

*In This Place Called Prison* offers a vivid account of religious life within an institution designed to punish. Rachel Ellis conducted a year of ethnographic fieldwork inside a U.S. state women's prison, talking with hundreds of incarcerated women, staff, and volunteers. Through their stories, Ellis shows how women draw on religion to navigate lived experiences of carceral control. A trenchant study of religion colliding and colluding with the state in an enduring tension between freedom and constraint, this book speaks to the quest for dignity and light against the backdrop of mass incarceration, state surveillance, and American inequality.

"I cannot recommend this book more enthusiastically. This is sociology at its best: theoretically rigorous, methodologically sound, substantively important, and beautifully written."—SANDRA SUSAN SMITH, Professor of Criminal Justice, Harvard Kennedy School

"Few works expose the core of America's complex religion of punishment and patriarchy better than this remarkable book. A revelation, a reckoning, and hopefully a Road to Damascus moment for the field."—SHADD MARUNA, author of *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild Their Lives*

"Ellis unravels the symbiosis of two quintessentially American institutions—prison and Christianity. We witness religion's counterintuitive power to ease but also exacerbate the pains of imprisonment."—FORREST STUART, author of *Down, Out, and Under Arrest: Policing and Everyday Life in Skid Row*

"Adds a much-needed carceral ethnography to the dearth of scholarship on women's prisons and offers powerful new insights into the role of religion in incarcerated women's lives. An important work."—JODY MILLER, author of *Getting Played: African American Girls, Urban Inequality, and Gendered Violence*

"A timely contribution. This gripping account provides a fresh perspective on the understudied demographic of women in prison."—ELIJAH ANDERSON, author of *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City*

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