DESIRE WORK EX-GAY AND PENTECOSTAL MASCULINITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

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EX-GAY *and* PENTECOSTAL MASCULINITY *in* South Africa

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To the memory of Bernice Brice

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PREFACE

The idea for this book project began over fifteen years ago when I was a divinity school student. I was working on an ethnography of LGBTI youth, access to health care, and spirituality, when I met a young man at the local LGBTI youth center who informed me that he was "ex-ex-gay." I had never heard of being ex-gay, much less being "ex-ex-gay" and I asked him to tell me about his experiences. He narrated for me how he had attempted, albeit in his case unsuccessfully, to transform himself into a heterosexual through a nearby Boston-area live-in program. He had left/dropped out of the program in frustration when his work to transform his same-sex desires did not lead to a change in his sexual attractions. This conversation got me interested in the ex-gay movement—in what motivations, pressures, and incentives might lead people to attempt to be heterosexual. The rabbit hole of Google led me to international ministries working all over the world, and I landed on a Pentecostal ministry in Cape Town—I call it Healing Revelation Ministries (HRM)—that is the subject of this book.[1] HRM, like other ex-gay ministries, advertised that it could "heal homosexuality through the power of Jesus Christ."

I worked with HRM members and ex-members between 2004 and 2013, including one continuous year of fieldwork in 2007–2008. This time period spanned much of the ministry's thirteen-year existence between 1997, when it was founded, and 2010, when it closed its doors. Thirteen years is a long period of time for any ex-gay ministry to exist,[2] as these organizations are plagued with challenges to their missions—including leaders' "sexual falls," an ex-gay term for sexual activities with people of the same sex, and financial competition with other organizations, like those targeting HIV/AIDS, that are able to generate more local and international donors. I tell you about HRM's closing up front not to predispose you to seeing HRM and its members as failures, but rather to situate the story within a historical context, which is detailed below and in this book's introductory chapter.

A white American man whom I call Brian began HRM. He first came to South Africa in 1996 as a missionary because he believed that God had "called" him to help "save" gay men and women in Africa's "gay capital,"

Cape Town. Brian was originally from southern California and grew up in a strict Pentecostal household. He had lived as an openly gay man until he "recommitted" himself to God in his thirties. In his forties, he spent five years in Europe as a missionary. It was while he was there that he felt the "call" to go to Africa. He first affiliated with Christian Uplift,[3] the first ex-gay ministry in South Africa, which was headquartered in Johannesburg and run by two white South Africans. Brian founded HRM in the Western Cape in 1997 and situated its headquarters in a local Assembly of God church, the Church of the Reborn, in 1998, which allowed it access to a broader Christian community and a physical location to offer classes, support groups, and counseling sessions.

HRM closed its doors in 2010 when Brian moved back to the United States and most of the leadership team had "returned to the lifestyle," an ex-gay term indicating when ex-gays decide to live openly gay lives. Brian subsequently opened a branch of HRM in the United States. The ministry is now American based, with affiliations with a large secular university (where Brian acts as a chaplain) and a Christian fraternity. HRM still offers classes, support groups, and counseling for men struggling with same-sex attraction but no longer does any work in Africa.

The ex-gay movement claims to "heal homosexuality through the power of Jesus Christ." It began in the 1970s in southern California in response to larger conservative Christians' fears about the influence of feminism, gay rights, and other identity-based movements they saw as "taking over" America (Gerber 2012; Davies 1998). It is a montage of biblical inerrancy, self-help rhetoric, psychology, and science. The nonprofit ministry Exodus International was officially founded in 1976, and although marred by a number of scandals in the 1980s, including the defection and then public love affair of two founders, it continued to grow until 2013 when it closed its doors. The closure came a year after Exodus publicly admitted that homosexuality was not a curable condition and reparative therapy was harmful (Eckholm 2012b). Exodus president Alan Chambers also apologized to the gay community for unintentional harm (Steffan 2013). Although Exodus is now defunct, there are still many other ex-gay ministries around the world. There is Exodus Global Alliance,[4] a Canadian ex-gay organization with member ministries in Latin America and Asia, and the Restored Hope Network, an American ministry that broke off from Exodus International in 2012 when Alan Chambers declared that ex-gay recovery was largely unsuccessful. Many of these ministries, like HRM, were started by Americans or have American affiliations (Jones 2013; Queiroz, D'Elio, and Maas 2013).

Ex-gay ministries have historically dealt with a variety of named "sexual sins" and dysfunction. These include homosexuality, masturbation, internet pornography use, prostitution, pedophilia, voyeurism, sadomasochism, premarital sex, and extramarital sex (Dallas and Heche 2009; Ankerberg and Weldon 1994). Internationally, such ministries share theologies and ideologies of "God's divine plan for heterosexuality," as well as ways of structuring and running their programs. The story in this book, therefore, is not just a story about South Africa. It is a transnational story that shows the longstanding links between places in the United States and Africa and the ways that scientific, biblical, and moral ideas and knowledge often travel a transnational route.

I started this project with one driving question: Why was there an ex-gay ministry in South Africa, the only African country to legally protect gay rights? South Africa is unique in Africa because sexual orientation is protected in the Bill of Rights in the Constitution, and gays and lesbians can marry and adopt children. Yet despite these legal protections the majority of South African people—many of whom are religious—do not support these rights. Studies have consistently found that many Africans across the continent strongly disapprove of homosexuality and rights being extended to gay community members. In places like Nigeria, as much as 98 percent of the population believes that society should not accept homosexuality (Pew Research Center 2013). In South Africa, this number is between 60 and 80 percent, depending on the study (Pew Research Center 2013; Roberts and Reddy 2008). In a moment where much of African Christianity and African public life is reputed to be marked by homophobia, this book examines how HRM offered men in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries personal and individual religious solutions to same-sex desires, understood widely as "sinful" and morally wrong. In this book I do not seek to answer the question, does the ex-gay process work (other studies have shown that it has only limited success long-term). But rather I ask: How does it work? What techniques does the ex-gay movement employ to transform desire? Why do some men (mostly white and some coloured) in South Africa seek to alter their gender and sexual selves in the postapartheid period? And how do they define success for themselves?

Despite a large amount of polarized literature on the ex-gay movement, written either by its members and supporters or by those who oppose it, there are few ethnographies on the ex-gay movement. We do know ethnographically that American ex-gay ministries are mostly evangelical Christian, male, and often segregated by race. We also know that there are ex-gay

ministries on every continent but Antarctica and that they are growing in so-called Third World/Global Southern countries, where homosexuality is often linked to Westernization and immorality. (The ex-gay movement itself is also linked to the West.) We currently have four full-length ethnographies on ex-gay ministries, all on the United States, although one has a chapter on the ex-gay movement in Uganda (Waidzunas 2015). Tanya Erzen documents a live-in ex-gay program in northern California (2006). Michelle Wolkomir examines the lives of gay and ex-gay Protestants as they attempt to reconcile or alter their religious and sexual selves (2006). Lynne Gerber compares evangelical weight-loss ministries with evangelical ex-gay ministries, documenting what addressing these two groups together can tell us about contemporary evangelical life in America (2012). Tom Waidzunas (2015) looks at the science of the ex-gay movement and practices like reparative therapy. All four of these texts narrate ethnographically what the contemporary American ex-gay movement looks like. My study fills in what the ex-gay movement looks like outside the United States in a postcolonial context. Besides a study by Annie Wilkinson on the ex-gay movement in Ecuador (2011) we know little ethnographically about what the ex-gay movement looks like beyond the borders of the United States.

This book sheds light on African Pentecostalism, Africa's fastest-growing form of Christianity (Hefner 2013; Freeman 2012). I use the definition of Pentecostalism that my subjects adhered to and that is similar to what most Pentecostals believe and practice in other parts of Africa. Their beliefs included substitutionary atonement (the belief that Jesus died for humanity's sins), biblical inerrancy, belief in the virgin birth of Jesus, the necessity for adult full immersion baptism, the idea that Jesus died and was divinely resurrected, gifts of divine healing, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a close personal relationship with God, and conservative social values. There are two different groups of Pentecostals in South Africa. One is traditional Pentecostals, a group mostly segregated during apartheid into black- and white-only churches (Anderson and Pillay 1997). The second is neo-Pentecostals, which includes HRM, who differentiate themselves from older Pentecostal groups by claiming racial inclusivity and engagement with the world, not separation and isolation. I use the term "Pentecostal" instead of "neo-Pentecostal" throughout this book because that was how subjects self-identified. African Pentecostalism is heavily invested in transforming sexual acts, gender roles, and sexual subjectivities, so HRM was one part of a larger trend in the faith that addresses reforming sexualities. However, HRM was

unique in that instead of only outright condemning homosexuality, it sought to acknowledge and alter it.

The ministry was made up of two groups of Pentecostal men: white and coloured. A note on racial terms: I use self-referential racial terms throughout this book. During apartheid, South Africans were categorized as white, coloured, or black African. As a separate racial category under apartheid, coloured Africans had higher status than black Africans but were much lower than white Africans. Afrikaners/Afrikaans people are white. There are two groups of whites in South Africa. The first are Afrikaners/Afrikaans people and the second are British South Africans. The differences between the two have to do with history and language: the first language of British South Africans is English, not Afrikaans. The coloured community is descended from racial and cultural mixing of Europeans, the local Khoisan peoples, and enslaved populations from other parts of Africa and Asia (Loos 2004). Today, Afrikaans, a mix of indigenous, Dutch, and English languages, is the first language of most of the Cape coloured community and of white Afrikaans people.

Understanding why white South African men joined an ex-gay ministry in their country during democracy means also holding on to the idea that the ministry is a hybrid in that it links together African and American Christian ideas on what constitutes "sin," what "sin" looks like, and how to "heal" from it. It also means looking at whiteness in South Africa, a contested and controversial topic. The ministry's leaders and members were mostly white South Africans, with some coloured men, and in their early twenties to midthirties. Many of the men were Afrikaans. Their whiteness was a key piece of the ex-gay selves they formed. These men grew up in small towns in the Western Cape or in Cape Town's suburbs and attended racially segregated schools. They held a variety of working- and middle-class jobs. They were all part of larger shifts in sexual discourses and practices in democracy. The ministry's position in Cape Town is also important, as the city is known as and sells itself as Africa's "gay capital." Many also know it as the "most racist" place in South Africa.

The ministry was full of men whose subjectivities were in flux personally and socially. They drew on some ideas of what it meant to be men in the twenty-first century, in the "new" South Africa, and they disputed or rejected other notions. They differentiated themselves from other South African men, seeing themselves as better, more equitable, and more committed to caring for women and children, at the same time that they viewed

and talked about women as lesser than men and in need of male leadership. They were men seeking access to hegemony in the new South Africa, fighting against being gay in a society that largely sees homosexuality as meaning that men lack masculinity. They were white men in a society where whiteness is largely linked to racism. In these pages, I explore the *why* and the *how* of the men in this South African ex-gay ministry, focusing on the types of selves they sought to build through hard desire work.

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ADRIAN'S DESIRE WORK

Adrian was a member of Healing Revelation Ministries (HRM), an ex-gay ministry in Cape Town, South Africa. He was thirty in 2008 but looked closer in age to someone still in college with his unlined chubby face and quiet, earnest way of expressing himself. He was a self-identified coloured man who kept his hair cut short and neat, and he favored roomy shirts and slacks that hid his body. He was easily embarrassed and avoided group gatherings when he could. I first met Adrian in 2004 when he was in his midtwenties; he often seemed to be on the margins of conversations and was very socially awkward. I was surprised when a ministry leader told me that by the time I met him, Adrian had made significant social progress. When he first started attending a weekly support group for ex-gay Pentecostal men he could not look anyone in the eye, even in one-on-one conversations, and he stared at his hands or the table on the rare occasions when he spoke. Besides attending groups for Christian men with "same-sex attraction," or sexual desire for other men, Adrian also underwent weekly individual counseling sessions for over a year with Brian, the ministry's white American founder.

Adrian was in his early twenties when he first came into the ministry offices at Church of the Reborn, a Pentecostal Assemblies of God church. Adrian had decided to undergo a sex change operation and entered the ministry without any hope that he could change his sexual preference. He went to his initial counseling appointment to prove to himself that he had exhausted all other "healing" options. He had already investigated the process for transitioning and planned to meet with a psychologist to begin liv-

ing as a woman. Adrian spent his childhood being teased and bullied for being different. In his high school years he thought he was a *moffie*[1] or that he was born in the wrong body. At their first counseling session Brian told Adrian that if he wanted to heal from his "same-sex attraction" he would have to work on drastically changing his self-presentation, beginning with his voice. At various times Adrian described his voice as sounding "like a woman," "effeminate," and "thin." He was shocked when Brian explained that he himself was the one making his voice "thin"—he spoke like a woman because he spent so much time with women, learning to mimic their characteristics and mannerisms. Adrian thought he had a physiological problem and had never gone through puberty; he believed his voice had never broken. Brian told him that he could make his voice "thicker," but it would take time and practice.

Adrian's voice had always been a major source of shame for him and he was ecstatic at the idea that he could deepen it. When Adrian and I met for lunch in 2007, he explained how, with effort and constant attention, his voice was changing and "starting to become normal." With practice in the past year it had become easier for him to change his voice without always having to think before speaking. However, he said that when he "gets a fright" or is very upset he loses his self-control and his voice becomes high-pitched. When people began to notice the change in how he spoke, he pretended not to know what they were talking about. Laughingly, he told me that he knew Christians were not supposed to lie, but he was too embarrassed to admit to anyone outside of his ex-gay support group that he was practicing to become more masculine. The other men in the ministry also sometimes participated in "helping" him change his self-presentation, occasionally mocking him for being effeminate. If he spoke in a high voice, they would sometimes sarcastically repeat back what he had just said in a very exaggerated, camp manner, and they also made fun of him when he was absent, which he knew.[2]

Besides controlling his pitch, Adrian also consciously changed how he walked; his high-pitched voice was accompanied by what he referred to as "effeminate walking," which involved swinging his hips. He learned through careful attention to move his body differently when he walked and to reposition when sitting. During most of our lunch Adrian had his legs crossed at the knee. Halfway through telling me about his transformation, he glanced down and stopped talking for a few seconds. He quickly uncrossed his legs, opening them up much wider and placing both feet flat on the floor. He leaned into the back of his chair and took a more relaxed sitting posture.

His arms rested on his upper thighs instead of his knees. His body took up more space and he remained in this stereotypically masculine position throughout the rest of lunch.

Adrian believed his masculine interior would continue to grow and transform as he naturalized his masculine exterior through posture and walking. He told me, "I think I have worked that [effeminacy] off. I don't even know how I used to walk because I've totally lost the ability to walk like that [pause] I think." Through practice Adrian had returned to what he referred to as his "natural" voice and gait. The language that Adrian used is notable—that of work, practice, and "forcing" himself to speak and walk differently. He believed that working on his exterior would initiate an interior working—that his masculinity would grow with each deeper voice intonation and time spent sitting with legs wide, taking up space.

Adrian was working to cultivate his ideal self—a deep voice, masculine walk, and heterosexual desires. He had an intimate relationship with God, who he believed would guide him to express himself in a manner that was read by others as masculine. Adrian felt that with God's love he could transform himself in body and spirit. God would eventually lead him to heterosexual desire and marriage. With God's guidance, he could begin to sexually desire women, not men, and have a transformed affect and comportment.

Adrian was part of a diverse group of men who entered the ministry in an effort to transform their gender and sexual selves. Men are the majority in most ex-gay ministries throughout the world, including HRM. One reason for this is that men are conceptualized as "naturally" sexual and said to "act out" sexually, while women are claimed to be "naturally" emotional and to "act out" through emotionally damaging interpersonal relationships. Women and their sex lives are marginalized and usually rendered invisible in ex-gay ministries like HRM. The men in HRM were white and coloured. They were mostly single and lived in apartments with roommates in town. The small number of men who were married lived with their wives and families in the suburbs. A few had been to technical colleges or to university. Some worked or sought to work in the ministry or at a church full time. Others were specialists in the fields of photography, piano repair, insurance, security, and construction, or they worked in the service industry as waiters, restaurant managers, and travel agents. All sought to answer God's "call" for their lives and focused on sexual salvation as a way to achieve a new and better saved Christian self. Few of these men had been in "the [gay] lifestyle"; instead they usually watched a large amount of gay pornography, sexually fantasized about other men, or had secretive, anonymous sexual

encounters. Most had grown up in some kind of a Christian household, with some in mainstream denominations like the Dutch Reform or Anglican churches, and others in Pentecostal or nondenominational Christian churches. These men had often let their faith slip over time. They used HRM as a way to recommit their lives to Christ. A lack of church attendance or a lapse in a relationship with God was often a result of their same-sex sexual attractions. Before HRM, men frequently interpreted their desires as evidence that they were "bad" Christians or did not deserve God's love and compassion. HRM provided men with a new way to be good and morally righteous Christians. They learned to tell different stories about themselves and their desires, to recenter their social and moral trajectories, and to turn to God and HRM for the tools to become heterosexual. This book details this journey, one that often led to years in HRM but also frequently led the men to "come out" as gay, as discussed in chapter 5.

Between 2004 and 2013, I worked with white and coloured ex-gay men at Healing Revelation Ministries (HRM), an ex-gay Pentecostal ministry in Cape Town, known by many as Africa's "gay capital." These men sought to transform their homosexual attractions through intense work on their desires. Ex-gay men like Adrian who strove to be heterosexual engaged in what I call "desire work," or a process of emotional, bodily, and religious discipline and practices with the end goal of heterosexual marriage. Although Pentecostals around the world believe that God and the Holy Spirit perform miracles every day, instantaneously curing people of diseases, disabilities, and addictions such as alcoholism, there is no miracle in desire work; *one must learn to do "what comes naturally."* Ex-gay belief systems rest on this paradox: opposite-gender desire is "natural" but sometimes also needs to be learned and embodied through purposeful effort. For ex-gay men, eliciting desire was hard work, and it was the most difficult part of forming and maintaining the heterosexual self.

"Desires" are historically and culturally located forces that are produced through a multitude of engagements with social norms, public life, political economies, and cultural forces; they are more than what individuals wish for or feel (see for example Rofel 2007; Smith 2006; Sinnott 2004; Carrillo 2002). Rachel Spronk has written of young middle-class professionals in Nairobi who drew on a "therapeutic ethos" from popular media to form sophisticated, sexually knowledgeable, and intimate selves in romantic partnerships that often challenged established moral authorities such as elders (Spronk 2011: 146). Shanti Parikh documents young Ugandans in the "Bentu class" (as having "been to" outside of Uganda and back) who act as cultural

desire brokers, linking sexual knowledge and the enactment of sexual desires to what it means to be cosmopolitan and modern (Parikh 2015: 35). In South Africa, the men in HRM produced heterosexual desires in a larger context of national desire work, in which dominant male heterosexuality is often patriarchal and abusive and men are encouraged to work on themselves (see for example Morrell, Jewkes, and Lindegger 2012; Hunter 2010; Jewkes et al. 2009). In this book, I examine how ex-gay Capetonian Pentecostal men attempted to transfer their desires from men to women through emotional, bodily, and religious work. I ask: how do men learn to desire different kinds of sexual and gendered relationships? What are the micropractices of thought, feelings, and action involved? What kinds of new selves emerge? Is ex-gay desire work successful, and if so, to what ends?

Men with same-sex attraction joined HRM because they felt that their desires and sexual practices did not align with their conservative Christian values, in which homosexuality is interpreted as a "sin" and heterosexuality as "God-ordained." They believed their "sinful" desires were leading them toward unhappy lives in which they would be alone, ostracized from their families and God, and eventually end up in hell, which is a literal place in the Pentecostal worldview. The ministry promised that men who "struggled" with same-sex attraction could achieve their heterosexual ideal through hard work; they could be reintegrated into their families and the larger Christian community to have fulfilling and joyful lives. They were told that a new self was possible through hard work.

Many Christians, including the ones I worked with in South Africa, interpret the body as outer proof of an inner state. In her work on devotional diet culture in the United States, Marie Griffith details how "body type, among assorted possible signifiers, has come to seem a virtually infallible touchstone of the worth of persons about whom one knows nothing else, as well as the value—indeed, the deepest truths—of one's own self: a vital component of subjectivity" (Griffith 2004: 7). Devotional dieters believe that people are fat because they cannot control themselves. A fat body is read as proof of a lack of religious commitment because the person is seen as more concerned with feeding the body than nourishing the soul. Similarly, HRM members saw the effeminate body and actions, for example, waving a hand when speaking or snapping one's fingers in ways that were read as stereotypically "gay," as proof that little "healing" from homosexuality had occurred. They interpreted effeminate affect as the lack of hard work on the self.

The work of ex-gay men in HRM, however, corresponded to a more complex interplay between the outer and inner self. Adrian employed works

of bodily change not only for the purpose of exhibiting a changed exterior to outsiders. He believed that altering his exterior would also transform his interior. In her work on women in the Egyptian piety movement, Saba Mahmood challenges the idea that conduct is itself an expression of emotion, the body being the vehicle to express interior feelings and desires. Like Adrian, the Egyptian women employed and repeated actions to create interior states of piety. She writes, "Instead of innate human desires eliciting outward human forms of conduct, it is the sequence of practices and actions one is engaged in that determines one's desires and emotions. In other words, action does not issue forth from natural feelings but *creates* them" (Mahmood 2005: 157, italics in original). Instead of bodily acts being indicators of an evolved interior state, the two are necessarily intertwined with each other. Seen through this perspective, Adrian's bodily acts could be reinscribed from foolish or as trying too hard to being an important part of his new masculine self-formation, where actions help form feelings, not merely express them.

Mahmood discusses a young woman named Amal who desires to become shy. Some may read this as hypocritical. Is Amal pretending to be shy to prove to herself and others that she is a pious woman? Mahmood offers an alternative reading. "Instead, taking the absence of shyness as a marker of an incomplete learning process, Amal further develops the quality of shyness by synchronizing her outward behavior with her inward motives until the discrepancy between the two is dissolved. This is an example of a mutually constitutive relationship between body learning and body sense" (Mahmood 2005: 157–158). Amal's behavior, like Adrian's, was not inauthentic but rather constituted her attempt to interiorize outward exhibitions. Work was necessary to align interior and exterior when they are "mutually constitutive" (Mahmood 2005). Adrian's sitting, standing, and change in voice pitch were all necessary to achieve, through discipline, new heterosexual affect, feelings, and piety. Men needed to practice desire work to achieve heterosexuality in what was a self-making project that took years. However, Muslim piety work seems to have been more successful than ex-gay desire work long-term. Ex-gay men frequently failed in their attempts to achieve heterosexuality, despite constantly working on themselves.

Seen through the prism of Mahmood's work, ex-gay Pentecostal men disciplined themselves not only to limit their effeminacy and camp but also to produce heterosexual affect and embodiment. In this way, desire work is not only restrictive but productive of new ways of being, of conceptualizing and actualizing the self. This production often had unintended consequences,

including leading some men to use their time in HRM to eventually come out as gay. Foucault's work on "technologies of the self" helps elucidate the work on the self that ex-gay Pentecostal men undertook in their quest toward heterosexuality, a journey that often did not lead to the desired goal. Foucault defined "technologies of the self" as "a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (Foucault 1988: 18). Desire work is a technology of the self in its focus on active processes of constant attention, care, and correction of the self. Ex-gay men repeatedly engaged in bodily and emotional performances to establish an inner state of purity of soul that would make evident their transformed masculinity and heterosexuality.

Self-Making in Millennial South Africa: Race, Sexuality, and Masculinity

Desire work did not take place in a historical vacuum. Democracy brought changes in economics, sexual and racial discourses, masculinities, and potentialities for self-making. Selves, like nations, have histories and sociocultural contexts (Giddens 1991; Taylor 1989). They are intimately affected by social, historical, economic, national, and transnational contexts. Public life profoundly shapes inner processes. The African National Congress (ANC), led by Nelson Mandela, was jubilantly elected through peaceful national elections that were broadcast all over the world as evidence of the hopeful beginnings of the "new" South Africa, known as the "Rainbow Nation." The new democratic government promised equality and accessibility for all citizens, especially those who had been marginalized and oppressed under National Party rule. Most citizens entered into democracy with hope for its ability to usher in a more equitable distribution of resources, multiracial representations in government and the public sphere, and equality across races, classes, and genders.

However, since its inception in 1994, democracy in South Africa has been plagued by upheaval and accompanying citizen disappointment and disapproval. By the time the nation celebrated twenty years of democracy in 2014, many South Africans believed that local and national governments were unable or unwilling to provide communities with the necessary physical and material support they were repeatedly promised by the ANC (Reddy 2015). Many critics believed that the postapartheid government was failing its citizens, with politicians putting their own personal gains and needs before

those of their constituents. Land was not redistributed to those from whom it had been taken during apartheid. Service delivery protests, often violent, had become a ubiquitous part of democratic life (Von Schnitzler 2016).

The implementation of the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution Plan (GEAR) in 1996 led to the privatization of utilities and poor service delivery to impoverished areas (Dugard 2008; Miraftab 2004).[3] This, combined with the continuation of apartheid-era structural inequalities, led to a postapartheid economic downturn and a growing disillusionment with the ANC. Democratic South Africa has some of the highest unemployment rates in the world (Campbell 2013; Berkowitz 2013), alongside some of the highest crime rates globally (Mthethwa 2008). Its sexual violence rates are also some of the most extreme in the world for a country not at war, but reporting and prosecution rates are low (Smythe 2015). Widespread economic reparations never materialized. All these factors have contributed to "a politics of hope and despair, characterised by a repeating cycle of unrealisable political promises and citizen despair" (Wale 2013: 19). HRM members, like many other South Africans, shared these sentiments with their fellow citizens in the period covered by this ethnography. No one in the ministry expressed satisfaction with the ANC government, its policies, or its provision of resources.

The men in HRM focused on themselves in a postapartheid context where public life seemed out of control and full of what they considered to be "sin" and hopelessness. The ex-gay Pentecostal men in this study focused on introspection, work on the self to reach an ideal, the embrace of therapeutic techniques, flexibility, self-surveillance, and self-mastery. They shared this in common with others in the neoliberal context, where there is a focus on the entrepreneur as an ideal postcolonial citizen. For example, Carla Freeman writes about Barbadians involved in "an ongoing process of envisioning and becoming, as opposed to a given position, status, or state of being that is achieved and established through economic means alone" (Freeman 2014: 2). For the women in Freeman's work and the men in mine, self-making was always in flux and never achieved once and for all—there was always more self-work to do. The men in HRM subjected themselves to constant self-examination and tried to perform mastery of the self's desires. They had this in common with a diverse group of people, including educated youth in Turkey (Ozyegin 2015), American college-aged Facebook users (Gershon 2011), and Russian talk show listeners (Matza 2009). Desire was processual in nature. Ex-gay Pentecostal men did not call themselves terms like "newly straight." Instead, they used "ex-gay" because this self was always in pro-

cess and never achieved, due to the pull of same-sex desires and activities that could lead one to "sin." I focus on the ex-gay process because it was not something that had an end point. Ex-gay men never arrived completely at heterosexuality or referred to themselves as such. Despite often spending years in the ministry, men still discussed their "struggles" with same-sex attraction and the importance of working on themselves to address their unmet emotional needs (which they believed they sexualized) and their periodic "sexual falls."

However, while the men in HRM were flexible, intent on altering same-sex desires through hard work, and always ready to try new techniques to achieve the goal of heterosexuality, they were also inflexible at the same time. By this I mean that while the men saw themselves as pliable subjects, they were also rigid in their ideas about the rightness and sanctity of heterosexuality. They were willing to be flexible in terms of their behaviors toward achieving heterosexuality but not in their beliefs about its rightness and "ordination" by God. For these ex-gay men God and the Bible were their main sources of authority. They were malleable in their work to achieve a goal, but there was not a question of this goal's morality and sanctity.

HRM was one part of a larger democratic cultural shift in sexual discourses. Ex-gay men discussed sex and sexuality in depth and in great detail, something they shared in common with much of the rest of the nation. A drastic change occurred in South Africa at the end of apartheid in how and where sexual activity and subjectivities were discussed. The government's constitutional protection of gay rights and rise of NGO HIV-prevention messages led to a proliferation of public discourses related to sexuality. Although their work to build a heterosexual self was unique, HRM members also shared with other members of the nation a focus on a new self that was more sexually informed and made conscious sexual decisions. Deborah Posel writes of the new national context, "Sexuality is presented as a site of rational, individual choice and agency—an opportunity for empowerment and 'healthy positive lives.' And the health education campaign is an effort to constitute an essentially modern sexual subject, one who is knowledgeable, responsible, in control, and free to make informed choices" (2005b: 134). HIV/AIDS made democratic sexual subjectivity and its practices—having "safe sex," preaching about and employing the ABCs (abstain, be faithful, use condoms)—key to what it meant to be modern and cosmopolitan. This link between personal empowerment and sexual decision-making became an important piece of what it meant to be a democratic citizen. One problem with this development, however, is its silence about the fact that

many South Africans are unable to enact this prescribed sexual self due to unequal power relations and structural oppressions. Ex-gay Pentecostal men shared with other citizens in South Africa in the postapartheid context a focus on being agents in charge of their sexual decisions. For the men in HRM, like for other South Africans in democracy, being a modern citizen meant identifying, speaking about, and analyzing their sexual desires in new ways. The ministry offered a cultural space for men to be public about their desires and to work on them.

Race and Racism

Apartheid was a system of white supremacy based on the strict separation and segregation of the races. Black and coloured South Africans were geographically segregated into townships on the peripheries of urban centers. During apartheid, Afrikaners represented themselves as being "under siege" (Retief 1995: 109), which led to severe legal and social penalties for any white person who challenged the heteronormative and racist status quo. Legally, the Immorality Act regulated interracial sex and homosexuality, as both were understood to disrupt the maintenance of a puritanical Christian nationalism, whereby whites understood themselves as the keepers and guardians of a strict Calvinist morality that needed to be strictly policed (Klausen 2015: 4–10). White women were also subject to public hygiene messages on sex, as they were exhorted to reproduce to stop the so-called black communist onslaught. The Bible was used by Afrikaners to uphold racist, sexist, and homophobic doctrines. Afrikaners saw themselves as God's chosen people, who had come to claim their own promised land, with black and coloured Africans representing non-Christian "others" who were not entitled to human rights and the land on which they lived (Bloomberg and Dubow 1989; Moodie 1975).

White men saw themselves as the guardians of morality and as the linchpin of this white supremacist homophobic system because of a patriarchal lens in which they were the authoritarian leaders of families and the nation. Kobus Du Pisani explains that during apartheid, "there is only one correct way of thinking and behaving. Many men are guilt-driven to obey higher authority. There is a high level of respect for leaders and authority, the adherence to rules, the self-image of moral superiority and the tendency to place people into separate compartments by classifying them as 'different' or 'other'" (Du Pisani 2001: 165). Gays and lesbians fell into the "other" category and were understood as being dangerous to white hegemony. Homo-

sexuals were seen as a threat to the maintenance of apartheid because they were covert and did not lead to the reproduction of the white family, seen as key to the continuation of white rule. White citizens' lives were full of sexual policing.

Although democracy ended the official segregation of apartheid, there were many carry-overs from the apartheid era in the racist views of South African whites toward black and coloured South Africans and in the economic powers of whites, who were allowed to keep their "apartheid loot" (Steingo 2005: 197). While white privilege was rather consistently bound up with political and economic privilege, white South Africans were still a diverse group. Some embraced democratic principles and interracial relationships based on equality and freedom (Besteman 2008). However, for many white South Africans, the white self was an embattled self because they felt that the racial and moral superiority they had enjoyed under National Party rule was under attack. These white men, like those in HRM, felt threatened by democracy and ANC dominance and used the language of "crisis" to reflect their discontent. A South African bumper sticker expresses this well: "Forget about the whale, Rather save the white male" (Morrell 2001: 26) .

Many white men viewed themselves as "victims" of the ANC and its decisions. One ex-gay HRM leader told me, "They [the ANC] stole the rainbow from us," gesturing toward South Africa's construction as the "Rainbow Nation" and the ANC's supposed theft of the nation from white rule (there is an overlap of symbolism here, as the rainbow is also the symbol of gay pride). Ex-gay men, like many white selves in contemporary South Africa, rejected the past and had an attitude of "ignore-ance" (Steyn 2005: 129) toward the past and how it continued to affect and alter the present. Melissa Steyn explains that for many white South Africans, "Being placed in more equal footing is presented as marginalization; the binaries that underpin whiteness are seen to be simply reversed. Whites, it is averred, are now in the same position as black people were in the past under apartheid" (Steyn 2005: 131). The white selves that HRM members developed were part of larger trends of white selves' self-definition as morally righteous and separated from apartheid and its continuing legacies like economic privilege. These white men were dismissive of the ANC government, saying that it was "ruining" the country.

White and coloured ministry members expressed similar views during apartheid about black men as criminal, violent, and oversexed, and coloured men as weak, irresponsible, and predisposed to sexual deviance because of their mixed-race heritage. I often heard that "black" or "African cul-

ture" was inferior to white culture and that racial differences had "natural" sexual characteristics. The white men in HRM explicitly constructed their racial and religious selves in relationship to a particular racist sexualization of African and coloured masculinities. Coenraad, an HRM leader who was Afrikaans, explained that sex outside of marriage was central to black masculinity and that black men were "messing up the country"; he pointed to President Jacob Zuma as evidence. Coenraad claimed that black men were less likely to become born-again than whites because, "You will lose some status because it means you can't sleep around playing. It's [sex outside of marriage] very socially acceptable. You [black men] almost have to prove yourself. You must make a woman pregnant. Look at [President] Zuma. It's a social status thing. So many women and so many children." (These ideas are not supported by statistical or academic literatures.) Similarly, white ministry leader Glen said that black and coloured men "have more issues and they have more sex. So I think they are different [than whites]." Bianca, a white woman who is married to a white ex-gay man, said that black men are "very extreme. They have to control. They choose these weak women to dominate them." For these ministry members, there was a link between what they believed were "natural" and well-defined races, cultural contexts, and sexual morality.

The coloured men in the ministry also frequently differentiated themselves from black men, othering this group and constructing them as the abject. These coloured men aligned themselves with the moral and sexual discourses of white HRM members on the dangers of black male leadership in the public realm and the assumption that all black men sought to oppress and rule over black women in the private sphere. To me, it at times seemed like the coloured men in HRM were equally, or even more racist, than the whites. Coloured subjectivities have a complicated history in South Africa, particularly in Cape Town, and they were historically and are still today often associated by community outsiders with promiscuity, miscegenation, and the so-called dangers of racial mixing understood to have begun during colonial conquest. Zimitri Erasmus explains that being coloured is often associated still with "sexualised shame" (Erasmus 2001: 14), with coloured community members talked about as inherently sexually immoral, a topic that was often alluded to and joked about in the ministry. During apartheid, coloured people had less social and political power than whites but more than blacks. Many middle-class coloured men and women sought to differentiate themselves from blacks and were complicit in putting forth racist stereotypes of black men and women in a politics of respectability

(Ruiters 2009: 114–115). Coloured men in the ministry who sought to alter their same-sex desires had to both perform desire work and also fight back against stereotypes, often put forth by the ministry itself, that they were more "sexually broken" due to their racial subjectivities. To counter ideas that positioned them as socially and morally lesser than whites, as well as inherently prone to "sexual sin," this group of coloured men often positioned themselves as ethically superior to unsaved coloured and black men.

White and coloured ministry members said they felt ostracized by the African National Conference (ANC) government because it supported "immorality" through the protection of homosexuality in the constitution, the legalization of abortion, and religious pluralism. Damon, a longtime coloured HRM member, was one of many Pentecostals who were nostalgic for the Christian nationalism of the apartheid government and laws banning same-sex sexual activity and relationships. He told me, "[The] apartheid years were horrible. [silence] A lot of things happened and a lot of people suffered severely. But this [ANC government] is even worse than the whole apartheid era. This crime and constitution [which enshrined gay rights] and all that, is even worse. It scares me. It really does." Many Pentecostals in Cape Town referred to the ANC government as "morally bankrupt" and chose not to engage in politics. These Pentecostals, including the white and coloured men in HRM, reanimated racist and homophobic apartheid-era beliefs by using language such as "sin," "immorality," and "decadence" in reference to the ANC and black individuals and communities.

Many white South Africans have tried to distance themselves emotionally and physically from democracy's multiculturalism. Racism in South Africa has been expressed differently in the postapartheid period. For example, whites' discussions of criminals, street traders, street children, and *bergies*, the homeless, "often serve as new ways to talk about old problems, interests, and conflicts" (Samara 2005: 220). Many white South Africans attempted to veil racist ideas with language such as "order," "safety," and "security" (Samara 2010: 646). Like some, though not all Afrikaans people, the white men in HRM sought to detach themselves from apartheid, its legacies, and its privileges, at the same time that they reinscribed its racist tenets like the link between race and so-called natural moralities. They shared this in common with middle-class white Afrikaners in Bloemfontein, who also sought to "sanitize" white identity, as they "recycled key discourses underlying racist apartheid ideology, particularly discourses of black incompetence and whites under threat " (Verwey and Quayle 2012: 560). These Afrikaners felt that being overtly racist was something to be frowned upon in

democracy, so instead they employed images and language of "uncivilized chaos, decay, or barbarism" (Verwey and Quayle 2012: 569) to describe the ANC and to justify their withdrawal from racial mixing and engagement with racial others. Both these whites and the ones in HRM were involved in projects of Afro-pessimism and racial retreat into democracy's ubiquitous gated communities.

The men in HRM did something similar. However, their coded racism was based on gendered and sexual stereotypes of black and coloured men. They sought to be morally superior to these groups of men, continuing apartheid-era beliefs, detailed above, that coded these men as inherently inferior to white men. Instead of seeing themselves as racist, coded as negative in democracy, the men in HRM sought to repackage and recycle Afrikaner narratives of moral masculine superiority. Due to their same-sex attraction, their own masculinities were suspect and could be questioned by others. Through their discourses on black and coloured masculinities as immoral, they reinscribed their own masculinities as superior. Ex-gay men sought to naturalize racial masculine borders as a way to shore up their own masculinities, put into question by their desires for other men. Their racism was heightened due to their own questionable masculinities. They needed to "other" black and coloured men to feel better about themselves. These white selves situated themselves as morally and sexually superior to black and coloured communities.

Cape Town has a special place in the history of white withdrawal from democracy, which is played out in current politics; Cape Town has been the only city in South Africa that was not predominantly black in democracy and whose provincial and city governments were not governed by the ANC in the period covered in this book.[4] Many Capetonian Pentecostals participate in "moral semigration," or withdrawal from the state because of its perceived moral and spiritual bankruptcy. The term "semigration" was originally used in South Africa to describe white disengagement from the state and physical isolation from contact with nonwhites in the postapartheid era (Ballard 2004). Many whites spatially reproduce apartheid's geographies in their choices of where and how to live.

Masculinities

Besides race, transforming masculinity was a key part of ex-gay work on the self in the democratic context. The South African government, local and international NGOs, and public health campaigns publicly advocated for a

change in how all men desired and performed heterosexual masculinity (Dworkin et al. 2012; Morrell, Jewkes, and Lindegger 2012). Statistically, the country was one of the most dangerous places on the globe at the beginnings of democracy. It had one of the highest documented numbers of rapes (see, for example, Jewkes, Sikweyiya, and Dunkle 2009; Wood 2005; Jewkes et al. 2002). Coupled with low levels of reporting, poor police response, and inadequate prosecution, "over 90% of rapists and nearly two thirds of men who kill their intimate partner go unpunished in South Africa" (Barker and Peacock 2009: 11). At the time I conducted my year of fieldwork in 2007–2008, the United Nations named South Africa as being within the top five most murderous nations in the world (Mthethwa 2008). The country was in the midst of a self-declared national crime epidemic, much of it consisting of violence within communities and between family members.

The men at HRM generated and authenticated heterosexual desires in a larger context of national desire work, where pervasive violence has led masculinity to be declared in crisis. HRM was only one group in South Africa that proposed to interpret and solve problems arising from the cultural effects of changing laws and social norms in democracy. Despite the number of academic and public conversations on the necessity for men to drastically change, there was little information on the micropractices men should employ to produce more equitable selves (for exceptions, see Peacock 2013; Robins 2008). Men's desires were a national preoccupation, but little was known about desires in terms of process. How were men supposed to change their desires? Ex-gay Pentecostal men were one part of a larger shift in postapartheid national life that attempted to push men to discipline and reform their own sexual desires through self-conscious and directed effort.

South Africa's new democracy was full of gendered extremes. Everyday life was starkly different from the government's wishful decrees of equality. Legally, the Bill of Rights in the Constitution protected the bodily integrity of all citizens. Section 12, subsection 2 of the Bill of Rights states, "Everyone has the right to bodily and psychological integrity, which includes the right (a) to make decisions concerning reproduction; and (b) to security in and control over their body" (1996). However, this ideal often remained out of reach. Helen Moffett contrasts the human rights discourses of democracy with what happened in the private sphere between men and women. She writes, "The flattened and transparent structures associated with democratic practice are eschewed in the domestic, and even more so, the sexual realms" (Moffett 2006: 142). Democracy had different inflections and expressions in public and private contexts.

For women, there was a deep divide between government rhetoric and representation and daily life, which was similar to the stark contrast one finds when comparing the legal protections for gays and lesbians with their social marginalization and frequent victimization by violent hate-crimes (HRW 2011; Mkhize et al. 2010). There were distinct splits between public and private. The constitution may have rhetorically protected women and gays and lesbians, but real life was very different from legal discourse.

Men were said to be destroying the country through their inability to lead, provide, and make and sustain emotional connections (see for example Morrell and Richter 2004; Walker, Reid, and Cornell 2004). When I was in the field in 2007–2008, the South African media was full of stories of sexual violence, detailing what men were doing to women, children, and the nation: the gang rape of lesbians in townships by men, high rates of child abuse, baby rape, and other crimes by South African men crowded the headlines. A headline from the *Sowetan* read, "Woman Killed Dad Who Gave Her HIV-AIDS" (Seleka 2008). The *Daily Sun* had "Rescued, Then Raped" on their front page, which detailed how a woman who was standing on train tracks to commit suicide was stopped by a man who then raped her (Stamier and Kekana 2008). A woman wrote a letter to the editor of *Drum* titled "Wanted: Good Black Men" to ask where she could find a nonabusive partner (Hlaka 2007). In all these examples, men were indicted for the ruin of other citizens and the nation. These public discourses on sensationalized masculinities affected more mundane performances of masculinity for ex-gay men, who sought to be "better" men than those often depicted in the media. Ex-gay men frequently contrasted themselves with the rest of South African men, using the kinds of articles mentioned above as proof of the need for saved men like themselves to "save" the nation from moral ruin. The rise of the ex-gay movement emerged from this convergence of cultural scripts, public discourses, and the availability of new masculine self-making practices in democratic South Africa.

Pentecostalism

Christianity has been significantly transformed in the past hundred years. In 1910, 1.4 percent of the world's Christians lived in sub-Saharan Africa. By 2010, this number had skyrocketed to 23.6 percent (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2011: 9). Pentecostalism is the fastest growing form of Christianity today. More than one-fourth of all Christians are now classified as Pentecostal or charismatic (Hefner 2013).[5] This Pentecostal explosion

began in the 1980s in Africa (Freeman 2012). South Africa is a predominantly Christian country and has been for many years. Both the 2001 South African census (Statistics South Africa 2004) and a 2011 Pew Research Study (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2011: 54) found that around 80 percent of South Africans were Christian.[6]

Pentecostalism is now a large part of postapartheid life for many South Africans. In South Africa, there have been distinct changes in religiosity during democracy, with mainstream Christian churches losing members and a soaring rise in Pentecostalism. Pentecostal churches have experienced the greatest increase in adherents since 1994, with a 48 percent growth from 1996 to 2001 (Schlemmer 2008: 24–25). Depending on how one defines "Pentecostal" and which denominations are included, estimates ranging from 10 to 40 percent of South Africa's total population was Pentecostal during the period covered by this ethnography (Anderson 2005: 67); 10 to 20 percent of this group lived in urban areas (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2009; 2006).

Christian conversion has historically provided Africans with a sense of individual agency. Missionaries in the twentieth century offered converted Africans direct access to God's supreme power, instead of working through the ancestors (Ashforth 2005). Many converts to Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa had the least social capital and power, and these women and younger men sought to build subjectivities different from their pasts and the prescriptive identities of "traditional" life, where male elders often had the most social power (Thomas 2000). These converts had the opportunity to shape new selves based on personal relationships with God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Self-reflective subjectivities and interiority are important outcomes of Protestant conversion (Keane 2007). This continues in Pentecostalism, where personal agency and the opportunity to construct a new, improved self is a key part of life for Pentecostal church members.

Pentecostalism is commonly described as a faith of "rupture" beginning with the conversion experience (Thorton 2016; Robbins 2007; Engelke 2004). This Pentecostal project, as David Maxwell categorizes it, is one of "constant emphasis on permanent internal revolution" (Maxwell 2005: 18). It provides a way for many Africans to split from prior ties of ethnicity, tribal affiliation, and kinship and to initiate a new self (van Dijk 1998; Meyer 1998). Becoming a new, improved self is consistent with a long history in Christianity of radical personality changes via conversion, especially for those considered social deviants like alcoholics, criminals, and prostitutes (Wanner 2003; Lovekin and Maloney 1977).

However, postconversion self-making involves work, and although people commonly describe their born-again experience as a rupture, it is more complicated than that. Katrien Pype explains, "Connections with the divine need to be established repeatedly. Christian selves are constantly emerging; they persistently need to be actualized" (Pype 2011: 281). Pentecostal self-making is process-oriented because Pentecostals believe that they live in a "fallen" world where demons and Satan attempt to get Christians to embrace "sin" and stop living a morally righteous lifestyle. Pentecostal self-making is never complete. Achieving salvation is a part of everyday life, a part of constant work on the self. Ex-gay men drew on Pentecostalism's focus on constantly working on the self to remain saved and filled with the Spirit to assist them in becoming heterosexual.

Pentecostals conceive of the faith as a place where they can significantly transform all aspects of their lives as individuals with agency. For many social scientists, Pentecostalism today offers solutions to the traumas of neoliberalism, structural adjustment, and government instability (Maxwell 2005; Comaroff and Comaroff 2000). Pentecostal churches and ministries in Africa are frequently discussed as providing adherents with opportunities for personal authority, honor, and dignity in the face of the negative economic and social effects of neoliberal reform (Cole 2010; Meyer 2007; Newell 2007). These churches offer tools that allow Africans to view and experience themselves as empowered and respected agents in spite of massive unemployment, a lack of social services, and little government accountability. For example, Zambian Pentecostals form intimate social ties that assist them emotionally and materially and allow them to bypass the unfulfilled promises of the state (Haynes 2012). This constant self-work allows Pentecostals to move from "the unredeemed state of being a victim" to "the redeemed status of being a victor" (Maxwell 2006: 194). Pentecostalism offers opportunities for empowerment and agentive decision-making in spite of structural domination.

In particular, Pentecostals believe that conversion and living a sanctified life can have worldly rewards in economic prosperity, transformed gender roles, improved relationships, and even better sex lives, all of which are discussed throughout this book. This new sense of self is primarily effected through changes in family and interpersonal relationships, which include avoiding alcohol, being faithful to one's spouse, maintaining fellowship with church members, and accepting guidance and inspiration from the word of God. Pentecostalism offers a new way to be an empowered self, with increased self-esteem and tools to reach personally defined goals based on re-

ligious values, not the values of "the [sinful] world." It supplies the theological language and practical tools that provide entrepreneurial, individualized solutions to economic, social, and familial problems. Pentecostal churches afford concrete ways for many Africans to redefine themselves with Pentecostal, not worldly, criteria, such as abstinence, fidelity, and obedience to the church's teachings. The Pentecostals I worked with in Cape Town did not seek to overthrow the government or work collectively for political change. Instead, they believed that working on themselves and trying to get ahead as individuals was key to thriving in what they considered as democracy's moral laxity and the ANC's political and economic corruption.

Although the Pentecostals I worked with and those around the world believe in the End Times and the importance of reaching heaven after death, much of the focus of their self-work was on what Paul Gifford calls "this-worldly victory" (Gifford 2014: 47), or individual religious empowerment in the here and now. For many African Pentecostals, the economic realm was a key place where they sought to be agentive and to receive God's blessings. Unlike Liberation Theology's privileging of the poor, in Pentecostalism, whether one lives in poverty or in abundance is linked to the Prosperity Gospel, also known as the "health and wealth gospel." In this theological system, poverty is an individual, not a structural problem. Being poor is linked to demonic blockages, or as a punishment for participation in sinful activities and the withdrawal of God's favor (Heuser 2015). The therapeutic ethos of Pentecostalism also affected the Prosperity Gospel in that what was promised to Christians was physical, financial, and emotional prosperity. Prosperity was also linked to happiness; salvation promised material and affective rewards. "Worldly success" is therefore not divorced from trends in the faith that link contentment and empowerment to what God promises to the born-again believer (Soothill 2014). Although the Prosperity Gospel is important for many African Pentecostals (Agana 2016; Omenyo 2014), for the men in HRM, the focus was on gender and sexual empowerment. They felt that it was only through God's help that they could achieve new heterosexual masculine selves. Though they may have believed in Pentecostal doctrines like the Prosperity Gospel, they focused and honed in on religious and ethical ideologies and practices that were key to sexual and gender self-making. While these individuals may have tithed to the church, I did not hear a lot of focus on religious economies or economic reasons for conversion. Instead, ministry members were more focused on the parts of Pentecostalism that offered gender and sexual, not financial, salvation.

Pentecostal churches work directly on the sense of self and the improve-

ment of congregants' personal relations to build happier and more assured members. In South Africa, studies have found that Pentecostals "are characterized by a moving sense of spiritual encounter and a corresponding sense of joy, happiness, and optimism . . . [and] feelings of self-confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of viability" regardless of economic hardship or social marginalization (Johnston 2008: 25). However, these new optimistic Pentecostal selves in South Africa embodied a paradox; the men in HRM often felt agency in their personal lives but felt disenfranchised in the public realm because of democratic laws based on racial, sexual, and gender equality and social norms of integration. Churches and ministries such as HRM have provided a way for some South African Pentecostals to retreat from public life and simultaneously claim to change it. They used Pentecostal beliefs and practices to resist democracy's new legal and cultural norms of racial and social integration. These Pentecostals sought to discount and avoid the state and politics. This was similar to what Ruth Marshall found in her work with Nigerian Pentecostals. She writes, "In its programmatic form, the Born-Again project does not refer to a revolution to create a new institutional order, found a constitution, or elaborate new laws. Rather it represents itself as providing the conditions for the redemption of the religious and political tradition, which were promised in colonial and post-colonial rule, and ruined through it" (Marshall 2009: 204). Pentecostalism offered alternate forms of sources of affiliation, "moral" community formation, and tools to live sanctified lives despite postcolonial problems.

In Cape Town, ex-gay men transformed their moral despair about democracy into hopefulness for personal empowerment through their desire work. They learned that there was a process that they could follow for individual moral "redemption" and for rebuilding themselves despite the more liberal and secular surrounding environment. These Pentecostals looked to themselves to perform personal transformation because public interventions seemed an ineffectual waste of time.

Pentecostal Gender and Sexuality

Pentecostalism offered Africans the language and tools to enable new ways of being a cisgendered man or a woman and ways to embody a saved sexual self (van de Kamp 2016; Burchardt 2015; Frahm-Arp 2012). HRM was one part of a larger trend in African Pentecostalism, discussed in more detail in chapter 4, whereby the faith was a way to have a gendered and sexual conversion experience. Men and women learn new vocabularies, ways of

relating to each other, how to categorize desires as "godly" or not, what to do with the "ungodly" feelings, what kinds of sex were "ordained" by God, what sex acts He disapproved of and why, and the "appropriate" ways to be a godly woman or man in a "fallen" world.

For men, Pentecostalism often meant growing in prestige in the eyes of other religious men but losing much of the respect of secular masculine peers.[7] Transnationally, many Pentecostal men constructed what they saw as superior masculine selves through Pentecostal conversion and practices (van Klinken 2012; Smilde 2007; Wilcox 2004). Evangelical men in Colombia stopped hegemonic masculine activities like violence, drinking, smoking, gambling, and pre- and extramarital sex to form selves that were more oriented toward their homes and churches, viewing themselves as "better" than their unsaved contemporaries (Brusco 1995). In Tanzania, many Pentecostal men expressed in their postconversion testimonials "relief and pride" in being "proper and responsible" husbands and fathers who could embody Christian respectability (Lindhardt 2015: 7). The men in HRM also felt personally enabled through embracing and embodying Pentecostal gender roles. They were taught about gender complementarianism, where men and women both had "God-given" gender roles but men were the leaders and had more power in interpersonal and public contexts. For ex-gay men, who were often ridiculed for being effeminate and who also felt less than masculine, learning that they were biblically, theologically, and biologically built for leadership made them feel empowered. It also helped them gain in prestige in the eyes of other Christians as the men in the ministry were publicly proclaimed to be moving from "sin" to salvation in leaving behind same-sex desires and behaviors.

Ex-gay Pentecostal men in South Africa also believed that they became improved masculine selves through their desire work, but they felt threatened by domestication or anything linked to women because they already felt feminized by their same-sex desires. Their masculinity was more focused on self-control, particularly of sexuality, than the domestic sphere. They sought to be "better" than the men around them through constructing sexual self-control and abstinence as evidence of possessing a moral masculine character. This is similar to what Adriaan van Klinken found in his study of Zambian heterosexual Pentecostal men. These men saw themselves as superior to secular men because "holiness requires self-control. In contrast to their peers who cannot control themselves and simply follow their desires, for born-again men the ability to control the self becomes a way of proving male strength" (van Klinken 2012: 225). Similarly, in Benin, Pente-

costal men were taught gendered self-control in order to avoid engaging in polygamy or cheating on their wives (Quiroz 2016). Ex-gay Pentecostal men in South Africa also conceptualized desire work as evidence of masculine vigor, instead of viewing it as the loss of masculine prestige. The men in HRM saw themselves as stronger, not softer, than unsaved men because they could exercise self-control. For men like Adrian, with whom I began this chapter, sexual self-control was recoded as masculine. Pentecostalism was key to gendered and sexual self-making.

In a Christian framework where men are supposed to lead the family and nation, masculinity that is "broken" leads to major societal breakdown. South Africa's declared "crisis in masculinity" at the time I did my fieldwork (Hunter 2010; Jewkes, Sikweyiya, and Dunkle 2009) was one part of a larger continental "crisis" in masculinity occurring in the postcolonial context because of violence and HIV/AIDS (Wyrod 2016; Smith 2006). Pentecostal churches often positioned themselves as key actors in these conversations, offering conversion and church membership as the solutions to "immoral" masculinities (Lindhardt 2015; van Klinken 2013; Soothill 2007). These churches claimed to provide men with new selves that were less violent and more nurturing and loving toward women and children.

South African Pentecostals said the lack of father figures was one of the key reasons for the nation's moral crisis. Popular Christian self-help writer Leanne Payne writes, "When enough individuals are out of touch with the masculine, a whole society is weakened on every level of existence" (Payne 1995: 82). The Pentecostals I worked with believed that apartheid's destruction of the family contributed to a nation of wounded men incapable of intimacy who used sexual conquests, fathering children without support, and crime as ways to prove masculinity.[8] Pentecostals in HRM and the Church of the Reborn used the language of "brokenness" in their explanations for why individual men acted "immorally," for example, participating in "ungodly" sexual behaviors and harming women and children. They applied the same concepts to societal problems and the nation itself, calling South Africa a "broken nation."

David, a coloured man who worked at the church and took HRM classes, believed that the nation's high rates of violence and moral failures were linked to a lack of fathers in the home. He told me, "So the core problem of our nation is the house. If you break down the family, you sort of break down the nation. Because then all the social ills of society will flow from that. From brokenness in the family." HRM offered ministry members and those who attended their classes a unique form of Pentecostal masculin-

ity that provided a specific and masculine response to the postapartheid period. They were actively and self-consciously working on achieving new masculine selves. They believed that new kinds of men would "save" South Africa from the "depravities" of democracy. The ex-gay Pentecostal men I worked with differentiated themselves from non-Christian men by claiming that the latter focused on externals to achieve masculinity like sports, sexual prowess, and drinking. Desire work was characterized by men taking the role of "spiritual warriors" for their families, and taking control, initiating, and having emotional strength. These Pentecostal men also thought they should be integrated beings with emotions that they felt deeply and could express without shame.

Throughout this book, I examine the intersections and disjunctures in discourses and practices of sexuality, masculinity, and morality that occur during the formation of the ex-gay Pentecostal self. Men sought to express and temporarily resolve personal and cultural anxieties through the formation of new selves. Desire work was a way for men to personally respond to a national crisis in masculinity through a focus on individual transformation of the self via hard work.

The Politics of Homosexuality in Africa

Homosexual behaviors and relationships have a long history in Africa that predates colonialism (Hoad 2007; Epprecht 2004). Marc Epprecht explains that same-sex sexual activities in much of southern Africa were not understood contextually as sex because they were divorced from fertility. Privacy and discretion allowed same-sex activities to exist without community-wide condemnation (Epprecht 2004: 132). African cultural norms of respectability and propriety led to "de facto tolerance"—sex was not generally discussed (Epprecht 1998). The sexual subjectivity of the "homosexual" or "gay" person sometimes replaced and sometimes existed alongside prior models for same-sex sexual activity in southern Africa after contact with Europeans. Colonialism brought with it judicial regulation and a tightening up of cultural restrictions. Under National Party rule, legislation and cultural policing only intensified.

As stated earlier, for the National Party, homosexuality was a threat to white hegemony and rule. The government began increasingly to scrutinize gay men after apartheid was established and its power entrenched. The authorities periodically policed homosexuality with sweeps and arrests in public areas during the 1950s, for example where men were cruising for

sex. As the National Party gained more control of the country in the mid-1960s,[9] white homosexuality came under intense surveillance and punishment, a trend that continued as apartheid cemented its hold on the nation (Du Pisani 2012). What motivated the change from minor enforcement to moral crusade had little to do with a change in the public's knowledge about or the visibility of homosexuality. Instead, "led by Prime Minister Verwoerd's clampdown on liberation movements and the formalization of apartheid South Africa, South African authorities consolidated Afrikaner 'Christian nationalism' control over the country, expelling from the *laager* anything that was deemed threatening to white civilization" (Gevisser 1995: 30). White men in positions of power believed that those white men who participated in same-sex sexual activities contributed to the moral degeneration of white society.

Whites originally passed the Immorality Act in 1927 (and amended it in the 1950s) in an attempt to quell sexual expression outside of racially homogenous heterosexual unions. They made so-called illicit sexual acts and subjectivities illegal. Despite these legal restrictions and moral sanctions, gay communities and organizations existed in cities like Cape Town, Durban, and Johannesburg during apartheid (see, for example, Tucker 2009; De Waal, Manion, and Cameron 2006; Hoad, Martin, and Reid 2005). Much of black and coloured South Africans' sexual activities flew under the radar during apartheid as long as they did not affect white society (Jones 2008: 404). However, not everyone in coloured and black communities accepted same-sex sexual activities. Many communities believed that *moffies*, *isitabane*, *sekswanas*, and gay men and women were immoral, unnatural, and un-African.

In the coloured community, men who self-identified or were designated as *moffies* (which could alternatively mean someone who was effeminate, gay, a drag queen, or transgender) were often visible parts of the community (Tucker 2009). However, heterosexual coloured elites did not usually accept *moffies* or *moffie* culture. Cody Perkins explains, "Coloured elites felt that *moffies* threatened Coloured social standing within South Africa and hampered Coloured men's claims to respectable ideals along the lines of those accepted by White South Africans" (Perkins 2015: 153).

Despite coloured elites attempts to silence those who they felt threatened the social order, *moffies* were often a visible and vibrant part of coloured working-class subcultures in places like Cape Town, at least before the forced removals of the Group Areas Act in 1950 demolished neighborhoods such as District Six (Chetty 1995: 117). For example, gayle, or *moffietaal* (gay

language), is a well-studied part of coloured culture. Gayle was a way to discuss and conceal gay life during apartheid.[10] Many believe that the language (a mix of Afrikaans and English) originated in the Western Cape, in coloured communities. A variety of speakers across racial lines used gayle (Cage 2003: 18–19). Though frowned upon by elites who were invested in racial respectability, *moffies* were a visible part of coloured communities during apartheid and continue to be so today.

The international antiapartheid movement changed the range of possibilities for self-making offered at home and in the larger world for black South Africans with same-sex desires. These South Africans understood themselves differently as apartheid progressed. In particular, the 1980s and early 1990s led to the emergence of new models for same-sex sexuality that focused less on gender identity and more on having a self that was based on sexuality. The emergence of a gay subjectivity in black communities in South Africa in the last decades of apartheid had local and international sources, such as the addition of sexuality by exiled ANC leaders to their nondiscrimination rhetoric, a new awareness by many that there was an international and supportive gay community, and the first Gay Pride March in the country in 1990 in Johannesburg (Donham 2002: 418–419). Before this time, effeminate individuals or those known to participate in same-sex sexual activities were usually called *isitabane*,[11] and they often became socially reinscribed as women, hermaphrodites, or intersex. Amanda Lock Swarr explains, “In Soweto and other South African rural and township areas, slippage among bodies, sexual practices, and identification was notable among those who are labeled as stabane” (Swarr 2009: 530). For example, Linda Ngcobo was an openly gay Zulu antiapartheid activist. Although born with male genitals, Ngcobo saw herself and was raised by her family as a girl. She had designated female chores, clothing, and social roles—even singing as a soprano girl in her father’s Zionist church choir. The above changes in South African social and political life had an important effect on individuals like Ngcobo, who stopped identifying as a woman and reconceptualized himself as a gay man at the end of apartheid (McLean and Ngcobo 1995: 169). In black communities, new sexual selves became possible in the waning days of National Party rule; a diversity of gender and sexual selves continues today.

Contemporary Africans largely view homosexuality and gay rights in a negative light, despite a history of same-sex sexual behaviors and gay selves in South Africa and other parts of the African continent. Homosexuality is currently illegal in thirty-eight countries in Africa (Amnesty International 2013: 7). Campaigns like the “Kill the Gays” bill in the Ugandan Parliament

have garnered international attention in the past few years to the politics of African LGBTI lives. A member of the Ugandan Parliament came up with the "Anti-Homosexuality Bill" in 2009, proposing that people should be imprisoned and even killed for being homosexual (Cheney 2012; Sadgrove et al. 2012). The constitutional court struck the bill down in 2014 for a legal technicality. Lawmakers then drafted more legislation to replace it: the Prohibition of Promotion of Unnatural Sexual Practices bill (Smith 2014). Gay Ugandans still remain under threat of arrest and imprisonment.

Gays and lesbians are vilified as being outside the moral fabric of the nation, un-African, and not deserving of rights in countries such as Malawi, Senegal, Zimbabwe, and Namibia (see, for example, Lorway 2015; Thoreson 2014; Msibi 2011). To oppose this, African gay rights activists have argued that gays and lesbians should be protected by universal human rights and that being gay is historically part of the African social fabric (Epprecht 2013). Condemnation of homosexuality seems to be part and parcel of a politics of scapegoating in Africa, what Sylvia Tamale calls a "politics of distraction" whereby leaders attempt to divert attention away from political and economic crises by focusing on the supposed national dangers of homosexuality (Tamale 2013: 39).

Many Africans across the continent understand the West as trying to import a neocolonial "moral imperialism" to Africa veiled in the language of human rights (Kaoma 2014: 236). Politicians in many African nations have sought to distance themselves from South Africa's legally progressive stance and its constitutional protection of sexual orientation. Leaders like Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe have made clear that homosexuality is un-African and should be punishable. For example, in a speech in 2011, Mugabe stated, "It is condemned by nature. It is condemned by insects and that is why I have said they are worse than pigs and dogs" (quoted in Laing 2011). The ANC leadership does not consistently support gay rights either, despite constitutional protection. South African president Jacob Zuma said in 2006 at a Heritage Day celebration (before he became the nation's president), "When I was growing up an *ungqingili* (a gay) would not have stood in front of me. I would knock him out," along with stating that gay marriage was "a disgrace to the nation and to God" (quoted in Robins 2008: 148).

Many Christians, particularly Pentecostals, are at the forefront of African homophobia, joining other Africans in their beliefs that homosexuality is unnatural and un-African (Chitando and van Klinken 2016a; van Klinken and Chitando 2016). There is a convergence of religious and political leaders' homophobic rhetoric in much of Africa (Gunda 2010: 37). Pentecostals

frequently believe gays and lesbians should be punished by the state. Public officials often join religious leaders and everyday believers in their calls for LGBTI Africans to be marginalized, change themselves, hide, and/or be punished for same-sex attractions and activities. Conservative Christians add another layer of antigay beliefs in their ideas that homosexuality is unbiblical and demonic. Passages used to say that homosexuality is unbiblical are called "clobber passages" because they are used to beat the LGBTI community with the Bible. Christians frequently use Genesis 19:15, Leviticus 20:13, Romans 1:26–27, and 1 Timothy 1:9–10 as biblical proof that God condemns homosexuality. Some religious leaders deny that homosexuality exists at all in their societies,[12] while others blame it on a diversity of causes like Western imposition,[13] colonial holdover, the supernatural, and/or recruitment by the LGBTI community. In Cameroon, for example, homosexuality is linked to the devil and the End Times, with LGBTI visibility understood as evidence of Satan's international growth and dominance (Lyonga 2016: 60).

So why does homophobia (which of course has national and local inflections) seem to be a hallmark of much of African Christianity in the early twenty-first century? The meteoric rise of Pentecostalism has made religious competition a key piece of the African religious landscape and raised the stakes of moral rhetoric. Adriaan van Klinken states, "Making homosexuality a major issue in public debate, Pentecostals also make it difficult for other churches to take a more nuanced position as this could easily be used against them on a highly competitive religious market" (van Klinken 2015: 145). The export of the American culture war on homosexuality has also led to an increase in religiously motivated homophobia in Africa (Kaoma 2009: 4). Kapya Kaoma explains that there is an "insidiously inverse relationship between LGBTI rights in the United States and in Africa; any advancement toward full equality in the United States is depicted as evidence of a growing homosexual threat to the world" (Kaoma 2013: 78). Politicians and religious leaders frequently tell other Africans to fear the growing "homosexual agenda" that seeks world domination. In Uganda, for example, homosexuality is closely linked to Western values and the possession of an inauthentic national identity (Valois 2016: 39).

Debates on homosexuality are also hotbed issues in more mainstream African churches. In the Anglican Communion, homosexuality has been extremely divisive and has set the stage for other churches to fight against more liberal branches of their denominations (Chitando and van Klinken 2016b: 6). Anglican bishops censured homosexuality at the 1998 Lambeth Conference (held every decade). African religious leaders spurred the vote

to outlaw gay ordination and for clergy to be prohibited from performing LGBTI commitment ceremonies (Hoad 2007: 51). The Anglican Communion has kept up the pressure on not accepting and welcoming gays and lesbians, and in January 2016, it disciplined the Episcopal Church for three years because of its open and affirming stance, its consecration of gay bishops, and its performance of same-sex marriages (Domonoske 2016). However, some churches in Africa are progressive toward gay rights. This includes South Africa's Anglicans and, perhaps surprisingly, the Dutch Reformed Church (known by many as the church of apartheid), which in 2015 voted to recognize same-sex relationships (though not call them marriages) and to ordain gay ministers without requiring them to take a vow of celibacy (DeBarros 2015; Ngubane 2015).

The nation of South Africa stands out as an exception on the African continent because gay rights are legally protected. Since becoming democratic in 1994, South Africa has formed a government based on the concept of universal human rights, with equality for gay people and the rights of women enshrined in the Equality Clause of the Constitution (Cock 2005; Stychin 1996). Gay men and women are also able to legally marry (Berger 2008). However, public attitudes and interpersonal behavior are not in line with governmental protections. Intense moral disapproval toward same-sex sexuality contrasts sharply with the ideologies of the Equality Clause. In democratic South Africa, homosexuality represents larger social anxieties about social change brought on by the new human rights–based constitution, its accompanying discourses, and social movements calling for its implementation. HRM members shared with the majority of South Africans the attitude that homosexuality is wrong, including black nationalists who think that homosexuality is un-African as well as a Western colonial import (Epprecht 2004). Lesbian women frequently experience verbal harassment and assault, which they usually do not report to police (Nel 2008; Reid and Dirsuweit 2002). So-called corrective rape of lesbians is a well-known and commonly used tactic, sometimes endorsed by families, to punish lesbians and "fix them" in black townships (Currier 2012; Gontek 2009; Muholi 2004).

Between 2003 and 2007, studies found that 80 percent of South Africans over sixteen years of age believed that sex between two people of the same sex is "always wrong" (Roberts and Reddy 2008).[14] In the Western Cape, slightly lower numbers of the population held this opinion, at 68 percent, suggesting that the province that includes Cape Town is more liberal in its attitudes toward homosexuality. A 2013 Pew Research Center study found

that 61 percent of South Africans surveyed answered the question "should society accept homosexuality" negatively. I am unsure how to account for the 20 percent difference in these statistics between 2008 and 2013. Part of it may be who did the survey, who was surveyed, and how the question was worded. Despite this discrepancy, these numbers still stand in sharp contrast to other African countries surveyed. For example, 98 percent of Nigerians, 96 percent of Ugandans and Ghanaians, and 90 percent of Kenyans believed that society should not accept homosexuality. Public disapproval is lower in the United States, where only 33 percent of the population said that homosexuality should not be accepted (Pew Research Center 2013: 1).

South Africa has a history of homosexuality, gay selves, and homophobia. HRM was not the first group of people to try to "cure" same-sex attraction and behavior in South Africa. Beginning in 1969 the South African Defence Force (SADF) had a psychological unit to "cure" white soldiers who were categorized as "homosexual." These "cures" included electro-shock treatment, hormone prescription, and sex-reassignment surgery, which frequently occurred without patient consent (Vincent and Camminga 2009: 685; Van Zyl et al. 1999). Outside of formal institutions, individuals also sought a variety of "cures" and went to a variety of "experts." For example, black antiapartheid activist Simon Nkoli wrote about telling his parents that he was gay in the mid-1970s. They took him to three separate kinds of healers for treatment—four separate *sangomas* (traditional healers) with various opinions (two who said he was bewitched, and two who said there was no problem), a Catholic priest who told him to repent, and finally a psychologist who told him to accept himself as gay (Nkoli 1995, 1993). Although this is the anecdotal account of one person, I note it because it illustrates, along with the SADF hospital example above, that not only were there people identifying as "gay" during apartheid but also that there were a multiplicity of local solutions to homosexuality from various community "experts" at the same time.

The history of homosexuality in South Africa is intimately linked to Cape Town. During apartheid, the city and surrounding areas had "protogay neighborhoods," including Sea Point for white gay men, where HRM was located, and District Six for coloured men (Gevisser 1995: 27). The communities had little contact until the 1990s due to apartheid's institutionalized racism and geographic separation (Tucker 2009; Leap 2005). HRM could only be public and flourish during the postapartheid period because gayness was protected and public. A diversity of "cures" are still available for homosexuality beyond HRM. I've picked up tracts in downtown Cape

Town that advertise healings by *sangomas* (traditional healers) for a variety of problems that include homosexuality, erectile dysfunction, and other forms of "misfortune." Many of the men I knew in HRM had gone for a variety of other "cures," including deliverance (the casting out of demons and demonic cleansing) at their local churches, before learning about and joining the ministry.

This book is about sexual and gendered self-making for men who were at the intersections and margins of both LGBTI and Pentecostal communities. The ex-gay movement gained traction in South Africa, particularly in Cape Town, Africa's "gay capital," because of LGBTI visibility in democracy. Despite violence and social stigma, there are vibrant LGBTI communities in Cape Town, although they are segregated by race. These communities were key to HRM's formation and growth in democracy because LGBTI visibility generated space for the growth of new sexual and gender subjectivities, politics, and group memberships. Events held by the Triangle Project (Cape Town's LGBTI center), marches for rights, annual Pride Parades, and parties like the Mother City Queer Project all made space for LGBTI Africans to be public about their desires and engage in their own self-making projects. South African LGBTI demands for recognition and rights made it possible for the members of HRM to do the same, to be public about who they were without apology and advocate for their rights as members of the new democratic nation. The men in HRM feared gay men but also were enabled by gay visibility to make claims for rights, for the ability to name their own subject-positions, and to construct a narrative of sexual liberation—even though this narrative was in opposition to the LGBTI one.

Ex-gay men felt ostracized from the gay community because of what they perceived to be its anti-Christian bias and hypersexualization but were still drawn to it and its so-called "worldly perversions." In many ways, the men in this book line up with other African Pentecostals in their beliefs that homosexuality is demonic and morally wrong, though they struggled with being judged and ridiculed for their so-called "sinful" desires. HRM members held stereotypical ideas of the gay male community, viewing it as full of "sexual sinners" who had frequent and dysfunctional nonemotional sexual encounters. Few had been part of the gay community or even at its peripheries before their time in the ministry. Instead, most had fantasized about other men or had what they hoped were discreet sexual encounters. Overall, these men viewed their same-sex desires and their consequences as the biggest failures in their lives and sought to transform themselves through desire work. Even after some HRM ex-members came out, detailed in chap-

ter 5, few were involved extensively in gay and lesbian specific activities or communities, though this changed for some men slowly over time. These men, especially at the beginnings of leaving the ex-gay lifestyle, had trouble letting go of their views of other gay men as overly sexual and the gay community as a place that enabled "deviant" sexualities. It was hard for them to give up their stereotypical views on gay men as hypersexual and lesbians as emotional manipulators.

Negotiating My Identity

This book is based on fieldwork in Cape Town in 2004 and 2005, from 2007 to 2008, and in 2013. My introduction to the ministry through Brian made it much easier for me to do my fieldwork. Brian is a white ex-gay Pentecostal man originally from outside of Los Angeles. His role as an American who broke South African norms allowed me to break these social conventions as a woman. Brian always talked about sex—who he used to have sex with, where, if he was still "like that," if the person in the corner was definitely his type, and so on—and as a fellow American my questions and comments on sex were not seen as strange. Between 2004 and 2007 I lived in San Francisco, which contributed to the idea that I was not easily shocked about anything to do with sex since I had lived in one of the world's "pink capitals."

South African Pentecostal men are not encouraged to spend time alone with women because it could communicate an interest in dating, as well as provide a venue for sexual transgressions. This rule never applied to me because I was an outsider. I spent a great deal of one-on-one time with various Pentecostal men. I also talked about topics that South African Pentecostal women were not supposed to discuss with men. I was "one of the guys" because I was good at sexual innuendo and would discuss sex and sexuality in detail with them. There was, however, a double standard for both sexuality and sexual pasts. As a woman, my past sexual exploits could not be too numerous if I were to remain respectable. I chose to share sexual experiences about long-term relationships because they did not put me in the promiscuous category. The men, however, could have numerous anonymous sexual encounters without the same judgment.

In her work with teenagers at an American high school, C. J. Pascoe writes about establishing a "least gendered identity" where she drew upon "masculine cultural capital" in order to distance herself from normative femininity (Pascoe 2007: 181). She did this because in her work with adolescent boys she sought to be less sexualized by them. Similarly, in my work I thought of

myself as embracing a "least sexual identity" in that I did not want my own sexuality to be the focus of how the men in HRM saw and interacted with me. I self-identify as a lesbian, and I knew this would make the men treat me differently because they were wary of lesbians, seeing them as mannish, gender confused, irrational, and incapable of having healthy emotional relationships. HRM believed that men "acted out" sexually and women "acted out" emotionally. Lesbians were seen as dangerous to be in relationships with because they were viewed as inherently dysfunctional and as having more issues to overcome than gay men. I did not seek to lie to the men in the ministry but I did not want to be put into a box as emotionally and spiritually dangerous. If anyone asked me direct questions about my sexuality or sexual past, I answered them, but in general I sought to have a "least sexual identity." At the end of my year of fieldwork I did share with many of the men my own sexual past and identity, which garnered a mixed response. Alwyn, for example, felt betrayed by me and upset that I had not shared my own struggles and been honest when he felt that he had been authentic and vulnerable with me. Michael and Liam were more forgiving and felt relieved that their own struggles made them seem less like "freaks" based on my also being gay. They said that my own subjectivity meant I could understand them better. Liam added that he would not have told the ministry either because they were so judgmental. For me, a "less sexual identity" allowed me to do my fieldwork, though it did make me uncomfortable.

I am not a Pentecostal nor did I present myself as one. I was raised in a mixed religious household with a Jewish mother and a Christian father and presented myself as such. I was raised closer to the Christian side of my family and went to Divinity School, so I was well versed in the Bible and more mainstream Christian rituals, worship, and theologies. Initially I found Pentecostal worship, with its live electronic band music and spiritual embodiment, exotic and overwhelming in comparison to my staid Presbyterian childhood experiences. Over time, I learned to enjoy the music and became more at ease with the more lively and charismatic parts of church and ministry life, like speaking in tongues, being filled with the Holy Spirit, and the focus on the demonic, though the latter did make me uncomfortable at times. No one tried to convert me to Pentecostalism, though those who knew I was not baptized thought I should be in the Church of the Reborn. During the time before my fieldwork I was attending a nondenominational open and affirming church, Glide Memorial Church, in San Francisco, so when Brian and I would have conflicts about submission to his or Pastor Jurie's authority, I deferred to my affiliation there, saying it was my home

church and not Church of the Reborn. For example, when I was told to submit, I would say that I did not have to because I was not at my home church, and I let the ministry infer that I may have submitted there. I found that being part Jewish also gave me some room to fall back on when I felt overwhelmed or needed some distance. For example, when I was asked why I was not baptized, I said it was because it would upset my mother, which was true, but I did not mention I did not want to be baptized either.

I was a participant-observer at a number of fieldsites and volunteered in the ministry's office to perform administrative tasks. I did semistructured interviews with thirty-one people, some multiple times, lasting from one to four hours in 2008 and 2013. In 2007 I was frequently at the Church of the Reborn. I spent two or three days a week in HRM's offices in the church building and attended Sunday morning and evening services. Every Wednesday night I participated in a Life Group, a small gathering of church members living in the same neighborhood or with something in common, for example, there were groups for youth and married couples. These two-hour gatherings combined worship, prayer, Bible study, and socializing.

In 2007, I hesitatingly agreed to be an assistant leader for the same "Life Matters for the Family" course I had observed in 2005. I consented only because I was not expected to teach but just to observe for the eight weeks of the class.[15] The leaders held a weekly prayer and spiritual warfare (the belief that there is a constant and persistent war between Satan and God that Christians must also actively participate in through spiritual battles) session, went to class, and finally broke into smaller gender-segregated groups for discussion and prayer. I was assigned to a leader with an abrasive communication style; the six women in our small group all dropped out of the class by the fourth week. I was relieved because I was uncomfortable with the leader, specifically when she told two women their feelings were "wrong" and another that she misread the Bible.

I attended the ministry's annual weekend retreat in 2004 and 2008. Leaders went away together to socialize, pray, talk about the future of the ministry, and discuss the past year. In 2008, I attended a secular sexual addiction conference in Cape Town run by Patrick Carnes, an international expert on sexual addiction from the United States, with HRM leaders. In 2005 and 2007, I attended the ministry's annual fundraising events. The event in 2005 was an informal dinner at an upscale restaurant; in 2007, the fundraiser featured a formal "ball" with dancing and a charity auction. I was also present for a Gay Pride Parade Outreach during Cape Town's 2008 Gay Pride festivities and was the scribe at Strategic Planning meetings, though

I was not allowed to attend board or counseling supervision meetings because they were confidential. Gossip was an important part of my fieldwork since it was very popular in the ministry, although everyone claimed it was wrong and a "tool" of Satan. For example, the content of board meetings, like most other "confidential" matters, was discussed in detail by almost everyone.

I spent my social time with ministry and church members. I attended an evangelical/Pentecostal Singles Ball and a number of Christian weddings with a leader who was a wedding photographer. HRM, church members, and I shared meals and went to the gym, on picnics, out for coffee and wine tasting, and to the movies. My apartment became a hub of social activity; I had afternoon teas and dinners with friends from HRM and the church a few times a week. It was often easy to forget the rampant homophobia of HRM. Sometimes when we were at the movies or drinking tea at my apartment and chatting, I felt like I was studying a group of kind, funny, and quirky men, but then I'd be reminded through homophobic or racist comments that I was studying a group with whom I had key differences. For example, I did not agree with HRM's beliefs and ideas about homosexuality. I did not and do not believe that gay people, including me, are going to hell, have psychological problems, or are doomed to a life of unhappiness unless they change their sexual orientations.

I think that there is value in studying groups we do not agree with, and I situate this book within a longer trajectory of scholars studying groups on the Right, groups of people different from themselves (see for example Bornstein 2005; Blee 2002; Harding 2000; Ginsburg 1989). Other scholars who have studied the ex-gay movement have also disagreed with their rhetoric (Gerber 2012; Erzen 2006). Anthropology has historically studied the disenfranchised, but I was interested in studying a group that could not be rehabilitated into a feminist or social justice project (for a discussion on this, see Mahmood 2005).

I also spent time with ministry members' openly gay friends. I was initially surprised that for his thirtieth birthday Afrikaans HRM leader Alwyn invited people with a range of sexual selves. Even more shocking to me at the time was that almost everyone came to the party. For hours, people chatted, laughed, and drank wine together. One of the first steps in starting the ex-gay process is that one is supposed to stop talking to anyone from "the [gay] lifestyle" and to stay away from gay people and places. Although some of the men in HRM lived like this, I found that the longer they were in the ministry, the more likely they were to have "out" gay friends. The men

became very close in the years they knew each other and were frequently unwilling to stop being friends if someone left the ministry. On many occasions, I found myself spending time in a group made up of Pentecostal ex-gay and formerly ex-gay men.

Many people left or were forced out of HRM and the Church of the Reborn during my year of fieldwork, including me. Brian and I had a series of arguments about HRM's choice to do a Pride Outreach in 2008 and to hand out hundreds of business cards advertising an "after-party" website that was actually for an anonymous ex-gay organization, which I write about in chapter 5. When I communicated that I thought lying about the website was wrong, Brian told me to stop questioning his decisions and to "submit" to his authority. After a few rounds of "Bible chicken" and a loud argument in the church offices, I was thanked for my service and told not to come into the office anymore.[16]

This conflict complicated my fieldwork, which ended up being split into two phases. I spent the first seven months largely in the ministry offices and at the church. In the second phase I worked from my apartment and followed people who were present and past ministry members or worked/attended Church of the Reborn. I originally thought that being on the outs with Brian would harm my fieldwork, but it turned out to be very useful. I learned how unhappy people were, and as an official outsider I was viewed as safe for sharing complaints and gossip. I attended services at churches that past HRM leaders and church employees joined, spending my Sundays at a variety of evangelical and Pentecostal churches in and around Cape Town, including the Vineyard and His People.

I was also accepted as a researcher and volunteer because of Pentecostal causality, where otherworldly intervention affects choices, for example, the frequently invoked "God laid it on my heart." Brian believed that God told him to come to South Africa and begin the ministry. I always told people I was an anthropologist doing research and was not a missionary, but I was frequently introduced as a missionary despite my objections. Some of the members and workers at the church believed I had come to South Africa to find a husband. One Church of the Reborn staff member came into the HRM office one morning to tell me that "God had shown her" that I had "flown over the ocean" to find the husband God "ordained" for me. She was disappointed with me when I left single.

The ministry had become much more official since 2004. The first two summers I volunteered in the office without any formality. However, before I could be approved to work with the ministry in 2007, I had to write a re-

ligious and sexual biography for the Board. I was also told that I needed to sign three quasi-legal forms. The first was a detailed Release from Liability, where I agreed not to sue the ministry for any physical, emotional, or spiritual trauma, including negligence. The second form was a Leadership Agreement detailing what kind of emotional and sexual conduct were not allowed and the consequences for participating in such activities. The third form detailed the ministry's policy on consequences and official steps that a person who broke the leadership requirements had to go through in order to be reinstated. I also had to agree to have an "accountability partner" to whom I was supposed to report any sexual or moral transgressions, though partner is a misnomer. Partners actually acted more as confessors. My partner was Abigail, a white woman in her sixties who was not ex-gay, though she came from a background of "sexual brokenness" and was married to a pedophile when she was younger. She and I were supposed to meet every month, but we only had one official meeting in the six months I was assigned to her. After my falling-out with Brian about the Pride Parade, I was removed from the "team" and was no longer expected to meet with Abigail. I dreaded what I was going to be asked to disclose in our one meeting; to my relief, the meeting was mostly gossiping.

My physical appearance, including my femininity, was important to my fieldwork. During one of my trips Brian asked me how often I wore skirts in a given week and about my grooming habits. Would I say I wore skirts once a week, a month, or never? Was I in touch with my femininity? How often did I wear makeup? I did not like this line of questioning. It made me angry and it came up at various times from Brian and other leaders. If I had looked very feminine, like the other women at the church, I would have been subject to the same social norms. This would have cut me off from the men in the ministry. However, I still had to be legible as a woman. Physical appearance, especially masculinity and femininity, are linked to recovery and emotional healthiness in the ex-gay movement. If I had veered too much into the androgynous or "butch" categories, I would have been seen as having unacknowledged problems and become less of a peer and more of a counselee or someone in need of "gender mentoring."

I had to regulate not only my gender presentation but also my visible responses. I learned how to keep my expressions neutral and remain silent when sexist, racist, and homophobic comments were made in my presence. Beginning with my first trip to South Africa in 2004, I worked on controlling my facial expressions when what people said, especially white Afrikaans speakers, was shocking. I was not always successful, however; I

often rolled my eyes without thinking. My research involved listening to conversations that I often found disturbing, yet I had to keep myself from responding negatively to comments I was sometimes completely unnerved by hearing. I was careful about responding to homophobia because if I had been seen as too gay friendly, I would have been cut off from conversations about homosexuality. I was conflicted about when to speak up. Over time I learned whom I could speak with more freely.

I frustrated many white Christians in Cape Town and on the farms I visited in the Western Cape when I tried to interject that I found certain comments or actions racist. Although I could be fuming, they rarely got upset, usually dismissing my comments as irrelevant, saying I would never understand race in South Africa. I was most disturbed by the overt racism I saw in HRM. White and coloured men frequently put forward racist ideas about coloured and black people. Black men were especially vilified, as the men in the ministry reproduced, as detailed earlier, colonial and apartheid-era stereotypes of black men as oversexed, irresponsible, and leading the country toward economic, political, and moral ruin. A nonwhite researcher may have been exposed to less of this "backstage talk" where whites felt comfortable expressing racist talk amongst themselves, assuming that other in-group members shared their views (Verwey and Quayle 2012: 552). In many ways I was more prepared for homophobia than racism, in that I expected homophobic talk but, naively in many ways, thought that a multiracial ministry would not lead to so much racism. HRM members and ex-members may disagree with my assessments of them as homophobic, sexist, and racist.

In 2013, I returned to Cape Town after a five-year absence to do follow-up fieldwork, the content of which is detailed in chapter 5. I ended up spending most of my time with now openly gay ex-ministry members. I had little contact with men still working the ex-gay process, who knew I was now supporting the newly out men, something which made me suspect in their eyes.

Outline of the Book

In chapter 1, I look at the reasons behind HRM's success after the ending of apartheid. I discuss how the convergence of a variety of social movements and discourses created the environment for the ministry to flourish in a particular historical circumstance. I pay special attention to twelve-step movements and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Chapter 2 examines the intimate work that Pentecostals employed to move closer to God. He

is understood to initiate healing through (re)fathering men who were denied emotional love and "appropriately" gendered parenting in childhood. In chapter 3, I address how South African Pentecostal men learned how to protect themselves, their families, their communities, and the nation in what was explained as a battle between Satan and God. I show how ex-gay men performed work like prayer, speaking in tongues, deliverance (exorcism), and spiritual warfare to battle personal and corporate sin. In chapter 4 I concentrate on how ministry members worked to achieve heterosexual desire, though they were often unsuccessful. I address the sequential changes in heterosexual desire work. In chapter 5, I look at the narratives of newly "out" gay men and their reflections on their time in HRM. I focus on the ways that they are now seeing and understanding themselves through a language of "integration" and "wholeness." In the afterword, I return to the question of failure and self-making.

Preface

1 The name of the ministry, church, and people are pseudonyms.
2 I followed a number of ex-gay ministries when I was in graduate school, and few of them exist today. However, more continue to pop up.
3 HRM broke away from its affiliation with Christian Uplift in 2002 because the male founder had a very public "sexual fall" that hurt its credibility; it closed soon afterward.
4 In 2016 Exodus Global Alliance had two African ministries listed on their website, one in South Africa, Living Waters South Africa, and the other in Egypt, Life Ministry. In 2017, it had one ministry listed, Journey South Africa.

Introduction

1 *Moffie* has a variety of meanings. It translates from Afrikaans as sissy. It is also often used to say someone is gay/effeminate (Cage 2003: 82). The men in HRM understand it negatively and used it in a demeaning way. Some South Africans have reclaimed the term *moffie* as positive, similar to how many in the United States have reclaimed "queer." Adrian means *moffie* negatively here.
2 Ken Cage defines "camp" as "a form of humor popular among gay people, using satire and sometimes downright mean . . . [to] mimic the opposite sex; to be witty and clever" (Cage 2003: 61).
3 GEAR was a form of what is usually coded as neoliberalism. (See Ferguson 2009 for a discussion of the problematics of this term, especially in the African context.)
4 The 2011 census found that the population in Cape Town broke down racially as 43.2 percent coloured, 39.4 percent black, 16 percent white, and 1.4 percent Indian/Asian (Statistics South Africa 2012: 11).
5 Pentecostal forms of Christianity are similar to evangelical and charismatic forms of the faith in sub-Saharan Africa (Omenyo 2014; Asamoah-Gyadu 2007). Charismatics are often similar to Pentecostals in ecstatic religious expression but remain members of mainline churches. Evangelicals also share much in common with Pentecostals, for example, the importance of the born-again experience, but downplay or do not believe in the more miraculous pieces of Pentecostal identity like speaking in tongues or miraculous healing. That said, this self-definition can vary and depends on the person and his/her self-definition.
6 The 2011 South African census did not pose questions about religion.

7 Conversion is frequently more ambiguous for women than men, in that it can lead to both empowerment and disenfranchisement in the public and private realms (Soothill 2014; Parsitau 2011; Soothill 2007; Mate 2002).
8 This familial destruction was brought on by apartheid practices like migrant labor, which separated men, often for years, from their families.
9 The 1966 Forest Town Raid (outside of Johannesburg) was the largest and most public police presence in gay life in South Africa at the time (Cage 2003: 12).
10 Gayle was not the only "gay language" in South Africa. There is also *isingquomo*, township gay slang, which is heavily Zulu-based and thought to have originated in Durban (McLean and Ngcobo 1995).
11 Ronald Louw explains that "*isitabane* . . . is a derogatory word (except where it has been appropriated by those whom it describes)" (2001: 292).
12 For example, Anglican bishop Michael Lugar of the Diocese of Rejaf said, "In the Sudan we know nothing of homosexuality. We only know the Gospel and we proclaim it" (Hoad 2004: 60).
13 Bishop Benjamin Kwashi of Nigeria said that Africans were "oppressed with this Western imposition [homosexuality]" (Hoad 2004: 61).
14 The question asked was, "Do you think it is wrong for two adults of the same sex to have sexual relations?" Possible answers were "always wrong," "almost always wrong," "wrong only at times," and "not wrong at all." The percentages per year answering "always wrong" were 84 percent (2003), 83 percent (2004), 85 percent (2005), 83 percent (2006), and 82 percent (2007).
15 One leader was thought to make the small group seem too much like counseling. Ideally, the assistant learned how to facilitate a small group in order to be a leader the next time the class was offered. That person could train someone else so that over time more leaders with the appropriate skills were created for the ministry.
16 "Bible chicken" is my term for the biblical equivalent of drivers trying to force each other off the road and get the other person to give up and crash. For many Pentecostals, quoting relevant biblical passages is a verbal art of competition. The way it works is that one person will answer a question or start an argument referring to or quoting a Bible passage. For Bible chicken to begin, the other person must answer back in an identical fashion. This can go on until one person crashes, runs out of biblical references. For example, if someone says that God doesn't care whether people are gay, a ministry member may answer with, "Doesn't it say in Leviticus that a man shouldn't lie with another man?" Or "Look at Leviticus 18:22." The first person then has to come back with another passage, maybe something about the dietary laws in Leviticus that Christians no longer follow, stating that if we do not follow those taboos, why the ones on homosexuality? And so on.

1. Cultural Convergences

1 I am not interested in critiquing or commending the commission here. My focus is on how the commission popularized new ideas about trauma and healing (see Ross 2008 for a critique of the commission). Although TRC trauma discourses