understanding of the university as an anti-Christian, secularizing force. For the most part, all the staff and student leaders I spoke to describe their ministry's relationship with the UNC Charlotte administration as positive and supportive. This is not to say these feelings completely disappeared; they sometimes bubble and burst through during meetings and conversations. For example, during my lunch interview with Alan, a Ratio Christi staff member, he claimed that academic departments in the Humanities are "very secular" and have an unwritten rule against hiring "Republican Christians." Despite this, Alan said UNC Charlotte is "fair" with "religious freedom" while other universities like UC Berkeley are "more combative" against Christianity.

More significantly, the university is perceived as a strategic mission site for the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Ministry leaders understand the university as a place where the future generation of influential leaders in the workforce are produced. In turn, the college student is constructed as a future leader with significant influence and social capital over people around them in their future careers. Therefore, these ministries rationalize that the fulfillment of the Great Commission, which is to make disciples all over the world, depends on converting and training college students how to make disciples before they scatter out into the workforce.

#### The University as a Strategic Site

The loud mechanical grinding of coffee beans filled the café. I placed my recording device closer to Marvin, an Impact staff member. I wanted to make sure his voice did not drown from the constant metallic whirring of the machines. He was tall, still had a youthful face, and wore black-framed glasses; he could easily blend in as a college student.

I sipped some coffee and asked him “Why do you feel Impact needs to be at UNC Charlotte?” Marvin responded, “Our mission statement, vision statement -I'll just say it and then I'll clarify it for you- It's to create families and make disciples that shape the future.” I asked him to elaborate on what Impact means by “shape the future.” He responded,

*Marvin: So, if you look at this world, we know it's not perfect for some reason, right? It's not a perfect world. There's disease. There's cancer... We cheat. We lie. We steal. Our system, like our political systems, are filled with corrupt humans. Humans are corrupt. I think it would only be seen as broken if you admit that it can be perfect, right? Otherwise you wouldn't call this a broken world, you'd just*

*call this the world, right? So, I think that's coming from the perspective that I know that there will be a time when all things are restored back to the way they were...So, knowing that we live in a broken world, I don't believe there is a perfect political system. I don't believe there is ever going to be a perfect family. I don't think there is ever gonna be a perfect way to live. I don't. But, I do believe the message of Jesus that's in the Bible...It's the only way for, that I see, God's perfection to come back into His creation; a broken creation. The Gospel, the idea that I don't deserve God's love because I openly chose not to do things he wants me to do, yet God still died in my place for the punishments that I deserve in order for me to have a relationship with him; that grace, that undeserved gift. And, if I view myself as someone who doesn't deserve love yet has God's love anyways...When someone wrongs me, I can be like "Listen, I know I deserve to punch you in the face. But, because I've been loved, I can love you the same way." The idea of putting other people before you, loving God, loving your neighbor. And it's just that if people have that lens, while knowing that the world will never be perfect, I believe that can shape the future.*

*LC: So, the role of Impact is to present that lens?*

*Marvin: Yeah, the idea of why on college campus is because everyone on a college campus is going to be the next generation of leaders. Not everyone, but that is where the next generation of leaders come from, college campuses...So, the idea is that we can start giving those lenses to people because our immediate goal isn't the four years of college, it's the forty years after college... We want to give them the lenses, that worldview. So, when people graduate college and whatever workforce they go into, they have this. Eventually, maybe they get called into church and start their own whatever, but they'll be reminded that God's loves you so much that it affects their whole worldview.*

Here, we see Marvin expressing the familiar Christian idea that society itself takes after the human condition of sin and brokenness. Humans are “corrupt” due to sin and, therefore, society is also corrupt because it is made up of corrupt humans. This is self-evident from individual acts like lying, cheating, and stealing, to complex networks like political systems. While Marvin believes that there will be a time when God will restore the world back to its original perfect state, these social systems will never be perfected by humans.

Nevertheless, Marvin does believe that society, though inherently broken, can be

improved through the Gospel, which he described as the message of undeserved forgiveness from a loving God. He reasons that the message of the Gospel allows individuals to imitate God in that they can also forgive their fellow neighbors and prioritize their needs over one's own. If people adopt this "lens," which views interpersonal relationships between people as analogous to one's ideal relationship with God, then society can be improved.

Marvin explains that the college campus is an important place to give students this lens because they are the "next generation of leaders." Given this Christian ethic, these leaders will "shape the future" and work towards changing society to match this vision. To Marvin, societal change is best achieved by influencing the future elite workforce at the point of their making in colleges and universities

This idea of "shaping the future" through college students is echoed in a statement on Impact's website,

*Why a University campus? Because the American University campus is the most forgotten, over-looked, ignored mission fields in the world. And the University campus is full of men and women who will shape the future culture. They are the future teachers, doctors, politicians, social workers, nurses, entrepreneurs, employers, husbands, wives, mothers and fathers. They are being trained to lead us into the future. If we can reach them with the Gospel then we could literally infiltrate the world with the Gospel. The University campus is the most strategic mission field in the world yet it remains un-tapped (Impact Charlotte 2015).*

Here, "culture" is an entity that will be eventually "shaped" by university students once they graduate and enter the workforce across a myriad of middle/upper-class occupations and start making their own families. Impact sees college students as "trained" with a certain special knowledge that will change the future "culture." The university campus is imagined as a compressed space "full" of these future influential culture-shapers. Impact

reasons that if they can “reach” or convert university students to Christianity, then they can “infiltrate the world with the Gospel,” suggesting that these new Christians will use their culture-shaping influence to forward the Great Commission once they graduate and begin their careers. The leadership among Cru and Ratio Christi echo this perspective as well.

Ken Cochrum, the current Vice President of Cru’s Global Digital Strategies, wrote a short article titled “Why College Students Are Strategic: 10 reasons why college students can help fulfill the Great Commission.” In it, he describes college students as “the educated elite that will most likely lead in every domain of society -- government, religion, military, education, even sports and entertainment. Our future leaders will be people who went to college” (Cochrum and Kinneer). Cochrum imagines society as made up of several distinct domains that will be led by the “educated elite.” College is the central institutional node in which the future leaders of society are produced before they scatter into other institutions. Thus, if one wants to infiltrate the world with the Gospel, then winning college students is necessary because they themselves will wield influence and power across the several domains of society after graduation.

In a December 2016 newsletter, Ratio Christi national president Corey Miller takes this idea a step further and argues that Ratio Christi must also evangelize to professors because they are the ones educating and molding the minds of students,

*Let me be candid with you: Professors are the gate keepers of thought in our culture. The neo-Marxist philosopher, Alberto [Antonio] Gramsci, once observed that in order to influence a culture one should not seek to infiltrate the coercive elements of society (government, police, military, etc.). Instead, one must seek to infiltrate the non-coercive elements (education, religion, media, etc.), and the*

*coercive elements will follow. We don't change our culture by merely winning elections. We must reclaim our influence in the most influential institutes in western civilization: universities. Why? Universities produce our journalists, artists, doctors, lawyers, political leaders, K-12 educators, and even our future professors—all taught by professors. Indeed, given the hundreds of thousands of international students attending our universities, we can say that as goes the American university, so goes the world!... We must act now or pay an exorbitant price. Either we wake up now and see the value of winning the professor or else we continue overseeing the greatest omission of the Great Commission of our time (Miller 2016).*

Following Gramsci's idea of cultural hegemony, Miller argues that in order to “change our culture,” Christians must first “reclaim” the university as it is the “most influential” institution in “western civilization,” which echoes a Ratio Christi flyer (see appendix D) that describes the university as a thing that Christians need to “take back.” While Impact and Cru leaders focus on winning over individual students because they will be the future leaders, Miller wants to win over professors to Christ because they are directly involved in the production of future leaders. If you Christianize the professors, then they will Christianize the students. Miller identifies the university as the means of cultural production which must be seized to fulfill the Great Commission.

In all, the leadership among Impact, Cru, and Ratio Christi all view the university as a key site of cultural reproduction. They reason that fulfilling the Great Commission requires missional intervention at universities because this is where the next generation of influential leaders are made. Christianizing these future leaders into disciples will somehow shape society in a way that is more conducive in their goal to make disciples of all nations.

So far, I only demonstrated that the leadership of these campus ministries desire

to fulfill the Great Commission and view college students as an important target to advance in their goal. In the next section, I will show how these campus ministries use “technologies of the self” to instill in students a “missional subjectivity” that compels them to autonomously produce disciple of Christ. I will then explain how this reflects the neoliberal idea of human capital in that these techniques to fulfill the Great Commission moralizes productivity as an individual responsibility for the greater good.

### Forming Missional Subjects

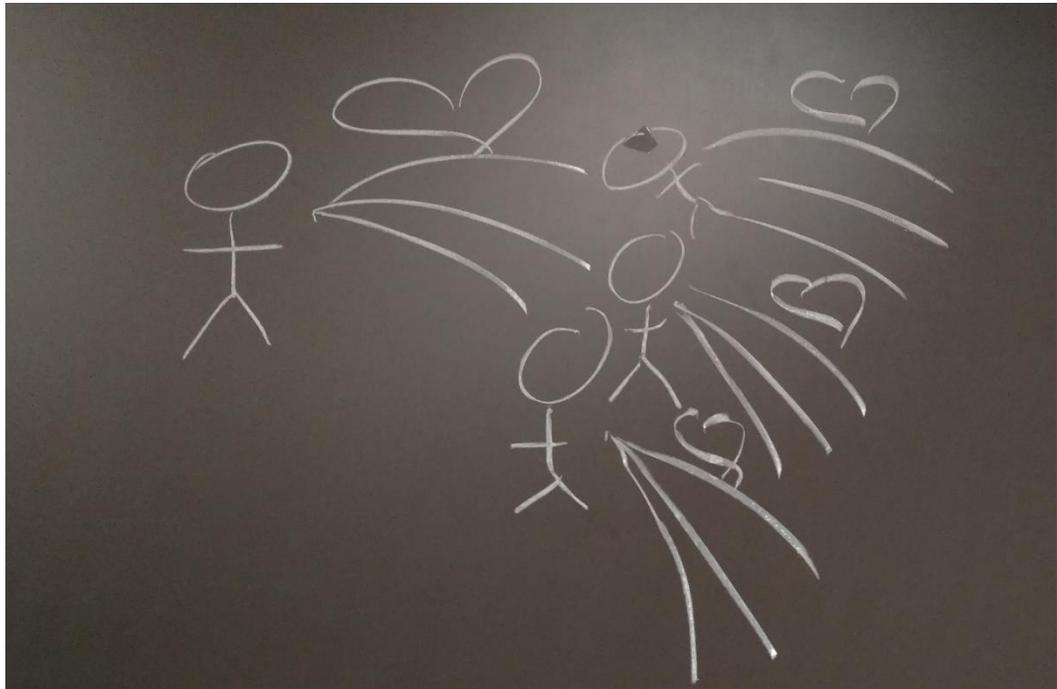
From my seat, I saw around twenty other young adult university students sitting in grey rolling desks. The classroom feels aged with its worn white linoleum tiles, concrete walls, bright industrial florescent lights, and blackboards. The students sat quietly as they listened to Levi, a Cru staff member, speak behind a lectern,

*The next thing we have to understand is the Great Commission. Jesus says in Matthew 28 “Go forward and make disciples.” He says other things as well beyond that but I’m just gonna stop right there and keep it really simple. God has commanded us to go make disciples. And in II Timothy 2:2, Paul says to Timothy “The things you heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust in faithful men will teach others also.” And so, we have lots of passages in scripture where God is wanting us to multiply.*

I saw several students nod and write down notes as he lectured. Though this “Blueprints” meeting is open to all students, it was announced at the general Thursday night meeting as a discipleship workshop for student leaders. The students around me were either current leaders or interested to become one. The purpose of this workshop was to provide resources and tips for ways to evangelize and disciple others.

Levi then asked, “Is anyone brave enough and draw, based on these passages of

scripture: love God, love your neighbor, make disciples, multiply your faith... Anyone brave want to draw a picture of what you think that looks like in discipleship?" After a brief moment of silence, one student leader raised her hand. "I can do it," said Shelby. The other students applauded in support as she walked to the blackboard.



*Figure 1: Cru student leader's diagram.*

"So, this is me," she said and with chalk she drew a stick figure, "and I am going to love these people," she then drew three lines connecting the figure to more stick figures and drew a heart over these connecting lines. She continued, "but they then have relationships with these people," and drew more three more lines with hearts coming out of each these three stick figures. She asked Levi "is that okay?" Levi nodded approvingly

and the other students applauded as she returned to her seat.

Levi went back up to the lectern and continued his lecture,

*Our hope for all of you is that you will have someone sharing their life with you and that you would go share your life with someone else. And in so doing, with the life that Christ has given you that you will share that with other people. Not just with people that actually believe in what you believe, but that you would be able to share that with people who don't...What Shelby drew was really great. What if each of you had just two people or three people that you disciplined and invested in very intently?...If you invest in two people and each of those two people invested in two people and those two people invest in two people, it only takes eight generations to get to 264 people...Eight multiplication generations, and you have 264 people if you just start with two people, that's kinda cool.*

This excerpt captures Levi's attempt to inscribe what I call a "missional subjectivity" on college students. I define "missional subjectivity" as a self that is capable and morally compelled to autonomously produce disciples of Christ. Missional subjects believe that they are morally obligated to transform others into new disciples of Christ and re-inscribe in new believers this missional subjectivity. The intended result is "spiritual multiplication," which is the accumulation of disciples through the efforts of individuals.

The idea of "spiritual multiplication" can be traced back to Bill Bright, the founder of Cru. In *How to Help Fulfill the Great Commission*, Bright wrote:

*The fulfillment of the Great Commission can be accomplished only as millions of Christians develop a personal strategy that ties in directly to Christ's global strategy...*

*A personal strategy is a deliberate plan of action by an individual to accomplish a specific goal. Since the goal of every sincere believer should be to help fulfill the Great Commission, his personal plan should include evangelizing and discipling – adding and multiplying. When you personally introduce another to Christ, that is spiritual addition. But when you deliberately disciple the new Christian and help him to win, disciple and send others who will do the same to still others, that is spiritual multiplication! Multiplication was the method Jesus Himself used as He concentrated much of His time on teaching the 12 disciples.*

*And the apostle Paul specifically commended this principal to Timothy, his son in the faith: “And the things you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” (II Timothy 2:2).*

*Consider this situation: suppose you led five people to Christ and began to work with them, teaching them to feed themselves from the Word of God and to share their faith with others. Suppose that within one year those five began to train five others. Now there are 25. In another year, as each of those 25 introduces five others to Christ and begins to build them, the number grows to 125. At that rate, the entire population of our world, theoretically, could be reached in just 14 years! (Bright 1981, 265-266).*

Bright describes spiritual multiplication as an effective “personal strategy” that one can adopt to help fulfill the Great Commission. It entails converting people to Christ first and then teach them to be able to win and disciple others. Bright also argues that spiritual multiplication is inherently more efficient than other strategies like “spiritual additional” because it produces more converts at a much faster rate.

It is worthwhile to pause on Bright’s reasoning here for spiritual multiplication. Clearly, Bright values efficiency in the accumulation of disciples. The more disciples in less amount of time, then the better. Levi made this same appeal to his students. He explained that if each disciple made two more disciples, then “264” disciples are made within eight generations. Levi was trying to convince his students that this model for disciple production is desirable because it is designed to produce a large quantity of disciples in a shorter amount of time.

I argue that Levi and Bright’s effort to convince students to adopt spiritual multiplication as a “personal strategy” that aims to increase efficiency and accelerate accumulation reflects neoliberal rationality. Wendy Brown argues that neoliberalism submits all spheres of life

*to an economic rationality...all dimensions of human life are cast in terms of a market rationality. While this entails submitting every action and policy to considerations of profitability, equally important is the production of all human and institutional action as rational entrepreneurial action, conducted according to a calculus of utility, benefit, or satisfaction (2003).*

Under neoliberalism, all actions are scrutinized and evaluated according to their “profitability.” In other words, the rationality of choosing one action over another is based on how much value it produces. Choices that yield more value are judged as superior and more favorable than ones that yield less. With this reasoning, both Levi and Bright present spiritual multiplication as a more rational and reasonable strategy because of its potential for faster exponential growth. Thus, the missional subjectivity that Cru and other campus ministries want to instill in students itself reflects this neoliberal calculative decision-making for maximizing profit.

However, I do not argue that the rationality for Christians to perform this missional subjectivity is solely based on economic or market rationalities. Rather, this neoliberal rationality articulates with other Christian elements. As Ong suggests, “neoliberal logic is best conceptualized not as a standardized universal apparatus, but a migratory technology of governing that interacts with situated sets of elements and circumstance” (2007, 5). In this case, ideals of productivity and accumulation connect with Christian ideals of obeying God and carrying out his Will.

James Bielo notes that among Evangelicals, “the Bible prevails over any other type of instruction in all matters, ranging from the practical to the moral to the spiritual” (2009, 53). Thus, to convince these Christian students that it is truly their personal responsibility to participate in the Great Commission, both Levi and Bright cite and interpret select Biblical passages to show students that this is God’s Will. These leaders

do not present the Great Commission as a great project thought up by humans, but say that it is a divine task ordained by God that “every sincere believer” should participate in. If being a Christian means to obey God’s Will, then these leaders reason that Christians must follow this command and make disciples. To be a Christian means to make disciples. This reasoning rearticulates disciple-making into a crucial moral activity.

During interviews, student leaders across all three groups do indeed express disciple-making as a moral activity. However, when I ask if evangelism and disciple-making are required duties for Christians, I always get an ambiguous answer. Clay, a Ratio Christi student leader, exemplifies this:

*LC: Do you think evangelism is a requirement for Christians?*

*Clay: It's kind of hard because it's like the relationship between Christians and the Jewish law in general because, technically, we're not obligated to follow the letter of the law and exactly what it says. But, naturally, it follows that we do because we follow Jesus and he said that “If you love me then you'll naturally follow my commandments.” So, our relationship, then, with evangelism is that it's something that we should want to do, but it's not a requirement for salvation. I think that's an important point, that there isn't any work itself that is required for salvation. What I would say is that in order to be a Christian you just need to be saved. So technically, it's not requirement.*

To Clay, evangelism is not something that a Christian has to do in order to be saved by Christ. However, it is an activity that Christians will “naturally” follow through because it is part of following or walking with God. Christians “*should want*” to evangelize. It is an indication of a Christian truly learning and walking with Jesus because he is following His commandments.

It is important to also point out the individualization in this spiritual multiplication model. Shelby’s illustration of the model does not indicate that the successful fulfillment of the Great Commission depends on the efforts of collective organizations or

institutions. In spiritual multiplication, the successful accumulation of disciples depends on individual efforts. If one individual disciple can successfully produce three more disciples and re-inscribe in them this missional subjectivity, then those new disciples will each make more disciples that will then each make more disciples and so on. As Shelby drew this model, she identified herself (“So this is me”) as the first stick figure that initiates this rapid accumulation of disciples. This performance indicates that Shelby understands herself as a missional subject who is morally responsible to labor in disciple-making.

#### Missional subjectivity and Human Capital

These ideas of productivity, moral obligation, and personal responsibility found in missional subjectivity all resonate with the neoliberal concept of human capital.

Under neoliberalism, the individual is understood as an entrepreneurial subject that owns human capital, which comprises of their body, skills, and attitudes that can be used to generate value (Foucault and Senellart 2008; Hamann 2009; Read 2009). This ideology creates a neoliberal subject that views oneself as a project that is expected to exercise market rationality in all aspects of life (Gershon 2011, 538-539). Activities are supposed to contribute and add value to one’s human capital to make themselves more competitive and desirable to be hired as employees. These activities include learning new skills and presenting oneself as a “bundle of skills” that can produce value for the business firm in exchange for an income (Gershon 2011, 539; see also Urciuoli 2008). Thus, individuals should conform their body, skills, attitudes (i.e., human capital) to the market forces of supply and demand and make themselves appear “competitive” in terms

of productivity potential for firms.

In this lens, economic success is indicative of the individual's proper self-management of their human capital. Likewise, economic failure indicates improper self-management. In both cases, the individual is seen as fully responsible for their financial situation. As Trent Hamann argues,

*Neoliberal subjects are constituted as thoroughly responsible for themselves and themselves alone because they are subjectified as thoroughly autonomous and free. An individual's failure to engage in the requisite processes of subjectivation, or what neoliberalism refers to as a "mismanaged life" is consequently due to the moral failure of that individual. Neoliberal rationality allows for the avoidance of any kind of collective, structural, or governmental responsibility for such a life (2009, 44).*

Because neoliberal subjects are construed as having the ability to make free choices, then their quality of life is a result of their own choices. This absolves social structures from any blame. Thus, negative social conditions like poverty indicate the individual's "moral failure" to manage their human capital. This morality is based on whether or not an action contributes to the realization of future value to take care of oneself through the market. In this respect, neoliberal subjects are personally and morally responsible to improve their human capital so that they can get a job and earn sufficient income.

A crucial difference between neoliberal human capital and missional subjectivity is value. On the one hand, neoliberalism sees value as expressible in money and markets determine the value of all things. On the other hand, missional subjectivity values disciples and aims to accumulate as many as possible.

While these two ideologies differ in what they value, both agree that subjects are morally responsible to produce it. Campus ministries like Cru teach students that being a good Christian means to evangelize to others and then train them to become disciple-

makers as well. Neoliberal human capital also rationalizes that individuals ought to gain competitive skills so that they can get a good job and earn a good income.

Also, both modes of thought connect individual actions to the benefit of the general population. If all Christians commit to this God-given duty, then the Great Commission can be more easily fulfilled, which means more people will be saved and have a satisfying relationship with God. In neoliberalism, if all individuals pursued their self-interest through the market by making themselves into competitive subjects, then the market will be more competitive and, thus, be a more effective mechanism to serve the population of its needs and wants. Therefore, in both systems, engaging in the production of value is an individual's moral responsibility for the good of oneself and for society in general.

#### “Equipping”

The similarities between this Christian missional subjectivity and neoliberal subjectivity deepen further as they both share the idea that individual subjects are inherently improvable in terms of increasing one's capacity to produce value. Neoliberal ideology transforms the subject into two parts: the self and his human capital. It is the self's personal responsibility to tend to his human capital by acquiring skills deemed usable because they produce value (Gershon 2011, 539). Similarly, these campus ministries also imagine missional subjects as selves that can acquire certain skills and attitudes to improve in their production of valuable disciples. The excerpts above illustrate how Levi and Bright believe any individual Christian can further the Great Commission and make more disciples by using the strategy of “spiritual multiplication.”

This idea that Christians are improvable subjects in terms of disciple-making is evident in their frequent use of the word “equip.” This keyword is very prominent in their discourse. For example, on the back of a flyer (see appendix D), Ratio Christi defines itself as “a global movement that *equips* university students and faculty to give historical, philosophical, and scientific reasons for following Jesus Christ.” Here, “equip” means to tack a set of knowledge or rhetorical skills on to students so that they may ultimately persuade others to convert and subsequently become disciples. In an interview, another Cru student leader similarly defined equip,

*Student leader: We want everyone that leaves Cru to be sent on a mission. And we acknowledge that it's a very small portion of people who are vocationally gonna go into ministry, but rather a huge number are gonna go into the normal workforce and so equipping them to enter into a place where they can share the gospel effectively and efficiently because they are then trained and can go out and, you know, again, that kinda goes back to that multiplication aspect of it.*

*LC: Now, you use the word equipping... It's such a prominent word. What does it exactly mean?*

*Student Leader: It's giving people the knowledge and it's a lot of that training. It's the knowledge. Knowing the four points [of the Knowing God Personally tract]. Knowing how to share them. Knowing. Being prepared for the questions that people are gonna ask...[At another university], a huge one was knowing how to respond when people brought up homosexuality...Like that's a very prominent question that you kinda have to be equipped and know the literature and the answer on. I think everybody has a slightly different answer. But, I think being equipped is being prepared. And I don't think we're ever fully prepared, but kinda having a basis to answer questions and tell people about Jesus.*

For this leader, being equipped is also about having sufficient know-how to “effectively and efficiently” evangelize. This knowledge includes the ability to share the gospel and answer questions and objections to it. The role of campus ministries like Cru is to pass on this knowledge to others so that they may then be able to share the gospel “effectively and efficiently” and make spiritually multiplying disciples once they enter the workforce.

Because evangelism and discipleship are understood as acquired skills, each campus ministry provides various training programs, tracts, websites, tools, and books to meant to assist and teach others how to make disciples. These technologies are meant to instill the appropriate skills and attitudes for students to spiritually multiply and make disciples. The excerpt above with Levi is an example of a staff member trying to instill a missional subjectivity in students and convince them that disciple-making is part of what it means to be a good Christian. Campus ministries like Cru want students to continue to autonomously produce disciples after they graduate, leave the campus ministry, and enter the workforce. Below, I provide more examples of technologies meant to “equip” students with the appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes for students to transform themselves into more productive disciple-makers.

#### Technologies of the Self

“Alright everyone! This is a stick up!” These iconic first lines of the 1995 animated film *Toy Story* blasted through the speakers during this Impact Sunday service. The projector displayed the first couple minutes of the film before cutting the lights back on. Ben, the founder of Impact, walked back up to the center of the makeshift stage. “Alright, how’s everybody doing? Any *Toy Story* fans?...Turn to your neighbor and tell them your favorite Pixar film and a favorite moment in that Pixar film. Ready...Go!”

The room was abuzz with conversations as students talk about these Pixar films. Ben walked back up to the front and with his booming slightly raspy voice commanded the attention of the students. “Name me a favorite!” Students started spewing Pixar film titles as Ben repeated them aloud. “*The Incredibles*...What?...*Wall-E*...*Toy*

Story...*Finding Nemo*...Huh?...*Monsters, Inc.* Good, good, those are good.” Ben then continued to preach to the students,

*This is the second week of a new series called Story of God and we're talking about God's storyline and story arc and throughout scripture we see that God has this ultimate story that can be found in all of our stories. And this story has four elements. And those are creation. So, he has a creation story. The Fall, okay, so he has a fall portion of this story. Redemption and then Re-creation. And those four elements can be seen in every great story. So, if you watch a Pixar film and you pay attention, you will see those four elements come out and if you look in your own story, you will notice that God's story- those four elements of God's story are intimately woven into your story. We at the church that I lead...we created this resource for you guys and it's called “The Story of God” and it helps you work through your story - to be able to write it down because part of this series isn't for you just to listen to some old guys talk, but for you to begin to interact with and begin to write down your story and then begin to share your story. So, here's what I want you to do. Pull out your phone. You can text to the number...Don't worry we won't spam you, you won't get multiple text in a day, things like that...it will send you a PDF of that file and then it's yours and you can use it and you can start to interact with it and you start writing out your story and can share your story and you can share that PDF with anybody you want. That's free. That's for you and for you to share and pass around. So, leaders, I would encourage you guys to use this in your Villages and your Huddles. Give it to people that you're discipling and it is- it should be a really, really great resource.*

In this excerpt, we see Ben, with authority as the founder of Impact, distributing a technology that aids students to write their own witnessing narrative. Ben wants students to use this tool to craft their narrative and then share it with others as a form of evangelism. While he is directly inscribing a missional subjectivity that compels students to tell others about God through their own narratives, Ben is also telling the students leaders to use and redistribute this technology to the people that they are discipling.

The PDF document itself argues that God's story “is the dominant story that shapes all other stories and where all stories find their ultimate meaning. God's story precedes, finishes and makes sense of all other stories. And His storyline, His story arc, can be seen in every story.” In other words, the effectiveness and meaningfulness of

stories stems from its affinity with the structure God's story. The document guides students to structure their narrative into four parts: "Creation," "Fall," "Redemption," and "Recreation." The point is to help students create effective narratives for evangelism in which they "have the power to shape the people in front of us, the people beside us and the world all around us."

Foucault defines technologies as "certain modes of training and modification of individuals, not only in the obvious sense of acquiring certain skills but also in the sense of acquiring certain attitudes" (1988, 18). They are the means by which individuals are fashioned with skills and inscribed with a particular subjectivity. I argue that this PDF document, along with other material things distributed by these campus ministries like tracts, booklets, and pamphlets can be analyzed as technologies meant for students to fashion themselves with certain skills and attitudes. In this case, the document is a technology intended to equip students with the ability to write an effective narrative for evangelism and to instill in them a missional subjectivity.

Another example of a technology to aid in evangelism is Cru's *Knowing God Personally* (KGP) tract. Every student leader I interviewed said that they were trained by staff to evangelize through this tract. Some leaders presented it to me as either memorized, as an app on their phone, or use the original booklet. The KGP tract is a short small booklet that presents the Gospel in four steps. Like Impact's *The Story of God*, the KGP tract is supposed to help students present the Gospel to others.

The tract itself is a slightly reworded form of Bill Bright's original tract called *The Four Spiritual Laws*. Bright describes his tract as a tool that enables Christians to

make a “clear, simple presentation of the gospel” (1998, 13). Bright relates this emphasis on clarity and simplicity to effective salesmanship,

*The content of the Four Spiritual Laws began to crystalize in my thinking during Campus Crusade for Christ staff training in 1956... One of the speakers that year was a Christian layman who was an outstanding sales consultant. He emphasized that to be successful in sales, a person must develop a clear, simple, understandable presentation that can be used over and over again... The speaker then compared the witnessing Christian to the secular salesperson. “To be effective in communicating our faith in Christ,” he stressed, “you must develop a simple, understandable, reasonable presentation of the gospel that you can share with everyone. The better and more often you communicate this simple presentation, the more fruitful you will be in your witness for Christ.” (1998, 15).*

To Bright, it is not only important to evangelize as a Christian, but to do so effectively.

Success in evangelism is modeled after success in sales, which is being able to sell off a large quantity of items or services. Thus, effective, “more fruitful” evangelism strives for accumulating more converts for Christ. Just as in sales, Bright claims that the key in effective evangelism lies in presenting a clear and simple message understandable to the audience.

### The Power of the Gospel

Among Evangelicals, there exists this idea that a non-believer will eventually convert if they sincerely listen to the message of the Gospel. Over and over, staff and student leaders claim that it is the power of God or the Holy Spirit that saves people, not their own efforts. For example, an Impact staff member explained,

*I want to put the Word out there, but, knowing that- this is where I feel like it's supernatural- I cannot save anyone. Only God saves... This is where the Gospel comes in again, right, knowing that I myself am a broken human trying to carry this message of salvation. But, I know that my words won't save, but the message will save. It's not the farmer, but it's the seed.*

According to Marvin, the potency of the Gospel and its power to save is not found in the actual words themselves or in person saying them, but rather in the meaning or message expressed through the words. The Gospel itself is understood as a fetishized entity with its own potency and agency with the power to transform anyone overtime into a Christian.

This seed metaphor is echoed by Evangelicals in church settings. As James Bielo observes, “The goal of witnessing is sometimes immediate conversion but is more often to ‘plant a seed’ to give nonbelievers a reason to want to know more about the Christian life...No matter what their stance is toward Christianity, they will eventually be overcome by ‘the Truth’ and convert” (2009, 115-116). Likewise, the leadership of these campus ministries do not view evangelism as something that yields quick and instant results, but rather as something that may take months or years of exposure to the Gospel. Therefore, making converts can only happen through the Gospel in which the individual overtime accepts it as Truth and submits to it. The role of the Christian is to continuously present the Gospel to the non-believer so that its transformative process can activate. In this reasoning, the Christian becomes a means for the message of the Gospel to circulate through.

### Improving Human Capital

So, the purpose for evangelism tools like *KGP*, *The Four Spiritual Laws*, and Impact’s *The Story of God* are to help Christians become effective communicators of the Gospel. They are meant to assist Christians and teach them the necessary skills to present the Gospel in a way that is more accessible and understandable to non-believers. The idea

is if the non-believer truly understands the Gospel's message, then it will begin to transform the non-believer's interiority and eventually result in conversion.

Through these technologies, even newer believers can fashion themselves into effective disciple-makers. As one Cru staff member said during a student leadership meeting,

*Discipleship doesn't have to be "Oh I've been disciplined for a whole year, now I'm ready to disciple somebody else" ... You've got tools, you've got five resources that you can use to disciple somebody else. Just like with being a believer, you don't have to be a Christian for a long time to share your faith. As soon as you have the Holy Spirit in you and you're a believer, that qualifies you to share.*

These technologies are designed to help Christians modify themselves into more productive disciple-makers regardless of their level of expertise, knowledge, or spiritual growth. This reflects the idea of human capital because disciple-making is understood as an acquirable skill that these technologies of the self can “equip” on students to yield more valuable disciples.

Not only do they simplify evangelism, they also attempt to instill a missional subjectivity on its users as well. For example, the “Recreation” section in *The Story of God* calls for each Christian to “participate” in Christianizing the world: “While we wait with hopeful anticipation for him to return to complete this final work, he calls us to participate with him in bringing about healing, restoration and (re)creation as a foretaste of this future reality.” In *Knowing God Personally*, it states that part of growing as a Christian is to “witness for Christ by your life and words.” Both technologies cite specific Biblical passages to make this point appear as direct commandments from God that this is what it means to be a Christian.

In effect, campus ministries also intend students to inscribe a missional

subjectivity on newer believers through these technologies. A new believer can almost immediately turn around to become another evangelist that will help propagate the Word through these very same technologies. As we saw with Ben telling students to share and pass on *The Story of God* to others, the leadership of these campus ministries encourage not only for students to circulate the Gospel, but to also circulate these technologies. Instead of relying on organizational events to make converts, these campus ministries place the onus of the realization of the Great Commission on individual Christians to productively “make disciples that make disciples” and exchange the Gospel through these newly learned skills dispensed by these technologies.

## CONCLUSION

In all, I argue in this thesis that campus ministries appropriate neoliberal elements like human capital and recombine them with Christian ideals to create new ways of thinking and being. One result is this effort to instill in students a “missional subjectivity,” which transforms disciple-making into every individual Christian’s personal responsibility. It also conceptualizes disciple-making as a skill that students can acquire through the use of various “technologies of the self” provided by these ministries. Missional subjects are also expected to follow God’s command to fulfill the Great Commission and to behave in such a way that promotes for the efficient and effective production and accumulation of disciples. A person is both an end to convert them into a disciple of Christ and a means to make more disciples by equipping them with the necessary skills through various technologies.

This imbrication of neoliberal and Christian ideals does not result in promoting neoliberalism’s goal in creating competitive subjects that economize their time and effort to pursue their self-interest through the market. Rather, as Iqtidar (2017) noticed in his study of an Islamic organization that emphasizes individualized proselytizing, pious members are expected to devote more time and effort in the production of disciples rather than money. This “limits the urgency of neoliberal self-making” and constrains neoliberalism’s “symbiosis” with these campus ministries (Iqtidar 2017, 809). This goes against the insistence of scholars like David Harvey (2005) and Wendy Brown (2003) that neoliberalism is a hegemonic ideology with predetermined outcomes upon its

diffusion. It seems that neoliberalism is more of a mutable and reconfigurable set of ideas that people can use to create new assemblages, novel subjectivities, and new ways to interpret the world.

Some readers may take up the Weberian counterargument that neoliberal ideals are themselves born from Protestant asceticism. In this alternative framework, the similarities between the formation of missional subjects and the desire to excel in accumulating disciples with late-capitalist/neoliberal ideals of efficiency, effectiveness, and human capital is due to the notion that capitalism itself evolved from Protestant ethics. To this I say that the capitalism and Christianities that Weber studied are quite different from today's millennial neoliberal capitalism and contemporary Evangelicalism. As Foucault notes, American neoliberalism expands market rationality to all aspects of life and imagines societies along the grain of self-interested entrepreneurial subjects, which differs from liberalism's conception of the individual as a rights-exchanging subject (2008, 225). While Calvinism believes every individual must pursue and labor hard in their God-given calling, the Evangelical campus ministries seem to flatten disciple-making as a sort of universal calling, a responsibility for every individual Christian to pursue. As of now, I believe Ong's (2007) framework to examine neoliberalism as a mutable ensemble of elements that integrate with other existing cultural logic and rationality is a stronger and more useful approach to help explain the similarities that I observed in their subject-making.

For future research, I propose a closer examination on disciple-making as a learnable skill among Evangelical campus ministries and its relationship with other Christian ideas like the calling and "spiritual gifts" (Wagner 2012). According to an

Impact staff member, each Christian possesses an innate spiritual gift given by God and that a successful Christian community depends on a mix of diverse individuals that complement each other's personality. Given this, it would be interesting to further investigate how neoliberal skills discourse (Urciuoli 2008) interacts with this Christian idea of essentialized personhood.

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## APPENDIX A: OBSERVATION GUIDE

### Tips for Participant-Observation at Church Services

These notes are intended to help you learn to 'read' a Protestant church ritual. They were compiled by Professor Susan Harding, Chair, Dept. of Anthropology, University of California at Santa Cruz.

Religious rituals are intense, stylized, collective performances of cultural assumptions about human nature, social relations, the origin, meaning, and purpose of life, death, history and the cosmos. They intend not merely to instill or reaffirm explicit beliefs, but to insinuate assumptions, often implicit, into the nonconscious mind and body. Rituals enact a culture (shared unconscious knowledge), so 'reading' a ritual is an act of cultural interpretation. Participants, in effect, 'learn their culture' through rituals; so may you.

1. Initially, just become as aware as possible of the information you are taking in through all your senses.
2. Draw a map (mentally, at least) of the church space and how it is used. Note colors, tones, materials, fabrics and textures, literature, adornments of images and words, seating arrangement, etc.
3. Identify the major roles in the service. How are they 'marked', what are the distinguishing features (clothes, placement, action, speech)? Who has access to them? How are hierarchical or egalitarian relations indicated? Is there any movement across the lines between roles?
4. Identify segments of the service. Note what happens in each, who does what, how long it takes. Listen to what is said in any given segment; at one level removed, what is the message? Notice moods and mood changes. What is 'accomplished' in each segment? What is the overall movement and focus of the service?
5. DO NOT ABSTRACT. Capture the words, phrases, visual details that seem characteristic, that convey, indeed that constitute, the mood, flavor, tone, intent, quality and meaning of the service.
6. Note how others interact with you, with each other, and with their deity.

Note taking. If you feel comfortable taking notes during the service, try this: Draw three columns on a page, a narrow one on the left and the rest of the page in two wide columns. In the first column, note the time when you observe a segment (the program identifies most of them). In the second column, take notes on what is happening in the service, what is being said and done by whom, etc. In the third column, record stray observations and thoughts that occur to you about what is going on, for example, 'very quiet', 'people are getting restless', 'congregation mainly young families and single women, white with a few asian-americans, middle-income, some probably less'.

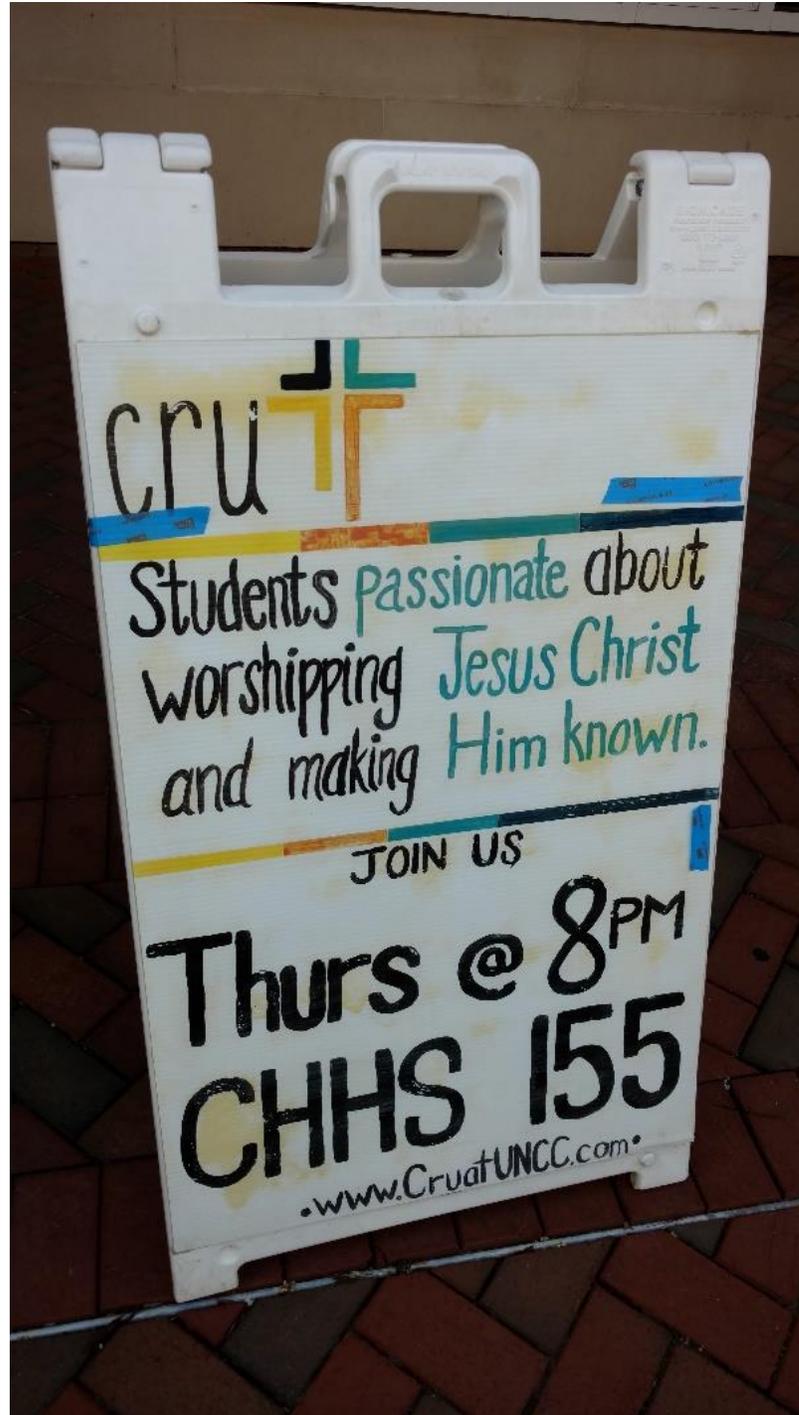
## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Interview Questionnaire: Student Leaders, Pastors, and Advisors

- 1) Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
  - a) (If interviewee needs more direction) What is your name? Age? Occupation?  
Year in school?
- 2) How did you get involved with your student organization?
- 3) Why did you want to get involved?
- 4) What is your position in your organization?
  - a) What are your responsibilities?
- 5) What does your organization do?
  - a) Why does your organization do this activity?
  - b) What needs to get done in order to do this activity?
- 6) In your own words, tell me the purpose of your student organization?
  - a) What are its goals?
  - b) What is your organization doing in order to achieve these goals?
  - c) Do you think these approaches are effective?
    - i) If so, why do you think that?
    - ii) If not, why so?
- 7) Do you guys have any contact with the institution's offices, like the Student Government Association or the Religious Affairs office?
  - a) If yes, for what reasons do you have to work with them?
  - b) If no, why not?

- 8) What should be the role of the government in relation to religion?
- 9) What should be the role of UNCC in relation to religion?
  - a) In your opinion, is UNCC fulfilling that role?
    - i) Why do you think that?

APPENDIX C: SIGN



APPENDIX D: RATIO CHRISTI FLYER

