Biblical PORN

Affect, Labor, and Pastor Mark Driscoll's Evangelical Empire

JESSICA JOHNSON

BIBLICAL PORN

JESSICA JOHNSON

Biblical Porn

Affect, Labor, and Pastor Mark Driscoll's Evangelical Empire

DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS | *Durham and London* | 2018

Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free paper ∞
Typeset in ArnoPro by Westchester Publishing
Services

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Johnson, Jessica, [date] author.
Title: Biblical porn : affect, labor, and pastor Mark
Driscoll's evangelical empire / Jessica Johnson.
Description: Durham : Duke University Press, 2018. |
Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2017046939 (print) |
LCCN 2017051059 (ebook)
ISBN 9780822371601 (ebook)
ISBN 9780822371366 (hardcover : alk. paper)
ISBN 9780822371533 (pbk. : alk. paper)
Subjects: LCSH: Mars Hill Church (Seattle, Wash.)—
History. | Big churches—Corrupt practices—
United States. | Fundamentalist churches—
Clergy—Conduct of life. | Driscoll, Mark, 1970–
Classification: LCC BX7800.F8634 (ebook) | LCC
BX7800.F8634 S43 2018 (print) | DDC 280/.4—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2017046939

Cover art: Mark Driscoll preaching at the Mars Hill
Ballard Campus, 2008. © Lauren Greenfield.
Courtesy of Lauren Greenfield/INSTITUTE.

Contents

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the people of Mars Hill Church who invited me into their homes and visited my neighborhood, sharing stories, lives, and friendship. Their vulnerability was a risk and a responsibility for which I am forever appreciative.

From the outset, I encountered institutional barriers to this research, obstacles that shifted in form as my position within the academy grew increasingly insecure. From 2012–2017, the period during which I did much of the interviewing and writing that comprises this book, I was lecturing at the University of Washington as a contingent faculty member in the Department of Anthropology; the Department of Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies; and the Comparative Religion Program. I would like to thank the students with whom I worked in various classrooms covering a wide range of subjects. Whether we were discussing books I was thinking through for research purposes or whatever I was writing at the time, their intellectual curiosity and engagement was a great support.

I have had the good fortune of meeting many wonderful colleagues on the road. A particularly generative space for taking risks was the Religion, Affect and Emotion group within the American Academy of Religion. I would like to thank Gail M. Hamner and Donovan Schaefer for organizing stimulating panels and including my work in the mix. Donovan also offered trenchant critique as a reader of this manuscript, pushing my thinking in productive directions, encouraging nerve on the page.

My deep gratitude goes to Sean McCloud for offering, insisting, to read chapters of this manuscript before I even thought to ask. I am thankful for his generosity in providing feedback throughout various stages of writing with such a perceptive and kind editorial voice. Sean also introduced me to Jason Bivins, another scholar of American religion, who was a wonderful conversational partner and invaluable set of eyes as I revised this manuscript.

Jason's suggestions facilitated improvisation, his commentary affording both insight and freedom. I am thankful for his generous spirit as a scholar.

Kathryn Lofton and John Modern invested in this project at a critical juncture. Katie's fierce encouragement was an incredible gift. My thanks also go to Joseph Masco and Kevin Lewis O'Neill for their thoughtful comments on early paper presentations, as I began playing with the concepts that generated the arguments of this book. I am grateful to Gregory Seigworth for organizing the Worldings/Tensions/Futures Affect Theory Conference in 2015, which provided an exciting venue for talking research. I would particularly like to thank Lawrence Grossberg, Gillian Harkins, Jason Read, and Tony Sampson for conversation and collegiality, as well as the organizers of the panel to which I contributed, Sophie Bjork-James and Yunus Dogan Telliel.

Finally, I wish to thank Miriam Angress and Sara Leone for their dedicated editorial support at Duke University Press. In addition, I would like to thank the editors and anonymous reviewers for journals and collections in which sections of this manuscript have previously appeared. Passages from the Introduction were published in the volume *Feeling Religion*; sections of chapter 1 appeared in *Feminist Studies* Vol. 43 (1) and *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* Vol. 33 (2); passages from chapter 3 appeared in the collection *New Views on Pornography*; sections from chapter 4 were published in the third edition of *Religion and Popular Culture in America*. I would also like to thank the Wenner-Gren Foundation for supporting the initial stages of this research, as I was investigating the politics of gay marriage legalization in Washington State for my dissertation on that subject.

Although it is highly unusual for Christians to publicly demonstrate outside a church against the mishandling of administrative and spiritual matters, it was not my first experience standing among protestors a stone's throw from Mars Hill's parking lot. While the issues cleverly summarized in protest slogans on placards raised important questions through which to engage passers-by on their way to worship, it was a thirty-minute video posted to the church website that inspired ex-members to rally behind the cry, "We Are Not Anonymous." That video began with Pastor Mark Driscoll sitting down in a simple wooden chair in the imposing Bellevue sanctuary, his figure flanked by rows of empty seats rather than large screens, the pulpit lectern onstage out of focus behind his left shoulder. The camera angle was such that it felt as though he was facing me from where I sat with laptop open at my desk. His complexion was ruddy but grizzled with salt-and-pepper stubble. The only prop that appeared throughout his delivery was a leather-bound Bible, which he physically and verbally gestured with and to in the video's opening moments:

> Hi, Mars Hill, Pastor Mark here. I wanted to give you a bit of an update on the season that we have been in and continue to be in. I was thinking about it and when I was seventeen years of age Jesus gave me this Bible through a gal named Grace who is of course now my wife, and Jesus saved me when I was nineteen, in college as a freshman, reading this Bible, and I started opening this Bible when I was twenty-five and Grace and I were a young married couple in our rental home. We felt called to start Mars Hill Church and so we would have some people over for a Bible study and there was not a lot of people so we didn't have a full service, instead I would sit in this chair and I would open this Bible and just teach a handful of people, or a few handfuls of people that would show up in our living room, and that grew to be Mars Hill Church. Now that I'm forty-three, almost forty-four, looking back it's, it's overwhelming if I'm honest, it's

> shocking and amazing and staggering and wonderful. What Jesus has done has far exceeded even what I was praying for or hoping for or dreaming of.[1]

After this introduction littered with references to the Bible in his hands, a material manifestation of God's hand in Mars Hill's successful growth as well as his own spiritual authority, Driscoll explained that the purpose of this video was to communicate "in a way that is godly," by "directly" addressing congregants in a manner that was intended "as a means of loving you and informing you."[2] Within the first five minutes of this performance publicly disseminated online yet purportedly broadcast for a particular audience of intimates, Driscoll made the statement that many I spoke with attributed with triggering the protest:

> During this season as well, I have been rather silent and there are some reasons for that. First of all, we, including myself, needed to determine what exactly was happening. If I'm real honest with you, at first it was just a little overwhelming and a bit confusing. . . . As well, one of the things that has been complex is the fact that a lot of the people we are dealing with in this season remain anonymous. And so we don't know how to reconcile, or how to work things out with people because we're not entirely sure who they are, and so that has, that has made things a little more complex and difficult as well.[3]

Stunned, I looked at my browser loaded with tabs open to sites with names such as Joyful Exiles, Mars Hill Refuge, Repentant Pastor, and We Love Mars Hill, where multiple testimonies to spiritual, emotional, and financial exploitation were posted with the authors' names clearly identified. My initial sense of betrayal seemed unreasonable given I had no personal attachment to any of the people in these stories, had not seen Driscoll preach live for years, and had never considered him an authority figure given I did not and never have self-identified as a Christian.[4] I was not the video's intended audience; there was no rationalization, let alone words, for how I felt. I was not physically shaking as I watched Driscoll lie to my face through the computer screen, but my agitation was palpable and did not recede during the entirety of his message. Even more disconcertingly, I found myself not only hoping but also believing that he was going to change course and repent of

his sin, as he had admonished audiences repeatedly and vehemently to do. I kept waiting for an acknowledgement of the specific charges of abuse, and the suffering that abuse had done to those who had the courage to openly testify to its prolonged spiritual and psychological toll, including the inability to trust religious authority or step foot into a church. When that did not happen, instead of doubting Driscoll, I started wondering if I had misheard or misunderstood. In a sense, I kept the faith alive until the final minutes of his message:

> Lastly, many of you have asked myself and other leaders, how can we be in prayer? I genuinely appreciate that. I would say, pray for your local leaders, they're dealing with things that, that I'm not dealing with . . . and, ah, there are some things in this season that are just, they're just, they're strange . . . ahh . . . unique. For example, at one of our churches, someone is folding up pornography and putting it in our pew Bibles. Just, all kinds of things in this strange season, so that when the lead pastor gets up and says, "Hey, if you're new or not a Christian, we've got some free Bibles in the pew, feel free to pick one up and go to page whatever for the sermon," and they open it up and they're exposed to pornography, and this can be adults or children, and so now there's a team having to go through our Bibles and take the pornography out to make sure their Bibles are clean on Sundays.[5]

The working title of my book on the church had been *Biblical Porn* for a couple of years. I was also in the process of writing a chapter on spiritual warfare, and never was my sense of it so keen as when I unexpectedly burst out laughing at this story's end. It was a full body laugh that erupted from my gut and lasted a long time, but not because I found the act of vandalism described particularly funny. After all the lies I had listened to, I highly doubted the authenticity of this anecdote, but that did not make it any less affective.

"Affect" is widely theorized across disciplines within the humanities and social sciences, but rarely ethnographically investigated as intersubjective intensities with political effects that traverse time and space. In this light, the empirical examination of affect complicates distinctions between macro- and micropower, what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari call the "molar" and the "molecular"—a becoming-other that they describe as the

"microphysics of desire."[6] The definition of affect offered by Spinoza and taken up by many political theorists, among them Brian Massumi, is "the power 'to affect and be affected.'"[7] Massumi writes, "Thinking *through* affect is not just reflecting on it. It is thought taking the plunge," a process of change that is "the first stirrings of the political, flush with the felt intensities of life."[8] Massumi describes affect on the whole as a "virtual co-presence of potentials" through which "power comes up into us from the field of potential. It 'in-forms' us."[9] The clunky hyphenate used by anthropologists to describe ethnographic fieldwork, "participant-observation," becomes usefully troubled in the examination of affect—participant-observation does not occur *in* the field, it is *of* the field.

Laughter is such a field. Philosopher William E. Connolly describes laughter as "a manifestation of surplus affect," which can inspire "side perceptions at odds with the dominant drift of perception and interpretation" such that the flow of thought is interrupted to "open a window of creativity."[10] Massumi states that laughter is one of the most powerful affective expressions because it interrupts a situation.[11] It was not what Mark said that had made me laugh, but the sense that we were sharing an inside joke. This surplus affective value did not register in his rhetoric, reside in a commodity, or remain self-contained, but manifested as conviction so unfocused that it emitted both within and without me. After the video ended, I sought to interpret and identify what I was feeling in emotional terms and settled on paranoia, figuring this irrational response would quickly subside. After all, Mark's employ of hyperbole and humor to excite and seduce audiences were renowned and considered among his gifts and strengths as a communicator. However, rather than fading, the intensity and unpredictability of sensations impossible to pin down kept me awake nights and indoors at my desk scanning the Internet for the unknown and unknowable. Information? Affirmation? Safety? And from whom or what, exactly?

At first, I rationalized my feelings in terms that I could understand and articulate as a feminist anthropologist—social justice. Put simply, I desired recognition for those whose suffering went unacknowledged. Despite its good intentions, such an explanation was no excuse for the disturbing and overpowering need I had to do something without knowing what that could be, other than endlessly tracking the explosion of media coverage surrounding Driscoll and the church. A few days after the anonymous video's release,

Mark began blogging on the topic of spiritual warfare, a six-part series that ended the same week in late August when he preached what would be his last sermon from the Mars Hill pulpit.[12]

While his opening posture and closing story provided the perfect tactile validation for my book's title beyond anything I could ever dream or script, it was not until I asked for permission to join the protest with former Mars Hill members via a public Facebook page entitled "We Are Not Anonymous" that its affective value became clearer. I had come "under conviction," but not of my own sinful nature and need for salvation. I did not become born-again in Christian terms, but I had to confront the troubling reality that I had desired to believe in "Pastor Mark." This was a desire that I did not feel I deserved, nor frankly wished to own, given I had never sacrificed for the church nor ideologically seen eye-to-eye with Driscoll. That video haunted me with surplus affect, both possessed and inhabited, that was not truly mine.

Anthropologist Susan Harding notes that when social scientists have investigated why people convert to Christianity, they inevitably deduce individuals have good reason to be "susceptible, vulnerable, and in need of something, so the question becomes 'Why? What's wrong? What's unsettling?' Or, 'what's setting them up? How have they been predisposed to convert?' "[13] In turn, accounts of various ritual practices and psychological techniques that catalyze transformation from one worldview to another posit conversion as a kind of brainwashing.[14] Harding describes her own experience of coming under conviction in terms of being "caught up in the Reverend Campbell's stories—I had 'caught' his language—enough to hear God speak to me when I almost collided with another car that afternoon. Indeed, the near-accident did not seem like an accident at all, for there is no such thing as a coincidence in born-again culture."[15]

By contrast, Driscoll was not witnessing to me personally in the video, nor was he using a biblical grammar that opened narrative gaps through which to insert myself as unbelieving listener. Rather than a sacred rite of passage, his concluding remarks conjured the folding of pornography into pew Bibles—a profane joke that complicated our subject positions of speaker/listener and believer/nonbeliever, given its ambiguity. I could not be certain whether the prank was *on* or *by* him. Semiotics was an unhelpful tool of analysis, as this affective process was unnecessarily dialogical and therefore

porously open-ended; mediation occurred bodily without becoming meaningful. Harding describes coming under conviction as chronological and spatial—a crossing from the terrain of disbelief into a liminal space of suspension or limbo that precedes the (potential) conversion from non-Christian into born-again believer. Clearly defined, preordained subject positions of speaker-saved and listener-lost are acknowledged by individuals who choose to enter into a relationship situated through a specific lexicon with a particular motive. Instead, I experienced conviction as irreducibly social while sitting alone at my desk.

I had no language for what I was experiencing, nor had I "caught" Pastor Mark's. I could not discern divine providence or impose self-will in explanations for what was bodily unfolding. I did not ask *why* I wanted to believe Mark would repent to the extent that I even doubted myself, as there were no religious or personal reasons for such an investment; instead, I kept asking *how*. This experience of conviction was akin to what William Connolly describes as belief that confounds cognitive understanding, belies agentive autonomy, and disrupts the individual's prerogative to judge what is true—"spiritual dispositions to action that both flow below epistemic beliefs and well up into them . . . the tightening of the gut, coldness of the skin, contraction of the pupils, and hunching of the back that arise when an epistemic belief in which you are invested has been challenged."[16] In this study, I examine conviction as surplus affective value which troubles felt distinctions between the sinner and saved, profane and sacred, subject and object, and spiritual and worldly. While I could not have articulated it at the time or during the many months that I sought the fellowship of former Mars Hill members over longtime friends, the disjuncture that I experienced was not a matter of worldview but the matter of worlding.[17] Anthropologist Kathleen Stewart suggests that writing culture is "an attunement, a response, a vigilant protection of a worlding."[18] In this mode, the ethnographer is instrument rather than authority.

SUBJECT AND ARGUMENT: BIBLICAL PORN

From 1996–2014, Mars Hill Church of Seattle multiplied into fifteen facilities in five U.S. states, serving approximately 13,000 attendees as Pastor Mark Driscoll's preaching on "biblical oral sex"[19] earned him international celebrity: "Men, I am glad to report to you that oral sex is biblical. . . .

Ladies, your husbands appreciate oral sex. So, serve them, love them well."[20] In sermons such as "The Porn Path"[21] and an e-book called *Porn Again Christian* (2008),[22] Driscoll stated in no uncertain terms that "free and frequent"[23] sex between a husband and wife is necessary to assure fidelity within Christian marriages and secure masculine leadership within evangelical churches. "Our world assaults men with images of beautiful women," he warned. "Male brains house an ever-growing repository of lustful snapshots always on random shuffle. . . . The temptation to sin by viewing porn and other visual lures is an everyday war."[24] As Driscoll claimed, "sometimes pornography is in an image, sometimes it is in your imagination,"[25] his sexualized hermeneutic revealed women's body parts cloaked in biblical metaphor.[26] Meanwhile, question-and-answer sessions during services encouraged congregants to text queries that materialized as sound-bite confessions to sins and desires on large screens surrounding Mars Hill's sanctuary. The church's employ of visual and digital media served to amplify Driscoll's sermonizing on sex by conscripting audience participation in animating a pornographic imaginary, legitimizing his spiritual authority.

Biblical Porn: Affect, Labor, and Pastor Mark Driscoll's Evangelical Empire examines how Driscoll's audiences were affectively recruited into sexualized and militarized dynamics of power through the mobilization of what I call *biblical porn*. By *biblical porn*, I mean the affective labor of mediating, branding, and embodying Driscoll's teaching on "biblical" masculinity, femininity, and sexuality as a social imaginary,[27] marketing strategy, and biopolitical instrument. My use of *affective labor* builds upon Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's theorization: "contact that can be either actual or virtual . . . [care] entirely immersed in the corporeal [while] the effects it produces are immaterial . . . social networks, forms of community, biopower."[28] In theorizing biblical porn as affective labor, I signal the critical potential of examining "porn" not simply as image or text, but also as imaginary and industry—or, more precisely, imaginary *as* industry. This industry is not interpretive but affective; it consists of material and immaterial labor that is social and embodied, producing surplus affective value that can be manipulated and exploited—the "carnal resonance" of conviction. In repurposing the term *carnal resonance* as used by porn studies scholar Susanna Paasonen, I play with the notion of resonance as a concept that she employs to "[make] sense of the movement between porn and its users."[29] In her formulation,

carnal resonance "describes the force and grab of porn—its visceral appeal and power to disturb," as well as "how users attach themselves to porn sites, images, videos, and texts and recognize some of the carnal sensations depicted on the screen."[30] She states that her project is "to tackle the interactive nature of such attachments, for the central question is pornography's power to touch and move us, to arouse our senses and interest alike."[31] In a similar if distinct manner, I wish to examine the affective entanglements, attachments, and labor of biblical porn by theorizing conviction as social and in process, visceral and disturbing, of bodily sensation and collective desire.

"Porn" in this instance is not cinematically portrayed onscreen or online through sexually explicit imagery such that clear distinctions can be drawn between producer and consumer. However, biblical porn is usefully considered in light of what porn studies scholar Stephen Maddison calls "immaterial sex"—the "creative and affective energies commodified in porn production."[32] Maddison examines how immaterial sex constitutes "the entrepreneurial voyeur" such that "porn consumption, sexual subjectification and enterprise culture mutually reinforce one another."[33] This immaterial-entrepreneurial dynamic produces forms of sex and sexual agency through neoliberal "free market" logics of governmentality that regulate sexual autonomy and exploit immaterial labor while proliferating sexual variation and "altporn" for the sake of capital.[34] In contrast, biblical porn is not generated through sexual performances per se, though it does function on an affective register with entrepreneurial drive as a tool of promotion and evangelizing. By framing "porn" as "biblical," I wish to decenter representational, discursive, and ideological modes for thinking and feeling sexual imaginaries, their bodily expression, affects and effects. In the immaterial sex of biblical porn, "emotional and physiological energies, desires, and sensations" are created and capitalized on during the affective labor of its cultural production and mediation as a social imaginary, marketing strategy, and biopolitical instrument.[35]

Pornography is typically considered in terms of the surveillance of pleasure—in Michel Foucault's language "knowledge of pleasure: a pleasure that comes of knowing pleasure."[36] Foucault argues that the pleasures of the body are socially and historically constructed and contextualized through discourse; changeable and politically put to use to constitute subjects and desires and to regulate bodies and populations. Biblical porn does

this work too, constituting Mars Hill congregants as gender-specific sexual agents and sinners who are trained to normatively embody masculinity, femininity, and sexuality. However, the affective labor of biblical porn also recruits and perpetuates visceral, virtual, and visual processes that are non-intentional, animating conviction in calibrated yet uncontrollable ways that are not always pleasurable or intelligible. I reassess conviction in terms of gut feeling which signals desires and passions simultaneously biological and social, examining how they activate and contaminate habits of the everyday. In response to political theorist Wendy Brown's dismissal of conviction as a "performative speech act of discursive subjection" that renders individuals "unfree to act,"[37] I argue that the political valence of conviction lies in its affective capacity to register as a belief that feels like one's own, but may be steered toward inspiring voluntary and involuntary affective labor. At Mars Hill, such affective labor entailed a variety of service opportunities that primed the church's atmosphere and fostered networks of care, such as worship band, media production, security team, and children's ministry. In addition, affective labor was enlisted through inadvertent yet habituated bodily responses of the nervous system—gut feelings, belly laughs, glances, and gestures—that excited, agitated, and exploited a desire to believe.

The orchestration of this affective labor was articulated in terms of "air war" and "ground war," with the aim to "rally one thousand churches behind one pulpit."[38] As Mars Hill's facilities multiplied, imperatives to support the church's propagation were framed in violent terms of combat-readiness and the sexualized embodiment of "visual generosity" and "sexual freedom" by Christian wives. The theology of sex proscribed by Driscoll as "biblical" generated an evangelical genre of "social pornography"[39] that was contingent on the "free" industry of congregants who contributed to its production, distribution, and diffusion. Practices of confession and processes of imagination were bodily and virtually mediated and networked via nervous systems and fiber optics. In turn, fear, shame, and paranoia circulated within and well beyond Mars Hill's facilities as political and economic affective value.

This religiously inflected form of biopower directed a collective sense of conviction in support of Driscoll's vision for Mars Hill's empire, a strategy of biopolitical control that reverberated throughout the church's ministry, including sermon study in small group settings, social media forums, men

and women's "training days," church leadership "boot camps," and "military missions" that gifted *Porn Again Christian* to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Foucault's theorization of "biopower," he discusses a "power over life" that invests "life through and through" via two poles—one that disciplines the body to increase its usefulness, efficiency, and docility; and one that invests in biological processes such as propagation, health, and housing—to further systems of economy.[40] Biopower includes myriad techniques for the subjugation of bodies via institutions such as the family, army, hospital, and school—mechanisms of surveillance and regulation that become internalized to inspire self-governance—while "biopolitics" includes "regulations of the population," such as "the harnessing, intensification, and distribution of forces, the adjustments and economy of energies."[41] Sex is a primary instrument through which this political technology of life functions, "deployments of power" that are "directly connected to . . . bodies, functions, physiological processes, and pleasures."[42] In my examination, biopower is operationalized through what I call an *affective ecology* of "Evangelical Empire"—an assemblage of agency that includes nonhuman bodies such as media technologies, collective moods, and invisible demons—through which relations and strategies of power excite and contaminate, rather than strictly police or regulate. This form of biopower is regenerative of populations, what cultural theorist Jasbir K. Puar calls "systems of unleashed circuitry," which are "exuberant and fertile."[43] Writing on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "assemblage," Puar notes, "Assemblage is actually an awkward translation—the original term in Deleuze and Guattari's work is not the French word assemblage, but actually Agencement, a term which means design, layout, organization, arrangement, and relations—the focus being not on content but on relations, relations of patterns. . . . Assemblages do not privilege bodies as human, nor as residing within a human/animal binary. Along with a de-exceptionalizing of human bodies, multiple forms of matter can be bodies—bodies of water, cities, institutions, and so on. Matter is an actor."[44]

The affective political and economic value of biblical porn extended beyond the monitoring and management of normatively "biblical" gender and sexuality, generating the social conviction and self-sacrifice necessary for Mars Hill's ongoing expansion beyond reason or resources—against the moral conscience of leaders, financial capacity of the church, and

"man-power" available at local facilities. Precarity intensified as locations multiplied and congregants were increasingly exposed to risk in spiritual, emotional, and material ways, a constant sense of insecurity that infused the very constitution of work.[45] Servitude was fought for as though it were salvation at the church via an affective ecology of fear tinged with hope. I call this affective ecology "Evangelical Empire" to signal a dynamic of biopower through which the circulation and amplification of affect via social processes of media(tion) agitated and infected Mars Hill congregants across its multiple facilities and within their homes. In linking "Evangelical" to "Empire," I index not only Driscoll's vision for the church's multigenerational legacy, or its model of entrepreneurial enterprise in the style of multinational corporations, but also how the affective ecology of Mars Hill inspired processes of militarization and sexualization that enlisted affective labor and self-sacrifice. In this sense, empire is not a totalizing, global form of domination, but a globally directed microphysics of desire that conflates freedom and control, perpetuating and exploiting conviction as bodily affect to political and economic effect. The affective ecology of Evangelical Empire is an assemblage of human and nonhuman bodily encounter that involves voice, tone, mood, atmosphere, image, imagination, demons, and technologies in ways that importantly transgress representational, discursive, or ideological systems to generate and network conviction as surplus affective value.[46]

Thus, this dynamic of biopower is less predicated on technologies of self—the disciplinary forms of self-governance and self-care that factor into Foucault's formulation. In the affective orchestration of Evangelical Empire, church discipline was a distinct mechanism through which biopower operated, priming a perpetual sense of impending threat (e.g., for "gossiping" or "divisiveness"), as well as inspiring and extracting as much affective labor as possible in order to "plant churches" and "make disciples."[47] For Foucault, the deployment of sexuality "engenders a continual extension of areas and forms of control," particularly "the sensations of the body, the quality of pleasures, and the nature of impressions, however tenuous or imperceptible they may be."[48] In theorizing biopower, he turns to a *history of sexuality* in order to show how "this idea of sex took form in the different strategies of power," such as the "hysterization of women" or "psychiatrization of perversions."[49] By shifting this discussion to the *biopolitics of sex*, rethinking the

deployment of sexuality in relation to the affective labor of biblical porn, I critically reassess the political impact of bodily sensation, tenuous pleasure, and imperceptible impression as vital materialities[50] in this "globalized" age of media convergences. Brian Massumi suggests the necessity for such reexamination when he states, "An American president can deploy troops overseas because it makes a population feel good about their country or feel secure, not because the leader is able to present well-honed arguments that convince the population that it is a justified use of force. And the media are not mediating any more—they become direct mechanisms of control by their ability to modulate the affective dimension."[51] Biblical porn was affectively networked and biopolitically disseminated, penetrating what Massumi calls the "micropolitical realm," where "mass affect" proliferates and becomes more diffuse, distributed, and insidious.[52] For years, scandal and controversy surrounding Driscoll and the church only served to circulate and amplify the affective value of fear and hope, shame and pride, and paranoia and conviction.

Within the field of porn studies, there is scholarly attention paid to what is called *sexualized culture*, a term with myriad uses that can mean anything from "a contemporary preoccupation with sexualized values, practices, and identities; the public shift to more permissive sexual attitudes; the proliferation of sexual texts; the emergence of new forms of sexual experience; the apparent breakdown of rules, categories, and regulations designed to keep the obscene at bay; our fondness for scandals, controversies, and panics about sex."[53] At Mars Hill, these various facets of sexualized culture converged in productively troubling ways. "Social media" (including screens, glances, texts, amps, laughter, and gut feeling) generated biblical porn as an imaginary of surveillance, strategy of branding, and biopolitical technology of contagion. Through sermon vodcasts, audio downloads, and church blogs, the practice of confession was commodified for public consumption. This industry proliferated and intensified congregants' sense of sin, affectively convicting them via a feedback loop that simultaneously validated Driscoll's spiritual authority. The affective labor of biblical porn gleaned website downloads that advertised Driscoll's charisma, popularity, and books, while his sexualized hermeneutic garnered media headlines, cultural influence, and market value as he became a key player in, and money maker for, a celebrity-driven "evangelical industrial complex."[54] In her groundbreaking study of

hardcore pornography, Linda Williams writes, "I had begun with what I thought to be an invulnerability, even a disdain for the texts of pornography, but was then surprised to find myself 'moved' by some works. What was the place of this vulnerability in writing about the genre?"[55] I felt similarly about my field site and found myself moved by its space and people in unexpected ways. However, the vulnerability I experience in writing about biblical porn is distinctly affective—I can repeat Driscoll's jokes verbatim and hear his voice as I do.

Digital media and communication studies scholar Tony Sampson writes that pornography serves as a cultural amplifier that, among other objects, generates a world "awash with hormones and consumer goods," in which "affects are significantly passed on, via suggestions made by others, more and more through networks."[56] In her examination of how power operates through couplings of freedom and control via the Internet, digital culture scholar Wendy Hui Kyong Chun speaks of this conflation as a response to the Cold War and the successes and failures of containment.[57] She discusses the Internet as a site of moral panic whose intensity far surpassed the actual viewing of cyberporn in the mid-1990s. It was the fear and paranoia that children would glimpse online pornography that made it "hypervisible," not the number of images themselves.[58] In examining the affective labor of biblical porn, I demonstrate how biopolitical control has gone viral through affective networks of suggestion that supersede institutional regulation or jurisdiction of the state, as the surplus value of conviction is incited and exploited across religious and secular divides.

METHODOLOGY: ETHNOGRAPHY AND AFFECT

This study is based on a decade (2006–2016) of gathering ethnographic evidence. From 2006–2008, I conducted fieldwork at Mars Hill's headquarters in Ballard, a centrally located Seattle neighborhood, as the church began multiplying into satellite campuses throughout the city and its suburbs. I regularly attended not only sermons but also gospel classes required for membership; seminars on how to embody biblical gender and sexuality; a women's "training day" called *Christian Womanhood in a Feminist Culture*; and Film and Theology Nights, when Hollywood movies were screened and discussed. Over the span of my fieldwork from 2006–2008, I was unable to receive the permission from Driscoll required by the Institutional

Review Board (IRB) at the University of Washington to conduct formal interviews. However, I was afforded the opportunity to attend any public events open to nonmembers. During the time that I attempted to receive Driscoll's consent, I informally met with several pastors and a deacon in women's ministry to discuss the church's theology, gender and sexuality doctrine, and engagement with popular culture.[59] I also visited a community group gathering in my neighborhood. All of these events were open to nonmembers, and those I spoke with were aware that I was an anthropologist at the University of Washington attending the church to better understand its teaching on marriage for research purposes, given I was investigating the politics of gay marriage legalization in Seattle for my dissertation. Most of the teaching events on gender and sexuality I attended were women-only, while larger gatherings included couples and families.

In the ensuing years as I finished my dissertation, I continued to follow what was happening at the church through local and national media, watched sermons online, and attended a 2011 Easter service held at Qwest Field (where the Seahawks football team plays). In 2012, after teaching at a university in Miami for one year, I returned to Seattle to find that Pastor Paul Petry, one of the leaders fired during my initial fieldwork, had inaugurated the website Joyful Exiles. On this portal, he archived primary documents (e.g., emails with leadership; internal church memos) that detailed his termination and shunning. Although returning to Seattle was not my plan, and re-embarking on fieldwork was not my aim, as the public testimonies to financial, emotional, and spiritual abuse mounted during and after 2012, a sense of urgency took hold. I did not hear God, but I did feel His hand.

Mars Hill's facilities steadily replicated until 2014, when a deluge of evidence surfaced online supporting several accusations against Driscoll. These charges included the surreptitious use of a marketing ploy to cull the buyers' lists necessary to achieve bestselling status for Driscoll's book *Real Marriage: The Truth About Sex, Friendship, and Life Together* (2012).[60] They also identified bullying, micromanagement, and tactics of intimidation and social isolation used to suppress information and stifle dissent.[61] After numerous former leaders posted confessions seeking repentance for sinning as—and being sinned against—church administration, a protest was organized outside the main facility in August 2014, which had shifted from

Seattle to suburban Bellevue.[62] From 2014–2016, in the aftermath of attending this protest, I spoke with former leaders and members who worked for the church during the stages of its foundation, expansion, and dissolution. These conversations and interviews suggested that I was neither immune from, nor had left behind, affective entanglements and labor that I was not privy to during my initial years of fieldwork.

Initially, my requests for interviews among those who began going public with their stories went unanswered, and I did not push. However, as the scandals continued and leaders began leaving the church in increasing numbers, publishing confessions on personal blogs and sites such as Repentant Pastor, media attention paved the way for more opportunities to speak with those I had once only seen from a distance onstage. I did not arrive at Mars Hill Bellevue and walk down the line of protestors holding signs passing out business cards; I stood with them and held one myself.[63] After the protest, I had the opportunity to meet with people formally and informally, including a long-standing weekly gathering of former male members who sat around a bonfire and talked through their experiences in the aftermath of leaving Mars Hill; a women's event for former members who wished to testify to their ongoing experiences of living with the affects and effects of spiritual abuse; and at dining room tables during holidays and neighborhood potlucks. My interviews with individuals and couples were in coffee shops, homes, and breweries; conversations were had after music shows and films. Since my field site was my home, people from Mars Hill quickly became an integral part of my social circle and we developed intimate friendships born out of shared sensibilities rather than aligned ideologies.

My analysis includes interview material and is also informed by casual conversations with former leaders and members, church documents leaked and curated on the Internet, and online confessions and testimonies by former leaders and members. Some of those I spoke with said that their names could be used, but many preferred to remain anonymous or "off the record," aside from written documents publicly accessible. For this reason, I have eliminated all personally identifying information from dialogue and interview material. The only exception to this rule is Pastor Mark, given his public stature. Often, those I spoke with had already released testimonies and confessions online and specifically asked that I use material from those

sources; thus, when names were attached to these documents, such identifiers remain. At the time of this book's publication, websites full of online testimonies are disappearing as Driscoll gains a new platform for his teaching, much of it recycled from his time preaching at Mars Hill, as a blogger on the faith forum Patheos. While some of this material is edited out of necessity due to length, I keep much of it intact in order to convey the mood, actions, and atmosphere of particular situations and scenes, as well as to reestablish an archive of labor and events erased or elided. I formally interviewed men and women, as well as met with couples in their homes. On the whole, I met with more men than women on an individual basis, but participated in several gender-segregated groups, achieving a balance in my interactions. I also attended larger informal gatherings by explicit invitation. During this stage of the research process, I received exemption from the IRB because the church was dissolving and so much information was publicly available online. In addition to this testimony, I analyze sermons and other audiovisual teaching material produced by Mars Hill spanning the years of 1997–2014; Driscoll's books (electronic and print); media coverage; audio recordings, blog posts, and other teaching and promotional material publicly distributed by the church.

While de-emphasizing the meaning of Driscoll's language, I examine how its onstage, onscreen, and online performance agitated and exploited affective processes during which the space and medium of communication conflated. When I examine texts, films, sermons or speech, I am not strictly doing so in ideological, discursive, or representational frames but as social, embodied processes of communication and mediation. Driscoll's voice, image, expressions, gestures and their affective impact in terms of rhythm, humor, tenor and inflection are a critical focus of my investigation, and I am purposefully promiscuous in my use of affect theory in their analysis. I use *mediation* to signal subjectivity as always already social, a transsubjective encounter of human and nonhuman bodies. As a concept, mediation is particularly useful to the analysis of empirical evidence grounded in the reflexive practice of autoethnography, wherever the "field" may be or might consist of—my laptop, the church sanctuary, or laughter. This approach aligns with what affect theorist Lisa Blackman describes as "processes, practices and affects that move through bodies in ways that are difficult to see, understand and investigate."[64] Blackman suggests that instead of talking about bodies,

we should speak of "brain-body-world entanglements" that entail haptic, or affective, communication.[65] She writes that such processes of mediation do not "require a human subject governed by psychic dynamics of subjectivity or sociality, but a nervous attunement or synchronizing of the body with technology."[66] According to Blackman, practices of suggestion are enacted through brain-body-technology entanglements such that they produce certain effects and affects. In this Introduction's opening moment, despite the space, time and screen between us, Driscoll and I were affectively entangled, but it took an uncontrollable, disturbing laugh to show me how.

In anthropological theory, affect has been described by William Mazzarella as carrying "tactile, sensuous, and perhaps even involuntary connotations," implying "a way of apprehending social life that does not start with the bounded, intentional subject while at the same time foregrounding embodiment and sensuous life."[67] Rather than an emotional state that can be named and is "always already semiotically mediated," according to this definition affect is precognitive, prelinguistic, and prepersonal.[68] As Mazzarella's formulation suggests, affect is difficult to analyze by conventional discursive methods given it is radically grounded in the body to the extent that it cannot be articulated or rendered immediately intelligible in language. Theorizing what he calls "affective space," anthropologist Kevin Lewis O'Neill writes, "Affect as a religiously managed and politically manipulated sensation makes legible a series of spaces that are not necessarily territorial but that are nonetheless deeply political. These include, for example, the felt distance that exists between *us* and *them*."[69] I concur with O'Neill's suggestion that such "broken space" between the profane and sacred, sinner and saved, and local and global must be critically examined in studies of American religion, rather than analytically assumed.

Thus, I examine how fear, hope, conviction, shame, and paranoia circulated to generate what feminist affect theorist Sara Ahmed calls an "affective economy," whereby "emotions play a crucial role in the 'surfacing' of individual and collective bodies through the way in which emotions circulate between bodies and signs."[70] Ahmed's formulation contests the notion that emotions are psychological dispositions or private property—that they come from within a person and then move outward. Instead, "emotions *do things*, and they align individuals with communities—or bodily space with social space, through the very intensity of their attachments."[71] According

to Ahmed, emotions work to mediate the relationships between psychic and social or individual and collective—it is their circulation and capacity to "stick" that creates bonds, involving subjects and objects without residing positively within them.[72] The affective labor of biblical porn came at spiritual, emotional, and bodily cost—immaterial yet visceral processes described to me by former members in terms of a "theology of rape," "spiritual abuse," and a "culture of fear."

Relations of affect and power have been theorized in ethnographic monographs by drawing attention to circuits of everyday sociality embodied in the ordinary, and tracing historical and contemporary performances and policies of the state that intensify a sense of emergent threat in the name of national security.[73] My analysis takes up anthropologist Kathleen Stewart's suggestion that terms such as neoliberalism which serve as shorthand for totalizing systems of politics and economy are insufficient to describe their force in everyday life, whereby "the political" and "the economic" affectively surface as shock, habit and resonance.[74] In his book *Religious Affects* (2015), religious studies scholar Donovan Schaefer provides a useful genealogy of affect theory, which examines tensions between what he calls the Deleuzian and phenomenological branches.[75] His research develops the materialist shift in religious studies by using affect theory to map power relations beyond language and through bodies in order to postulate that animals have religion and religion itself may be considered animal. Schaefer aims to trouble human exceptionalism as a framework uncritically adopted in the study of religion, a commitment that my project also advances insofar as I use ethnographic field methods to examine relationships and experiences that occur between persons and other vital materialities.

Biblical Porn also complicates accounts of evangelical cultural performances and the politics of affect that only consider the aim of conversion.[76] I investigate processes and relations of power that cannot be summarized by hegemonic notions concerning evangelical cultural politics. Anthropologist Susan Harding's ethnographic study of the cultural politics of Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority shows her methodologically "standing in the gaps" between the subject positions of believer and nonbeliever—a "paradoxical space of overlap [that] is also the space of ethnography."[77] Harding's linguistic analysis focuses on rhetoric rather than affect, yet her ethnographic practice of listening "actively and uncritically" to a reverend's witnessing opens a door

whereby she hears God speak.[78] She writes, "Preachers construct such contexts verbally, and life presents them virtually every day—those gaps in the ordinary, when the seams split apart and you encounter the unknown, the unexpected, the uncontrollable, the irrational, the uncanny, the miraculous."[79] I argue that anthropological research into the lived practice of evangelical concepts such as conviction or repentance demonstrates how their political dimensions surpass self-contained "religious" publics and identities, while offering potential for rethinking so-called secular political concepts such as freedom, or formations such as empire.

Joel Robbins called for an anthropology of Christianity in and for itself while positing such research as a risk: "Anyone who has been told in the course of fieldwork that to understand is to convert has a visceral sense of the force of such Christian challenges to the modernist tradition."[80] My ethnographic investigation complicates this notion of risk by privileging vulnerability and uncertainty over researcher control and reflexivity. Through ethnographic engagement with the study of affect and its embodied sociopolitical effect, I demonstrate the critical potential and ethical necessity of reflecting on what anthropologists Peter Benson and Kevin Lewis O'Neill call the "phenomenology of 'doing' fieldwork . . . embedded in the contingency and risk of human relationships."[81] Utilizing ethnographic methods and empirical evidence to analyze dynamics of power animated through circuits of affect suggests underexplored ethical potential and relations of sociality. *Biblical Porn* shows how "ethnography's ethical possibilities are *actualized* when ethnographers change . . . not simply for the self and its interests, but rather for the sake of new kinds of collective affiliations across interpersonal and intercultural boundaries."[82] My examination not only analyzes the affective labor of biblical porn as it impacted the lives of Mars Hill congregants, but also how it unpredictably affected my positionality and stakes as an anthropologist.

When I described my experience of coming under conviction during the "anonymous" video to a former leader—how I trusted Mark would repent to the extent that I questioned myself—he emphatically gestured to my phone on the table as it was recording our conversation and exclaimed, "Put that down! Get that in!"[83] At the wooden table where we sat, I was not the only one taking notes. I used pen and paper; he used a tablet. I had asked permission to record our time together, an interview that lasted nearly six

hours, and whenever there needed to be a pause, he would double-check to see if "we" were recording again.

Many of those I spoke with did not want to be recorded or have their names used. I understood. It was risky. I was asking people who had been socially isolated out of fear of being labeled "gossips" or "divisive" to discuss events that could be read as indictments of themselves and/or others, some of whom were family members or friends that remained connected to Mars Hill after they left. I asked people where they wanted to meet so that they could choose whether they would be more comfortable talking at home or in public. In one Seattle coffee shop in the vicinity of a Mars Hill facility before the church officially disbanded, a former pastor spent much of our thirty minutes together glancing around the premises, informing me when someone associated with the church walked in, eyes darting and brow lightly beaded with sweat. In one home, tears surfaced in the eyes of an ex-pastor as soon as we sat down; later during our conversation, tears welled up in mine. Many confessed that they felt duped and betrayed as well as culpable. There was tension between what was attributable to human will and what was attributable to divine will, individual agency and God's sovereignty. People were not only looking to answer, but also to find answers themselves. None of my "interviews" with former church staff were a one-way affair.

I played informant, too, describing the arguments of my book, experiences at Mars Hill, and fluctuating feelings in the aftermath of its dissolution. In the frantic days after watching the video, I found a link to the public Facebook group We Are Not Anonymous. Without forethought or script, I woke up one morning and wrote a former church leader that I had not met. That lengthy email message is truncated below: "I'm writing for your thoughts on the question of whether my presence would be welcome at the protest this Sunday. . . . I have been reluctant to join anything that would make anyone uncomfortable, especially as I'm a non-Christian. . . . I'm in a strange limbo state where I'm not an 'insider' but not really an 'outsider' either, and it's hard for me to simply watch from the sidelines with all that's happened."[84]

I never omitted that I was not a Christian or pretended to be anything but a feminist anthropologist. Openly informing those I spoke with of my identity was ethical according to my methodological training, yet "positionality" was inadequate to the task of explaining my prolonged

experience of liminality and displacement—a process through which I came to affectively, if not theologically, resonate with former church members. To claim any positionality in my case was feeble—a hollow gesture and ideological fiction in the face of sociality generated out of a disaggregation of self.

Coming under conviction online compelled inquiry into distinctions between the human and nonhuman, matter and language, as well as the boundaries constituted and policed by the categories "religious" and "secular." Language was not the catalyst for a religious conversion; instead, there was a "conversion of the materiality of the body into an event."[85] An intensification of my body's relation to itself occurred in an event-encounter with other bodies—an assemblage that included Driscoll, his Bible, my laptop, tabs open to websites dedicated to former congregants' testimonies, the (supposed) prankster putting pornography into pew Bibles, and Satan. All of these bodies were affective conductors, rendering fault nonsensical and my positionality arbitrary. Rather than ask, "who is to blame?" for Mars Hill's decline, better to ask, "what were the affective conditions necessary for the event-space to unfold?"[86] In other words, how did the church recruit affective labor and mobilize an affective ecology such that fear, hope, conviction, shame, and paranoia circulated to spiritual, economic, and political effect? Ethnographic fieldwork elicits attunement to ecological and phenomenological processes of worlding that signal an ethical dimension to the movement of bodies as they are moved together. By examining my affective entanglements and attachments with the space and to the people of Mars Hill Church, I suggest that the ethical promise of ethnography, and political potential of ethical action, lies in the bodily risks, vulnerabilities, and transformations of the field, an encounter of precarity.

FIELDWORK AND SETTING: MARK DRISCOLL AND MARS HILL CHURCH

As pastors left the church for various reasons, their names were excised from the Mars Hill archive without comment. Thus, the creation story of Mars Hill Church has dramatically changed over the years. In a 2005 visitor's guide, its history was told as such:

> Mars Hill Church began with 12 people studying the Bible and worshipping together in a living room, the shared vision of Pastors Mark Driscoll,

> Lief Moi, and Mike Gunn. The goal was to create a healthy body of believers in what was, at the time, the least-churched city in the least-churched state. The outreach began primarily to the least-churched demographic as well—college men and women in their late teens and early twenties. In October 1996, the growing core launched as an official church with about 100 regular attendees, and numbers increased steadily through word-of-mouth.[87]

It was said that Driscoll "grew up amid the strip clubs, tarmacs, and turf wars of south Seattle, where his family moved from North Dakota a few years after he was born."[88] He was raised a Catholic, but did not consider himself a Christian until his first year at Washington State University, where he majored in communication. His wife, Grace, was his "high school sweetheart," and they married in 1992. In 1996, after leading youth group at another church, Mark felt called to "preach the Bible, plant churches, and train men."[89] I often heard him refer to the earliest days of Mars Hill—when he was twenty-five years old and its size was that of "a small Mormon family"—as meeting in a Seattle rental house where he lived with his wife Grace and their growing family (eventually of three boys and two girls). As more people showed up, the church moved near the University of Washington campus, with offices in what was known as the Earl Building. During this period in the mid- to late 1990s, a didgeridoo might serve as worship music before evening sermons lit by candles, and there was a rotation of preaching pastors; however, Driscoll's voice would soon rise over the others. In 2000, he cofounded the Acts 29 Church Planting Network, which trained and offered seed money to men who felt called to build congregations in the United States and around the world. In 2001, Mars Hill moved to a smaller building in Ballard and launched its first Sunday morning service. In 2003, after nine years of bouncing around Seattle, the church relocated to the repurposed hardware warehouse in Ballard that became known as "central," where I attended my first service. During my ethnographic fieldwork from 2006–2008, I met people who drove from the suburbs to the city in order to attend Mars Hill, a reversal of the stereotypical megachurch model whereby congregants flock to large stadium-sized facilities outside of urban centers. I often met members or nonmembers who drove more than an hour, sometimes two or three times a week, to participate in sermons and other church events.

I began attending Mars Hill when it was known as theologically hardline but culturally hip, appealing to arty urbanites in their twenties and thirties with its raucous music, savvy employ of visual and digital media, and edgy sermons delivered in the sarcastic patter of a stand-up comedian by a brash pastor who was generationally and culturally aligned with his congregation. The man I quickly became accustomed to calling "Pastor Mark" preached live from a stage loaded with high-end sound equipment and beat up guitars. While Driscoll's personalized tag line became "a nobody trying to tell everybody about Somebody," and Mars Hill's publicity proclaimed the church was "All About Jesus," the flat screen TVs projecting Pastor Mark's image throughout the amphitheater seating over 1,200 belied this humble posture. The church's cream-colored lobby, which featured members' artwork, well-stocked bookshelves, and canisters of free coffee, affected the contemplative ambience of a gallery, in stark contrast to its black box exterior and the buzz of the crowd before services. Young guys lingered in the parking lot at all hours beyond an entryway announcing "meaning, beauty, truth, community" within, while worship music thundering outside during band practice in the sanctuary testified to the authenticity of this promise.

In the local press, Driscoll described Mars Hill as theologically conservative but culturally liberal, an anomaly among a growing movement of "emerging churches" attracting a young demographic in U.S. city centers while responding to a "new crisis in American culture fueled by the emergence of a postmodern, post-Christian, neo-pagan culture and the global war on terrorism."[90] Mars Hill was far more orthodox than smaller emerging churches in Seattle: Quest Church, whose Pastor Eugene Cho, a former youth-group leader at the Korean church Onnuri, attracted a more ethnically diverse audience; at the Church of the Apostles (known as COTA), pastored by a black woman named Karen Ward, hands-on arts and crafts and discussion-focused worship commingled with Episcopalian liturgy.

Mars Hill's name came from the Book of Acts, where the apostle Paul stands up in a meeting of Athenians at Areopagus (Mars Hill) and proclaims the gospel. The visitor's guide that I picked up at the information desk stated, "Mars Hill Church seeks to embody [Paul's] mission here in Seattle, a city that prides itself on art, education, culture. . . . To connect relevantly with this time and place we know it is crucial not only to be in contact with popular thought and culture, but to engage it directly."[91] Thus, the church targeted

young Christians and nonbelievers by emphasizing the importance of engaging the natural and creative expressions of the Seattle environment and culture.

When I initially began attending, the church had a vaguely "liberal" reputation among locals, due to its well-advertised acceptance of congregants with tattoos and piercings who liked to drink beer and enjoyed indie music in the style of Seattle bands like Modest Mouse. Mars Hill volunteers also booked bands at the Paradox, one of the only all-ages music venues in Seattle in the late 1990s and early 2000s, where acts transgressed religious and secular divides, flouting stereotypical Christian rock. The Paradox provided an important opportunity for "organic evangelism," or "the patient work of building relationships and looking for natural opportunities." Members were discouraged from "verbally dispensing the gospel" or "confrontationally or propositionally" proselytizing, and the Paradox proved to be a useful space for attracting musicians and artists to Mars Hill services.[92] Film and Theology Nights, where Hollywood films were screened and discussed by way of a lecture, purposefully trained congregants how to critically and biblically engage popular culture, given "movie theaters are modern day techno-pulpits."[93] For young Christians raised in Baptist, Fundamentalist, or Pentecostal churches, Mars Hill offered previously unknown freedom for creative and personal expression. Meanwhile, Pastor Mark preached in the verse-by-verse style of systematic theology, cleaving to a "literal" reading of the Bible and a conservative social doctrine that was communicated with enough fire and brimstone to feel familiar and authoritative.

Mars Hill's website demonstrated that the church aspired to be cutting edge in communicating the gospel within a digital context. The visitor's guide proclaimed that "the Internet is the Greek Marketplace of Acts 17: the place in which people gather to dialogue thoughts, philosophies, opinions."[94] The church's website popped with flashy graphics, was highly trafficked and user-friendly. Its media library included vodcasts of sermons; audio recordings of worship music; film and theology commentary, gender seminar recordings, and other teaching material; interviews with Driscoll; and (positive) media coverage on the church. Mars Hill benefited from its location in the Pacific Northwest, "an open religious field" where "sectarian entrepreneurial churches" could flourish due to the city's infotech labor pool and the preponderance of volunteer interns eager to gain experience in this growing

industry, with Microsoft and Amazon nearby.[95] The church garnered much success and positive press in the early to mid-2000s; in 2006, a survey distributed among 2,000 (non-Catholic) Christian leaders to assess the "50 Most Influential Churches" ranked Mars Hill 22nd.[96]

Four sermon times—9:00 a.m., 11:15 a.m., 5:00 p.m., and 7:15 p.m.—were displayed in large block numerals on a sign at the top corner of the plain black building whose façade remained true to its previous incarnation as a hardware storeroom. Upon entering the main doors, there were no religious symbols in sight. On the side opposite the main lobby was a children's ministry, where parents dropped off their kids (up to age nine) for Bible study during sermons. In the back and off to another side of the sanctuary was a corridor of smaller rooms, where Bible classes were held on Wednesday evenings. The visitor's guide said, "Instead of acting like an institution, Mars Hill Church seeks to be a family," and the feeling in the lobby resonated with this sentiment.[97] During my first visit, it struck me that many people knew each other. The church functioned as a social center well beyond Sunday services and the spatial circumference of its amphitheater. Conversations were neither hushed nor hurried prior to sermons. To-go cups of coffee were common accessories as people looked for friends and stood talking in the spacious lobby or aisles. I spied many undergraduates in Seattle Pacific University and University of Washington sweatshirts who looked like they had just rolled out of bed, exchanging stories about their weekends as they would on campus Monday morning.

Entering Mars Hill's sanctuary felt like walking into a nightclub. The dimly lit lamps cast a dark glow from high-beamed ceilings that bore traces of the warehouse that it used to be, exposing guts of large tubes piping in data, electricity, and air. The black outer walls and dusky hue of the open amphitheater added breadth to its cavernous layout absent any widows or structural cushion to soften tone or image. An iron-wrought cross cast a large shadow against dark-red curtains behind the stage that served as a pulpit. There was a large sound and light board system in the middle of the room, where two DJs in headphones twisted knobs and muted the lighting still more, creating a cool ambience of expectancy. The atmosphere of Mars Hill on Sundays felt like an extension of Saturday night. There were several mikes, two guitars, an electric bass, drum kit, and keyboards on stage. Announcements flashed on the large screens flanking the pulpit and hovering

over aisles, including calls for volunteers to help with facility cleanup and expansion efforts. A schedule of upcoming events also came into view, which varied according to the time of year. During my fieldwork, Mars Hill hosted weekly climbing excursions, Wednesday evening Gasworks Park picnics, a Fourth of July party, a New Year's Eve party, film and theology screenings of movies such as *X-Men 3*, *Grizzly Man*, and *Stranger than Fiction*, and, in August, public baptisms taking place at Golden Gardens Park, not far from Mars Hill's Ballard location.

It was difficult to precisely assess the ratio of women to men, but the crowd was predominantly white, and the number of twenty- to thirty-year-old men in attendance was definitely high. Even at 11:15 a.m., the sanctuary had the vibe of a singles scene. There were a lot of people in their teens and twenties in pairs or small groups. As I walked along the back wall to get a sense of the space, a man in his mid-twenties dressed in long, baggy shorts greeted me with a "Good morning" and smiled. As I moved up to find a seat closer to the stage, a woman wearing jeans who also looked to be in her twenties wished me another good morning. There were no ties or jackets to be found. I noticed many young couples, some with small children. Next to me a woman was introducing her parents to Mars Hill for the first time (I noticed that her father filled out the visitor's information card). The worship band entered and struck the strident chords that signaled people should take their seats, and after a few songs, the amphitheater filled.

To my surprise, there was a baptism onstage. A gangly nineteen-year-old college student stood before the congregation, his face slightly flushed. He wore a rugby shirt and his hair hung down to his shoulders. Speaking slowly and clearly, he explained that he had never known a "rock-and-roll" lifestyle; he had given his life to Christ at an early age, but had never really known what that promise entailed. Now that he had a clearer understanding of this commitment, he felt compelled to demonstrate his true devotion and faithfulness to Jesus by being baptized and born again (again). He stepped down into a wooden tub stage left, was fully dunked under the water by a pastor, and then escorted to the wings as the congregation applauded. I came to understand that baptisms were one of the many metrics used by Mars Hill to prove its success; however, during my fieldwork, I rarely met people who converted at Mars Hill. Mark often referred to "the non-Christians in the room" during his sermons, and purposefully dis-

tinguished us from Christians when it was time for communion and the offering, "if you're not a Christian, or you're a first time visitor, we don't want your money, but if you feel moved to join us today in communion and meet Jesus. . . ." Every time I listened to this refusal-invitation, I wondered how many non-Christians there actually were in attendance. Driscoll also claimed that the political partisanship of the church was split fifty-fifty between Republicans and Democrats, but that was impossible to judge. While abortion was never directly referenced from the pulpit, there were "recovery groups" for people with postabortion trauma (as well as for those "struggling with same-sex attraction"). I read pro-life blog posts by leaders other than Driscoll. Homeschooling children before college was a common denominator among some.

After the baptism, the room went black and the large screens surrounding the stage lit up with a short film produced in-house. The first sermon I attended was the opening night of the 2006 *Vintage Jesus* series, a title animated by a montage of the Seattle skyline, shot from a car at night superimposed with Jesus represented in classical, kitschy, and pop cultural forms. The droning static of guitar that served as the video's soundtrack was echoed in the fuzzy shifting images that blurred the biblical, modern and postmodern—a neon Jesus hanging on the cross; plastic and porcelain figurines of Jesus bearing goofy and somber expressions; the cartoon Jesus of *The Simpsons* and *South Park*. Throughout the sermon series, this visual introduction was laced with voices culled through closing interview segments with the likes of Dustin Kensrue, lead singer and guitarist of the band Thrice (who would later become an elder); stoned visitors to Seattle's annual hemp fest; and James Wellman, Professor of Comparative Religion at the University of Washington, who provided commentary that punctuated the video's soundscape. Wellman's language was edited to supply the exclamation point that suggested a need to take up arms and rally the troops, "Christians who say they're right . . . I think they're fools." This phrase reverberated as the screen went black and the Mars Hill logo, a large M inside a circle, appeared on mock stock footage that started to burn as though lit by a match. The clicking sound of a film reel wound down to a stuttering halt as the logo smoldered. While the affect of this film on me—a graduate student in the initial stages of her dissertation fieldwork of the politics of gay marriage in Washington State—could have been alienation or disgust, I was drawn in.

I couldn't see the reactions of those around me; the Mars Hill sanctuary was dimmer than a movie theater, without prominent exit signs or footlights up the aisles.

When Driscoll entered stage left in dark jeans and a black T-shirt with "Jesus is my Homeboy" stenciled in white, he looked less like a pastor and more like a rock star. The opening of his sermon conflated biblical and local idioms, much like the video:

> Well, we'll talk about Jesus Christ tonight. The name Jesus Christ is actually very indicative of his ministry, a derivative of the Old Testament name Joshua, which means Yahweh God saves. And, ah, Christ means the anointed of God, the anointed one of God come to save God's people. And when we're speaking of Jesus Christ, we're speaking of someone who was born roughly two thousand years ago, in a dumpy, rural hick town . . . like Kent, essentially, is what we say at Mars Hill.[98]

His pacing just right, Pastor Mark grinned to give his audience a chance to laugh at the inside joke only those living in the Seattle area would understand. He was making fun of "rural hicks" in a church purposefully planted in a city, creating an advantageous urban/rural divide such that the former was clearly the superior while situating biblical stories in a present day context that made them timely and relatable. But it was his stand-up shtick, caustically humorous and aggressively confrontational, that struck me. As I watched, his preaching lived up to interviews in which he professed to be a "smart-ass" who taught "straight from the Bible."[99] These sentiments were echoed by attendees and elders who called him a "gifted" speaker who "tells it straight," a pastor who spoke in the voice of "a persuasive friend, cajoling, chiding, throwing in sarcastic jabs" such that the Bible became "understandable."[100] His sermons typically lasted over an hour and were interspersed with personal details and stories that contextualized Scripture in terms of present-day life in Seattle and Mark's experiences as a pastor, husband, and father. Just as the baptismal waters at Mars Hill were not meant to assuage, there was no sugarcoating of the Word in Sunday sermons to make people feel good. Driscoll claimed this style was natural yet deliberate: "It's way more Chris Rock than Puritan. That's just the way I am. When it comes down to culture, a lot of it comes down to humor and rhythm and pace.

One of the most important things I can do is agitate people to the point they want to investigate. Otherwise, they're indifferent."[101] A little later in his sermon, the visceral force of this tactic became clear:

> You may also have seen Jesus in various movies. He's appeared in more than a hundred movies . . . and one of the funniest is *Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby*. I love the fact that Will Ferrell plays the character, he does a good job and it's funny. And he repeatedly prays to baby Jesus . . . he keeps praying, "Thank you, baby Jesus, for my smoking hot wife." And that's become a sort of recurring theme in our house, when my wife, for example, came out the other day and said, "How do I look in these jeans?" I said, "Thank you, Jesus, for my smoking hot wife.' "[102]

At the end of this statement, Mark pulled back his arm with a gloating grin and glint to his eye, then slowly swung it forward, hand open, as though slapping his wife's ass. Hearing the laughter around me, I was convicted; I would write my first book on Mars Hill.

In addition to analogizing his sermon patter to stand-up comedy, Driscoll had a penchant for self-identifying as a "Biblicist" while calling attention to Mars Hill's success through statistics that provided empirical proof of the Holy Spirit at work. This habit reflects a strain of Evangelicalism that sociologist Christian Smith calls "the church-growth movement":

> American evangelicals—especially those shaped by the church-growth movement—assume that numerical growth in a congregation indicates spiritual strength and vitality, which, in turn, indicates possession of the truth. Numerical growth, the assumption suggests, can be taken as an empirical indicator that the Holy Spirit is present and working and leading a congregation into the right beliefs. God must be "blessing" such a spiritually vibrant and faithful church with increased numbers of visitors and members. . . . Understood in this way, then, Biblicism may represent a particular effort to prevent what Biblicists perceive to be ever-menacing external and internal threats to order, security, and certainty.[103]

Driscoll regularly framed talking points with statistics that advertised blessings and asserted authority. In his book on how to mobilize congregants and

grow a church called *Confessions of a Reformission Rev.: Hard Lessons from an Emerging Missional Church* (2006), each chapter title has a number beneath indexing how many people were in attendance during the period of expansion discussed. By chapter 5, "Jesus, Why Am I Getting Fatter and Meaner," the statistic below reads "350–1,000 people," which increased to "1,000–4,000 people" in chapter 6 and "4,000–10,000 people" in chapter 7.[104] Mars Hill also publicized an annual report each year that mapped God's witness through metrics concerning real estate purchases, the local and national multiplication of facilities, the global planting of churches, Easter service attendees (typically the biggest Sunday draw), baptisms at Easter service, baptisms per campus, tithing per campus, attendees per campus, website hits, sermon downloads . . . the list goes on and on.

Driscoll became known as the bad boy of Neo-Calvinism in the United States, featured in articles with titles such as "Young, Restless, Reformed" and "Who Would Jesus Smack Down?"[105] However, in the collection *Listening to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches* (2007), he contributed the first chapter entitled, "The Emerging Church and Biblicist Theology." Editor Robert Webber writes, "[Driscoll] refers to himself as a 'devoted biblicist' and notes, to prove his point, that he supports his theology with more than seven hundred verses of Scripture."[106] Indeed, all 176 footnotes from his chapter but the last two reference the Bible; those remaining point the reader to the websites of Mars Hill Church and the global church planting network he cofounded, Acts 29. By structuring the entirety of his chapter with numeric references to the Bible rather than actual verse—page after page and comma after comma—Driscoll forecloses any interpretation beyond his own while defending this hyperbolic annotation by exclaiming that it is his way of being "faithful" to Scripture.[107] The authenticity of his exegesis becomes measured in a size queen way as he assaults the reader with numbers signifying, rather than engaging, the Word. When I first read this chapter in *Listening*, I took it for an immature prank—a *Punk'd* hermeneutic.

Advances in audiovisual and new media in the late 1990s bolstered Driscoll's ability to communicate a missional message for evangelical pastors eager to engage in "Generation X ministry" by capitalizing on elements of postmodern culture. Driscoll describes the publicity he received after his first message on this topic at a conference hosted by Leadership Net-

work, an organization that was shaping what was then called the "emerging conversation":

> Because I was familiar with the growing curiosity about postmodernism, I spoke on these subjects. I titled my session "The Flight from God," which I stole from existential philosopher Max Picard's book by the same name. That message reportedly outsold any conference tape . . . and it shifted the conversation from reaching Generation X to the emerging mission of reaching postmodern culture. I was not prepared for the media onslaught that came shortly thereafter. Before I knew it, National Public Radio was interviewing me. *Mother Jones* magazine did a feature on our church [and] Pat Robertson's *700 Club* gave me a plaque for being America's "Church of the Week."[108]

While listening to the audiocassette recording of this talk, I was struck by how this "flight" was specifically identified by Driscoll as a "flight against the fear of God"—a spiritual crisis signaled by the popularity of Islam in U.S. cities as Christians worshipped in suburban churches that lived in yesterday.[109] Furthermore, cities were identified as the "epicenter" of "culture wars" whose "tremors are felt underground," which Christians could not sense the reality of because "our faith has become about thoughts, not feelings, moods."[110] Therefore, the church had to attract "artists, mystics, poets, and philosophers" to engage postmodern culture through emotional and affective means that touched the heart, increased the pulse rate, and primed the collective mood. In this way, true faith could be reignited and spread against the rise of Islam while combating the ineffectualness of consumer-driven megachurches to "expose people's hearts" and "command them to repent of sin," affording missional Evangelicals "the authority to proclaim a gospel of freedom."[111] In his admonishment to appeal to feeling rather than thought by emphasizing fear, sin, conviction and repentance (without mention of grace, love, forgiveness or reconciliation), Driscoll laid the groundwork for testimonies to spiritual abuse by ex-staff and congregants.

One former Mars Hill member describes spiritual abuse as "when one narrative voice controls the emotional power of the narrative."[112] In a blog post on this topic he states, "A skeptic, a rationalist, an agnostic, [or] an atheist will not concede that there is a 'spirit' in the 'spiritual abuse' [but it] can be considered emotional abuse that plays out at an interpersonal, even

social level . . . with religious rationalizations."[113] Driscoll's best-selling talk at Leadership Network signaled his affective capacity to control the emotional power of Mars Hill's narrative. He was invested in exposing and manipulating the heart on a collective scale by calls to conviction that would habituate confessions to sin and leverage repentance as a weapon. In turn, as Mars Hill and Acts 29 multiplied facilities on local, national, and global scales, innovations in media technologies audio, visual, and digital bolstered this physical expansion. In effect, Pastor Mark's voice was secured as the space and medium of spiritual authority on mission to Evangelical Empire. In "The Flight [from fear] of God," Driscoll commandeered "freedom" as the "emerging" and "missional" emotional narrative; he also knew that to amplify its bodily affect and extend its political effect, he needed to attract and exploit artists and entrepreneurs with the same atmosphere and buzz that they played roles in affectively priming and globally marketing.

The invitation to speak at the Leadership Network conference came on the heels of Driscoll's mention in what became a canonical text for emerging Christians, Donald Miller's *Blue Like Jazz* (2003), as "Mark the cussing pastor."[114] It also followed a verse-by-verse sermon series on the Song of Songs during which Driscoll routinely preached for over an hour while he "extolled the virtues of marriage, foreplay, oral sex, sacred stripping, and sex outdoors, just as the book teaches, because all Scripture is indeed profitable."[115] Later, he would attribute his "frank but not crass" approach to sermonizing on sex with congregational growth and cultural reformation: "apparently a pastor using words like 'penis' and 'oral sex' is unusual, and before you could say 'aluminum pole in the bedroom,' attendance began to climb steadily to more than two hundred people a week . . . A lot of people got engaged, and young wives started showing up with big baby bellies, a trend that has continued unabated ever since."[116] According to Driscoll, this success generated a buzz to the extent that Christian leaders from around the country began to visit in order to see how Mars Hill was achieving such popularity.

On June 6, 2005, the morning of the Gay Pride Parade in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Seattle, Driscoll gave a sermon on Genesis 38 in which his primary theme was fear of God. As supporters and gay marriage activists marched down Broadway, Capitol Hill's main drag, he told the congregation, "God is supposed to scare you. . . . He will kill sinners, He is meant to

scare you into repentance. It is a myth that God is all about love, that's the God up on Broadway for the parade . . . the fairy, hippy God . . . the pansy Jesus in a purple G-string."[117] As an example of God's wrath, Driscoll proceeded to tell a story in which a church member came to him for counsel. The young man's father had taken his family on a mission to the Philippines. While there, his father met a man in a chat room who became an Internet sex partner. After much success converting people and planting a church in the community, the father emptied his family's bank account and left to be with his lover in New York City without a word. As a result, new converts left the church. Eventually, after much suffering, the rest of the family left the Philippines. Driscoll asked the young man to kneel with him and pray for the repentance or death of his father. Two weeks after their prayer, although he was in good health and had no prior history of heart trouble, the young man's father died suddenly of a heart attack. Driscoll's message during the sermon that day was: "Sin leads to death and fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. . . . Our culture has no moral high ground when it comes to sexuality, marriage, or women. At the Gay Pride parade, they are talking about sex, gender, marriage, relationships. . . . We need to talk about this as Christians. Sex and marriage don't go together in our culture."[118]

Although I heard disclaimers from the pulpit that distinguished Driscoll from "culture war" stalwarts like Jerry Falwell or James Dobson, he regularly drew analogies between the sins of homosexuality and murder without skipping a beat, distancing Mars Hill from old school moral value politics by sermonizing on sin as equal opportunity. At the same time, he repeatedly insisted that the greatest obstacle facing institutional Christianity was its dearth of masculine, entrepreneurial leaders, a crisis exacerbated by Evangelicals who did not view Jesus' death on the cross as a penal substitution for human sin; resisted openly denouncing homosexual acts as sinful; questioned the existence of hell; and, rejected "biblically defined gender roles, thereby contributing to the 'mantropy' epidemic among young guys now fretting over the best kind of loofah for their skin type and the number of women in the military dying to save their Bed, Bath, and Beyond from terrorist attacks."[119]

This comment posted to a thread on *Leadership Journal* was my introduction to Driscoll's response to the "Homosexual Question" beyond Mars

Hill's sanctuary, and my initiation into his way of utilizing controversial topics and online forums to draw attention to Mars Hill's success in one of the "least-churched" U.S. cities:

> Before I begin my rant, let me first defend myself. Lastly, don't just rant that I'm yet another angry fundamentalist who does not understand. First, the guy who was among the first to share the gospel with me was a gay guy who was a friend. Second, I planted a church in my 20's in one of America's least churched cities where the gay pride parade is much bigger than the march for Jesus. Third, my church is filled with people struggling with same sex attraction and gay couples do attend and we tell them about the transforming power of Jesus. Fourth, I am not a religious right wingnut. In fact, when James Dobson came to town to hold the anti-gay rally we took a lot of heat for being among the biggest churches in the state, the largest evangelical church in our city, and not promoting the event in our church because we felt it would come off as unloving to the gay community. The men who hosted the event are all godly men and good friends and I've taken a few blows for not standing with them on this issue. Fifth, I am myself a devoted heterosexual male lesbian who has been in a monogamous marriage with my high school sweetheart since I was 21 and personally know the pain of being a marginalized sexual minority as a male lesbian.[120]

While Driscoll bluntly preempts the criticism he is well aware his choice of words will invite—he can rant, but you cannot—he asserts his authority to speak on the "homosexual question" based on his own balls, aggressively playing offense while on the defense, knowing that what he is about to say will and should offend, but giving the reader reason to think otherwise. Once his renunciations are established, he freely channels the *Jackass* humor he quickly became famous for. While his stance from the pulpit appeared more balanced than "anti-gay" protester James Dobson, his rhetoric on virtual channels overtly signaled not only a less tolerant position than his sermons would suggest, but an affinity for using digital culture to popularize his voice and actualize his image as a rebel with a cause and vision for legacy in Jesus' name and fame.

In 2006, accelerated growth warranted Mars Hill's transition into a multisite structure whereby videos of Driscoll's sermons were projected onto

flat screens hovering over pulpits throughout the city and its suburbs. A facility in suburban Shoreline was an experiment to see if congregants would flock to watch Mark preach via video rather than live. As that satellite campus grew, the Resurgence was launched as an online ministry of the church, serving as a platform for Driscoll's blog posts and an archive of teaching material produced by Mars Hill and Acts 29 pastors, as a way to connect and train young male leaders. While church facilities and community group cells replicated like Starbucks coffee shops within Seattle, its suburbs, and Washington State (including a location in the capital of Olympia that opened in 2008), innovations in visual and digital technology were employed to advance Driscoll's cultural influence within and beyond Christian audiences. Concurrently, increasing demands were placed on members to provide voluntary labor and submit to church authority, as self-sacrifice became embedded in a hierarchical reorganization through bylaw changes that consolidated executive power and enforced shunning procedures against "divisive" staff and congregants. During this upheaval in 2007, all members were required to resign their old membership covenant with the church, then re-sign a new membership contract agreeing to the new bylaws and in turn submitting to stricter forms of church discipline. During this process, three pastors were fired or marginalized to the extent that they eventually resigned, while roughly a thousand members left. Despite this upheaval and the negative press surrounding it, the church continued to replicate and attendance numbers grew. In 2009, Mars Hill launched its first location outside of Washington State, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Later, facilities in Orange County, California, and Portland, Oregon would follow.

However, by 2014, the scandals surrounding Driscoll and the church were rapidly mounting amid intense turnover in staff as pastors began steadily resigning, and attendance numbers dropped from roughly 13,000 to 7,000 that summer. Evidence had surfaced online that supported several accusations against Driscoll, including plagiarism, the surreptitious use of the marketing firm ResultSource to achieve best-selling author status on a variety of book lists, the misappropriation of tithes intended as a "global fund" for churches in Ethiopia and India, and formal charges of bullying and micromanagement lodged by twenty-one former pastors.[121] This escalation in controversy was preceded by prior episodes that suggested Driscoll's use of social media was becoming increasingly offensive to an ever-larger audience,

given his regularly caustic use of Twitter and Facebook. For example, on Inauguration Day in 2013, as President Obama was being sworn in for his second term, Driscoll tweeted: "Praying for our president, who today will place his hands on a Bible he does not believe to take an oath to a God he likely does not know." The *Christian Post* reported, "The tweet has since gained a great deal of controversy; it has been retweeted 3,181 times as of Tuesday morning, and been 'liked' nearly 10,000 times when it was posted on Facebook."[122] In the same article, it was said that blogger Hemant Mehta from the *Friendly Atheist* responded, "I can't tell if that's more or less demeaning than flat-out calling him a Muslim."[123]

In March 2014, Driscoll publicly apologized for his scandalous use of social media in a letter to his congregation that received national coverage. In this message, he said that his "angry-young-prophet days [were] over" and that he would take steps to become "a helpful, Bible-teaching spiritual father."[124] As reported in the evangelical publication *WORLD*, "Among the steps Driscoll planned to take included refraining from posting on social media until 'at least the end of the year' and to doing few, if any, media interviews."[125] However, weeks later, the Executive Elders—Driscoll, Sutton Turner, and Dave Bruskas—announced a new document retention policy that would destroy all staff emails more than three months old. The plan was dropped only after the group's attorney, Brian Fahling, asked the church to "preserve electronically stored information that may contain evidence" for legal action in which the church, Driscoll, and others in church leadership "will be named as defendants."[126] The letter lists anticipated litigation in the areas of "RICO [Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act], Fraud, Conspiracy, Libel, Slander, Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress."[127] One example of such treatment against a staff member publicly surfaced in late May 2014, when Mars Hill elder Phil Smidt refused to sign a noncompete agreement, which by then had become a requirement for all departing church employees who wished to receive severance benefits. This contract prevented anyone from serving in a church leadership position within ten miles of a Mars Hill location. Given the expanse of the church's facilities, this noncompete agreement made it difficult for ex-staff to find pastoral work in western Washington. Nondisclosure agreements were also required, and the threat of legal action invoked distress that haunted leaders long after their employ was terminated. In gathering material for their cov-

erage on the controversy surrounding these agreements, *WORLD* contacted at least a dozen elders and former Mars Hill employees who refused to talk on the record because they feared retribution from the church; one pastor in Charlotte, North Carolina, stated that while it was common for churches to require departing staff to sign nondisclosure agreements, "noncompete agreements cross[ed] over into paranoia."[128]

In the summer of 2014, amid accusations of financial, emotional, and spiritual abuse leveraged against leadership, Mars Hill continued advertising expansion that it could no longer actualize, leading one *Forbes* reporter to call it "the Enron of American churches."[129] After a six-week hiatus from the pulpit while these charges were formally investigated, Pastor Mark resigned from the eldership of Mars Hill Church on October 14, 2014, although he was not deemed disqualified or removed by the board of overseers evaluating his fitness to pastor. At that time, well-respected evangelical author and leader Timothy Keller credited Driscoll with building up "the evangelical movement enormously," even as he admitted, "the brashness and the arrogance and the rudeness in personal relationships—which [Driscoll] himself has confessed repeatedly—was obvious to many from the earliest days, and he has definitely now disillusioned quite a lot of people."[130] However, given he left without any judgment of illegal or immoral activity, Driscoll soon established a website under his name through which to release sermons preached at Mars Hill. He also planted a new church within two years of turning in his resignation, The Trinity Church located in Scottsdale, Arizona, which opened its doors in August 2016. Meanwhile, in Pastor Mark's absence, Mars Hill quickly fell apart, and officially dissolved as a corporate body on December 31, 2014.

CHAPTERS

Chapter 1, "Arousing Empire," investigates how sexualized and militarized dynamics of power were structurally embedded and bodily networked through visual and digital media as the church went multisite and framed its ecclesiology in terms of air war and ground war. I analyze Mars Hill's approach to ongoing expansion in tandem with teaching on entrepreneurial leadership that promoted "authentic" embodiments of biblical masculinity and sexuality. Specifically, I examine how spiritual and military warfare were conflated and conjured in the name of security; Driscoll's use of a public online

forum to rant on the social ills of a "pussified nation" in order to agitate a masculine reformation within the church; how *Fight Club* became a motivational tool of men's ministry; teaching on biblical masculinity articulated in military terms against the rise of Islam in U.S. cities; the short film *A Good Soldier*, which was produced by staff as teaching material for a global church planting conference; and a blog post by Driscoll labeled misogynistic that triggered the first protest I attended outside the church. In this chapter, I analyze how congregants' affective labor on behalf of Mars Hill's security, legacy and growth primed an atmosphere of combat readiness, circulating fear and animating a pornographic imaginary.

Chapter 2, "Under Conviction," theorizes conviction in relation to biopower. Specifically, I analyze events surrounding the firing of a pastor who questioned bylaw changes, and the subsequent shunning of his family, in relation to Driscoll's lecture series *Spiritual Warfare* (2008). In particular, I consider Driscoll's self-proclaimed "spiritual gift of discernment"—through which he could identify insurgent "wolves" and visualize sexual sin—in tandem with procedures of containment, isolation, church discipline, and demon trials. In so doing, I analyze testimony by congregants and leaders exiled for being "unrepentant" and not submitting to the "spiritual authority" of church leadership. I also examine how soldiers' testimonies, battle imagery, and a Film and Theology discussion of *The Hurt Locker* capitalized on logics of U.S. militarism and processes of militarization shaped by the global war on terror to leverage confession, conviction, and repentance as instruments of biopolitical control.

In chapter 3—"Porn Again Christian?"—I concentrate on particular interactive technologies and tropes of social media as they were developed and repurposed by the church to further its cultural influence within and beyond evangelical audiences. While analyzing how digital culture was used to incite, habituate, and proliferate confessions to sexual fantasies and sin, I theorize how a pornographic imaginary was produced through affective labor to circulate paranoia as political and economic value. Specifically, I examine the multimedia production of Driscoll's controversial yet popular sermon series *The Peasant Princess* (2008) to analyze how feminized sin went viral within and beyond the church's facilities. I consider Driscoll's teaching on the imperative that wives embody visual generosity and sexual freedom in his e-book *Porn Again Christian* (2008) alongside confessions

to premarital sex, the withholding of sex, and spiritual/physical adultery narrated onstage and online by Mars Hill women. Finally, I consider how paranoia affectively materialized as a bodily force of habit while discussing my experiences at a women's training day.

In chapter 4, "The Porn Path," I analyze Driscoll's gambit to rebrand his image as authentic to elevate his celebrity. To do so, I consider how baptisms were performed in public parks, before sermons, and in large-scale productions on Easter for marketing in music videos of MTV-quality. This evidence is examined in tandem with a sermon series event—*Porn Again: Pastor Mark and a Former Porn Star Discuss Pornography*—which Driscoll used to promote the book cowritten with his wife Grace entitled *Real Marriage: The Truth about Sex, Friendship and Life Together* (2012). I investigate this media strategy in relation to the financial manipulation that earned Driscoll *New York Times* number one best-selling author status on its How-To/Advice list. Specifically, I consider Driscoll's teaching on porn addiction, during which he discusses neurobiological research regarding "mirror neurons" that cultivate a "porn path," as resonant with the church's misappropriation of tithes to cull the buyers' lists necessary to achieve Driscoll best-selling author stature. In turn, I consider how Driscoll performs expertise in neuromarketing while selling authenticity in order to augment the affective value, monetary profit, and celebrity pull of "Pastor Mark." I also analyze testimonies by women and men that describe the emotional, spiritual, and affective costs of "the harmful teaching of wives as their husbands' porn stars."[131] In this chapter, I argue that "Pastor Mark" the brand name not only supported the expansion of Mars Hill's empire but also an "evangelical industrial complex"[132] that intensified the affective capacity and value of his performances. Thus, this chapter analyzes the virality of joyful encounter and emotional entanglements of shame-interest to consider how the sacrament of baptism and contagion of the porn path were exploited to excite affective labor that amplified Driscoll's authority and trademark.

In chapter 5, "Campaigning for Empire," I examine how the affective infrastructure and atmosphere of the air war–ground war was networked within and beyond Mars Hill facilities to channel teaching, worship, and community engagement through Driscoll's voice and image. In the e-book *Campaigns* (2012), Driscoll describes his vision and strategy for Evangelical Empire by globally marketing materials and locally training disciples through

calibrations of affective labor, technology, and mood. I analyze the cultural production, material effects, and spiritual affects of Campaigns as they facilitated the networking of violence-care among leaders and congregants, examining public confessions and online testimonies that detail tactics of bullying and micromanagement resulting in PTSD-like symptoms. While considering how Campaigns fostered claims of spiritual abuse by church members, this chapter analyzes the visual and affective strategies used to promote tithing for Mars Hill Global, a ministry dubiously linked to congregations in Ethiopia and India.

The conclusion, "Godly Sorrow, Worldly Sorrow," discusses my participation in the protest outside of Mars Hill in August 2014, analyzing empirical and discursive evidence leading up to and in the aftermath of Driscoll's unrepentant retirement from the Mars Hill pulpit. In light of his virtually reclaiming that pulpit by redistributing Mars Hill sermons through his self-titled online ministry while preaching at a new church in Arizona, I consider the spiritual, political, and ethnical valences of repentance. I also reflect on the affective labor of my fieldwork and writing process to argue for ethnography's ethical potential beyond its applied virtues and anthropocentric values. In this discussion, I analyze theoretical debates concerning the political possibilities of love and vulnerability, taking into account the affects and effects of the 2016 election and Mars Hill's fall, concluding with thoughts on Foucault's conceptualization of biopower as it relates to freedom and resistance.

The first and only time I met Pastor Mark was during the gospel class series required of church members. After months of trying to get his approval to conduct formal interviews with members as required by the IRB, I was surprised and glad to see him during the first lecture. He announced that he would be available for questions after his talk, and would stay as long as it took. The documents that I had emailed to another pastor several weeks earlier detailing the questions that I would ask church leaders and congregants, and the rules of consent and confidentiality that I would follow, had been unacknowledged by Driscoll. Getting his permission was no easy task for a host of reasons. A journalist named Lauren Sandler had recently published a book called *Righteous* (2006), which included a scathing chapter on Mars Hill. Sandler was granted access to men and women who she condescended to and fully identified in writing. It was heavy-handed investi-

gative journalism and, from an anthropological perspective, unethical; she betrayed her subjects without a care. Women who were named in the book sounded as though they were wistful for days of independence and freedom pre-Mars Hill, downtrodden by their wifely duties and responsibilities of motherhood, and represented as stereotypical victims brainwashed by church leadership. Although these women publicly condemned their portrayals in *Righteous*, the fallout from the book's publication was still fresh.

When I attended the gospel class, I was taught that the majority of the elders subscribed to a "soft Calvinist" approach, which entailed belief in: God's absolute sovereignty (salvation is given from God alone, not through good works); man's total depravity (we are all born with a sinful nature); predestination or elect salvation (God chooses who is saved by electing them before time began); and penal substitutionary atonement (Jesus died in the place of sinners). The eight-week course culminated in an invitation to sign a Mars Hill Membership Covenant. There was a list of declarations for the incoming member to agree to: "I commit myself to the Mars Hill church family and agree to aid in fulfilling its missional purpose to both be and bring the gospel to Seattle by being a doer of the Word"; "I covenant to practice the humility and sacrificial attitude of Christ by considering the needs of others and by not gossiping"; "I covenant to follow the biblical procedures of church discipline regarding my brothers and sisters in Christ, and submit myself to church discipline if the need should ever arise"; and last, "I covenant to submit to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues. *God enabling me, I will strive to consider my commitment to this Membership Covenant on a yearly basis. I understand that it is an evaluative tool, as well as an affirmation of my continuing conviction and purpose.*"[133] This covenant, and my experiences on the first day of the gospel class, were my initiation into how the church "made disciples."

During his lecture consisting of power point slides on the subject of Scripture, Driscoll gave yet another rendition of the metaphorical imagery in the Song of Songs. By then, I had heard more than one mention of how the fawns in this book of the Bible represented women's breasts, and that "all men are breast men except for three kinds, dead, gay, or blind. . . . It's Biblical." There were about fifty people in attendance, and I willingly waited at the end of the line to speak with Driscoll afterwards. I took the opportunity to watch him interact with people from a respectable distance while

talking to the two young men in front of me. They were both in their early- to midtwenties and told me that they were living with six other guys who also attended Mars Hill. During the class, Mark mentioned that when you covenanted with the church, a community group or service leader needed to vouch for you, which made them sound like gatekeepers who measured commitment in terms of volunteer hours. When I remarked that I did not know such an endorsement was necessary, one of the young men quickly said, "well, it's good to give to your church and community groups are important to connect with people."

Watching Mark, I noticed that he never looked distracted, always made eye contact, spoke softly, and appeared willing to help. Several people used hushed tones while conversing with him. The young man who was very chatty and comfortable while speaking with me stammered while talking to him. In response, Mark was kind; I overheard him say that he "didn't know what went on at the big man's house," but that the young man should let him know if he had any problems. Mark also showed a surprising degree of familiarity with the house itself, asking the guys which rooms they were in, as though he knew the property well. Then, after waiting an hour, it was my turn.

By the time Mark and I spoke, it was 9:30 p.m. I mentioned my research and explained that I was speaking to both conservative and liberal Christian groups. Mark gently interrupted: "Yeah, being in Seattle as liberal as it is, we come across as more conservative than we are. It's like being a jockey on top of a horse, the jockey's short but on top of the horse he appears to be really tall." Suddenly, all the lights cut out. The room went black and turned awkward. We both laughed and Mark shouted into the dark, "Still talking here," and the lights quickly returned, although we appeared to be alone.

He asked where I was getting my master's degree, a common assumption at the church, and I routinely corrected him by stating that I was working toward a doctorate then asked for an interview. Initially, he said that it was no problem, and then mentioned another pastor as a valuable resource given he was a biblical counselor. He added, "So many daughters are molested by their fathers, sexual abuse is a huge issue. It's amazing how many people we have come in here who need help," emphasizing that Mars Hill recovery groups for victims of sexual abuse were "packed." I asked Mark how to make an appointment with him. He passed along the name of his

assistant who did all of his scheduling between speaking engagements then said, "I'm not going to lie to ya, it's going to be tough to see me." I acknowledged that I knew how busy he was, thanked him for his time, and walked away impressed by his ability to make those he spoke with feel cared for, while steering them away from asking more of him.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1 This transcription was done in July 2014, when the video was available on the now defunct Mars Hill Church website. However, evidence of the video's distribution and content are available at Alex Murashko, "Mark Driscoll Admits He Should Have 'Acted with More Love and Pastoral Affection' during Leadership Changes at Mars Hill, "*Christian Post*, July 23, 2014, http://www.christianpost.com/news/mark-driscoll-admits-he-should-have-acted-with-more-love-and-pastoral-affection-during-leadership-changes-at-mars-hill-123712; and at "Mark Driscoll - Mars Hill Seattle and the 'Pinocchio' Syndrome (They're Anonymous)," YouTube video, posted by "alphapa," July 31, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsGDCd1iLls.

2 Driscoll, "Anonymous."

3 Driscoll, "Anonymous."

4 To clarify, I was raised a Catholic—baptized, took communion, and confirmed in our local parish. To do so, I attended Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) classes until I was thirteen. My participation was for my parents, not for myself, and as soon as I was confirmed I no longer attended church except for the occasional Christmas or Easter service with family. Throughout my teens and twenties, I vacillated on the agnostic-atheist spectrum, finding spiritual sustenance in books such as Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, Kafka's *The Trial*, and everything by Albert Camus. My most rigorous education in any religious tradition before attending Mars Hill was in Buddhism, with an emphasis on its Mahayana branch, as a student at Sophia University in Tokyo, Japan. I participated in various forms of meditation while living in Japan for four years. Since returning to the United States, I continue to go on ten-day long Vipassana meditation retreats, during which students are not permitted to speak, read, or write and spend the majority of their days sitting, focusing on breath and sensation. I currently do not identify with any religious tradition, or as an atheist or agnostic.

5 Driscoll, "Anonymous."

6 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1983), 200.

7 Brian Massumi, *Politics of Affect* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2015), ix.
8 Massumi, *Politics of Affect*, vii, ix.
9 Massumi, *Politics of Affect*, 5, 19.
10 William E. Connolly, *Neuropolitics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 8.
11 Massumi, *Politics of Affect*, 8.
12 Mark Driscoll, "Spiritual Warfare: Who, What, and Why," July 2014, http://marshill.com/2014/07/24/spiritual-warfare-who-what-and-why.
13 Susan Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Politics and Language* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 35.
14 Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell*, 35.
15 Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell*, 59. The pastor to whom Harding refers is Reverend Melvin H. Campbell of Jordan Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia.
16 William E. Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 65.
17 My use of *worlding* deliberately distinguishes this study from one invested in the notion of the "public sphere," "the public," or "publics," as formulated by theorists such as Jürgen Habermas. Habermas distinguishes between a public sphere, which in the eighteenth century was "coextensive with public authority" such as the state, and a "private sphere" of civil society and social labor (*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* [Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1989]). In Habermas's theorization, the " 'authentic' public sphere" spans these so-called public and private realms such that it becomes conceptually distinct from the state and a site of the production and circulation of discourse that may be critical of such a governing or ruling body. I do not engage in discussions of participatory democracy or the ideological forms of political action in such a manner, nor is my focus on rhetoric or discourse. My investments concern bodily processes of *worlding* rather than of *worldview*. This distinction becomes clearer as I discuss my formulation of "affective ecology," insofar as it does not presume a preexisting social entity (comprising only humans)—a "public" known as "the social," "the political," "political action," or "civil society." Michael Warner demonstrates how even a culturally and historically contextualized examination of "publics" abstracts and reifies social processes into social entities, worlds with prescribed ideological and political boundaries that agentive subjects may transgress, but that nevertheless exist on their own terms: "Much of the texture of modern social life lies in the invisible presence of these publics that flit around us like large, corporate ghosts. Most of the people around us belong to our world not directly, as kin or comrades or in any other relation to which we could give a name, but as strangers. How is it that we nevertheless recognize them as members of our world?" (*Publics and Counterpublics* [New York: Zone, 2002], 7). My

examination does not presume "a world," "our world," or "their world," distinct, abstract worlds to which we do or do not belong; rather than recognition, I purposively focus on bodily and social processes of world*ing*—a verb that is both intentional and non-intentional, that does not reside in preexisting ideological worldviews or publics.

18 Kathleen Stewart, "Precarity's Forms," *Cultural Anthropology* 27, no. 3 (2012): 518.

19 There was evidence of Driscoll's usage of this term here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8sNVDyW-ws; there is also evidence found in Molly Worthington, "Who Would Jesus Smack Down?" *New York Times*, January 11, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/11/magazine/11punk-t.html.

20 Don Hinkle, "Bott Network Blocks Pastor Mark, Replaces Segment Mid-Show," *Baptist Press*, June 17, 2009, http://www.bpnews.net/30700/bott-radio-blocks-driscoll-replaces-segment-midshowStation.

21 Mark Driscoll, "The Porn Path," *Real Marriage*, 2012, http://markdriscoll.org/sermons/the-porn-path/.

22 Mark Driscoll, *Porn Again Christian*, 2008, http://campusministryunited.com/Documents/Porn_Again_Christian.pdf.

23 Driscoll, *Porn Again*.

24 Mark Driscoll, "Dance of Mahanaim," *Peasant Princess* series, MarsHill.com, 2008, available at "20081109 Dance of Mahanaim Vodcast - Peasant Princess," YouTube video, posted by "Mike Thibault," May 7, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZ06ck9dDTw.

25 Mark Driscoll, "The Porn Path," *Real Marriage*, 2012, http://markdriscoll.org/sermons/the-porn-path/26. Driscoll, "The Porn Path"; Driscoll, "Dance of Mahanaim."

26 Driscoll, "The Porn Path"; Driscoll, "Dance of Mahanaim."

27 My use of "social imaginary" draws from anthropologist Arjun Appadurai's formulation in *Modernity at Large* (1996, 31): "the imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (in the sense of both labor and culturally organized practice), and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility." However, in my examination "social imaginary" signals the conflation of visual, virtual and visceral processes that are ongoing and unruly, troubling distinctions between subject/object, self/other and local/global, while calling the agentive individual and intentionality of the subject into question. I analyze "social imaginary" in terms of collective bodily affects rather than individual participants or strictly agentive subjects, thus subjectivity is understood as always already social, not as an entity but as emerging process.

28 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 293.

29 Susanna Paasonen, *Carnal Resonance: Affect and Online Pornography* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2011), 16.

30 Paasonen, *Carnal Resonance*, 16.

31 Paasonen, *Carnal Resonance*, 16.

32 Stephen Maddison, "Beyond the Entrepreneurial Voyeur? Sex, Porn and Cultural Politics," *New Formations*, nos. 80–81 (winter 2013): 103, doi:10.3898/NewF.80/81.06.2013.

33 Maddison, "Beyond the Entrepreneurial Voyeur?," 103.

34 Maddison, "Beyond the Entrepreneurial Voyeur?," 107.

35 Maddison, "Beyond the Entrepreneurial Voyeur?," 107.

36 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume One: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1978), 77.

37 Wendy Brown, *Politics Out of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 92.

38 Mike Anderson, "Hello, My Name Is Mike, and I'm a Recovering True Believer," *Mike Anderson* (blog), 2013, http://mikeyanderson.com/hello-name-mike-im-recovering-true-believer.

39 Jennifer Wicke writes that social pornography "is the name for the pornographic fantasies the society collectively engenders and then mass culturally disseminates, usually in the case of anti-pornography," in "Through a Gaze Darkly: Pornography's Academic Market," *More Dirty Looks: Gender, Pornography, and Power*, ed. Pamela Church Gibson, 176–187 (London: British Film Institute, 2004), 184. I expand on this concept while examining the affective labor of producing such a genre of evangelical social pornography in the context of Mars Hill and the communication, marketing, mediation and embodiment of what I call "biblical porn."

40 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 139.

41 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 139–43.

42 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 152.

43 Jabir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 154.

44 Jasbir K. Puar, "I Would Rather Be a Cyborg than a Goddess," EIPCP, January 2011, http://eipcp.net/transversal/0811/puar/en.

45 Jason Read, "The Order and Connection of Ideology Is the Same as the Order and Connection of Exploitation: Or, Towards a Bestiary of the Capitalist Imagination," *Philosophy Today* 59, no. 2 (spring 2015), 175–89, doi:10.5840/philtoday201522059.

46 I develop a theory of affective ecology instead of relying on formulations of "public" (and "counterpublic"), in order to demonstrate how an embodied yet social sense of conviction goes viral in ways both calculated and uncontrollable.

47 The primary mission of the church, and one of the key slogans branding its teaching material, was "Planting Churches, Making Disciples." I discuss the meaning and process of this aim—how churches were planted and disciples were made—in chapters 1 and 2.

48 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 106.

49 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 152–53.

50 Jane Bennett writes of vital materialities as, "a subsistent world of nonhuman vitality. To 'render manifest' is both to receive and to participate in the shape given to that which is received. What is manifest arrives through humans but not entirely because of them . . . This sense of a strange and incomplete commonality with the out-side may induce vital materialities to treat nonhumans—animals, plants, earth, even artifacts and commodities—more carefully, more strategically, more ecologically." *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 17–18. It is this sense of a strange and incomplete commonality with the out-side that I wish to analyze in the development of my concept "affective ecology."

51 Massumi, *Politics of Affect*, 31.

52 Massumi, *Politics of Affect*, 33.

53 Feona Attwood, "Sexed Up: Theorizing the Sexualization of Culture," *Sexualities* 9, no. 1 (2006): 78.

54 Skye Jethani, "The Evangelical Industrial Complex and the Rise of Celebrity Pastors," *Christianity Today*, February 20, 2012, http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2012/february-online-only/evangelical-industrial-complex-rise-of-celebrity-pastors.html.

55 Linda Williams, *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), x.

56 Tony Sampson, *Virality: Contagion Theory in the Age of Networks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 5.

57 Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, *Control and Freedom: Power and Paranoia in the Age of Fiber Optics* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2006), viii.

58 Chun, *Control and Freedom*, 82.

59 The requirement to receive Pastor Mark's permission to speak to individual church leaders and members is another reason why I do not engage in discussion of "the public." While the IRB was fine with my visiting public events open to nonmembers—which any visitor to an evangelical megachurch knows are plentiful, given the incentive to proselytize and convert nonbelievers—the concept of the public does not do justice to the sensation of being in such spaces. It also struck me as ironic that I could formally "talk" to individuals only with the consent of a pastor whose authority was clearly inflected through investments in heteropatriarchy and therefore reluctant to relinquish such control to a feminist anthropologist in the academy doing research on the politics of marriage. I found myself limited by institutional conditions presumed "ethical" that were in fact detrimental to ethical action. The IRB seemed more invested in protecting the liability of the University of Washington than in protecting the subjects of

my study, let alone my own integrity as researcher. I learned about the ethical dimensions of ethnographic fieldwork *despite* the regulatory practices of the IRB, not because of them.

60 Warren Cole Smith, "Unreal Sales for Driscoll's *Real Marriage*," *World Magazine*, March 5, 2014, https://world.wng.org/2014/03/unreal_sales_for_driscolls_real_marriage.

61 Dave Kraft et al., "Statement of Formal Charges and Issues—Mark Driscoll," Patheos.com, http://wp.production.patheos.com/blogs/warrenthrockmorton/files/2014/08/FormalCharges-Driscoll-814.pdf.

62 See Repentant Pastor (blog), http://repentantpastor.com/.

63 Rather than suddenly recognizing that I belonged to this "public" in any abstract sense, I felt compelled to bodily stand with the protestors rather than at a distance from them. I felt that I belonged, but not because we shared a worldview or common cause, but because we were already in social relation. I am thankful that "We Are Not Anonymous" existed as a public *Facebook* page, but I never joined the group as a member because I did not feel it was my place to do so. That distinguishes how my feeling, and my examination, is different from what is described in terms of "the public" or "a public." Having said that, I would offer that "We Are Not Anonymous" did constitute a "counterpublic" in the terms that Michael Warner describes (2002), intentionally against, or counter to, the discourse of Mars Hill surrounding the protestors and issues under protest that challenged Mark's qualifications to pastor.

64 Lisa Blackman, *Immaterial Bodies: Affect, Embodiment, Mediation* (London: Sage, 2012), ix.

65 Blackman, *Immaterial Bodies*, 1.

66 Blackman, *Immaterial Bodies*, 22.

67 William Mazzarella, "Affect: What Is It Good For?," in *Enchantments of Modernity: Empire, Nation, Globalization*, ed. Saurbh Dube (New York: Routledge, 2009), 91.

68 Mazzarella, "Affect," 93.

69 Kevin Lewis O'Neill, "Beyond Broken: Affective Spaces and the Study of Religion," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 81, no. 4 (2013): 1095.

70 Sara Ahmed, "Affective Economies," *Social Text* 79, no. 4 (2004): 117.

71 Ahmed, "Affective Economies," 119.

72 Ahmed, "Affective Economies," 119.

73 Kathleen Stewart, *Ordinary Affects* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Joseph Masco, *The Theater of Operations: National Security Affect from the Cold War to the War on Terror* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

74 Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*, 1.

75 Donovan O. Schaefer, *Religious Affects: Animality, Evolution, and Power* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

76 Ann Pellegrini, "Signaling through the Flames: Hell House Performance and Structures of Religious Feeling," *American Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (2007): 911–35.
77 Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell*, 58.
78 Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell*, 59.
79 Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell*, 59.
80 Joel Robbins, "What Is a Christian? Towards an Anthropology of Christianity," *Religion* 33 (2003): 193.
81 Peter Benson and Kevin Lewis O'Neill, "Facing Risk: Levians, Ethnography, Ethics," *Anthropology of Consciousness* 18, no. 2 (2007): 27.
82 Benson and O'Neill, "Facing Risk," 31.
83 Interview by author, April 2016.
84 Email by author, July 2014.
85 Puar, "I Would Rather be a Cyborg than a Goddess."
86 Puar, "I Would Rather be a Cyborg than a Goddess."
87 *Mars Hill Visitor's Guide*, 2005.
88 *This Is Mars Hill* (2010).
89 *This Is Mars Hill*.
90 Robert Webber, "Introduction," in *Listening to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches: Five Perspectives*, ed. Robert Webber (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 15. Also see Janet Tu, "Pastor Mark Packs 'Em In," *Seattle Times*, November 28, 2003, http://community.seattletimes.nwsource.com/archive/?date=20031128&slug=pacific-preacher30. For recent anthropological scholarship on emerging churches, including national affiliates of Acts 26, see James Bielo's ethnographic account in *Emerging Evangelicals: Faith, Modernity, and the Desire for Authenticity* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).
91 *Mars Hill Visitor's Guide*.
92 *Mars Hill Visitor's Guide*.
93 *Mars Hill Visitor's Guide*.
94 *Mars Hill Visitor's Guide*.
95 James Wellman, "The Churching of the Pacific Northwest: The Rise of Sectarian Entrepreneurs," in *Religion and Public Life in the Pacific Northwest: The None Zone*, ed. Patricia O' Connell Killen and Mark Silk (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira, 2004), 80.
96 "The Church Report's 50 Most Influential Churches for 2006," Reclaiming the 7 Mountains of Culture, July 11, 2006, http://www.7culturalmountains.org/apps/articles/default.asp?articleid=39901&columnid=4338.
97 *Mars Hill Visitor's Guide*.
98 Mark Driscoll, "Is Jesus the Only God?" *Vintage Jesus* series, MarsHill.com, 2006.
99 Tu, "Pastor Mark Packs 'Em In."
100 Tu, "Pastor Mark Packs 'Em In."
101 Tu, "Pastor Mark Packs 'Em In."

102 Driscoll, "Is Jesus the Only God?"

103 Christian Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible: Why Biblicism Is Not a Truly Evangelical Reading of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2012), 63–64.

104 Mark Driscoll, *Confessions of a Reformission Reverend: Hard Lessons from an Emerging Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006).

105 Collin Hansen, "Young, Restless, Reformed," *Christianity Today*, September 22, 2006, http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/september/42.32.html; Worthington, "Who Would Jesus Smack Down?"

106 Webber, "Introduction."

107 Mark Driscoll, "Devout Biblicism and the Emerging Church," *Listening to the Beliefs of the Emerging Church: Five Perspectives*, ed. Robert Webber (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 21.

108 Driscoll, *Confessions of a Reformission Reverend*, 98.

109 Mark Driscoll, *The Flight from God*, speech delivered at the Leadership Network Conference, 1997, audiocassette.

110 Driscoll, *The Flight from God*.

111 Driscoll, *The Flight from God*.

112 Wenatchee the Hatchet, "Spiritual Abuse and Emotional Abuse—Cycles of Provocation and Escalation," *Wenatchee the Hatchet* (blog), November 9, 2012, http://wenatcheethehatchet.blogspot.com/2012/11/spiritual-abuse-and-emotional-abuse.html.

113 Wenatchee the Hatchet, "Spiritual Abuse and Emotional Abuse."

114 Driscoll, *Confessions*, 97.

115 Driscoll, *Confessions of a Reformission Reverend*, 96.

116 Driscoll, *Confessions of a Reformission Reverend*, 96.

117 Mark Driscoll, *Genesis* (2005).

118 Driscoll, *Genesis*.

119 Driscoll, *Confessions of a Reformission Reverend*, 22.

120 Mark Driscoll, "Brian McLaren on the Homosexual Question 3: A Rant by Mark Driscoll," *Christianity Today*, January 2006, http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2006/january-online-only/brian-mclaren-on-homosexual-question-3-prologue-and-rant.html.

121 Kraft et al. "Statement of Formal Charges and Issues—Mark Driscoll."

122 Stoyan Zaimov, "Mark Driscoll Rebuked for 'Judging' Obama's Faith with Controversial Twitter Post," *Christian Post*, January 22, 2013, http://www.christianpost.com/news/mark-driscoll-rebuked-for-judging-obamas-faith-with-controversial-twitter-post-88675/.

123 Zaimov, "Mark Driscoll Rebuked for 'Judging' Obama's Faith with Controversial Twitter Post."

124 Warren Cole Smith and Sophia Lee, "Changing Course?" *WORLD*, August 9, 2014, https://world.wng.org/2014/07/changing_course.

125 Smith and Lee, "Changing Course?"
126 Smith and Lee, "Changing Course?"
127 Smith and Lee, "Changing Course?"
128 Smith and Lee, "Changing Course?"
129 Rob Asghar, "Mars Hill: Cautionary Tale from the Enron of American Churches," *Forbes*, September 16, 2014, http://www.forbes.com/sites/robasghar/2014/09/16/mars-hill-cautionary-tales-from-the-enron-of-american-churches/#7f62f3306f85.
130 Kate Shellnutt and Morgan Lee, "Mark Driscoll Resigns from Mars Hill," *Christianity Today*, October 15, 2014, http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/channel/utilities/print.html?type=article&id=125142.
131 Wendy Alsup, "The Harmful Teaching of Wives as Their Husbands' Porn Stars," *Practical Theology for Women* (blog), July 28, 2014, http://www.theologyforwomen.org/2014/07/the-harmful-teaching-of-wives-as-their-husbands-porn-stars.html.
132 Jethani, "The Evangelical Industrial Complex."
133 *Mars Hill Membership Covenant* (2007).

1 | AROUSING EMPIRE

1 Mark Driscoll, "How Human Was Jesus?," *Vintage Jesus* series, MarsHill.com, October 2006. While I was in attendance for this sermon, there is currently evidence of it at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLCMloIvIX8.
2 Driscoll "How Human Was Jesus?"
3 Driscoll, "How Human Was Jesus?"
4 Driscoll, "How Human Was Jesus?"
5 Driscoll, "How Human Was Jesus?"
6 Driscoll, "How Human Was Jesus?"
7 Driscoll, "How Human Was Jesus?"
8 Nathan Finn, "Why Does a Church Need a Security Team?," MarsHill.com, May 2011, previously accessible at http://marshill.com/2011/05/05/why-does-a-church-need-a-security-team.
9 Brian Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Threat: The Political Ontology of Threat," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, edited by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 53.
10 Finn, "Why Does a Church Need a Security Team?"
11 Sean McCloud, *American Possessions: Fighting Demons in the Contemporary United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 51.
12 Taylor Svendsen, "Fear, Abuse at Mars Hill," *Falcon*, February 8, 2012 http://www.thefalcononline.com/2012/02/fear-abuse-at-mars-hill/.
13 Mark Driscoll, "Spiritual Warfare: Who, What, and Why," MarsHill.com, July 2014, formerly available at http://marshill.com/2014/07/24/spiritual-warfare-who-what-and-why.