BEFORE THE CULTURE WARS:
CONSERVATIVE PROTESTANTS AND THE FAMILY, 1920-1980
VOLUME I

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines conservative Protestant efforts to preserve the social and religious mission of the evangelical Protestant family between the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 and the rise of the New Christian Right in the 1980s. It focuses on how members of five conservative Protestant groups—the fundamentalist movement, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Assemblies of God, and the neo-evangelical movement—responded to sweeping changes in American family life and social thought during the middle decades of the twentieth century. Confronted with changes in women's roles, rising divorce rates, changing romantic and sexual expectations within marriage, social chaos in the form of crime and international threats, and secularization, they replied with a growing pool of advice books, periodical literature, sermons, and denominational and parachurch campaigns that aimed to define and revive Christian marriage and parenthood.

Conservative Protestant writing about the family reveals that commentators sought to make the religious ideals of personal salvation and holiness cohere with
middle-class American faith in progress and self-improvement. During the interwar years writers articulated a conservative religious version of the middle-class ideal of the family as an emotionally intimate and spiritually potent institution able to build the nation by forming the minds, characters, and bodies of individual citizens. Following World War II, they increasingly presented Christian belief and practice as a means of achieving a companionable marriage, sought to ensure harmonious and sexually warm relationships between couples, and instructed parents to balance the rigors of Christian training and discipline with an appreciation for the child's feelings and developmental needs. Greater acceptance of popular and counseling psychology encouraged conservative Protestants to embrace the expectation that personal and marital happiness could be obtained through self-understanding, self-improvement, and a salvific relationship with God.

In the 1970s Dr. James Dobson and Tim and Beverley LaHaye, all leaders in the emerging New Christian Right, established themselves as psychologists, counselors, and teachers invested in improving family life. In these roles, they called upon conservative Protestants to defend their conception of the family and moral order, along with the cherished hopes they had attached to each.
For Jeremy

Who has always offered me the privilege of being his equal partner
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INTRODUCTION

His mother was a powerfully-built, dominating woman who found it difficult to love anyone. She had been married three times, and her second husband divorced her because she beat him up regularly. The father of the child I am describing was her third husband; he died of a heart attack a few months before the child's birth. As a consequence, the mother had to work long hours from his earliest childhood.

She gave him no affection, no love, no discipline, and no training during those early years. . . . Other children would have nothing to do with him, so he was alone most of the time. He was ugly and poor and untrained and unlovable. . . . During adolescence, the girls would have nothing to do with him and he fought with the boys.

Despite a high IQ, he failed academically, and finally dropped out during his third year of high school. He thought he might find a new acceptance in the Marine Corps; they reportedly built men, and he wanted to be one. But his problems went with him. . . . He fought back, resisted authority, and was court-martialed. . . .

Once again he thought he could run from his problems so he went to live in a foreign country. . . . While there, he married a girl who herself had been an illegitimate child and brought her back to America with him. Soon, she began to develop the same contempt for him that everyone else displayed. She bore him two children, but he never enjoyed the status and respect that a father should have. His marriage continued to crumble. His wife demanded more and more things he could not provide. Instead of being his ally in a bitter world, as he hoped, she became his most vicious opponent. She could outfight him, and she learned to bully him. . . . Finally, she forced him to leave.

. . . After days of solitude, he went home and literally begged her to take him back. He surrendered all pride. He crawled. He accepted humiliation. He came to her terms. . . . But she laughed at him. She belittled his feeble attempts to supply the family's needs. She ridiculed his failure. She made fun of his sexual impotency in front of a friend who was there. At one point, he fell on his knees and wept bitterly, as the great darkness of his private nightmare enveloped him.
After relating this sad case history, Dr. James Dobson, Jr.—psychologist, future radio host of *Focus on the Family*, and a future leader in the New Christian Right—revealed the story's punchline: the man who had been psychologically destroyed by the women in his life and prevented from developing even rudiments of self-esteem was none other than Lee Harvey Oswald. The day after the final events in Dobson's tale took place, Oswald got out of bed and proceeded to the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository in Dallas. He then shot and killed President John F. Kennedy.¹

Dobson's interpretation of Oswald's life story illustrates a number of ideas important to the New Christian Right, and to conservative Protestantism more generally, during the 1970s. First, a bad family life could have terrible consequences for a person—and for the whole nation. Second, adherence to traditional social roles met individual needs and fostered a happy family life; conversely, the lapse of individuals from their usual social roles compromised the emotional or spiritual well-being of family members. Third, acceptance, self-esteem, and the achievement of personal happiness, all causes taken up by modern psychologists and advice writers, were important values that families ought to embrace. The confluence of these ideas in the conservative Protestant social imagination call for reflection.

As Dr. James Dobson's discussion of Lee Harvey Oswald illustrates, conservative Protestants, including those instrumental to the formation of the New Christian Right, were also participants in a different kind of dialog, one about the power of the family to shape people and the need of the family for help to accomplish that sacred mission. Following the upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s, conservative Protestant interest in this

topic has been made more obvious to outsiders, more politicized, and more salient to conservative Protestants themselves. But its history stretches back much further than this time period, and that history has shaped the evangelical social imagination and its religious priorities and devotional life. It has also influenced how conservative Protestants perceived the first rumblings of the “culture wars,” and why some of them became such ardent foot soldiers in that conflict.

When historians have written about conservative Protestants and the American family, they have most often focused on the political rise of the New Christian Right and its “pro-family” agenda during the last three decades. These sources focus on the family and gender roles only after they have become politicized. Meanwhile, scholars have produced groundbreaking studies of the development of modern ideas about marriage and sexuality and of the industry of marriage counseling, but they have tended not to

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comment much on religious conservatives. Writers who have chronicled the growing interest of Protestants in counseling and psychology have focused primarily on mainline churches.

Some secondary literature has discussed the longer history of conservative Protestant interest in evangelizing the middle-class home and deploying its resources to the service of the gospel and civilization. Histories of women and domestic culture in the nineteenth century have commented on the importance of evangelical religion to the American middle class. However, historians of American fundamentalism and other conservative Protestant groups during the opening decades of the century have mainly discussed how conservative Protestants embraced an anti-modernist stance that led them toward conservative social attitudes, particularly on women’s public roles. Margaret


4 E. Brooks Holifield, A History of Pastoral Care in America: From Salvation to Self-Realization (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983); Alan Petigny, The Permissive Society: America, 1941-1965 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Davis, 136-175. Although Davis devotes greater attention to Reform Judaism, Roman Catholicism and liberal Protestantism in her work, she does present an incisive treatment of evangelical advice to women during the late 1960s and 1970s and comments on their conservative Protestant's alliance with Paul Popenoe during the same period. See Davis, 204-212.

5 Histories of middle-class women’s roles have frequently discussed the importance of evangelical piety to nineteenth-century domestic ideals. Two classic studies that have explored the connection between evangelical religion and the idealization of the Christian home are Colleen McDannell, The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840-1900 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); Katheryn Kish Skylar, Catharine Beecher: A Study in Domesticity (New York: Norton, 1976).

6 The scholarly output on the question of women’s roles in churches and religious organizations has been substantial. One of the most robust historiographical discussions has concerned the formation of fundamentalist views of women’s roles during the early development of that movement. See Betty DeBerg, Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990); Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, Fundamentalism and Gender, 1875 to Present (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Janette Hassey, No Time for Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry around the Turn of the Century (Grand Rapids: Academe Books, 1986); Michael Hamilton, “Women, Public Ministry, and American Fundamentalism, 1920-1950,” Religion and American Culture 3 n. 2
Lamberts Bendroth has offered some of the most substantial reflection on how fundamentalism's concern for gender order affected the fundamentalist family, especially after World War II. During this time, she argues, the growth of suburbia, greater mobility, and popular uncertainty about gender roles inspired a “search for order” among fundamentalists. Although these works have commented extensively on the interest of fundamentalists about gender roles, they have commented far less on how religious conservatives may have been creating their own versions of modern, middle-class family life during those critical decades.

Likewise, historians who have written about the rise of neo-evangelicalism in the 1940s and 1950s have discussed the greater conversation of evangelicals with mainstream American culture. However, these historians have not often explored how moderate conservative Protestants have carried this cultural dialog into their views on the family. David Harrington Watt, one of the few writers who has commented at length on how evangelicals adopted greater optimism about the family and greater acceptance of psychology following World War II, argues that both trends point to an evangelical accommodation to modern culture that compromised its vitality, rather than exploring what such a dialog tells us about the place of conservative Protestants within middle-class culture or their ability to advance their religious ideas from that place of influence.

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7 Bendroth, 97-117.

On the whole, then, historians have paid only scanty attention to the ongoing place of the Christian home in the efforts of conservative Protestants to convert the world and build a Christian nation. They also have not sufficiently explored how the institution's purported importance has brought conservative Protestants to adopt some of the claims of the therapeutic culture, the practices of self-help and counseling, or modern ideals about romance and companionship in marriage or sexual gratification in the bedroom. This dissertation tells that story.

This dissertation argues that contemporary conservative Protestant views of the family are the product of more than fifty years of growing conservative Protestant efforts to adopt and to implement the modern, middle-class view of the family as an emotionally intimate and spiritually potent institution able to build a nation through the formation of the minds, characters, and bodies of individual citizens. It contends that this larger conversation of conservative Protestants with mainstream ideas about the family reveals the coherence of the religious ideals of salvation and holiness with middle-class American faith in progress and self-improvement. It also suggests that during recent years the appeal of leaders in the New Christian Right to their audiences stems partly from the fact that these leaders have been able to articulate and politicize deeply felt American hopes for the power and influence of individuals and the family. If religious conservatives have sometimes raised a distinct and even strident voice on cultural and familial issues, they have also remained in close dialog with mainstream culture and its

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ideas, a fact that often places them in closer, if tenuous, agreement with their neighbors than they or their neighbors always perceive. The story of conservative Protestant views on marriage and family life is also the story of American struggles to interpret vast changes in family life and to sustain optimism about the redemptive possibilities of private institutions.

The source material for this dissertation includes advice books, periodicals, pamphlets and sermons, novels, and personal papers. The dissertation relies heavily on the ideas of conservative Protestant leaders, especially pastors and lay persons who have written advice literature or otherwise commented publicly on the topic of marriage and family life. It does so partly out of necessity, but also because clergy and vocal lay people are often the individuals who have often worried about the future of their churches, denominations, and movements. Realistically or not, they have also surveyed the resources available to them—including the Christian family—and envisioned a place for those resources in their campaigns. Frequently, they are also responsible for turning to contemporary ideas for help in accomplishing their goals. To supplement this literature, the dissertation additionally turns to 160 surveys on family life that the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association collected from volunteers in its Los Angeles crusade in 1963. The responses to these surveys provide a glimpse into how some evangelicals perceived their marriages and described the importance of evangelical religion to their private lives at the end of the family-focused “long decade” of the 1950s and on the eve of the cultural upheavals of the mid- to late-1960s.
Rather than focus on a single group, this dissertation takes “conservative Protestants” as its subject. It does so because the Protestant home has long been an ideal shared by many groups. Indeed, the New Christian Right was able to forge a powerful coalition only because a shared interest in the American family transcends any one group. In addition, published material, especially advice literature, has often appealed to members of multiple groups who share general theological sympathies or social outlooks. For example, a reader thumbing through the January 14, 1950 issue of Pentecostal Evangel, the paper of the Assemblies of God, would have found a page-size advertisement showcasing recommended books on the Christian home. Their featured authors were not Pentecostals; they included John R. Rice, a southern fundamentalist evangelist; Walter A. Maier, a theologian and radio personality from the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; Otto Geiseman, also a pastor with the Missouri Synod; and J. A. Huffman, a pastor with Mennonite Brethren in Christ.10

In light of these facts, this dissertation examines the periodical literature, denominational news, and publishing activities of five important conservative Protestant groups: fundamentalists, antimodernist Protestants who opposed the growth of theological liberalism; the Assemblies of God, the largest white Pentecostal denomination in the United States; the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, a confessionalist Lutheran denomination; the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Baptist denomination to remain outside of the Protestant mainline; and neo-evangelicals, a coalition of moderate fundamentalists who in the mid-1940s began to advocate greater

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engagement with mainstream American life. In addition, it draws liberally from books on marriage and the family from closely related groups and surveys the books published by religious presses that have catered to conservative Protestant audiences. These include Zondervan Press, Moody Press, and Fleming H. Revell.

Organizationally, the dissertation proceeds chronologically and topically. The first four chapters concern the period of time stretching from the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 to the outbreak of World War II in 1941. Chapters five to nine concern the period from World War II to the end of the 1960s. My final chapter concerns advice writers in the late 1960s and 1970s, including New Christian Right leaders Dr. James Dobson and Tim & Beverley LaHaye.

Chapter one examines how, in the 1910s and 1920s, conservative Protestants confronted a new problem: the collapse of the separate spheres model of gender roles, which previously defined a woman’s responsibilities and sustained the family. In response, like many other Americans, conservative Protestants began to re-conceive women’s roles in terms of their subordination to male authority and their possession of a special set of responsibilities related to their social and biological functions as mothers.

Although the boundaries of denominations are formal and therefore easy to draw, the boundaries of movements are not. More specific definitions are therefore in order. By fundamentalists, I mean the coalition of revivalist, anti-modernist Protestants, who in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries opposed theological modernism (especially German higher criticism and evolution) inside many major Protestant denominations and theological schools. They subsequently formed separate personal networks, churches, and Bible Institutes and colleges (such as Moody Bible Institute and Bob Jones University). Though separated on many theological points, they shared opposition to the encroachments of modernism and secularization, concern about changing mores, and adherence to Biblical literalism and (in most cases) premillennial dispensationalist eschatology. By evangelicals, I mean a second coalition of fundamentalists who during the 1940s broke with aspects of fundamentalism to form the less separatist and less dispensationalist “neo-evangelical movement.” These individuals rallied around institutions and persons such as the National Association of Evangelicals, Billy Graham, and Fuller Theological Seminary. See George M. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Marsden, Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 62-82.
and nurturers. As they moved toward this paradigm, conservative women and men tended to accept the movement of women out of their “sphere” provided that their concerns and activities remained strongly identified with the family or with definitions of “femininity” that were compatible with the familial roles.

Chapter two examines how, as the separate spheres system of gender roles disappeared, conservative Protestants needed a way to envision larger public rights and roles for women without running too great a risk of women leaving their physical and spiritual work in the Christian home behind. To accomplish this goal, conservative Protestant writers of prescriptive literature and women themselves advanced a spiritual version of a new view on the rise in America: that home contained sufficient work and required sufficient expertise to necessitate that women continue to devote the bulk of their energies to domestic tasks. Authors of prescriptive literature enumerated the tasks that a woman could perform as a wife and mother to serve God, while prominent Christian women such as Helen Sunday, Grace Fuller, Henrietta Mears, and Alice Reynolds Flower built lives in which literal or metaphorical wifehood and motherhood defined their life mission and promised a full, productive life of service.

Chapter three examines how, during the interwar years, conservative Protestants viewed it as increasingly necessary to clarify Christian teaching about marriage and home life. Providing definitions and instructions seemed particularly necessary in light of a variety of new or growing social and cultural conditions: new emotional expectations for companionship and sexual intimacy in marriage, rising divorce rates, and increasing public discussion of the meaning of marriage and the rules governing it. In order to
respond to these conditions, conservative Protestants asserted that marriage and family life could and should meet the new emotional expectations associated with modern marriage. To advance this claim, they adopted new, modern values about the institution: the expectation that marriage would be freely chosen by husband and wife and thereafter sustained by the emotional connections between them, by a shared spiritual perspective and mission, and by the mutual satisfaction of each other’s deep human needs for love, help, and companionship. In building this picture, they also asserted a new picture of how Christianity would relate to the emotional and social expectations of modern citizens. In this picture, Christianity aided persons in realizing their basic needs and deepest hopes for personal life and the family by providing people with the attitudes and supernatural help they needed to foster these bonds. It also helped them to succeed by urging them to reject the materialism and selfishness that conservative Protestants viewed as destructive to the family; consequently, writers urged their audiences to reject the pursuit of pleasure outside of moral bounds, the advancement of self-interest or happiness over responsibility, and the avoidance of parenthood to pursue individualistic goals or to accrue wealth.

Chapter four considers how conservative Protestant views of gender roles and child training were affected by their larger quest to build individuals and relationships who stood apart from the materialism and excesses of modern life. It argues that conservative Protestant advice writers advanced differing ideas about gender roles within marriage but were largely united in the belief that the unique roles they assigned to husbands and wives could promote domestic happiness and cooperation, as well as a
structure within which Christian devotion might find expression and prosper the home. They therefore shared a core conviction that the pursuit of Christian holiness offered an alternative and better path to realizing middle-class cultural ideals and goals.

Chapter four also explores how this perspective shaped their understanding of the goals and techniques of parenting. On this topic, conservative Protestants often expressed concern over trends in education or parenting that seemed to de-emphasize the older evangelical and middle-class values of discipline, character, and self-control. In fact, they were particularly eager to assert these values in the face of a growing consumer culture that made questionable amusements, leisure activities, and old vices widely available to working- and middle-class Americans. In consequence, much of the literature conservative Protestants produced in the interwar years preserved and advanced the well-established evangelical opinion that homes ought to build character, protect children from corrupting influences, and instill patterns of religious practice; they often also advanced the suspicion that secular experts called into question the importance of these hallowed standards. But to varying degrees, the quest of authors for effective methods of instilling good habits and morals led some to adopt useful insights from the child study field, especially those pertaining to the stages of child development and proper techniques of child care and instruction. While guarding against both carelessness and laxity, some following the child study ideals asserted that parental responsiveness, understanding, and companionship were assets in shaping a child. Those who fused the traditional emphasis
on religious practice and discipline with the ideals of child study tended to view parenting as the ongoing task of nurturing and training through continuous personal study of the Bible and observation of the child’s needs.

Chapters five to nine explore how the dawning of World War II and the Cold War energized simmering conservative Protestant anxiety about the American family and produced an expanding body of advice literature aimed at providing direction to the Christian family. This outpouring of literature and church programs that focused on the Christian family was a byproduct of conservative Protestant ambivalence over the direction of American culture. Conservative Protestants had much to worry them in light of the threats of materialism and unbelief in the form of fascism and communism, as well as in light of persistent signs that American behavior and social attitudes were significantly more permissive than the conservative Protestant religious standards of moral behavior and marriage stability. Yet conservative Protestants also found grounds for optimism. They were able to fuse postwar anticommunism, optimism about American family life, and pursuit of psychological well-being with conservative Protestantism's historic faith that the Christian family could build moral order and advance the gospel. They were also able to see in the postwar desire for a happier, fuller personal life in the wilds of suburbia a tremendous hunger for conversion, religious experience, volunteerism, and commitment to building private institutions—all elements of conservative Protestant religion and its quest to claim the hearts and minds of individuals, thereby working outward to transform society. Long pessimists about human nature, conservative Protestants did not expect to usher in a millennial kingdom, but they did
aspire to save the nation in the short-term and to evangelize the world. The individuals embroiled in that cosmic drama were expected to experience the power and the joy of personal holiness and a “triumphant life.” Thus began a significant dialog of conservative Protestants with the ideals and expectations of the Cold War American middle-class that had been freed from fifteen years of depression and war to explore the personal possibilities presented by a postwar “therapeutic culture” in which psychology, self-help, and consumer products sought to enlarge the scope of personal life.

Chapter five argues that World War II exacerbated conservative Protestant concerns over juvenile delinquency, divorce, and sexual morality while at the same time underscoring existing conservative Protestant perceptions that Western civilization was in peril and therefore in need of families properly prepared to rear godly individuals. During and immediately after the war these conditions fostered the interest of both mainline denominations and conservative Protestant denominations, such as the Southern Baptist Convention and the Missouri Synod, in establishing new organizations and Christian education initiatives to study and strengthen Christian families. The war also provided the context in which the neo-evangelical movement began to articulate the conviction of a younger group of fundamentalists in launching a greater, more engaged effort to repair American institutions and evangelize Americans.

As a result of these developments, between the mid-1940s and the mid-1960s the family life committees in the Southern Baptist Convention and Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, periodicals and book publishers within the neo-evangelical movement, separatist fundamentalists such as John R. Rice, and Pentecostal periodicals and presses
produced a far larger body of literature on the Christian family than conservative
Protestant organizations had produced during the first half of the century. The authors of
this growing body of advice literature were eager to adopt Baby Boomer optimism
toward the family and displayed a greater openness to some of the emphases in
contemporary literature on family life, child rearing, and the needs of teenagers. As a
result, they more readily adopted the concepts of child development, personality
development, personal adjustment, and popular psychology.

Chapter six explores how, under these conditions, many conservative Protestant
advice writers of the “long decade” of the 1950s responded to the apparently widespread
problems of sexual immorality and juvenile delinquency by adopting experts’ beliefs
about teenagers’ social needs and personal development. Believing that teenagers
possessed unique developmental and social needs, they presented the moral and lifestyle
requirements of Christian holiness as recipes for social success and for the personal
resolution of psychological and emotional struggles. This view augmented and
sometimes displaced an earlier view of self-regulation, character, and self-denial with the
new values of psychological health, emotional expression, the discovery of personal
values, and the achievement of a unique and likable personality.

Chapter seven explores how, during the “long decade,” this interest of
conservative Protestant advice writers in forging strong homes and forming well-adjusted
youth motivated them to adopt a second prominent idea in Cold War writing about the
family: the conviction that the modern family ought to nurture the growth and happiness
of every personality within its ranks. Conservative Protestant advice writers’ interest in
this topic led them to reinterpret conservative Protestant views of gender roles and the exercise of parental authority in light of the family's emotional and psychological functions. Compared to the years preceding World War II, conservative Protestants were more often interpreting the spiritual growth of children and the job of parents in light of child psychology.

Chapter eight explores an important contributor to the quest of Cold War conservative Protestants for stronger homes and well-adjusted Christians: greater confidence in psychology and counseling to help individuals and to advance Christian ideals. This chapter argues that from the 1950s to the early 1970s psychology remained controversial among conservative Protestants, but that neo-evangelical writers and likeminded conservatives warmed considerably to using psychological concepts to discuss personal problems and the benefits of the Christian life. Editors and authors' growing acceptance of psychological ideas and language during the 1950s and 1960s facilitated conservative Protestant interest in the themes of adjustment and personality development and gave rise to a new kind of authority able to dispense advice on marriage and family life, the “Christian psychologist” or “Christian counselor.” Popular promoters of “Christian psychology” such as Clyde Narramore and Henry Brandt dedicated themselves to providing advice about family life and Christian youth. In the process, they facilitated the trends in advice literature toward psychological adjustment, personality development, mental health, and the possibility of achieving an intimate marriage.

Chapter nine examines how the themes evident in conservative Protestant advice writing about the family reverberated in the opinions of 160 highly-committed
evangelicals living in the suburbs of Los Angeles in 1963. It takes as its subject an important source of data about what ordinary evangelicals thought about their lives and relationships, a pool of surveys that the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association distributed to volunteers for its crusade in Los Angeles during the autumn of 1963. These surveys revealed that respondents were often invested in the perception that their marriages were happy and that Christian faith and practice improved their relationships or enabled respondents to deal with problems. They also revealed that collectively respondents worried the most about the emotional and spiritual dimensions of their relationships. Evangelical religion interlocked with respondents' pursuit of success in these aspects of home life, frequently forming a basis for shared values and shared activities. Conversely, some respondents found their commitment to evangelical religion to be a source of marital dissatisfaction, especially when spouses did not agree on the level of personal commitment to religious practice, frequency of church attendance, or lifestyle norms. On the whole, these sources suggest that highly committed, suburban evangelicals expressed great concern for themes that surfaced in postwar advice literature, particularly the topics of emotional intimacy, communication, and shared religious values and practices in the home.

Chapter ten examines how the vast social and cultural controversies of the late 1960s and 1970s challenged and transformed the dialog that conservative Protestants had been building about the family during the last five decades. During these years, national attention to the question of self-fulfillment and rights motivated advice writers to distance themselves from the radicalism they associated with feminism, permissiveness, and social
upheaval. At the same time, it served to deepen conservative Protestant attention to the question of the individual's birthright to happiness and self-fulfillment. Eager to hold on to the ideal of intimate marriages and a distinctly feminine and motherly Christian womanhood, advice writers repudiated sexual immorality and feminism while encouraging conservative Protestants to improve marital communication, pursue more satisfying sex lives, and have more family fun. They encouraged women to embrace wifehood and motherhood, while still affirming the need of women for self-confidence, some outlets for self-expression, and a greater recognition of their physical and emotional needs from their husbands.

During the 1970s and early 1980s three of the more prolific conservative Protestant advice writers were Dr. James Dobson, Tim LaHaye, and Beverley LaHaye. They repudiated the values and social changes that they associated with “the sixties” while building public identities as psychologists, counselors, teachers, and the authors of advice books. In these roles, they sought to help Americans unlock the secrets to mental health, better marriages, and successful children. They also translated these religious and personal concerns for a fulfilling life and a strong family into political causes, viewing secularization and political liberalism as forces that threatened to sweep away these treasured hopes. According to the battle lines they drew, immoral or selfish requests for self-fulfillment, especially when fueled by the ideals of secular humanism or other hostile philosophies, threaten to destroy the individual, the family, and the nation. In response, they attempted to mobilize Christians politically as well as culturally by arguing that the goals of personal happiness and influence are best pursued by accepting Christian moral
On August 18, 1920, the Tennessee legislature convened to cast its historic vote on the proposed Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution. Nearly fourteen months before, Congress had voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Amendment, and by August, thirty-five states, just one short of the number needed for ratification, had endorsed women's suffrage. However, southern congressmen had been overwhelmingly opposed to the Amendment when it was presented to Congress the year before. By August 1920 eight southern legislatures—Maryland, Virginia, Alabama, South Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Mississippi—had voted against ratification. It was unclear in what direction Tennessee would swing.

The vote proved as dramatic as the furor surrounding it. Suffragists and anti-suffragists alike descended on Nashville in the hopes of garnering support for their side, and on the morning of August 18 it appeared that the “antis” would win. Representatives who appeared at the State Capitol Building sporting a “red rose” (the symbol of the “antis”) outnumbered representatives displaying a yellow rose (the symbol of the pro-suffrage group). But when the vote was finally cast, it tied 48-48. On recount, a man from
the anti-suffrage camp, Harry Burn, switched allegiances, shifting the decision in favor of suffrage by one vote. He had received a telegram from his mother asking him to vote in favor of women's suffrage.¹

One might expect—and be largely correct—that in this contested environment leaders of theologically conservative Protestant churches would prove to be opponents of women's suffrage. Theological conservatives have, especially since the rise of the New Christian Right, gained a reputation for opposing changes in men’s and women's roles. Nonetheless, differing theological priorities and organizational needs caused conservative Protestant leaders to offer varying opinions on the topic of both political suffrage and women's growing public roles in church life. The opinion offered by leaders in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) decried women's suffrage as not only dangerous but also ridiculous. “Many of us have been accustomed to regard Woman Suffrage as too insignificant and too absurd to deserve serious attention,” Lutheran pastor Louis Sieck observed in the his church's longest communication on the subject, a three-part article series that appeared in the denomination's national paper, Lutheran Witness. Fundamentalist Arno Clemens Gaebelein, editor of the prophesy magazine Our Hope, warned that “Woman leaving her sphere, becomes by it an instrument of Satan.”² Yet the response of the Southern Baptist state newspaper for Tennessee, the state in which the fateful and closely contested vote took place, was positive, even effusive, in its praise for the Amendment. The Baptist and Reflector praised the inclusion of women in political

¹ Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, Votes for Women!: The Woman Suffrage Movement in Tennessee, the South, and the Nation (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), xvi-xvii.

life. “We have loved Tennessee for a long time,” an editorial following the decisive vote began, “but we love her better today than ever before. The House of Representatives voted 49 to 47 in favor of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution, which gives the ballot to our mothers, wives and daughters.”

These varied responses illustrate an important fact about conservative Protestants during the first three decades of the twentieth century: while they expressed many common concerns, they did not adopt a uniform response to critical ecclesiastical and social problems. This topic has supplied ample material to historians who have sought a “usable past” for women in ministry. Scholars who have studied fundamentalist views toward sex roles have sought to reconcile fundamentalism's legacy of social conservatism with the large roles that laywomen and church workers have played in the movement. Betty Deberg has argued that up to 1920 the conservative networks that gave rise to the fundamentalist movement launched a staunch defense of the nineteenth-century, "separate spheres" model of sex roles. Margaret Bendroth has chronicled the same phenomenon over a longer period, demonstrating that fundamentalists' eschatology and ideological opposition to modernism led them to emphasize sharp distinctions between men’s and women's roles. Other historians have contended that fundamentalists were, at least for a time, relatively open to women's greater participation in political and church life. Janette Hassey has argued that key conservative leaders, denominations, and Bible institutes afforded larger roles to women during the early years of the twentieth century, while Michael Hamilton has argued that even during periods of staunch conservatism, fundamentalist women, if usually placed under male authority, were frequently given

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wide opportunities for Christian service. Historians who study the founding and early
growth of the Pentecostal movement have chronicled a similarly complicated history in
which ecstatic religious experience and a zeal for evangelism have frequently provided
wide opportunities for women to speak and work on behalf of churches and missions
organizations, alongside a strong conservative social outlook that has cut sharply against
the acceptance of an egalitarian perspective on sex roles.

Historians who have studied the histories of women in major conservative
Protestant denominations have found that women have been significant contributors to
denominational life and growth, often while operating within the constraints of firm
limitations on their activities or authority. Catherine B. Allen, David T. Morgan, Charles
Deweese, and others have tracked the history of the Southern Baptist Convention's
conservative positions on women and ministry and have chronicled the activities of
women involved in Southern Baptist missions efforts and in the large and influential

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Women's Missionary Union. Mary Todd has done much the same for the LCMS in her study of how the question of authority within the Synod has persistently led it to place firm restrictions on women's leadership.

Using the findings of these scholars as well as conservative Protestant periodical literature, this chapter traces how conservative Protestants confronted a new problem, the fact that in both secular and religious life the separate spheres model of gender roles that previously defined women’s responsibilities and sustained the family was collapsing. It argues that in response to these realities, conservative Protestants began to reconceive women’s roles in terms of their subordination to male authority and their possession of a special set of responsibilities related to their social and biological functions as mothers and nurturers. This viewpoint enabled conservative Protestant leaders to assert a view of Christian womanhood consistent with a long history of Protestant reliance on the middle-class family to advance the religious mission of American Protestantism. Due to this background, among the varied intellectual and organizational concerns that conservative Protestant leaders took up in the twentieth century, one of the most critical was the desire to preserve the Christian family's ability to save souls and to advance Christian civilization.

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This paper first examines the roots of conservative Protestant interest in the Christian home by recounting the significance of that institution to the religious and social aspirations of nineteenth century evangelicalism. In four additional sections, it then examines how public comments regarding women's changing rights and social roles by leaders from the Southern Baptist Convention, the fundamentalist movement, the Pentecostal movement, and the LCMS reflected the continuing importance of the Christian home to their social strategies for preserving the faith and advancing their social missions.

Turning first to Southern Baptists, this chapter argues that in the 1910s and 1920s many Southern Baptist leaders applied the outlook of southern progressivism to denominational life and in the process recalibrated their views of Southern Baptist women's social roles. They hoped that ambitious, efficient, better-staffed, and better-funded denominational programs would allow the Southern Baptist Convention to meet the challenges of a new century by saving southern souls, leading southern culture, and building robust home and foreign missions efforts. In consequence, these leaders viewed Southern Baptist women as subordinate but essential contributors to the Convention's mission, mainly through their roles as wives and mothers and the commitment of their spare resources to the cause of Southern Baptist churches and missions. Some, especially those who were willing to offer support for women's suffrage, additionally credited Southern Baptist women with advancing the work of the denomination through their
support for social causes related to the home. Both pro-suffrage and anti-suffrage Southern Baptists agreed that women had a special role to play that was an extension of their familial roles as Christian wives and mothers.

A similar identification of women with the Christian home guided fundamentalist opinion. Like pro-suffrage Southern Baptists, some early fundamentalist leaders praised godly women for their work as wives and mothers as well as for their involvement in temperance, social uplift, and Christian ministry. During the 1910s and 1920s their successors, especially those leaders embroiled in the ecclesiastical battles against theological modernism and the building of explicitly anti-modernist, “fundamentalist” institutions, reversed their former commitment to social reform work and began to identify the advocacy of women's rights with liberalism and unbelief. These leaders still left significant opportunities for Christian service open to women. But they did not expect women involved in public roles to assert their authority over men, and they emphasized that the primary social responsibility of women as a group was to care for their homes and families. Advocacy of women's rights, especially in the form of a “feminism” that minimized differences in function or authority between men and women, became a target of criticism.

Pentecostalism became the exception that proved the rule. Pentecostals afforded larger roles to women because their special views of religious experience and eschatological views emphasized God's spontaneous calling of individuals to speech and to ministry over rigid adherence to religious or social rules. Yet while Pentecostal women were often more visible and able to assume roles of public ministry more readily than
were women in other theologically conservative traditions, Pentecostals did not express
an interest in the question of women's rights per se and in fact tended to affirm patriarchal
norms and women’s commitment to family life as general principles. Early Pentecostal
history was therefore full of women's speech and action, but its leaders retained the
expectation that most spirit-baptized women would live out charismatic gifts as wives
and mothers dedicated to the rearing of a second generation of saints.

The pronouncements of leaders within the LCMS on the topic of women's public
roles reflected confessional Lutherans' commitment to sustaining orthodoxy through
defending the religious authority of Scripture, foundational Lutheran creeds, and male
pastors. These priorities made them particularly reluctant to accept women's enlarged
rights and roles. Their tradition emphasized lay movements and social reform work far
less than that of the evangelicals, whom they joined in opposing theological modernism
and sin. As a result, they viewed the Lutheran home and the Lutheran parochial school as
the allies of the Christian church. This view made Lutheran women's domestic roles and
responsibilities their most vital contributions to the cause of Christ.

The approaches of each of these groups to the controversial topic of women's
shifting roles and authority reveal the widely divergent factors that helped to inform
individual believer's opinions and the experiences of men and women who sought to
understand and to live out their social roles. But they also testify to a shared
understanding of the family and its importance that would remain important to
conservative Protestants as the century progressed.
The Family and Protestantism in the Nineteenth Century

Perhaps the most important fact regarding the conservative Protestant conversation about the future of womanhood and the family is that these questions were caught up in a larger question: what would the future of a growing, industrializing, urbanizing, and “modern” nation be? By 1920 few Americans would have doubted that the United States was entering a new historical era. American manufacturing and financial power were reaching new heights, ensuring that when Europe went to war in 1914 the combatants would turn to the United States for loans and supplies. In 1917 the decision of President Woodrow Wilson to enter the World War I on the side of Britain and France marked a major step toward the “superpower” status that the US would attain following World War II. An entire generation of reformers who had sought to counter the social and political ills of the industrializing nation with crusades against machine politics, trusts, child labor, saloons, and unsafe food supported Wilson’s idealistic dream to “make the world safe for democracy.” It was in this climate of reform that Congress approved and the state legislatures ratified the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, two simple and revolutionary sentences that “prohibited the distinction of the vote, based on sex.”

In the face of these events, theologically conservative Protestants were speaking animatedly against the apparent corruption of a new, modern, commercial, fast-paced world as well as the opportunities for evangelism presented by American wealth, new communication technology, and ease of travel. They also turned their attention to one of the most significant social changes of the past 50 years, women's changing social roles.
Understanding their concern about this topic requires an examination of the importance of the nineteenth-century, middle-class model of American family life to the evangelical movement of that century. The growth of evangelical Christianity in America had coincided with the rise of the American middle class, a market economy, and a new model for understanding sex roles and the place of the household within the American nation. In this environment, American Protestantism, especially the varieties of evangelical Protestantism that flourished in the marketplace, learned to rely on the volunteerism of individuals and private institutions, including the new middle-class family. This history of reliance on the individuals and private institutions made the family—and therefore also the social roles of men and women—an important topic to conservative Protestant religious leaders.

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Americans had been a populace of farmers, shopkeepers, professionals, and their servants and slaves. As a result, America's most prosperous and influential classes viewed the household as a productive unit headed by fathers under whose authority family members lived and labored. However, over the course of the nineteenth century, a series of inventions and internal improvements helped to extend Europe's industrial revolution to the United States. This “market revolution” enabled American farmers and capitalists to produce more products for market and brought greater proportions of the populace in contact with the new national marketplace. It also led to the rise of two new classes: an American middle class invested in business and the expanding professions, and a growing pool of persons dependent on wage labor. These new patterns of employment removed men's
labor from the home to new places of manufacturing and commerce and brought with it a revised view of the family. Women's labor within the home—and their labor outside of it, especially among the urban working class—sustained American families as well, but it became increasingly unacknowledged. Americans began to think of public “work” as paid work situated outside the home; the home became a private space separated from the pressures and corruption of business and politics. With the social world carved into public and private halves, men's and women's roles were envisioned as being encompassed by “separate spheres.” Men led in politics and business, representing their families in the public world and supporting them financially; women centered their attention on the private, domestic world of the home, now re-imagined as a secluded and protected space in which nurture, morality, religion, education, and society's highest ideals were preserved and propagated.8

American Protestants greeted this first revolution in American beliefs about the home and gender roles with enthusiasm. Believing that scriptural teaching on marriage and parenthood contradicted Catholic standards of celibacy for those seeking the highest possible religious life, Protestants had long sung the praises of the Christian family. By denying strong distinctions in authority or lifestyle between clergy and laity, they also

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made marriage the nearly universal expectation for religious adults. Following the Second Great Awakening, the growth of evangelical Protestantism reinforced this view of ordinary lay life as a venue for Christian living and devotion.

The Awakening, a series of revivals that stretched from the 1790s to the 1840s, drastically changed the face of American Christianity. The number of Americans who became active members of churches and other religious organizations increased, and Methodists and Baptists were among the significant beneficiaries of the revivals. In 1850 they claimed 34.2 and 20 percent of the population respectively, while Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians fell from holding the allegiance of 20.4, 19, and 15.7 percent of religious adherents in 1776 to just 4, 11.6, and 3.5 percent, respectively, in 1850. Entirely new denominations and sects—the Restorationist Movement (parent to the Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ), numerous offshoots of the Baptists and Methodist traditions, and radical religious communities such as the Shakers—also sprung up in the wake of the revivals. This period of mass evangelism and religious innovation placed the new leaders and new ideas at the center of American Protestantism.

One of the great appeals of the new evangelical movement of the early nineteenth century rested in its adoption and promotion of a democratic rhetoric that emphasized the claim of the gospel on the personal and private life of the individual citizen and, through him, his larger community. Putting a democratic spin on Reformation doctrines such as

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salvation by grace, the supreme authority of Scripture, and the priesthood of all believers, evangelicals promoted a religious experience that centered on personal repentance and conversion, individual study of Scripture, and the pursuit of individual moral and spiritual improvement. These ideas introduced into popular American religion an enduring anti-authoritarianism as well as a strong primitivist impulse: for decades to come believers, zealous leaders, and new denominations would continually seek through prayer and a fresh reading of Scripture to restore the purity of belief and practice of the New Testament church to the contemporary world.¹¹

This emphasis on personal conversion and sanctification assigned great significance to the decisions, religious experiences, and moral reformation of ordinary people and fostered enthusiasm for a deeper experience of God. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodists, had taught that after conversion, a powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit could remove a person's inclination to willful sin. This doctrine helped to inspire a robust holiness movement among evangelicals who embraced Wesleyan theology; perhaps the most influential advocate was New York resident Phoebe Palmer, who held meetings in New York during the 1830s and 1840s to encourage believers to seek the experience of “entire sanctification.” Her subsequent publishing career and travels with her husband to teach about sanctification helped to spread the concept. Meanwhile, adherents of other theological traditions proved equally interested in the topic of Christian sanctification. Charles Finney, the Presbyterian evangelist who helped to pioneer revival methods in the nineteenth century, advanced his own view of Christian

perfection in the hope of effecting lasting change in converts and propelling dedicated believers into social reform. From the 1870s forward this impulse caused holiness believers to break away from established churches that they believed had grown too lax; the Church of the God (Anderson) (1881), the Christian and Missionary Alliance (1887), and the Church of the Nazarene (1895) were among the fruits of that trend. In the 1870s the Keswick holiness movement, a yearly conference based in England, began to promote the “higher life” or the “victorious life” among Baptists, Presbyterians, and others who did not embrace Wesleyan perfectionism but nonetheless thirsted for more powerful personal encounters with God and renewal in the church.

Evangelicals also expected the character of the American nation, which they often thought of as a Protestant nation to whom God had bestowed a special blessing or even a divine destiny, to be a product of the collective religious life and the moral attainment of individual citizens. In accordance with this belief, nineteenth-century evangelicals often expected the religious enthusiasm and zeal for holiness unleashed by the Awakenings to promote public virtue and social reform. In consequence, evangelicals influenced by the Awakenings contributed greatly to the rise of social reform movements: the anti-slavery movement, abolitionism, prison reform, the purity movement, Sunday school outreach, and the temperance movement. The modern foreign missions movement, which began in the early nineteenth century, involved evangelical churches in work and fundraising to send hundreds of missionaries into foreign fields around the world.12

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Another significant influence on American Protestantism arrived with the influx of large numbers of immigrants from northern and central Europe, many of whom were members of Lutheran or Reformed churches. These groups brought with them commitments to distinctive liturgical traditions and theologies. Some leaders within these groups acclimated to America's evangelical milieu by combining their existing traditions with the emphases and methods of American evangelicalism. Others, such as the rigidly traditionalist German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States (later the LCMS), resisted innovation. The group's most important early leader, C. F. W. Walthur, encouraged German Lutherans to retain their distinctive theological commitments, language, and familiar institutions, such as the parochial school. Walther and like-minded souls critiqued evangelicals’ theology, engagement with social reform, and practice of holding special revival meetings. However, the Lutherans of the Missouri Synod also embraced some familiar emphases: belief in scriptural authority and religious freedom to found, sustain, and rely upon their own institutions—church, school, and families—in order to preserve their communities and beliefs.\footnote{Noll, 214-217.}

All these developments tended to extend and deepen American Protestant interest in the religious importance of the family. The success of American Protestants, particularly of evangelicals, in establishing themselves as an influential cultural force rested partly on a new set of social strategies for spreading the gospel and building a Christian nation. Beginning in the 1790s, established American churches lost state support. The prohibition of a national religion in the First Amendment of the US Constitution set a precedent for the state governments, each of which disestablished their
state churches and removed their religious tests for state office. By 1833 Massachusetts surrendered its distinction as the last holdout against this trend when it dropped its requirement that all citizens belong to a church. Forced to compete in the new religious marketplace and in novel demographic conditions, evangelical Protestant churches in early America relied and flourished upon the volunteerism of private individuals, whose personal devotion, church membership, financial contributions, and entrepreneurial prowess transformed the new “democratized” Christianity into a powerful cultural force. The quest to evangelize the nation and to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth therefore rested upon the innovation and aid of private institutions—churches, parachurch organizations, and families. In this triad, the family not only enjoyed a special status as an institution that was established in Scripture but also possessed the unique opportunity to propagate Christian teaching through the rearing of children and the living out of Christianity in life’s most intimate setting.

New middle-class beliefs about the family dovetailed snugly with these religious priorities. Public sentiment and passionate advice writers portrayed the middle-class home as a private, sacred space: as a haven from the corruptions of public life, it offered comfort, relaxation, affection, and a place where religious convictions and moral instruction found a natural home and wielded influence. Evangelical Protestants joined in this refrain, eager to spread the gospel by fireside as well as packed pew. In historian Colleen McDannell's words, nineteenth-century Americans saw the Christian home “as a vehicle for the promotion of values,” the very underpinning of a nation whose success depended on the piety and character of its citizens. Nineteenth-century evangelicals and
middle-class boosters for the home alike saw women as the nurturers of children, the
shapers of character, the builders of the home, and the vessels into which civilization
poured all of its highest sentiments. When she had been enclosed within a separate
“woman's sphere,” the American woman's identity, her social and religious contribution,
and her importance as a key pillar of Christian civilization all seemed assured. Men, who
were occupied with the business of commerce and politics, also had a clear identity and
role as civilization-builders.\textsuperscript{14}

This hospitable world was not to last. From the beginning, the ideal of separate
spheres contained the seeds of its own undoing. As historian Nancy Cott has observed, a
separate spheres model of womanhood “bound women together even as it bound them
down.”\textsuperscript{15} Women’s conviction that they shared a special area of social responsibility
became the basis for concerned activism, both among advocates of wider roles for
women and among those who were impelled by humanitarian or religious feelings to
advance social causes. Middle-class women organized the Seneca Falls Convention in
1848, one of the early women's rights conventions and the symbolic beginning of the
women's rights movement in the United States. Over the next several decades, they used
women's common identification with the home as a justification for their political
activism and for a wider range of work. Meanwhile, the social problems created by the
nation's growing cities and frontiers led concerned women to activism and community

\textsuperscript{14} Colleen McDannell, \textit{The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840-1900} (Bloomington: Indiana
University Press, 1986), xiii; Katheryn Kish Skylar, \textit{Catharine Beecher: A Study in Domesticity} (New York:
Norton, 1976). A study of these themes in a major black Protestant denomination appears in Julius Bailey,
\textit{Around the Family Altar: Domesticity in the African Methodist Episcopal Church} (Gainsville: University

\textsuperscript{15} Cott, \textit{Bonds}, 1.
work on behalf of the home: particularly the protection of morality, families, and children. The local ministries, social causes, and foreign missions efforts that evangelical churches embraced likewise drew women toward interests and work on behalf of enterprises that lay far beyond the comforts of home. All these efforts pushed the boundaries of what a “woman's sphere” might encompass.16

Between the 1890s and the 1920s economic changes caused the collapse of the separate social worlds that had formerly been the mainstay of middle-class respectability. Vast portions of the United States had always been rural, and much of the nation still was. However, American cities had grown in size and importance. In 1920 for the first time half of the population lived in a city. America's industrialization was also reaching a pinnacle. Greater proportions of the American workforce worked for corporations whose bureaucratic structure produced a new class of middle managers who made the vast integrated, rationalized processes of American mass production possible. These occupations made the older middle-class ideal of becoming a “self-made” man harder to achieve. The same economic realities that were challenging American ideals of manhood also broke down some of the traditional barriers between men and women. The growing economy, particularly around large towns and cities, provided young people of both sexes with opportunities to find work, earn limited spending money, and enjoy shared social spaces in which to labor, mingle, and court. Popular amusements, movies, the rise of dating, cheap novels and magazines, department stores, and advertising aimed at young people all created the beginnings of a youth culture that prized greater “frankness” and

expressiveness in both sexes and took their greater socialization together for granted. All these factors destroyed the social barriers that had kept respectable women at home and out of the public spaces in which men recreated. In this social environment, most Americans still assumed there were significant differences between men and women, but women's ever-enlarging field of activity made the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment more likely and fueled speculation about the emergence of a new, “modern” woman. In American towns and cities, middle-class housewives, working girls, maids, young women conducting visitation for a local church, and numerous others rose to begin their days, all living out the realities of modern social conditions. The suffrage movement reflected these realities; it drew from both the working and middle classes, although women in the latter group made up some of its most important leaders. It drew both religious reformers, especially women associated with the temperance movement, and young women whose views and tactics were less conventional. In the 1900s and 1910s a cadre of young leaders agitated, picketed, and engaged in other tactics that public opinion at that time regarded as questionable for members of the fairer sex. Women were on the move, but it was not yet clear whose face reflected the trends of the future.

In the 1920s the attributes of the modern woman still had yet to be defined. She could vote, and she enjoyed unprecedented, but not equal, access to employment. Leaders of the women's rights movement argued that she still had victories to win, even after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, and therefore a better future ahead of her. Feminists would advocate an Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, but they would not see it enacted. Meanwhile, urban affluence, Hollywood, and a new generation
of young people offered an alternative vision for modern womanhood: the flapper. As an icon, the flapper symbolized feminine rebellion from the constraints of an older generation. In legend and often in practice, her hallmarks were short dresses, rolled stockings, bobbed hair, cigarette-smoking, a love of jazz music, wild dancing, joy riding, and a taste for liquor. The girls who emulated the flapper image usually described their purpose as an honest quest for fun, pleasure, and personal liberation, especially from the stilted hypocrisy they saw in a bygone “Victorian” era. Observers agreed on very little about the modern woman, but everyone was certain that she had arrived.¹⁷

As former champions of a feminized, privatized family, American Protestants had to make sense of what these changes in gender roles meant for the future of the Christian family.

**Southern Baptists**

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, Southern Baptist leaders responded to women's growing public roles by seeking to preserve the idea that southern women ought to dedicate themselves to the social and religious work of the Christian home. This quest generated two responses to women's suffrage. Some leaders sought to oppose women's suffrage on the grounds that the expansion of women's rights would alter women's activities and interests so greatly that their unique social role would be lost and, with it, the future of Christian civilization. Baptists holding these opinions frequently

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identified established southern ideals of womanhood with the Bible's prescriptions for men's and women's roles. A second group supported women's suffrage, on the understanding that women's social roles could be enlarged without changing their dedication to the home and its interests. This group viewed the religious and social labors of Southern Baptist women and temperance advocates as proof that as Southern Baptist women assumed a wider scope of rights and responsibilities they would advance the cause of the Christian home and the Christian church.

The conservative stance that many Southern Baptists took on women's roles was rooted in several decades of Baptist evangelism of, and accommodation to, southern culture. Baptists arrived in colonial America as a small, dissenting sect whose adherents were sometimes willing to challenge gender and racial norms. Their perspective shifted during the Antebellum Era and Gilded Age, as Baptists grew to become one of the South's largest religious groups and began to identify her social values with their own. By the dawn of the twentieth century, southern evangelicals had a long history of promoting individual conversion and piety, while readily adopting southern social ideals as their own.18

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18 For a classic essay on the pietism and social conservatism of Southern religion, see Samuel Hill, *The South and the North in American Religion* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980). In addition, several studies have dealt with the problem of the effect of evangelical energy, growth, and transformation on women's roles. In her study of Baptists and Methodists in the South, Christine Heyrman notes that as these groups gained adherents between the 1700s and early 1800s, their sometimes countercultural stances on the roles of women or status of black persons began more closely to match the opinion of white elites. See *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). The general pattern of evangelical innovation and restriction on the topic of women's roles in the colonial and antebellum periods has been studied by Susan Juster in *Disorderly Women: Sexual Politics and Evangelicalism in Revolutionary New England,* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994) and Catherine Brekus in *Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).
The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) proved no exception to this rule. Baptists did not hold a single view of women's proper roles in the church; over the course of the nineteenth century, they traded words over the propriety of women voting in church meetings or addressing mixed audiences. Nonetheless, the tenor and content of these conversations were restrained. Baptists absorbed and promoted the ideal of “the southern lady” of the nineteenth century, whose male and female defenders presented her as too high-minded to muddy herself in public speaking, business, or politics, and they frequently interpreted Scripture as a justification for that view. The Bible, particularly in the Pauline epistles, contained verses that directed women to submit to male leadership and to remain silent in church; others instructed women to dedicate themselves to their families. These passages could readily be marshaled to support the view that women ought to remain firmly under male authority and dedicated to serving God in a “separate sphere.”

This history influenced Southern Baptists' response to women's suffrage and other attempts to widen the rights and responsibilities of women. Few Baptists better exemplify the initial opposition of Southern Baptists to the growing campaign for women's suffrage in the 1870s and 1880s than John A. Broadus, the celebrated preacher and professor of New Testament at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In his essay “Shall Women Speak in Public Assemblies?” (1880), Broadus opposed public speaking by women and blamed “the movements for female suffrage” for promoting an unscriptural sentiment to the contrary. As proof he showcased the dissenting voice of a Baptist woman and church

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19 For a historical survey of controversy of women's speech and the creation of women deacons, see Charles W. Deweese, Women Deacons and Deaconesses: 400 Years of Baptist Service (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005). For a discussion of the “Southern lady” as an ideal see Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1970), 3-21.
trustee. She had addressed her church publicly in the past with good effects, an experience that led her to argue in a letter to the *Western Recorder*, “I cannot reconcile Christ's treatment and mention of women with Paul's. I think Paul must have written there his biased opinion, instead of the direction of the Spirit.” Broadus warned that her conclusion should surprise no one, as those who wished to relax traditional restrictions on women's speech—the Unitarians, Universalists, and Congregationalists—possessed “loose views of inspiration.” Baptists, Broadus argued, were a people of the Book who ought to resist the less reverential attitudes of liberal, northern churchmen.\(^\text{20}\)

Nonetheless, a generation later Broadus' perspective had some challengers. During the forty years that followed the publication of Broadus' essay, the transformation and growth of the Southern Baptist Convention brought some of the denomination's younger leaders to support limited public roles for women, including women's suffrage. To illustrate this shift, one need look no further than Broadus' own family. Four decades after Broadus published *Should Women Speak Before Mixed Assemblies*, his son-in-law A. T. Robertson occupied his position as professor of New Testament and was becoming a vocal proponent of expanded roles for women. Writing for the *Watchman-Examiner* in 1919, Robertson noted that the recent war had inspired enthusiasm among women for a greater field of activity in society. Having successfully taken over men's work during the wartime labor shortage, only some women would relinquish their “new freedom and opportunity for service” for the “seclusion” of their traditional domestic role. “Our girls are revealing an eagerness to be of some positive value to the world apart from

\(^{20}\) John Broadus, *Should Women Preach in Mixed Assemblies*? (Louisville: Baptist Book Concern, 1880); for other characteristic treatments, see J.W. Porter, ed., *Feminism: Woman and Her Work* (Louisville: Baptist Book Concern, 1923).
marriage,” he observed. The same year, he published The New Citizenship: The Christian Facing the New World Order (1919), an optimistic assessment of the affects of the Great War. A full chapter in the book argued that suffrage and wider employment for women would help to usher in a better and more Christian society. Unlike Broadus, who had applied Pauline prohibitions on women's conduct to church life, his son-in-law argued that the New Testament examples of women's participation in Christ's ministry and in the New Testament church indicated that Christianity elevated women's status far beyond what they had enjoyed in the Jewish, Oriental, or Roman world. After Christ, Paul had placed prohibitions on women in recognition of women's situation in a specific time and place, and even then he exceeded his contemporaries in sensitivity. Two thousand years later, it was fitting for Christians to recognize that the greater education of women in America had made it possible for them to enjoy wider privileges than Paul had envisioned. Further, the expansion of women's political rights and work would no doubt help to bring Christian reform to society. Although not everyone agreed with him, Robertson's stance illustrates the emergence of a denomination whose leaders felt that its political, social, and religious interests could be served by the expansion of women's rights and responsibilities.21

The liberalized opinion of some leaders among a new generation of Southern Baptists grew out of the organizational goals they embraced for their denomination. Between the turn of the century and 1920 Southern Baptist leaders sought to build a larger, more efficient, better-funded denomination capable of shepherding a new and

more modern South into a position of regional strength and worldwide influence. In this quest, Southern Baptists were aided by the fact that they were a dominant cultural force in the South, although they also confronted the difficulties inherent in large organizations that are diverse and governed largely at the local level. Making up the Southern Baptist Convention was a large network of Baptist churches that shared several distinctive beliefs, among them opposition to infant baptism, creedalism, and the establishment of state churches. Most affirmed classical Christian doctrines about the Trinity, Jesus Christ and the incarnation, congregational church government, and the necessity of personal regeneration—as did most southern Protestants of all stripes, due to inveterate conservatism in intellectual and social life. However, the Southern Baptist Convention could be a large umbrella. The denomination included some outspoken dissenting liberal and conservative pastors; its membership also straddled affluent urban and impoverished rural communities. Holding the vast network of Baptist congregations together was the limited machinery of the state and national conventions, whose leadership was comprised of moderates who successfully kept extreme voices on the edges of denominational power. The conservative temper of southern Christianity and the perspective of this moderate group sustained a broad consensus among denominational leaders and prevented the kind of strife that afflicted many northern Protestant groups.\footnote{A far more detailed description of the place of Southern Baptists in the southern culture during the nineteenth century can be found in Rufus B. Spain, \textit{At Ease in Zion: A Social History of the Southern Baptists} (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003). Barry Hankins explores the history and describes the temper of Southern Baptist moderates in \textit{Uneasy in Babylon: Southern Baptist Conservatives and American Culture} (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002), 1-15. For a discussion of how strong progressives and conservatives have acted as dissenting traditions within the Southern Baptist denominational landscape, see David Stricklin, \textit{Genealogy of Dissent: Southern Baptist Protest in the Twentieth Century} (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999).}
From this position, some Southern Baptist leaders embraced the goals of southern
progressivism and applied its goals to denominational life. Progressives sought to correct
social problems, remedy political corruption, and improve the democratic process
through applying social science to problems and creating efficient and rational
organizations. As would-be leaders of the New South, many Southern Baptist moderates
talked about realizing and harnessing the untapped potential of the South and of Southern
Baptists in particular. “Broadus used to say that Baptists had as much culture as
Presbyterians and as much ignorance as Methodists,” A. T. Robertson noted. This alleged
ignorance had embarrassed Baptists before their peers for years, but Robertson also
thought that it was an unrealized source of strength. “The truth is that,” he concluded,
“since the South has so large a number of illiterates, it is a compliment to the Baptists and
the Methodists that they can claim most of them.” Having stirred the hearts of so many, it
was time for the denomination to empower and mobilize its legions through education.
Likewise, influential pastor George W. Truett—a resident of Texas, whose Convention
had a relatively permissive view of women’s church roles—argued that the size of the
Baptist church would enable it to meet the social challenges posed by American
industrialization and urbanization. Addressing the Baptist World Alliance in 1911, he
admitted that forty percent of the American population lived in cities that were plagued
by poverty, vast inequalities of wealth, the immigration of “alien populations,” the
corruption of “saloon power,” an immoral secular press, and the decline of the home. He
also urged his audience to remember that Baptist churches possessed a nationwide
membership of four million white and two million black persons, more than enough
people to address the nation's urban problems if Baptist leaders could get them behind the cause. A few years later, World War I, “the War to make the world safe for democracy,” heightened this optimism. Baptist leaders expressed some trepidation about the war, but they also predicted that the conflict would inspire young men to disregard selfish interests and to embrace “progressive church work.”

To achieve these ends, Southern Baptist leaders embraced another progressive goal: creating an efficient denominational structure with enough influence to organize the efforts of the Southern Baptist members behind ambitious collective goals. Forward-looking Southern Baptist leaders expanded the ambitious fund-raising efforts of the Foreign Missions Board and the Home Missions Board, the oldest organs within the Southern Baptist Convention. In addition, they established new organizations: the Sunday School Board in 1891, a Baptist Young Person's Association in 1896, a publishing enterprise run by the Sunday School Board in 1910, and an Education Commission in 1915. Baptist newspapers began holding subscription drives to improve their readership, and fund-raising efforts commenced to provide building funds for rural churches and to provide support to retired Baptist pastors. These ambitious goals belied a deep concern

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about the needs of both the South and the Southern Baptists as a denomination, but they also rooted the voice of the Southern Baptist leadership in the tradition of optimistic social reform that had characterized the nineteenth-century evangelical movement.24

For optimistic denomination-builders, the involvement of Southern women in Baptist life and in Southern society at large were critical questions. As Southern Baptist leaders strove to create and implement a strong, coordinated national program of religious education and missions, women became an important source of interest, money, and volunteers. While many pastors and church members responded to the appeals progressives made for renewed commitment to missions, education, and church growth, there were many small churches, especially in the rural South, that were disinclined or unable to follow well-conceived but elaborate organizational schemes involving graded Sunday schools, church committees, and the purchase of official denominational literature. Also, the arguments that middle-class Southern Baptist progressives offered often failed to appeal to rural audiences who held suspicions of centralized governance and expressed little interest in systems calculated to produce “efficient” results. By contrast, many Baptist women, particularly middle-class Baptist women, proved eager allies.25


Baptist women had a proven interest in missions and became key participants in the crusade of progressives for new, national structures staffed by qualified workers. “Widow's mite” clubs had been meeting in churches to raise support for Baptist missionaries since the 1840s. Like progressive Southern Baptist men, members of these local women's mission clubs began to discuss the possibility of forming a national body capable of uniting the separate groups behind a common purpose. In 1888 Women's Missionary Union (WMU) leaders convened their first national meeting. After debate and a show of reluctance, the Southern Baptist Convention recognized the WMU as an independent auxiliary organization. Once recognized, the WMU proceeded to succeed in realizing a progressive's dream: they created a centralized national and state-level leadership structure that successfully identified and implemented collective goals, year after year. They also succeeded in establishing the Women's Missionary Training School in Loisville in 1907. The School combined gender-specific training for Baptist missionary work within the context of a home-like atmosphere, thereby preparing women for larger but distinct, feminine roles within the SBC.26

Due to its tremendous success, the WMU offered the Southern Baptist Convention critical but often invisible aid in the form of money, ideas, and labor. Annie Armstrong, WMU corresponding secretary from 1888 to 1906, labored dawn-to-dusk in the service of the Convention without taking significant public credit for it. “I am truly glad and thankful for you to give me the opportunity of doing such work as I am capable of without assuming responsibility,” she wrote to Sunday School Board chief executive J.  

26 Allen, whole text; Morgan, 118-159; T. Laine Scales, All That Fits a Woman: Training Southern Baptist Women for Charity and Mission, 1907-1926 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000).
M. Frost. She then emphasized that he must present any ideas she supplied him as his own, if her work was to continue. “If I had to appear before the public as the one who was responsible for some measures which I have suggested and the Boards have carried out,” she explained, “I would simply be made a target of criticism and I should long ago have been forced to give up the work, for I could not have borne it.” Significantly, Armstrong rejected proposals that she be paid a salary in order to protect herself. “I know I am peculiarly sensitive to criticism,” she explained, “and I have felt that as I was not a salaried officer, I was in a measure independent. . .” When subjected to criticism three years later by an anonymous contributor to the *Christian Index*, she looked to R. J. Willingham, secretary of the foreign missions board, to issue a public defense of her actions. Yet this public voicelessness did not stop Armstrong from trading hundreds of letters with the leaders of each of the national boards during her eighteen-year tenure. Her efforts, historian Keith Harper has observed, not only offered support to the boards but helped to promote cooperation between them.27

WMU leaders also made it plain that they understood the progressive hope that a large vision, an effective organization, an efficient method, and an educated lay audience would equip the denomination to accomplish great things for God. Addressing the WMU Convention, Mrs. W. C. James asserted, “the Christian life is a business and not a pastime, not a temporary calling but a profession” and urged members to understand “the methods adopted by the Women's Missionary Union to help its constituency meet these responsibilities.” Those methods included adherence to the WMU’s 10-point “Standard of

Excellence” in the pursuit of “United Prayer and Regular Bible and Mission Study.” As one Women's Missionary Union column explained in 1919, “It is very important that our women be intelligent workers, and a Mission Study Class is the best place to gain definite, accurate information about our workers and mission fields, also about our obligations, opportunities, and possibilities.”

True to their word, the WMU created an organizational network with a proven track record of raising funds for Baptist causes. “For nearly a quarter of a century the women of the denomination in an organized way and with headquarters in Baltimore have worked with increasing power year after year for the furtherance of all the interests of the Convention,” the Sunday School Board reported to the national meeting in 1910. “They now occupy their own building,” the statement continued, “...a further testimony to the wisdom of our women in the management of their own affairs.” Due to this organizational prowess, major Baptist fund-raising campaigns set specific fund-raising goals for the denomination's women. Between its founding and World War I the WMU had raised five million dollars for the Convention; but in 1917 they promised to raise three million for the Education Commission and another one million for the Ministerial Relief and Annuity Board. Emboldened by such increases in Baptist giving, in 1919 the Southern Baptist Convention instituted its first coordinated national fund-raising drive, “The Seventy-Five Million Campaign.” The Women's Missionary Union pledged the

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women of the denomination to raise fifteen million of that amount. Expectations were similar on the state level; the Tennessee State Convention asked women to raise $75,000 of the state convention's $300,000 goal for 1919.30

Family ties also bound leading Southern Baptist men to the women who were active in the WMU activities, Sunday schools, and related efforts. When A. T. Robertson wrote his strongest support for expanded roles for women, the memory of his daughter Charlotte, who had tragically died in 1917 of a thyroid-related illness, was likely fresh on his mind. In the year before her death, the kindly youth had been a top student in her secondary school, a volunteer for the Sunbeams (a WMU missions club for girls), and a Sunday school teacher of her church's first-year junior class. She had possessed a lifelong interest in missions work in China, read voraciously, and frequently took walks with her father and his seminary students. She was without question destined for college and possibly the missions field, although after her death, a fellow student confided to the Robertsons that she had expected Charlotte to become the next Alice Freedman Palmer. A champion of higher education for women, Palmer had become president of Wellesley College in 1881 and later Dean of Women at the University of Chicago. Charlotte's untimely death inspired her family and friends to create a church building loan fund and a scholarship to the Women's Missionary Union Training School in her honor.31

The effect of these developments on Baptist views about women's roles and rights was yet to be determined. To those women who hoped for a wider role in denominational life, there were a few small victories. As World War I drew to a close and the United

30 Allen, 125-129.
States Congress debated women's suffrage, the Southern Baptist Convention moved at least symbolically toward granting women a voice in its business. This was a significant development, because the last debate over women's roles at the national convention had occurred in the mid-1880s and it had reached conservative conclusions. Prior to 1886 the wording in the original Southern Baptist Convention Constitution had failed to specify the gender of Convention messengers. That ambiguity had allowed the Arkansas convention to appoint two women as messengers to the national convention in 1885. The attempt raised the ire of enough other Convention messengers that the women withdrew their names. The following year, the Convention voted to amend the Constitution to specify that only men could serve as messengers to national meetings. But by the 1910s the dominant opinion of the Convention was changing. In 1916 B. D. Gray used his position as secretary of the Home Missions Board to arrange for Kathleen Mallory and Maud Reynolds McLure to be given a half-hour to address the Convention on behalf of the Women's Missionary Union Training School. Meanwhile, Robert H. Coleman, Sunday School Superintendent at First Baptist Church in Dallas, was urging the SBC to revisit the question of women messengers. When he first announced his proposal to allow the seating of women in 1913, conservative opposition kept the matter from consideration for five years. But quiet support from his pastor, the influential George Truett, and public support from J. B. Gambrell, Baptist Standard editor and Southern Baptist Convention president from 1917 to 1920, helped bring the measure to a vote in 1918. It passed—and left mixed but encouraging messages for Baptist women. “As yet we have not been given the liberty to function as members of the Convention in any real sense, as e.g. serving on
a committee or what is more important on the boards of the convention,” WMU president Mrs. W. C. James noted. Despite this limitation, “The woman movement has moved with amazing momentum and irresistible power and the time has come when we must widen further the work of the W.M.U.”

Baptist newspapers also revealed that Baptist men both asserted their own authority and sought the support of Baptist women. Like the rest of the denomination's organizations, Baptist state newspapers were male-dominated institutions. The editors were male, and most of the papers focused heavily on the problems, needs, and leadership of Baptist pastors. But each paper had within its pages at least one page written by and for women—the Women's Missionary Union page. Tennessee had two pages, one for the WMU and one for women's interest in general. As if to underscore the understanding that women occupied a separate existence replete with its own concerns, the Baptist and Reflector called their second women's page “Women's World.”

Even if half of humanity was tucked away within a “women's world,” editors of the Baptist and Reflector were still eager to reach them with news about how they could contribute to denominational affairs. During the paper's campaign to raise its total number of subscriptions, the Baptist and Reflector urged the wives and mothers of Tennessee's churches to consider seriously the newspaper's need for support and the part they could play in remedying the want. Mattie Straughan, the author of the column, went so far as to suggest that men and women ought to view themselves as competitors in

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providing the paper with new subscribers. In one article titled “It's Mostly Up to YOU,” she proposed that “It would be a good plan to have a contest between the two [classes] in the Sunday School, or two committees, one composed of men and the other of women, in order to get up a rivalry.”

Straughan also felt she had reason to believe her fellow women might win such a contest. Writing about the paper’s goal for new subscribers, she praised “our Baptist women . . . who have so faithfully and loyally supported the paper in the past” for once again coming to its aid. “Only this week Mrs. J. T. McCain, Jr. of Bedford sends us four new subscribers; Mrs. C. F. Marler of Alexandria, our good friend of many years, sends her own renewal and one new subscriber, and assures us she will do all in her power for the paper; Mrs. M. Hitt, who never fails to respond to a call for help, in a personal letter adds: 'I shall do all in my power to make this the banner year for the Baptist and Recorder, so you may count on my cooperation, my interest, and my prayers.” Straughan regarded these pledges as invaluable contributions. “Cooperation, interest, and prayers!—what more could we ask?”

A woman like Mrs. Hitt might even receive praise on the front page of the paper. In March 1919, the Baptist and Reflector praised the “scholarly and well-loved” pastor of the Humboldt Baptist Church for arranging for the church budget to pay for a subscription for his church's membership. It also credited the church’s decision to Mrs. S. B. Boykin, who “has kept the Baptist and Reflector before the attention of the members.” The Women’s World column more effusive. “Did you read on page one of the glorious

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33 “It's Mostly Up to YOU,” Baptist and Reflector Feb. 27, 1919, 10.

thing which the Humboldt church did on Literature Day in Sunday school?” Straughan
gushed. “In speaking of what this great church did, I cannot miss the opportunity to pay
tribute to the services of Mrs. S. B. Boykin, for somehow I feel that she must have had a
large part in the success of her church in putting the Baptist and Reflector into every
family in its membership.” Like many of the women, she was a long-time friend to the
paper. “Every year since I have been with the paper Mrs. Boykin has sent a large list of
new subscribers and renewals. She has worked in season and out of season, and I want
her to know how much we appreciate her. After all what would we do without you
women?”

The paper expressed its confidence in the contributions Baptist women could
make by encouraging their interest in the affairs of the Convention. In 1919 the paper
offered tangible prizes in exchange for subscriptions. One could obtain traditionally
feminine prizes—a novel or china set—in exchange for three subscriptions. But for the
truly ambitious fund-raiser, there was a greater prize to be claimed: a ticket to attend the
upcoming meeting of the national convention in Atlanta, which could be obtained by
recruiting one new subscriber for every dollar the ticket would cost. Staughan hoped that
no small number of women would take advantage of the offer. “I trust,” she prodded,
“that at least 100 Baptist women in Tennessee will attend the Southern Baptist
Convention at the expense of the Baptist and Reflector.”

While Southern Baptist leadership proved willing to view women as subordinate
wives, mothers, and local church members who offered critical support to Southern

35 “Humboldt Sets a New Standard,” Baptist and Reflector March 6m 1919, 1; Mattie Straughan,
“The Women Again,” Baptist and Reflector March 6, 1919, 10.

Baptist church programs, some leaders were also coming to value the work of civic-minded women who enlisted in the temperance movement. During the 1880s and 1890s Southern Baptists had increasingly enlisted in the temperance movement, asserting that the South's single greatest social evil was alcoholic beverages. Characteristically, they often emphasized the power of Christian conversion over political activism to solve the drink problem. Only the blood of Christ could address the problem of sin; those who sought to follow Christ would see the necessity of a life of complete abstinence to avoid the danger of intoxication, supporting the liquor business, or influencing others to drink. But they increasingly also supported the efforts of the Anti-Saloon League, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and other temperance organizations to lobby the government for the prohibition of alcohol. As Baptists ordinarily eschewed any mutual interference between the church and state, the Southern Baptist Convention's pronouncements on this issue made temperance the one political cause they consistently championed. It also placed Southern Baptist leaders in solidarity with the temperance movement's many women leaders and supporters. In 1919 Southern Baptist leaders joined male and female temperance advocates in offering enthusiastic support for the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which that year banned the sale of alcoholic beverages in the United States.37

The involvement of Southern Baptist women in the work of the Southern Baptist Convention and the temperance movement made some men in the Convention's leadership open to the expansion of women's suffrage. It did not, of course, change the

minds of all, especially since anti-suffrage sentiment was particularly high in South
owing to cultural conservatism and to fears that the debate of women's votes would
reopen race issue.\footnote{For histories of the pro-suffrage and anti-suffrage causes in the South, see Majorie Spruill Wheeler, \textit{New Women of the Old South: The Leaders of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the Southern States} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Elna C. Green, \textit{Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Question} (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). For an earlier survey of attitudes toward suffrage in Southern Baptist newspapers, see Bill Summers, “Southern Baptists and Women's Right to Vote, 1910-1920,” \textit{Baptist History and Heritage} 12, no. 1 (Jan. 1977), 45-51.} In the decade leading up to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, editors of Southern Baptist papers published statements from both pro-suffrage and anti-suffrage southerners. By far the strongest voice in opposition was J. W. Porter, editor of the \textit{Western Recorder} (Kentucky), who used the paper to portray suffragists as enemies who attacked the racial, religious, and gendered basis of Southern society. In this pursuit, the paper invoked all of the common Southern anti-suffrage arguments. Porter argued that women's suffrage would reopen the question of suffrage for black southerners, thereby threatening the establishment of white control of Southern politics. In addition, proponents of women's suffrage spurned the religious foundation of Southern society, the Bible. They proposed to violate God's laws; in fact, they scorned Scripture. Porter charged that suffragist Susan B. Anthony had incited women into “trampling the New Testament under unhallowed feet.” He described the endeavors of suffragists as a group in equally vivid terms: “With unblushing audacity they laugh to scorn the book of Genesis, and the teaching of Paul, and incidentally the teaching of Christ.”

According to the \textit{Western Recorder}, the greatest danger of women's suffrage lay in the danger that it would “unsex” the Southern woman and thereby destroy the family. The paper asserted that women with so little regard for social order and for Scripture would
also abandon the holy callings of wifehood and motherhood. The voting woman would become nothing more than “a female man,” a person devoid of a woman's distinctive qualities and therefore unable to fulfill a woman's social calling. Modern women were losing their love for their husbands and children, one pastor wrote; suffragists, editor J. W. Porter contended, encouraged women to have fewer children or even to reject motherhood entirely.  

No other Southern Baptist editor was as adamant about these points as Porter, but some printed comments that advanced similar points.  

Although the anti-suffrage cause had advocates among the Southern Baptists, some papers expressed support for the cause of white women who wanted to win the power of the ballot. In so doing, they also revealed the basis on which they would accept new rights for women. Pro-suffrage statements published before the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment typically cited the tradition of nineteenth-century women's reform efforts, especially for the cause of Prohibition. In the view of prohibitionists, this effort had advanced the safety of American homes and communities and had rid numerous communities of the deleterious effects of alcohol on a Christian society. In addition, women's support for progressive reforms related to the protection of the home, child labor, and education seemed to demonstrate that when women entered politics, they

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40 For an parallel example of a Southern Baptist fearing that the Nineteenth Amendment would bring black southerners to the polls, see: “Woman Suffrage,” Baptist Standard Jan. 23, 1913, 4-5. For additional examples in which Baptist papers argued that virtuous women would not want to vote or that women's suffrage would not bring about desired social reforms, see: “Current Events,” Christian Index (Sept. 21, 1916), 5; “Current Events,” Christian Index Feb. 24, 1916, 5; “Chronicle and Comment,” Baptist Standard Feb. 8, 1912, 11.
would advance causes related to their social roles as wives and mothers. James B. Gambrell, editor of the *Baptist Standard* (Texas), published two defenses of suffrage from Baptist women that asserted these points, and a third in which a Texas pastor did the same.\(^4\) Gambrell himself stated that enfranchised women often supported compulsory education laws and had helped to turn wet counties into dry ones.\(^2\) Gambrell's successor, editor E. C. Routh, argued that voting women would support moral causes, especially Prohibition.\(^3\)

Positive statements about women's suffrage from other sources assured critics that women who voted would remain properly feminine women dedicated to the home and Baptist social causes. The *Baptist Advance* (Arkansas), featured a speech from a young woman, Alice Anno Bagby, who had won the first-place prize in the Women's Oratorical Contest at Southwestern Theological Seminary. Bagby announced that women would retain their earlier natures, despite access to “new spheres” of activity following the Great War. “Five lines of service”—motherhood, education, politics, the setting of social and moral example, and the contribution of spirituality, culture, and education to church life—lay open to women, and it was incumbent on them to use each opportunity to improve the world. There was no question in her mind that women had proved themselves worthy of political participation. The vote would not unsex women, as some feared. Women had already demonstrated that they would remain virtuous and womanly while participating.

\[^{4}\text{As a Woman Sees It,} \text{ Baptist Standard Feb. 13, 1912, 11; Woman Suffrage,} \text{ Baptist Standard March 27, 1913, 12; J. W. Dawson, “The Rise of Women,” Baptist Standard October 15, 1914, 3.}\]

\[^{5}\text{Concerning Female Suffrage,} \text{ Baptist Standard Jan. 16, 1913, 8; Woman Suffrage,} \text{ Baptist Standard March 5, 1914, 8.}\]

\[^{6}\text{The Moral Foundations of Society,} \text{ Baptist Standard March 14, 1918, 11.}\]
in the war effort and working in the nation's factories.\textsuperscript{44} Likewise, in a Sunday sermon reprinted in the \textit{Baptist Record} (Mississippi), W. O. Blout strove to ensure that his listeners understood that women's suffrage meant not the creation of a "mannaish" or "bold" woman but rather a new status for a figure who embodied the motherly qualities worthy of a son's praise. "May I speak again of that little white haired, 66 year young mother of mine?" he ventured. "For several years she has been voting," he observed, most likely in one of the Western states that had already extended the franchise to women. "And with it all she is quite unchanged, the same little mother with her life all bound around her children. As long as women are mothers, or look forward to motherhood, I am sure it will be thus."\textsuperscript{45}

When arguing for women's suffrage and access to better pay, A. T. Robertson also advanced this picture of Southern womanhood. Young women no longer wanted marriage to be the sole focus of their lives, he argued, but they nonetheless intended to make family an important part of it. Rather than abdicating her normal role, as some feared, the American woman would retain her dedication to her family and improve society through her commitment to principles that qualified her to build a home. As such, the more powerful New Woman was still essentially a woman who deserved a proper display of honor and protection from Southern men. Manipulating traditional Southern notions of honor, he argued that fair-minded men were duty-bound to provide women the protections of the voting booth and fair wages.\textsuperscript{46}


\textsuperscript{45} W. O. Blout, "Personal Purity Series No. 3," \textit{Baptist Record} March 18, 1920, 7.

\textsuperscript{46} A. T. Robertson, \textit{New Citizenship}, 66-76.
The responses of Baptist papers to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment on August 18, 1920, reflected the divided opinions of Baptists as well as their concern for whether women would retain their historic focus on the home and its interests. In characteristic form, the *Western Recorder* argued that enfranchised women would support more lenient divorce laws, thereby destroying Southern families.\(^{47}\) Although more circumspect, the *Religious Herald* (Virginia) griped, “We have kept the Herald out of the woman's suffrage controversy but we are bound to say that the great state of Tennessee has not furnished an edifying spectacle in the conduct of her legislature on this business.”\(^{48}\)

Three southern papers remained neutral directly following the Amendment’s passage. The *Maryland Baptist*, did not offer any comment, while the *Florida Baptist Witness* merely reported on ratification without offering an opinion on the topic. Although the *Baptist Standard* (Texas) had printed several defenses of women’s suffrage in the past, the paper reported on the political fortunes of the Nineteenth Amendment in a matter-of-fact tone.\(^{49}\)

Other papers were cautiously optimistic, admitting that ratification was an accomplished fact and urging Baptist women to use their newly-acquired powers to advance Christian moral and social concerns. The *Baptist Record* (Mississippi) simply concluded, “It becomes now not only the privilege but also the duty of every woman of

\(^{47}\)“Will Women's Suffrage Prove a Curse or a Blessing?” *Western Recorder* Nov. 11, 1920.

\(^{48}\)“All Sorts and Sizes,” *Religious Herald* Sept. 9, 1920, 3.

intelligence and character to use the ballot for the good of the country. We believe that whatever influence they exert will be in the interest of righteousness and patriotism.”

Likewise, the *Christian Index* (Georgia) employed broad but positive language, arguing “it is a great event in the world for women to be given full voice in the government of the United States of America.” The *Alabama Baptist* argued that good would come of the Nineteenth Amendment, but only gradually. Perhaps only 10 percent of women actually wanted the franchise, the editor estimated. Owing to this supposed indifference, he judged that women's suffrage probably would not have a substantial effect on society for “a decade or two,” until after the possession of new rights stimulated an interest in politics among women. When that event finally did take place, the editor expected its effect to be positive.

In the *Baptist Courier* (South Carolina), D. M. Ramsay turned to the biblical story of Esther to explain how Southern Baptist women, who might object to the Nineteenth Amendment, could accept new roles without losing their virtue. In previous years, it had been pragmatic to debate the merits of women's suffrage, and women had possessed the option of abstaining from political questions. But with women's suffrage now law, the time for discussion and hesitancy was over. Baptist women would have to follow the example provided by the women of Scripture. In a “strategic moment” hundreds of years ago, the blissful Esther had “realized that she alone could save her nation and the hint was thrown out that she was brought to the kingdom for that timely task.” So, too, sudden responsibility had fallen to Christian women in the

50 n.t., *Baptist Record* Aug. 26, 1920, 1.


United States. Just as Esther's realization of her duty had “transfigured the young woman and made a heroine out of a light-hearted girl, who became the deliverer of her race,” Ramsay urged Baptist women to be “conscientious, grave and earnest” in executing their new public role.53

The Baptist and Reflector (Tennessee) offered some of the strongest statements in favor of the recent ratification, arguing that the Nineteenth Amendment had empowered “our mothers, wives, and daughters,” who had long proven themselves able to shoulder important responsibilities alongside southern men. The paper distinguished between protesting suffragists and the more numerous “worthy women” whom the Nineteenth Amendment would enfranchise. “A lot of foolish women with more zeal than knowledge . . . have brought shame and reproach upon this most worthy cause,” the editor conceded. However, he also reassured readers that the attitude of pro-suffrage southern women differed from the brazen demeanor of the radical suffragists. “They do not want to run the government,” he concluded, “but simply want to help men run it.”

Further, he argued that southern women had over the generations proved their worthiness to wield the ballot. Through their “sacrifices” and “daily toil,” women had “helped their husbands and fathers” during the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, and the “recent world war.” In the editor’s mind there was every reason to assume that women would continue to exercise a positive influence on national life. Repeating a common argument for women's suffrage at the time, he claimed that women's entrance into politics would discourage further wars. For this reason, good Baptist women would do well to adjust the traditional attitudes that might prevent them from voting in upcoming elections. “Women

who read these lines,” he admonished, ought “to lay aside their overmuch modesty, timidity, and fears of public criticism, and begin to qualify themselves at once to vote intelligently in the next election, and remember that, under God, it is their duty to vote to help make this country a place where Jesus Christ will delight to dwell.”

Northern Fundamentalists

North of the Mason-Dixon Line, an equally strong concern for the preservation of women's vital roles as wives and mothers informed the response of fundamentalists to women's changing public roles. Conservative evangelicals living in the North during the 1910s and 1920s inherited from two previous generations of evangelicals a social strategy that placed special emphasis on the domestic ministrations of the middle-class home. That home's domestic culture and religious activity had long seemed vital to northerners, who viewed the home and the commercialized, industrialized public world as sharply-defined spaces. Since evangelical pastors and moralists had long relied on the private “sphere” to play a special religious and educational role, they considered any loss in its health or influence to be a serious blow to the cause of Christ. Taken in isolation, this problem might have produced a response similar to the one evident among Southern Baptists: a concern for established institutions and social rules mixed with confidence in the ability of the church to lead the culture and to use some novel social change to further its religious goals. However, northern fundamentalists confronted the troubling question of changing sex roles at the same time that they were wrestling with other critical intellectual, theological, and ecclesiastical issues. In the 1910s fundamentalists were

increasingly embroiled in doctrinal controversy, and in the 1920s they were in the midst of losing control of their denominations and colleges. Intellectual and institutional defeat, particularly when set against a background of quickly-changing social ideas, called into question the health of the institutions on which fundamentalists relied and motivated them to preserve those institutions against innovation or decay.

Fundamentalism descended from the more optimistic, crusading tradition of nineteenth-century northern evangelicalism that had fostered among some of its leaders an appreciation for the women's involvement in reform and religious outreach. Northern denominations, prominent evangelical congregations, and missions agencies assigned subordinate but significant roles to women in the areas of social reform and missions work. As a result, a significant minority of fundamentalist leaders, especially those who came of age while evangelicalism still commanded a position of cultural authority in the North, affirmed the cause of women's suffrage. Some may have remembered that Dwight L. Moody (1835-1899), the influential pastor of Moody Memorial Church in Chicago and founder of Moody Bible Institute, had invited temperance leader and women's suffrage advocate Francis Willard to speak from his pulpit. Nationally renowned evangelist Billy Sunday and his wife, Helen Thompson Sunday, supported women's suffrage. William Bell Riley, pastor of First Baptist Church in Minneapolis and founder of Northwestern Bible and Missionary Training School, allowed a women's suffrage meeting to convene at his church in 1901. At the meeting, Riley himself supported women's public work for temperance with the words, “a suffering woman feels compelled to break the silence and speak against sin.” Methodist minister, temperance advocate, and fundamentalist Bob
Shuler likewise proclaimed women's suffrage an essential tool in women's great moral crusade against alcohol. Under the editorship of Curtis Lee Lewis, a supporter of the fundamentalist faction in the Northern Baptist Convention, the *Watchman-Examiner* expressed reservations about women's suffrage but applauded its effect in states that had already extended voting rights to both sexes. In particular, it noted that women voters immediately lobbied for greater legal rights and for the increased regulation of working conditions for women and children.\(^{55}\)

However, as fundamentalists transformed from a network of conservative evangelicals to a movement dedicated to fighting for the future of American Protestantism, its outlook and emphases shifted. By 1920 American Protestants were wrestling—and often parting ways—over several critical theological and social questions. Foremost among them was the advent of the theory of evolution to explain the origin and development of species and the use of higher criticism to understand biblical texts. These intellectual developments led some Protestant leaders and theologians to revise their earlier views of origins, their position on the authority and authorship of the Bible, and the veracity of such Christian doctrines as the substitutionary atonement and the possibility of miracles. At the same time, accelerating social change led some evangelical leaders to champion a “social gospel” that sought to understand the gospel message in

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terms of modern urban social problems. This intellectual ferment had generated
discussion and controversy for a few decades, but several factors pushed the theological
conversation to a climax in the 1910s and 1920s. Funding from state governments and
wealthy philanthropists such as John D. Rockefeller had opened large and important new
research centers where conservative theology and its assumptions were no longer the
norm. In addition, the industrialization and urbanization of the nation was beginning to
shake the foundations of cultural leadership that American evangelicals had long enjoyed.
The United States had always been diverse, a fact that had long motivated reformer's
efforts at social control and the amelioration of social problems. However, with the nation
more urbanized than ever, the fact of that diversity became difficult to ignore. Along with
urbanization also came an apparent rise in crime and decline in morals, a fact deeply
distressing to evangelicals who had long affirmed a link between morality and social
stability. All in all, intellectual and social problems alike were beginning to seem
numerous, and the stakes appeared high. These developments energized proponents of the
new scholarship, the social gospel, and other efforts to make Protestant Christianity
relevant and modern; conservatives became increasingly adamant in articulating their
criticisms.  

Responding to the fracturing of the earlier evangelical consensus, prominent
conservative leaders strove to unite a broad-based coalition of conservatives to define and
defend historic Christian doctrines. Typical of this effort were The Fundamentals, a set of

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56 A description of the crisis faced by nineteenth century evangelicalism are discussed extensively in
George Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press,
2006), 9-39. A detailed account of the transformation of American university and seminary education can
be found in George Marsden, The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to
volumes published between 1910 and 1915 under the editorship of Reuben Archer Torrey of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA) and financed by businessmen Lyman and Milton Stewart. Torrey invited a wide range of conservative evangelineals to contribute essays that affirmed scriptural infallibility, human sinfulness, substitutionary atonement, the veracity of biblical prophesies, the reality of miracles, and other “fundamental” doctrines. The volumes opposed evolution, atheism, and higher criticism as well as Roman Catholicism, Mormonism, Christian Science, Spiritualism, and other groups that lay outside the evangelical Protestant fold. As conservative efforts to oppose theological modernism intensified, staunch conservatives began to describe their efforts as nothing short of a war for the survival of Christianity. In his seminal book *Christianity and Liberalism* (1922), J. Gresham Machen, professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, summed up the mood among conservative Presbyterians: “The great redemptive religion that has always been known as Christianity is battling against a totally diverse type of religious belief, which is only the more destructive of the Christian faith because it makes use of Christian terminology.”

Modernists, he contended, had invented a novel religion; if they wished to perpetuate it, they ought to leave the Christian church and build new institutions.

The growing movement of “aggressive conservatives” to which Torrey and Machen belonged acquired not only a combative stance but also a new name: “fundamentalist.” The label did not appeal to all participants in the conservative movement, but after Curtis Lee Lewis, conservative editor of the Baptist paper *Watchman-Examiner*, introduced it, the term stuck as the dominant epitaph for the species.

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of crusading conservative Protestantism that was growing increasingly vocal in the North.
Outspoken conservatives existed in all the major northern denominations, but most of the
fundamentalists' definitional battles would be fought within the two denominations where
both theological modernism and a significant conservative voice existed side-by-side: the
Northern Baptist Convention and the Presbyterian Church in the United States. The
contest between “fundamentalists” and “modernists” in these two denominations finally
reached fever-pitch between 1920 and 1925.  

Fundamentalists were ultimately unsuccessful in establishing their dominance
over the northern denominations they set out to win. Between 1920 and 1925 the
fundamentalist faction within the Northern Baptist Convention and the Presbyterian
Church pressed their denominations to reaffirm traditional doctrinal statements, to
censure prominent proponents of modernism, to investigate the orthodoxy of
missionaries, and to ensure that the classical evangelical emphasis on personal
regeneration remained at the center of foreign missions. However, the support they
gathered for these causes ultimately caused more controversy than substantial change.
The fundamentalists were outnumbered and outmaneuvered by their “modernist”
opponents and by moderate conservatives. Liberals resisted the fundamentalist proposals
because they were the targets of scrutiny, while moderates began to fear that the

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58 The Fundamentals: A Testimony to Truth (Chicago: Testimony Publishing Co., 1910-1915);
Marsden, Fundamentalism, 102-123, 164-184. For J. Gresham's views and roles in the emerging
fundamentalist movement see D. G. Hart, Defending the Faith: J. Gresham Machen and the Crisis of
Conservative Protestantism in Modern America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).
controversy would split their denominations and undermine their ministries. By the close of 1925 it was becoming clear that the fundamentalists would not be able to eradicate theological modernism from their denominations.⁵⁹

Fundamentalists marched into a second Waterloo when the highly publicized Scopes Trial of 1925 pitted William Jennings Bryan against ACLU lawyer Clarence Darrow. At issue was the legality of a controversial Tennessee law that prohibited the teaching of evolution in public schools. In public opinion, however, fundamentalism itself was on trial. From the beginning, the trial was rich in symbolism. Bryan, representing the state of Tennessee, was an aging politician, prominent member of the fundamentalist faction within the Presbyterian Church, and the creature of an earlier era when religious language had reigned more prominently in American political life. Defending Scopes was Darrow, a young and articulate lawyer who showed open disdain for Bryan and his rural constituency. Smelling controversy, the press played up the significance of the trial. So when Darrow succeeded in humiliating Bryan with a barrage of academic questions that the statesman was unprepared to answer, he dealt a serious blow to the public image of crusading religious conservatism.⁶⁰

Having lost both key institutions and public respect—both assets that their evangelical parents and grandparents had taken for granted—fundamentalists concluded that the only safe course for true believers was separation from the unbelief of the mainstream culture as well as from religious institutions that tolerated apostasy. Between the Scopes Trial and World War II many fundamentalists abandoned evangelicalism's


former interest in cultural leadership and social reform. Instead, they redirected their resources to alternate ventures: the expansion of their own networks of churches, Bible institutes, and missions agencies. Fundamentalist spokespersons still yearned for the restoration of their lost cultural influence and prayed for nationwide revival, but they adopted a pessimistic view of the direction of the culture. In contrast to Southern Baptist leaders who placed hope in the salutary effects of Prohibition, the Great War, and reform work, fundamentalists adopted a sober tone when assessing the efforts of others to built either a secular or religious millennial kingdom. Editors and writers stressed that Prohibition was a righteous cause but that laws alone could ultimately do little to uproot personal vice. They contended that all Christians had a patriotic duty to support the government during the Great War but Christians also should not hope the conflict would inaugurate a new era of human progress. They criticized proponents of the social gospel for turning churches into social halls and community centers when they could have been preaching Christ's gospel of sin and repentance.61

Premillennial dispensationalism and the Keswick holiness movement facilitated this shift in fundamentalist cultural aspirations away from national leadership and toward the construction of a separatist movement. The advocates of premillennial dispensationalism taught that sacred history could be divided into a series of

dispensations, each of which is inaugurated by a new covenant between God and humanity. The model had grown popular among the religious networks that later gave birth to fundamentalism because it helped to harmonize events in Scripture and make sense of prophesy. For the emerging fundamentalist movement, the view had an additional attraction: it helped fundamentalists to make sense of the trials through which they and their churches were passing. Premillennial dispensationalism predicted that the final dispensation of sacred history—the period that had arrived or was close at hand—would be characterized by political, religious, and moral decline. In the midst of this turmoil, the Antichrist would arise, a period of great tribulation would begin, and Jesus Christ would return to rescue that faithful remnant of His Church. The Keswick holiness movement, which made the inner mental world of the individual believer its focus, provided a natural complement to the premillennial dispensationalist expectations for human civilization. As fundamentalists retreated from their former aspirations to cultural leadership, they redoubled their emphasis on inner emotional, moral, and spiritual triumph through “the victorious life.”

Altogether these shifts dimmed the reforming spirit that had guided an aging generation of conservative revivalist evangelicals. They also made the leaders of the self-identified “fundamentalist” movement more deeply concerned with questions of authority and order. To be sure, fundamentalists reserved their greatest protest for mainline theology, the theory of evolution, and immorality. Nonetheless, the Christian family, the gender roles that supported it, and the preservation of male authority in the church also became key concerns of the movement. As historian Margaret Bendroth has shown,

fundamentalists associated progressive views toward women's roles in church life with their modernist opponents. By the close of the 1920s the Northern Baptists and Presbyterians had integrated women's missions boards into the general denominational organizations. They also debated the ordination of women and proceeded to extend the privileges of the pulpit to them in small numbers. The willingness of women to press for a greater place in denominational affairs and the eagerness with which churchmen were entertaining those requests coincided with the fundamentalists' own loss of influence. It was also not lost on fundamentalists that the few women who were ascending to positions of influence in mainstream denominations often tended to oppose the fundamentalists' calls to purge alleged liberals from the denominations. Further, liberals and women united in support of missions work that aimed to provide social betterment to target populations, a cultural agenda that fundamentalists saw as a weak substitute for a program to spread the gospel of repentance and conversion. In response, fundamentalists rejected women's quest for larger roles as symptomatic of an unscriptural search for power and insisted that the church needed “manly” leaders with the courage and vigor necessary to combat doctrinal error.\footnote{Bendroth, 54-96.}

The emphasis that northern fundamentalists placed on male authority did not lead them to close all, or even most, preexisting opportunities to women. Pessimism about the direction of American culture led them to reject the reforming fervor that had undergirded nineteenth-century evangelicalism and so removed one of the main justifications for women's increased roles. But they also called upon women to enlist in the urgent cause of spreading the gospel. The fledgling movement had an unending need for funds, staff,
missionaries, and personal evangelists, particularly following the departure of many fundamentalists from mainline denominations. As a result, the question was never whether fundamentalist women would enter service to the church but rather how fundamentalists would define critical but gender-appropriate tasks for them to fill. At times, fundamentalists proved strikingly permissive. Women at W. B. Riley's Northwestern Bible Institute could train in sermon delivery and received accolades for it; in 1921 the student paper noted, “Elizabeth and Genevieve/To work they will determine/Honors they surely will receive/And each an A-plus sermon.” If she found the right niche, an Elizabeth or Genevieve might even find employment delivering that sermon. Conservative denominations such as the Evangelical Free Church and the Christian and Missionary Alliance permitted women's evangelistic work, especially when they lacked sufficient workers. More commonly, institutes engaged women in personal evangelism. For example, BIOLA dispatched its “Bible Women” to explain the gospel to passersby, men and women who dropped by missions, and families contacted through home visitation.64

Nonetheless, the connections that fundamentalists were drawing between women who sought expanded roles and the decline of American religion and culture gradually led them to prohibit women from taking positions of authority. As fundamentalists became more deeply embroiled in their controversy with “modernism,” they increasingly emphasized that nature and biblical teaching alike qualified men for the important work of preaching and leading the church. Although women remained active in the movement

64 “Dormitory Data,” The Northwestern Pilot Dec. 23, 1921, 85; “Bible Women,” regular column in the King’s Business.
and in independent churches, new denominations, and conservative missions
organizations that it was building, they were primarily directed to work as missionaries,
office assistants, Sunday school teachers, writers, conference speakers, and deaconesses.
These roles provided some women with wide opportunities for service, but their service
was rarely understood as a progressive accommodation to a new era of rights or a larger
sphere of activity for women.65

Fundamentalist opinion on women's suffrage reflected both its reliance on
women's support and its concern about gender roles. When fundamentalists spoke out on
the topic of women's expanding social roles, they most often defended existing religious
and cultural norms.66 The most basic cause of fundamentalist objection was the fact that
many of its spokespersons thought they had found in the old separate spheres model of
gender roles a means to guarantee the survival of Christian belief and values. In an anti-
suffrage essay reprinted in the *Christian Workers Magazine*, William Parker summed up
this outlook. In Parker's mind, women's great contributions to the world rested so
thoroughly on their identification with the feminine sphere that changes in social life
which seemed to weaken this identification portended the cultural death of everything the
Christian mother had represented. Women were “love producers,” the possessors of a
“silent power,” and the exemplars of “spiritual power and not temporal power,” Parker
sermonized. In their roles as submissive wives and dedicated mothers, Christian women

65 Hassey, 11-45, 81-94 137-143; Michael Hamilton, “Women, Public Ministry, and American
Fundamentalism, 1920-1950,” *Religion and American Culture* 3 n. 2 (Summer 1993), 171-196; Bendroth,
73-96.

66 According to a previous study of fundamentalism between 1890 and 1930 by Betty DeBerg,
negative assessments of women's suffrage outnumbered positive ones by ten-to-one. See *Ungodly Women*,
51.
also epitomized Christian love, which was unmindful of self-interest. These cultural values evaporated before “the bold effrontery, the loud clamor of women for suffrage and 'equal rights' with men.” In the same magazine, Margaret Worthington offered a feminine version of the same argument. She contended that because women had a “God-appointed sphere, as well as a God-appointed position,” they also had a definite and large sphere of action. “Note, the Holy Spirit says certain women labored 'with' St. Paul, not 'under' him, for they had their own sphere,” she wrote. From Worthington's perspective, political suffrage threatened the “emancipation” that women already enjoyed under system gender roles that assigned them their own, unique work and responsibilities.  

The militancy of fundamentalists and their expectation of impending apocalypse also encouraged them to oppose women's suffrage. Arno Clemens Gaebelien, editor of the prophesy magazine *Our Hope*, exemplified the tendency of dispensationalists to interpret major social changes as fundamentally sinister in nature. In 1912 he pointed to violent acts by suffragists as proof that the activists were “degenerate” and “hysterical.” In 1913 he described “the emancipation of the female sex, women's rights, and women's suffrage” as the rebellion of modern people against biblical teaching. In 1914 continued agitation by suffragists prompted him to write, “It is significant how Satan uses woman in the closing days of our age. . . . Woe unto this world when they get the leadership they

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Predictably, Gaebelein also foresaw doom in the news headlines about women during the 1920s. Commenting on the rise of smoking (a formerly masculine habit) among women in 1923, he wrote, “More and more woman leaves the sphere assigned to her by the Creator. . . . It forebodes nothing but evil.” Additional articles condemned Harriett Stanton Blatch, a former suffragist, for promoting “radical socialism” and feminists for seeking to abolish the family and institute state child care; Gaebelein linked these ideas to the Soviet Union and warned that they could bring only “bloody, unspeakable revolution.” The frequency of divorce indicated that “the nation is heading for some dreadful disaster.” The fame of female religious healers such as Mary Baker Eddy and Pentecostal evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson proved that America was rife with “religious insanity.”

The singular focus of fundamentalists on individual salvation also led them to regard the kinds of questions that women's rights advocates and sociologists were asking about women to be unimportant. On November 23, 1918 the *Sunday School Times* exemplified this viewpoint when it published three reviews on books about American women. Conceding that women could benefit from practical life advice, the *Times*

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recommended one book by a female physician for women on “health, recreation, conduct, business life, and homemaking,” provided that the Christian reader skip the material on “right thinking” in favor of inspiration from a Christian author.\footnotemark\footnotetext{Review of Preparing for Womanhood by Edith B. Lowry, in “What Books Shall We Read This Winter?” Sunday School Times Nov. 23, 1918, 669.}

However, the Times was less friendly toward the two titles that focused on the economic and social needs of women. They preferred instead to privilege the need of women for conversion and Christian living above all lesser issues. In The American Girl and Her Community, sociologist Margaret Slattery had profiled several “types” of women and pronounced them united in their need for, as the reviewer summarized it, “an 'understanding' home, an education, wholesome fun, attractive work, and service through ideals which are stimulated by a 'spiritual experience,' differing only as she happens to be a Hebrew, Scientist, Theosophist, Christian or whatever.” The review countered that there was no utility in grouping all women together in order to discern their shared social needs. There were two varieties of girls—saved and unsaved—and the pressing need of the unsaved was for new birth and biblical guidance.\footnotemark\footnotetext{Review of The American Girl and Her Community by Margaret Slattery, in “What Books Shall We Read This Winter?” Sunday School Times Nov. 23, 1918, 655.} Likewise, the Times review of Mary Austin's The Young Woman Citizen dismissed the author's chosen topic as irrelevant to the real problems of the present age. In the words of the review, Austin argued that women's unique capacity for intuitive judgment, ability to nurture, possession of a sense of values, and experience in “the administration of social energy . . . for the family's sake” made them valuable contributors to professional life and politics. In reply, the reviewer faulted Austin for lacking a “rigorous moral tone” and for attributing women's
unique nature to the forces of biological and social evolution. Further, the reviewer argued that Austin's interest in women's ability “to clarify commercial judgment”—the supposed focus of male-dominated politics—ignored the most pressing issues confronting humanity. Instead, the *Times* urged readers to focus not on politics but on achieving social uplift through Christian missions.\(^\text{74}\)

The piety promoted by proponents of the Keswick “higher life” movement fit nicely with this emphasis on the spiritual needs of women over their political, social, or economic rights. Emphasizing complete surrender to God's will, adherents to Keswick teaching argued that by emptying themselves of ambition and anxiety, Christians could embrace victory and peace in the Holy Spirit. This quest for inner release added special drama to the ordinary struggles of everyday life in which many women were immersed. Hannah Whitall Smith, one of the first promoters of the holiness doctrine, explained that “the Blessing” involved living a life of faith that could drive out even routine annoyances. When a sudden visitor inconvenienced her, she sought deliverance from her sinful attitude:

> Lord, I am provoked, I want to be provoked, and I think I have cause for being provoked; but I know I ought not to be, and I want the victory. I hand this whole matter over to thee.”...I was brim full of rebellion; but by faith I laid hold of the victory and the result was that immediately a sunny morning of peace and happiness spread over me and I felt happy as a bird.\(^\text{75}\)

In 1918 an unidentified woman shared a similar sense of release after reading *Absolute Surrender* by Andrew Murray. “A real human life on the written page,” the book spoke

\(^{74}\) Review of *The Young Woman Citizen* by Mary Austin, in “What Books Shall We Read This Winter?” *Sunday School Times* Nov. 23, 1918, 668.

directly to her own struggles. “It tells what happened in my own life—of failure, suffering, and heart-longings.” Finding the root of her suffering in “self-life,” she shared that she had come to long for “death to self and life in Christ.”

By offering a means to express personal struggles, locating the fault deep within the sufferer's soul, and promising spiritual victory, dominant fundamentalist piety both glorified the struggles of ordinary women and encouraged them to find deliverance within their circumstances.

**Pentecostals**

The response of Pentecostal leaders to women's changing roles presents a more enigmatic picture of conservative Protestant social concerns. Like fundamentalists, Pentecostals brought a belief in the inerrancy of Scripture, a premillennial dispensationalist framework of interpreting Scripture, and a concern for personal evangelism to bear on practical questions. They also vested special importance on the religious experiences that restored not only the authority of the Bible but also the apostolic purity and witness to God's power evident in the first-century church. These expectations had the effect of playing down the importance of ordinary human agency and social rules. They expected supernatural power to intervene in human affairs, empowering believers for service and enabling them to adhere to the high moral and spiritual standards of Christian living. This focus on higher things muted Pentecostal interest in the question of women’s rights and responsibilities in mainstream American political and economic life; within Pentecostal churches, it led to comparatively large

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public roles for women. Nonetheless, biblical literalism and long-established views of gender roles still held sway over Pentecostal institutional life. The pattern that emerged in the networks of Pentecostals who formed the movement's two largest white denominations, the Assemblies of God and the Church of God (Cleveland), was to afford wider and more visible roles for women than either fundamentalists or Southern Baptists afforded to their women members, but without conceding the principle (and often also the practice) of male authority. Pentecostals also retained evangelical Christianity’s reverence for Christian women’s roles as exemplars of Christian virtue who committed themselves to cultivating Christian homes. If Pentecostal leaders allowed women to pray, testify, and even preach in public, they also expected godly women to attend to the needs of hearth and home.

Nothing about early American Pentecostalism is intelligible, even on its views of mundane social institutions, unless one takes into account the fact that its adherents believed that the power of the Holy Spirit was moving powerfully in America as the new century dawned, thereby creating a community of saints who thought that they lived not in the social and political universe of the twentieth century as much as in a time when God was bringing the church back to the realities that had governed its life in the first century. The conviction that this fateful moment in salvation history had arrived sprang from multiple sources, but one of the most important origin points was in a tiny collection of men and women who in 1901 had gathered in Topeka, Kansas around breakaway Methodist evangelist and faith healer Charles Fox Parham. Parham had recently begun Bethel Bible College, where he instructed his students to seek a deeper experience with
God. Parham believed that the last days had arrived, and he anticipated that a distinct religious experience, a “Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire,” would enable a remnant of true believers to return to the spiritual purity of the apostolic church. This revival of “apostolic Christianity” would, he was coming to believe, be marked by an unmistakable sign—the miraculous gift of speaking in tongues recorded in Acts 2, 10, and 19. Parham concluded that his beliefs had been vindicated when Agnes Ozman, a student anxious to receive the Baptism, began to speak and write in another language, purportedly Chinese. In the following days, many of her classmates also spoke in tongues. After these watershed events, Parham carried his teaching on faith healing and Spirit Baptism to Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Houston, Texas. In Houston, he again began to teach students.77

Unusual signs again appeared in 1906, when one of Parham's students from Houston, black evangelist William J. Seymour, arrived in Los Angeles. For the next three years, Seymour conducted evangelistic services before racially mixed audiences at a former warehouse on Asuza Street. Large numbers of people converted, experienced Spirit Baptism, spoke in tongues, and produced other fantastic signs that something unusual was afoot in Los Angeles. The revivals quickly attracted the attention of other conservative Protestants, especially members of the Wesleyan holiness movement. Some members of the holiness movement determined that the manifestations in Los Angeles were of God and accepted Pentecostal teaching, while others concluded that insanity or even demonic forces were responsible. Meanwhile, converts from Azusa Street dispersed to spread the revival to the United States, Canada, and foreign lands. As a result, a far-

77 Blumhofer, Restoring. 43-55; Wacker, 5-6; Synan, 95-116.
flung network of missions, former holiness churches, and new congregations had within months begun to appear. Although Pentecostals were at first a decentralized movement whose leaders were reluctant to squelch the Spirit by founding institutions, several major denominations emerged. These included the Assemblies of God among whites in the central and south central states, the Church of God (Cleveland) and the Pentecostal Holiness Church among whites in the Southeast, and the Church of God in Christ among blacks in the South. Dozens of smaller churches and denominations also sprang into being.\footnote{Blumhofer, Restoring, 71-84; Synan, 108-186.}

The growing Pentecostal movement shared a number of similarities to the holiness and emerging fundamentalist movements. With the exception of “Oneness” Pentecostals, an offshoot of the Assemblies of God who denied the doctrine of the Trinity, members of the Pentecostal movement affirmed the doctrines that other conservative Protestants regarded as essential. Revivalists all, they also shared with their peers an emphasis on personal conversion and intense post-conversion religious experiences. They also accepted a premillennial dispensationalist approach to interpreting Scripture and prophesy. This interpretive framework informed their belief that the signs and wonders experienced among them were evidence that the final dispensation had arrived, and it gave fundamentalists and Pentecostals a shared pessimism about the future of human civilization. Since Pentecostals founded their own churches and recruited members of existing conservative Protestant groups, they did not engage in the direct battles with “modernism” that preoccupied fundamentalists, but they did adopt fundamentalist attitudes toward evolution and modern theology.
Although they were similar to their conservative Protestant peers on a number of crucial topics, early Pentecostals spent the bulk of their energy evangelizing converts and defending a distinct set of doctrines. Like Parham, all believed that a special work of grace in the lives of believers, “Spirit Baptism” or “the Latter Rain,” was restoring the purity and power of the apostolic church. In some understandings of sanctification, Spirit Baptism was a second experience that followed conversion and brought a believer into greater fellowship with God; in other understandings, it was the third step. Pentecostals also disagreed about the signs that accompanied the Baptism, but all affirmed that the gift of speaking in tongues always or usually accompanied it. The gift of tongues, in turn, was just one part of the restoration to church life of all the spiritual gifts enumerated by Paul in I Corinthians 12: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracle-working, prophesy, the discernment of spirits, the speaking of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. In addition to tongues, the gift of healing took on special importance. Pentecostal belief went beyond the common evangelical belief—which they also affirmed enthusiastically—that obedience to the Bible's teachings tended to promote health. Some Pentecostals grafted belief in healing into their understanding of the atonement itself, teaching that Christ's sacrifice on the cross not only paid the penalty for sin but also provided physical vigor and healing to believers who turned to God in faith. Believers would still be subject to death, but those who turned to God in faith for healing could find relief from illness, injuries, and disabilities. Further, some believers had a special gift for faith-healing—a conviction that jump-started the careers of many evangelists and generated significant attention from the press. This shared anticipation that the miraculous could infuse the
everyday lives of believers informed Pentecostals' relationship to American culture: they focused special attention on the experiences and moral standards that separated saved and Spirit Baptized believers from their peers and empowered them to spread the gospel. Standing on the cusp of history, they distrusted the power of conventional wisdom. They instead turned to the supernatural help and the private worlds through which the Spirit worked.79

Pentecostals' overwhelming focus on the dramatic cosmic events in which they were enveloped led them to publish sparsely on the topics of women's suffrage or access to secular work. This silence can probably be explained by the fact that early Pentecostals were strikingly apolitical. There were, to be sure, outspoken exceptions. Frank Bartleman, who made his negativity toward uppity women in any guise clear in his tract Flapper Evangelism: Fashion's Fools Headed for Hell (1920), insisted that “petticoat government” (women's suffrage), flappers, and female evangelists all expressed disobedience to God. They also portended the ruin of the Christian home. “Home, piety, and everything worth while is nigh gone,” he complained. “The homes are largely destroyed today through disobedience. Especially the disobedience evident among women.”80 But Bartleman's protest against the Nineteenth Amendment proved unusual. Contributors to Pentecostal magazines such as the Latter Rain Evangel, Pentecostal Evangel, and the Church of God Evangel searched the news headlines for signs of the end times, not for cultural and political issues that might impel believers to action. Some

79 A fuller discussion of the role of tongues and healing in Pentecostalism can be found in Wacker, 1-3, 26-28, 35-57. Pentecostalism's doctrinal commitments, focus on personal experience and oppositional posture toward mainstream culture are discussed in Wacker, 18-34, 70-86, 177-196, 217-250.

Pentecostals were also pacifists due to Quaker and holiness influences, a fact that led them to affirm with Methodist minister and holiness teacher J. B. Culpepper that “I stood around the church doors on the village square, and looked at the young men who had enrolled for 'the front.'... All failed to stir the martial spirit in my breast.” The Pentecostal faithful did not believe they were acting on the normal world stage; there was no time for politics-as-usual. An outpouring of God's Spirit was equipping the church for a special spiritual work; cosmic forces, not temporal ones, ultimately lay behind world events. The evangelism of the world and the renewal of the church, both events not possible without supernatural intervention, were the pivots on which the door of the world turned.

Although Pentecostal commentators offered only infrequent comment on women's secular public roles, their emphasis on the action of the Holy Spirit to empower people for service led them to adopt a far more complicated set of attitudes toward women's work in the church. Pentecostals did great amounts of planning and legwork, but they understood their decisions and successes to be the products of God’s spontaneous leading and other miraculous events. They described themselves as vessels through whom the Holy Spirit worked. Accordingly, the style of Pentecostal worship often veered toward the expressive and exuberant; speaking in tongues was expected as a matter of course as were extreme bodily responses to the Spirit's work, including collapsing, shouting, shaking and bodily contortions. This behavior appeared excessive, even demonic, to critics in the holiness and fundamentalist movements and to some curious outsiders; it also violated middle-class standards of respectability to which other conservative

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81 J.B. Culpepper, Some Women I Have Known (Louisville: Pentecostal Publishing Co, 1902), 12.
Protestants, fundamentalists especially, were deeply attached. Some Pentecostals, including many farmers or laborers, found this religiosity more acceptable; more affluent individuals saw respectability as a reasonable trade-off for living at the vortex of God's redemptive action in the world. All agreed that the unusual and extreme nature of Pentecostal experience demonstrated the very great extent of the Holy Spirit's work as well as the fact that twentieth-century Christians were living through extraordinary times.

These attitudes mattered to how Pentecostals interpreted women's actions. At their most elemental levels, Pentecostal belief and practice encouraged women to seek powerful religious experiences, to express these experiences publicly, and to disregard ordinary social rules or personal qualms when they contradicted the Holy Spirit's leading. Once they had dipped their ladles into the deep waters of God's grace, Pentecostal women offered testimonies, spoke in tongues, uttered prophesies, and acted on the overwhelming feelings of confidence, power, and peace they received. If nothing else, Pentecostal meetings were filled with women's speech and marked by their visibility.82

Women also went into public ministry. Out of necessity, the Pentecostals' zeal for evangelism and church planting required even the most ardent defenders of male authority to rely on Pentecostalism's armies of willing women to volunteer, evangelize, organize informal meetings, and preach. Pentecostals typically expressed reservations about granting women full pastoral responsibilities or about appointing them to head congregations, although both privileges were conferred when necessity demanded or when pockets of enterprising believers allowed it. As a result, women served as

missionaries, evangelists, associate clergy, and ministers in striking numbers, albeit in proportions that often shrunk as their fledgling denominations grew. The Assemblies of God listed women as a third of its clergy at its founding in 1914 and a fifth in 1925. Two-thirds of its missionaries were women. In the Church of God (Cleveland), between 1913 and 1940 the percentage of women ministers varied from 11.5 to 14 percent.83

The career of Aimee Semple McPherson, an early Pentecostal leader and the founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, illustrated how Pentecostalism's decentralized, entrepreneurial nature sometimes created exceptional opportunities for women. Growing up in the 1890s and 1900s, McPherson began her spiritual formation in the Salvation Army, an offshoot of Methodism founded by a woman, Catherine Booth, which embraced women's leadership. Her mother, Minnie Kennedy, was a dedicated member of the Army. As an enthusiastic teenager, Aimee threw herself into church work as well as many of the expected pursuits of an outgoing teenager, including acting. These experiences prepared her for the greatest turning point of her teenage years: her encounter with Pentecostal evangelist Robert Semple in Ontario in 1907. At his evangelistic meetings, seventeen-year-old Aimee recanted her worldly interests and sought the Second Blessing. The next year, marriage to Robert Semple propelled Aimee deeper into Pentecostal circles. The couple received training from William Durham in Chicago and in 1910 departed for missionary work in China. Not long after their arrival, Robert died, leaving Aimee a pregnant widow.

From this point, Aimee's story took an unusual turn. As a despondent young mother, Aimee went to live with her mother, who was at that time engaged in Salvation

83 Edith Blumhofer, *Restoring*, 120-121, 164-179; Wacker, 160; Roebuck, 73.
Army work in New York City. While there, she met and married Harold McPherson, who hoped his bride would adopt a middle-class life. However, neither remarriage nor the birth of a second child convinced Aimee that God wanted her to pursue an ordinary life. Her discontent reached a crisis point during a serious illness in 1913, during which Aimee dreamt that God called her back into Christian service and would spare her life if she accepted the call. She interpreted her subsequent recovery as a miraculous act and fled Harold for evangelistic work, bidding him to come and join her if he wished. Harold joined his wife for a time, but later sued her for divorce on the grounds of desertion. Despite his departure, Aimee and her family drove their “Gospel Car” up and down the East Coast, holding meetings and leaving a trail of tracts behind them. In 1918, they arrived in California, where Aimee proclaimed that God had called her to start a church. Her relentless and charismatic preaching generated the needed contributions to build an immense church, Angeles Temple, in 1923. The church became the headquarters for a new denomination, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, which Aimee led until her death in 1944.84

First as an evangelist and later as head of a major Pentecostal denomination, Aimee justified her leadership on the immediate need of world evangelism and on the direct leading she had received from God to enter ministry. She also reenacted the story of her call into ministry over and over again in the form of illustrated sermons, and she disseminated it in her frequently revised autobiography. In this continual repetition of her testimony, McPherson claimed that her actions were borne solely out of obedience to the

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Holy Spirit. By this logic, Aimee did not specifically claim that all women had an inherent right to assume public roles. Nonetheless, McPherson established and encouraged a pattern of other women repeating the experience of calling and ministry. The school she founded, L.I.F.E. Bible College, accepted women students, and under her leadership the Foursquare Church began an unbroken tradition of ordaining women. Late in her career, McPherson even asserted that she had broken down the barriers to women serving in ministry, just as women had done in other fields. The one blemish on this legacy might be the fact that, as in other Pentecostal denominations, the proportion of women serving in public ministry in the Foursquare Church shrunk over the course of McPherson's lifetime. Nonetheless, McPherson's career and legacy demonstrated how far a woman could build an exceptional career by riding the enthusiasm of the early Pentecostal movement, adopting its emphasis on religious experience, and operating outside the constraints of male-dominated denominations or ministries.  

However, Pentecostals' willingness to embrace women as co-laborers did not necessarily mean that the men—or the women, for that matter—were prepared to discard notions of gender difference. Like their fundamentalist kin, they stressed biblical authority and tended to adopt the “plain” meaning of biblical texts. Men and women accepted the public actions of Spirit-baptized women, not as modern, revolutionary examples of women's rights, but because their literalistic reading of biblical prophesy led

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85 For details on McPherson's self-presentation and claims about women in ministry, see Blumhofer, 359-363 and Sutton, 125-29, 204-209. For McPherson's autobiographical work, see: This is That, Personal Experience, Sermons and Writings of Aimee Semple McPherson, Evangelist (Los Angeles: Bridal Call Publishing House, 1919); This is That (Los Angeles: Bridal Call Publishing House, 1921); This is That; Personal Experiences, Sermons and Writings of Aimee Semple McPherson (Los Angeles: Echo Park Evangelistic Association, 1923); In the Service of the King: The Story of My Life (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927).
them to believe the last days were at hand. They expected to witness extraordinary events of the type described in Joel 2:28—“your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.” In this framework, women's extraordinary claims to be compelled by the Holy Spirit to testify offered an unassailable justification for their boldness. The fields were ripe unto harvest; God's trumpets were sounding; the bride was preparing to meet her Bridegroom. At such a moment in time, the Holy Spirit acted spontaneously and forcefully, calling whom the Spirit chose to call. These beliefs had radical implications, but not always radical effects. Although the Spirit did not necessarily obey ordinary social rules, neither did the Spirit overturn them. Pentecostals still interpreted verses that seemed to teach that God had created men and women for different purposes as literal, authoritative, and applicable to most situations. Pentecostals expected most women to become wives and mothers whose bold service to God would be characterized by self-sacrifice and by submission to the authority of husbands and male clergy.

The roots of Pentecostal attitudes can be found in the holiness movement out of which many early Pentecostals had emerged. The holiness movement had a legacy of permitting women a wide field of practical work while sustaining a strict and scripturally grounded goal to maintain unequal authority between men and women. Phoebe Palmer, one of the original holiness teachers to argue for women's public speech in her book The Promise of the Father (1859), contended that a woman might testify not because she enjoyed abilities or authority equal to a man’s but because the Holy Spirit, who did have authority, was working through her. Seven decades later, Julia Shelhamer, a Free
Methodist evangelist, wife of an evangelist, and author of marriage advice literature, professed that she had composed her marriage advise book *A Message to Men* (1927) with extreme humility. The introduction composed for Julia by a male minister assured readers, “Had she not firmly believed that she was Divinely led, she certainly would not have undertaken such a task; for the seeming impropriety of it has so annoyed her that it has become one of her greatest crosses to proceed.” Shelhamer wrote that she welcomed “a grand new era of liberty” for Christian women in the last days, but she still stressed that outside of special circumstances, submission of women to men's authority ought to continue. “It will never be in His plan for them as a whole to usurp authority over God's firstborn sons of light,” she insisted. She therefore expressed her disapproval of women evangelists who had acquired “masculine airs.” In general, women in the holiness movement were granted significant roles as evangelists and other Christian workers, but they were expected to be orderly and submissive as well.86

Pentecostals embraced this expectation that women, even when occupying a position of leadership, would display “feminine” attributes and attitudes. Historian Edith Blumhofer has argued that the attitudes of many men—and often women—in the Assemblies of God on the topic of women's roles contained a blend of “admission and restriction.” Leaders often praised women for their extensive efforts and championed their visibility in situations where the Holy Spirit filled them and led them to speak about personal experience, holy living, or equally practical and experiential topics. However, most also expected women to accede readily to biblical passages that granted men greater

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authority. Self-assertion and rebelliousness were marks of worldliness. In 1914 the Council ruled that women could serve as “helpers in the gospel” who should not “usurp authority over men.” They could receive credentials to serve as “Evangelists and Missionaries,” but could not serve as pastors or elders. They were also supposed to minister under the authority of male pastors. Resolutions in 1914 and 1922 specified that women missionaries and evangelists could perform baptisms and other ceremonial duties associated with men only in emergency situations. A resolution in 1920 permitted women to become “assistant pastors,” mainly to allow pastor's wives to minister while their husbands were away from home. In 1935 the denomination finally affirmed that women could be ordained as pastors but also asserted that Scripture taught there ought to be fundamental differences between the work and authority of men and women ministers. Predictably, member churches of the Assemblies of God preferred to appoint male leaders and expected credentialed women to labor under the authority of a male pastor, which prevented many women ministers from obtaining a post.87

David Roebuck's study of the Church of God (Cleveland) has shown that this denomination's leadership adopted an approach to the problem of defining women's roles similar to that of the Assemblies of God. A. J. Tomlinson, the denomination's first General Overseer, affirmed that the Holy Spirit empowered both men and women to speak as evangelists and pastors. However, he distinguished these highly visible teaching roles from the authority to govern the church. Only men could participate in business meetings, hold administrative positions, serve as elders, or plant churches, because all these activities were acts of government. The Church of God's Book of Doctrines, its

87 Blumhofer, Restoring, 120-121, 164-177.
early leaders, and its periodicals regularly advanced this viewpoint, thereby opening the way for women to exercise significant leadership while reserving formal authority for men.\textsuperscript{88}

When considered altogether, these examples point to some broad trends within the more organized and successful portions of the Pentecostal movement. The movement's dynamism made it possible for certain churches or individuals to view ordinary laws to be in temporary suspension: a woman, who in herself might have no right to authority, might temporarily acquire it when she was “filled” with the Holy Spirit. The action was not hers, but God's. Her work as an evangelist or a teacher followed not from the gifts or rights inherent to her sex, but to the gifts which she received from God by faith. She pursued this work not because of any benefit or satisfaction it might offer her, but because God had called his daughters to serve due to the urgent need of a lost humanity to hear the gospel and experience Pentecostal blessing. Under these conditions, a person might say or do things others found shocking, but out of radical obedience to God rather than revolt against God's established order.

Most Pentecostals agreed that marriage and parenthood remained important components of God's established order, even during the dangerous and surprising last days. For this reason, Pentecostal leaders found it necessary to speak against those members of their own movement who reached the conclusion that the calls they felt to evangelism or to the pursuit of holiness justified the abandonment of their seemingly more commonplace duties. In 1907 even as the revivals at Azusa Street entered their

second year, the periodical published by its leaders, *Apostolic Faith*, spoke against “many precious husbands” and mothers who abandoned their families for Christian service.\(^89\) In the 1910s prominent Pentecostal leaders found it necessary to denounce teachers who argued that true believers ought to suspend ordinary family life. These teachers believed that those who hoped to sanctify themselves in preparation for Christ's imminent return ought to adopt “the eunuch life,” abstinence from all sexual relations. Other Pentecostal leaders responded by reiterating the more mainstream Protestant belief that marriage had been instituted by God for humanity's good. Those who advocated chastity ignored this truth at their own peril: believers who sought to break off marital relations with their spouse might, with no legitimate outlet for their needs, turn to immorality. By advocating chastity for married people they also, in effect, were advocating the dissolution of marriage, an institution the Bible taught was sacred and lifelong. According to most Pentecostal leaders, especially those who emerged at the helm of Pentecostalism's largest and most important networks, the pattern of life that had structured human social relations since Eden were intended to remain intact across all of human and sacred history. To leave father and mother and to dedicate one's self to the establishment of a home therefore remained sacred commands.\(^90\)

Similarly, Pentecostal leaders worried that parents—especially mothers—might fail to see the importance of their holy mission within the home. They enjoined earnest Pentecostals to recall that the Christian home was not only important but also one of the

\(^89\) Quoted in Edith Blumhofer, *Restoring*, 93.

\(^90\) Thomas Myerscough, “The Unmarried Life; or the Eunuch Life; or Married Life for Christians,” *Confidence* July 15, 1913, 16 and October 15, 1913, 203-04; E.N. Bell, “The Doctrine Condemned,” *Pentecostal Evangel* November 29, 1919, 10.
primary vehicles through which God evangelized the human race. Too few people benefited from the “exalted and glorious privilege” of growing up under a godly mother,” George Ruch wrote in 1916. Spelling out how the family might serve as a model for religious persons to exert influence on the nation, he explained, “Nations are composed of individuals, and each man should be trained by his mother to know God and love and obey Him.” In consequence, a woman who sought to win souls in “God's great harvest-field” could do no better than to look first to her “own field . . . all ready and white to harvest.” Elizabeth Sisson, although not herself a homemaker but a former missionary and traveling speaker, argued that God redeemed and consecrated individuals to live separately from the world, so that they might in turn claim the salvation and consecration of their families. Both the individual and the family were essential for delivering God's salvation to the world: “God is after the family in calling the individual; we shall find this runs like a golden thread of covenant grace throughout the Bible,” she wrote. God had worked through Noah, the patriarchs, Israel, and church of the New Testament by calling individuals and their households to faith and by delivering God's promises to them. Through these channels, the whole world had been blessed. Speaking at the Stone Church in Chicago on August 15, 1920, Hardy Mitchell stressed that God's promises extended not just to individuals but to households, so that earnest believers ought to strive for the conversion of their entire family and their consecration to God's service. Given these truths, the *Pentecostal Evangel* and other publications regularly enjoined that

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“Divine duty calls upon everyone honored with parenthood, saying that what the Spirit has wrought in your life must be passed on to your children. . . . No responsibility is so great as your responsibility to your family.”

Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Compared to their counterparts in other conservative Protestant denominations, the leadership of the LCMS expressed particularly strong and unified disapproval of women's efforts to win the ballot and to expand their roles in public life. Their firmness on this point makes them a useful counterpoint to leaders among the Southern Baptists, fundamentalists and Pentecostals, all of whom shared roots in the nineteenth-century evangelical tradition. For the most part, members of the evangelical tradition either opposed the movement of women into public roles or extended it cautious approval so long as it seemed that women would not, by the acceptance of public rights and responsibilities, be removed from their domestic role. Leadership in the LCMS issued pronouncements that placed them in solidarity with the former camp. The reason they took this position reflects intellectual commitments similar to those of other conservative Protestants: a tendency to defend, and to vest great significance in, an established model of sex roles that seemed to cohere with scriptural teaching and the theological precedent. This tendency was particularly great among Missouri Synod leadership because, like northern fundamentalists, they viewed the defense of orthodoxy to be one of the key goals of their church and were therefore particularly cautious of deviating from past

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94 “The Family Altar: Passing the Torch,” Pentecostal Evangel June 18, 1938, 5. For a similar article, see “From Prize Ring to Pulpit: Because of a Mother's Prayers,” Latter Rain Evangel October 1, 1923, 18-19.
teaching. But unlike members of the evangelical tradition, leaders within the Missouri Synod also lacked a tradition of revivalism, involvement in social reform movements, or (at least until the early twentieth century) strong lay movements. This institutional history resulted in a different set of organizational priorities: leaders within the Missouri Synod identified the local church, the parochial school, and the Christian home to be the three institutions that preserved the health of the Synod and its mission to the world. Of these three, the Christian home afforded the clearest role, and a vital role, for women. This fact reinforced the caution of Missouri Synod leaders to social developments that might diminish women's commitment to their domestic calling.

The leadership of the LCMS perceived their most immediate and important challenge to be the preservation of Lutheran orthodoxy and the maintenance of the Synod's institutions. The generation who founded the denomination in 1847 had been participants in a confessional revival that set out to be rigorously faithful to two authorities: Scripture and the Book of Concord (1580), a collection of early Christian and Lutheran creeds. In particular, LCMS leaders opposed two tendencies within the thought of the Lutheran church in Germany. First, they rejected any theology that applied the “rationalism” of Enlightenment philosophy to the study of the Scriptures. Second, they rejected trends in the German church toward “unionism,” the proposition that Lutheran and Reformed believers ought to unite under a single church. In their view, any church that combined Lutheran and Reformed Christians—or for that matter, Lutherans with any dissimilar group—by necessity downplayed and discarded the unique and consequential claims of Lutheranism.
These shared convictions brought two different communities of Midwestern Lutherans together. The first were churches to whom Wilhelm Löhe of Bavaria, a confessional pastor and proponent of Lutheran missions to the Americas, had begun sending “emergency helpers” during the 1840s. The second were a circle of emigrants from Saxony. Their leader, Martin Stephan, had convinced the group to remove themselves from the errors of German Lutheranism by leaving Germany altogether; his shoes would soon be filled by C. F. W. Walther, a prolific theologian who championed the same views. Attracted by religious freedom in the United States and the availability of land, the emigrants settled in Perry Country, Missouri in 1839. Offering this nineteenth-century pilgrim story as the raison d'être for their existence, LCMS leaders would later celebrate in glowing terms how the Saxons, Löhe's churches, and like-minded immigrant Lutherans had joined together in 1847 to form a church that purposed to witness to the true, undiluted Lutheran faith.95

This commitment to adhere rigorously to classic Lutheran theology led the Missouri Synod to view itself as an island community that guarded carefully against the errors they perceived in both other Lutheran groups and in American evangelicalism. They joined American evangelicals in championing religious liberty; they also adopted a form of church government that granted member churches a great deal of autonomy, a decision that brought Synod government relatively close to congregational or Baptist church polity. However, they never adopted the revivalism of the camp meeting or nineteenth-century evangelicalism's penchant for social crusades. Always on the guard

95 The best detailed accounts of these events may be found in Walter Foster, Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxons in Missouri, 1839-1841 (St. Louis: Concordia, 1953) and in Todd, 17-96. Surveys and extracts of primary sources may be found in Carl S. Meyer, ed., Moving Frontiers: Readings in the History of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964), 1-193.
against any form of ecumenism that diluted Lutheran theology and against theological liberalism, they regularly critiqued competing groups and used Synod conventions as occasions to define Synod doctrine, warned members against intermarriage with members of other denominations, and used their national paper to offer explanations of Lutheran doctrine and critiques of competing viewpoints. They were neither pessimistic about the possibilities of the fate of the culture, nor did they view social crusades as the church's role. They instead advocated a Lutheran “two kingdoms” model: a view that the church and state had separate and complementary missions. The largely immigrant Synod would build its own churches, schools, and homes to keep itself separate and orthodox and to fulfill the expressly religious mission of the Lutheran church.

Like its conservative evangelical counterparts, the LCMS was historically loyal to scriptural authority and encouraged its leaders to resist rapid social change undermining traditional biblical interpretations. Franz Pieper, former professor at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and president of the Synod since 1899, articulated the Synod's theology in Christliche Dogmatik (1917-1925), writing that in Scripture “the order of creation and the order established after the Fall” placed women in a subordinate position. God had created women in the divine image to the same degree as men, giving both sexes dominion over all other creatures. God also treated women equally in regard to “participation in the gifts of Christ.” However, Paul's injunctions to women to remain silent in church (1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2) were universal principles rooted in the order of creation and later recognized as valid in the writings of Martin Luther. In addition, Scripture “makes home the sphere of women; it distinguishes sharply between the forbidden public
and the permitted and commanded domestic activity of women.” Pieper rooted the establishment of an exclusively women's sphere in 1 Timothy 5:14 and Titus 2:3, in which Paul had instructed women to marry and to become “stewards of the home.” Luther had later affirmed this principle by teaching that the Holy Spirit did not call women to public leadership in the church but instead to service as “mother and educator of the human race.” Additionally, the Lutheran rejection of monasticism had ended the unscriptural practice of taking pious women out of the home. Against those whose indifference to biblical teaching and plain reason led them to advocate a larger public role for women, Pieper contended that “Woman ought not to be dragged from her place of honor into public life.”

In the 1890s the growing support for political suffrage for women challenged this paradigm and therefore alarmed Synod leaders. *Concordia Magazine*, an illustrated monthly that LCMS began in 1896 to provide wholesome lessons in history, geography, civics, and morals, offered an explicit endorsement of Victorian gender roles in its first issue. “Women,” the article explained, had been created to fill “a definite sphere of usefulness” from which they directed the course of civilizations. Hence “woman is never in her sphere, where she is out of harmony with God's creation.” *Concordia* also warned

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that “a minority of women of America” were conspiring to move women out of their God-given role by advocating access to the vote and to divorce. Christians would do well to avoid both “Lady Ballot Box and Lady Divorce Court.”

Synod leaders' adherence to absolute doctrinal integrity led them to view America and Europe’s gradual reconsideration of women's place in society as an outside movement whose concerns were irrelevant to Synod life and hostile to Lutheran values. In 1896 W. H. T. Dau happily reported, “German Wives have in our country distinguished themselves by discountenancing and repudiating the revolutionary claims of the ‘new woman.’” Unfortunately, their sisters in Germany had organized a “Protest-Meeting of German Wives” full of “blustering” women calling for full equality between men and women. The situation in America motivated writers to produce more detailed commentary. In 1899 Th. E. quoted passages demonstrating Elizabeth Cady Stanton's advocacy of easy divorce laws, which she backed on the ground that it was destructive to personal happiness and social good to force a woman who could no longer countenance life with her husband to continue marriage to him. Such notions were proof, Th. E. contended, that women's rights aimed at nothing less than the destruction of marriage and the family.

The involvement of American women in national reform efforts—even those causes attractive to members of the American evangelical tradition—also failed to impress Lutheran leaders. They took exception to the goals of such prominent reform


organizations as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. While Baptists and many fundamentalists identified the temperance crusader as a willing ally to Christ's cause, German Lutherans had no qualms about alcoholic beverages consumed in moderation. A crusade against drunkenness might be wise, they reasoned; after the success of Prohibition, they urged all Lutherans to obey the law according to traditional Lutheran views about the necessity of obedience to civil authority. However, the temperance movement's promotion of ironclad pledges against all drink went beyond scriptural teaching. “On what do they base all they do?” S. Augustus asked Lutheran Witness readers in 1888. “I am rather sorry to say, not on what they claim—on the Word of God—but on their perversion and misapplication of the Divine Word.” As proof, he quoted W.C.T.U. addresses from Mrs. Whitall Smith and Francis Willard that included the points, “I believe that He [God] is always on the outlook for good points in us” and “The Woman's Christian Temperance Union has one vital, organic thought, one undying enthusiasm, and it is, Christ shall rule over this world as king.” Both of these ideas elicited fatherly scorn. “White Ribboners, let me speak kindly to you. Are you really Biblical scholars? Do you ever read the Bible?” To fill them in on the obvious truth they were passing over, he supplied them with verses about the depravity of man and the spiritual nature of God's kingdom. Taking their errors as grist for his mill, he then advised them to take the Bible seriously when it said that women should remain silent. Clearly they had proved that they had more to learn than teach.99

The Synod's quest for orthodoxy further fostered a conservative view toward women's roles partly because the denomination's structures of authority excluded women.

In the LCMS, individual congregations were self-governing bodies who received guidance from the Synod. Only male members possessed the authority to vote on church matters, while only the pastor was qualified to serve the church through sacramental ministry and the teaching of God's Word. Pastors were the Synod's highest authority. At the national and district levels, they held all Synod offices except treasurer. And while the Synod took as its role defining doctrine and assuring pastoral orthodoxy, because there was no bishop, no one man held sufficient single-handed authority to alter Synod doctrine. In practice, a few leaders did hold tremendous influence. C. F. W. Walther, one of the original Saxon immigrants, shaped many aspects of the first forty years of the Synod's life. He was not only the architect of the Synod's governmental structure but also pastor of St. Louis' prominent Trinity Lutheran Church, two-time president of the Synod, and editor of the *Lutheran Witness*. Nonetheless, even his extraordinary influence was informal.100

LCMS leaders reserved the critical office of pastor for men. Whenever other Protestant denominations considered women's ordination, the editors of the *Lutheran Witness* commented negatively.101 They also questioned the validity of offering theological education to women. Reporting on the decision of the Congregational Theological Seminary of Chicago to admit women, the *Lutheran Witness* offered counter-arguments to its logic. Defenders of the seminary's position claimed American women needed theological education because their role on the missions field was expanding.

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100 Mary Tood provides excellent description of Missouri Synod church government and the critical role of C.F.W. Walther played in the development of the Synod's early history in *Authority*, 65-96.

However, the *Lutheran Witness* replied, the only role any church should provide to women would be informal evangelism, and for that task a deep love for Christ and basic doctrine would suffice. The argument that women were entering many professions in recent years that had been closed to them before met with a simple answer: law and medicine could do what they would, but the office of minister was subject to scriptural mandate, and the Bible clearly reserved such roles for men.  

Although barred from most forms of public ministry and seminary education, Missouri Synod women could fill one teaching role—as schoolteacher in one of the Synod's parochial schools. Lutheran congregations who heeded the Synod's call to establish Christian schools in association with every church might in their early stages run a one-room schoolhouse at which the pastor acted as instructor. Many, however, hired teachers whom the pastor trained himself or who had passed through one of the denomination's teacher colleges. Though Synod leaders encouraged men to enroll, these courses of instruction were open to women. Missouri commentators believed that women were particularly suited to teach young school children. Additionally, the church schools needed teachers, and women could accept a teaching job without threatening the structure of authority within the church. Though the Synod debated the question, they never extended voting privileges to the Synod's teachers. Women who took teaching positions remained the masters of children alone. They remained the subjects rather than the creators of denominational policy.  

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Before 1917 the Synod's structures of authority also discouraged the formation of the voluntary organizations that had long provided opportunities for evangelical women in other denominations to take up visible public work. LCMS leaders were well aware of the American penchant for forming voluntary religious associations, and until World War I they rejected the practice on the grounds that it divided congregations and undermined the authority of the pastors over their churches. How, Synod leaders asked, were pastors to guide their flocks along the narrow ways of faithfulness, when members were taking marching orders from the lay leaders of many different organizations? It was only in 1917 that wealthy laymen grew sufficiently numerous and assertive to form the Lutheran Laymen's League, an organization that aimed to ease Synod debts and guide its financial affairs. Three years later the Synod finally recognized the thirty-year-old Walther League as an official association of Missouri Synod young people. By that time, the pastors and young people who originally started it had passed their mantles on to others. Before 1920 Synod leaders had shied away from extending it official recognition because they feared that youth who were empowered by control of their own organization would become a destabilizing force. In a sense they had been correct: in 1900, the Walther League granted women a vote and a voice in national meetings, despite cautions from Concordia Seminary professors, whom league leaders had contacted for advice.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Wayne Schmidt, The Lutheran Parochial School (St. Louis: Concordia, 2001), 54-61; Todd, 109-113. Also, the Synod's perennial devotion to parochial education can be followed in many articles appearing Lutheran Witness as well as the entire publication history of the Evangelical Lutheran School Journal (later Lutheran School Journal and Lutheran Education).

Similarly, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, local pastors, women, and
district associations had formed Ladies Aid societies, despite Synod leaders' great worries
about their potential misuse. A woman possessed, the Lutheran Witness asserted in 1899,
a “magic power of influence” over the hearts of her children, but only if she did not fritter
her energy away on less worthy ventures. Christian women lose their influence when
“they are giving too much time to society, to visiting, to traveling, or to philanthropic
work which takes them away from their home.” Fourteen years later, [Insert Name]
concurred. Outside activities, he insisted, were fundamentally incompatible with a
woman's duties at home. “Club women” were likely to neglect their homes, and “a true
Christian home-and-church woman” apt to fail at club life. A Lutheran Ladies Aid
Society provided a better venue for outside work, but even this option had to be
entertained cautiously. The venture would prove ill if the Ladies Aid Society “ceases to
be an aid society, and seeks to become a ruling society.” It was not until 1938—long after
the Ladies Aid had established itself as an enduring feature of local church life, and long
after the Synod had recognized the men's and youth organizations—that the Synod finally
permitted Lutheran women to found a national organization.105

Besides allowing Missouri Synod women to organize nationally in 1938, the
Missouri Synod approved only one expansion of churchwomen's roles: the adoption of
deaconess as a church office in 1919. Long before, Wilhelm Löhe, whose missionary
churches had been instrumental to the founding of the Synod in 1848, had promoted the
office of deaconess and used them in his charitable missions. The largest group of

Ladies' Aid Society,” Sept. 25, 1913, 155-56; Todd, 122-27.
American Lutherans, the General Synod, had adopted the office of deaconess in the mid-nineteenth century. Despite its relation to Löhe, the Missouri Synod did not seriously consider the idea until a single paper-giver, Friedrich Hertzberger, outlined the benefits of the office in 1910. In 1919 the Synod leaders followed his suggestion. Historian Mary Todd suggests that they may have responded so positively because they trusted that Synod churches would always assign deaconesses to gender-appropriate work. For this reason, it may have seemed like a safe concession to America's trend toward expanded roles for women.\textsuperscript{106}

The deaconesses encouraged the belief that their mission was to support the authority of Synod leaders on doctrinal and social questions. In 1929 P.E. Kretzmann responded to a request from the Lutheran Deaconess Association of the Synodical Conference for a book stating the Synod's position on all the major sociological questions, so that deaconesses might apply those principles in their ministry. Kretzmann replied by praising the work of deaconesses, nurses, and teachers. He argued that in these roles Synod women confronted the personal problems of ordinary people. They therefore conducted “social work,” a pursuit that required physical, mental, spiritual, and intellectual maturity as well as specialized knowledge of sociology. Kretzmann hoped that in this role they would act as the mouthpieces of the Synod, censuring sinful and socially harmful behavior and promoting Christian social views. Accordingly, Kretzmann's volume contained brief chapters outlining the Synod's views on courtship, marriage, gender roles, child rearing, divorce, government, and the church's social role.\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{106} Todd, 116-120.
Significantly, when they created the office of deaconess in 1919 and recognized the Ladies Aid in 1938, Synod leaders were also rejecting proposals to extend women the right to vote in their congregations. In 1916 the growing popularity of women's suffrage in secular politics had stirred enough discussion about women's suffrage in one local church to force an official response. Two laymen, later identified only as “Mr. J” and “Mr. R.,” and their pastor, “Rev. M.,” had been unable to agree on the question. The laymen apparently supported the extension of voting rights to women church members, while the pastor opposed the proposition. The three then asked the Concordia faculty for their opinion. W. H. T. Dau responded with a rebuke of the “feministic movement” and firm defense of the exclusion of women from participation in church government. Women who voted were by definition governing men, he concluded, and such a role was unscriptural. After Dau's response, the issue did not formally come up again until 1938, when the same national convention that approved the creation of a national Ladies' Aid Association also responded to popular requests to reconsider women's suffrage by recommending, but then neglecting to appoint, a committee to study the subject. That matter would not be revisited again until 1958, at which time the Synod upheld its previous conclusions. Outside of the Walther League, Missouri Synod women did not vote on church business until 1968.108

The view of LCMS leaders regarding woman's roles within the Synod pushed them toward an overwhelmingly conservative take on women's rights movements outside

107 P.E. Kretzmann, The Christian Woman as a Social Worker: Forty Analyzed Lessons for Class Discussion or Private Study (Berne, IN: Economy Print Concern, 1929).

108 Pahl, 49-53; W.H.T. Dau, Woman's Suffrage in the Church (St Louis: Concordia, 1923).
the church. As always, they strove for an authentically Lutheran stance. In 1913 Louis Sieck, a pastor and later president of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, stated in the *Lutheran Witness* that scriptural authority prevented the church from making a definite pronouncement on whether Christian women ought to vote, should the United States government extend them the right. Scripture was silent on the issue, and so an individual's decision about voting fell under “Christian liberty”—the Lutheran doctrine that Christ's grace saved believers from the oppression of legalism and gave them the freedom to live as God's children. Further, it was the state's right, not the church's, to decide whom to enfranchise. Despite Sieck's article, other Synod leaders nonetheless expressed their concern about the results of women's suffrage, should it be granted.

As the reality of women's suffrage became more likely, Louis Sieck grew more outspokenly opposed. “Instead of favoring us with an early and natural death, the Woman Suffrage movement has grown to such proportions that the time has come when it cannot be disregarded by the Church,” he observed in 1919 at a pastor and teacher's conference of the LCMS. To counter the growing danger, he provided his audience—and soon after readers of the *Lutheran Witness*—with a three-part lecture on the destructive effect that suffrage would have on the church, the family, and the state.

Like his colleagues who had decried Elizabeth Cady Stanton and other advocates of women's suffrage two decades before, Louis Sieck now expanded his critique to the new generation of women's rights activists: Margaret Sanger, Max Eastman, and Charlotte Gilman. Choice quotes demonstrated that the new “feminists” intended to goad women out of their dedication to home life and toward a world of equal rights, full-time
work, and collective childcare. Such wholesale destruction of motherhood and home life had to be opposed at all costs. “To change the sphere of woman and create for her a sphere outside the home is to overthrow God's ordinance and unsex women,” Sieck warned. Politicians who gave women the vote dealt “a blow to the home on which the welfare of Church and State rests.” If women did vote, they would have to proceed carefully, making certain that it sapped none of the time, energy, or devotion that they had previously devoted to home life.109

Louis Sieck's begrudging acknowledgment that Lutheran women might soon have the vote and might exercise that right proved too lenient in the opinions of some members of the Synod. In an article series of advice to young pastors published in the *Homiletic Review*, Theodore Graebner, professor of New Testament at Concordia Theological Seminary, reported that Sieck's comments had drawn criticism. Graebner attempted to sustain a compromise position by arguing that women could exercise the political right to vote without themselves becoming political actors and thereby abandoning their scriptural roles. “I should make a distinction between women in politics and the right of women to use the ballot,” he explained. The scriptural understanding of women’s role did not center on the question of whether they cast ballots but on the social roles they assumed. “Her relation to her husband—a helper, who shall acknowledge him as head. Her sphere—the home, the family. Political activity takes her out of both. The use of the ballot does not.” It was therefore not a “moral wrong” for a woman to vote, as some were arguing. Lutherans were right to criticize the women's rights movement, whose leaders

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spoke “widely and wickedly” so that “no Christian can associate himself with such company as the Feminists are.” However, with the right to vote granted, those concerns were water under the bridge. “Even if we know in the end that women will not be benefited, but rather harmed, by the right of suffrage, we need not for such a reason forbid our women to vote. The thing is done. . . . Now let them vote.”

The political campaign of 1924 drew similar comments from Walter Maier, editor and frequent writer for the Walther League Messenger. Maier urged Lutheran young women to accept the responsibility to vote. However, he stressed that the necessity that they vote arose not from any good accomplished by the movement for women's suffrage, but from the fact that the Lutheran women's vote was needed to counter the influence of large numbers of non-Lutheran women votes. Roman Catholics, statisticians had estimated, would make up two-thirds of all women voters. Maier therefore reluctantly set aside his numerous reservations about women's suffrage:

> While we are free to state—in the face of the wide endorsement which the 19th Amendment has received from the press, from pulpits that should resound with the Gospel, and from the long list of women's societies—that we are not convinced that the granting of the ballot was a measure which was necessary for the raising of women's dignity and for the furtherance of the welfare of our country; yes while we do not hesitate to state that the picture which the Bible draws of Christian women is that in which her greatest interests are centered about her home and her church and that the Scriptures nowhere attach any enforcement, promise, or blessing to any measure which may tend to remove Christian mothers, daughters, wives, and sisters from the sphere of their most necessary

activity; nevertheless, the welfare of our country and the interests of
our church now demand that our women, young and old, cast their
votes regularly.\(^{111}\)

This sentence summed up the discomfort among prominent Missouri Synod leadership
and the basis on which many opponents of women's suffrage would, in the coming years,
accept the trek of their wives and daughters to the polls.

**Conclusion**

The varied stances that conservative Protestants took on women's suffrage, access
to secular work, and church roles testify to the fact that they were far from unified in their
interpretations of the changes through which American social life was passing. Their
responses also point to consequential, if broad, similarities. They agreed that women's
work and responsibilities were matters in which society at large—and the church in
particular—had a stake. Conservative Protestant identities and missions were tied to the
question. Conservative Protestant leaders, especially those who were acting as self-
conscious defenders of orthodoxy, set out to rigorously interpret Scripture and apply it to
church life and to the lives of believers. In the pursuit of this quest, most found obedience
in the highly controversial area of women's roles impossible to ignore: women's public
roles were a topic of public discussion in the 1910s and 1920s, and there were several
relevant scriptural passages which conservatives took seriously. As a result, one of the
central issues with which conservative Protestant groups wrestled was their need to rely
on women's support and labor without disregarding scriptural imperatives.

\(^{111}\) Walter Maier, “What the Ballot Means to YOU—Your Church and Your Country,” *Walther League Messenger* November 1924, 136-137.
At the center of conservative Protestants' unfolding discussions about the modern woman and her social role also lay a profound concern about the Christian home. Local churches, denominational and para-church missions efforts, and social reform movements enlisted the aid of women, but virtually all conservative Protestants agreed that the Christian home stood beside the church as a second fundamental institution. Across the board, scriptural precedent and practical necessity impelled fundamentalist, Pentecostal, Southern Baptist, and Missouri Synod Lutheran church leaders to envision a future for American womanhood that centered her efforts squarely on the family and the family's concerns.

As the next chapter explores, this belief reverberated through both denominational literature and the lives of prominent Christian women.
CHAPTER TWO

“SHE HAS SHOUTED AND SHINED HER WAY THROUGH DUTY ON CORNBREAD AND ONIONS”: MOTHERS AND THE FUTURE OF CONSERVATIVE PROTESTANTISM

In 1881 the zeal that attended the spread of the holiness movement arrived in Jones Country, Georgia, where Methodist pastor J. B. Culpepper labored as a guest preacher. Its power impressed Culpepper, who embraced holiness teaching and became a well-known Methodist preacher and writer in holiness and Pentecostal circles. It also led him to write about the effects that the powerful experience of seeking holiness had on women.

Among the women who burned themselves into Culpepper's memory were Sister Annie Bagley, a young woman whose spiritual life transformed radically when she heard Methodist pastor Geo. H. Patillo speak on the topic of entire sanctification. Culpepper remembered her response as surprising and even excessive. “Her utter inability to refrain from talking first impressed me. She, all unconscious to herself, was the center of all eyes and ears. No one I ever met could say more words the minute, or hour, or day, than she.” This profusion of speech, Culpepper remarked, was not ordinarily expected from a woman or enviable in a woman, but it was justified. Not only was she “unconscious to herself,” but her chatter was full of the things of God:
It was all full of startling intelligence, and about a religious experience she had become the wonder-struck possessor of, within the past eight weeks. There was not one moment in which she hesitated for a word, but in language most select, and in sentences ready for the critic or the press, she recited volume and volume of most thrilling experience, punctuated by two large eyes which billowed in seas of joy, and which had entered in conspiracy with a liberated tongue and an emancipated heart, to tell you all.”

Bagley's continual reflection on God and her ability to mold that speech into “select” language marked her not as a woman out of control but controlled by powers greater than herself. She gained the compulsion to speak and the right to be heard.

Culpepper remembered that in her zeal, Bagley saved a man from suicide, began teaching among the local “hardsell Baptists,” led a children's service in which “Pentecostal demonstrations” became manifest, and held a prayer meeting in Culpepper's stead during one of his absences. She also helped Culpepper's wife and sister to receive the same blessing. They “saw the blessing she had, heard the blessing she had, and, thank God, got it too,” Culpepper explained, with the result that his parsonage became “a licklag—a prayer meeting—a classroom, a thoroughfare—a very campmeeting” as the women sang all day and demonstrated their new experience. Soon all the women were singing and giving testimony in the surrounding towns. “And I—well I went along,” he recounted.

Experiences like Bagley's have occasionally propelled ardent Protestant women onto the annals of history, precisely because their behavior seemed scandalous or unusual. However, Culpepper's tale of a holiness revival and the women it enlivened also

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pointed to another, equally important element of such stories: narrators were eager to
demonstrate that powerful actions of the Holy Spirit improved men and women,
redoubling their commitment to their responsibilities and empowering them for service.

The women did not become social radicals. To the contrary, Annie Bagley soon
accepted her social role as a dutiful, if vociferous, mother. In Culpepper's account of
Bagley's surprising story, she demonstrated that her performance of ordinary duties were
unaffected, even improved, by her powerful religious experiences. At the very moment
that Bagley began to embrace the hope of entire sanctification, she suddenly noticed that
her shoe was untied and fixed it. When she got home, she began to rise early in the
morning to help her family and adopted a less “slouchy” appearance. When Bagley's
habit of effusive talking led Culpepper to warn her that some people who are overcome
with religious experience afterward have the “fidgets” and “can't cook a hoe cake and
turn it without tearing it up,” she put her cooking skills to the test. He recalled, “She told
me afterwards that she slipped off in the kitchen, made down a hoe cake, and was much
rejoiced to find that her great heart-joy had not destroyed her common sense.”

This command of common sense soon made Bagley a model wife. In Culpepper's
retelling of events, Bagley put to shame the suggestion of some unnamed friends that
marriage might cause her to lose her intense religious experience. She married an
evangelist. In this new role, she proved supremely useful as a dedicated mother able to
care for her family under the meanest of incomes. “She is today the mother of six or
seven boys and a girl or two,” Culpepper reported. “She has gone with her husband to the poorest Georgia circuits, has shouted and shined her way through duty on cornbread and onions, for herself and her children, rather than have her husband go into debt.”

The question that Culpepper implicitly posed—whether new experiences or powers would pull a woman further away from her domestic responsibilities or in more ardent pursuit of them—were even more pressing a generation later. Following on the wake of the vast changes in women's roles and the advent of women's suffrage, in the first few decades of the twentieth century women and men began to worry about the future of the family and to write extensively about the work that women needed to perform there. As Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English have argued, experts and educated mothers hoping to elevate the work of housekeeping to modern, scientific standards championed the need for greater cleanliness and efficiency in housekeeping and the need for more diligent study and careful attention to children. On a religious and spiritual plane, conservative Protestants engaged in a parallel conversation in which they lionized the commitment of previous generations of evangelical Protestant women to the work of motherhood and urged women to view motherly responsibilities within the family and within society as the proper focus for women. With the separate spheres model of gender roles collapsed or collapsing by the 1920s, conservative Protestants imagined women's roles defined not by confinement to the home and its tasks but by lives of service and ministry in which motherhood—literal or figurative—and its tasks still structured women's lives and formed their identities as social beings. They conceived

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2 The previous few paragraphs summarize material in Culpepper, 27-36.

women's roles as social and emotional, but more than anything else, as the guidance of souls. Even as women's public roles grew within American society as well as within some conservative Protestant churches, conservative Protestants held up the specter of the selfish modern women divorced from the home as an example of the nation's loss of spiritual vision. By contrast, the Christian mother, or the motherly single woman, understood how necessary her special abilities and spiritual life were to the future of civilization.

In order to explore the influence of these ideas within conservative Protestants churches, this chapter examines the content of prescriptive literature for women appearing in conservative Protestant periodicals. This section focuses on the content of the Southern Baptist periodical *Home Department Magazine* (later renamed *Better Homes*), one of the first venues in which the Southern Baptist Convention disseminated articles and stories about women and the home, as well as *Baptist Student* and Women's Missionary Union (WMU) materials, two of the denomination's first means of communicating with Baptist college students. From there, it turns to the parallel attempt of Walter Maier, prominent Lutheran pastor and youth leader, to communicate his perspective on women's roles to the youth of the Missouri Synod. To examine some representative examples of fundamentalist and Pentecostal discussions about the work of motherhood, it turns to ideas commonly raised in those movements' periodicals and sermons. These sources reveal how denominational leaders pictured Christian womanhood and sought to communicate their ideals to the membership of their churches and movements.
Especially for fundamentalist and Pentecostal movements, another powerful means of communicating these ideals was through the careers and writings of prominent women. Due to the fact that the fundamentalist and Pentecostal movements were held together in networks of association through prominent churches and leaders, Bible institutes, and missions organizations, leaders not only helped to define the agenda of the movement; prominent personalities also served an important role by modeling the commitments and life patterns that their movements espoused. For this reason, this chapter additionally examines the lives of four women whose work or writings made them well known: Helen Sunday, Grace Fuller, Henrietta Mears, and Alice Reynolds Flower. The stories of these four women do not represent the experiences of all women, but they did exemplify how conservative Protestant views of mothers or “motherly” women helped to shape the ideals and life paths of four women who became well-known within the movement. The life stories of Sunday, Fuller, Mears, and Flower serve to tell us something about what each woman experienced and the public face she presented to other women.

**Ideal Mothers: Community-Builders**

In 1900 the Southern Baptist Convention had virtually no independent, sustained program of educational publishing. It would develop one over the next several years, a move that allowed it to provide monographs to Baptist libraries and homes as well as graded Sunday school materials for its churches. Out of these early efforts, the publication speaking most directly about Baptist home life during the 1910s and 1920s
was the *Home Department Magazine*. The slender periodical's audience consisted of anyone who could not regularly attend Sunday services, but its content was often addressed to women. Divided between Bible study, advice, and fiction, *Home Department* imagined its audience as women and other virtuous and usually anonymous persons who provided the backbone of the South's towns and rural communities. Girls and women in the city appeared in stories as charitable workers and as objects of pity; most, however, lived on farms or in towns. Rural daughters, one article said, might “envy their sisters in the social whirl,” but if they joined them would soon find that world bereft of real value.\(^4\) They were instead mothers, wives, and community-builders.

Within these communities the values of the southern past resided, and moralistic anecdotes explored the power of pastoral settings and rural communities to provide a healing balm for an uneasy civilization. Readers journeyed with an educated French woman and her alcoholic husband as they left New York City to find sobriety and redemption on a southern homestead in rural Virginia.\(^5\) They watched an unruly schoolboy gaze at a painting of the countryside in his urban school and vow to improve his behavior and one day purchase a farm. In another story, they witnessed how a modern apartment with a strict restriction on noise rendered a little girl unnaturally polite and joyless, then saw her brighten when she visited her teacher's family in the country.\(^6\) Another tale told how a rural upbringing might prepare a young man for the challenges of city life. Young Harold Foster, the reader learned, survived his first years in the city by

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\(^5\) George Braxton Taylor, “An Exile from France,” *HDM* 1 n.3 (1910), 8-10.

\(^6\) Adelia Westcott Motts, “Jessie Tries to Play,” *HDM* 7 n. 4 (1917), 2-4.
remembering his origins. Wisely avoiding destructive city amusements, he took long walks in city parks for entertainment. Eventually, his mother's ardent desire that he attend a Baptist church led him to join a large city congregation, where his faithfulness convinced a Baptist businessman to offer him his first good job.  

*Home Department* authors stressed that women's devotion to motherhood and homemaking strengthened their communities. Before all else, articles called women to make sure their homes were well-tended, warm, and welcoming. The home was to nurture family members, protecting them and easing the burden of the outside world. It was also to be a center of hospitality that entertained strangers, received neighbors, and gathered Christian women together to support one another and to do God's work. The accomplished homemaker would also pay special attention to the needs of the families around her. She would gently prod less attentive mothers toward church and better habits, provide food to those in distress, and invite other people's children into her home to enjoy its warmth and to learn such skills as knitting, cooking, painting, or sewing. She would accomplish all these tasks not only through her commitment to practical action, but by drawing from her special gifts as a woman. As *Home Department* advice articles understood it, the Christian wife and mother loomed as the single figure able to imbue the home with special qualities and capacities. Homes were the outward manifestations of a woman's true inner nature as the nurturer of her family. Comfortable because they were carefully tended, they provided a private theater within which women cared for family members, led their children by instruction and example, and created a general environment that moved the mind to higher things. Tellingly, the home that the ideal

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Baptist woman inhabited would not be impressive for its physical characteristics but rather for the spiritual qualities it exuded. The perfect home was no mansion; it was a cottage made great by the woman who resided within.\(^8\)

Such women soon found that their work as homemakers became the basis for their contributions to society. The ideal Baptist woman, just like her home, overcame her own limitations, often her own apparent uselessness or disability. Usually victory came when she came to understand that her true power lay in her ability to pour her attention to seemingly small, simple things. In one story, a talented woman became an invalid and suffered for three years before succumbing to an illness; nonetheless, she sang such beautiful songs from her window that passersby were moved to change their lives.

Another woman felt useless to the church because she lacked education or musical skill, only to discover that her weekly gift of flowers to her minister made all the difference to his cheer and comfort. In a third story, the industriousness of an impoverished minister's wife inspired a wealthy church member to resume her financial contributions to the church. In other tales, those with no special abilities fall back on their womanly sensitivity and charity as their main assets in helping others. One character kept a careful log of her acquaintances' needs and supplied them. Another imagined what she would purchase for the members of her town, if she had the financial means to supply them with what they most needed. Although she was financially unable to purchase such gifts, her

good will melted her resentments and made her a trusted community member. “All seemed to gather to her instinctively, when in dilemma or trouble,” the narrator related. Her home became a place of cheer and counsel.⁹

Communities thrived, story after story implied, on the invisible kindnesses that women supplied. Even if their tasks seemed “commonplace and unromantic,” Home Department authors argued that observant church attendees, Sunday school teachers, missions society members, and mothers were all essential, if at times invisible, contributors to the church's ministry. Certain ministries were especially suited to women. In an article advising how readers could best minister to the sick or invalid, James Elmer Russell explained that women possessed natural sympathy and sensitivity that suited them for ministry to the sick. “Invalids are often as unreasonable as children, and they are extremely sensitive to appearance and manner,” he argued. The woman able to use her skills for picking just the right pretty dress, for exuding a cheerful manner, and for selecting happy stories or music could greatly cheer the ill and help to speed their recovery.

Home Department authors believed that whether she was urban or rural, a woman's contribution to the church and reform work was an extension of her role as a

homemaker. Articles stressed how a woman's ability to rally community members to a cause or to sell farm or household products could overcome daunting local problems.

“How They Built the Church at Big Haven” provided one such example for women to emulate: the small town possessed no local church until the local farmers decided to tithe their crops and one eager woman convinced her friends to devote themselves to selling canned jams and cottage cheese to raise money. Women whose labor had been freed up by the modern economy were in a special position to apply their homemaking skills outside the home. “Modern progress and invention,” Elizabeth Fry Page wrote, “have so lightened the labors of the housekeeper that she had more leisure” and could “look about her and take a more detailed account of the needs of the world.” Praising a boarding house she recently visited, she told readers how talented women could use their facility at creating nurturing environments to provide homes for “homeless” young people working in the city. Boarding house women acted as ever-benevolent mothers, providing their charges with kind words, calm surroundings, and welcoming dispositions that were “never harried or hurried.”

A poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox suggested that the very nature of women qualified them to care for all members of society: “Lord, give the mothers of the world/More love to do their part/That love which reaches not alone/The children made by birth their own/But every childish heart/Wake in their souls true motherhood/Which aims at universal good.”

10 Ceo. Braxton Taylor, “Success at Stout Spring,” HDM 6 n.4 (1916), 4-6; “How a Missouri Town Got Playgrounds,” HDM 7 n.3 (1916), 6-7 (check exact content-blurry); Susan M. Griffith, “How the Built They Church at Big Haven,” HDM 2 n.4 (1912), 4-5; Susan Hubbard Martin, “The Larger Service,” HDM 8 n.1 (1917), 7-8.

11 Elizabeth Fry Page, “The Larger Home,” HDM 7 n. 1 (1916), 7; A.L.W. “A Creator of Happiness,” HDM 7 n.3 (1916), 3; Ruth Pugh Bond “Florence Nightengale, the Nurse,” HDM 2 n.4, 11;

Periodicals written for Southern Baptist college students presented similar ideas about the future of Baptist womanhood. Bypassing the rural scenes and poetic tributes that filled *Home Department*, the *Baptist Student* tackled the controversial questions of the hour: bobbed hair and women in sports. An article on college sports tried to direct women into suitably feminine forms of exercise, an appeal that bordered on pleading. Surely, the author wryly noted, women could respect that some sports had been important outlets for manly expression. “Our womenfolk . . . smoke our cigarettes, use our golf clubs, and so on down an exasperatingly long line. Why not leave us this one thing?” Nonetheless, photos in the *Baptist Student* demonstrated that college women continued their pursuit of athletics without bothering the editors. References to bobbed hair were also tolerant. In 1924 the *Baptist Student* reported on the growing popularity of bobbed hair with playful humor; five years later, *Window on the YWA* concluded that either the popular bob or the increasingly fashionable long hairdo could suit a woman's “crowning glory” so long as she kept it “neat.” 13

The upbeat tone of the *Baptist Student* on bobbed hair and sports extended its assessments of the future of southern manhood and womanhood. During the 1925-1926 academic year the *Baptist Student* featured monthly letters written between two fictional college students, Billy and Caroline, that commented on campus trends and revealed the path to life-long happiness. Caroline and Billy both pointed out negative social trends. They expressed surprise at the popularity of petting and resolved to avoid unchaperoned dates at night, when “petting parties” and foolish escapades often took place. Both

decried actions in women that they deemed unwomanly. Caroline particularly disapproved of the overly tired, experienced, painted look of sophisticated college women. The “modern girl” and the “college girl,” she complained, seemed to become more immodest every year. Excessive make-up, bright red lips, “freak skirts” and “form-fitting flapper one-piece dresses,” and a jaded, assertive attitude made a “travesty” of womanhood and left Caroline, to whom “modesty was second nature,” feeling “awkward and embarrassed.” She swore off dancing after discovering that the college women and young men she met at dances seemed love-worn, foolish, and robbed of their innocence.

The fictional couple also provided a model for faithful Baptist living and social success. Billy and Caroline were up-to-date: both accepted benign trends and enjoyed their college years. Caroline sported bobbed-hair; Billy accepted it as a style that befitted an “old fashioned woman.” Caroline refused to transgress the boundaries of “ladyhood,” but that did not keep her from becoming a self-avowed “tomboy” accomplished in tennis, one of the sports to which Baptist commentators usually gave their approval. As a result, she earned a circle of friends and membership in a sorority. Billy proved his trustworthiness by remaining devoted to Caroline, deepening his faith, losing his “smart aleck” attitude, and resolving to return home to take up his father's law practice and to become his pastor's “right hand man.” By the April issue, both looked forward to graduation and a happy marriage. With such worldly success greeting their spiritual
achievements, the fictional Caroline dared to hope that “the flagrant immodesty, the boldness and slouch” of her generation would still be countered by “motherhood, and wifehood, and girlhood and fatherhood and brotherhood and sheer manhood.”

The lesson plans of the Young Women's Auxiliary of the WMU echoed this message. Reprinted each month in the *Baptist Student*, the lessons urged college women to become supporters of Baptists missions and dedicated mothers. The WMU’s reflections on the life stories of Susan B. Anthony, Mary Lyon, and Clara Barton were particularly forceful in their efforts to direct college women toward traditional social ideals. The lesson plans argued that each woman's life story chronicled the hard and glorious path that self-sacrificing Christian women had traveled in order to win for women the privileges of education, employment, and the vote. This legacy, the WMU writers stressed, was not a call to social radicalism but to social responsibility. A lesson on the Old Testament judge Deborah and Susan B. Anthony urged Christian women to remember that Deborah had risen to the public stage only after she had first been “a mother of Israel.” Unlike women who were tempted to seek public leadership at the expense of home life, Deborah first tended the too-often “neglected fireside.” Having filled her spirit with noble sentiments, “prophetic words,” and “patriotic songs,” she grew into a “public-spirited woman” capable of leadership. Another meeting program explained that Mary Lyon had founded Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary in the interest of

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producing “the very foundation of the highest civilization—educated Christian wives and mothers.”16 A study of Clara Barton's life portrayed the Red Cross founder as a woman whose tireless nursing work had made her a mother to soldiers everywhere. In the same spirit, members of the Auxiliary were urged to pray that “True Motherhood May Precede Social Ambition.”17

**Ideal Mothers: Modern Traditionalists**

While the educational materials of the Southern Baptist Convention advanced the idea that modern southern women ought to remain invested in their homes and communities, the leaders in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod strove to communicate with denominational youth through its most significant educational outreach to that constituency: the Walther League and its magazine, *Walther League Messenger*. Walther League material is a particularly important source for understanding the attempts of LCMS leadership to shape the values and aspirations of the denomination's next generation of women, for two reasons. First, before the recognition in 1938 of the Ladies Aid Society the Walther League was the only national denominational organization in which women participated. Second, the Walther League was the organization most directly engaged with the question of how to prepare the Synod's youth to remain faithful to Lutheran orthodoxy as citizens of modern society. It is

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notable, then, that the *Walther League Messenger* urged young people to regard recent changes in men and women's roles with caution. In particular, it urged young women to keep motherhood at the center of their lives.

No single figure proved a more important architect of the social commentary in the Walther League—or in the LCMS at large—than Walter Maier. Maier's biography and vast interests rooted him firmly in Synod tradition; they also marked him as a forward-looking architect of the Lutheranism's social witness in the modern world. Born in 1893, he was the fourth child of deeply religious German Lutheran immigrants living in Boston. From these beginnings, Maier followed the typical path to service and authority in the Lutheran church. He decided early in life that he wanted to become a pastor, and his parents enrolled him in Concordia Collegiate Institute, a parochial school patterned on the German gymnasium model of education. Maier went on to earn a BA from Boston University in 1914 and an MA and PhD in Semitics from Harvard in 1920 and 1929. His scholarship led to his appointment in 1922 to the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis, the Synod's leading seminary and historically a position of significant influence. However, Maier would become best-known to the public for the additional responsibilities he took on out of deep concern about the intellectual, social, and organizational challenges to the expansion of orthodox Lutheranism in the twentieth century. Maier served as the Walther League's first executive secretary following the League's official recognition by the Missouri Synod in 1920. Afterward, he became the most prolific contributor of columns for its magazine between the two world wars. For four decades, Maier also became the voice behind a new ministry, the radio program
Maier entered the ministry in 1917, the same year that the United States entered World War I on the side of Great Britain and France. As a result, his first experiences as a minister took place during one of the most critical moments in the formation of the Missouri Synod's identity. The Great War inspired a great deal of nationalist fervor as well as anti-German sentiment. This situation proved trying for the LCMS, which was comprised largely of ethnic Germans and was known in 1914 as the “German Lutheran Church of Missouri and Other States.” The Synod still conducted business, published, and taught its children partly in German. Hoping to assert the denomination's American identity, Synod leaders scaled back their use of the German language, removed the word “German” from the denomination's name, and reassured readers of its publications that the Synod had no ties or loyalty to the German government. No doubt individual pastors and lay people also felt the scrutiny of public opinion, and young Maier was no exception. His first responsibilities as a minister reflected his ambiguous identity. While serving in his first ministerial job at Zion Lutheran Church in Boston, Maier volunteered to become military chaplain. However, pastoral interests and proficiency in German led him to serve not as a chaplain to American soldiers but to German POWs being held at nearby Gallop's Island. During his service as a German-speaking pastor to German 

prisoners, a censor charged Maier with including coded messages in postcards he had written to the prisoners. The uncomfortable incident ended humorously when Maier explained to officials at the Immigration Authority that the suspicious “codes” were merely Bible verse references.  

When the war had passed, Maier threw himself into addressing a wide range of questions that lay before the modernizing and Americanizing Synod. Maier was from the beginning profoundly interested in expressing the implications of the Synod's commitment to Lutheran orthodoxy for his denomination's identity. Consistent with other Synod leaders, he believed his denomination's commitment to the distinctive points of Lutheran theology precluded it from close cooperation with other conservative Protestant bodies. Nonetheless, Maier and other Synod leaders became adamant about many of the same issues that energized the fundamentalist movement. They sought to re-articulate classic doctrines as well as offer stiff opposition to mainline theology, the social gospel, the theory of evolution, and both unbelief and moral decadence in American culture. During his presidency of the Walther League, its student representatives reflected their inculcation of these points when they resolved that they stood for a “Lutheran fundamentalism.” In his articles and books, Maier would commonly set himself in opposition to the theological and social views of “modernists.”  

Maier also hoped to see the Synod expand its ministries, so that it not only trained its own youth but also evangelized aggressively both within the United States and in foreign fields. In 1926 Maier told readers of the *Walther League Messenger* that if current  

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19 Paul Maier, 28-30.  

growth rates continued, the denomination would reach 1.5 million members in 1947. Maier hoped the denomination would instead claim 10 million members, a goal achievable if one out of every fourteen members brought a new person into the Synod every year. Only with a vigorous focus on missions could the Synod expand into American communities and foreign nations where they lacked a presence. This goal, in turn, required “sanctified Christian warriors” to rise up with a “direct, virile, missionary spirit.” This need to rear great Christian individuals placed the Lutheran church in ambiguous relationship with the “machine age.” Maier thought that modern institutions lost vital spiritual values when they focused too much on efficiency, quotas, campaigns, fund-raising, and technology. “Machines,” he cautioned, “can never substitute for men.” “Mechanized industry” was already removing more wives and mothers from the home, thus American homes were no longer “havens of helpful happiness” in which “that deeper companionship” between family members was realized. Machines and machine-age values in the church could likewise “take the heart and soul out of Christianity.” The church had to guard against these dangers while remaining “determined to use modern machinery for the dignified and effective spreading of its message.”

When Maier wrote about the “dignified and effective” spread of the gospel, he had in mind the power of radio towers to broadcast messages to vast audiences. In 1920 Maier had solicited the denomination’s lay organizations, the Lutheran Laymen’s League and the Walther League, for the financial backing necessary to begin a Lutheran radio program. The first broadcast of the Lutheran Hour aired in 1920. The Lutheran Hour

eventually purchased its own station, KFUO, in 1924. The program quickly made Maier the best-known member of the Missouri Synod in America, a distinction he retained until his death in 1950. Testimonial letters poured in from Lutherans, conservative evangelicals, mainline Protestants, Roman Catholics, and unbelievers. In 1937 Maier rejoiced that the program had carried the Lutheran gospel to a diverse audience and participated in the vast ideological war between belief and unbelief and between conservative and modern theology:

Why should we, raising the voice of our testimony, demand the great masses be converted through our work? Yet the blessing of God rested unmistakably on our efforts....

Through the guidance and the power of the Spirit some who were unconcerned about their soul's destiny were returned to the faith; many who had suffered under the cruelty of last years' reverses learned of the high spiritual compensations in the Gospel. Literally thousands of questions involving matters of faith, Bible interpretation, doubt of salvation, marital affairs, personal worry, were answered. Strengthening contacts were maintained for members of modernist, Christ-denying churches.

Maier's influential roles as pastor, professor, youth leader, and radio minister positioned him to articulate and advance a conservative Lutheran view of changing American social values. From these vantage points, he offered both a stiff critique of novel cultural trends alongside the conviction that many American youth, and young Lutherans in particular, could lead their peers in a saner and more Christian direction.

Maier's perspective on the youth culture of the 1920s reflected the Synod's well-established concerns about youthful rebellion, particularly of suffragettes and affluent libertines against the work and values that sustained the Christian family. Like many of


his contemporaries, he decried everything that movies, critics, and magazines imagined
the flapper to be: “a scantily dressed, highly rouged, deeply whitened creature with
plucked eyebrows, shingled hair, and painted lips” who carried cigarettes and liquor on
her person and raced between social engagements to dance and pet in fast automobiles.
This image, which suggested both a fundamental change in women's character as well as
a general revolt of youth against taste and morals, indicated the worst of the possible
paths open to modern youth. Nonetheless, Maier also expressed confidence that the
typical “modern girl,” and certainly Lutheran girls, remained on the whole “sound,
sensible and sincere” people who eschewed these widely-publicized excesses.

Maier stressed that Lutheran young people had to guard against a more subtle
threat, “the tendency to make our young women masculine.” The entrance of women into
politics and a greater number of masculine professions since the recent world war were
developments that were fraught with dangerous cultural and social repercussions. Greater
socialization with men could easily result in young women taking on men's appearance or
manners and losing any sense of women's distinct, historic social role. The antidote to
this maldy among Lutheran women rested in girls consciously cultivating feminine
attributes that would continue to distinguish them from men. A central part of this self-
training would focus on remembering that training for wifehood and motherhood ought to
form the center of a young women's interests. “Amid all the cross currents into which the
complicated scheme of our modern existence carries her the Christian young woman
must remember that after serving her God, the duty of next importance is to prepare
herself for the founding and successful conducting of a Christian home,” he explained. In a post-suffrage, postwar world, a knowledge of home economics would bring greater rewards than time spent at the vanity or in political activity.

Articles driving home this message appeared regularly in the *Walther League Messenger* during the 1920s. As editor of the magazine, Maier produced several of his own articles on youth's preparation for marriage and included many pieces from other Synod leaders. Mother's Day inspired tributes to the influence of a mother's prayer, piety, and instruction, reminding readers that these activities formed the center of a godly woman's influence. “She is a Christian wife and Mother,” L. J. Sieck extolled in the issue of May 1929, “and this is the brightest jewel in her crown.” Other articles discussed the importance of the Christian home to the future of Lutheranism. Expressing a view commonly advanced by Synod leaders, W. H. T. Dau explained that the Christian home and the church were partner institutions that together bore the responsibility of protecting and training children and youth through the critical years of their development. “Our heavenly father wants the normal life of a young Christian to develop in the quiet and seclusion of his Christian home, under the guiding and guardian care of his church,” he explained in a series on the development of Christian character. “The domestic circle and the church people with whom he mingles are to the young Christian a sacred retreat.” He speculated that Jesus' boyhood conversation with the priests at the Temple may have

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been the only time that he had ever been beyond the safety of this sanctuary.\textsuperscript{26} An article on Martin Luther's wife, Katharina von Bora, championed early Lutheranism for rediscovering biblical teaching on the importance of the home and allowing Katherina to leave her unsatisfying life at her nunnery to care for a bustling household comprised of several children as well as her orphaned nieces and nephews.\textsuperscript{27} A booklet on Christian marriage originally written by former Walther League leader John Fritz in 1900 appeared as a series of nine articles that stressed the importance of marriage to “the being and well-being of man” and the importance of a Christian home to the rearing of children. Central to the home's success were young men and women who, besides sharing important likes and dislikes, possessed the qualities desirable to their success. Women who maintained good health and dressed “neatly” but without “becoming a fashion-plate” retained a timeless appeal to men. Like the tribute to women in Proverbs 31, she exemplified moral goodness, the fear of the Lord, industriousness, frugality, and other virtues that prospered her husband and benefited her children. Her husband should possess “manly qualities: a strong, sterling character, a healthy frame of body and mind, the ability to support a wife and children.”\textsuperscript{28}

Education and the mission field also merited the attention of Christian women—so long as they did not detract from the true Christian woman's motherly aspirations. The


\textsuperscript{27} O.C. Schroeder, “The 400\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary of a Happy Marriage,” \textit{Walther League Messenger} June 1925, 596-97.

Walther League Messenger encouraged women to seek education through the college level, arguing that academic preparation would provide the broad intellectual skills that would aid mothers in rearing their children and providing companionship and help to their husbands. Walther League material urged women to study the missions field and to consider service abroad, but in lines of service that were distinctly feminine. One of the only articles geared specifically to Lutheran women on the missions field urged educated Lutheran girls to consider working for Lutheran boarding schools in India. The article's author imagined that faithful young women with well-developed spiritual lives, bodies, and minds would excel in instructing younger women coverts. Christian girls faced impossible challenges in their home villages, the article explained, but instruction from mature Christian women would protect them and prepare them to serve God.

Predictably, Maier was eager to ensure that Lutheran women would not allow vocational aspirations to compete with their commitment to motherhood. In an article titled “Cradles or Careers,” Maier expressed disapproval at the fact that a recent magazine contest soliciting suggestions for the nation's most accomplished woman drew mainly nominations for prominent women's rights advocates, scientists, novelists, and social reformers. Nine-tenths of these women were “not known especially for their home lives and for the careers as wives and mothers, but are women who have attained their reputation through public life or through their own independent efforts in some sphere of activity which is in no way associated with the home or family life.” Maier proceeded to stress the importance of accomplished mothers and warned young women that any

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29 “Let's Measure our Heads!” Walther League Messenger August/September 1926, 10-11, 56-57.

pursuit of a career after marriage would imperil the happiness of her marriage and her influence as a mother. A second article on wifely responsibility, “The Delicatessen Danger,” disparaged women's strategies to reduce the burden of childbearing and housework. Birth control, Maier stressed, was the enemy of the Christian family; when couples purposely limited the size of their families, they also denied themselves the joy and the social contribution they might have enjoyed if they had allowed themselves a larger brood. Likewise, Maier viewed the growing volume of restaurant patronage and bakery sales as disturbing evidence that women were losing their esteem and skills for the domestic arts of “baking, cooking, and dish-washing.” The wide employment of laundresses and housekeepers demonstrated that too many women hoped to escape from the basic requirements of housekeeping. This evasion of responsibility was no trivial matter: Maier thought that a woman's dedication to the little details of the family's material needs sustained its comfort and health. The mother's efforts also helped to center the attentions of the entire family on the home and fostered an intimate family life. If she scattered her attention in many directions, this intimacy would be lost. Divorce seemed the likely outcome.31

**Ideal Mothers: Women in Obedience to God's Pattern**

While denominational literature tried to offer young women ideal models on which to pattern their aspirations and behavior, the evangelists and pastors who made up

the core leadership of the interdenominational fundamentalist and Pentecostal movements urged Christian women to distinguish themselves from their unbelieving peers by excelling them in their commitment to motherhood.

For revivalists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the vast social changes of their generation often conjured fears that women were flagging in their commitment to motherhood. They were particularly concerned that growing affluence and popular amusements carried women to distraction and self-indulgence. Billy Sunday, easily the most prominent evangelist during the first few decades of the twentieth century, sounded the typical note of alarm when he blamed mothers for the failure of the nation's morals. All too often, he warned, young women guilty of flirting, dancing, or rushing to marriage fell victim to life with “some cigarette-smoking, cursing, damnable libertine.” Even worse, she cast aside all thoughts of motherhood, kept company with men of low character, and indulged in so many trivial activities that she became no more than “a matinée-gadder and fudge-eater.” Frivolous mothers, in turn, raised criminals rather than children. “Who is more to blame for the crowded prisons than mothers?” he asked. “Who is more to blame for the crowded disreputable houses than you are, who let your children gad the streets?” Divine judgment would follow on the heels of such failure: “What do you think God will do if a mother fails? I stagger under it.” So would the nation, because it depended upon worthy women to serve as its “rampart wall.” Sunday urged women to
recognize these realities and rededicate themselves to motherhood. “All great women,” he explained, “are satisfied with their common sphere in life and think it is enough to fill the lot God gave them in this world as a wife and mother.”

Fundamentalist pastors in the 1920s and 1930s followed the men of Sunday's generation in calling upon women to uphold their duties at home. W. O. H. Garman was a pastor to several United Presbyterian churches during the 1920s before leaving to join the Bible Presbyterian Church and begin a forty-three-year pastorate at Callendar Memorial Church in Wilkensburg, Pennsylvania. He also used Mother's Day as an occasion to comment on the state of American womanhood. When he turned to the topic, his view of women's suffrage was unclear from his outlines—but his concern that women might abandon motherhood and morality was impossible to miss. In his outline for a sermon on the history of women, Garman wrote, “We are witnessing a movement among women today which is one of the most remarkable phenomenon in the history of mankind. It began with a world wide spontaneous aim for the universal right to vote,” Garman recorded. Women's future roles, the outline indicated, were going to rest “Primarily in the Home” but also included “Politics” and “Social Reform.” However, Garman was far more concerned about the negative social effects of this shift than he was about its possibilities. He argued that suffrage had turned women into competitors with men and could result in them being pressed into military service, both results that Garman considered unacceptable. Garman planned to conclude the sermon with the warning, “Don't go too far and lose all independence, honor, respect, But continue so to live that all

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32 Quotes are drawn from two sermons of Billy Sunday's, “A Clean Man on Social Sins” and “Help Those Women” as recorded in William Ellis, “Billy” Sunday: The Man and His Message (L.T. Myers, 1914), 202-248. For the quoted phrases, see pp. 228, 243-44.
races can stand up and call you blessed.” Feminists, his 1929 and 1930 Mother's Day sermons stressed, were “going too far in what they call their rights.” Years later, he tucked an article on India into one of his sermon outlines. He underlined a single phrase in the article's text: “nearly all women when they took to politics become extremists.”  

Responding to these dangers, Garman drew a sharp contrast between American culture and God's ideals. He complained that women had rushed to adopt all of men's vices—smoking, drinking, carousing, gambling, chewing tobacco, immodesty, and swearing. Worse, many women had rejected the responsibilities of motherhood, a decision that Garman felt disqualified them from the respect ordinarily due to women. Christian women, however, were called to another kind of life. They were to become “true mothers” who displayed unselfishness, modesty, temperance, purity, sincerity, love, industry, and concern for their children's welfare. Such women would strive to create Christian homes that worshiped God and honored God's precepts. The influence of such homes could alone stem the tide of lawlessness and crime. Even revivals depended on them. “The Great Revivals of the kind Billy Sunday superintended will not come again to this apostate age,” Garman predicted, “unless we have a revival of the Christian home.” “Young women, especially young married women, the world today needs badly, very badly, millions of ardent Xian mothers like those of the past. This is our very great need at this present moment and unless they are forthcoming our own future looks helpless.”

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Pentecostal leaders joined their fundamentalist peers in expressing concern that modern women would eschew both the high calling of Christian holiness and dedication to the Christian home. Like fundamentalists, they found no symbol more powerful for depicting the potential fall of modern women away from virtue than the flapper. Pentecostal observers invoked the specter of the flapper, even long after her heyday, as the epitome of modern women's alleged pursuit of wealth, beauty, pleasure, and social success at the expense of modesty and holiness. Here, writers of sermons and editorials were sure, was a woman to whom rights and ambitions meant everything, and piety nothing. An editorial in the *Pentecostal Evangel* noted that the flapper's famed attraction to cigarettes rendered her a consumer of deadly pleasures that cost her “ten times as much as . . . Christians give for the great task of world evangelism.” An address given by Pentecostal missionary N. Moomau in 1923 viewed idolatry to “the god of fashion” as a feature of “this wicked and adulterous generation.” In her estimation, Christian women in “low-necked blouses and short skirts who look like the modern flapper” were forgetting the admonition in I Timothy 2:9-10 to wear only modest apparel. Ernest Williams, another leader in the Assemblies of God, contrasted worship “in spirit and in truth”—a value exemplified in the heartfelt singing of “an old well-worn gospel hymn”—to “the flapper's class of music doggerel.” In another article, Williams reminded Pentecostals that the Apostle Paul “warned against those who sought to glory in the flesh.” The pride reflected by flamboyant or immodest clothing, reflected an unsanctified heart; conversely, “he who has the inward marks of the Lord Jesus, is not going to dress or act like a dude

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or a flapper.” Pastor W. T. Gaston agreed, stressing that the Spirit-filled, sanctified church, the bride of Christ, would meet her husband clothed in virtues far removed from the values of modern society. “I cannot believe that the Lord, who is the world's most ardent lover, is coming for a sub-normal, vain, lukewarm, pleasure-loving, power-denying, world-courting, ultra-modern flapper for His bride.”

The flapper not only represented the worldliness from which all believers ought to flee, but also the great need of her more responsible sisters to restore the power and influence of the Christian home. According to William Hogg, whose sermon was reprinted in the *Latter Rain Evangel* in 1931, “Modern Theological Criticism, reacting against the standards of yesterday, accompanied by Worldliness and Atheism” had destroyed the “old fashioned family altar” in many homes. Just as in the days of Hezekiah, God's people had unwisely allowed unsavory visitors to penetrate the sanctum of their homes, survey the extent of their precious treasures, and as a result had lost their children to invaders. A new breed of man and woman exemplified this modern loss of faith: the father whose pursuit of wealth caused him to abandon his children and to neglect family worship, and the indifferent “flapper mother.” Like her modern husband, she neglected religion and pursued worldly goals. Her home floundered due to her neglect and her lack of spiritual vision. “Flapper mothers make flapper homes,” he warned. “No flapper mother of modern society and the business world will ever get a grip on her child's heart like that old-fashioned mother who prayed with her children.”

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“old-fashioned home” had been rich in spirit and often modest in means; moderns had reversed the equation, preferring transient pleasure to the cultivation of spiritual values. Recalling his own roots, Hogg charged, “I know you modernists will laugh at the old tin tub in which the youngsters took their Saturday night bath. . . . I am sure many will smile when I tell you we did not have any plumbing or modern bathroom fixtures.” Hogg returned the favor by condemning these scoffers for their empty lives.36

Fundamentalists who called for the revival of Christian parenthood, and motherhood in particular, likewise identified the home as one of the last remaining institutions capable of promoting holiness available to God's beleaguered church. Writing two years after the devastating denominational battles and the Scopes Trial, Rev. Lynn F. Ross explained that “the mother of 1927 must face problems which her mother did not face, situations her mother did not know of. Numerous things antagonistic to the Christian home are abroad in this land.” Sabbath-breaking, sensational press stories, the decline of the family altar, and attacks on the Bible by Christianity's own ministers all made the mother's task more difficult. The mother's role therefore became more difficult and more essential; the defense of young women's purity and the opposition to the forces that threatened to corrupt the faith and morals of her children would render her invaluable aid.37 In these circumstances, God's promises to families appealed to fundamentalists as much as to Pentecostals. “It is the Christian home that is the hope of the world,” J. C. K. McLure proclaimed before attendees at the Northfield Young Women's Conference in 1915. The believer who wished to carry the vital faith he acquired from his personal


conversion into effective, practical service could find no more important area of concern than his family. “Like Abraham, each of us must first come straight to God, realizing Who He is and what He wishes of us, and must give ourself as an individual to His will,” McLure explained. It was Abraham's subsequent success in passing his faith down to his progeny that God's message was preserved and Abraham was remembered as the father of Christians, Jews, and Muslims. The burden on the modern individual was identical. “Only as your homes are godlike and are continued godlike from generation to generation,” McLure pressed, “will the work that Abraham started be carried out into the world.”

An article addressed to fathers ran similarly. “The Christian home is the unit in the earthly development of the Kingdom of God among men. Out from these Christian homes, blessed by Christian fathers and mothers, go out Christian sons and daughters to establish other Christian homes, to the glory of God and the spiritual and eternal welfare of generations yet unborn.”

Consistent with this view of the home's potential contribution, editorials, Sunday school lessons, and advice columns alike touted the family and the home their “immeasurable importance and influence for good.”

**The Ideal Meets the Real**

Prescriptive literature presents the idealized picture of women that denominational leaders, pastors, and official publications wanted to promote. A gap between such standards and the actual feelings of women can be assumed. The content of prescriptive

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39 “Fathers and Sons,” *Herald and Presbyter* March 5, 1919, 1.

40 “The Blessed Family,” *Herald and Presbyter* June 16, 1920, 19
literature therefore raises a necessary question of whether and how these ideas were lived out by women who participated in conservative Protestant churches, especially those conservative Protestant movements that placed great value on evangelism, church service, and religious experience for both sexes. The answer to this question was, of course, as diverse as women's individual lives and subjectivities, which were subject to the numerous factors of personality, economics, geography, local church teaching, education, and family history. Nonetheless, the implication of these beliefs for particular women, especially for those who became well-known leaders and examples of conservative Protestant womanhood in their own right, can illustrate the paths that conservative Protestant religious service and concern for motherhood offered to accomplished women. To gauge the life patterns that conservative Protestants commonly accepted and that prominent women themselves promoted, I turn to four examples: fundamentalists Helen Sunday, Grace Fuller, and Henrietta Mears, and Pentecostal Alice Reynolds Flower.

Helen Sunday

The lives of Helen Sunday (1868-1957) and Grace Payton Fuller (1886-1966) illustrate the importance that motherhood, wifehood, and support for male clerical authority held for married fundamentalist women. Their education and skills suited them as well as anyone else in their generation to press the limits of what a woman's “sphere” or role might encompass, a fact that makes the life courses they chose illustrative of the opportunities and limitations they encountered. Although separated by a generation, both adopted a common life pattern of marrying men who went into ministry and acting as
wives, mothers, and vital components of their husbands' ministries. These roles placed them under male authority and within a primary role that was clearly domestic, while still offering them opportunities to exercise their own skills in practical ministry—and, in the process, leading them to embrace and to promote the idea that a woman's proper place was in a domestic and supportive role.

The older of the two, Helen Sunday, came of age in an environment in which northern, middle-class Americans took a “separate spheres” model of gender roles for granted. Her aspiration to obtain a college education was therefore a source of disagreement within her family. By the 1880s college had become an increasingly common option for middle-class women, but Helen's mother did not feel that advanced study was appropriate. However, she was overruled by Helen's father, a businessman who thought that her abilities warranted sending her to business college. Over the course of Helen's life, she would embrace a domestic role and make extensive use of her administrative skills, largely as the emotional and organizational pillar upholding her future husband's public ministry.

Helen was a young, college-educated woman when she met Billy Sunday in 1888, just as he was concluding his career as a minor league baseball player and planning to enter the ministry. Billy was smitten from the first time he met Helen at her family's Presbyterian church, and Helen saw in her Billy a passion for her faith. The discovery of their mutual attraction led Helen to press her father to agree to her marriage. This decision, Helen surely understood, meant that she was accepting the role of a pastor's wife, with the domestic and communal responsibilities that came with it.
Soon it would come to mean an even larger role than Helen had anticipated. Within a few years of taking up evangelistic work, Billy Sunday was emerging as the nation's best-known evangelist for “old-time religion” and social ideals. Consistent with Billy's frequent critiques of drink, immorality, godlessness, and unmotherly women, his young wife at first took up the traditional role of keeper of the home during her husband's extended evangelistic campaigns. However, long, solitary journeys away from home took their toll on Billy. He sent tortured letters home expressing his loneliness, and soon the couple resolved to travel together. During the school year, the Sundays left their four children in the care of hired help and boarding schools in order to make it possible for Helen to accompany her husband on his tours. While Billy focused on calling souls to receive Christ, Helen supplied him with companionship and employed her vast administrative skills to handle his voluminous correspondence and plan future evangelistic campaigns. These actions may have seemed out of sync with Billy's instruction to Christian mothers to direct their energies toward forming the character of their children. But if they did, Helen's ability to support her husband and to further his dramatically successful soul-saving ministry eliminated the fear that her labor subverted his authority or contradicted God's will.\(^{41}\)

Billy's fame provided Helen not only with a large role in running the practical details of his evangelistic campaigns but with a soapbox of her own. In 1916 and 1917 the Bell Syndicate offered Helen the opportunity to distribute her opinions in “Ma Sunday's Column,” which the Syndicate published in its newspapers. She chose to use the opportunity to address the question of women's roles in modern America—indirectly.

\(^{41}\) Dorset, 81-89, 100, 104-07.
Helen was actually not the author; she hired a man, Hugh Weir, to ghostwrite it. It is impossible to know whether Helen wrote any of the material herself. She did, however, approve of the content of the columns enough to consider turning them into a book, the drafts of which she titled, *Book to the Women of America.*

It is telling that the ghost-written “Ma Sunday” offered praise to American women who, like her, sought an education and a wider sphere of usefulness. She affirmed the wider participation of women in the workforce and the desires of modern girls for a fulfilling life. She urged readers to recognize the hard work of waitresses, would-be college students, and young workers. She praised war nurses and ambulance drivers, celebrated the conversion of high-society “butterfly” girls into patriotic wartime volunteers, and proclaimed that the Great War had finally helped women to escape from the “dollhouse.” She vindicated the desires of young runaways who slipped silently from homes that lacked “an atmosphere of helpful, sympathetic understanding, where her spirit can develop.” Further, she defined a poor atmosphere in terms that modern girls would have recognized: it was one that denied girls the independence and recreational freedom that many young women were beginning to expect. She offered two examples. In one, parents required their daughter to work in the family’s store with no compensation; in the second, parents neglected to supply their daughter with even a modest amount of spending money, a privilege all her friends enjoyed. Given these circumstances, Ma Sunday did not fault either daughter for desiring a life of her own. In one case, Ma Sunday even tipped her hat to married women who worked. After indulgently reprinting

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42 Bell Syndicate to Hugh Weir, Box 2:25, Papers of William Ashley “Billy” Sunday and Helen Amelia (Thompson) Sunday, Billy Graham Center Archives, Wheaton, IL.
the long, sad tale of a young wife who returned to her job as a store manager in order to support her husband's proliferate spending, she revealed that the writer's later divorce had not been due to her toil outside the home. The true cause of the marriage's failure had been a lack of true sacrificial love between husband and wife.

However, most of the time "Ma Sunday" praised women who adopted classic feminine roles and qualities, and she stressed the danger that modern cities and their values posed to unrealistic young women. Her highest praises went not to dream-seekers but mothers who sent sons to France and to old-fashioned, self-sacrificing women who traded educations, health, and even offers of marriage in order to care for others. An unpublished draft about a successful businesswoman noted, but did not dwell on, the fact that she been "proving feminine ability in a new field of work, up to ten years ago given exclusively to masculine alertness and aggressiveness." "The fact of her profession," the draft asserted, did not make her memorable; rather, it was her cheerful disposition and mastery of the art of delivering a feminine and persuasive smile. "Ma Sunday's Column" was also full of warnings about the downfall of modern women who became entwined in the work and social world of urban America. One column warned that too many girls discarded the wise advice of mothers against the new generation's fondness of mixing in public with strange men. Other columns warned that modern magazines planted fantasies of fame, fortune, and fashion in young women's minds, driving them to work in the city.
and sometimes even to prostitution. Many others dwelt on the consequences of vice and bad habits. These warnings were so frequent that Bell Syndicate requested more uplifting content.\textsuperscript{43}

If Helen came across as too negative to readers of the Bell Syndicate, the recommendations that “Ma Sunday” offered to readers of her column paid off, at least in Helen Sunday's case. The exceptional career Helen built on the foundations of her role as mother and wife to one of America's most important religious celebrities made her not only an important part of Billy's ministry but also enabled her to emerge as a prominent personality in her own right. Following Billy's death in 1935, other prominent fundamentalists regarded Helen Sunday as Billy Sunday's widow, the living representative of Billy's legacy and ministry. Helen continued her husband's work until her own death in 1948, giving evangelistic messages, holding fund-raisers, and offering her testimony at numerous evangelistic campaigns. By this means, she was able to witness the rise of a new generation of evangelists in the 1940s, Billy Graham most prominent among them. With great enthusiasm, she symbolically passed Billy's torch to this cadre of leaders by speaking at their early evangelistic meetings. Helen regarded Billy Sunday's work, and the work of those who carried forward fundamentalism's evangelistic spirit, as the face of the movement. She regarded her own role in its story as important, but more limited. In her last interview, she explained:

I'm so glad that young men like Billy Graham, Merv Rosell, Jack Schuler, Jimmy Johnson, and, oh, a whole lot of others that I can't mention right

\textsuperscript{43} “Ma Sunday's Column,” Box 2:25, 11:3, 11:5, Papers of William Ashley “Billy” Sunday and Helen Amelia (Thompson) Sunday.
now, are on the job, night and day, out preaching God's blessed Word and
giving out the invitation to come and accept him. And I'm glad God has let
me do my little here and there.  44

Grace Fuller

Born a generation later, Grace Payton became nationally known as the wife of
California evangelist Charles Fuller and the owner of the feminine voice that graced his
radio ministry, Old-Fashioned Revival Hour. Like Helen Sunday, Grace inherited the
privilege and social expectation that came with birth into the prosperous American
middle class. The only child of a physician, she attended Cumnock School of Expression
in 1906 to study dramas and diction, Western College for Women in 1907, and the
University of Chicago in 1908. She would have completed her bachelor's degree had her
father not died in 1909, causing her to return to California. Whatever life plans Grace
imagined for herself in high school and college, her coursework in diction foreshadowed
her later role in her husband's radio ministry.  45

At first, the Fullers established a typical middle-class pattern of home life in
which Charles worked in business and later ministry, while Grace assumed the role of a
homemaker and evangelist’s wife. When Grace and Charles married in 1911, Charles was
working in his father's orange-growing business. In 1916 a sermon by evangelist Paul
Radar convinced Charles to recommit his life to God and brought his mind back to
adolescent dreams of becoming a pastor or missionary. As a result, he enrolled in the

44 Helen Sunday's last interview, quoted in Lyle Dorset, 160.

45 Wilbur Smith, A Voice for God: The Life of Charles E. Fuller, Originator of the Old-Fashioned
Revival Hour (Boston: W.A. Wilde Company, 1949), 58-73.
Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA) in 1919 and was ordained as a Baptist pastor in 1925. That same year, he became a father to baby Daniel Fuller and the pastor of Calvary Church in Placenta, California.

Over the next decade Grace's attentions were focused on her role as a mother who hoped to rear a son who would one day take up his father's dedication to spreading the gospel. Perhaps the roots of this sense of mission grew from Grace's own family history. Her papers contain notes on her family's history, including the story of how her grandmother, Elizabeth Payton, a little woman not over 96 pounds, braved the frontier and gave birth to several children. This legacy provided Grace with a familial link to forerunners who, at least in memory, had persevered in adversity and trusted their children to God. Grace kept a poem that her grandmother copied onto a piece of purple columbine stationary in 1882: “Lead them my God to thee/those Children Dear of mine/thou gavest me/And may they be/thine forever.”

Living women also influenced Grace’s perceptions of her life mission. When Grace embraced her grandmother’s dedication to rear godly children, she also did so with the praise and encouragement of her friend and spiritual mentor, Leonora “Barney” Barnhill. Writing to Charles and Grace on their wedding day, Barnhill expressed her hope and confidence that both possessed “such high ideals of home life” that they would learn to overcome difficulties and provide “uplift” to the “less fortunate.” In Barnhill's estimation, bestowing that blessing clearly included guiding Daniel, the Fuller's only son, to a life of Christian service. After Daniel's birth in 1925 Barney again wrote to predict

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46 Unnamed poem handwritten at Drain, Oregon by Mrs. Daniel Fuller, Jan. 20, 1882, Series I:1, Box 6:3, Charles E. Fuller Collection, David du Plessis Archive, Pasadena, CA.

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great things of the Fuller household: “We are rejoicing over the safe arrival of
'Daniel'. . . We are all expecting great things of him. He sure will be a soul saver for the
master. I don't see how it could be otherwise.”47 Grace clearly came to agree with this
sentiment, for Daniel became the subject of Grace's ongoing prayers. Her journals, which
consist largely of notes about major topics for which she prayed, dwell on the Fuller's
Depression-era financial troubles and Daniel's personal development, particularly during
his college years. At times, she also examined herself for worthy wifely and motherly
attributes. For Grace, this quest mixed personal submission to God and the taming of
personal “aggressiveness” in the name of achieving a nurturing personality. As she
recorded in her journal on January 14, 1935:

    My prayer . . . That I may die to self, and that the Holy Spirit may
dominate my life—that because of this my life may be fragrant for him. . . .
    That I may be given an understanding heart—especially toward my child—that I, who am naturally aggressive and sometimes harsh, may be
gentle and yielded.

    "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."
    Oh! that the above might be said of me! 48

As young Daniel Fuller entered his teenage years and the nation reeled from the
Depression, a new aim complemented Grace’s dedication to her spiritual life and her
family. Her husband's ministry was growing and increasingly enlisting Grace’s aid. In
1934 Charles Fuller’s early labors as a pastor and evangelist culminated in his decision to
begin a national radio ministry, Old-Fashioned Revival Hour. The program transported

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47 Leonora Barnhill to Grace Payton Fuller, 1911, Series I:1, Box 6:36, Charles E. Fuller Collection; Leonora Barnhill to Grace Payton Fuller, 1925, Series I:1, Box 6:36, Charles E. Fuller Collection.

Grace from her former role as a mother and pastor's wife to Charles' administrative assistant and partner on the air. Charles preached; Grace proofread, reviewed some of the hundreds of letters the ministry received each week, and chose selections to read over the airwaves.

In the radio personas of Charles and Grace Fuller, radio listeners received a portrait of the gendered aspects of fundamentalist piety in microcosm. Charles preached from the Bible and exercised the voice of authority; Grace handled the relational task of reading from letters and making *Old-Fashioned Revival Hour* seem more like a warm family. Listeners often addressed their mail to “Rev. and Mrs. Fuller,” rather than to Charles Fuller alone. Listeners also made it clear that they expected Grace to model effective—and submissive—Christian wifehood. Mrs. F. C. Maier of Circle, Montana wrote: “My dear Mrs. Fuller it is a true saying that [in] back of every great man is a great woman. . . . Mrs. Fuller only heaven will reveal what Dr. Fuller has been enabled to do, because he had you as a wife. . . . You are a leader to the rest of us women as wives.”

Another listener, Norman Cornelius, wrote to express his disapproval of a broadcast in which he felt Grace had stepped out of her proper role. In the broadcast in question, Grace had declined Charles' request that she sing with him on the air. If she planned to participate in Charles’ ministry, he explained, then she ought to adopt a more biblical attitude. “I always liked to listen to your program on the air,” Norman Cornelius began, “but felt so sick when your wife disappointed you when you asked her to sing with you. . . . I love to hear her letters but she must obey her husband too.”

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49 Mrs. F. C. Masser to Dr. and Mrs. Charles Fuller, June 22, 1950; Series II: 4, Charles E. Fuller Collection; Norman Cornelius to Charles Fuller, n.d, Series II: 4, Charles E. Fuller Collection.
If exceptional, Grace Fuller’s life, like that of Helen Sunday, exemplified one of the pathways open to fundamentalist women who tried to live out their Christian commitments to personal holiness and the spread of the gospel. Both became particularly famous examples of women who followed the ideal of marriage, motherhood, and ministry. Their responsibilities in ministry emerged from their roles as wives to pastors and evangelists, and their visibility to millions of fellow Americans came to them because their husbands became important personalities in the fundamentalist movement.

But not all women marry.

*Henrietta Mears*

Henrietta Mears followed the other major path open to women: education and employment in the work of a fundamentalist church. Like Sunday and Fuller, Mears took advantage of access to both a high school and college education, academic training which allowed her to begin her lifelong career as an educator. What set her on a different path may have been a personal call to ministry, which Mears received while still a child. Mears also descended from a family with a history not only of female piety but also of women who had remained spinsters. As a single woman in ministry, Mears accepted and excelled in filling those roles that fundamentalist churches readily accepted for unordained women. Although neither a wife nor a mother, she presented herself and was accepted by students as a mother-figure who exemplified fundamentalist piety and cajoled them into greater commitment to Christian service—service consistent with their respective gender roles.
Born in 1890 to Elisha Ashley Mears, a lawyer, and Margaret Burtis Everts Mears, the descendant of a line of ministers and devoted Christian women, Henrietta followed her predecessors to Christian commitment and intellectual attainment. She adopted her parent's faith at the age of seven and demonstrated it by joining her family's church, First Baptist Church in Minneapolis. As a teenager, she pledged to enter Christian service. The pastor of First Baptist was fundamentalist leader William Bell Riley, whose efforts to oppose “modernism” within the Northern Baptist Convention made him the patriarch of an extended circle of fundamentalist Baptist pastors; Mears' early commitment therefore guided her into the ranks of the budding fundamentalist movement.  

Her path into service came through education. She completed a bachelor's degree at the University of Minnesota in 1913 and for several years afterward taught high school chemistry and volunteered in church Sunday schools. In 1927 Stewart P. MacLennan hired her as the full-time Sunday school director at Hollywood Presbyterian Church in California, where her energies were consumed in the project of turning Hollywood's Sunday schools into a striking success. Between 1928 and 1930 alone she grew Sunday school enrollment from 450 to 4200. And burgeoning enrollment figures were not her only feat. Under her guidance, Hollywood's youth and college ministries turned out dozens of budding ministers, minister's wives, and missionaries, many of whom she counseled, inspired, and occasionally pressured into considering full-time Christian service. She also masterminded a highly structured and efficient method of running the church's Sunday school program. When she grew dissatisfied with the liberal content of

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many available teaching aids, she wrote and published a Sunday school curriculum. The materials become so popular that she founded Sonlight Publications, which became the nation's fourth largest publisher of Sunday school curricula, to distribute them.  

Mears' role as a Christian leader dovetailed with the fundamentalist requirements of her gender. Mears remained single, thereby avoiding tensions between her ministry and her feminine responsibilities. Intentionally or unintentionally, she and her sister Margaret followed a model like that of her paternal great-aunts, spinsters who lived together for most of their lives. Though Henrietta dated as a young woman and often professed to want a family, there is little evidence that she encouraged potential suitors. Until her death in 1951, Margaret devoted herself to supporting Henrietta in her Christian work and to her own full-time employment in business.

Although neither made marriage and motherhood the center of their lives, Henrietta and Margaret acted in ways that reassured other fundamentalists that they valued home and motherhood. Barbara Powers, Mear's friend and biographer, noted that Henrietta paid meticulous attention to her home, a sizable abode in Hollywood that she carefully decorated with art acquired on her travels. “Miss Mears feels that the home should have great spiritual significance,” Powers observed. Following the lead of “her mother, her grandmother, and her great-grandmother,” Mears understood that “When a

51 Roe, 89-90, 91-95, 98-114, 132-149, 154-169, 196-224.
52 Roe, 54; 84-85.
person has been in your home and eaten at your table, he feels a close bond with you; he feels as though he really knows you.” Old-fashioned hospitality laid the foundation for ministry.53

Even outside her home, Mears understood her ministry to be a form of mothering. In place of producing flesh-and-blood children, her work centered on her propagation of a large family of spiritual offspring whom she called her sons and daughters. As ministers, minister's wives, and missionaries, they spread over the globe, and Mears happily traversed that same globe to visit them. Each one she swayed not with masculine authority but rather—like the fundamentalist ideal for mothers—by her persuasion, exhortation, and continual example. Seeking to model her own, deeply pious mother, Mears emphasized that she drew her power from a life of constant submission to God's will. Speaking about her distress following her mothers death, she shared:

I felt absolutely powerless from the thought that I could possibly live up to what my mother had been and had done, and I prayed that if God had anything for me to do that He would supply the power. I read my Bible for every reference to the Holy Spirit and his power. The greatest realization came to me when I saw that there was nothing I had to do to receive His power but to submit to Christ, allow him to control me.

I had been trying to do everything myself; now I let Christ control me completely.54

In turn, she encouraged her students to follow her example in surrendering completely to God. Her students reported that beneath Mears' oversized hats lay an uncanny knack for asking pointed questions, pushing promising students into positions of responsibility, and eliciting commitments to Christian service. Her leadership proved both informal and


54 Henrietta Mears, quoted in Roe, 74.
forceful. One student cheerfully complained, “She ruined my life! She gave me such a high standard of spiritual perfection and performance to maintain that my life will be ruined trying to keep up with it.” Despite Mears’ clear force of will, she did not claim authority so much as she did a right to be heard based on her own experience, knowledge, and acquired wisdom. She wanted to be known as one thing: “Teacher,” and that was what many of her students called her.56

For Mears, there was little need to go beyond these channels of influence, and consequently clerical and political authority were not questions that concerned her. “Miss Henrietta Mears lives in five directions at once, and in seven on Sunday,” Powers noted. With such weighty tasks on her shoulders already, it was therefore easy for Mears to abstain from cultivating, as Powers understood it, “any aspirations to occupy the pulpit as a preacher or minister.” On the contrary, “She has always felt that her place, as a woman, was in the ministry of teaching.” To reject such a principle would have meant not only a lapse in her commitment to Scripture but also the erosion of Mears' main source of significance and authority. Only as a teacher with a clear commitment to the truth of the Bible could she hope to enjoy the adulation and influence she received. And in Henrietta's mind, Scripture lay out separate roles for the sexes.57

Consistent with her convictions on Scripture and gender roles, Mears shied away from cultivating female leaders who would follow her own life pattern. When young women announced they wanted to emulate her life as a single woman committed to

55 Unnamed student quoted in Powers, 9-10.

56 Powers, 19-24, 50-51, 67-81; Roe, 152-54, 172-94.

57 Powers, 53-54, 58-59; Roe, 152.
Christian service, she informed them that God intended most Christians to marry. Meanwhile, she labored to ensure that the men they married became church leaders. Recognizing that young women were usually more willing to become involved in church ministry than were young men, she strove to involve men on at least a 50/50 basis and paid special attention to cultivating them for leadership. “We . . . need to find men who will dare to be true to the calling of Christ, need men who will build an empire for God,” she urged. “There will always be enough work for the women to do so long as we follow in their steps.”

_Alice Reynolds Flower_

Alice Reynolds Flower's life and testimony exemplify the power of a similar allegiance to human life and church ministry among Pentecostal women. However, different factors shaped Flower's own life path and ministry. As a young woman, Alice did not enjoy the financial benefits of Grace Fuller, Helen Sunday, or Henrietta Mears, all of whom hailed from upper-middle-class families, nor did she pursue a college education. That difference reflected a general, but not universal, gap in social class between the leadership of the fundamentalist movement, whose leadership often expressed northern, middle-class social values, and the Pentecostal movement, which drew many of its members from both the working and middle classes. But like Helen Sunday and Grace Fuller, she also married a pastor and built her own life around motherhood and ministry. In their respective roles, the Flowers did not become nearly as famous as the Sundays or Fullers, but Roswell Flower did become the editor of the influential _Pentecostal Evangel_.

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58 Henrietta Mears, quoted in Powers, 135; Roe, 82.
and an important administrator in the Assemblies of God. Meanwhile, Alice reared six children, threw herself into local church ministry as opportunities arose, and became a prolific writer of poetry and essays about the Christian experience and the Christian home. This last topic drew some of her most passionate writing, particularly as the Flower brood grew in size and matured. Alice regarded the home as a sacred place in which God brought healing and redemption. To the usual conviction of her fundamentalist contemporaries that mothers had a special role to play in instructing children in the faith and modeling Christian piety, Alice added the specifically Pentecostal expectation that a spirit-baptized mother would model the necessity of continual fellowship with God, earnest prayer, and holy living, inviting the emulation of her children.

From her early years, Alice Reynolds experienced the pursuit of Christian holiness as a family affair that began with her mother's example and flowed out toward her husband and children. To recount her family's spiritual biography, Flowers often began with the experience of her mother, who had experienced a miraculous healing in 1882. As Alice later recounted events, her mother had been stricken with multiple stomach tumors while still a young wife and mother. Following the convention in Pentecostal healing narratives, when Alice recounted the story of her mother's illness, she stressed the severity of the illness: doctors, including experts from the Mayo clinic, did not expect her mother, Mary, to recover. After this grim prognosis, Mary later reported a surprising experience: while she lay in bed waiting to die, God spoke to her directly, telling her, “You're going to die, unless you take me.” Mary reported that she did not
understand what this command meant, until a Quaker neighbor arrived to pray with her. The kindly visitor asked permission to return with a Quaker minister called Brother Ramsey, who had a successful ministry of prayer for the sick. Brother Ramsay arrived and prayed for the languishing mother's recovery. The next day, he came to the conviction that she would be healed. Upon hearing this news, Mary took the report to heart. All her pain disappeared. She got out of bed, found herself completely healed, and began to praise God.\textsuperscript{59}

Bodily healing brought with it spiritual renewal: an intense piety expressed through a dedication to service and to living a holy life free of the amusements and vices of worldly society. Alice testified that her mother began to visit the residents of Indianapolis' poor neighborhoods to pray and bring donations of clothes and household items. She also immediately forsook all worldly amusements, a step that alienated her from relatives, friends, and (for a time) her husband. Alice recalled that this alienation forced her mother “to live in the Word. She didn't have anybody to go to. She was a like a lone pelican.”\textsuperscript{60} Soon, she was even without a church. Like Annie Bagley and other participants in the holiness movement before her, Mary felt compelled to share her testimony with anyone who would listen. Her audiences included a willing audience of curious visitors who inquired about her healing and a less willing audience at the Reynolds' Methodist Church. Troubled by the dissension that Mary's testimony caused, Mary's pastor asked her to cease telling her story. Mary did not regard silence as an

\textsuperscript{59} Transcript of taped interview with Alice Reynolds Flower, Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center Archives, Springfield, MO, 1-6.

\textsuperscript{60} Interview, 13.
option, so she quit the Methodist church. Only when a holiness church, a Christian and Missionary Alliance tabernacle, was founded in Indianapolis did she find people of like mind and heart.\textsuperscript{61}

However controversial her convictions, Mary's healing and spiritual metamorphosis brought about a transformation in the Reynolds' family life. Alice recalled that her mother's newfound devotion to God redoubled her dedication to her family. They also empowered her to model spiritual principles before her children. Most important, Alice explained, was her mother's establishment of a family altar. The daily practice of family worship was the one thing Alice regarded as most important to the success of family life, and she credited her mother for conducting it long before her father took any interest in the subject. “No cooperation from father at the start—a backslidden, birthright Quaker, who deliberately absented himself from these occasions—until one gracious morning when he turned his horse’s head homeward halfway to his office, and entering the house, joined the family circle at worship,” Alice later wrote. Once Mr. Reynolds resumed his proper place as spiritual head, Alice's mother restored proper order in the family by placing leadership of family worship in his hands. In Alice's recounting of family history, however, it would always be her mother who loomed as the family's spiritual giant. “I can remember right now going down the hall, when I thought she was gone out of the house,” Alice later recalled about her mother, “and I'd hear her weeping and I'd hear a low voice in prayer. I even heard her on one occasion, 'Lord, lay your hand on my Alice, lay your hand on my Alice.'” Predictably, it was Alice's mother who began attending Pentecostal meetings when news of the Azusa Street revivals reached

\textsuperscript{61} Interview, 6-14.
Indianapolis and led to the establishment of a Pentecostal Apostolic Mission in 1907. Despite being burdened with schoolwork, Alice eventually followed her there. “It came just like a voice strong to my heart, 'Go with your mother today and you will receive a blessing,’” she recalled. Alice put aside her original plans and attended a Pentecostal meeting for the first time.  

With this decision, Alice's spiritual destiny as a Pentecostal leader and hallowed mother was sealed. At the meeting, Alice recalled, she prayed for the baptism of the Holy Ghost and “the power of God struck me for the first time in my life and I was down on the floor. And then it was just like a shining road of glory for my soul right up into the presence of the Lord and the flowing of his love was just coming in.” The gift of tongues followed, and a reporter observed that “Sister Alice” was laying prostrate surrounded by members of the city's new “strange sect,” both speaking and interpreting tongues. Like her mother, Alice was soon being guided by an overwhelming thirst to speak and act on her apparently miraculous religious experiences. Nine days later, the Indianapolis papers portrayed young Alice Reynolds as a leading feature of the unusual services conducted by the “Apostolic Christians,” testifying that her second baptism had caused her to repent of her idolization of books and education and demonstrating her newfound ability. “When Sister Alice, aged 16, whose manipulation of the strange tongue

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62 Interview, 9-11, 20; The Business of Coat-Making, 6-7.
63 Interview, 18.
64 “Stutterer Speaks at 'Glug' Service,” Indianapolis Morning Star April 18, 1907, 13.
is really a feature of the meetings, rose there was a craning of necks,” the article related. “Some rose to chairs, and, as a veritable flood of strange syllables fell from her lips in shrill, soft or vehement tones, many climbed onto their seats.”65

The reading public were not the only ones noting the behavior of the Reynolds girl. So were George Lorenzo and Bethia Rice Flower, both longtime participants in the holiness movement and enthusiastic believers in the Pentecostal awakening. They later remembered that they had agreed, “Oh, wouldn't it be wonderful if God would give Roswell, our son, a girl like that, a young woman like that for his wife.” Perhaps George and Bethia dropped hints, because when their son Roswell appeared at the meetings and also received the Pentecostal blessing, Alice made the acquaintance of the man who would soon become her husband. Their marriage again brought the Pentecostal revival into the newspapers. On June 1, 1911, the Indianapolis News reported that the young evangelist, Roswell Flower, had applied for his marriage license. When asked to explain his means of support, he answered the question by quoting Philippians 4:19: “But my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Together, the couple became important figures in Pentecostalism. Originally a student of law, Roswell broke off his studies to became a pastor in the emerging networks that grew into the Assemblies of God. He subsequently started the national paper of the denomination, the Pentecostal Evangel, and served in a number of administrative and pastoral positions.66

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65 “Tongues Crush Idols,” Indianapolis Morning Star April 26, 1907, 5.


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While Roswell Flower helped to build Pentecostalism's largest denomination, Alice Reynolds Flower became the mother of six children as well as an inspirational writer whose poems and devotional writing extolled the importance of Pentecostal experience, motherhood, and Christian home life. The family altar became a point of special emphasis both in the Flowers' home life and in Alice's writing. Alice recalled that after she and Roswell were married, “the very first night we read the Word and had prayer together, established a family altar that was kept up all through the years . . . . I never, never can stress enough that the success and the blessing of any home depends on a family altar that's sincerely and genuinely carried on.” Alice reported with deep satisfaction that the regular training of the Flower children through daily family worship became so ingrained and important that the children would even conduct a session when their parents were out. On one such occasion, a visiting Moravian bishop paid a call on the family. The Flower children answered the door, told the bishop that they were just about to begin family worship, and invited him to join them. The impressed bishop later declared that he “didn't know such homes still existed in America.”

Alice was convinced that parents who made a commitment to bring spiritual instruction into daily home life were following a biblical pattern of rearing children that could revitalize the church and the nation. Acting on this conviction, Alice dedicated three of her early pamphlets to the scriptural examples of godly parenthood. What Mean Ye By These Stones? argued that the Old Testament, especially the five books of the Pentateuch, were “filled with God's careful planning for the spiritual welfare of future generations.” Scripture commanded parents to instruct each new generation in the faith,

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Interview, 29-30.
reminding them of how God had established a covenant with their ancestors and delivered them from bondage in Egypt. Christian parents could follow this ancient command by offering their children “God in all the sweet consistent reality of a truly consecrated life lived day by day.” Each father would be a “priest unto God;” his wife would cultivate “a holy appreciation of their glorious privilege” of pursuing “true motherhood.” This “full-time job” was “the most soul-satisfying, heart-thrilling career in all the world.”

Alice searched the Scriptures for examples of how godly mothers had carried out this divine mission. Turning to the life of Moses in Jochebed's Wages, she combed Moses' early biography to discover how his mother, Jochebed, had prepared her son for his future role as Israel's leader. The story began, she reflected, with Jochebed's decision to trust in God. At the beginning of the biblical account of Moses' life, Pharaoh decreed that all male infants born to the Jews must be killed. The horrible command forced Moses' parents to make a decision: they could despair of hope or they could embrace “the light of steadfast faith in Jehovah.” Jochebed elected to hide their son from Egyptian soldiers for three months. When further concealment became impossible, she again trusted God when she placed the child on the Nile River in a basket of reeds. God rewarded the prayerful mother for her faithfulness: the baby did not perish. Instead, Pharaoh's daughter rescued him from the River, then unknowingly paid Jochebed to nurse her own baby. Seizing the opportunity to nurture Moses during his early childhood years, Jochebed “wasted no time to press home vital teaching,” Alice imagined. “Line upon line, precept upon precept; here is a little and there is a little.' Those seeds of truth lived

68 Alice Reynolds Flower, What Mean Ye By These Stones (n.l.: The Author, 1930-1940?), 2-4, 7, 10.
on in the fertile mind and heart, growing from day to day.” Jochebed's efforts shaped Moses character and spiritual destiny. As a result, “Israel and the whole world benefited from her motherhood.”

In another booklet, Alice reflected on the example of Hannah, who dedicated her son Samuel to God's service and delivered him to the Temple for training. Hannah could not be with her son most of the time, but she found ways to express her daily care and concern for the future prophet. Scripture recorded that every year Hannah delivered “a little coat” to her son. Alice surmised that Hannah had probably poured her time and care into that coat all year. She also saw in Hannah's dedication to coat-making a metaphor for the daily time and care mothers poured into taking care of their children. Alice argued that Christian mothers were called to model their own labor in the home on Hannah's dedication, even though “real coat-making may mean pricked fingers, bent knees, tired bodies.” Alice recalled that her own mother had given her children “a coat of prayer,” another of “consistent living,” a third of “discipline,” and a fourth of “understanding.”

In Alice's opinion, the call to Spirit-filled living in the home overruled all other priorities, especially for mothers. “Fervor for the church is good, labor for others greatly commendable: but 'making the coat of consistent living' in that home, dear mother, is your most important task.” The practical, holy living of parents in the home would redeem the family's collective life and bring revival to the nation:

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Christians are pleading for revival—and, praise God, let it come first to our homes, where family altars have been neglected, where confidence between mothers and daughters is waning, where fathers and sons fail to meet life's problems together, where plain, everyday holiness is lacking. No one can do more to help such revival than parents themselves, awake to all the glorious possibilities of their calling.  

Christian family living also promoted the health of the local church by ensuring that all family members had prepared for each service by participating in worship around the family altar during the previous week. For this reason, “pastors who sense a deep lack in their church could well start a crusade of reviving family altars and home godliness as a certain feeder of blessing in their congregation.” The whole community would benefit as well: “If George Fox could say, 'Every Quaker ought to make himself felt for ten miles around,’” Flower pressed, “should we not say as much for our godly homes today?”

Alice's own dedication yielded fruit. After her death in 1991, Joseph Flower credited his mother with teaching him about God in his earliest years, influencing him toward salvation, and modeling the “Spirit-filled life.” She balanced ministry and home life, he asserted, making sure the second never suffered. “Mother demonstrated complete dedication to ministry, without neglecting family responsibilities,” he praised. “Her entire life was given to ministry, whether it was public speaking, witnessing, counseling, conducting prayer groups or seminars, or teaching a Sunday school class.” Due to her enthusiasm for her family and the church, all six of her children entered Christian ministry, and many people in the Assemblies of God also called her “Mother Flower.”

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75 Joseph Flower, “A Tribute to My Mother,” computer printout of an essay printed in *Glad Tidings* (Northern California and Nevada District), 1993, Flower Pentecostal Archive, Springfield, MO.
Conclusion

In literature intended to depict the contribution of women to the work of building a strong church and of evangelizing the world, conservative Protestant leaders often portrayed women as members of local communities or missions organizations who relied on the domestic and emotional attributes associated with their sex. Southern Baptist, Missouri Synod Lutheran, fundamentalist, and Pentecostal writers often pictured Christian homes and communities as spaces in which obedience to Scripture was maintained, older cultural or “Christian” values were preserved, and the emotional care and training of individuals were accomplished. As such, private Christian institutions might be able to counter the advent of impersonal, commercial, or permissive values that writers saw as the vices of modern society. This expectation led writers to express special concern for the behavior of women, out of the conviction that changes in women's interests and activities might undermine the foundations of Christian society. Conversely, they hoped that the persistence of women's interest in feminine roles and in motherhood would prosper Christian civilization and advance the gospel message.

The centrality of wifehood and motherhood to well-known fundamentalist and Pentecostal women illustrates how some conservative Protestant women embraced this message and lived it out in their own lives. Helen Sunday, Grace Fuller, and Alice Reynolds Flower all embraced their roles as mothers as well as companions and partners to men in ministry, while Henrietta Mears took up her role as a motherly teacher and an influential church educator who served the pastoral leadership of her church. All four
women viewed their roles not only as acceptable paths given scriptural teaching and American cultural expectations, but also as special religious missions to advance the cause of Christ.

All four women also made use their educations, experiences, and skills to perform a limited amount of public ministry, but under the clear auspices of male authority. In the case of Henrietta Mears, that male authority was pastoral; as an author, publisher, teacher, and administrator, Mears practiced equally important leadership without challenging men's authority to preach. Sunday, Fuller, and Flower derived public roles from their support of and participation in the public ministries of their husbands. Within the role of a pastor’s or an evangelist’s wife, they each fulfilled domestic ideals by committing their identities and labor to the needs of their families. The private needs of husband and children clearly formed the center of their daily lives; the additional time, resources, and skills they had to offer clearly supported the important ministries and work of their husbands, offering them a wider field of service without necessitating that they assert independent ministries, identities, or goals.

The lives of four relatively prominent conservative Protestant women do not reflect the decisions or options that were available to all conservative Protestant women, but they do reflect women's enlarging range of activities within American society. They also reflect how conservative Protestant women and their communities absorbed this trend and sought to bring it into harmony with their persistent concern for the preservation of the family and its child-nurturing, gospel-spreading, and holiness-inspiring mission.
Both the ideal Christian woman of advice literature and the lives of actual women advanced an ideal of femininity, marriage, and motherhood that would remain important to conservative Protestant churches and movements during decades to come.
CHAPTER THREE

“UNITED BY THE TIES OF LOVE”: MODERN MARRIAGE AND THE
CONSERVATIVE PROTESTANT FAITH BETWEEN THE WARS

In 1936 Martha Boone Leavell published a book in which she set out to explain “The Meaning of Home” for Southern Baptist Sunday school classes. As an opening reflection, she repeated the speech given at an engagement party. The host of the party, a grandmother to the happy couple, arose to praise the “inward beauty” of the young pair, who were “pledged to each other for a deep and sacred purpose, the founding of a new and noble Christian home.” She explained that the vital core of such a home was like a “hearthfire,” a living flame that resided within the home. Just as the first people discovered physical fire and used it to warm their homes, so the spiritual power that filled the home provided “utility, cleansing, warmth of love” as well as “vision, knowledge, and goodness.” This spiritual gift had been kindled by the first families in history and handed down to their sons and daughters, all the way down to the present. To symbolize the continued journey of this spiritual blessing, the grandmother handed a lighted candle to her daughter. Her daughter then passed the flame to the young couple, entrusting them to guard the legacy of a good home life.

Leavell’s conviction that an unchanging spiritual core enlivened the home and made the institution relevant and useful to rising generations of Americans reflected
longstanding evangelical beliefs that the home was a special and private realm set apart and uniquely able to embody and propagate religious and cultural values. “It is hardly too much to say that the home is the center of all time and the symbol of eternity,” Leavell asserted, and so it was “the supreme earthly fascination to which all youth looks forward and upon which all youth looks back.” It “dated from the very start of man” and so “has priority claim in time over state, school, church, or any other institution.”

These claims protested a fact that was widely known by the 1930s: American marriage was a changing institution that was becoming less stable. Divorce in the United States had been on the increase ever since the Civil War, and the divorce rate rose sharply following World War I. As historian Elaine Tyler May has summarized, “Between 1867 and 1929, the population of the United States increased 300 percent, the number of marriages 400 percent, and the divorce rate 2000 percent.” While one in fourteen to sixteen marriages ended in divorce in the 1880s, one in six marriages were ending in divorce by 1928. American couples were also producing fewer children. Together, these shifts encouraged the perception among social and religious critics that Americans' respect for the sanctity of marriage and their zeal for family life was waning.

Conservative social observers also feared that their contemporaries seemed eager to question received social values. Although a small group, between the 1890's and 1920's young bohemians in Greenwich Village sought liberation from the restrictions of

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“Victorian” thought and social ideals in order to champion the rights of the working class, to create a modern literature and art, and to stage romantic relationships unbound by middle-class sexual repression or social expectations—in all, to discover a new, modern persona fully aware of new possibilities. In the 1920s youth culture idealized the flapper, whose boyish appearance, forthright sexuality and freer morals were immortalized in popular culture and in the diatribes that denounced them. Social scientists and social critics described marriage in terms of its historic functions and asked whether it might and ought to be transforming to meet unique modern social conditions. The rise of Freudian psychology aroused professional and popular suspicion that received social mores might be too restrictive and responsible for neurosis and mental illness.\(^3\)

The reason that this national conversation on marriage became so concerning can be seen in the checkered fortunes of one of the most controversial proposed alternatives to traditional marriage. In 1927 Colorado Judge Ben Barr Lindsay argued for a new legal and social arrangement, “companionate marriage,” which he thought reflected the changing beliefs of middle class Americans. Lindsey argued that young couples desired to marry in order to find love, companionship, and a healthful outlet for their sexual feelings; many of them used birth control, despite the fact that circulating information about it was still illegal; many childless couples who found themselves unsuited for one another conspired to obtain divorces or annulments from the courts. Given these facts,

Lindsey envisioned a three-pronged plan of legal reform: the decriminalization of information about birth control, lenient divorce laws for childless couples, and the reform of alimony laws to exclude childless women from the right to alimony payments if they were capable of self-support. These reforms would, he hoped, make safer and legal what many young people were already doing. Young couples could marry with the full expectation of staying together for a lifetime, and the courts would help them in that task by helping to mediate between young people seeking a divorce. Stricter divorce regulations would also apply after the birth of the couple's first child. At the same time, unsuccessful couples would enjoy the freedom to discover their incompatibility in their first years of marriage, thereby preventing a single youthful mistake from wrecking the remainder of their adult lives.

The ultimate fate of Lindsey and his ideas demonstrated how little traction apparently “radical” ideas to alter American marriage actually had. Lindsey's conservative intentions notwithstanding, his recommendations created a furor. They became fashionable topics of conversation in some circles, but they also made Lindsey a target of critics who believed he was advocating “free love.” In the end, the controversy that Lindsey's ideas generated led to his being disbarred in Colorado in 1929, and discussion of companionate marriage waned, having effected little substantial change, in the 1930s. Still, concerned observers noted with great trepidation one essential fact, that
practices previously receiving disapproval and little public discussion were increasingly being discussed as potentially legitimate alternatives. The sanctity of marriage—its unquestioned goodness and universal embrace—seemed to be at risk.  

Conservative Protestants responded to these trends by creating a steady trickle of advice literature that reiterated Christian teaching about marriage. In the 1930s for the first time the Christian home found a place in the Southern Baptist Convention's expanding publishing and educational ambitions. In that decade, Boardman Press, the Convention's official publishing house, released its first full-length book on the home, pastor William Cooke Boone's *What God Hath Joined Together* (1935). Meanwhile, the Sunday School Board identified the Christian home as one of several distinct topical areas on which it wished to produce graded curricula for Baptist churches. The first fruit of that decision became Mary Booth Leavell's *Building the Christian Home* (1936), the first textbook on home life to be published explicitly for use in Southern Baptist Sunday school or Training Union classes. The Board also changed the name of its Extension Department's folksy paper the *Home Department Magazine* to *Better Homes*, a title which defined the paper's purpose as the “inspiration, pleasure, and betterment of the Baptist home.”

The efforts of the Southern Baptist Convention to produce the first trickles of up-to-date marriage advice literature were echoed in the publishing priorities of other conservative Protestant groups. Among Pentecostal and holiness writers, J. Grant

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Anderson's *Sex Life and Home Problems* (1921); Julia Shelhamer's *A Whisper to Women* (1927), *A Message to Men* (1927), and *The Secret of a Happy Married Life* (n.d.); F. Lincicome's *Enemies of the Home* (1934); and Church of the Nazarene pastor William Greene Heslop's *Secrets of a Happy Married Life* (1941) offered guidance to young people and couples. Among the Lutherans of the Missouri Synod, professor and youth leader Walter Maier followed several years of writing articles for the *Walther League Messenger* with a 500-page marriage manual, *For Better Not for Worse* (1935). American fundamentalists and conservative denominationalists produced books that included evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman's *When Home Is Heaven* (originally published in 1917 but reprinted several times after that date), Mennonite Brethren in Christ pastor Jasper Abraham Huffman's *Building the Home Christian* (1935), and Presbyterian pastor and scholar Gerrit Verkuyl's *Christ in the Home* (1932). In addition to these books, the proliferating popular conversation on sex and advocacy of sex education prompted the publication of Missouri Synod doctor Edward Marquardt's *Why Was I Not Told?* (1939); fundamentalist pastor Oscar Lowry's *A Virtuous Woman: Sex Life in Relation to the Christian Life* (1938) and *The Way of a Man with a Maid: Sexology for Men and Boys* (1940); and Mennonite pastor Clayton Dertstine's *Path to Beautiful Womanhood* (1942), *Path to Noble Manhood* (1942), and *Manual of Sex Education for Parents, Teachers, and Students* (1943). Established fundamentalist periodicals such as *Moody Bible Institute Monthly*, the *Sunday School Times*, and *Record of Christian Work* devoted routine attention to sermons and advice about the home; new publications such as evangelist...

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5 Biographical data on Jasper Abraham Huffman can be found in *History of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church*, ed. by Jasper Abraham Huffman (New Carlisle, OH: Bethel Publishing Company, 1920), 245-46.
John R. Rice's *Sword of the Lord* took up questions of marital fidelity, sexual purity, gender roles, modest dress, and discipline in the home as matters of obvious and immediate Christian concern. Novels, advice columns, and entire magazines appeared for Christian youth.

This literature provides an opportunity for the historian to examine the place of conservative Protestants in an unfolding national discussion about marriage. Historians of religion and gender as well as historians of conservative Protestantism have generally emphasized the self-consciously conservative social views of fundamentalists, Pentecostals, Baptists, and confessional Lutherans. Conservative Protestants themselves encouraged this interpretation. When advice writers turned to the topic of American family life, they often wrote with the conviction that the Christian home needed to be defined and defended. The *Moody Bible Institute Monthly* reprinted a sermon whose author, Clarence W. Kemper, faulted the church for offering “no sure and steady constructive teaching” on the home, even though “a pleasure philosophy of life” challenged the Christian view of marriage. Arrayed against “the Christian ideal” were “birth control,” “companionate marriage,” “motion pictures,” “the tabloid and emotional press,” and “excesses” related to “the emancipation of women.” When William Cooke Boone composed his talks on marriage, he explained that he was writing against “the Freudians, and the advocates of trial and companionate marriage, those who teach free love, and those who would abolish the very institution of marriage.” Walter Maier faulted evolution, sociology, communism, college intellectuals, psychoanalysis, religious cults, modernism, salacious literature, and motion pictures for undermining popular
acceptance of the Christian view of marriage. His tome-like manual attempted to counter
the collective influence of these agents with extended, systematic exposition of Christian
ideals and practical advice for maintaining a Christian home. In his book on the home,
Presbyterian Gerrit Verkuyl found it necessary to argue that “Every attempt to deviate
from that standard [of monogamous marriage] brings disaster.”

However, conservative Protestant nervousness and social protest can also obscure
elements of the dialog that was taking place between advice writers and popular
American attitudes about marriage. When Martha Boone Leavell portrayed the spiritual
core of the home as an unchanging legacy passed between generations, she called upon
readers to accept an older generation's sentimental picture of the home as a sanctuary
containing timeless spiritual qualities. However, her description of the essence of
marriage as the emotional bond holding family members together also evoked an
understanding of marriage that was quite contemporary. Some of the most important
shifts in American beliefs about marriage were not particularly controversial, even to
self-avowed conservatives who wanted to preserve biblical teaching and traditional
middle-class social ideals. Conservative Protestant authors not only absorbed these ideas
but were eager to seize upon those aspects of the mainstream dialog on marriage that
seemed to affirm the goodness of the institution and to preserve its moral and religious
influence.

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Walter Maier, For Better Not For Worse: A Manual of Christian Matrimony (Saint Louis: Concordia,
1935), 73-206, 361-401, 435-450; William Cooke Boone, What God Hath Joined: Sermons on Marriage,
Courtship, and the Home (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1935), 16; Gerrit Verkuyl, Christ in the Home
(Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1932), 16.
Leavell's understanding of the home, as well as that advanced by many of her contemporary advice writers, reflected some of the most widespread assumptions that the American public made about marriage during the first half of the twentieth century. In her tellingly titled, *Marriage, A History: How Love Conquered Marriage*, Stephanie Coontz argues that contemporary American attitudes toward the institution are the products of the birth and spread of the revolutionary idea that marriage ought to be the product of a love match. For centuries, she observes, marriage was primarily an economic and political institution; however prized, marital affection was an ideal and a side-benefit to marriage, not its primary function. The importance of marriage to cementing alliances, transferring property, producing legitimate offspring, creating laborers for farms and household businesses, and guaranteeing long-term care for children were too important to jeopardize in the service of emotional fulfillment. Not until the early modern period did Europeans begin to idealize romantic love in courtship and marriage, and not until the nineteenth century did the love match graduate from being a cultural ideal to a lived reality for most members of the middle class. Lubricating this transition was the new, middle-class view of the home that pictured it less as an extension of the political or economic world than as a private space that offered family members love, nurture, rest, education, and religious training.  

However much they protested the sentimentality of their “Victorian” parents and grandparents toward the home, modern Americans continued to embrace their elders' core assumptions about marriage, enhancing and burdening it with a new and greatly elevated

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set of hopes for its emotional rewards. In the opening decades of the twentieth century, Americans began to hope for marriages that provided self-fulfillment, a sense of psychological happiness, and sexual satisfaction. Their optimism has been reflected in the fact that more of them married—and married at younger ages—than had their parents and grandparents. A leading interpreter of these developments, historian Elaine Tyler May, has demonstrated that Americans' greater optimism about the spiritual and psychological benefits of marriage was rooted in a host of social and cultural shifts. She argues that at the opening of the twentieth century the separate spheres model no longer dominated social thought or practical reality but that greater choice in a marriage partner, greater access of women to paid work, urban affluence, and shared work and social spaces transformed the Victorian ideal of companionship into a whole new set of “great expectations.” Friendship, honesty, sexual pleasure, and access to some of the entertainments and comforts of the modern economy became not only hopes, but often basic expectations. These high standards changed what young people expected from marriage and ultimately led some couples into disappointment, conflict, and divorce. May contends that the sharp rise in American divorce over the course of the twentieth century tells not a story of mass callousness about the institution of marriage, but instead a tale of how the idealization of marriage by modern couples has also made it less stable.\(^8\)

When conservative Protestants are viewed against this backdrop, they are revealed to be conservative apologists for marriage who accepted and perpetuated some of the ideals and assumptions most key to modern American perceptions of the institution. On one hand, they viewed themselves as defenders of an older order of legal and

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\(^8\) May; Coontz, 196-215.
ecclesiastical restraints on the behavior of married couples. Nowhere was this clearer than in conservative Protestants' responses to the divorce problem, which usually elicited dismay over state laws that pastors felt were too lenient by scriptural standards. It also generated ardent appeals to Christian pastors to define and defend the biblical prohibitions on divorce and remarriage. On the other hand, the ability of conservative Protestants to change public behavior through these means were limited. Hoping to promote public esteem for marriage and dedication to prospering their own unions, conservative Protestant apologists for marriage baptized the quest of contemporary young people for a marriage that offered companionship and emotional fulfillment, arguing that they ought to embrace marriage and parenthood because of the unique satisfaction that both offered. Variations on these themes were apparent in the discussions that highly-committed Christian women conducted about their own decisions to marry or remain single workers dedicated to Christian service. Similarly, religious novels, which were composed to compete with popular novels that provided young people with tales of romance and adventure, indulged youths' fascination with the topics of romance and a satisfying marriage.

**Divorce and Remarriage**

With the possible exception of women's changing roles, no issue so evoked conservative Protestants' concern over the future and health of American families more than the rising divorce rate. Twentieth-century Protestants were the heirs to an evangelical tradition that had for the past century sought to build a Christian nation based
on religiously inspired public virtue. In the achievement of that goal, they had assumed that the persuasive powers of the pulpit and the power of law ought to prove allies in convincing Americans to regard marriage as the first and most essential social institution. Thus began the uncertain and ultimately strained alliance between the religious advocacy of marriage as a sacred and unique institution and the civil government's definition of it as a contract exemplifying the Republican values of free consent and mutual obligation. Nonetheless, if it could be sustained, such an alliance promised to ensure that marriage, the foundation of the family, would serve the goals of organizing social life and passing essential Christian and American beliefs and life patterns on to upcoming generations. In addition, religious and social commentators often viewed commitment to marriage—by individuals and by society—as a demonstration of the value that Americans placed on contractual commitments, on social order, and on such public virtues as self-moderation. Both casually and symbolically, the health of the body politic rested on the willingness of people to marry and fulfill their marital obligations. But American Protestant religious convictions never exactly matched the dictates of civil law. Religious defenders of marriage often found themselves at odds with intellectual, legal, and cultural trends, especially as divorce became more common in the decades following the Civil War. That dissonance only grew in the twentieth century as divorce became more common, leaving unresolved dilemmas for conservative Protestants who kept the family at the center of their religious and social worldviews.⁹

⁹ For discussions of American marriage as a repository for religious and Republican values, as well as a “metonym for social order,” see Norma Basch, Framing American Divorce (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), xix-xx, 1-25. Basch also notes that while Protestant religious leaders sought to use law to support broadly Christian convictions about the marriage, gaps always existed between law, actual practice, and Protestant ideals. By the close of the 1870s, it was clear that attempts to bring civil law into conformity with religious convictions would meet with only limited success; in fact, legal statutes pressed
During the nineteenth century, the American legislative and legal systems
developed multiple ways of dealing with strife in marriage or with the failure of one or
both parties to fulfill their material, moral, or gendered duties. Separation provided a
means by which men and women could establish separate residences and lives,
sometimes permitting a deserting husband to continue a separate life or a bigamous
relationship. The wife, by appealing to the assumption of her legal and financial
dependence on her husband under the legal doctrine of coverture, could retain financial
and legal protection from her husband.\(^\text{10}\)

Alternatively, divorce brought an end to marital obligations and introduced the
possibility of remarriage. The terms on which a divorce might be obtained varied widely.
Civil laws governing marriage and divorce fell under the jurisdiction of state
governments. As a result, each state developed an evolving collection of statutes
influenced by its unique legislative, legal, and social history. Eastern states enacted some
of the nation’s most restrictive laws; the largest and most influential conservative state,
New York, permitted divorce on the grounds of adultery only. In many states, desertion
formed another legal ground for divorce. Relatively permissive state laws included any
number of additional grounds for divorce, including the more nebulous complaint of
“cruelty.” In some states, omnibus clauses granted litigants and lawyers an even wider
range of options for bringing a suit. Western states became known for enacting divorce
statutes that included some of these broader criteria. One of the most notorious, Indiana,

\[^\text{10}\] The most astute and detailed history of separation, especially of the appeal of separated wives to
University Press, 2000).
allowed divorce on multiple grounds and developed a reputation for lax legal process and scant residency requirements. In addition to complications presented by differences in state laws, ordinary citizens placed pressure on the legal system by using divorce statutes to accomplish their own goals. All these factors made marriage and divorce contested grounds over which nervous conservatives and concerned reformers exerted only limited control.\textsuperscript{11}

Divorce became the subject of even greater contest between the 1850s and 1870s. As historian Norma Basch has argued, following the Civil War a rise in the number of divorces as well as growing class and gender conflict fueled concerns about authority, morality and civic order. In this context, clergy, feminists, and civic leaders viewed rules governing marriage and divorce as central to their conflicting visions for society. Radical critics of existing marriage and divorce laws regarded legal restraints as tyranny that suppressed the pursuit of marital happiness. Feminists were divided over whether divorce liberated suffering wives or permitted husbands to cast wives aside. Meanwhile, many clergy, especially in the Northeast, launched a crusade to tighten divorce laws, to reassert the authority of the Bible, and to teach the obligation of individuals to essential social institutions.

The results of this campaign foreshadowed the situation in which conservative religious leaders would find themselves for decades to come. Through the efforts of the

\textsuperscript{11} Older histories of divorce have discussed the evolution of law governing divorce in response to intellectual, legislative, and legal debates. More recently, scholars have additionally noted that the ordinary people whose own situations often did not conform to strict legal constructions of “fault” brought pressure to bear on lawmakers and courts, both by the sheer number of suits they presented and their use of the legal system to accomplish their objectives. For one treatment that takes into account the priorities of judges, cultural leaders, and ordinary litigants, see Norma Basch, \textit{Framing American Divorce} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 25-55, 78-82, 83-128.
New England Divorce Reform League (later named the National Divorce Reform League), anti-divorce religious leaders and lawyers succeeded in stirring national debate over “lax” divorce laws and the possibility of enacting a uniform, federal divorce law. Ultimately, the League's efforts brought about the tightening of certain state laws, especially in the 1890s and early 1900s, as the accelerating divorce rate induced a growing sense of urgency among social commentators and legislatures. But religious advocacy of stricter laws did not produce the sweeping reform that crusading pastors hoped to enact. In most states, the statutes governing divorce and remarriage were more restrictive than many pro-divorce commentators wished, but they also remained more liberal than anti-divorce clergy wished. The actual use of the law by ordinary people who daily came before American courts also defied the wishes of those who ardently sought to see divorce become rare or non-existent.\textsuperscript{12}

This background shaped conservative Protestants' discussion of divorce. For most conservative Protestant commentators, the stakes of the divorce question had been set in the cultural and legal debates that followed the Civil War. Like the anti-divorce reformers in the second half of the twentieth century, concerned pastors continued to describe divorce as a scarlet sign of the moral failure of married persons, of a lawlessness within the hearts of people and the judicial system, and of a rot at the center of democratic institutions. Many believed that the Bible could form a basis for reforming civil law and that the pressure of law could strengthen the family and the state.\textsuperscript{13} But by the 1920s and 1930s this result seemed increasingly unlikely. Consequently, churches were left with

\textsuperscript{12} Basch, 56-82; May, 4-6.

\textsuperscript{13} For a description of the positions taken my anti-divorce clergy in the Nineteenth Century, see Basch, 68-78.
more limited, ecclesiastical means of influencing public behavior. The limited tools available for this purpose included maintaining a stigma on divorce in popular opinion and exerting the power of the local church to censure persons who had obtained legal divorces or remarriages on grounds that pastors deemed unbiblical.

In view of these circumstances, pastors pursued a less grandiose goal than forcing state or national law to their service: they proclaimed the authority of biblical standards over the consciences and actions of committed church members. They decried overly permissive laws but primarily called upon faithful churches to stem America's growing lawlessness by recognizing the authority of Scripture as superior to the opinions of the State. “We cannot inveigh strongly enough against the evils of our present legalized system, that is, the system of marriage and divorce as it obtains to the laws of the land,” the Pentecostal periodical the *Latter Rain Evangel* lamented. “This condition of affairs has been brought about by the distinct transgression of God's laws regarding the married state.” The *Pentecostal Evangel* likewise disregarded human laws as too lenient by God's standards. It reminded Christians that they must not allow the errant laws of the United States to affect their esteem for marriage. “When human law becomes increasingly slack,” they stressed, “let us look to the Word of God, which cannot be broken.”14 In *Moody Bible Institute Monthly*, John G. Reid expressed a similar allegiance for the “plain” teaching of Scripture over the lenient rules approved by the state and by some

14 Andrew Frasier, “Marriage and Divorce,” October 15, 1915, 6-11; Ernest Williams, “Marriage and Divorce,” *Pentecostal Evangel* June 20, 1931, 6-7.
churches. Like the chief justice of the Supreme Court, Jesus Christ himself could—and had—offered a “specific, categorical, and unequivocal” decision that would “preclude further inquiry or discussion.”¹⁵

In contrast to some more permissive legal codes, conservative Protestant pastors and periodicals argued that married persons had a right to divorce only for adultery; some writers also made concessions for abandonment. They recognized—or denied—the right to remarry on a number of technicalities. The essential attitudes and opinions they offered did not change drastically during the first half of the twentieth century; rather, differences between them reflected ongoing theological debate over the exact meanings of verses and their applicability to pastoral problems. However, their writing did reflect concern over the fact that American law and culture seemed to contravene the standards they hoped to assert, as well as an awareness that enforcing biblical prohibitions on divorce and remarriage was becoming a pastoral quandary.

The biblical texts that writers most frequently discussed on the divorce question included Jesus' teachings on marriage in Matthew 5:32, Matthew 19:1-9, and Mark 10:1-10. In both gospels, Jesus recited key passages from Genesis, teaching that God created humanity male and female and that marriage made the two “one flesh.” Therefore, the union between husband and wife was an act of God that human agency ought not to undo: “So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let no man put asunder” (Matt 19:6). Mosaic law had permitted divorce in Israel only due to the “hardness of their hearts”; those who sought to follow God's will were to follow a higher standard. Mark's gospel ends with this statement, while Matthew added a caveat that

many writers used as the one-sentence summation of Jesus’ teaching on divorce and remarriage: “Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Matt 19:9). Likewise, the Pauline epistles directed believers to remain in their marriages. In Romans 7:2-3, Paul wrote, “For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress.” In a longer treatment of the topic of marriage and divorce in I Corinthians 7:10-15, the apostle offered direct instructions: “To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.” Paul instructed those married to unbelieving spouses to remain in their marriages in order to save their husband or wife but to allow the unbeliever to depart if they chose (7:15).

These verses inspired a wide range of interpretations. Commonly, commentators focused on Jesus' language about husbands and wives becoming “one flesh” by God’s hand. They additionally noted that Jesus had specifically named only a single cause for divorce, “fornication.” Following Jesus’ formulation, the majority asserted that “fornication” formed the main or sole biblical ground for divorce. Within this interpretation, there was some variation in opinion. Some argued that Jesus was discussing only impurity prior to marriage and was therefore technically only referring to the breaking of an engagement over sexual indiscretion. More commonly, writers
understood Jesus to be discussing sexual immorality after marriage, but they differed about the meaning of the Greek word mentioned in the text (*porneia*). Many translated this word as “fornication” or “unchastity,” which could mean that any instance of adultery could be considered a basis for divorce; but some argued that it specifically meant “whoredom” and that Jesus was therefore justifying divorce only in cases of ongoing sexual infidelity. Whatever their interpretation, many explanations of the verse terminated in various pithy conclusions: “This much is plain as day, namely that there is one Scriptural ground for divorce and remarriage, namely, impurity on the part of the other party”; “Divorce is not permitted except for adultery . . . and . . . any remarriage involves both parties in adultery”; “It is evident that there may be divorce for adultery and it may be wise to separate for other causes, but remarriage never”; “God never sanctions divorce except for fornication.”

Those who believed adultery was the main or sole justification for divorce explained that fornication was a uniquely terrible offense because it violated the sexual unity that made husband and wife “one flesh.” Explaining his own understanding of its severity, fundamentalist and independent Baptist evangelist John Rice argued that “a persistent course of harlotry on the part of the wife or whoremongering on the part of the

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Although in this and subsequent footnotes I am citing the text of Dixon’s essay as it appeared in the *Watchman*, the piece was reprinted many times by conservative Protestant publications. Among them was the *King's Business*, which released the essay as a booklet, “Divorce and Remarriage as Taught by Jesus: What Does the Marriage Relationship Mean and How Can It Be Broken?” (Los Angeles: BIOLA Book Room, 1927). *The Pentecostal Evangel* also reprinted it in 1950 (“Marriage and Divorce as Taught By Christ,” *Pentecostal Evangel* June 25, 1950), 5.
husband robs a marriage of its essential meaning and beauty.”

A. C. Dixon, a well-known fundamentalist pastor and contributor to *The Fundamentals*, argued that any action that severed the bond between a husband and wife was akin to murder. To grant divorce to those who were still bound together by God was “to destroy a living organic oneness, and that is murder.” The only action against marriage that was equally reprehensible was adultery, “a crime akin to murder,” which destroyed that living bond and made the adulterer into “a menace to every home.”

Some commentators also made allowances for the difficult problems presented by desertion and physical abuse. Following Paul's lead in I Corinthians 7:15, they discussed the possibility that Christian believers whose spouse deserted them ought be permitted a divorce and the chance to remarry. The *Sunday School Times* explained that this right stemmed partly from the severity of desertion. “Willful desertion seems to be followed in practically every case by unfaithfulness (adultery), even when this cannot be proved,” the paper observed. The abandoned spouse was therefore just as justified to divorce as the innocent victim of adultery. The Missouri Synod likewise recognized divorce on the basis of adultery and malicious desertion, a position with which Walter Maier wholeheartedly concurred. Physical abuse of a wife justified her seeking temporary

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17 John R. Rice, *Divorce, the Wreck of Marriage, 8; The Home – Courtship, Marriage, and Children*, 354.

18 Dixon, 9, 10.

separation from her husband, and in cases so severe that “a drunken sot . . . persists in beating his helpless wife and threatening her life, this brutality may produce a condition tantamount to malicious desertion.”

The question of remarriage drew equally conservative, if diverse, opinions. The national leadership of the Assemblies of God did not approve of remarriage under any circumstances. Likewise, some fundamentalists argued that remarriage was never permissible, even for those who had divorced for a scriptural reason. A. C. Dixon took that position, arguing that only death dissolved the marriage bond. Even those with a right to divorce still had an obligation to ensure that “the way is open for repentance and re-union.”

However, such severe rules did not enjoy a monopoly, even among the fiercest champions of moral rigor and scriptural fidelity. Many conservative Protestants were willing to recognize remarriage as a biblical choice for those whose divorces met the criteria of Jesus and Paul. Although John R. Rice argued that divorce was permissible only in the case of persistent infidelity, he contended that a scriptural divorce freed the divorcee completely from further obligation: “Fornication breaks the vows of marriage and gives the innocent party a right for divorce. When divorce takes place on this Bible ground, the first marriage is broken entirely, and the parties are free to marry again. In such a case, a woman who has been divorced and remarried does not have two husbands, as people sometimes say.”

Prominent fundamentalist pastor R. A. Torrey suggested that

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20 Maier, 423-24.

21 A. C. Dixon, 9-10.

22 John R. Rice, Divorce, the Wreck of Marriage, 9; The Home – Courtship, Marriage, and Children, 356.
for a believer who had “contracted an unfortunate alliance,” a single life might be the
wisest course. However, Torrey regarded this as a recommendation rather than a mandate:
“But if one has divorced a husband or wife on the ground of adultery and has already
married another, there is no Scriptural reason why he or she should feel condemned.”
Likewise, in a paper presented to the General Council of the Assemblies of God in 1940,
pastor Guy Duty questioned the Assemblies' opposition to remarriage for divorced
persons. He argued that those who took the Assemblies' official position had
misinterpreted the statements of Jesus and Paul. They failed to understand that the
original speakers and hearers took it for granted that divorce automatically conferred a
right to remarry, and they failed to give adequate heed to Jesus and Paul's statements that
God had called only some believers to embrace a life of celibacy; for the rest, Paul had
regarded marriage as a necessary precaution against lust. Surely, he pressed, neither Jesus
nor Paul meant to commit Christians to self-destructive courses of action.

Beneath the repetition of these fairly stringent positions on divorce, a growing	
	
trepidation over the difficulty of enforcing biblical teaching became evident. In 1938
Harold Lundquist of Moody Bible Institute revealed to readers of Moody Monthly's
Uniform Sunday School Lessons that he had been “astonished” to discover that his own
“respectable residential neighborhood” contained several blended families. The multiple
last names, visits from ex-spouses, and other awkward circumstances must, he

23 R.A. Torrey, Practical and Perplexing Questions Answered (Chicago: Moody, 1909), 47.

24 Guy Duty, “Paper on Marriage and Divorce” (CA: 1940), Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center,
Springfield, MO; Christ-Divorce-Remarriage (North Bergen, NJ: Duty, 1955); Divorce and Remarriage
(Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1967; Bethany House, 1983, 2002).

Other opinions in favor of remarriage for those divorced on a Scriptural basis can be found in Maier,
441-444.
speculated, sow “utter confusion in the hearts of boys and girls.” These trends indicated that the Bible’s teachings “should be taught with care and tact, but also with holy boldness for a plainness that will make it effective for God and for our homes.” Boldness was necessary to counter “the laxness of some branches of the church in such matters” as well as “almost the entire lack of standards in the world.”

As divorce rates changed the face of even “respectable” neighborhoods, church members and potential converts were more likely to be divorced and remarried, many on grounds pastors considered unbiblical. As an anonymous pastor reported to the *Sunday School Times*, a pastor's success in evangelism could leave him with a dilemma. New converts came with baggage. “I have been here as pastor about one and one-half years and have seen over one hundred find peace, including a number of divorced people.” He could not decide whether these persons could be legitimately admitted to church membership, but he was leaning toward grace. He confessed, “The more I study the case of David and see how God exalted Solomon, second son of Bathsheba, the more I wonder if God really sees these people today as in sin.”

The pastor's letter and the response it received from the *Sunday School Times* testified to the fact that pastors who had no intention of liberalizing their views nonetheless found the enforcement of their own prohibitions troublesome. The *Times* responded to the young pastor's inquiry by trying to define a middle ground between the enforcement of biblical prohibitions and the fact that it was impractical, if not impossible,

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26 “Notes on Open Letters—When Divorced People Have Married Again,” *Sunday School Times* September 24, 1932.
to reverse the divorce and remarriages of potential church members. “God's laws always seem to fit so wonderfully into practical situations, not going into extremes in either direction,” they argued. Some leniency had not only to be given to those who were innocent victims of adultery or abandonment, but also to those who had wrongfully remarried and had come to shoulder important responsibilities as part of their new family unit. If possible, the Times felt that a wrongfully remarried person should reunite with his first spouse. However, it argued that there were also situations in which “obligations have been accepted as a result of the new marriage, either the coming of children into the home or other far-reaching obligations” and that “it would appear that God might indeed wish such a marriage union to be continued, not broken.” The right course in each case could be best discerned when the church gave each situation “careful, considerate, loving, and prayerful consideration.”

Other spokespersons were also aware that strict church discipline, although necessary, carried the risk of excluding committed believers from full participation in church life, of imperiling pastoral care, and of destabilizing errant believers' current marriages. The courses of action they recommended in the most difficult cases reflected that uncomfortable fact. John R. Rice argued that there was nothing scriptural or practical about censuring persons who had already divorced and remarried. Rice thought pastors ought to prevail upon those considering an unscriptural divorce to repent and relent. But once couples had taken new partners, no further measures were available. In fact, he argued that those who had already divorced and remarried ought under no circumstances

to end their second marriages. Rice reasoned that if either a Christian or her former spouse remarried, then they committed the sin of entering an ongoing adulterous relationship—the one gross sin that actually did permanently end a marriage. As Rice explained to the concerned wife of a previously divorced man, “If your husband got a divorce not because of fornication, then when he married you, he was guilty of fornication. If his first marriage was not broken before, then it was broken after he married you and lived with you.” The shame of such an act ought to be unspeakable to the guilty party, but Rice thought it freed the innocent party from any further obligation. 

Similarly, the General Council of the Assemblies of God made provision in its resolution on marriage and divorce for believers who had already remarried in “their former lives of sin.” Although the General Council asserted that a wrongly divorced person possessed an obligation to return to their first spouse, they could remain in their second marriage if they did “not now see how these matters can be adjusted.” Forcing remarried persons to separate, Assembly leadership argued, would do nothing to remedy past sin and would instead break up existing households. Instead, the Council admonished pastors “for the present and future to discourage divorce by all lawful means.”

Walter Maier also admitted that in the case of some who had already taken a second husband or wife, “many complicated situations may arise. These intricate cases should be carefully examined and judged according to the statements of God’s Word.”

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28 Rice, Home – Courtship, Marriage, and Children, 357.


30 Maier, 443.
Enforcement was an additional problem. In a nation in which legal standards contradicted theological interpretations, the meanings and morality of marriage and divorce became contested ground. Under such circumstances, the pastor's job was tricky enough. But it was made all the more delicate by the fact that a believer with a troubled marriage or a past divorce had many local churches and evangelical denominations to join. In the vast numbers of churches vying for members, it was not unusual for people to change churches or even jump from one evangelical theological tradition to another over the course of their lifetimes. The ability of any one church to censure a member was therefore entirely dependent on the member's own determination to accept and abide by its conclusions. The fundamentalist periodical the *King's Business* alluded to the danger of this possibility in its column, “The Girl's Query Corner” in 1937. The column printed a letter from a reader who wrote to defend her reasons for seeking a divorce on the basis of incompatibility and to ask whether she could remarry. Her plea appealed to the increasingly acceptable view that married persons had a right to expect at least minimal companionship and happiness within marriage. She related:

I married young, but we soon found we had made a mistake. We were most uncongenial. I felt I would rather be dead than tied to that man for life. Perhaps he felt the same, for we were divorced and he married again and seems happy. . . . I am a Christian and know the prejudice many have against divorce. I accepted that attitude as a matter of course until it touched my own life. Then I began thinking things through, and things look different to me. I do not feel it would be wrong for me to marry again. It does not seem that a loving Father would want a whole life to be spoiled just because of a mistake of youthful folly. It was an innocent mistake, too. I do not believe the ceremony ever makes a couple truly married if the hearts are not really united in love, and I doubt whether we were ever married in God's sight.
The letter writer also revealed that the growing acceptance of divorce by some pastors and laypeople had encouraged her in her opinion. She knew church members who had divorced and remarried, and her pastor had accepted the inevitability that the church must accept them:

Times have changed, too, and people do not look upon divorce as they once did. Some of the best Christians I know have been divorced and have married again. Our pastor marries divorced people, and says that since the law permits separation, he merely is upholding the law.

In response, Myrtle E. Scott, editor of the “Girl's Query Corner,” sought to contest the standards set by American law and more permissive churches. She quoted at length from A. C. Dixon's article on divorce and remarriage to demonstrate that mutual dissatisfaction did not justify the letter-writer's divorce and that no circumstances could justify her remarriage. To remain obedient to God's will, the writer would have to remain single and look to Christ rather than a second husband to satisfy her.31

Scott was not the only conservative Protestant spokesperson who suspected that some pastors winked at church members' violations of Scripture. Statements against lax or unclear standards on the topic of divorce abounded. Although Walter Maier advocated pastoral concern for the plights of church members, he also defended Missouri Synod churches who imposed church discipline on those who remarried wrongfully:

Until American churches sternly set their faces against this slump in morals and many sectarian clergymen refuse to officiate at the nuptials of these multi-chances in marriage, there can be no indiscriminate check on divorce and remarriage. Never before have the leaders of American Christendom been under more serious obligation to proclaim the

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31 Myrtle E. Scott, “Girl's Query Corner,” King's Business March 1937, 118.
indissolubility of the marriage vow, to restrict divorce to infidelity and malicious desertion; and never before has outward Christianity so dismally failed in a crisis.  

While Maier faulted liberal clergy for making a wreck of American marriage, Pentecostal groups wrestled with their own internal issues. Pentecostal opinion and practice varied wildly. In their zeal for restoring apostolic purity, the leadership of Pentecostal denominations often advanced some of the most stringent positions on divorce and remarriage. For example, the official doctrine of both the Assemblies of God and the Church of God (Cleveland) on divorce taught that adultery alone granted the wronged spouse a right to seek a divorce. Neither the guilty nor the innocent party could remarry. To avoid scandal, the Assemblies additionally ruled that remarried persons whose former spouse still lived could not be ordained to the ministry. However, opinions and practices varied from congregation to congregation, a fact that led Assemblies of God pastor Andrew Frasier to assert in 1915 that Pentecostal leaders had to do more to create a united front against divorce. “Laxity in Pentecostal circles,” he explained, had placed “a blot” on the movement. Fifteen years later, Assemblies of God pastor Ernest Williams suggested that the denomination's denial of the pastorate to divorced persons should be extended to include all church “officers” – an indication that some congregations had accepted the marital pasts of their members enough to place

32 Maier, 444.

divorced persons in these positions. The Church of God (Cleveland) asserted its own position on divorce and remarriage in 1925, after two precious attempts to reach a consensus on the topic were derailed by controversy. 34

The general drift of American discussion and practice of divorce and remarriage created an uncomfortable situation for pastors and laypeople who regarded tight restrictions on divorce and remarriage imperative to Christian obedience and the health of civilization. However ardent, their main power lay in moral suasion and the ability to embarrass members of their own community into following the rules. In addition, the attempts of pastors to implement biblical prohibitions among believers and converts may have had unintended consequences. No doubt many believers took scriptural prohibitions to heart and strove to work through—or suffer through—marital problems. By design or desperation, others may have found limited means in the rules expounded from the pulpit to justify an end to their marriages. What is true for the courtroom is also true in the pastor’s office or the public testimony. One could behave in such a way or retell one’s marital history in such a way as to place more blame on an ex-spouse for infidelity or desertion, thereby inviting sympathy as well as censure. Alternatively, one could succumb to sin or weakness long enough to establish a new household that a new church would be reluctant to dissolve. Hundreds of ordinary people and their pastors dealt with these matters can only be guessed.

Increasingly, pastors would wrestle with the fact that the power of both the law and pulpit to persuade unhappy individuals to remain married was limited. Increasingly,

pastors and writers augmented their teaching on divorce with another tactic: persuading their congregations to esteem the institutions of marriage enough to pursue marital happiness and thereby remain far away from the shadow of the courthouse.

The Meaning of Marriage in a Modern World

The oppositional posture of conservative Protestants toward an increasingly lax set of social, spiritual, and moral standards among modern Americans is only part of a larger and important story. Much of conservative Protestant rhetoric on social issues emphasized the differences they perceived between themselves and the world. Fundamentalists and Pentecostals distinguished themselves from their “lax” society and “worldly” contemporaries, Missouri Synod Lutherans appealed to a pure and closely guarded doctrinal orthodoxy, and Southern Baptist leaders tried to make believers’ convictions distinctly Baptist and reflective of the South's dearest cultural values. These ideological priorities obscured the degree to which conservative Protestants were also like their contemporaries when they discussed the meaning and purpose of marriage. While they hoped to exert external pressure on couples in order to help keep homes intact, they relied equally strongly on the power of a person's inner commitment to marriage. Their advice literature focused on convincing new generations of the practical benefits and emotional happiness that marriage and parenthood had to offer. Advice writers implied that persons who could be persuaded of this fact would esteem the institution of marriage—and therefore would also seek to preserve their own marriages and use them to advance Christian religious and cultural goals.
In this cause, conservative Protestant advice writers drew inspiration from both Scripture and from contemporary American understandings of marriage and sex. In their articles and advice books, they emphasized the emotional benefits of marriage, its ability to better an individual's health and overall well-being, and the spiritual responsibility and personal satisfaction one could gain by embracing parenthood. In this pursuit, they inserted themselves into a debate raging among American experts and social commentators during the 1920s and early 1940s about the shape that “modern marriage” ought to take. As historians Christina Simmons and Wendy Kline have observed, divorce, a more forthright youth sexuality, the advocacy of birth control, women's changing roles, and the activities of social hygienists and radical thinkers were all reshaping American beliefs about sex and marriage. Implicitly or explicitly, experts and other social commentators called for a new perspective on the institution of marriage that at once took into account modern needs and created new, more appropriate guidelines for people's behavior. This dialog had a variety of participants: social radicals, such as birth control advocate Margaret Sanger; social reformers, such as Judge Lindsey; and psychologists and sociologists who studied marriage, such as the University of North Carolina's Ernst R. Groves. These thinkers advocated for a model of marriage that emphasized sexual intimacy (including the sexual needs of women), greater privacy for couples, and greater equality between husbands and wives. Some sought a new vision of sexual pleasure pursued independently from the marriage and child-bearing, but most were hoping to stabilize and improve marriages. Many also intended motherhood to remain the center of women's lives. Eugenicists such as Paul Popenoe were particularly eager to stress the
importance of marriage and motherhood. To discourage the movement of women outside the home, Popenoe and like-minded colleagues presented a modified view of marriage that privileged marital happiness and sexual fulfillment out of the belief that these rewards would encourage middle-class, eugenically “fit” couples to marry and have children.\textsuperscript{35}

Conservative Protestant authors were aware of the broad issues over which experts and social commentators were wrangling, and in this environment they set out to preserve the essential aspects of their own vision for marital life as it had come to them from nineteenth-century evangelicalism. They imagined the family as an institution that embodied and taught Christian doctrine and living, displayed the virtues of emotional intimacy and Christian love, and embraced the sacred responsibilities of parenthood. Due to these priorities, conservative Protestants proved cagiest about the versions of “companionate marriage” that asserted the goodness of sexual pleasure outside of marriage, easy access to divorce, and use of birth control to avoid parenthood or limit children to very small numbers. Most conservative Protestant commentators associated these trends with a decline in family-mindedness among Americans, young women in particular. They also suspected that modern Americans were placing the values of pleasure and the individual’s well-being above older religious and social obligations. But their reservations about this vision pushed them toward other, equally contemporary values and into common cause with the experts who took them up. They asserted, first and foremost, that the obligations of marriage and parenthood were taught in the Bible

and ought to inspire enthusiasm on that basis alone. But like some marriage experts, they also embraced the desire for companionship, for some measure of sexual fulfillment, and for a life of significance and personal achievement to be the reasons that young people should consider marriage and parenthood.

To understand how conservative Protestants approached the rise of new cultural and social conditions surrounding marriage in the twentieth century, it is necessary to turn first to the biblical terms in which they understood the institution, then to how they thought the institution met modern needs. Most asserted that the Bible and human experience demonstrated that family was of enduring utility. Cosmically, the institution reflected and symbolized the divine love that existed between God and creation, especially between Christ and the Church. These beliefs prevented conservative Protestants from viewing its worth sheerly in terms of the benefits or happiness it might provide to any single person, but it did allow room for them to view the institution's enduring qualities as the answer to legitimate, contemporary needs.

Conservative Protestants who set out to define and promote marriage in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s believed they were preserving marriage as it had existed since creation, rather than justifying a new model for the institution. They sometimes admitted to historical change, particularly when portraying monogamous marriage in the Christian West as the highest and most civilized form of marriage. But in general they emphasized continuity over change. They regarded the picture of marriage as understood in Hebraic law, the New Testament, and in the Christianized West to be essentially consistent and reflective of humanity's true nature and God's intentions for creation. They argued that
God had personally inaugurated marriage as an institution entered into by one man and one woman, whom God had created to be different and complementary. Most also believed that the Bible's repeated acknowledgment of three human authorities—the family, civil government, and the church—testified to their enduring utility. Of these three, the home stood out as the most fundamental and important. God's first commands had come to a single man and woman; the people of Israel had sprung from a single father; Mosaic law had upheld parental authority. In the New Testament, Jesus had condemned divorce; Paul had praised mothers and grandmothers who passed the faith to their children. Since the home appeared to be an integral part of God's plans in the biblical record, authors had little doubt that it would endure—or would have to be made to endure if society was to survive.36

The conservative Protestant endorsement of marriage had important theological dimensions as well. The recurrence of marriage as a metaphor of God's relationship to God's people suggested that the human longings satisfied in marriage were deep and unchanging enough to reflect transcendent spiritual truths. The prophet Hosea had wed a prostitute in order to deliver an illustration to Israel of the severity of her faithlessness to God. Paul had described the relationship of husbands and wives as a reflection of Christ's care for and leadership of the Church. Jesus and the apostles' use of the metaphor of a bride and bridegroom to describe the church and Christ further cemented this impression. Inspired by these passages, Leila M. Conway wrote effusively to Pentecostal readers of the Latter Rain Evangel in 1918, “The marriage union when rightly consummated,

embodies the deepest and richest in life, and is so sacred and exalted an experience as to be typical of the bond existing between Christ and his church.” Also writing for the *Evangel*, W. E. C. echoed this sentiment, calling the relationship between husbands and wives “living illustrations” that taught “precious eternal truths regarding our possible Relationship to himself and His kingdom.” Martha Boone Leavell waxed eloquent when reflecting on the same mysteries:

> Home, as God intended, is a thing of exquisite beauty. Its various loves, that of parent for child, child for parent, the young for the old, the old for the young,—these loves break like a fractured light through a prism from the great white love of God himself.

If God's Word used marriage to illustrate eternal truths to all generations, it seemed reasonable to assume that the institution of marriage was meant to endure. 37

Scripture also seemed to prove that the institution had in fact survived across time and circumstances. Protestants usually contended that, with the notable exceptions in Genesis and among Israel's kings, the biblical record appeared always to portray monogamous marriage as the norm for Jews and Christians. Ministers were both comfortable and eager to instruct modern Americans to look directly to the marriages of the Bible for guidance and inspiration. In his sermons on marriage, Southern Baptist minister William Boone found godly models in the shepherd woman from Song of Songs, who pursued her true love over the advances of a king; Isaac, who fell in love with his intended when she was brought to him; Jacob, who found in Rachel “a real love match”; and Ruth, who suggested marriage to Boaz. “Some peculiar customs” separated ancient

men and women from the young people of modern America, but Boone believed that their feelings and dilemmas were the same. Clarence E. Macartney, a prominent conservative Presbyterian pastor, expressed the same view in his book *Ancient Wives and Modern Husbands*. “The Bible’s gallery of husbands and wives” included the godly Rebekah, Michael, and Abigail and the ignoble wives of Lot, Potiphar, and Herod; the experience of all were relevant to the concerns of a contemporary woman. “There is no ancient, medieval, or modern in the history of the soul,” he explained. “Ancient wives are as modern as to-day, and modern husbands are as ancient as Adam.”38

Conservative Protestants were convinced that the family’s utility and spiritual importance made the institution relevant to contemporary needs. In consequence, they defended the worth of marriage partly on terms that modern American culture valued: romance, companionship, and the attainment of a satisfying life. For example, Mary Boone Leavell explained the importance of family in terms of both the material and emotional services that family members provided to one another—“protection, economy, procreation, development, and love.” William Cooke Boone identified twin purposes of marriage to be love and procreation. Of the first cause, he asserted “Here is the original human marriage. . . . There was to be the ideal companionship and love of husband and wife for each other.” Jasper Huffman explained that home was “love, character, honor, sacrifice—real human living.” Gerrit Verkuyl insisted that “a complete home is composed of a father, a mother, and their children, united by the ties of love.”39


39 Huffman, 26; Leavell, 13; Verkuyl, 13; Boone, 14-15.
These definitions were borne partly out of a well-established literary tradition among American Protestants to praise the home for the spiritual and emotional ideals it embodied. In his book *The Secret of a Happy Wedded Life* (1941), Nazarene pastor William Greene Heslop exemplified this tendency by filling each chapter with verbal hymns to the glories of “motherhood,” “fatherhood,” and the “Christian home,” complete with poems, famous quotes, and stories from earlier centuries. The highly romantic language to which Heslop was drawn pictured the godly man and woman as paragons and their home as the embodiment of love itself. “Never dying fires are intended to be kindled in the combined hearts of bride and groom,” he waxed, “for of earthly possessions the best is a good wife and the rarest is a strong, happy, and unselfish husband.”

But the picture of the home as a place that bound families together on the basis of mutual affection also reflected the growing importance of companionship to an upcoming generation. For all the evil that divorce visited on the United States, commentators were nonetheless willing to recognize and praise the heightened idealism of Americans to secure the happiness and safety of individuals. This opinion, they sometimes asserted, was a specifically American and Protestant ideal. In 1906, just a week before *The Watchman* published A. C. Dixon's essay articulating his strict position on divorce, the paper also published comments praising the value that American Protestants placed on “the purity of married life.” The Roman Catholic Church, the author asserted, erred on the subject of divorce because it denied the right to divorce for any reason, a position that could only force vulnerable women to suffer. The true remedy to marriage problems and

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divorce lay in redemption of the individual citizen by that true religion which altered the human heart. “Divorce as an evil cannot be stopped by mere legislative control, not by ecclesiastical regulations,” the writer asserted. “There can be no happy marriage or permanent and pure union except between those of good hearts, upright conduct, and mutual love.” Consequently, measures designed to “hold men and women together with their wicked hearts” could ultimately do little good compared to the spread of true Christianity, which could “leaven the mass of society of the principle and spirit that will be a power of unity and peace.”

Two decades later, some conservative Protestants were still advancing this argument. In the Record of Christian Work, Rev. John Gardner likewise decried divorce but embraced the ideals of companionship and cooperation within marriage that many of his contemporaries were embracing. However concerning they might be, he thought that modern conditions had brought about one boon: a greater emphasis on saving marriages by improving them. “Men and women are learning to regard each other more as equals than used to prevail when women had no rights and were compelled to bear with infidelity with no recourse to law,” he observed. The disappearance of the compulsion to remain married meant that the preservation of marriage rested on the improvement of men and women's feelings toward one another. “If men and women would dwell together in recognition of love as a sacred bond, if they would hallow their union, if men refrained from vagrant love and women dwelt in chastity of thought,” he urged, “there would be no desire for divorce.” He therefore offered readers a prayer for the will and grace to forge good home lives based on love, honor, respect, and cooperation: “Almighty God,

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41 Home Circle, Watchman Dec. 22, 1904.

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pour out thy Spirit on the homes of our land! Teach husbands and wives to love, respect, and honor each other! Help parents and children to cooperate in godly living! May our people learn to honor thy laws in all things! In Christ's name. Amen.”

These convictions were also fostered by conservative Protestant interactions with the mainline Protestant conversation about the Christian family. The mainline wing of Protestantism were particularly eager to integrate Christian teaching and social thought with progressive social causes and the findings of social scientists. Accordingly, they were often forthright in describing contemporary institutional and social relations as novel and arguably superior. A. W. Beaven, a pastor in the mainline Northern Baptist Convention and the president of Colgate-Rochester Theological Seminary, argued that what distinguished modern marriage was the near-disappearance of economic, communal, or legal pressures holding them together. “Inner ties” alone kept couples together, making some marriages weaker than they otherwise would have been. On the other hand, successful marriages were enriched by the modern emphasis on personal values and commitment. “The two who remain together in wedded life because of these [inner] ties are themselves developed and are supremely content and happy with home ties,” he observed. These modern marriages not only remained intact on the basis of shared feelings and commitment; they also obtained a greater level of companionship. The subjective comforts they afforded the couple who freely remained together marked


them as superior in many ways from those marriages that had in the past been more secure but less focused on intimacy and fellowship. Ideas like these circulated easily among conservative Protestants: Baptist William Cooke Boone identified Beaven's book as an influence on his own writing; both he and Mary Boone Leavell recommended the title to their readers; readers of the fundamentalist magazine *Record of Christian Work* encountered Beaven's writing on such topics as the future of American womanhood and efficiency in the Christian life.

Conservative Protestants were attracted to the broad idea that couples could take steps to strengthen the invisible ties that held them together. In this belief they were encouraged by a general movement on the part of Americans, especially of marriage experts of the 1920s and 1930s, to stress the importance of careful preparation for marriage. By the end of the 1930s marriage experts were carving out careers as the authors of advice books, as the architects of high school and college courses on marriage, and as benevolent guides offering premarital counseling to couples. One of the tools that emerged from these efforts was an elaborate test by Lewis Terman for measuring the compatibility of potential spouses. Terman argued that marital compatibility was greatest when a man or woman possessed complementary personality characteristics as well as when each conformed to standards of masculinity and femininity. Paul Popenoe, founder of the American Institute of Family Relations, adopted Terman's vision for screening couples. Ernest Burgess, prominent sociologist at the University of Chicago, and Leonard

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Cottrell, Jr. published a study of the leading factors in marital happiness that was based on questionnaires distributed to married couples. These and other efforts expressed the optimism of American efforts for science, as well as for the improvement of marriages.\(^{45}\)

American Protestants readily took to experts' belief that people could prepare for and predict marital success. This was not an entirely new interest: pastors had long warned church members only to marry other practicing Protestants and to prefer virtue over worldly achievements. But in addition to these classic points, some Protestant marital advice authors also argued that couples could increase their chances of cooperation and harmony within marriage by ensuring that one's prospective partner possessed good health and heredity, shared a similar social background, harbored similar expectations for life, and possessed compatible personality traits. A. W. Beaven urged young men to search for wives who possessed good health, cooking and housekeeping skills, rapport with children, good taste, common sense, the ability to laugh, and a vital faith; young women would do well to seek husbands who were respected by other men, had clean blood, good character, and a vital faith. In addition to selecting a partner with a vital Christian faith, William Cooke Boone urged men to seek wives with good health and a capacity for great love and women to seek husbands with good heredity, good homes lives, and good morals. Whatever specific criteria authors chose, they were eager to drive home the point that a sensible assessment of a prospective mate's qualities would make a happier and more harmonious marriage possible.\(^{46}\)


\(^{46}\) Boone, 33-36; 44-47; Beaven, 25-43.
Eugene Watters, the author of a vocational preparation textbook published by the Southern Baptist Convention and recommended for use in Baptist churches and Baptist Young People's Unions, was particularly persuaded that a good checklist could reveal a couple's potential for success. This penchant no doubt sprung from Watters' larger interest in vocational counseling, a field in which the counselor encouraged young people to assess their aptitudes, personalities, interests, and skills before selecting their life's work. Applying this technique to the selection of a marriage partner, Watters urged youth to seek potential spouses whose abilities, ambitions, values, and religious ideals very closely matched their own, a person with whom close cooperation and shared feelings were possible. Watters therefore encouraged potential couples to inventory and compare their physical and temperamental characteristics, vocational interests, objectives in life, family characteristics, tastes, and special requirements. The more closely their goals and proclivities complemented one another, the greater their potential happiness. “The choice of a mate is . . . fraught with as much important consequence as that of choosing one's vocation, often more,” he asserted, and the prevalence of divorce and marital unhappiness was “a symptom” of the fact that too many people lacked the information and guidance to choose a compatible partner. It was important that a couple head off these pitfalls by evaluating their suitability for marriage; in fact, Watters argued that it was unfair for anyone not to ensure that his vocational interests and goals matched the feelings of his potential spouse before setting his mind on marriage. “For well-matched couples . . . no divorce court is needed,” Watters explained. “. . . Life partners, being teammates, should be inspired by the same ideals, interested in the same objectives, each one contributing
something that the other lacks and each inspiring the other. Even if it was with the aid of a clipboard, conservative Protestant advice writers were hopeful practices that guided couples toward more cooperative and emotionally intimate marriages could neutralize the corrosive effects of marital conflict and divorce.47

An important corollary to the idea that inner ties and careful preparation for matrimony held marriages together was the belief that marriage was the normative path to a full and rewarding life. Rightly pursued, the institution was supposed to satisfy basic human needs; alternatives to marriage could not be expected to perform the same service. Authors were particularly eager to believe that this fact was true of the sexual impulse. It seemed evident that sexual desire—especially in the face of the freer youth sexuality of the 1920s and 1930s—tempted people to engage in immoral behavior. But it seemed equally true that sexual desire was an essential part of God-designed human nature that found its proper and best fulfillment inside the institution that God had specifically designed to contain it and give it expression. Advancing this convention required writers to warn young people to beware of two alternatives: indulgence in sexual immorality or the pursuit of celibacy. Against both of these competitors, they argued that only marriage could fulfill the individual’s quest for a satisfying relationship and society's need for institutions to direct the social energies of citizens toward useful ends. It was therefore in the best interest of all physically and psychologically sound persons to marry. In Christ in the Home, Gerrit Verkuyl identified a host of factors that sometimes led young people away from marriage: the Catholic Church's spiritual idealization of celibacy, the

availability of prostitutes and masturbation to satisfy sexual desires, and financial barriers to establishing new households. To counter these influences, he argued that people who avoided marriage should reconsider their reluctance to marry in light of the benefits married life offered: long-term economic advantage, companionship, and a bond of love rooted in “mutual purpose.”

48 Walter Maier mounted a similar case for marriage by citing statistics showing lower rates of death, mental problems, and criminality among men who were married compared to men who were either single or divorced. Likewise, he marshaled anecdotes attesting to the positive influence of marriage on spirituality and success. He attacked the pursuit of greater spiritual attainment in the celibate religious life with special vehemence, faulting clerical celibacy with denigrating marriage and promoting persistent sexual lapses among the church hierarchy. Those values, he asserted, had established a pattern of immorality in medieval society that accounted for its backwardness. If modern materialism succeeded in reestablishing disregard for marriage and promoting lust, the fate of the modern world would be the same. 49

Conservative Protestant authors of sex education books for adolescents and parents also argued that marriage promoted personal health, happiness, and usefulness. Social reformers had been calling for sex education of both sexes for a few decades, since the rise of the social purity movement in the late nineteenth century to combat prostitution and the growth of the sex hygiene movement in the twentieth century. 50

Conservative Protestant pastors had sometimes joined this national conversation by

48 Verkuyl, 14-16, 52.

49 Maier, 15-32.

issuing general admonitions to mothers to relate essential facts to their children or with
“special sermons” relating the danger of venereal disease or the “right to be well-born.”
By the mid-1930s the wisdom of distributing books on these topics began to seem clear.
Between the mid-1930s and the mid-1940s fundamentalist pastor Oscar Lowry,
Mennonite pastor Clayton Derstine, and Missouri Synod doctor Edward Marquardt wrote
early conservative Protestant sex education books for teenagers and parents.

Drawing from nineteenth-century and contemporary sources, they advanced a
number of central arguments. First, they contended that God had designed both men and
women with a sexual instinct, and that sexual feelings impelled individuals toward the
worthy goals of marriage and procreation. Those individuals not compelled by Christian
service or personal obligation to remain single would do wise to marry in order to fulfill
those sexual feelings. Second, they stressed that any alternative exercise of sexual desire
was fraught with danger, if not death. Encouraged by two generations of social hygienists
and public health leaders to curb prostitution and prevent the spread of venereal disease,
all three authors stressed the danger of infection to young people—boys especially—who
sought premarital sex. According to Lowry, a man who visited prostitutes or solicited

51 For examples of “special sermons” given by one fundamentalist minister during the 1920s and
1930s, Henry Stough, see: “Is Marriage a Failure?,” “The Scarlet Man,” “The Story of Life,” “Problems
and Perils of Womanhood,” “Red Lights and Search Lights,” “The Father's Responsibility,” “Your Boy's
Dad,” “Mysteries and Tragedies of Motherhood,” in Ephemera of Henry Stough, Folder 3-6, Billy Graham
Center Archives, Wheaton, Illinois. Broad statements about venereal disease appeared in the preaching of
well-known evangelists as well. For a sermon by Billy Sunday touching venereal disease see Billy Sunday, 
Sunday.

52 Oscar Lowry, A Virtuous Woman: Sex Life in Relations to the Christian Life (Grand Rapids: 
Zondervan Publishing House, 1938); Oscar Lowry, The Way of a Man with a Maid: Sexology for Men and 
Boys (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1940); Clayton Derstine, The Path to Noble Manhood 
(Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1944); Manual of Sex Education for Parents, Teachers, and 
Students (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1943); The Path to Noble Womanhood (Grand 
Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1944); Edward William Marquardt, Why Was I Not Told? (St. Louis: 
Concordia Publishing House, 1939).
sexual favors from women was an unmanly person—a “cowardly cur”—who “not only imperils his whole future life, and that of his wife-to-be, but he also practically elects to acquire a social disease.” Drawing quotes from everyone from nineteenth-century social hygienists Prince Morrow to Surgeon General Thomas Perran, whose book *Shadow on the Land* initiated a New Deal campaign to battle syphilis, Clayton Derstine used the clinical effects of syphilis and gonorrhea as shocking illustrations of the danger of sexual dalliance. Marquardt's medical training fostered a less dramatic description of the risk of infection, which he regarded as a particularly dire threat to personal health and therefore to be diligently avoided. To Marquardt, following the strictures of Christian morality simply made medical sense and was the capstone of a program of personal health that also included sufficient sleep, the avoidance excess of worry, good dental care, a healthy diet, and regular bowel movements. All three authors agreed that the diligent guarding of personal morals, marriage, and fidelity to the marriage bed protected youths and their families from the pain and shame of social disease.53

In addition to these critical points, Lowry and Derstine insisted that personal health and vitality could be sapped by a second extramarital sexual outlet—masturbation, euphemistically termed the “solitary vice” or “self-abuse.” The belief that frequent stimulation of the sex organs led to insanity or to illness had grown out of an older—and discredited—medical model of the body that posited a limited supply of nerve energy supported bodily and mental health and that too frequent sexual excitement or seminal loss could deplete it. Apparently unaware that social hygienists had long since abandoned

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those claims, Oscar Lowry quoted physicians of the previous two generations on the topic. Derstine knew enough to state that the belief masturbation led to madness was a myth, but he still hung on to the idea that one's “life fluid” was a “living treasury” that affected a person's vitality. While he did not think the depletion of those fluids directly caused disease, he still felt that it taxed the nervous system, inhibited digestion, and affected blood circulation. In addition, he feared that the cultivation of lust and an appetite for dirty literature impaired a person's intellectual and vocational development, pushing him toward a life of drifting from job to job and possibly condemning his children to the same fate. Both the risk of masturbation and of venereal disease sent a clear message: a person who wanted to enjoy a full and happy life either had to exercise superb self-control or get married. Perhaps some readers concluded with the Apostle Paul that—spiritually or medically—“it is better to marry than to burn.”

However, for all the stress they placed on the topic, authors thought that fear of vice and its effects were far from the only reason to marry. Derstine, Marquardt, and Lowry took it for granted that most people would find the companionship of marriage and the duty of parenthood attractive. Lowry was particularly effusive about the contribution of the individual to civilization through parenthood. He was deeply taken with the idea, and hoped his readers would also be taken with the idea, that by marrying and rearing children a godly individual could leave a long line of progeny to serve the cause of Christ and to build a strong civilization. On this point, Lowry owed an intellectual debt to positive eugenics, that strain of eugenic thinking that stressed the importance of encouraging “fit” men and women to marry, raise children, and create

home environments that would shape the health and mental life of children. Echoing the
main messages of this branch of eugenic thinking, Lowry praised the value of good
heredity, even invoking the common illustration of breeding quality people, just as a
farmer would breed prize livestock. But he interpreted heredity to mean something quite
different than unalterable genetic destiny. In Lowry's view, heredity described the
mechanism by which God carried out divine promises to prosper the godly “from
generation to generation.” Invoking a second textbook example that eugenicists used to
point to the importance of family history, Lowry cited how the descendants of colonial
thecologian Jonathan Edwards numbered 1394 known persons, of whom “13 were
presidents of leading universities or colleges, 65 were college professors, 60 were
doctors, 100 were ministers, 60 were prominent authors, 100 were lawyers and 30 were
judges. A number were senators, congressmen, mayors of cities and ministers of foreign
countries.” By contrast the lineage of a criminal, Max Jukes, included 903 persons, of
whom “300 children died prematurely, 200 were thieves, 145 drunkards, 90 were
prostitutes, 91 were illegitimate children,” and “480 . . . were suffering from venereal
diseases.”55 The illustration appealed to Lowry, who wanted to know how to create more
fearless, faithful Christians prepared to build lives of consequence.

What excited Lowry was the question of how parents committed to clean living
and the highest ideals of marriage might pass legacies of character, morality, and
successful living on to their children and thereby create a multi-generational legacy. The
laws of heredity, he contended, were none other than the Old Testament principle of
blessings and curses. God had promised that merits or sins of fathers would pass to their

55 Lowry, A Virtuous Woman, 116-117.
children, even on to “a thousand generations that love” God. The Bible had even provided hints as to the mechanism by which this happened. Based on Old Testament family histories, Lowry argued that “ancestral hereditary characteristics” passed primarily to children from their fathers. Clean living and ardent prayer could preserve the health of one's children and might, if Jonathan Edward's descendants were any proof, influence the future course of the nation. Lowry also thought that through the process of nurture, which he believed began at conception, a mother's thoughts and feelings would also make a strong imprint on her children. Lowry looked hopefully at the example of Samuel's mother, who spent her pregnancy praying that her son would become a prophet. He also noted that the mother of General John Sullivan, Governor of New Hampshire, had declared her intention before his birth to “raise governors.” He credited Susanna Wesley with cultivating “the gospel of peace in her heart,” thereby influencing her sons to write hymns and preach brilliant sermons. Henry Ward Beecher received a love for flowers from his mother, who devoted herself to gardening while he was in the womb. Certainly, he pressed, the opportunity to take up such a creative destiny would fulfill the deepest human aspirations. As Lowry put it, “a girl who marries without a willingness to accept this responsibility is sacrificing that which, if rightly borne, will bring her the highest personal development.”

If idiosyncratic, Lowry's particular fascination with eugenic duty reflected the idea of marriage that conservative Protestant leaders usually embraced—and the basis on which they expected it to fulfill individual human needs. If the first divine purpose for marriage was the companionship and unity between husband and wife, the second was

procreation. The larger social function of the Christian family, to create Christian workers who advanced Christ's cause and supported a Christian nation, made this second point important. Moreover, the defense of this belief seemed especially urgent in light of growing trepidation among white Protestants that their slice of the national pie chart—and of the nation's future leadership—was shrinking. By the early years of the twentieth century, it had become obvious that the size of the average American family was falling. In 1800 the United States had been a predominantly agrarian culture in which a typical couple produced several children over the course of their marriage. This picture changed radically over the ensuing 130 years. The growth of a middle class around the nation's urban centers, especially in the North, led couples to restrict their fertility in order to have fewer children and to devote more resources to each. For these families, children were not producers but expensive investments who required emotional nurture, formal education, and financial support over a long adolescence. When this pattern of restricting family size extended to include families in the Midwest and South in the 1870s, the trend toward smaller families became nationwide. In 1903 President Theodore Roosevelt popularized the concept that “race suicide” by respectable Protestant Americans could be imminent. Conservative Protestants were among those who helped to spread this concern, out of their fears that evangelical religious convictions and moral principles were becoming less influential.

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In view of these concerns, conservative Protestant writers pressed couples to see parenthood as a necessary component of the emotionally fulfilling marriages for which they yearned. The avoidance of parenthood, they warned, proved a chief impediment to the achievement of a truly deep and enduring love between husband and wife. Marriage made man and woman “one flesh,” but the birth of children carried parents to new heights of wonder and fulfillment. Popular American poet Eddie Guest, whose poems and book on parenthood made him often quoted in conservative Protestant literature, argued that even the worst heartaches inflicted on parents by children were worth the thrill of parenthood. “Even the infant doomed to die could enrich, if only for a few weeks, the lives of a childless couple, and they would be happier for the rest of their days in the knowledge that they had tried to do something worthy in this world and had made comfortable the brief life of a little one,” he promised. The birth of children could also enrich every facet of domestic life, making it satisfying and worthwhile. Urging childless couples not to cheat themselves out of such happiness, he urged, “If you would make glorious the home you are building; if you would fill its rooms with laughter and contentment; if you would make your house more than a place in which to eat and sleep; if you would fill it with happy memories and come yourselves into a closer and more perfect union, adopt a baby!”

Harold Lundquist shared these sentiments, promising that parenthood would provide marital happiness by raising the purpose of marriage onto a higher plane. “Sad and disillusioned will be the man and woman who make themselves childless, hoping for

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more comfort and pleasure. . . . The soft and tender baby hand has led many a couple to full happiness.” William Cooke Boone concurred, contending that the arrival of children introduced greater challenges and delights into married life than any love nest could deliver. “It is still true, that no home is complete without a baby. No married couple can enter into true glory of love, except as that love is blended and centered in a little child,” he explained. “It is God's plan that marriage should be completed and sanctified in the high privilege of parenthood. That baby is God's gift that enriches and deepens the love of a man for a woman and a woman for a man as nothing else can.” In addition, the satisfaction and sense of shared purpose would stabilize the marriage and help to prevent divorce. “Then it is often true that the coming of children into a home will bring the parents closer together. All of us know of homes that have been literally transformed by the coming of a baby. Husbands and wives who were drifting apart have been brought back by the coming of a little one. Many difficulties have been adjusted, many difficulties that seemed insuperable have been overcome when God has sent the baby. Many a marriage has been saved that would otherwise have ended in failure by the changes wrought by the advent of a child. Any normal man will love a wife more when she is the mother of his child, and the same is true of the woman toward the father of the child.”

Conservative Protestants were more vocal about the glories of parenthood than they were about the more delicate topic of sexual intimacy. Generally, pastors shied away from composing marriage advice manuals that offered specific information about sexual adjustment or sexual technique, a growing genre among marriage experts. Since difficulty with marital intimacy sounded like a medical issue to be discussed with a doctor, most

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60 Lundquist, 151; Boone, 80-81, 87.
viewed such volumes as falling outside of their expertise as doctors of souls. In addition, they regarded most details as quite aside from their main point: they set out to discuss the ideals of marriage and the institution's purpose. Walter Maier judged it “entirely unnecessary to indulge in the intricacies which are often explained in much detail and with the aid of diagrams and profane illustrations.”\(^{61}\) Even the authors of sex education books shied away from mentioning anatomical details, even though their authors promised “frank” discussion and a fearlessness that matched the Bible's own boldness in making “the plainest statements regarding sexual sins and their dreadful consequences that have ever been put into print.”\(^{62}\)

 Nonetheless, authors were at least cryptically willing to assert that sexual pleasure could be a component of the emotional and spiritual bonds that held couples together. Protestant authors ordinarily described sex—much as they described marriage—as both unitive and procreative. Sex therefore had a distinct function and could be regarded as a positive good apart from procreation, even though procreation was the usual and expected result of an active sex life. As J. Grant Anderson explained in his book *Sex Life and Home Problems* (1921), “While it is true that reproduction is the primary purpose of sex, it is not to be assumed that procreation should be the concern of the married persons themselves in the conjugal act, or that the act should not be indulged in except with procreative intent. Such teaching would engender bondage and place mankind in a straight-jacket.”\(^{63}\)

\(^{61}\) Maier, 516.

\(^{62}\) Lowry, *Virtuous Woman*, 5-8.

\(^{63}\) Anderson, 47.
Conservative Protestant opinions on the valid means of family limitation varied, but writers typically recommended an active sex life within which couples controlled fertility through periodic abstinence. Holiness evangelist Julia Shelhamer presented readers of her book *Whispers to Women* with four potential views on limiting family size: to reject any attempt to limit family size, to advocate male self-restraint, to pray for God’s miraculous leading and protection, and to advocate the distribution of birth control. She strongly condemned any attempt by married women to remain childless, and she argued against the use of any birth control method that threatened personal health. Nonetheless, she rejected none of the four views firmly. “We answer [the question of family limitation] in the words of the Bible: ‘Let every (woman) be persuaded in her own mind.’”\(^{64}\) J. Grant Anderson recommended restricting sex to a woman’s safe period to control fertility but warned that birth control devices offended “nature, the laws of God, and civilization.”\(^{65}\) Oscar Lowry argued that use of the safe period was the only form of fertility regulation sanctioned by Scripture, arguing that Leviticus 15:19-33 laid out “positive divine instructions” for using this approach to space children a comfortable three to five years apart.\(^{66}\) The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod taught that attempts to separate sex and procreation were violations of the divine laws implied by the order of creation and the


\(^{65}\) Anderson, 117-119.

command to “be fruitful and multiply” in Genesis 1-2. The most liberal viewpoint came from Walter Maier, who condemned all artificial methods of birth control but suggested that the rhythm method posed an acceptable solution.\textsuperscript{67}

What laity thought of these perspectives—or what pastors recommended privately in special cases—can only be guessed. While Ernest Williams was General Secretary of the Assemblies of God from 1929 to 1949, William Pickthorn wrote him for direction on how to advise a young mother who had been instructed by her doctor to avoid any further pregnancies. Then a young pastor, Pickthorn was uncertain how to answer, and he recouned years later that he was impressed that Williams had written him frankly and so doing “had trusted his reputation in my hands.” Pickthorn never revealed what advice was transmitted, but the closely-guarded content of the correspondence suggests that Williams offered the controversial advice that family limitation through some means was advisable: “He wrote a long letter in reply,” Pickthorn recalled, “which he said he had written by hand because he did not want to involve a secretary. And he asked me to keep confidential what he had written because it had not been confirmed by official policy.” Pickthorn eventually lost the letter; he had kept it separate from the letters stored in his scrapbook because it was “so intensely personal.” Likely there were other pastors who wrestled with these questions. But at least through World War II, official teaching and writing followed a cautious and conservative line.\textsuperscript{68}


In arguing that couples use the woman’s “safe period,” conservative Protestant writers offered limited approval of the least controversial means of controlling fertility. Actual practice varied considerably. The sale of birth control information and devices was regarded as “obscene” under the Comstock laws from 1873 until 1936, when the Supreme Court ruled the Comstock Act could not restrict a doctor from prescribing birth control devices. Nonetheless, both working- and middle-class Americans were using the safe period, coitus interruptus, douching, condoms (available in both animal skin and rubber), IUDs, and “pessary caps” or diaphragms. The rates at which each method was used is unclear, but a lively market existed for selling birth control devices, and couples frequently turned to friends and relatives for recommendations. Doctors offered varying opinions about the methods available, but they often warned the public about the possible safety risks of black market birth control devices.\(^69\) Conservative Protestants who argued that believers should rely exclusively on the “safe period” were likely responding to a number of factors, the first being a habitual conservatism that trusted doctors’ warnings and regarded the trade in explicit information with distrust. The Comstock Laws gave birth control an additional stigma of illegitimacy and made their promotion a controversial and radical act. These factors likely reinforced the preference of conservative Protestant leaders for the “safe period,” because that method placed value on both marital sex and self-control, ideals that fit with conservative Protestants’s belief that impulses and appetites ought to be governed by higher, spiritual principles. By contrast, other birth control methods seemed to be "unnatural" practices that allowed radical thinkers and ordinary people to promote a “new morality” that permitted sexual

\(^{69}\) Tone, 67-90.
immorality without fear of consequences or perpetual childlessness. Commentators branded those who pursued such ends as persons "without natural affection" who turned marriage into "legalized adultery." But sexual intimacy, both as an answer to lust and an opportunity for husband and wife to express their emotional and spiritual affection for one another, appeared to be a positive good.

In fact, Anderson was willing to push somewhat beyond the general language that conservative Protestants usually employed when discussing the inherent goodness and divine design of sexual intimacy. He contended, “IF SEXUAL RELATIONS BETWEEN A HUSBAND AND WIFE ARE NOT RIGHT, ARE NOT HARMONIOUS, EVERY OTHER RELATION OF THEIR LIVES IS AFFECTED—home, children, business, and their usefulness as citizens.” Persons had been created male and female with a need to satisfy their sexual natures. Sex was therefore “a God-given source of the highest pleasure possible.” When placed within the God-ordained institution of marriage, it could reach its “highest physical attainment.” That experience, in turn, fashioned the fullest persons by contributing to their “spiritual and physical development” and granting them access to the creative work of motherhood and fatherhood. Homes in which both the husband and wife understood the importance of sex and enjoyed its blessings supported

the happiness of society as a whole. “In such a home,” he explained, “natural passion is
satisfied, lust is abolished, and true love becomes the stabilizer and harmonizer, and
society is SAFE.”71

Due to the lack of books on marital adjustment by conservative Protestant authors,
it is difficult to know how many persons would have agreed with Anderson's assessment.
However, Assemblies of God Charles Robinson would have concurred. In the mid-1930s
Robinson prepared a manuscript on the topic of sex in marriage and submitted it to fellow
pastors in the Assemblies of God for review. Robinson was partly responding to a faction
of Pentecostal teachers who taught—uncharacteristically for Protestants—that all sex,
including married sex, was worldly. To counter this idea, Robinson argued that the Old
and New Testaments contained many affirmative statements toward marriage and
assumed that sexual union followed and completed marriage. These verses taught that
marriage and marital sex were sacred and the bonds they created were indissoluble.
Therefore, those who argued that married persons should remain chaste toward one
another perpetuated a grave error. They effectively advocated divorce, because they asked
married persons to cease the sexual consummation that God had already declared
necessary to making marriage complete. In addition, they set people on a course contrary
to human nature. Both Scripture and practical experiences taught that most persons were
not suited to perpetual chastity. If denied sexual satisfaction in marriage, many would
eventually turn in desperation to adultery. Even those who avoided falling into temptation
still faced a sad fate. A husband and wife who felt sex to be against God's will were

doomed to labor under a burden of guilt that harmed their marriage and undermined their faith. Thus, marital sex was not only proper and right; it was also a positive force for good in the lives of individuals. 72

Out of this conviction, Robinson turned from the topic of heretical teaching to a more universally applicable topic: the importance of sexual adjustment to the larger American problem of divorce. Robinson asserted that unhappiness in marriage had caused numerous divorces and turned children to a life of crime. In addition, he related that “a number of our higher institutions of learning” were teaching young people that “there is nothing wrong or disgraceful about breaking marriage vows.” In view of rising divorce rates and rampant sexual immorality, he urged Pentecostal men and women to “support the God-ordained institution of marriage by each pair making their own union a shining success and an evidently delightful experience.” Sex, he felt, was an important component of that venture. “I assert that husbands and wives should be happy together – so happy together that it actually hurts, because the joy of their union is so great.” 73

In order for husband and wife to be happy together, Robinson thought that marital sex ought to meet both the husband's and wife's needs. “Connubial bliss” could be obtained when couples used Scriptural commands to ensure that their behavior was guided by “self control, patient forbearance, heart purity, absolute unselfishness, and perfect love.” To meet these high standards, Robinson urged couples to follow “the

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73 Robinson, 3-8.
Golden Rule” in considering each other’s physical needs, especially in cases where the wife's health or feelings led her to abstain. In cases where the decision seemed unclear, the husband and wife might pray for guidance and praise God for “this great blessing given by Him richly to be enjoyed.” Robinson thought once a month best, but he judged twice a month to be more practicable for most couples. This two-week guideline would ensure that sex was pursued only out of love and earnest purpose, rather than “gluttony.” It also ensured that wives were not so often pursued by their husbands that they became annoyed. This observance of the Golden Rule, if somewhat out of touch with the emerging cultural perceptions of a more assertive female sexuality, was an attempt by Robinson to ensure that both parties would enjoy the sexual experience. “If a man every time he passes a restaurant speaks of his desire to go in and have a meal, and is prone to talk longingly about how he would like to put his feet under a well-spread table he is not a normal Christian man,” Robinson explained. “If a woman had a husband like that she would be annoyed if not disgusted with him. For a greater reason she had the right to be provoked if her husband every time he comes near her has something to say about how well he would enjoy engaging in the Marital Relation.” Robinson thought the husband would do better to court her in the interim, since “women want variety.” By proceeding in his manner, couples could make sex into great earthly joy, which Robinson compared to the heights of religious experience. He surmised that marital relations could be like enjoying a fine banquet held at intervals. It would begin like a prayer service, with holy prayer and thanksgiving; it would then proceed as “a sacred ceremony” and a “delectable feast” for which both parties had thoughtfully prepared. By seeking to realize this picture
of marital intimacy, believers were acting in accordance with I Timothy 6:16, which read, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.”

In communicating his particular vision of Pentecostal piety, companionship, and sexual intimacy in married life, Robinson asserted—as many advice writers broaching the topic of marriage tended to do—that Americans might respond to the more tumultuous national conversation on marriage and the greater choices open to them by retaining older ideals of marital companionship and Christian parenthood. By pursuing them more diligently and by strengthening the inner commitment to them, their potential to create human happiness and build civilization would renew American faith in the institution of marriage and guarantee its future.

**Experiencing God’s Will and the Decision to Marry**

While conservative Protestants were eagerly recommending marriage and parenthood to youth on the basis of its rewards, the expansion of opportunities for women to become the foot soldiers in missions-minded conservative Protestant communities fostered an important parallel conversation. As the previous two chapters have recounted, the lives of conservative Protestant women were reshaped by the same forces that were redefining women’s freedoms and work across American culture. The older picture of separate spheres had collapsed before new realities: women had access to a wider range of work, albeit largely work pegged as “feminine” and afforded smaller wages; women more often mixed with men at school and during recreation; beginning in 1920 women

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74 Robinson, 24-38.
had the vote. While most conservative religious persons emphasized the importance of differences between the sexes and asserted male authority as an important scriptural principle, they were creatures of their cultures and believers with a mission. Young, single women in fundamental, Pentecostal, Southern Baptist, and Lutheran churches took advantage of the jobs open to them. Meanwhile, their denominations and religious movements encouraged them to obtain Bible school educations, volunteer for church ministries, and enter full-time Christian service.

These structural changes had consequences. When they dovetailed with long-established and growing religious idealization of marriage as an enriching experience and a social relation held to the highest of standards, they encouraged some of their most ardent church members to wrangle with a variety of potential religious callings. A single woman could conclude that God had called her to remain single for the sake of the gospel; she could conclude that God had called her to wed a minister or a missionary and to accept the special opportunities and requirements of that life; or she might conclude that God had called her to become a wife and mother whose prayers and love sustained her family and the church. The most dedicated young people, especially if they were fundamentalist, holiness, or Pentecostal believers, learned to view these decisions as opportunities to discover God's loving and perfect desire for their individual life and to enter into greater fellowship with God through submission to God's will. One chose a vocation for God, not for self-gratification; nonetheless, self-sacrifice proved attractive in part because of the rewards it promised. Advocates of the “Spirit-filled” or the “triumphant life” portrayed the subjective experience of operating under the direction of
the Holy Spirit, of serving God, and of advancing the gospel as superior to all earthly joys. Whether they became wives or forsook the comforts of home, the stories that fundamentalist, holiness, and Pentecostal women told about their courtships and marriage reflected this expectation that marriage could become a conduit through which profound spiritual insight and satisfaction could flow.

Free Methodist evangelist Julia Shelhamer, a married woman and the author of advice books for married men and women, learned from her mother that marriage ought to take a backseat—even if a privileged backseat—to the believer's personal quest for God. Shelhamer's mother had lived what most holiness or fundamentalist believers would have regarded as an exemplary life. She had married a man who shared her faith; he moved the family frequently, but generally sustained modest but respectable lines of work. Shelhamer's mother remained committed to her husband for life, and she bore five daughters, every one of whom entered Christian service as an adult. Nonetheless, this respectable life story contained what both Shelhamer and her mother regarded as one great disappointment. When young, Shelhamer's mother had felt a powerful calling to Christian work as a teacher to the children of black freedmen. She had instead forsaken her call in order to marry. Shelhamer reported that as a “backslider,” her mother had never felt fully satisfied on account of “her wasted life.”

Young Shelhamer, who came of age at the turn of the century, learned from her mother's mistake. At seventeen, she recorded in her journal that too many of her friends were too eager to marry before they had engaged in useful service to God:

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Some of my girl friends are quite taken with the idea of match-making—not phosphorous matches—there would be more profit in making that kind. They say there is no harm in having 'friends,' of course they mean beau. This has led some to marry, and they have deeply regretted it since. I don't see why an ambitious girl wants to marry anyway, so young. Why not take up some line of work that will help make the world brighter and better?\textsuperscript{76}

When young men showed an interest in her, she distrusted the ordinary motivations, however well-intentioned, that could inspire such attention:

\begin{quote}
Tuesday night: Just turned down an ambitious young man who, when I asked him to the altar at the service tonight, dropped a word to let me know his esteem for me. I'll never ask him to the altar again, since he's more interested in \textit{me} than he is in Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{77}
\end{quote}

If the decision to marry were made, Shelhamer believed it would have to accord with her own quest to live in Christ's presence and to do God's will through Christian service. The only match who could meet that criteria was a man whose own work and highest ideals matched her own. She eventually found occasion to embrace “two lovers, my dear, ever faithful Savior and the angelic creature He sent me to be a comfort and support to my life.” Her angel was a fellow Christian worker busy in the field of preaching. His suitability for her, and her for him, lay in their shared relationship to the only force that could bind two persons together in full concord and mutual purpose: Christian service and a thirst for holiness. That spiritual intensity guided Shelhamer for the rest of her life. In 1951 a recently-widowed Shelhamer—then a vivacious woman of seventy years—was running church services with her older sister in one of Washington, DC's worst neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{78}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[76]{Shelhamer, \textit{Trials}, 39.}
\footnotetext[77]{Shelhamer, \textit{Trials}, 39.}
\footnotetext[78]{Shelhamer, \textit{Trials}, 50; “Religion: The Lord Jesus Will Answer,” \textit{Time} February 12, 1951.}
\end{footnotes}
Other faithful women chose to remain single. Like Shellhamer, Methodist and fundamentalist educator Lois Gregory benefited from a family history of women in Christian service. Her mother, Esther Carroll Gregory, had in her youth cultivated an interest in Christian work. This interest gave rise to a misunderstanding between her and her suitor Elmer Gregory, the man who later became her husband. Esther confessed to her future husband that she was uncertain of his feelings; she also feared that if she married, Elmer might expect her to abandon her desire to remain active in Christian service. Elmer's few surviving papers reveal him to have been an advocate of women's suffrage, and it was in this spirit that he responded to her concerns. In a letter crafted to bring reconciliation between himself and Esther, Elmer wrote to reassure her of his intentions and feelings for her. He also explained that he would “not stand in the way of any plans of life work.” These words proved persuasive: Esther married him and served for many years as a teacher. She also kept the letter, which passed into the possession of her daughter, Lois. The top of the letter bears an annotation in Lois' handwriting: “A letter from Elmer Gregory to Esther Carroll (Gregory) at 20 years of age saying that he would not stand in the way of any plans of life work.” When the critical promise came dangerously close to fading from the fragile letter, Lois traced over the her father's pledge in pencil in order to preserve it.79

When Lois herself embarked on a career as a Christian educator, her mother could not have been more pleased. The voluminous correspondence from mother to daughter provided ongoing encouragement of Lois' calling, urging her never to flag and to confront

79 Essay concerning woman's suffrage, by Elmer Gregory (1887) and Letter from Elmer Ellsworth Gregory to Esther Carroll, n.d., Box 2:8, Papers of Lois Vashti Gregory, Billy Graham Center Archives, Wheaton, IL.
the challenges before her with “the courage of a man.” On the back of corrected student work, letters from Bible Institutes and Chautauqua conferences, and business letters from rural Pennsylvania, Esther provided her daughter with advice on a variety of matters: discerning her calling to home missions, overcoming distraction and discouragement, confronting doctrinal controversies, praying effectively, selecting teaching methods, motivating teenage students, and making effective altar calls. Despite her own good luck, she also cautioned Lois against marriage. “A single woman will be lonely because God has made her to be a perfect equal partner... but it is nothing [compared] to the loneliness of a married woman who invariably finds she is considered an underling in every way,” she warned. “No matter how many deny it, every man considers woman an inferior, taken off guard he always admits it.” Often relegated to the home and to only a small part of their husbands' lives, most wives could not enjoy the marital partnerships for which God has fashioned them. In her daughter's case, Esther thought the results might be tragic:

But I don't believe you will meet the man that will make you a happy wife. Not that you are critical or expecting perfection, but because men today are not living up to the highest that is in them... And a woman, especially one that is a creator, cannot be satisfied that her very best work, yea the product of tears and anguish and pain and toil and fatigue and loving care day after day, shall be ruined by careless work of someone else, her necessary partner and ever present companion.

Lois may have reached the same conclusion: she never married.80

Obedience to God sometimes necessitated a higher life that excluded marriage, even for believers who desired a mate. One story publicized by Revivaltime evangelist

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80 Letter from Esther Carroll Gregory to Lois Gregory, Box 2:3, Papers of Lois Vashti Gregory, Billy Graham Center Archives, Wheaton, Illinois. The letter is incomplete and undated but probably written sometime in the 1920s. General topics of conversation between mother and daughter populate a significant portion of this collection; see folders 1:12, 2:1, 2:2, and 2:3.
C.M. Ward reflected the attitude toward the place of decisions about marriage in the Christian life long instilled in young Pentecostals. Thirty-five and still single when *Choosing Rather* appeared in 1958, the anonymous writer explained that she had met a young “born again” and Spirit-baptized Christian and youth leader from another Assemblies of God church. Intrigued, she agreed to start correspondence with him. All seemed fine until she felt God telling her at that summer’s camp meeting “to place this young man on the altar”—that is, to be willing to give him up. She was still conflicted about this revelation when a mutual friend revealed that the object of her affections, though converted and a “splendid Christian,” had also previously been married. When confronted, the young man explained that he believed his previous wife to be dead. Uneasy but in love, Anonymous persisted with the relationship, until her suitor eventually proposed marriage. “He seemed to be,” she recalled, “the symbol of my highest ideals.” These ideals included high aspirations for the home she would one day find. She explained that she had high expectations for home life—a family altar and a husband who could inspire her affection and respect. She was determined only to consent to marriage when she felt these expectations could be met:

> I have always had the highest ideals. Sometimes girls at the office thought they were too high. I have always said that should I ever marry I really wanted to respect the one I married. . . . Long ago I decided I would never marry anyone who was not genuinely born again. I would want the family altar before any other comfort in life.

Anonymous eventually decided not to marry her suitor, and she imbued this decision with equally immense spiritual significance. Finally, she explained in her testimony, it became clear that her love's first wife still lived. This knowledge forced a
choice: would Anonymous accept his proposal anyway? It was evident that they shared similar ideals; the former marriage did not show any hope of restoration. One of Anonymous's family members told her that good Christians in similar circumstances had stayed with their intended. But for Anonymous, these answers could not offer satisfaction; to enjoy fellowship with God, she would have to run her life by God's standards. Despite her sadness, prayer enabled her to prevail against “accusations and reasonings of the Devil” and the temptation he offered to “smear my Christian testimony.” Despite her heartache over the break-up, she viewed her trials as important tests of her faith, something all believers should expect. To triumph and to look to God rather than men for fulfillment became a way to experience God. “I never thought I would have to make such a decision,” she shared. “Now that it is over I marvel at God's grace.”

The availability of secular and religious employment as well as unassailable spiritual justification for remaining single enabled women to remain single until they saw an opportunity to find a match that seemed to promise spiritual fellowship and a sense of connection to God's will. This spiritual and economic power to choose her marital status promoted the ideal that marriage ought to reward women who chose to accept marriage and motherhood. Those few women whom God had called to a single life lived in the personal knowledge of living and working in obedience to God's will; those who continued Christian work through partnering in a husband's ministry did the same. Given these comparison points, it did not seem too much to some to suggest that those who embraced the more ordinary calls of wifehood and motherhood ought to be recognized
for their commitment, possibly their willingness to sacrifice the other options open to them. For example, the Church of God—Cleveland's youth publication *Lighted Pathway* noted that because women had the expectation of happiness and self-development outside of marriage, the suitor who asked her to settle down with him owed her respect and love.

“She turns away from her father who would have spent thousands of dollars for the furtherance of her education should she desire to remain at home,” the article explained. “She becomes his wife and as the years pass she makes the supreme sacrifice of motherhood. Then for a man after he has asked the beautiful girl to make all this sacrifice for him to turn and treat her unkindly is an unspeakable shame.”

**Imagining the Christian Romance**

The conservative Protestant dialog with the mainstream American relational ideals of romance and companionship in courtship and marriage extended as well to some of its most widely disseminated social commentary: Christian novels for young adults. Pastors and concerned parents had long worried about the moral content of popular literature, and the appearance of inexpensive dime novels and magazines that purportedly glorified crime, immorality, and questionable pastimes only heightened their reservations. Religiously-inspired fiction, an equally long tradition, seemed an attractive tool to counter the influence of mainstream literature because of its ability to entertain, evangelize, and indoctrinate. Authors of Christian novels found ample interest from conservative publishers like Moody and Zondervan; conservative Protestant periodicals

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such as *Moody Bible Institute Monthly* and the *Sunday School Times* carried numerous advertisements for such novels, reviewed them favorably, and recommended them as Christmas gifts.

The popularity and purpose of Christian novels made them one of the most influential venues through which conservative Protestants articulated what aspects of mainstream ideas about romance and marriage were appropriate for Christians. Authors viewed them as opportunities to communicate pressing messages to youth. It was impossible for a reader to miss the importance that authors placed on proselytizing: they rehearsed conservative Protestant beliefs about sin and the necessity of being born again, often a number of times in the same novel. They also treated readers to long conversations or even entire sermons that left little doubt about the evils from which they were being saved: atheism, theological modernism, evolution, crime, drinking, unchristian pastimes, and all those sins that afflicted society and destroyed personal happiness. These messages were repeated in the lives of the novel's characters. Unsaved youth indulged in frivolous pastimes and ridiculed Christians for being “old-fashioned”; once saved, those who converted saw the emptiness and foolishness of dancing, movies, drink, heavy make-up, and fashionable clothing. Youth whose moral instincts remained undeadened recoiled instinctively at the shallowness, irreverence, and artificiality of non-Christians. As the power of God's grace advanced through the lives of characters, love overcame immorality and lust, service to God replaced self-aggrandizement, respect for law triumphed over crime, and high romantic ideals replaced the pursuit of cheap exchanges of affection.
Consistent with the spiritual message of the novels, Christian romance stories were crafted to sanction young people's fascination with the prospect of courtship and marriage, all the while downplaying worldly standards about love in favor of Christian ones. A sampling of what a young person typically encountered in these novels can perhaps be best gauged by examining what a teenage girl in the summer of 1945 might have read if she had selected four novels featuring romantic stories published over the past decade from major conservative Protestant publishing houses: *Romance of Fire* by Paul Hutchens (Eerdman's, 1934); *Glorious Triumph* by Louise Harrison McCraw (Zondervan, 1937); *Blind Clamour* by J. Wesley Ingles (Zondervan, 1938); and *Dawn: A Novel of Hope* by Newman Watts (Moody, 1944).

The main message of each novel was religious from start to finish, but the young reader of these four novels would still have enjoyed romantic moments experienced between a main character and a love interest whom he or she would one day marry. In *Romance of Fire*, Betty, daughter of a long-deceased, born-again father and recently-deceased mother, flees her stepfather, a leader of the Chicago underworld who plans to kill her. Her flight lands her in the company of Gerald, a cab driver, university student, and atheist who has rejected the Christian faith of his mother, a widow and Christian writer; Tim, a born-again paper boy and amateur sleuth; and Rev. and Mrs. Raynor, who run a city mission in heart of Chicago. Betty's motley group of friends set out to protect her and unravel the secret surrounding the underworld's interest in her, a quest that brings them face-to-face with the high cost of unbelief in America (criminal behavior, violence, and death) and to the discovery that Betty's father had possessed rights to a valuable mine.
in which the underworld has an interest. Only Betty, his heir, stands between the criminals and vast fortune. Meanwhile, only Gerald's unbelief stands between his eternal salvation and romance with the newly-converted Betty. As he moves toward faith in Christ, he shares breathtaking views of the Rocky Mountains with Betty, saves her from kidnapping and likely rape, and gazes at a newspaper clipping that contains her picture. His conversion midway through the novel brings him to the realization that he is in love with her. After their adventures come to an end, he and Betty enter the same Bible institute in order to train for ministry. There, they discuss their feelings for one another in a rowboat on a placid lake graced by bird calls. Having bested dangerous criminals and consecrated themselves to Christian service, the two look forward to an full and useful life together.

Other heroes and heroines confronted the choice to pursue love according to the world's standards or to search for it through a personal commitment to Christian living and service. The novel *Glorious Triumph* follows the spiritual and romantic journey of Betty, a young teacher from a respectable southern family who discovers that her growth toward a full knowledge of God helps to guide her through the challenges her romantic life presents to her. At the start of the novel, the young and highly eligible Betty is being pursued by Dr. Tom Martin, a young doctor of exceptional talent. Betty does not at first encourage his interest, but his persistence and worshipful adoration of her slowly cause her to fall hopelessly in love. Her later acceptance of his marriage proposal sets her on a path toward an arrangement her peers and small town believe is ideal: an entirely sensible match to a man of means and social standing that is graced by intense mutual affection.
However, Betty soon finds that Tom’s and her lack of strong faith will set her life off of its planned course. She learns that Tom has been overly familiar with other women while traveling in his worldly and more sophisticated New York circle. When she protests the fact in a harsh letter, Tom chides her for overreacting and, finding that she is not placated, abruptly calls off their engagement. Betty will later come to understand that her girlish desire to be romanced and her impulsive jealousy were the expressions of an immature and unregenerate heart, while Tom's callous attitude reflected his lack of faith. Years later, she learns that this deficiency has turned him into a sophisticated but cynical person.

However, at the time of her jilting, Betty does not possess this spiritual insight. After her disappointment, she begins to read books on prayer and the Christian life gifted to her by her sister. Under the direction of the books, she discovers that mere church attendance does not constitute a vital religious faith. This discovery prompts Betty to turn to God in saving faith and sets her on a long trek toward understanding God's will for her life. Conversion grants her comfort, but not, at first, love. For a long time, her immaturity in the faith is reflected by her seemingly dried up romantic prospects. For two years, she prays that Tom will experience a change of heart and come to visit her; he never shows up, despite occasional rumors that he may still be interested in her. Meanwhile, an old widower attempts to court Betty, much to her chagrin. She cannot find a good way to discourage his interest, but she also feels no affection for the man, whom she finds physically repulsive. Only when Betty experiences a deeper faith borne out of personal suffering and many hours of prayer do her prospects improve.
Betty's situation gradually improves as her growing faith make her a more spiritually-minded person and a caring teacher. Just as everyone begins to consider Betty almost an old maid at twenty-five, the qualities Betty is developing attract the attention of a son from one of her town's best-respected families. A businessman with a respect for traditional values, Peyton Beverly, calls on her for several months. Betty realizes that he does not share her deep Christian faith, but she grows to respect him; when he proposes marriage, she considers accepting his offer. However, despite the fact that she feels his offer may be her last chance at marriage, Betty resists the temptation to marry her beau. As an increasingly mature believer, Betty has come to recognize God instructs her only to marry another believer and that Peyton's sheerly conventional esteem for a good woman's piety will not encourage her to live a life increasingly dedicated to God or to enjoy the unity of heart she desires with her husband.

Although everyone in town would consider Betty's decision to be mad, she soon finds that her obedience to God will carry her toward a marriage based on a deep love rooted in an intense, shared religious faith. Without knowing it, Betty takes the first steps toward meeting her future husband when she begins to look for ways to share her growing faith with others. Over time, she develops the conviction that God may want her to begin writing spiritually-minded stories for children and sets herself to the task. Her efforts are rewarded: she is delighted when a prominent Christian magazine begins to publish her work, and more delighted still when the magazine's editor visits her home to offer her a job. The job offer carries her to Philadelphia, where life in a Christian boarding house bring her face-to-face with other believers dedicated to Christian work.
The new job also allows Betty to get to know the magazine's editor, Alfred Steele. Like Betty, he is still single, and his own suffering has brought him a religious faith as intense as hers. In this new friendship, Betty finds that her faithfulness to the Christian life and her long wait for a man she can love on the deepest of levels have finally paid off. Unlike her previous relationships, Betty finds that her friendship with Alfred develops on spiritual grounds. Accordingly, she finds that she experiences none of the hesitancy that dogged her earlier courtships, nor does she find her hopes dashed. When Alfred confesses his love several months later, Betty finds herself irresistibly drawn into his arms, blushing.

Warren, the protagonist of *Blind Clamour*, also passes through a journey toward a deeper faith and romance. Like Betty, he discovers that his worldly fiancee, Lorraine, is a poor match for him. Warren has recently discerned a call to enter the ministry, but Lorraine has no intention of becoming a pastor's wife. His engagement broken, the disheartened Warren leaves town for a ministerial internship that will present him with difficult questions about suffering, death, and the depth of his faith. Meanwhile, Lorraine learns that she is pregnant and attempts to pin responsibility on the innocent Warren, nearly ruining his career as a minister before it begins. Warren plods through each of these struggles, all the while developing an attachment to the daughter of the family with whom he is boarding. Warren's attraction to Anne is based partly on her merits: unlike Lorraine, she is modest and pious. She also proves a true friend who supports Warren even when Lorraine's accusations cast doubt on his character. In addition, the sheer thrill of mutual attraction is at work. In one encounter between the two, Anne playfully
attempts to force her guest to sit down, which results in a moment of sexual tension. “At first he was surprised by her strength,” the narrator revealed, “Then suddenly, in that brief struggle with her plait young body he became fully aware of her sex, her utter attractiveness. Something inexplicably dynamic had passed between them.” Spiritual compatibility and that “something inexplicably dynamic” eventually lead the pair to the church altar.

Similarly, in *Dawn* a secular life fosters only amusement, while faith brings true love. The novel follows the heroine Dawn as she leaves her first, secular suitor for a Christian life and marriage to a handsome evangelist. At the opening of the novel, Dawn is the daughter of a prominent British businessman, politician, and avowed atheist. She is also a spitting image of the stereotype of modern youth against which conservative Protestants railed: she has seduced a young man into sleeping with her, enjoys dances, drinks liquor, and covers her room with movie posters. Her boyfriend Reggie, who has just proposed marriage to her, is an equally worldly man and a successful leader in Parliament. However, deep down Dawn is not satisfied. She does not feel a strong emotional attachment to her amiable and prominent boyfriend and has to ask for time to consider his marriage proposal.

As it turns out, Dawn's consideration of Reggie's offer of marriage does not even survive her walk home. As she crosses town, a strong, masculine voice arrests her attention. She follows it into a local hall, which she finds has been rented to a handsome evangelist whose rhetorical skills demand her unwilling admiration. Instantly, the unchurched Dawn is convicted of all her sins and feels compelled to repent and change.

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her life; this decision also ends any chance of her consenting to marry her parliamentary suitor. Instead, her powerful but unacknowledged attraction to the evangelist, an American named Greyson, ensures that romantic tension pervades the novel and propels her to Christian service. She will have to outwit her father's attempts to keep her from revival meetings, thwart her spurned boyfriend's attempts to sabotage the meetings, resist temptation—and ultimately fall in love with Greyson and support him in his evangelistic work.

These stories expressed the desire of Conservative Protestant leaders to encourage the romantic aspirations of youth while warning them about the dangers of unbelief, selfishness, and moral laxity. A young person who read each of the novels above encountered four cautionary tales warning that secular young people's interest in success, wealth, fashion, and entertainment were ultimately shallow and self-defeating. Such pursuits led neither to the soul's salvation nor true love. In Romance of Fire, the marriage of a widow to a wealthy criminal nearly ends the life of her daughter; in Glorious Triumph, Blind Clamour, and Dawn, engagement to successful and wealthy people offers main characters a path straight into respectable marriages and comfortable lifestyles that cannot ultimately satisfy them. The authors consistently drove home a central point: A young person who wanted to be happy and win true love had to turn to God. The novels themselves spelled out what a young person yearning for a good life might do so.

Yet even as novels stiffly condemned young people's typical interests, they also laid out an alternative, Christian way to experience romance, win a marriage partner, and live a full and happy life. The failed relationships in each novel provided a foil against
which authors contrasted true Christian romance. Unlike a worldly courtship and marriage, Christian romance grew out of the future spouses' shared commitment to personal holiness and Christian service. Novelists were careful to establish that their main characters had experienced a definite conversion before their relationships began. Novelists also established that their main characters either had never shared or had definitely abandoned the worldly values and pursuits of their secular peers. For example, in *Glorious Triumph*, Betty's spiritual development takes place over a few years before she meets her future husband. In that time, she loses interest in parties or meaningless banter and learns to become increasingly sensitive to God's priorities. In *Dawn*, Dawn's conversion, decision to forgo all her worldly pursuits, and romantic interest in the evangelist Greyson all spring into existence simultaneously. But in each case, the spiritual faith and priorities of the future lovers are clearly established. Their unfolding Christian lives and involvement in ministry drive the plot of the novels—and ultimately become the well that waters a satisfying life and a deep romantic connection to an attractive mate.

Authors further critiqued the secular pursuit of marriage for its merely selfish rewards by picturing the fruits of the ideal and truly fulfilling marriage to be greater service to God and of inestimable benefit to civilization. In the artistic visions of all four authors, a vital faith did not only present a chance for true romance but also provided a framework within which a believer's marriage became the well-spring of soul-saving and civilization-renewing revival. Over the course of the novels, young believers invariably dedicated themselves to sharing their testimonies, witnessing to friends, preaching, and volunteering for local ministries. At the novels' conclusions, Gerald and Betty are
preparing to enter the ministry; Alfred and Betty are publishing quality Christian literature and sending the proceeds to African missions; and Warren and Anne are on their way to service as a pastor and pastor's wife. These activities brought couples together; their relationships also propelled them into further, effective ministry. In each of the novels, the future husbands decide to enter Christian service; the women who agree to marry them understand full well that they, too, are choosing to embrace a life of ministry.

The national and global importance that conservative Protestant authors attached to these private commitments are brought out most strikingly in Dawn. Published three years after the United States entered World War II, Dawn imagined how revival among just a few souls brought together by shared faith and true love might shift the fate of the postwar world. At the beginning of the novel, Greyson is relatively unknown. His initial obstacles lie in reaching the souls who gather at his small revival meetings and in overcoming attempts by Dawn's father and friends to disrupt his services. As a new believer, Dawn struggles to live her Christian life despite the disapproval of her father and all her friends. As a result of these struggles, a trickle of people in Dawn's hometown, including some of her friends, convert to faith in Christ. Having fallen in love, Dawn and Greyson marry. However, none of these events seem to have any power over the stark social realities that form the backdrop of the novel. Europe has been devastated by war, thousands of people are out of work, and labor agitation in England is fierce. Most citizens believe that Christianity has nothing useful to say about these problems and is responsible for causing wars throughout history. But in the final chapters of the novel, the faithfulness of the novel's two main characters sets off an unexpected chain of events.
Events that for Greyson and Dawn seem only personal and local quickly become worldwide in influence. Greyson's faithful labors in England bring him the opportunity to conduct a preaching tour in the United States and to preach over the radio, enabling him to teach audiences of many thousands. In these venues, the Holy Spirit uses Greyson's passion for the gospel and verbal acumen to stir hearts. A revival begins. Back in Britain, Dawn's influential father hears one of Greyson's radio broadcasts and repents of his sins. Together, he and an overjoyed Dawn launch a plan to solve England's problems. They recognize that most of their wealth has come from dishonest business dealings, and they conclude that by giving it away they can alleviate poverty in England and satisfy the demands of England's laborers. When Dawn's father announces his conversion to Parliament and his decision to make his fortunes available to the State, his gesture causes other politicians and business leaders to follow his lead. Meanwhile, the spread of the gospel has dissolved the social and political turmoil launched by communists and the Labor Party. Several Labor Party leaders repent and “see the pathetic folly” of their political ideologies. Leaders on both sides of the political spectrum recognize that social change cannot take place by championing the cause of social classes but instead by seeking spiritual renewal. In their speeches, prominent Labor leaders state firmly that “there can be no social word without spiritual rebirth” and “all that is good about Communism is in Christianity.” Accordingly, they call off the nation's strikes and offer government and business leaders a more realistic compromise. As news spreads that the gospel is building a kinder and more charitable political order in Great Britain, revival also breaks out in Germany, France, China, and the Soviet Union.
Conclusion

If highly fanciful, the story *Dawn* reveals some the greatest hopes and dearest priorities of conservative Protestants, especially for fundamentalists and others steeped in American evangelicalism's revivalist heritage, during the 1930s and '40s. Living in a modern world they thought was deeply hostile to the gospel message and moral values, they stressed the importance of personal commitment to Christ, beginning with Christian conversion and carried forward in Christian living and spreading the gospel. A principled and discerning separation from and opposition to the corrosive influences of modern unbelief, wealth and self-interested gain, and immorality were part and parcel of this commitment. In light of rising divorce rates and other home problems, love and marriage appeared to be key grounds on which conservative Protestantism’s war against shallow and selfish values had to be fought. Accordingly, conservative Protestants also expected love and marriage to be an area in which conservative Protestants expected the gospel's power to work dramatically by breaking the power of sin and making a triumphant life possible.

This outlook fueled conservative Protestant's own “great expectations” for family life. Seizing upon their historic interest in a high-minded home life, conservative Protestants who wrote about the family during the 1930s and early 1940s pictured the redeemed emotional and spiritual life of individual believers as a source of new strength to marriages and a source of personal delight. Advice writers, idealistic Christian workers, and novelists alike believed that the power individuals expressed in the most private and important areas of their lives would demonstrate the efficacy of the gospel,
prosper the church, and spill over into the collective life of local communities and entire nations. Whenever they repeated this message, conservative Protestants advanced a critique of modern life and values, particularly of economic prosperity devoid of older, spiritual values. But they also advanced a conversation that enabled believers to express their discomfort with recent, rapid social change at the same time that they were participating in middle-class communities and internalizing their most elemental ideals about romance, marriage, and the therapeutic value of private life.
CHAPTER FOUR

“HERE COMES THE PRIDE!”: CONSERVATIVE PROTESTANTS AND MODERN FAMILY LIFE

Writing for Lutheran youth in 1927, Walter Maier observed that modern American wedding trends verged toward the zany, the irreverent, and the self-indulgent. Many nuptials included extravagant displays of wealth. Others sought novelty, excitement, or proof of individuality. Heavy make-up and expensive dresses gave the impression of a fashion show. Thrill-seeking brides and grooms married aboard aquaplanes, in churches filled with canine guests, and on softball fields. Americans thought they were celebrating marriage, but Maier suspected that they were celebrating only themselves. The general impression conveyed by modern ceremonies was not “‘Oh, Here Comes the Bride,’” but 'Here Comes the Pride.’”

Maier thought that Christian youth ought to embrace a more reverent and more Christian view of the marriage ceremony. In his view, marriages should be held in churches; they should include Scripture reading and hymns; they should highlight the importance of religion to the newly-wedded couple; they should promote reflection on the joy and solemnity of marriage. They ought to banish, at least for the short space of time comprising the most sacred social event of a young life, the values of the commercial world or of modern individualism. Thus it was not necessary, and perhaps
also undesirable, that weddings be large social events. It would be better to experience a small wedding with family and dear friends, without bands or large bouquets, than to lose sight of Christian meanings amidst the secular trappings of a wealthy culture.¹ This message reflected a larger point Maier frequently made when commenting on modern American culture: that the preservation of true Christianity in an age of unbelief required not only theological orthodoxy but also adherence to a set of God-given principles older than and superior to the modern world's pet accomplishments. As he described them on the Lutheran Hour radio program in 1931, these were “the idols of mass production, grinning Mammon, the false gods of material, selfish, sensual worship,” which together had brought about “the tragic consequences that we are living in the greatest away-from-God movement that the country has ever known.”²

Maier's contemporaries among the Southern Baptists, fundamentalists, and Pentecostals shared his suspicion that modern America's consumerist, individualistic, and pleasure-driven ethos was both pervasive and threatening to American family life. Speaking at the Northfield Conference in 1921, John McDowell warned his fundamentalist audience American social and religious life were undergoing vast changes. American business was booming and personal wealth was rising; Americans were also becoming complacent and more secular. According to McDowell, America had risen to three great challenges in her history: the crusade for liberty during the American Revolution, the crusade for unity during the Civil War, and the crusade for democracy.

¹ Maier, “Here Comes the Pride,” Walther League Messenger May 1927, 536-7, 602, 604-05; Maier, For Better Not for Worse (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1935), 347-358

² Maier, “Our Generation of Moderns,” The Lutheran Hour: Winged Words to Modern America, Broadcast in the Coast-to-Coast Radio Crusade for Christ (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1931), 258.
during the recent world war. With those causes won, a fourth contest lay before her, a cultural struggle over whether the nation would be “Christianized or commercialized.” The struggle affected all American institutions: “the home, the state, and the church.” It subsisted in Americans’ confrontation with the question of whether an older American, Christian ideal, “which is not materialistic, nor commercial, but spiritual,” would be displaced by “the commercial conception of life.” A national return to Christian values in the home and other basic institutions would require a repudiation of three pagan values: “self-indulgence,” “self-culture for culture's own sake,” and “self-aggrandizement.” The hope for besting these foes and finding true virtue and happiness rested in the embrace of “the principle of self-sacrifice.”

The social conservatism inherent in these messages was unmistakable; conservative Protestants asserted that at the heart of modern social attitudes lay moral permissiveness and shallow, selfish ambition, both of which young people ought to repudiate for time-honored values and the strict requirements of Christian living. This critique of modernity existed alongside and gave shape to the alternative vision for the future of contemporary middle-class life—including and especially for family life—that conservative Protestants attempted to promote in sermons and advice literature. As the last chapter suggested, conservative Protestants embraced moderns’ desire for romance, affectionate marital bonds, and a rich inner life—all ideals near and dear to the contemporary middle-class quest for personal happiness. But as Maier and McDowell's stiff critiques of wealth and secularization suggest, they also sought to avoid ceding

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intellectual or rhetorical ground to the individualism inherent in those goals. Against what they perceived to be a modernist quest for happiness without holiness, they promoted instead the achievement of happiness through self-denial, service, and self-moderation. By holding the ideals of private bliss and social responsibility in tension, they attempted to keep both the modern quest for fulfillment and scriptural teaching fully in view.

The following chapter examines how these themes played out in the advice that pastors and other Christian leaders communicated to their readers through major conservative Protestant periodicals and book publishers. To do so, it explores the direction they offered about three key topics: gender roles, authority and discipline in the home, and the building of Christian character.

**Gender Order and Harmony**

Between the World War I and World War II conservative Protestant advice books about marriage presented readers with two complementary messages. On one level, conservative Protestant authors advanced a self-consciously conservative message. They affirmed the continued relevance of traditional patterns of work and authority in households and took seriously biblical commands that appeared to support these patterns. On another level, their focus was contemporary. They defended the persistence of traditional patterns by depicting them as arrangements that permitted, and even promoted, the realization of a dream near and dear to the hearts of young men and women from America's contemporary middle class: the pursuit of romantic love, culminating in a companionable marriage.
Conservative Protestant conceptions of gender roles arose from both established cultural patterns and Scripture. Pastors and other Christian leaders from across the conservative Protestant denominational spectrum shared the basic assumption that the Bible's teaching was relevant to all generations; the close corollary to that belief was the conviction that dominant cultural patterns of authority and work of the recent past, especially when they also seemed to reflect biblical teaching, were not merely historical accidents but were the products of God's will and the universal, inborn needs of men and women. The order of creation in Genesis 2, the role of the patriarchs in the Old Testament, and the establishment of male apostates as the authorities in the early church all supported these beliefs. Perhaps no set of verses were more important than the Pauline epistles, which described gender order in the household as an expression not only of the natural order but also as a reflection of spiritual truth. I Corinthians 11:3f seemed to establish an order of gender authority that placed men over women and Christ over men (“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God”), and Ephesians 5:22f reiterated the teaching (“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”). I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:11-14 instructed women to remain silent in churches and to learn in “all subjugation.” Titus 2:4 instructed older women to “teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.”
Authors of conservative Protestant advice literature advanced widely different interpretations of these verses and their implications, even though most affirmed the general principle of gender order within marriage and society. The positions advanced by fundamentalist evangelist John R. Rice, by holiness evangelist and pastor's wife Julia Shelhamer, and Presbyterian pastor and scholar Gerrit Verkyl present something of the range of views that a young husband or wife could find in print between the late 1920s and mid-1940s.

The most conservative voices who spoke to the issue of household authority tended to emphasize rigid adherence to the order of authority described in Scripture and usually strongly emphasized the authority of husbands over wives. John R. Rice, who in the 1930s began to build his lifelong reputation as an advocate of conservative gender roles, warned his audiences that American home life was floundering. This malady, Rice believed, sprung largely from the failure of couples to adhere to the proper lines of authority and responsibility that Scripture accorded to each sex. Women too often usurped their husband's authority, while men disregarded their solemn role as leaders. Based on the examples of Abraham, whom God honored as a man who would “command his children and his household after him,” and Joshua, who had declared on his own authority that “as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord,” Rice argued that men bore the sole responsibility for the moral and spiritual state of their households. Although he stood behind Christian mothers who strove alone to win the souls of their children, no woman could claim to stand in her husband's place or usurp his authority. Citing Numbers 30:13-15, a passage granting husbands the right to uphold or cancel the vows of
their wives, he argued that a man had “the right to set aside any vow of a woman to God, or to establish it.” The husband alone was therefore fully accountable for his wife’s and children's well-being. A wife was accountable for demonstrating her love through her submission and for allowing him to lead the family into godliness for the benefit of all. Through the heroic stories it related and the prescriptions it made, the Bible was the complete and only reliable textbook to establishing a godly and happy life within the home.4

Julia Shelhamer shared John R. Rice's belief that the headship of husbands and the submission of wives were important principles laid down in Scripture, but she advocated that men's leadership was not automatically bestowed but instead earned. When she wrote to wives, she stressed a hard teaching about male authority: man had been the first created, the last to sin, appointed head of the home, and endowed with greater mental, physical, and moral strength. By natural ability and God-given right, the husband was the leader of home and public life. His wife occupied a wide but subordinate sphere of responsibility and activity. She was bound to acknowledge these facts by cultivating a sweet, passive nature recommended to her in Scripture and generally preferred by men. Even when a man disappointed his wife, Shelhamer thought the aggrieved woman ought to strive to submit, praying to sway her husband's opinions and behavior by her own loving example. However, when addressing men, Shelhamer argued that they forfeited their birthright to leadership if they failed to develop their

4 “Rebellious Wives and Slacker Husbands,” Sword of the Lord July 22, 1938, 1, 3. Another sermon stressing the importance of male leadership to the outcome of the household can be found in “Bringing Up Children,” Sword of the Lord August 21, 1936, 1-2. Rice expanded on these points in his postwar marriage manual The Home–Courtship, Marriage, and Children (Wheaton, IL: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1945), 93-122.

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inborn qualities or succumbed to the allure of sin. Men too often failed to enjoy their rightful role as social and spiritual leaders, not because anyone had usurped their place but because they had willingly abandoned it. Men employed crass language; they failed to attend church in the same numbers as women; they forgot to show affection and common courtesy to their wives; they ignored home life; they turned to immorality and narcotics. In the face of such failure, those who possessed fewer abilities surpassed their natural betters. Under such circumstances, no one would be able to assign blame to a woman if she should “soar so high she reaches the stars and as a consequence returns with her wings tipped with gold.”

Adopting the tone most often taken in mainstream advice literature, Gerrit Verukyl responded more favorably to the individual and cultural forces that appeared to be eroding the authority of men in the home. He observed that recent history had ushered in a host of benefits: child labor was disappearing, workdays had shortened, incomes had increased, and hygiene and food safety had improved. In the middle of this onrush of reform, modern Americans were beginning to disapprove of heavy-handed governance of women and children. Increasingly, parents believed that developing children's needs had to be respected. Mothers were embracing activities and interests outside the home, thereby mitigating their anxiety and ability to monitor and control a child's every move. Finally, public opinion had shifted against “imposing fathers” who in the past had forced their will so strongly on their families that they had “spoiled many promising lives.”

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the citizens of the American Republic “the Father-Kaiser is dethroned.” No resuscitation of the standards of a bygone era were necessary. Fathers instead needed to understand that fatherly responsibility was a call to guide rather than to rule.⁶

Uniting each of these interpretations was the shared assumption that readers accepted at least some ordering of authority based on sex and would likely assume distinct male breadwinner and female homemaker roles after their marriages. They therefore saw the commonplace annoyances and problems related to those roles as the most important obstacles for their readers to overcome. Southern Baptist pastor William Cooke Boone exemplified this outlook in the talks he prepared for young people on choosing a spouse. He readily acknowledged that even though men and women’s separate roles and natures were complementary and a source of mutual esteem, their differences could also prove a source of frustration. Boone reported that in order to brief his audience on the mutual perceptions of men and women, he had distributed surveys to two generations of Baptists living in the vicinity of Jackson, Tennessee: 187 men and 127 women enrolled in Union University, a Baptist university in Jackson, and an undisclosed number to older members from his congregation, the First Baptist Church of the same city. His results reflected some of the prevailing assumptions of the day. When asked whether women were more intelligent than men, no male respondents replied in the affirmative; when women were asked whether men were more intelligent, the results also came back with a resounding no. But respondents agreed on other matters. Both men and women, regardless of age, agreed that women were more religious than men. When asked

to identify positive traits in women, male respondents praised women for qualities associated directly to their interest in religion and the home: loyalty, religious commitment, love of home, and sympathy.

Even if the men were willing to praise women for their unique natures, Boone's results also revealed that respondents found their differences mutually frustrating. Both college-age and older women overwhelmingly rated men's biggest flaw as “lack of appreciation.” College women rated “stubbornness” the next most problematic trait in men, while older women selected “religious shirker.” Women from both groups voted into third place male faults related to selfishness or arrogance: a “me first' attitude,” “fault-finding,” or an “inflated ego.” They rated the most important qualities in a mate to be the polar opposite of these faults: young women thought “frankness” was the male quality they most appreciated, trailed by “determination” and “good humor,” and “thoughtfulness;” older women chose “generosity,” trailed by “industriousness,” “honor,” “determination,” and “devotion to home.” Both groups of women, then, wished for greater respect for their thoughts and responsiveness to their needs from men. Younger women perceived this need in terms of candor and honesty in communication and thoughtfulness in action; older women expressed the desire that men would respect their needs and perspectives enough to be freer with their resources and time.

The men whom Boone surveyed perceived the pressure that women put on them for recognition, funds, and time. Both college-aged and older men overwhelmingly reported the most irritating feminine faults to be “gossiping” and “prying into other people's affairs”—women's tendency to exert indirect influence by passing along
community news and pronouncing their judgment upon it. After these faults, men rated the top womanly vices to be claiming too much of the family budget (“extravagance”). Women's repetitive attempts to prompt action to their ideas and requests (“nagging”) ranked as the third most common male complaint against the female sex.⁷

Others cautioned that men and women's separate roles could drive a wedge between them even when they didn’t generate conflict. Holding up companionship in marriage as a cherished ideal, they warned that even when men and women successfully fulfilled their separate parts in getting the daily financial, housekeeping, religious, and educational work of the home accomplished, a rift might develop between them. In 1912 aging Presbyterian pastor J. R. Miller expressed this concern from the perspective of a person for whom the crumbling social world of separate spheres had been a reality. “The husband is absorbed in business, in his profession, in severe daily toil; the wife has her home duties, her social life, her friends, and her children; and the two touch at no point,” he warned. “Unless care is taken this separation of duties will lead to actual separation in heart and life.” The antidote to this sad possibility lay in the cultivation of shared sentiment—“constant, loving interest in what the other one does.” “The life should be made common,” Miller insisted, by which he meant “They should read and study together, having the same line of thought, helping each other toward a higher mental culture. They should worship together, praying side-by-side, communing on the holiest themes of life and hope, together carrying to God's feet the burdens of their hearts for their children and every precious object.” This perfect unity admitted no outside party's

intrusion or knowledge, and it flourished only when spouses remained on guard for “even the smallest beginning of misunderstanding or alienation.” Two decades later, Church of God (Cleveland) pastor F. Lincicome dropped the mental picture of two spheres but still cautioned that men and women's separate tasks might make them virtual strangers, leaving the home devoid of the loving cooperation that ought to characterize it. It would not do, he argued in his book *Enemies of the Home*, to split the tasks of the home in two, handing the father the duty of providing material wealth and the mother the duty of establishing the rules and religion of the home. This approach could only be recommended as a survival strategy for couples whose contrary opinions caused the home to be so “divided against itself” that their marriage was nearly a sham. “Why call such a situation a home?” he queried, “Label it 'Hotel' and let it go at that.” “Mutual agreement,” “mutual understanding,” “mutual appreciation,” and “mutual obligations” built a home.8

Even if the separate roles of husbands and wives could lead to alienation, authors stressed that those roles created “mutual obligations” that had the power to draw them together. Reciprocal obligations ensured that each family member give sacrificially to the family and have his needs met in return. “That home is far from ideal,” Edith May Evetts argued in *Moody Bible Institute Monthly*, “where some member becomes a martyr and takes the brunt of things so that others may be relieved of duties and obligations about the home.”9


Authors who took a more equitable view of relations in the home emphasized that the different economic and social duties of men and women did not so much create a hierarchy as it did a basis for cooperation in order to realize common goals. Jasper Huffman spent less time writing explicitly about authority in the home than he did about the idea of cooperation and compromise—an art that often had little to do with the question of official rules, guilt, or innocence. “Home building is a partnership task, and teamwork is indispensable,” he explained. The task before each couple was to lubricate the machinery of their marriage so that it was harmonious, not ask questions of who might be right or wrong. “It is a fine art to be prepared to accept the blame . . . ,” he explained, “even though the question of blame may be legitimate.” This art required patience, consideration, and other Christian virtues. Similarly, Gerrit Verkuyl named the elements of close cooperation to be integrity, sexual fidelity, trust, practical loyalty, harmony, and freedom to remain individuals; when those supports were in place, the question of who was in charge did not matter because husband and wife worked together like one unit, each sharing in the life of the other. When they shared a vital Christian faith, their awareness of being “brother and sister in the household of God” strengthened the ties between them.10

Writers who adopted more moderate language about power relationships in the home were particularly eager to recommend a calm, deliberative, and democratic style of communication between men and women. A. W. Beaven, a Northern Baptist whose writing was known in conservative Protestant circles, advised couples that the handling

of an argument could determine whether their disagreement proved “a source of irritation or permanent trouble.” The goal was not to determine which person was “boss” or to win the argument but instead to give each the privilege of explaining his viewpoint in full, without interruption. “The art of living together is learned when each sees the other's point of view and respects it,” he explained. Whatever decision was reached, both husband and wife would understand each other better and know that they had been given “a fair deal.” Martha Boone Leavell contended, “With two people, prayer and open-mindedness brought into quiet discussion ought to solve most any problem between them.”

Those who pressed more strongly for a clear division of roles and authority between men and women thought that the obligations of male headship could motivate fathers to become involved in the household's daily affairs and to exemplify both strength and kindness in their interactions with their wives and children. In his book on the Christian home, J. Wilbur Chapman devoted a full chapter to the topic of fathers becoming the heads of their households and modeling Christian piety; a second chapter dwelt specifically on the dangers of men's failure to assume those responsibilities. Wives, meanwhile, were to exemplify all those attributes commonly associated with nurturing mothers, diligent housekeepers, and tireless religious devotion. When both husband and wife were ardent Christians, this arrangement of household responsibility would create “a heavenly atmosphere” in which the forces that undermined harmony—“a critical spirit, a manifestation of impatience, an unfair judgment, an unkind criticism, an undercurrent of

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restlessness, the absence of affectionate fellowship between husband and wife, the lack of accord between parents and children, the spirit of unfairness”—were cast out. Under those circumstances, the home became “a cooperative organization” in which “each one who is a member of the household must live for all the others.”

Taking up a similar frame of mind, Julia Shelhamer interpreted the responsibilities of husbands and wives in such pietistic terms as to redefine them as the expression of love, sensitivity, and religious self-mastery. Governing his family with “physical force” and “intellect” would do the would-be patriarch no credit, she taught, unless he also displayed “piety.” She therefore urged men to seek God fervently and to recognize that their wives needed their loving attention. If a husband could achieve this piety, he would acquire “a power over her [his wife] that he could get in no other way.” She would find him “master over every situation without an effort. She recognizes it, is not jealous of his superiority but yields a loving, devoted obedience to him whom her heart loveth.” All society depended on proper gender order, but proper gender order also could not be firmly established outside of fervent Christian faith and obedience.

William Cooke Boone described the responsibilities inherent in the roles of Christian husbands and wives primarily in terms of the commitment to exercise common courtesy and kind regard toward one another. Boone stressed that a woman did not owe her husband unblinking submission; instead “she is to look up to her husband in the sense

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she respects him, and that she has to offer her co-operation and helpfulness under this leadership as they work together for the good of their home.” In accepting his leadership, she would abstain from those behaviors which tore down marital happiness:

A wife who measures up to this teaching will not quarrel with her husband nor constantly nag at him; she will not magnify his faults, forgetting her own; she will not make slighting remarks about him to others; she will not disregard his wishes or show contempt for his views; she will not be unreasonable or selfish in her demands of him.

By loving his wife “as Christ loved the Church” (Ephesians 5:25), a man would likewise demonstrate the appreciation and consideration of her needs, thereby preventing her unhappiness with her position as helpmate. Biblical guidelines created the structure and reciprocity essential to successful relationships and mitigated the destructive influences of affluence, shallow pleasure-seeking, and selfishness.\textsuperscript{14}

The common thread running through advice writers’ descriptions of how husbands and wives ought to perform their unique roles was a belief that superlative Christian love smoothed over potential marriage problems and prevented either party from trampling too much on the needs of the other. They shied away from the discarding of traditional roles and obligations, because these familiar responsibilities seemed to present scriptural opportunities to live out the Christian call to obedience to God and love for others. Instead, they affirmed moderns' contemporary desire for greater companionability in romantic relationships and family life and affirmed the acceptance of responsibility, self-denial, and Christian living as the best means for realizing that coveted goal. What made the Christian's pursuit of life's hidden ambrosia distinct from the quest of her peers was her ability to seek self-fulfillment not in a narrow, ultimately self-defeating pursuit of

\textsuperscript{14} Boone, 59-67.
self-interest, but in genuine service learned from Christian teaching and made possible by God's own Holy Spirit. Ardently arguing this point, fundamentalist evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman reveled in the heaven-like nurture and rest he believed a home might provide when family members traded selfish desire for Christian service to one another. “Life is at its best when it is lived for others,” Chapman wrote, “and there is no place where the injunction of St. Paul is more needed than in a home,—'Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.'”

Parental Authority and Christian Discipline

Closely related to conservative Protestant concerns about gender order were the twin issues of parental authority and effective Christian nurture. Just as conservative Protestants portrayed the obligations of unique gender roles as opportunities for cooperation, love, and mutual service, they portrayed the exercise of parental authority as a force that not only kept children in line but also formed the basis of a meaningful relationship between parent and child. Scripture commanded mothers and fathers to instruct and correct their children; in return, children were instructed to respect and obey their parents. When both of these obligations were fulfilled, faithful parents would find one might teach God's Word to their children, “when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deut. 11:19). The teaching of one generation would pass to another, and God's purpose for the family would be fulfilled.

Logically, any lapse of children, the church, or society from Christian faith or morals could indicate a failure of persons to fulfill these commands. This struck conservative Protestant commentators not only as a theoretical possibility but a present-day trend. Writers frequently feared that too many parents neither modeled nor taught morality and Christianity; others failed to provide the consistent discipline needed to send a clear message to children. On the other side of the spectrum, there lay those sterling examples of faithfulness that made the redemption of the family and even the culture seem possible. Lutheran educator A. C. Stellhorn described the multi-generational influence of a godly couple this way: “We have the example of pious grandparents who themselves attended a Lutheran school and saw to it that children and children's children enjoyed the same privilege. When they visited their children and grandchildren, they would inquire about church attendance and other important matters, and instruct and admonish everyone from the Word of God according to his needs.” As benevolent governors, the aging couple enjoyed a rich relationship with their children and grandchildren that included a vital spiritual influence. But when the parents’ attempts to express their authority and care failed, the “lukewarmness and indifference of whole families” was commonly the result.

Following his death in 1929, fundamentalist leader R.A. Torrey, Sr.’s children immortalized their father's legacy in very similar terms, as a family patriarch whose long absences from home were offset by diligent governance of the family and leadership of

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the family's religious life. “Together he and his young bride agreed that he must put his work and study first; domestic demands must be made secondary; the enjoyment side of home life must be strictly limited,” R.A. Torrey, Jr. related. Still, even as Mrs. Torrey shouldered many of the burdens of the home life, her husband expressed keen interest in the home, led family worship whenever he was present, and sent the family regular letters. When present his wife found that “No more loving husband had ever lived,” while his children thought he was “our ideal, a living hero to each of us.” Dedication to God's work, personal discipline, respect for the Sabbath, consistency in keeping dancing and movies out of his children's lives, and lively appreciation for humor and play entitled Torrey to his children's exalted opinion. Heartfelt expressions such as these remembered the departed and offered an unabashed model of rigorous personal development and family government.18

In the project of guiding one's children toward such worthy goals, conservative Protestants adopted varied opinions about mainstream literature on child development. Many suspected that the failure of parental instruction in many instances stemmed directly from the hedonism and leniency that they believed characterized modern social attitudes, an orientation that extended to the advice families received from contemporary books on child rearing. Others discerned in much contemporary writing an emphasis on nurture and child study that furthered the Christian parent's mission.

Most authors also stressed that the effective patriarch and patient mother would not be able to rule their children merely by establishing authority and providing

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instruction. An additional quality would be necessary: the ability to give the face of authority an expression of attention and love. As Walter Maier instructed fathers in his marriage manual, “Fathers, knowing that they are ordained by God to be the heads of families must find time to meet the demands of their exalted position.” The ideal father would not only dedicate his time to home but also establish his authority clearly but without harsh actions. “Parental authority must be firm, not tyrannical . . . men must retain a sympathetic feeling for their children's activities and find a means of developing a happy companionship with their family.” Children did not need a “pal” or “loose familiarity” in a father but a benevolent leader; his wife needed “sympathetic cooperation.” In a quest to be “firm, not tyrannical,” some writers stressed that contemporary child study provided parents with relevant insights into how best to understand their children. Keen observation of the child and his needs would enable the parent to judge just what a child was experiencing and what he needed. Loving attention to his perceptions and problems would enable parents to help him understand his world and acquire the behavior and attitudes necessary to interacting with it.

Accordingly, many conservative Protestants adopted a warm attitude toward the burgeoning fields of education, psychology, and sociology, which sought to describe childhood development and enumerate the needs and rights of children. One of the strongest endorsements of the current literature of the day came from Southern Baptist Martha Boone Leavell, who directed readers of her Sunday School text on the Christian family to consult some of the “scores of books and magazines” as well as syndicated newspaper columns dedicated to “the theories and psychology of training children.”

19 Maier, 302-305.
Authors she recommended included a large number of moderate Protestants with an interest in child study: Isle Forest, S. D. Gordon, Frederick W. Langford, Margaret Eggleston, Ruth Shonle and Jordan True Cavan, Frank E. Burkhalter, A. W. Beaven, J. S. Reilly, Grace Sloan Overton, Regine Westcott Wieman, and Edwin Dahlberg. She encouraged readers to filter the material for suggestions that squared with their own “judgment and experience.” In her view, the dominant and overarching lesson to be gleaned was that good parenting required cultivating consistent discipline, provided that the standards imposed were ones that children could both understand and follow. Discipline was also not to be overly punitive. Nurture, laughter, and affirmation of what the child did right ought to form the bulk of a parent's influence. Parents might be in authority, but they did best when they studied their children's immediate needs and interests in order to respond to them on that ground. “Modern teachers tell us to begin with the child's interest and work up the activities we desire for him,” she noted. These convictions about the usefulness of modern child study were echoed by Northern Baptist A. W. Beavell—one of the authors whom Leavell recommended. He praised the field for its “revolt against the autocracy of an older method of instructing children, particularly against the idea of teaching them to obey like automatons. Over and against our assumption of wisdom and final authority, they stress the value of the child's individual personality; its right to self-expression, and the things we can learn from the child.” Earnest parents would find such help invaluable and only a danger if they misinterpreted sympathy for the child's needs as a license to let the child do whatever she wished.  

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20 Leavell, 41, 48-49, 52; Beaven, 101-102.
Consistent with these beliefs, J.A. Huffman also explained parenting in terms of a continual project of directing the child's behavior and responding to his needs. Writing about Proverbs 22:6, he wrote, “Train up a child in the way he should go. Notice this use of the word 'Train' . . . One might teach or instruct a child an hour or two a day; but it requires twenty-four hours a day to 'train' one.” Discipline (including corporeal punishment), an uplifting environment, nurture, and the teaching of precepts “considerately, lovingly, plainly, and firmly” were integral to this project. Personal example was particularly vital. Although placed in authority by God, parents had to earn the right to be heard. “He who seeks to impose his will upon another,” Huffman enjoined, “even though the other might be a child, must prove that he himself is willing to abide by such a decision.” Gerrit Verkuyl described parenting as the project to shape all the separate aspects of a child by engaging the child's sense of touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing as well as his spiritual inclinations to act as a traveler investigating spaces, a gatherer claiming possessions, a questioner grasping for intellectual insight, an observer of events and behavior, a worshiper of God, and co-operator with others. Parenting was a program of training and exercise in continual example.21

The champions of child study were the moderate voices; others were significantly more careful about accepting the conclusions of mainstream secular or religious work on child development. Writing for the Sunday School Times, an anonymous “farm mother” wrote that modern educators who advised parents to view childhood vices as normal parts of development, and therefore to be tolerated, were in fact advocating “anarchy against

the law of God,” a characteristic of “atheistic Communism.” Mothers who let small matters slide would find that “It is a far simpler task to keep the home Christian than to reclaim it once the world has found quarter there.”22 She was not alone in feeling that attempts to understand the child and cater to his needs often went too far. The Watchman-Examiner sounded an oft-played note when it claimed that children's true need was for “parents who have spunk enough to climb back upon the thrones of their own households.”23 Grant Stoh of Moody Bible Institute Monthly rebutted those who interpreted the admonition of Prov. 22:6-7 to “Train up a child in the way he should go” as a call to parents to “observe their children in order to discover their natural bents and then train them along the line of the natural endowments.” The verse did not primarily call for parental sensitivity and child study, he contended; it meant that a child should be initiated to the teachings he should follow from his earliest days.24

Clarence Benson—a minister, faculty member at Moody Bible Institute, and frequent contributor to the Sunday School Times and Moody Bible Institute Monthly—asserted that the typical psychologist “rejects the sound, sane teachings of earlier days, and refuses to accept the child on the basis so clearly taught in the Bible.” “Materialistic and mechanical psychology” had encouraged the decline of national morality and religion in the home. In contrast, Benson offered an overview of child study in which he tried to


glean the best of psychologists' observations about child development. Understanding the
unique requirements of children in each stage of their development formed the basis for
his recommendations that child training and religious instruction begin at the soonest
opportunity, when habits were forming. It also highlighted the usefulness of graded
Sunday school classes so that lessons could be tailored to the specific needs of each age
group. Benson used these insights himself to help prepare Moody Bible Institutes's
Christian education classes and Sunday school curriculum.25

Concerned parents shared the reservations that pastors held toward expert advice.
In 1930 Frida Jass, a primary school teacher who helped to begin a “Child Study Club” of
a dozen mothers at her Lutheran church in Forest Park, Illinois, approached the topic with
an air of caution. A conscientious member of the Missouri Synod, she obtained the
approval of her pastor for the club, then wrote Missouri Synod Secretary of Schools A.C.
Stellhorn for advice on “suitable books and literature.” A fellow Lutheran and the
Supervisor of Public Health had recommended the Parents’ Magazine, but Jass expressed
her desire for a more trustworthy opinion. “She is a Lutheran,” Jass wrote to Stellhorn,
“but we realize that politics often callous one's finer Christian knowledge.”26 Stellhorn's
reply confirmed Jass' suspicions, describing much of the literature produced on child
rearing as “so permeated with unbiblical philosophy that it is dangerous.” He suggested
instead the main titles available from the denomination's own Concordia Press.27 Jass


26 Letter from Frida Jass to A.C. Stellhorn, February 18, 1930, in folder “Child Study,” Papers of
August C. Stellhorn.

27 Letter from A.C. Stellhorn to Frida Jass, February 20, 1930; Letter from A.C. Stellhorn to Frida
reported back that her club members had particularly enjoyed one of his selections, Carl Manthey Zorn's *Eunice: Letters of a Fatherly Friend to a Young Christian Mother* (1921).  

Zorn rejected suggestions from modern writers who downplayed the importance of discipline or who suggested that children needed religious example rather than instruction in specific religious dogma. Even very young children, he contended, required both discipline and religious education. That program was not merely to be training in the general moral principles prized by mainstream experts but instead a well-planned grounding in both Bible studies and Lutheran doctrine. His recommended course of child care prioritized the instilling of responsible habits from the child's earliest days. The infant would benefit from a mother dedicated to bathing him in prayer and then equipping him to steer his way through the many spiritual dangers he would later encounter. While he was a toddler, she could impart habits of cleanliness and obedience right away, implanting lessons that would have lifelong consequence. He was not too young to learn such lessons and would suffer afterward if they remained untaught: “A child that has not been washed regularly as an infant will, later on, not attend to this regularly itself, and is apt to be slovenly throughout life.” Likewise, Bible stories and childhood prayers would remain in his mind for life.

Zorn contended that to be lax on these points was not a mark of love, as some believed, but an exercise in self-interested indulgence. Mothers who loved themselves more than their children escaped home duties. “They like to go out often,” he explained,

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“They think that of twelve months one month at least should be entirely free from household cares and nursery troubles and be devoted to pleasure.” They complained frequently about their responsibilities. They also misapplied discipline. They failed to correct their children for truly bad behavior because it was too difficult to do so; but when children exhibited innocent but annoying behavior, they doled out threats and punishments. Self-centered behavior on the mother's part brought about an abdication of her responsibilities and imperiled her children's welfare.\textsuperscript{29}

In addition to Zorn's writing, Stellhorn recommended the work of Ella Frances Lynch, an author who also distrusted mainstream advice literature and emphasized the importance of religious instruction that mothers provided directly to children in the home. A Catholic and the founder of the National League of Teacher-Mothers, Lynch advocated a number of central points: first, that moral and religious training was of paramount importance and could only be handled effectively at home; second, that thoughtful mothers had the ability to educate their children for their first several years of life; third, that the education children received from their mothers equipped them morally and academically better than any institution; fourth, that nursery schools and kindergartens deprived children of the benefit of nurture in the home. Additionally, Lynch shared Stellhorn's belief that public education could at best promulgate a weak moralism rather than true Christian religion. For all these reasons, both Lynch and Stellhorn were inclined to value the home and the parochial school over competing institutions.\textsuperscript{30}

Accordingly, Lynch harbored at least as much skepticism as Stellhorn about the value of the advice offered by educational experts. She thought that humanist and behaviorist philosophies of education were lacking because of their disconnection from Christian teaching. In addition, she thought that ordinary mothers and advocates of a proper religious education faced impossible opposition from American institutions, even from their own potential allies in sympathetic churches and cultural institutions. At best, she had found the public schools had been unresponsive to her suggestions for improving institutional education. “The public school system, from top to bottom, is so mechanized that it is perfectly useless to expect collaboration from one section unless an order goes forth from headquarters,” she told one correspondent when explaining her frustrations in generating interest in her views. Turning to other citizens with conservative religious persuasions, Lynch likewise felt rebuffed. She related to Stellhorn her disappointment when the fundamentalist paper, the *Sunday School Times*, rejected her material. “When I believed we were going to have the cooperation of Evangelical groups represented in the

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Sunday School Times, an editor found something in one of my books that indicated my personal belief in the efficacy of good works,” she explained. As a result, the periodical would not publish her ideas or accept her advertising material. However, Stellhorn felt that his passion for sectarian Christian education and the Christian home ought to make him a friend of the embattled Lynch. Despite the inveterate position of the Missouri Synod against Catholicism and Catholic influence, Stellhorn conducted an active correspondence with Lynch and distributed her books to colleagues and friends. He praised her ideas simply and often: “I wish I could publish all you have said,” he stated in one letter. “I shall keep everything on file and use it as occasion calls for it.”

Both those who expressed sympathy with modern child study and those who warned against it rallied around the family altar—the daily gathering of the family for Bible reading and prayer—as the choice tool for establishing parental religious leadership and a regular program of religious instruction and care in the home. In some cases the family altar was a literal place: an altar built in the home or a shelf reserved for the family Bible. Usually the image of gathering around the altar was metaphorical, denoting not a physical place so much as a consistent practice of communal Bible reading and prayer. Either way, its promoters believed it to be an irreplaceable tool in providing religious instruction to children and a potential bulwark against the trends toward sin and secularization in American life.

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Most youth problems, advocates of the family altar argued, stemmed from the fact that American children were not trained in the Christian faith at home. Some parents were not religious; others felt that they were too busy to provide daily instruction; others assumed that churches would handle the child's religious training. Whatever a Christian's excuse, he accelerated the secularization of American culture and invited all the difficulties that came with it if living in a home that was Christian in name but secular in fact. The family altar would remedy this state of affairs by bringing worship, instruction, and religious conversation back into the home on a daily basis. It accomplished what neither church attendance nor individual, private devotions could: it extended the experience of collective worship across the week, ensuring the messages preached from the pulpit and taught in Sunday school were made more effectual. As such, it would make parents the instructors and models for their children, allowing them to best the host of vices afflicting American society at large. To proponents like William Biederwolf, who started the Family Altar League in 1909 to generate pledges from believers to institute an altar in their own homes, the family altar was both a method and a hallowed institution championed ever since the Reformation and remembered as a vital force sustaining the “Christian America” of a previous century; if maintained, it could bring that influence to
bear in the twentieth. In William Biederwolf's words, “Religion in the home will solve every problem—the problem of anarchy, of gambling, of the saloon problem, and every other curse which blights and damns our land today.”

To its advocates, the family altar reinforced parents' efforts to train children and would bring spiritual insight and power into family life in a way that no set of mere child training principles, however sound, could. It promised to become a means by which God's power could flow into family life, drawing the family closer to God and to one another. The *Western Recorder* recommended family singing during such times because “Music may be used to bind people together emotionally until they are a unit . . . it can create an atmosphere of warmth and tenderness in which the natural bonds of family affection can be cemented.” Huffman expected family worship to create a “sacred memory” that followed a child throughout his life. Daily use turned the family Bible into a truly hallowed book whose significance could never be forgotten. Suggested prayers included the hope that God would preserve family members and sustain the family as a

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Discussions of the family altar can also be found in abundance in many books written as aids to family worship. Although the family altar had been a longstanding ideal, countless writers in the twentieth century suspected that families often neglected the practice because they were unaware of its import or uncertain about how to conduct family worship. Countless devotionals were written to answer this need.
unit. A strong proponent of the family altar, evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman offered the following suggested prayer to families who were unsure of how to conduct family worship and prayer:

Why not have family worship something like this? Let the family assemble around the breakfast table, the head of the household reading the Scripture lessons suggested in this booklet, then use the prayers indicated for each day, closing with the Lord's Prayer or the Apostle's Creed, or offer a simple prayer such as the following: “Our Father, bless our household today. Take care of our children; protect them in time of danger; help them in their work and in their play. Bless their father and their mother and keep us all, an unbroken family circle, until we are safe home with thee. Amen.”

In the spirit of Chapman's prayer to “keep us all, an unbroken family circle,” an advertisement for a new edition of the Scofield Chain Reference Bible promised that a good study Bible would serve as “a new source of strength and inspiration for the American Family.”

### The Fruit of Discipline

As their conversations about gender roles and child rearing reveal, conservative Protestants saw the cultivation of the inner feelings of youth as the means to encourage their conversion and to guide them into the responsibilities of adulthood. They claimed that spouses who accepted their proper roles and responsibilities within the home would find that those roles provided a basis for forging the companionship they craved, if they

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Discussion of the family altar covering these points can also be found in Beaven, 105-115; Verkuyl, 169-180; Leavell, 57-71.
could succeed in cultivating the proper Christian virtues and interpersonal skills. Similarly, they argued that the cultivation of the attitudes and skills needed to nurture and discipline children would forge the kind of lifelong bond between parents and children that could raise up a truly godly generation.

The priority that conservative Protestant writers of sermons and advice literature placed on shaping dedicated, responsible citizens and family members reflected the larger conversation that they held about the problem of guiding young adults into adulthood. Consistent with their strong pietism and self-professed opposition to a lax culture, conservative Protestants' deepest fears and hopes for the personal development of young believers were dominated by concerns for bodily integrity and mental habits. They hoped to protect and cultivate the individual’s powers so that he might be properly submitted to God and able to acquire the superlative virtues that success in social life required of him. The individual with fully developed personal powers of body, mind, and character would resist the laxity and temptations of an increasingly secularized and commercialized world and provide the strength necessary to support families, churches, and other essential social institutions.

Strong Bodies

Conservative Protestant youth, especially those in Baptist, Pentecostal, and fundamentalist churches, received a variety of messages centered on the problem of maintaining healthy, sound bodies. Christian leaders argued that persons should be in full self-possession of their faculties. By developing and retaining this inner integrity, Christian youth acquired the ability to make God their master and the focus of all their
actions. To achieve this fundamental goal, they had to remain free from the strong appetites or addictions that might enslave a person's desire and will. Such physical bondage prevented total surrender to God and therefore spiritually hamstrung those who wished to become productive family members and citizens. Foods, drinks, and substances that ran the risk of harming the body or enslaving the will to strong cravings were therefore decried as dangerous and unchristian. Avoiding them was often made a mark of the true Christian, and enslavement to them a dire sin and personal travesty. As pastor Charles F. Weigle wrote in booklets to teenagers in 1938, “The world in which you live today is a moral wilderness. Much of it is a jungle, and in this jungle-wilderness there are wild beasts of passion and appetite waiting to destroy you. . . You'll have to put up a fight.” In order to best these foes, the young person had to develop a strong body and the “stamina” to resist social pressure to engage in unchristian amusements. “Do nothing that will weaken your body or mind or that will poison your blood he warned,” a mission he believed was best accomplished by avoiding cigarettes, drugs, liquor, sexual immorality, and gambling.35

Southern Baptists, fundamentalists, and Pentecostals eagerly embraced evangelicalism's earlier opposition to alcoholic beverages. (Missouri Synod Lutherans, who had long considered evangelical reform movements unscriptural and were disinclined to abandon an appreciation for German beer, emphasized moderation rather than total abstinence.) Temperance advocates argued that the consumption of alcoholic beverages led easily to drunkenness and to alcoholism. Since intoxication led to a loss of

35 Charles Weigle, Listen, Fellows! (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1938); for quoted portions see 8, 12-13. For a very similar message to young women see Listen, Girls! (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1937).
physical and mental self-control, it spawned a host of social problems: violence toward
women, poverty, the economic exploitation of children, and the alleged popularity of
gambling and prostitutes among those who frequented saloons. These dangers were so
ever-present to the drinker and those whom he might induce to drink that no one could
claim to raise his glass with either safety or innocence.

The temperance movement was of vast importance to the religious groups who
worked to advance its cause. John R. Rice's condemnation of the repeal of prohibition
reflected what conservative Protestants felt was at stake. “America Repent or Perish,
Repeal opened the floodgates of booze, crime, judgment of God certain,” one issue of
*Sword of the Lord* proclaimed. Another publicized Rice's plans to preach about a “Texas
State Senate Crime Investigation Report showing more liquor drink in Texas than ever
before, Offices corrupted, Citizens asleep, Boys and Girls Going to Hell.” Convictions
along this line led conservative Protestants to express solidarity with temperance
reformers across the American denominational and ideological spectrum. In the 1920s-
40s, groups who generally remained aloof from politics or questions of social reform
were nonetheless willing to crusade against consumers, producers, and politicians who
enabled alcohol's production and sale. They supported prohibition and protested its repeal
with a fervor and constancy that they afforded no other political issue.36

36 John R. Rice, “America, Repent or Perish,” *Sword of the Lord* January 4, 1935, 1-2; “More
Liquor Sold in Texas Now Than Ever Before!” *Sword of the Lord* January 11, 1935, 1; “Booze
Government, Saloon Keeping Officers, 16 Year Old Barmaids and Drug Store Bootleggers,” *Sword of the
Aubrey Hearn, *Alcohol the Destroyer* (Nashville: Broadman, 1944); H. Clay Trumbull, *Border Lines in the
Field of Doubtful Practice* (Fleming H. Revell, 1899), 17-42; William H. Ridgway, “How Billy Sunday
Made Colorado Vote 'Dry,'” *Sunday School Times* February 15, 1936, 99, 103; “The Iniquitous Propaganda
of Wet Newspapers: Resolutions Adopted by the National Christian Forum,” *Moody Monthly* October
1929, 72-73; “Alcohol or Automobile,” *Moody Bible Institute Monthly* reprinted from *Sunday School Times*
Conservative Protestants became equally animated when they described the power of other addictive substances to overthrow the self-control of persons who would otherwise have been good spouses, parents, employees, and citizens. Cautionary tales demonstrated how ordinary and upstanding people could fall into ruin from a single encounter with a corrupting substance or pastime. In a dramatically titled piece, “Morphine Tablets of Hell,” Pentecostal pastor W. H. Pope described how a respectable husband and father innocently accepts morphine as pain treatment during a mortal illness. He inexplicably recovers from his physical illness, but he never escapes his addiction to morphine. By the end of the story, the unfortunate man has lost his health, livelihood, and family, who have kicked him out of his own home to wander the streets. Imploring his listeners to take the tale as an example of the personal cost of morphine, booze, gambling, theater, dancing, and other social sins, Pope presented the gospel as both a spiritual and physical choice: to embrace sin and physical deterioration or to embrace God's grace and clean living. The rational choice was clear. “Sinner,” he urged, “will you not turn your back on the world and its allurements?”


Some fundamentalists expressed doubts about Prohibition, seeing all reform movements as doomed to failure. For example, Donald Barnhouse predicted the immanent Eighteenth Amendment with resignation, reminding readers that only by saving soul's could people be converted away from drink. He argued that reform movements that tried to arrest sin by any other means advanced “an utterly false conception of the purpose of the church” and lacked the power to effect change. See “Editorial—The Eighteenth Amendment,” Revelation August 1933, 288. Follow up “Editorial—Repeal,” Revelation Dec. 1933, 446-47.

Besides the destruction of the physical body, the danger of all these “allurements” lay largely in the fact that they competed with God for the control of a person's whole life. Although it faulted smoking for causing a host of medical conditions that included tuberculosis, infertility, cancer, and heart problems, conservative Protestant anti-smoking literature and sermons most commonly decried cigarettes for their power to manipulate a person's appetite and will. “A tobacco slave will 'walk a mile' or do anything desperate to gratify his abnormal appetite,” Howard O. Welty, a high school principal, told readers of *Our Pentecostal Boys and Girls* in 1930. Though the young man might think tobacco use could demonstrate his toughness and “manliness” among his fellow boys, he would soon find himself governed by a shadowy and sinister master. Articles and stories likewise warned that cigarette use dulled mental powers and turned otherwise reliable people into poor workers. “I've had experiences with dozens of boys, and have yet to find one cigarette smoker who has met the requirements [of his job],” one character in a short story instructed his protégé. “They are either careless or stupid or downright bad, and always unreliable.”

The competing bids of God and addictive substances for the right to govern a person's life made the decision to smoke or drink not merely a vital one to personal health

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but also a fundamental religious question. For Baptist, fundamentalist, and Pentecostal leaders, drinking and smoking were important markers of religious identity. Lois Gregory, a Christian educator who integrated anti-smoking campaigns into her work with youth, challenged her charges to make an anti-cigarette pledge, an act that echoed the decision she also hoped they would make for Christ. By committing not to smoke, a young person could set their entire physical and spiritual future. “Your habit of the cigarette deadens your nerves, destroys your prayer life, defeats your good intentions . . . hardens your arteries, hurts your friends, harms your children,” she explained. As a result, “What you do in this world with a cigarette, you will answer for in the next.” Expressing similar concerns, a young mother begging for advice about how to quit smoking told advice columnist Mother Ruth of the *Sunday School Times* that she feared her habit would undermine her young son's faith. The child understood that a person “can't seek the Kingdom of God smoking” and therefore had grown concerned about his mother. Even if believers could escape the spiritual dangers of addictive substances, advice writers nonetheless urged them to avoid “even the appearance of evil.” Speaking in terms of keeping one's testimony “clean” and one's life “pure,” they urged believers to avoid any act that called into question their identity or their integrity.39

*Pure Minds*

The body and its appetites were not the only aspects of a person that could fall prey to unholy masters. Threats of an even greater magnitude awaited the mind. Such

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popular amusements as card-playing, dancing, theater-attending, and movie-watching seemed to introduce patterns of behavior that pulled pure minds toward lustful thoughts and introduced bad mental habits. In addition, the moral lessons and positive mental attitudes that conservative Protestants extolled seemed to be scarce in the larger culture. It was therefore necessary that the Christian seek diligently to cultivate them.

Prohibitions on card-playing typified the tendency of conservative Protestants to express reservations about any activity that introduced a person to patterns of behavior they believed were likely to end in sin—and thereby also the destruction of a person's ability to promote the well-being of themselves, their family, and their society. Advice writers encouraged recreation and play, but they opposed card games because they depended on chance. This aspect of game play frequently led proficient card players to experiment with gambling, a practice that conservative Protestants viewed as both sinful and addictive. They argued that the gambler strove to extract money from others through luck rather than laboring honestly to earn it. The gambler was therefore engaged in nothing more than polite stealing. Even worse, gambling proved addictive. A person who began gambling regularly often became a person ruined for honest work, citizenship, or Christian service. Since this sad chain of events could only begin when an innocent child picked up a card deck for the first time, pastors and advice writers urged families never to take that first step.40

Like the card deck, dancing undermined a child's future as a spouse and parent because it introduced its practitioners to powerful sexual impulses that frequently led to temptation and sin. The forces at work on the dance floor to strip away the mental and physical self-control that youth relied on to control their sexual passions were myriad: the close proximity of dancers, the inherent “vulgarity” and sexual beat many commentators discerned in modern music, the harmonious movement and physical communion necessary to dance well, the consumption of alcohol at dances. Some young men were certain to succumb to temptation, and when they did, their self control and virtue, perhaps even their health, might be lost. Their thought life, which all men had to strive to manage, could be forever turned from snow white to crimson. Fallen girls lost both virtue and social position.  

Movies and popular literature held out the same danger as dancing. So commonly did movies recommend themselves to viewers on the basis of “sex appeal,” complained an editorial comment reprinted in *Moody Bible Institute Monthly*, that their “brazen effrontery has passed the bounds of toleration.” Nervous pastors also noted that academic studies and informal comments by the critics of American movies asserted that the movie-going youth was regularly exposed to pictures that depicted illicit sexual relationships, murder and other violent acts, gangsters and criminals, indecent exposure, and alcohol consumption. Popular literature was threatening because it dwelt on the same

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themes. Sounding the typical objection to secular literature, evangelist John Rice recommended that believers read novels written by Christians, which were “written to glorify God and do good,” and pass over those more popular works which “picture crime as a glorious adventure” and “love as a matter of lust.” Westerns, pulp magazines, and cheap nonfiction magazines were in his estimation particularly guilty of “making evil things seem beautiful and good.” The constant exposure of young movie-goers and readers to this type of material would necessarily inflame young persons' imaginations, whetting their appetites for the unwholesome and dulling their moral instincts.  

Just as smoking, drinking, and narcotics were presented as tests of Christian identity in fundamentalist, Pentecostal, and Baptist churches, young persons were cautioned against social amusements on the basis that they could bring spiritual slavery to unholy appetites or mental habits. Accordingly, they were urged to see abstinence from harmful amusements as basic components of the Christian commitment and an important test of the religious identity of others. Writing to the Mother Ruth's advice column in the Sunday School Times, “Perplexed,” a twelve-year-old believer wrote: “I have many friends. They are professed Christians, but they are not saved. They believe in dancing, card-playing, and picture-shows. I did too, but ever since I have been converted, I don't.”  

Others embraced these standards with more difficulty. Another youth wrote the


“Counselor” at *Christian Youth* to express doubts about her salvation. Alongside a lack of emotional proof of conversion, she provided lifestyle indicators that seemed to place her outside the community of saved and victorious believers. “I smoke, without the knowledge of my parents,” she confessed. “I would dance and play bridge if I knew how but I have never learned. I just don't see the harm in either of them.” The solution that the column “Counselor” provided to her suggested that she “go over unequivocally to God's side” by confessing her lies to her parents, ending her involvement in unsavory pastimes, and allowing God to replace her desires with the ones God wished her to have. Others had no doubt of their ardent desire to do right but struggled with their alienation from the activities that friends and acquaintances enjoyed. “I don't go to the movies, play cards, dance, etc. We just don't speak the same language,” one woman wrote about her coworkers. She did not want to betray her faith, but she confessed that she felt lonely when unable to relate to most of the people whom she knew. When Frank Leavell, executive director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Department of Student Work, asked Baptist college students to submit questions to him in 1938, the most commonly repeated social question he recorded concerned whether a Baptist could dance. Others asked what social activities and clubs were proper. The fear of corruption—of

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44 “What Would You Do?”, *Christian Youth* June 1, 1940. 96-97.

blending in too much—may have been phrased best by a student who asked, “How can you keep from forgetting that you are a Christian at times when the atmosphere tends to make you forget?”46

Some of the issues that loomed large in conservative Protestant social commentary ascended to that place because they evoked questions about maintaining a Christian identity and social witness in the context of a culture that seemed increasingly promiscuous or at least sensual. As the nation's burgeoning economy caused new fashions to sweep the country, commentators made the powerful symbolism involved in a person's choice of clothing and personal adornment an important religious issue. The modesty of women's clothing drew the most immediate concern, partly because new fashions usually decreased the coverage of clothing. Shorter skirts and more form-fitting clothes for women were considered questionable for the same reason that movies or dancing were: they excited the passions of young men. But beyond this concern, clothing touched on the question of “worldliness.” A loose term that enveloped any attitude or action indicating too great a concern for secular, temporal, or commercial values, worldliness was an important concept to conservative Protestants, especially those in fundamentalist, Pentecostal, or holiness churches whose emphasis on personal holiness and separation from “the world” were particularly salient concepts. Women's dress appeared relevant to this topic because clothing choice signaled whether a woman was allowing popular values of sexual attractiveness or the dictates of Christian holiness to guide her choices. A person who implicitly sought popularity or notice betrayed an

46 “Problems Submitted by Students,” June 9, 1937, Box 13:6, Papers of Frank Hartwell Leavell. Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, TN.
enthusiasm for peers rather than for God. That priority was religiously suspect in itself and especially dangerous when it threatened to subsume her in a culture that was sexually permissive or otherwise unmindful of Christian values. Together these concerns provoked comment and controversy over clothing that presented a danger to young morals or a threat to a young Christian's “witness”: their ability to stand out among their peers as a person belonging to God and demonstrating God's ways before a watching world.47

Many commentators took I Timothy 2:9, as the rule to follow: “In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with braided hair or gold, or pearls, or costly array.” Some of the strictest interpretations came from holiness and Pentecostal churches who thought that any wearing of jewelry or fashionable clothing violated this standard.48 Those with less extreme views stressed the importance of modesty and of choosing clothing and adornments that would neither intentionally nor unintentionally erase the identity of the wearer. That meant exercising caution about the clothing and make-up promoted in advertisements and movies, lest Christians adopt all the trappings of those who flaunted Christian standards of behavior.

A Christian woman's choice of modest, sensible clothing over flashy, popular styles expressed her inclination toward God and her rejection of Satan. Chiding youth for adopting the styles of their friends rather than those of their mothers, Clayton Derstine, a


bishop with the Illinois Conference of the Mennonite Church, quipped, “I have heard
girls say, 'I will not be tied to my mother's apron strings.'” Such girls would do well to
consider whether they “would rather be tied to the devil's strings.” John R. Rice
employed the same logic to argue against the use of make-up. He admitted that no single
Scripture prohibited the use of make-up; however, he cautioned that ungodly women had
pioneered and promoted its use. That fact made the Christian woman's employment of
them questionable at best.49

Consistent with these priorities, the standards of dress that concerned churches
chose to promote varied widely and seemed calculated mainly to ensure that Christian
standards of dress were sufficiently strict to distinguish Christians from their secular
peers. Historian Edith Blumhofer has observed that Pentecostal churches, some of the
strictest enforcers of dress rules, followed no uniform rule except a pattern of always
staying on the conservative end of whatever clothing styles were current in the group's
region; for members of the Church of God (Cleveland) during the 1930s the chosen
standard were no sleeves shorter than the elbow. Whatever one's standards, changing
fashions invariably led individuals to variant definitions of modesty.50

Of course, the discovery of an appropriate middle ground between unrealistic
expectations and merely fitting in was the rub. In 1930 Moody Bible Institute reported on
its own wrestling both with critics who believed their dress standards were too lax and
with students who found the school's standards foreign. Responding to an unnamed report

49 Clayton Derstine, The Home: From Four Angles (Scottsdale, PA: Mennonite Publishing House,

50 Edith Blumhofer, Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American
Culture (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 97-98; “Immodest Apparel,” COG Minutes 1932, 119;
COG Minutes 1933, 43, 128-29.
that Moody had become lax on clothing standards, *Moody Bible Institute Monthly* argued that the Institute had maintained a reasonable dress code that preserved modesty and that the extremely strict standards of dress advocated by their critics simply were not practical. “The remedy of the thing is with the female sex, and not with Christian women who are only a small percentage of the sex,” the editorial asserted. “The majority are obliged to wear prevailing styles because their purses are too narrow to engage private dressmakers and they must take what the shops offer them or go without.” The editor also acknowledged that Moody Bible Institute rules sometimes possessed only modest influence over its students' opinions. Like a distressed father or pastor, the Institute “can protest and warn against it and denounce it, but he tolerates it because there is nothing else that he can do.” The editorial added that many students came from family and church backgrounds which brokered no strong objection to recent fashion trends. Even when it acknowledged its limitations, Moody rules and editorials continued to denounce those who sought “to please the fashion god of this carnal world” by valuing popularity over biblical guidance.51

*Good Character*

The twin emphases of many conservative Protestant churches on bodily and moral development reflected the special religious vocabulary that the holiness movement and other varieties of pietism had given conservative Protestant churches. They also reflected the general understanding of the self fostered by the American middle class over the

previous century. The rise of individualism, capitalism, and classic political liberalism had helped to make the ideals of individual self-development a strategy for social success important to America's middle class, which produced an extensive body of advice literature in the nineteenth century. According to this literature, the balanced development of a person's various faculties enabled him not only to act rightly but also to develop the self-control necessary to pursue long-term economic goals. Such a person possessed “character.” In the twentieth century, new concepts in the fields of psychology and sociology eroded the ideal of character and replaced it with the concept of personality, each part of which developed through experience and progressive adjustment to the self, environment, and other people.

Conservative Protestants invoked the concepts of both character and personality when discussing self-cultivation. Authors discussed the importance of a good home life to molding the evolving personality of children as they interacted with other people and expressed their thoughts and feelings. But in addition, many emphasized character, the internal qualities necessary to regulate oneself and organize one’s energies in the pursuit of worthy goals. As William Bierderwolf explained in a sermon and pamphlet on amusements, just as success in study or business required self-regulation, the Christian life required the “sacrifice” of certain short-term pleasures for long-term gain.⁵²

As its nineteenth-century advocates and its twentieth-century defenders understood it, character could ultimately only be built over time, because it was the product of the life training one received and the religious or philosophical principles that guided a person's daily actions. Its presence or absence also affected the whole person. A

⁵² Bierderwolf, 4-5.
person able to control himself or exercise courage in one area of his life would find the same abilities useful in another; an undisciplined person was liable to approach all of his activities with that same attitude. Thus Christian faithfulness in regard to prayer or healthy living both expressed and built a person's commitment to God. Conversely, a person who slipped into apparently innocent movies or who indulged in weekend dances put himself under the sway of influences that overthrew virtuous thoughts and undermined self-control. Success in the Christian life, business, and marriage were therefore all connected to these seemingly isolated earlier decisions. “Two distinct classes of young people are molding the future. One is upward, the other downward,” J. Henry Allen, a professor at Phillipps University, commented in an article on preparation for marriage. “The daily actions and habits of college students indicate with a good degree of certainty what the life of young men and the co-eds will be after marriage.” Dedication in one area of life—or lack of it—bled over to one's dedication in another:

For those who pursue their studies with earnest purpose and with talents consecrated to the Master's service, it is easy to predict a useful, happy future. For those who smoke and drink and swear, ever ready to neglect the duties for a high old time, it is just as easy to predict a future stamped with failure, disappointment, and disaster.

A young woman was about to marry on a very short acquaintance with her prospective husband. A friend said to her, 'You tell me that you have known him for only two or three weeks, therefore how do you know you will be congenial? You should have a longer acquaintance before marriage.' The young woman answered flippantly, 'Oh, well, if we don't like each other, we'll just get a divorce and marry again.'

Reflecting the mindset that one built character by degrees and long practice, as a young woman Lois Gregory, a Christian worker and educator, wrote down maxims that

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pertained to making “useful actions” both “automatic and habitual.” She was careful to place daily Bible study, prayer, and involvement in useful work at the center of life. Relaxation and amusement were accorded limited roles. The model of conduct she recommended to Christian youth mirrored the pattern she set for herself: play had a place, within the correct boundaries. It could not take over one's life, because this would mean a serious loss of usefulness and satisfaction. In a similar manner, the “Counselor” in the advice column of the Southern Baptist periodical *Christian Youth* instructed a teenager to make “definite studies and Christian service” the focus of the local youth group. “Occasional parties” and individual pursuit of hobbies in the home could play a complementary role. In general, conservative Protestants saw recreation as a healthful break from labor and joined other Americans in promoting sports, travel, and other healthy activities but stressed that too great a concern for leisure pursuits turned productive citizens into mere society people who flitted from one useless pastime to the next.54


Short stories composed for the edification of Christian youth reflected on this theme. They frequently extolled the lifeways and values of the middle class, especially economic values such as hard work and thrift. A survey of stories printed in 1940 by *Christian Youth* illustrates the prominence of themes in writing for youth related to the development of employable attributes, habits, and skills. In one story, the children of a businessman are left to fend for themselves when their father undergoes a nervous collapse. With their father removed to the countryside for recovery and their mother
absent to care for him, the three children manage the housework and the family's meager remaining finances. The children learn to budget, which requires them to give up such niceties as the family's black maid and weekly hair styling. Determined to earn money in their parents' absence, they find work cutting lawns, hosting tourists, and nursing the infirm. By the end of the summer they have met all their expenses, saved money, and found life professions. In another story, two nature-loving children are tempted to lie to a duck hunter about the plentiful bird life inhabiting an island their grandparents have put up for sale. Reluctantly, they reveal the truth and are delighted with the results: the hunter passes on the information to a prominent ornithologist, who buys the land instead. In another tale, a hardworking teenager invents new methods that increase the efficiency and customer service of the store in which he works. His good business sense earns his employer money and lands the young employee a managerial job. In such vignettes honesty, thrift, innovation, hard work, clean living, and prayer make up the components of a happy and prosperous life.  

In other stories published in *Christian Youth* that year, the qualities necessary for success in middle-class business and life were contrasted strongly to the social amusements and values of the privileged and popular members of high society. In one story, the Baptist children of a middle-class family grow frustrated with, then pray for, “Aristocratic Charlotte,” a neighborhood friend who spends her time striving to become

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part of the city's society class. Charlotte eventually converts to Christ, which cures her of her vain interests in dancing and dating privileged young men. Instead, she resumes playing tennis for the neighborhood team and develops a romantic interest in the courteous son of the Baptist family. Louise, the main character of another story, fancies herself too sophisticated to waste time playing piano at services conducted by the young but old-fashioned pastor, Harold Guthrie—until she discovers that he is no “saintly patsy” but instead a true man whose seriousness of purpose brings him true assurance and happiness.

This concern for the development of character and work ethic reverberated in conservative Protestant advice to young people about preparing themselves for their life's work and for marriage. One expression of this interest arrived in the form of the notice that church leaders took in the emerging field of vocational counseling. A response to the economic diversification and growing length of formal education, the field of vocational counseling had emerged in the 1910s to help youth understand how their skills might connect them to careers. By the 1930s there were full undergraduate courses in the subject—and religious interest being paid to it. The Southern Baptist Convention's Department of Student Work began to promote vocational emphasis weeks during which student groups were urged to use sermons, chapels, and study texts to aid college students in selecting a career path. In 1930 the recommend text was Abingdon Press' *Getting into Your Life's Work* by Harold M. Dozee; a few years later, Southern Baptist Convention presses were publishing their own materials: *Planning a Life* (1935) and *Youth Makes the Choice* (1938) by Henry Eugene Watters.
Just as many advice writers thought that character development offered a youth a reservoir of attributes and skills that enabled him to shoulder adult responsibilities, vocational counselors viewed a youth's inborn personality and acquired physical and mental competencies to be the foundation for his economic and social success. Watters urged youths to make charts displaying their strengths and weaknesses in order to better understand themselves and the choices that lay before them. When properly inventoried, physical abilities, intelligence, and aptitudes (broadly defined as “traits, types, temperaments, and characteristics”) made up the raw personal potential that fitted one for certain careers and directed one away from others. Upon examining his grades, interests, and personality, a student would find that in addition, he possessed a combination of artistic, constructive, scientific, practical, reflective, mathematical, and optimistic traits. This matrix of attributes and preferences formed the raw potential that would be actualized by the student's “emotional traits”: introversion, extroversion, industriousness, fair-mindedness, cooperativeness, self-sufficiency, leadership, and moral attitude. By gaining self-awareness of all these elements and the interactions between them, a young person could select a career at which he would excel. He could also identify areas he wished to strengthen to improve his chances of success in particular pursuits. Personal satisfaction and improved efficiency would result.\(^{56}\)

Others provided less detailed guidance but stressed the importance of youths carefully and prayerfully selecting a career from the multiple options open to them. In talks to Baptist college students, Frank Leavell sketched out similar advice to that offered

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by Watters, outlining “vocational choice” as a process of evaluating one's physical, mental, and spiritual needs in order to identify work that one “likes to do,” “can do,” and “should do.” Likewise, a Bible study for youth published in the Church of God (Cleveland)'s Lighted Pathway observed, “Many of our young people are simply drifting here and there discouraged and unhappy because they have not found the place God intended them to fill. God has a complete plan for every life and will help you find what vocation you are fitted for if you trust Him to do it.” This reality was equally true for the spiritual world. “This is a day of specialization in the business world,” the author observed, and so it only followed that in spiritual matters each believer would concentrate his energies on particular gifts.57

Ultimately these issues also mattered to conservative Protestants because they saw the development of a sound moral and social life by individuals to be the root of social order. The crime rate, a common subject of conservative Protestant social commentary, seemed to furnish clear evidence that social disintegration ensued whenever society grew more secular and institutions dedicated to the education and discipline of the individual declined. No one did more to promote this idea nationally than FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, who pushed the importance of parental authority and Sunday school problems in national periodicals. Appreciating the encouragement, conservative Protestant periodicals published entire articles by Hoover and sprinkled quotes from him throughout their commentary on crime. “Children used to live in homes,” Church of God pastor F. Lincicome quipped, “Now they live in the automobile and at the movie.” Only by

bringing them back home and into church could they be formed into the men and women they ought to become. Articles and advertisements pushing the importance of Sunday school advanced the same conceit.58

Conservative Protestant leaders hoped that their collective efforts to parent, evangelize, and educate children would counter the decadence and lawlessness evident in modern society. Paul Radar of the Chicago Tabernacle, an influential fundamentalist church, blamed crime on affluence and the weak moral character it fostered. “The crisis hour of any nation is when it is great and big and growing popular and filled with money and luxury,” he explained. “We are not only filled with lust and luxury but crime, which is the outcome of lust and luxury.” The only force that could counterbalance such an pernicious foe were families and churches.59 Likewise, in a newspaper feature in the Sunday Star (Kansas City) profiling “crimeless Lutheran communities,” Rev. O. C. J. Keller of the Lutheran Church at Block Settlement, near Paola, Kansas held out this picture of what American communities might become:

In this community we have none of the problems that seem to be perplexing the outside world so much. . . . The jazz frenzy has not touched us. The hip-pocket flask is unknown here. Not a girl in all this settlement ever smokes cigarettes. We have no thieves, no crime. This settlement has never graduated a criminal. I will put this community up against those of any community in the country.


The pastor observed that youth in that community stayed primarily on the farm and married young people with whom they had grown up. They attended Lutheran churches, populated the local parochial school, and participated in the Walther League. Although it might seem to some that these communities were becoming increasingly scarce, Keller thought this town provided a model for the future rather than a throwback to the past. These successes had been sustained even as improvements in communication and transportation modernized Kansas.60

**Conclusion**

Many conservative Protestants embraced an approach to building a civilization that relied heavily on the ability of families and churches to mold individuals who, through the power of personal conversion and the pursuit of holiness, could approach their tasks as providers, parents, and citizens with properly developed minds, bodies, and characters. Writers imagined that the hunger of such an individual for spiritual things embodied and fulfilled the contemporary quest for a happy life. Complete dependence on God made his success possible, thereby proving that the rules God had established millennia before were still authoritative and relevant.

The particular religious language that conservative Protestants used to discuss Christian conversion, the expression of Christian identity and witness, and the content of the Christian life validated and sanctified the emphasis of modern persons on the value of

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60 “A Reporter Visits One of Our Crimeless Lutheran Communities,” extract copied from *Sunday Star* (Kansas City), March 30, 1930 by the *Sunday School Board Bulletin*. Item located in folder “Child Study Club,” the Papers of August C. Stellhorn, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, MO.
private, subjective experience, especially that located within the private and sacrosanct regions of the self and the family. At the same time, those who employed this language fought competing visions of what these private universes ought to contain. They consciously rejected the ethos of a consumer economy or a quest for happiness via self-indulgence or the cultivation of art, love, or expression for their own sakes. Instead, they vied for a religious goal of self-discovery through self-abrogation, of fulfillment through the embrace of traditional social and familial responsibility. They argued that persons found happiness not by seeking it as their highest goal or by imaging themselves to be autonomous individuals capable of attaining through their own power, but by placing themselves under God's will, the Bible's mandates, within God's mission, and under God's power. And they advanced the sectarian message that this acceptance of social responsibility, with its attendant delights, were not fully possible outside of Christ. A nation of sound families would have to be a nation built around family altars.
CHAPTER FIVE

“PANOPLYED FOR WAR”: WORLD WAR II AND THE DEEPENING FAMILY CRISIS

Reflecting upon the importance of the American family in a world ravaged by war, marriage expert Leland Foster Wood urged Americans to place special hope in the family as an institution that could give them a concrete means of determining the future course of history. “Sometimes we feel we can not do much about the World,” he observed. “But we can do something about the family. In creating good homes we are building healthy tissues in the body of humanity and are doing a vital part toward rebuilding the world.”¹

Wood's optimism about the social significance of the home both to individual private needs and to the nation's future reflected the wider dialog in the United States about the meaning of World War II. As historian Richard Westbrook has observed, corporate advertisements and government propaganda retreated from the grandiose claims raised during the previous world war, when young men were urged to mobilize in order to protect ravaged French womanhood or to guarantee the right of all peoples to self-determination. During World War II, artists instead explained the cause for democracy as the preservation of individual rights and the fulfillment of private

¹ Introduction, What the American Family Faces (Chicago: The Eugene Hugh Publishers, 1943), xxvi.
obligations to family members. After FDR gave his famous address calling Americans to
defend the “four freedoms” (freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom of religion,
and freedom of speech), Norman Rockwell created iconic depictions of these ideals that
interpreted “Freedom from Fear” as the right of one's children to sleep at night without
threat of physical harm and “Freedom from Want” as the ability of one's family to gather
around a bounteous Thanksgiving Day table..

The religious response of mainline Protestant Christianity to the challenges of the
war years reflected similar convictions about the importance of the family. Historian
Margaret Bendroth has observed that, despite the significant social upsets of the
Depression and the clear decline of religious practice in American homes, mainline
Protestants remained deeply attracted to the idea that the home could build God's
kingdom through its power to shape the developing child's moral, cultural, and religious
sensibilities. For those facing social chaos, these salvific influences seemed to offer a ray
of hope, and this may have been especially so in mainline churches, where reliance on
doctrine or revival meetings had given way to a greater emphasis on Horace Bushell's
picture of Christian nurture, enlarged and augmented by social science's interest in home
training and education. The US government greatly encouraged this emphasis by calling
upon churches to aid it in preventing juvenile delinquency and in strengthening the home

\[2\] Robert B. Westbrook, “Fighting for the American Family: Private Interests and Political Obligation
front through programs of moral and religious education. American churches and the
government together promoted Christian Home Week, starting in 1943, making it one of
several efforts to marshal the populace through both public and private means.  

Wood's assertion about the influence of the home, Rockwell's appeal to Americans
to protect their children and pantries, and mainline Protestant optimism about religious
nurture and education reflected in part the value that Americans assigned to private
institutions and in part the practical mindset of citizens who in a single half-century had
faced two world wars and a depression. Individuals longed to see concrete improvements
in their lives. Consequently, they viewed their smallest, most fundamental, and most
easily controlled institution as a vessel in which to pour future hopes.  

Conservative Protestants shared the conviction that the family had a special role
to play in preserving the Christian faith and in arresting negative trends in twentieth-
century social life. As they threw their support behind the war effort, they connected
these convictions to their own interpretations of the war, interpretations that carried
forward their established pattern of viewing military or political events as cosmic realities
subject to influence primarily by individual decisions and private commitments,
especially by the success or failure of people to turn to God in faith and to live out that
faith. This view of events made religious faithfulness in the hallowed spaces of home life
one of the most important bids to seize control of a threatening world and to build a
stronger church and people in the coming years.

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Editorial cartoons published during the war reveal a great deal about the shape of the conservative Protestant imagination as vast armies met each other in Europe and the Pacific. In 1943 the *United Evangelical Action* asserted that behind the political and geographical contest of the hour a greater and more consequential battle was being waged. Satan, depicted as “That Old Serpent, The Devil,” had wrapped the entire world in his coils. From this favorable position, he was poised to strike the church, “the true object of his hatred.” Satan hoped to cripple the church because it was “the power of God unto salvation.” Thus the ultimate stakes of the geopolitical game was not the political future of humanity but the salvation of individual souls. In a similar manner, a cartoon in the *Pentecostal Evangel* warned that even though no physical bombs had fallen on the US populace, the enemy's spiritual bombardment had already reached American shores in the form of “drunkenness,” “divorce,” “crime,” “vice,” “murder,” “hatred,” “greed,” “immorality,” “graft,” and “immodesty.” Surrounding the cartoon was a revival sermon from evangelist Louise Nankivell titled “Wake Up, America!” The next year, the front cover of the *King's Business* portrayed the GI on whom the nation's future rested as a man who marched into battle with two comforting thoughts: the knowledge that “In God I Have Placed My Trust: I Will Not Be Afraid” and the memory of a wife and child waiting for him at home. These images argued that the ultimate nature of the war was spiritual and moral; its outcome would not only decide the fate of individual souls but also depend on the ability of the redeemed to rise up to meet the challenges of the hour and to build a virtuous postwar world.4

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This conviction, that the duty of Christians and churches consisted of proclaiming the gospel and building faithful individuals to serve at home and in the war, formed the bulk of conservative Protestants' concrete plans for ministry during the war. This conviction also helped to bring their concern about the health and future of the American family to a head. Since the previous world war, conservative Protestant leaders had stressed the importance of the Christian home as a biblical imperative and an integral part of their effort to evangelize the world. In response to forces that seemed to challenge the integrity of marriage, they had decried sin and tried to reiterate Christian social ideals for a new generation. World War II brought with it the collective belief that the home was more necessary than ever, as well as evidence that wartime stresses also threatened to worsen earlier social trends against which Protestants had labored: divorce, sexual immorality, cigarette use, drinking, and crime. In response, conservative Protestants built more ambitious plans to extend their churches' ministries, to bring revival to the nation, and to convince Christians to commit themselves to marriage and parenthood.

**World War as a Family Crisis**

The rise of political tension and war around the world reached a vast community of conservative churches who had a tradition, then several decades old, of interpreting bad news as a sign that society's very foundations were being shaken by human rebelliousness and sin. Among American Pentecostals and fundamentalists a premillennial dispensationalist framework for interpreting biblical history was particularly influential. That view broke salvific history down into several epochs, the
final of which would be characterized by the increasing dominance of evil, greater social chaos, and the rise of “wars and rumors of wars.” Dispensationalists generally held that the church was witnessing the last days, an idea that combined with the optimism of revivalism to produce two emphases in their social outlook. These ideals were often held in creative tension. When they composed jeremiads, dispensationalists often switched between presenting themselves as critical prophets in the midst of Babylon or Rome who foresaw the imminent destruction of the world and presenting themselves as warm-hearted patriots who hoped earnestly that their beloved America would repent and prove that they were not so much out of step with their fellow citizens after all. America, they stressed, still had a chance to repent and reassert its role as a believing, moral, and politically virtuous nation.

Conservative Protestants who did not hold to a dispensationalist framework were more wary of making firm predictions about the end of the world. For example, leaders in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) found it especially necessary to distinguish their own eschatological views from those of the dispensationalists. In both 1918 and 1932 the Synod affirmed statements repudiating “millenarianism” or “chiliasm,” the idea that Christ's second coming would establish His reign over the earth for a literal period of one thousand years. Hoping to reinforce these points, theologian Theodore Graebner published books during both world wars repudiating the attempts of such “fundamentalist” publications as Revelation, Our Hope, Destiny, the Sunday School Times, and Prophetic Monthly to interpret specific contemporary events as the fulfillment of biblical prophesy. Graebner instead urged Lutherans to wait for the future coming of
Christ and in the meanwhile to bring both prophetic judgment and the hope of the gospel to a lost generation. Missouri Synod leaders expressed these convictions by calling for a reformation of morals in the church.5

From either perspective, the American family appeared to be a matter of tremendous importance. The state of the family was one means by which commentators measured the spiritual temperature of the nation, scrutinizing it for problems on which to call Americans to repentance. When they discerned moral failing, the family was also the institution they viewed as the natural companion to the church as it strove to stem the tide. Commentators imagined that moral instruction at home, prayer at the family altar, and revival in the churches were to be interlinked; if these places of spiritual instruction and power were not marshaled effectively, few souls could be reached and the nation's future was in peril. If the tide of war or the rise of the anti-Christ turned the fortunes of the American nation and the world even darker, then the faithfulness of individuals, families, and local churches would be the single remaining hope for spreading the gospel.

With these thoughts in mind, conservative Protestants surveyed the headlines for evidence of the nation's moral health. They found ample reason to worry. As the Social Service Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention warned, past experience taught that “not only is the war itself a danger to the moral and spiritual integrity of those who engage in it, but [it] creates inevitably conditions that aggravate the ordinary problems of life.”6 Further, the evidence seemed to support that conclusion. Statistics, anecdotes, and


experts in the popular press all seemed to agree that the war would exacerbate the divorce problem and loosen parental control over young people. The rising divorce rate, which had been somewhat suppressed by the economic constraints of the Depression, rose during the war years. Moreover, in the press experts expressed concern about the great numbers of marriages young couples contracted during the war, arguing that couples who married hurriedly before a young soldier's deployment gave insufficient thought or time to the wisdom of their choice in a partner. Fearing a great divorce boom when the war ended, advice writers cautioned youth to follow the same discretion in choosing a mate that they would have exercised in peacetime. “Great numbers of men and women are taken from their customary work, from their families and communities, to meet new and strange people,” the Lutheran Witness reminded its members. “It is then that the young Christian should call to mind that matrimony is a very serious matter.”

The enlistment of soldiers and the domestic need for labor also threatened to become disintegrating influences on family life. The deployment of fathers and sons abroad posed obvious stresses on family relationships. In addition, family experts and psychologists predicted that the unusual conditions that prevailed during wartime could make a return to normal family life difficult for both men and women. For example, sociologist William Waller, whose book The Veteran Comes Back (1944) received a favorable review in Moody Monthly, detailed how the military training and wartime experiences alienated soldiers from family, friends, and old routines. He cautioned that afterward, many soldiers would find readjustment to civilian life and the resumption of

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old family relationships and friendships difficult. Picking up on these warnings, church
literature described the reintegration of soldiers to congregational life as a “large and
more complex problem than people realize.”

Husbands were not the only problem: many speculated that wives who had
entered the workforce during the war might also find it difficult to return to homemaking
as their sole occupation. They might also find it hard to submit to a husband who had
been absent for months or years. Repeating the observations of a Chicago judge, a
column in *United Evangelical Action* reported, “Never was the marriage relation so
jeopardized. . . . Never in the history of America were [there] so many divorces as this
year, when women have won their independence economically from men.” Countering
that dangerous tendency, periodicals urged women to remember that the stewardship of a
woman's talents and resources begins and is centered upon her home, where “Your own
family circle will know that Christ lives in you and through you.”

Newspapers, law enforcement, and the military raised additional concerns about
single men and women. The war appeared to make juvenile delinquency worse, raising
doubts about the moral fiber of teenagers. In 1943 FBI Chief J. Edgar Hoover reported
increases in arrests of young men for assault (17 percent), disorderly conduct (26
percent), drunkenness (30 percent), and rape (10 percent). Sexual immorality also
became more visible; Hoover reported that offenses of girls against “common decency”

8 William Waller, *The Veteran Comes Back* (New York: Drydey Press, 1944); Review of the Veteran
Comes Back, *Moody Monthly* February 1945, 363; Report of the National Advisory Planning Council,
*Proceedings of Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* 1944, 388.

9 “Solution to the Social Question,” *United Evangelical Action* December 1943, 26; Susan M.
comments on the difficulties of both servicemen and women on the home front can be found in: Gilbert
rose 88 percent. Meanwhile, military officials and the press both noted and decried the
eagerness with which working girls and unchaperoned teenagers openly sought liaisons
with soldiers. The same authorities expressed a combination of resignation and
trepidation about young men. Recognizing the likelihood that soldiers would seek a
sexual outlet one way or another, the military inaugurated an extensive sex hygiene
campaign that avoided moralizing, opting instead to raise awareness of the risk of
venereal disease infection and the usefulness of condoms in preventing infection.10

Naturally, the question of how authorities might contain the apparent surge of
youthful misbehavior became one of the recurring discussions of managing life on the
home front. Editorials in both the secular and religious press blamed crime and sexual
indiscretion alike on young people's relative autonomy during the war. Commentators
blamed the absence of fathers due to military duty and the disappearance of mothers into
the nation's factories; in addition, they observed that military service and civilian war
work provided young men and women with their own paychecks and often carried them
far from home, where they proved unprepared or unwilling to make decisions that
accorded with the standards of their critics. In typical fashion, religious commentators
additionally asserted the worst threat of all was the lack of religion in the home, which
might have counterbalanced these destructive forces if only God's aid had been enlisted.

10 For secondary literature on sexual conduct and venereal disease, see: Jeffrey Moran, Teaching
118-123; John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, Intimate Matters, 2nd edition (Chicago: University of
Chicago Press, 1997), 260-61. For treatment of this topic by J. Edgar Hoover and other law enforcement
authorities, see David Wolcott, Cops and Kids: Policing Juvenile Delinquency in Urban America, 1890-
1940 (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2005), 193-98; J. Edgar Hoover, “Mothers . . . Our
Only Hope,” Woman's Home Companion January 1944, 21-22; “Rapid Rise in Teen-Age Crime Is Traced
to Wartime Tension,” Newsweek November 8, 1942, 27.
In fundamentalist William McDermott's words, wartime juvenile delinquents “were simply young pagans, in whose homes there had been no training for ideals or character.”

Signs of the Times: Interpreting the Family Crisis

Faced with these challenges, conservative Protestants often predicted impending social cataclysm if audiences did not repent and renew their commitment to building Christian civilization. In this quest, they sometimes perpetuated a message very similar to that of secular marriage experts and leaders within the Protestant mainline. Conservative papers printed articles that advanced the kind of ideas about the home that the Protestant mainline leaders already widely espoused, and which some conservative Protestants had echoed, during the 1920s and 1930s. For example, in 1945 the Church of God Evangel, the paper of the Church of God (Cleveland), reprinted a sermon in which Warren D. Bowman, pastor of Washington City Church of the Brethren in District of Columbia, called upon Americans to renew their commitment to the Christian home: “Let the Christian people of America inaugurate a movement from coast to coast for better...

homes.” To Bowman, that quest involved a redoubled commitment to building a modern companionate marriage complemented by Protestant religious convictions: careful preparation for wedlock, a willingness to see professional counsel in the event of trouble, personal study of the problems involved in marriage adjustment and child rearing, and the cultivation of “genuine love” as well as “vital religion of the heart.” While most articles written by Pentecostals stressed the importance of seeking supernatural intervention into daily problems, on this occasion subscribers to the Evangel read that consulting a professional third-party—a counselor, lawyer, doctor, or pastor—about one's marriage problems “often works miracles.”

Conservative Protestants also brought their own characteristic theological views to bear on their interpretation of wartime social conditions. Some commentators interpreted the outbreak of war and the social disorder that attended it in light of biblical prophesy. Lester Sunrall, intrepid faith healer and pastor with the Assemblies of God, wed his bride Louise Laymen, a Pentecostal missionary, in 1944. But he feared that his good fortune in marrying a godly partner was about to become a rare privilege. Sumrall asserted that the earth was witnessing its last days, one sign of which was the devastating loss of young men in the battlefields of Europe and the Pacific. The itinerant evangelist predicted in one of his messages, 7 Women and 1 Man, that as a result of the war there would be a severe shortage of husbands for eligible women, a circumstance foretold in Isaiah 13:11-12: “And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the

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haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than gold.” This
demographic nightmare would in turn alter family life and gender roles. “In that day
seven women shall take hold of one man,” the prophet had written. Social revolution
would ensue. Women would say, “We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel;
only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach” (Isaiah 4:1). Sumrall
concluded that the prevalence of single women and mothers would “alter our way of
living, and destroy our standards of life.” No longer would the social rule that Sumrall
had learned in “the old-fashioned Southland” to regard women as ladies and to act as
their defender hold sway. Instead, an entirely new reality would prevail. Women would
seek paid work rather than depending on husbands for support. Their pursuit of careers
would sweep away men's respect for them. Finally, the severe shortage of men with
whom to establish homes would encourage sexual immorality among women. Births out
of wedlock would abound. Already, Sumrall warned, these trends were evident. Due to
wartime labor needs, women were proving too eager “to emulate men.” Married men and
women separated by the war were proving unable to remain true to their spouses or to
preserve their marriages. Experts were predicting that forty percent of wartime marriages
would end in divorce.¹³

Others avoided making specific predictions based on prophesy, opting instead to
warn readers about the disintegration of moral order and its consequences. “The other
war removed many of the old time restraints and convictions” an editorial in *Moody
Monthly* observed, “What will a war do when the barriers of sex are already down and

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¹³ Lester F. Sumrall, *7 Women and 1 Man: A Startling Message to America's 66,000,000 Women* (Chicago: Lester Sumrall, 1945).
when a generation is already saturated with nicotine and soaked in cocktails?”

LCMS president J. W. Behnken saw in the international unrest of the twentieth century ample reason to wonder what cosmic designs were afoot and to call Americans to sober repentance over their spiritual and moral failings. “For the second time within the short span of twenty-five years . . . the whole world is in the throes of destructive war. . . . Unquestionably, the Savior's specific reference to wars and rumors of war demands serious consideration at this time,” he told the Synod's Triannual Regular Convention in 1941. He viewed the War as God's judgment on “a world as wicked as Sodom and Gomorrah, as guilty as Nineveh,” whose sins included “vice, immorality, divorces, murder, robbery, theft, greed, graft, in fact disrespect for all law and order.” God's judgment lay equally on the Church, who had failed to maintain “the sharp line of demarcation which should be drawn so clearly and distinctly between the life of the world and the life of Christians.” Plagued by “worldliness,” she had succumbed too much to the social sins of drunkenness, selfishness, gambling, and “loose morals.” She had shown too little zeal for Christian education and missions. Sober repentance was in order.

To some, the war issued not only a clear warning against spiritual and moral failing but also against secularization. In Western Recorder, H. H. Hargrove, pastor of Columbus Avenue Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, faulted that the rise of atheism—


15 J.W. Behnken, “President's Address,” Proceedings of the Thirty-Eighth Regular Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States (St. Louis: Concordia, 1941), 3-8. Behnken also made these points in his address to the convention of 1944. See Behnken, “President's Address,” Proceedings of the Thirty-Ninth Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States (St. Louis: Concordia, 1944), 4-10. For a similar message, see “Which Way, America?” Western Recorder March 4, 1943, 4.
defined both as conscious atheism and the “practical atheism” of Christians who “lived as though God did not exist”—had sparked the “conflagration of war.” Unbelieving citizens proved all too ready to substitute political leaders for God, while the atheist leader tended naturally to become a “beast” who “plunders and kills the weaker nations.” The only force that could prevent future wars was the return of masses of humanity to faith in God, an event that made possible “submission to His sovereignty in all the affairs of individual and nation.” In Moody Monthly, Stephen E. Slocum argued that humanity's inherent selfishness bred conflict, a fallen nature that the present generation could scarcely hope to overcome and, even if they did, would soon find the progress lost when the next generation would “revert to an atavistic type of homo sapiens.” Only Christianity could alter such a natural course of events, by introducing “new and higher impulses than the inherited tendencies common to human nature.” Also in Moody Monthly, Benjamin Johnson contended that World Wars I and II had proved that “the philosophies and isms of man have failed to heal the wounds of mankind.”

If the individual, social, and political effects of unbelief were not arrested, commentators promised that totalitarianism would continue to plague humanity, even if the US won the war. “Today has been impregnated by the Devil and has given birth to a litter of isms,” Southern Baptist pastor G. B. Bush explained to readers of the Western Recorder, “which have turned out to be giants and are now seeking to overthrow the world.” Airing similar convictions, A.G. Ward, an Assemblies of God church

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administrator and Central Bible Institute instructor, wrote that humanity was witnessing “a revival of demon power on earth.” Unparalleled in its severity, even by the great evil that had brought about Noah's Flood in Genesis, the contemporary demonic revival took the forms of many “isms” seeking “the extermination of Christianity”: “Nazi paganism, Fascist atheism, Anti-God communism, and Far Eastern heathenism.” The physical devastation and poor “moral conditions” wrought by the “titanic struggle” of World War II provided the greatest and last opportunity for the church to demonstrate Christ's power to save. From this perspective, the salvation of the nation and the preservation of liberty rested entirely upon the reformation of individual believers, especially of their moral lives.17

Authors of Christian fiction adopted many of the same themes in their work, portraying the dawn of war as a call to Americans to realize that their lives and their nation stood at a crossroads at which they would choose to enlist in God's cause or become complicit with Satan and all those forces that threatened to tear society apart. Of special concern to them were the questions of how the formation and redemption of the self spiritually determined the outcome of the war, the shape of the postwar world, and the ability of individuals to bear up under the physical and emotional challenges the war presented to them. Faith brought strength of character and courage; conversely, unbelief and selfishness brought personal disappointment and death. In a novel about returning soldier Barney Vance, Grace Livingston Hill, the author of around one hundred Christian romance novels over the course of her prolific career, offered her readers a solution to the

problems of preparing young soldiers for faithful service and for resolving the moral problems faced on the home front. When the reader meets Barney in the pages of *In the Time of the Singing of Birds* (1944), they learn that he has already enjoyed the benefits of growing up under the guidance of a Christian mother. In addition, his deployment to Europe two years earlier has brought him friendship with Stormy, a born-again Christian who led Barney to Christ during their deployment. Barney's character and faith enable him to serve bravely, and he returns home a wounded war hero. Yet even with these two momentous chapters of his life behind him, the recuperating Barney returns home to find that he has to make important decisions. Until the war, Barney's mother had been his moral compass and the spiritual center of his household; but by the time he arrives home, she has passed away. No sooner does Barney comprehend that he is alone to shape his moral universe in any direction he wishes than he is immediately presented with two childhood friends, who have grown old enough to become potential love interests: the worldly Hortense and godly Margaret.

Hortense and Margaret turn out to be examples of the worst and best of what conservative Protestants pictured American womanhood to be during the war. On one side stood the power of piety, industry, and moral order instilled in the citizen from her childhood years; on the other, stood the power of selfishness and moral disorder learned during one's earliest days and brought to fruition in one's adult years. The object of an indulgent, self-interested mother, the spoiled child Hortence demonstrates that she has grown into a self-centered woman. She has spent the war years building an expansive social circle, dancing, smoking, drinking, and seducing young men. She married quickly
and sued for divorce even faster. She does not even attempt to expresses an interest in war work and considers the entire affair “a bore.”\(^\text{18}\) Being both privileged and listless, she immediately sets her sights on Barney because he is an attractive war hero. This aim requires her to conspire with her expansive group of adoring friends to lure Barney into their social scene in order to induce him to let go of his mother's “old-fashioned” principles. Echoing the concern of earlier religious advice literature about the meaning of make-up and excessive jewelry, Hill used both to signify that Hortense is “worldly”:

> Then suddenly there was a sound at the side door, rushing noisy feet, sharp heels clicking across the linoleum of the hall, coming straight and inexorably toward his hiding place. . . . a painted face flung herself arrogantly into the room. A girl with sharp red finger nails like claws on her lily white fingers, and a number of noisy clattering rings and bracelets jingling as she moved.\(^\text{19}\)

Meanwhile, churchgoing Margaret has grown into Hortense's exact opposite. Barney remembers her as an innocent child whom he taught to whistle; she expands on this pleasant memory by presenting herself as a grown woman who has spent the war years teaching at the local elementary school and nursing an ill relative. Snubbed by Hortense's crowd, she has committed her scarce free time to church involvement. Plainly dressed and free of make-up, she shines with “natural” beauty.

Hill's novel asked which of the two women America would follow and built a case for striving to be more like Margaret. The reader quickly discovers that thanks to his wartime conversion, Barney has already returned home determined to follow his mother's God and his mother's advice. Armed with this sacred purpose, he is immediately repulsed


\(^{19}\) Hill, 45-46.
by Hortense and within days falls in love with the like-minded Margaret. Margaret also finds an ally in a new friend, Cornelia, a sensible and kind person whom Margaret succeeds in winning for Christ. In the end, it is not Hortense and her friends but Barney, Stormy, Margaret, and Cornelia who emerge from the trials of war with their hearts rewarded.

Apparently ignoring well-known advice cautioning couples against hasty marriage, Barney and Margaret prove eager to embrace marriage and the future responsibilities that come with it. A short time after developing a romantic interest in one another, the two marry. And they do not wed alone. Divine will orchestrates the marriage of Stormy and Cornelia, despite the fact that the two are scarcely acquaintances. The second romance unfolds when Barney learns that Stormy has gone missing during an intelligence gathering mission. The news prompts Margaret and Cornelia to begin praying for Stormy's safe return, an experience which brings Cornelia to develop a deep affection for the missing soldier. Meanwhile, Stormy finds comfort in visions of his brief encounter with Cornelia during his imprisonment and escape from a German camp. By the end of the novel, he has delivered valuable intel to his superiors and returned home, where he and Cornelia find that they require only a brief re-introduction to begin planning their marriage.²⁰

Ken Anderson's novel, *Shadows Under a Midnight Sun* (1943), also depicted the trials faced by Europeans as a test of personal religious faith when confronted with murderous evil threatening to break apart families. The novel's main characters—Pastor Gran, his daughter Borghild, and Borghild's fiancee Bjarne—face the grim reality of Nazi

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²⁰ Hill, entire text.
occupation after Sweden is overrun by German forces. The arrival of the Nazis to their
town, which is placed under strict control after a secret German submarine base is
established there, brings clashes between the occupiers and townspeople that result in the
death of several people, including the summary execution of twelve men in the town after
Borghild leaks intelligence about the submarine's location to the British. In the face of
this brutality, the saintly Pastor Gran demonstrates Anderson's ideal of Christian conduct
by stalwartly preaching the gospel to citizens and occupiers alike and by interceding with
the German officers for greater clemency toward the town's citizens.

As in Grace Livingston Hill's novel, Anderson's characters demonstrate the power
of their faith and individual moral conviction against those whom faith and morals have
failed to guide them. The characters in Anderson's drama exist on a continuum between
the godly and godless, with the most exemplary proving to be Pastor Gran, who falls
easily into a position of local leadership, perceives keenly the spiritual needs of even the
Nazis, and prophetically cautions his oppressors that the inherently stalwart and moral
people they are dominating are free men who will not submit to domination forever. His
death in the novel's final chapter at the hands of the German commanders marks him as a
martyr and as the individual most problematic for the political aspirations of dictators.
Borghild and Bjarne, whose general convictions mirror those of Pastor Gran, survive the
ordeal to carry his vision into the future. On the other side of the fence, two of the local
German commanders are merely unprincipled cogs in the National Socialist machine who
hope to make a name for themselves with the Party. No appeal to higher values can reach
them.
The third, Bruno Schreckenbach, exists halfway between the two groups. A former member of the church of Martin Niemoller, the German Lutheran well known for his opposition to National Socialism, Bruno possesses the moral and spiritual insight to feel conflicted about his actions. He is especially convicted by Pastor Gran's preaching and seems frequently on the edge of abandoning his political allegiances to embrace the Pastor's beliefs. He is also desperately attracted to Borghild, despite her previous engagement to Bjarne, and expresses toward her a combination of genuine love and violence. The strange mixture eventually lands the frustrated Bruno alone in a graveyard with Borghild, where he corners her and confesses his love, then seizes and restrains her so that she cannot leave him. At other times, he toys with the idea of killing her fiance and compelling her to return with him to Germany. Meanwhile, touched by Pastor Gran's preaching, he considers standing up to his brutal colleagues in order to save innocent lives. Ultimately, the conflicted officer takes neither course of action, and in his vacillation between evil and redemption illustrates the choice that Ken Anderson thought everyone confronted in the events of the day. Too many were already corrupt; those who were standing for the cause of justice and for the gospel had to stand firm; those vast numbers who had not clearly chosen a side, but who possessed some instruction from past or present inclining them toward God, did not have the luxury of pondering their course of action much longer. Bruno's time finally runs out at the conclusion of Anderson's story, when he and his peers are arrested by the Party for botching their duties, while the townspeople take advantage of the confusion to flee into the nearby forest.
If the possession of faith or the lack of it determined the outcome of soldiers and citizens in Grace Hill’s and Ken Anderson's work, Paul Hutchen's *Eclipse* (1942) focused on another wartime problem: the physical and emotional injuries that war could inflict. Set in the months before America's entrance into World War II, the characters in Hutchen's tale encounter some common wartime problems: bodily injury, rushed romances, grief over the death of a family member, and the loss of health or mental stability following war service. When the novel opens, several characters find themselves in the same Appalachian town. Terry, a born-again Christian and athlete, had recently lost his right eye in a football accident, his girlfriend to another man, and his former spiritual confidence to doubt. Terry's former girlfriend, Mildred, has gotten caught up in a whirlwind romance with her new love interest, which has resulted in a rushed engagement. Only in the days before her wedding has she realized that her intended, Clem, is a committed atheist with little respect for her religious beliefs, prompting her to abandon her wedding plans and flee to Terry for counsel. Clem has pursued his fiancée to Terry's remote mountain hometown, only to wind up in the hospital when he unwisely gets into a fistfight with his rival. Terry's family and friends are not much better off: His mother is in deep grief over the death of Terry's father, while the family friend, “Silent Oss,” feels intense guilt over his role in the shooting accident that has led to the bereavement. For Silent Oss, these events have deepened a chronic depression that has afflicted him ever since he contracted a severe case of malaria during his service in the Spanish-American War four decades earlier. *Eclipse* follows each character through their personal experience of “Gethsemane” until they reach salvation and Christian joy.21

In tracing these journeys, Hutchens hoped to demonstrate that God could remedy each of these personal problems; he also argued that God's power to heal decisively demonstrated that God possessed a better “war machine” than Satan. The most miraculous transformations take place in the unbelieving Clem and the disillusioned Terry. Since he is an atheist who has been indoctrinated into the beliefs of “modern psychology” in the university, Clem is particularly resistant to the gospel. So when he suddenly returns to the beliefs of his godly Christian mother with great zeal, everyone is astounded and Mildred once again agrees to marry him. Still sensitive over his injury and wavering in his faith, Terry doubts Clem's sincerity—until the former atheist's testimony cures his own cynicism and unbelief:

The fiery, dramatic message rolled like a mighty war machine, crushing before it all the doubt and bitterness in Terry's mind, compelling him to believe—not only in the direct intervention of the God of heaven in the affairs of men, in the veracity of Christ's resurrection and present active influence in the Work of the Kingdom, but also in Clement Lindeman's regeneration. It was, beyond a doubt, a phenomenon of Christianity.  

Preparation a Response

Since they viewed the causes and potential effects of the war to be spiritual lostness and moral failure of individuals worldwide, church leaders saw their primary and highest duty to be the evangelization of soldiers and the shoring up of mechanisms at home for ensuring Christian faithfulness and for fanning the flames of revival. “The only way to hold what you have is to go forward,” Pentecostal pastor William Long explained in Christ's Ambassadors Herald. “The best defense is a good offense, whether in football,

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22 Hutchens, 172.
in war, or in Christianity.”23 That offense consisted largely of disseminating the gospel more ambitiously than before. Speaking for most leaders of churches in the revivalist tradition, the editor of the Western Recorder stressed to his readers that “These are wartimes in spiritual matters as well as political. . . . All will agree that the gospel must be preached to the masses on a more intensive scale.”24

Predictably, conservative Protestant commitment to effective ministry to young people brought them to consider the unique problems of soldiers and youth employed on the home front. Denominations prepared for ministries to the armed forces, hoping to draw both those who had attended church their whole lives and new converts who, as Richard H. Schneberger put it for Moody Monthly readers, knew “little of theology, doctrine, or the Christian life as such.” Meanwhile, churches and youth societies adjusted meeting times to fit the schedule of working youth, strove to maintain connections to young people who had gone to war, and offered counsel to those beset by “fears and anxieties.” Likewise, denominations strove to keep track of members who migrated during the war to take advantage of wartime jobs, encouraging Christians not to fall away after they arrived in new cities.25


As in earlier decades, the problem of alcohol and cigarettes loomed large in conservative Protestant estimations. Old arguments against these substances for their alleged assault on individual health and self-control seemed especially timely as the nation mobilized for war. Addressing the Northern Baptist Convention, George Cutten summarized the typical “dry” argument about liquor and war. He blamed intoxication for 90 percent of venereal disease patients and for 20 to 40 percent of insanity cases. When the loss of life to accidents and economic waste were also counted, the alcohol industry represented a threat to US war readiness. “We are facing not just a moral emergency, but a national one as well. . . . Let us insist that the military camps be cleaned up and the authority of the the Army and Navy be used to clean up adjacent territory; let us insist that we go all-out for this war and that the liquor interests be no longer the pet of the President and Congress of the United States.” In *What Really Happened at Pearl Harbor* (1943), fundamentalist polemical writer Dan Gilbert contended that alcohol consumption among soldiers had allowed the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor to be successful. Likewise, as wartime stress and the inclusion of cigarettes in soldiers' rations encouraged smoking, religious commentators continued to insist that tobacco served not as a stress reliever or energy enhancer but as a gateway to “broken homes, juvenile delinquency, crime, ruined health, and lost religious faith.”

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Conservative Protestants leaders also stressed that the Christian home had a special role to play in the church's efforts. Periodicals repeated pleas by the US government that families remain strong in order to lend emotional support to America's soldiers. “Reports from the Army and Navy tell us that most soldiers, nurses, WACS, and WAVES think of, speak of, and long for home,” S. of the Lutheran Witness stated, “All the more reason why none of us should cause any disturbance or disharmony in the home. Rather let us ask God to make us such members of the family as grace the home, brighten the home, support the home, cheer the home.” For the power to conform one's home life to this image, believers might turn to Christ for assistance.27

In addition, conservative Protestants of various persuasions argued strenuously that the Christian home was a valuable component of the machinery Christians needed to evangelize and rebuild the world, as well as an institution in immediate need of the moral reformation that true repentance could bring. Walter R. Alexander of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board described in glowing terms how success in reaching America's “vast missions field” with the gospel would transform American social life:

When America does that [repents], it is safe to prophesy that her churches will be crowded again. God's name and God's day will be reverenced, His moral laws will once again be the standard, our homes will be founded on the bed-rock of religious faith and the marriage vows will be held sacred. Then will the women of the land be arrayed in modesty, their daughters clad in virtue, their sons will be sober and industrious, while our men will know the strength and beauty of Christian character. Then shall we sing with a new spirit 'America the Beautiful' and our fair land will take her God-intended place of moral and spiritual leadership among the nations of the world.

during the War can be found in Carl Zebrowski, “Smoke 'Em If You Got 'Em,” America in WWII October 2007.

The realization of that vision rested entirely on the individual. “Every person in an army is important,” Alexander insisted. “You can enlist in the army of righteousness; you can dedicate your powers, whatever they may be, to the cause of righteousness; you can be found in every issue to be fighting on the side of God. To the extent that you, the individual, are true to your duty, to that extent will America return to God.”

Everywhere that message and variations on it sounded from conservative Protestant institutions, enlisting people to use all means available, especially family relationships, to spread the gospel and uphold Christian morality. In a letter home, a Baptist soldier chastised the popular stereotype of a worldly mother for her shortcomings: “And you complacent, bridge-playing, cocktail-drinking mother, why don't you teach your son about God instead of handing him a cigarette and a dance program?” Fellow Baptist George Redding pressed, “You and I both know the solution to this critical problem can be explained in one word—Christ in us, in our home, in our churches; Christ reaching out through us to other lives and other homes.”

Among fundamentalists, important leaders made similar appeals for revival and the renewal of the Christian institutions that sustained it. Evangelist W. E. Pietsch asserted that “America's two great institutions are the home and the church. Our great struggle against the rise of totalitarianism is to protect and guard the Christian home and the Christian church.” In Moody Monthly, Moody Bible Institute's Will H. Houghton argued strenuously that D. L. Moody's revivals in the US and Great Britain during the

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1870s had helped to build a shared, Christian civilization that had united the two nations; a rebirth of Christian civilization could again be accomplished, if evangelistic efforts could again reach ordinary people around the world and unite them behind shared principles. That program of necessity included the revival of the Christian home. Houghton recounted, “Queen Elizabeth, in a recent broadcast, when pleading for a rebuilding of family life on a Christian foundation, gave expression to a similar thought, in these words: 'It is that creative and dynamic power of Christianity which can help us to carry the moral responsibilities which history is placing on our shoulders.” All this, Armin Gesswein explained in the Moody Monthly, could be accomplished if even just a few people would commit themselves to the course. “Revival . . . does not start on the streets with the masses . . . But usually with one!” A single person’s commitment to intercessory prayer and feeling the burden for souls could set off a chain-effect.29

As in earlier decades, faithfulness in conducting the family altar remained the primary means through which leaders hoped that American families could build stronger bonds and strengthen their faith. Exemplifying this mindset, the Pentecostal Evangel dedicated nearly every one of its articles about the family to the topic of family worship. In 1941 an article credited the success of English Puritan Richard Baxter and Thomas Burton's historic ministries to the decision of each to convince their congregants to begin holding family worship. “You cannot have a thriving church without a family altar in the homes of its members,” the article advocated. A church filled with believers who prayed

at home would grow “filled with spiritual power and influence.” Another article chronicled how memories of family worship had promoted two wealthy businessmen to dedicate their wealth to Christian work. On a third occasion, evangelist D. Leroy Sanders feared that the new generation lacked the “old time, positive faith and power” of their Pentecostal forebears, a defect due not to pressures from the unchristian world but from a lack of faithfulness in home life. Four more articles explained the personal spiritual benefits and practical aspects of maintaining a family altar.  

Wartime experiences as a chaplain brought Col. James A. Bryant home from the war eager to disseminate similar views. As Bryant's colleague Leslie Flynn later recounted, Bryant noticed that soldiers fell into two groups, “those who withstood temptations, especially off-campus allurements” and “those who succumbed fast to temptations.” He contended that soldiers from Christian homes who did not practice family worship often were defeated by temptations, whereas those whose families had consistently practiced family worship had “withstood evil.” Fearing for his life during the Battle of Normandy, Bryant promised God that if he survived he would start a campaign to enlist American families in the cause of establishing family altars. In 1948 he founded the Christian Home League, one of many postwar campaigns to revitalize religion in the home.  

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As Bryant's efforts to promote the family altar testify, the general concern that Christian ministry address pressing questions of personal morality and family religion helped lay the foundation for a variety of wartime and postwar efforts to strengthen the Christian home. Both the Southern Baptist Convention and the LCMS identified the social conditions that existed during and just after the war as a “cultural crisis” requiring concrete response from the church. In 1946 the Social Service Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention summed up their concern for the future of American families this way:

The cultural crisis through which we are passing has created strains and problems for the family. The war disrupted normal courtship processes, disturbed the ratio between the sexes, drew an enormous number of women into industry, increased familial tension and disorganization, and speeded[sic] up the processes of social change affecting marriage and the family.

To counter the impact of desertion and divorce on Christian families, the Committee recommended:

(1) that family worship be practiced as a fundamental part of the family enterprise, (2) that sound instruction in preparation for Christian marriage be given to young men and women, (3) that pastors council married couples concerning parenthood and the responsibilities of a truly Christian home, (4) that the churches explore new ways to strengthen the moral and spiritual foundations of the family.32

To effect these changes, in the first years after the war denominational leaders sought to make family life a greater focus of Southern Baptist Christian education. In 1948, the Committee recommended and the Convention approved a resolution that again stated

their concern about “increasing problems which endanger the stability of family life.”
They urged churches to include “a special series of studies in the Christian ideals of
courtship and marriage” in their educational programs.\footnote{Resolution on Marriage and Family Relations,” Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention (Nashville: The Convention, 1948), 53.}

Meanwhile, the Sunday School Board strove to provide appropriate family life
education materials. Anticipating the needs that Baptist families would have of their
denomination, in 1945 it formed a “Department on Family Life.” The head of the new
department, the former Secretary of Home Missions Joe Burton, accepted his new
appointment on the conviction that the church could not fail to take up the cause of
improving American family life. “Such inroads have been made upon the home as to
provoke one to battle,” he wrote in 1947, that Christians could not help but call “a
Better Homes, the Extension Department's modest periodical, into a larger, longer, and
more colorful Home Life: The Christian Family Magazine. While the primary audience
for Better Homes had been church members who could not regularly attend Sunday
services, Burton urged churches to place Home Life in the hands of every single Baptist
family. This ambitious agenda paid off: in its first year, the revised magazine reached
250,000 households per month, approximately three-and-a-half times the readership that
Better Homes had enjoyed during the Depression and twice the readership it had enjoyed in 1945.\(^{35}\) The Department on Family Life also encouraged the addition of new books and Sunday School texts for children, teenagers, single adults, and married couples.\(^{36}\)

The LCMS’s Literature Department and Board of Parish Education embraced similar priorities. Beginning in 1941 the Board of Parish Education began to advocate that the Synod produce more materials aimed at building up Lutheran family life. Pointing out that parents were indispensable partners to the educational missions of the church and parochial school, in 1941 the Board recommended that the LCMS produce “an instruction book, or manual, for parents” as well as a magazine about Christian family life.\(^{37}\) Three years later, it expanded these suggestions to include a series of special adult education courses on home life.\(^{38}\)

A brand new Christian family magazine for Missouri Synod members never materialized, although a parenting magazine founded by members of the Synod in 1937


\(^{36}\) Broadmen Press and the Sunday School Board continued to publish William Cooke Boone’s What God Hath Joined (retitled Together) and Martha Boone Leavell’s Building a Christian Home. In addition, they produced several additional titles: Joe Burton, Tomorrow You Marry (1950); Bethann Van Ness, My Family and I (1948); Ralph Phelps, Blueprint for Tomorrow (1955); Martha Boone Leavell, Christian Marriage (1956).


\(^{38}\) Report of the Board of Christian (Parish) Education, Proceedings of the Thirty-Ninth Regular Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States (St. Louis: Concordia, 1944), 115-120.
did exist and continued to disseminate advice until 1961. But Lutheran leaders did place a new priority on studying the family and producing literature to aid parents in forming strong marriages and rearing their children. In 1945 the *Lutheran Witness* recorded one such effort by members of the Friestatt Circuit, who held special meetings on the theme of “PracticalSuggestions on Christian Home Life.”39 In 1947 both the Synodical executive committee and the Board on Parish Education established special commissions to study American family life and recommend programs to enrich it. In 1948 the two committees merged to form the Family Life Committee, which remained part of Board of Parish Education until its dissolution in the 1970s. Exploring the possibility that Lutheran homes would benefit from “a comprehensive and coordinated program of Christian Education for the parish,” the members of the committee produced educational pamphlets, books for individual and group study, spoke to college students, organized pastoral conferences, and published several academic studies reconsidering the Synod's position on key topics affecting the family.40

While the Southern Baptist Convention and the LCMS sought to build denominational programs on the Christian home, American fundamentalists and Pentecostals sought to enlist individuals and churches in the cause of strengthening the Christian home through periodicals, parachurch organizations, and evangelistic campaigns. No one exemplified the fundamentalist commitment to preaching about the


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home more than independent Baptist John R. Rice, who in his Depression-era evangelistic preaching and voluminous writing for the *Sword of the Lord* had taken up the cause of personal repentance and return to biblical teaching about the home. Rice published incessantly on the later topic between America's entrance into World War II, producing: *Bobbed Hair, Bossy Wives, and Women Preachers* (1941), *Petting and the Scarlet Sin* (1943), *The Unequal Yoke* (1944), *Lot: The Man Who Made Money His God, Called the Wicked His Brethren, Lost His Family, and Let His Town Go to Hell* (1944), *The Home—Courtship, Marriage, and Children* (1945), *Divorce—The Wreck of Marriage* (1946), *The Correction and Discipline of Children* (1946), and *The Scarlet Sin* (1946).

Rice's frame of mind at the close of World War II is most evident in *The Home—Courtship, Marriage, and Children* (1945), his largest and bestselling work on the family. “All over America I have preached on the home,” he related, with the result that many family altars had been established, many marriages saved, and many homes made Christian. This, he felt, demonstrated the power of an unabashed, “plain talk” interpretation of vital, biblical Christianity. Rice set out to make *The Home* a “Bible manual,” a common sense compendium of the Bible's authoritative teaching on every practical area of family life—courtship, household authority, gender roles, sex, birth control, child rearing and evangelism, divorce, adultery, family worship, and prayer. It seemed to Rice that as America eased her way into the postwar world, her families needed nothing more than such direction. Hoping to distribute the volume as widely as
possible, he bought full-page ads for the volume in a variety of fundamentalist and neo-evangelical magazines. The effort bore fruit: Rice sold enough copies in 1945 to immediately begin reprinting it. It remains in print today.  

An eagerness to see revival likewise energized a new conversation within American fundamentalism. As America entered World War II, a new generation of young potential leaders who had grown up in the network of churches and Bible institutes that compromised the fundamentalist movement began to articulate their own vision for bringing the gospel message to Americans. Hungry to witness revival on a national scale, the young innovators relied on advertising, music and popular entertainment styles, patriotic fanfare, radio, and their own youthful enthusiasm to promote their message—a presentation that agreed with young men and women. Young men and women who faced the challenges of military service, war work, migration, and worry about the fate of friends and lovers also responded well to the message that God offered happiness, moral direction, spiritual certainty, and a recipe for overcoming personal difficulty. As the hopes of evangelists and young people converged, revivals broke out across the country.  

The revivals were not small affairs. To evangelists hoping and praying for success, the upswell in revivals appeared to be proof that the Holy Spirit was spontaneously and powerfully confronting the nation. Torrey Maynard Johnson's campaign in Chicago became one of the most successful and well reported. Johnson  

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41 Quoted sentences and phrases are from Rice, *Home*, ix-xi.

began his Chicago effort grandly, with a six-month lease on Orchestra Hall—a structure that Youth for Christ's Mel Larson later described as “acoustically the most perfect auditorium in Chicago.” It made a fitting location for an evangelist willing to spare “no expense” to provide “the best in gospel music.” The rallies regularly drew audiences of two thousand. In 1945 a Memorial Day rally at Soldier Field drew sixty-five thousand people. These successes thrilled conservative Protestant observers and established young revivalists such as Torrey Maynard Johnson, Billy Graham, and Jack Wyrtzen, as national leaders. The organizations they founded—Youth for Christ International, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Word of Life, and others—helped to make the folksy yet contemporary evangelistic style they pioneered a standby of postwar conservative Protestantism.43

When the architects of the new youth revivals recruited Americans to their campaigns to fight sin and fascism with the gospel, they made the resolution of marital and sexual problems an important and recurring theme. In his celebratory book, *Youth for Christ: Twentieth Century Wonder* (1947), sports writer and Youth for Christ publicist Mel Larson eagerly shared how two accounts of personal commitment to Christ had rescued the personal lives of converts whose hastily planned war marriages had broken apart. In the first, he presented Christ as the solution to two national problems—the newly married couple on the verge of divorce and the lonely young woman who sought casual sexual liaisons:

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They had called it quits. Married during the war, two young people, whom we'll call Jane and Dick, decided that their marriage had been a mistake. They separated. Jane stayed in Chicago, and Dick became a member of the United States Navy. Life for Jane went from bad to worse. It wasn't long before she was picking up servicemen on Chicago's Michigan Avenue. Without Dick, and deprived of his stabilizing influence, her life was barren and weak.

One night she was resting on a park bench directly across from Orchestra Hall. As she reflected, music—enthusiastic music—bounded across that busy thoroughfare. Three thousand young people were singing lustily. The music delighted her ears and touched her heart. She arose from the bench, slowly crossed Michigan Avenue, found her way to the balcony of Orchestra Hall, and took the only vacant seat. She listened to every word and every song with an eager heart; and God used every other part of that service to impress her sin-sick heart with the need of a Saviour. When the invitation was given, she went forward with many others, knelt in one of the first two rows in Orchestra Hall and became a new creature in Christ Jesus!

In Los Angeles, on the very same night, Dick had gone to the Saturday Nite Jubilee at the Church of the Open Door. Going to church wasn't exactly routine for him, especially on a Saturday night, but he was far from happy. He thought constantly of Jane and felt more and more than he was deeply in love with her. But there was something else that had to be straightened out first. The meeting that Saturday night struck him. Young people here were actually enjoying a religious service. The young preacher spoke the language to which he was accustomed in the navy; his message was direct, with no mincing of words. The Holy Spirit worked in his heart and mind, convincing him of his sin. At the invitation, someone tapped him on the shoulder and asked him if he was interested in becoming a Christian. He walked down the isle with a new friend who had the privilege of leading Dick to a personal knowledge of a 'friend that sticketh closer than a brother.'

On the very same night the Holy Spirit had worked in the hearts of two young people thousands of miles apart. Two young people sat down and wrote each other, and there was amazement and joy when each received the other's letter. Needless to say, there was a happy reunion, a permanent reunion.

In the second account, Larson admitted that some unions were beyond saving. In these cases, the gospel offered personal healing and hope for the future:

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44 Mel Larson, Youth for Christ: A Twentieth Century Wonder, 15-16.
It's a long way from Haddon Heights, New Jersey, to Australia, but through the free transportation of the United States Army a young fellow from that New Jersey town of five thousand found himself in Australia. He was normal, along with many other American soldiers this young Yankee from New Jersey looked, and looked, and looked again at the Australian girls.

He looked until he found one he liked . . . and loved . . . and married. The war moved on. The American G.I. unwillingly but dutifully moved on. He continued to move until one day he found himself back in the United States, alive and unharmed, after many months and years of battle in the South Pacific. Several months later a young Australian war-bride arrived in the land of her husband and was met with open arms. There was joy in two hearts as husband and wife were together again.

All went well until he brought her home to his family in Haddon Heights. Frankly and bluntly, his parents refused to accept her as one of the family. She turned to the young fellow on whom she had been wanting to depend for so many long, dreary months. But he was not there. Seeing that his parents did not want her, this young husband decided that he, too, did not want her.

They were divorced. She found a job in Haddon Heights, hoping perhaps to earn money to go back to her native land. After a few months she lost her job. Lonesome, far from home and with an ache as big as the ocean over which she had traveled, she was far from the happiest person in the United States. One Sunday night, not having anything to do, she was 'just walking' along the street. She casually wandered into a Youth for Christ meeting in Haddon Heights. That same night God used the young speaker of the evening to convince her that she needed Jesus Christ as her personal Savior.

The Holy Spirit convicted her of her sins . . . and she was saved!  

While the revivals of the 1940s were raising up new, nationally known personalities, some fundamentalists were striving to build a new, more moderate religious movement. They hoped to bring fundamentalism out of its deeply entrenched position of rhetorical and institutional retreat from modern, mainstream life. Previously, fundamentalists and their intellectual kin had fought and lost several important battles for control of mainline denominations and for respect in mainstream American culture. They

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had responded by retreating into their own churches, Bible institutes, colleges, and
independent organizations, where they solidified their movement and its intellectual
commitments and built a vibrant subculture.\footnote{For a discussion of fundamentalism's
formation, see George Marsden's \textit{Fundamentalism and American Culture}. Important
secondary works following tracing the development of neo-evangelicalism from these
roots can be found in George Marsden, \textit{Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary
and the New Evangelicalism} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 5-8, 31-52; Carpenter, 13-160.}
Hoping to move fundamentalists and their
witness out of their seeming invisibility, they urged fellow fundamentalist leaders to
realize that unbelief, immorality, and materialism were continuing to move America
further away from its evangelical heritage. The crisis called for renewed commitment and
a new response. In a sermon attributing the rise of Stalin and Hitler to the loss of
Christianity's influence in Europe, H. J. Ockenga of Park Street Church, Boston captured
the mood of the moment. He contended that biblical Christianity had offered the Western
world a coherent worldview at whose center lay “the law of God.” When people lost this
source of transcendent meaning, political leaders governed according to a materialistic
philosophy in which “the authority of brute force” became the only absolute rule.
Ockenga saw this clear deterioration of spiritual understanding in the West to be a clarion
call that the highly separatist and decentralized fundamentalist movement needed greater
unity and cooperation, so that Christ's gospel could again be preached to all people. “We
believe there is a way of life followed by many in America and which could be enlarged
for our nation and for the world so that it could become the first column of defense and
the fifth column of Axis penetration leading to abiding Victory,” he proclaimed. “Your
part is to get right with God and with your neighbors that you might participate in united
action.”\footnote{For a discussion of fundamentalism's formation, see George Marsden's \textit{Fundamentalism and American Culture}. Important secondary works following tracing the development of neo-evangelicalism from these roots can be found in George Marsden, \textit{Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 5-8, 31-52; Carpenter, 13-160.}
Concern led to organization. Meeting in St. Louis in 1942 and in Chicago in 1943, Ockenga, J. Elwin Wright of the New England Fellowship, Dr. William Ward Ayer of Calvary Baptist Church in New York, Stephan Paine of Houghton College, theologian Carl F. H. Henry, and other important leaders formed the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). The great handicap of conservative churches, they argued, lay not in numbers, enthusiasm, or resources, but rather in the fact that theological conservatives lacked a national voice and agenda. American Protestantism's great flagship organization, the Federal Council of Churches, could not be trusted to take up this role. Many conservative Protestants felt its leadership did not represent their views, owing to the presence of “modernists” within its national leadership. They believed that the fundamentalist movement needed its own national organization, a center from which the heirs of Victorian evangelicalism could reclaim their prior role as cultural leaders.

Accordingly, the founders of the NAE agreed upon a constitution that defined their new organization as an interdenominational coalition of churches and organizations willing to affirm their belief in a variety of historic evangelical doctrines: the authority and infallibility of Scripture; the Trinity; the deity, virgin birth, and miracles of Christ; the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit; the present ministry of the Holy Spirit; the resurrection of Christ and of the dead; and spiritual unity of believers.

Although the NAE was obviously an alternative organization to the Federal Council of Churches, neo-evangelical leaders emphasized their desire to unify conservative Protestants and to discourage overly “contentious” rhetoric against the

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Federal Council. This language carried with it both idealism and practical concerns. In the 1940s, the flourishing but academically ridiculed fundamentalist movement was made up of a vast cross-section of institutions, clergy, and lay leaders who shared an anti-modernist stance but differed in many other ways. Some were strict separatists—believers who thought all ties with institutions that tolerated modernism must be severed; others remained inside of moderate denominations. In addition, theological differences were pronounced. No Presbyterian or Baptist could agree on precise theological commitments that separated denominations or even individual churches within the same tradition. Premillennial dispensationalist beliefs remained an important doctrinal stance for many of fundamentalism's most influential leaders, but adherence to this interpretation of biblical history and eschatology were hardly universal. Complicating things further, the NEA's founders hoped to invite the participation of theologically conservative groups outside the fundamentalist fold. These included Pentecostal groups such as the Assemblies of God (which accepted) and confessional churches such as LCMS (which did not). Since the NEA's founders wanted to unite these diverse groups around a revised agenda, overly sectarian language did not suit their purposes. Also for this reason, the moderate fundamentalists began to shed the term “fundamentalist,” adopting instead the “evangelical” to express their theological commitments and cultural goals. In response, conservative Presbyterian Carl McIntire rallied some of the more separatist members of the fundamentalist movement to join a rival organization, the American Council of Churches, which attracted a much smaller membership. From the
1940s to the mid-1950s the lines distinguishing the moderate “evangelicals” and separatist “fundamentalists” were blurry at best, but over time sharp disagreements caused a falling out between the two groups.\textsuperscript{48}

Neo-evangelical institutions were not founded specifically to improve American family life. However, neo-evangelicals hoped that stronger homes would aid them in restoring the witness of biblical Christianity in an overly materialistic, secular world. As C. Stacy Woods argued in his youth column in the NEA's paper, \textit{United Evangelical Action}, the secularization of American education and irreligion in the modern home hamstrung the church. Without a strong foothold in the nation's great educational institutions, the church “could no longer claim influence and mold the life and thought of university men and women to any really effective degree.”\textsuperscript{49}

Free Methodist Bishop Leslie Marston concurred, noting that schoolhouse, home, and Christian belief had once been powerful allies. “Most of this audience can recall when the moral thinking of the nation very largely followed the patterns of the Sunday pulpit, the religious press, and the little red schoolhouse, with the family circle the integrating element of these patterns.


Today, the little red schoolhouse is gone. The family has been broken into fragmentary arcs.” To resuscitate itself, the churches therefore had to resuscitate families and reclaim education.

To rescue the family, believers not only had to counter the great social problems of the war but also had to reclaim the idea that marriage and morals could only be fully understood or sustained when grounded in Scripture. One neo-evangelical author faulted authorities on marriage and family life for describing the family only in terms of “conceptions of its purpose and function;” the idea that marriage “has any place in the redeeming purpose of God” had been lost. Likewise, Bishop Leslie Marston and similarly minded Protestants faulted schools for trading education centered on timeless ideals for one obsessed with practical training and pragmatic moral reasoning. Recent pedagogical methods tended to view students and their experiences as the starting-point of learning and reasoning; Marston discerned in this assumption “a new morality” based on “selfish interests.”

The incipient selfishness that underlay pragmatism in social life and education could be corrected by Christianity, which required confidence and faith in a God beyond oneself. Evangelical leaders called upon churches, families, and Christian educators to build their living and teaching on Scripture and a firm commitment to classic evangelical

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doctrine, and to express that commitment in ambitious programs to rebuild the local church, restore the influence of the home, and found new Christian schools. Like the Southern Baptist Joe Burton, in the immediate postwar years they wrote of the necessity to grant Christian family life more concerted attention than they had ever paid it before. Calling for a “Christian Home Crusade” in the *United Evangelical Action*, John W. Walkup reported that Christians from many vocations were “raising their voices” in order to “daily ponder the cause and probe for the cure of the breakdown of the American home and the resulting chaos.” He then reported favorably on efforts of twenty-one churches in his area to counter “Christian delinquency” in their home life with a seven-week program of preaching and teaching on family life.51

**Conclusion**

World War II intensified the earlier concerns that conservative Protestants had harbored about the family. The stresses of wartime separation, changed labor patterns, and migration threatened to deepen existing family problems. The outbreak of a second world war also seemed to confirm that the foundations of Western civilization had been shaken, the end result of a weakening of religion, morals, and family life. This perception that the family had entered a period of crisis increased attention to it in denominational initiatives, as well as in evangelists' preaching during the war and postwar years. In this effort, conservative Protestants did not seek to trade their former emphasis on evangelism or spiritual truth for a social campaign, but rather they were

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beginning to give the Christian home a larger role in their campaign to combat unbelief and immorality, which they viewed as symptomatic of a general cultural drift into materialism.

The wartime dialog about the family also reinforced another, increasingly important element in the conservative Protestant social outlook. This was the conviction that the decisions made in one's private life had the power to transform the larger world. Americans had long seen the family as a special, private space protected from and better than the relationships that existed in the outside socioeconomic world. Thus, when wartime Americans were caught up in events so impressive and worldwide that they could not personally change them, conservative Protestants were eager to claim the individual, his family, and his local church as their favorite battlegrounds. With schools and governments becoming the casualties of physical, spiritual, and intellectual strife, the faltering family often seemed to be the one last solid institutions remaining—if it could be saved.
BEFORE THE CULTURE WARS:
CONSERVATIVE PROTESTANTS AND THE FAMILY, 1920-1980
VOLUME II

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of the University of Notre Dame
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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CHAPTER SIX
“CHRIST—OR CHAOS!”: FIGHTING THE COLD WAR AND GUIDING TEENAGERS

“Are you an atomic bomb?” the Walther League Messenger asked its teenage readers in 1952. Anger, the article explained, resembled the world's newest and most feared weapon. A short fuse harmed family relationships, destroyed friendships, ruined one's looks, and made a person dissatisfied with himself. For this reason, a person had to master his anger: “Just like an atomic bomb, it must be controlled in order to serve its purpose. You can't go around popping off all the time, or you as well as those around you will have to pay the penalty.” Containing strong feelings inside oneself wouldn't do, either: that option had negative physical and psychological effects. A person who wanted to live a full, successful life would have to fix his anger problem. He would accomplish this goal not merely by resolving to build his character or discipline his will but by pursuing personal understanding and growth. A bad temper, the article explained, might be a sign of bad health, a symptom of excessive worry, or a subconscious attempt to attract attention. By recognizing the underlying problems and dealing with them, a person could overcome his shortcomings. Having done so, he would like himself better and find his social life much improved.¹

During the early years of the Cold War literature advising conservative Protestants to pay careful attention to managing inner impulses and feelings became increasingly common. As the above example suggests, that literature emphasized the rewards of self-understanding, self-improvement, and healthy self-expression. Its authors also stressed the importance of keeping those forces that occupied one's inner world in check, lest they spin out of control. At least on a symbolic level, this imperative to govern chaotic forces within the self reflected the larger need nationally and internationally to hold back those forces that threatened to plunge civilization itself into chaos.²

This outlook was the product of conditions that extended Americans' wartime concerns about the danger of personal, national, and international crisis well past the war years, into the late 1940s and 1950s. Although Americans could boast that fascism was defeated and that the throes of the Great Depression were lifting, the immediate settling of the USA and USSR into new positions as ideologically opposed superpowers brought with it a political and cultural conversation that emphasized confrontation and danger abroad. In the minds of many Americans, the communist menace loomed as an insidious and ever-present threat both at home and abroad. This belief introduced uncertainty. A devastating war could begin at any time. Communist infiltrators could undermine the US government or democratic ideals in the West. Most frightening of all was the new prospect of nuclear weapons. By 1949 both the United States and the USSR possessed

² Elaine Tyler May has offered a sustained argument for the connection between Cold War politics and popular interest in the family in her book, "Homeward Bound: American Families during the Cold War Era" (New York: Basic Books, 1999). She also argues that the political language of containment encouraged the employment of the same metaphor for describing the powers of the self and of the populace.
them, making it a possibility that an open war could result in the annihilation of many thousands of people. Under the shadow of this longer “Cold War,” Americans searched for comfort and for ways to retain influence over the world.

Flanking American concerns about the instability of nations and of individuals was a persistent optimism about the power of people to order their lives and rise to meet the problems they confronted. Following World War II, American interest in family life and faith in its possibilities swelled. Americans began to marry and bear children at younger ages. Due to the postwar surge in the number of births, American mothers brought 32 million babies into the world during the 1940s, compared to 24 million during the previous decade. Thereafter, the birth rate continued to climb until 1957. The likely causes of this sudden shift in behavior and social attitude included the disappearance of obstacles that the Depression and World War II had presented to marriage and child rearing. Despite initial fears that the end of wartime production and the return of thousands of veterans to the workforce might cause the Depression to return, the postwar economy and the financial prospects of many Americans began to improve. The Serviceman's Readjustment Act (or G.I. Bill of Rights), a measure passed in 1944 to aid veterans and to prevent a postwar rush of veterans onto the job market, made a year of unemployment compensation and money for postsecondary education available to returning soldiers. It also provided loans to veterans who wished to purchase homes or

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open businesses. In 1955, the Veterans Administration and the Census Bureau reported that 7.8 million veterans had received educational benefits and another 4 million had secured VA-guaranteed loans for homes, farms, or business.4

New jobs, young families, and new homes brought about tremendous economic, demographic, and cultural shifts. Between the late 1940s and the 1960s, new, affordable housing developments sprung up on the outskirts of American cities, forming new suburbs. The mass-manufactured ranch home, a single-level home consisting of two or three bedrooms and kitchen overlooking a yard, defined the new “American dream.” Meanwhile, companies marketed great quantities of consumer goods to fill those homes, deliver happiness, and prosper family life. Advertisements explained how electric appliances, a barbecue, games, and a host of other products would enable wives to enjoy their housework and family members to enjoy each other's company. Disposable income helped to fuel an accompanying explosion of mass media in the form of self-help books, glossy magazines, cheap paperback books, movies, and comic books. Television joined this list in 1948, when the first commercial network TV programs were broadcast in the United States. According to historian Elaine Tyler May, these developments encouraged both ordinary citizens and politicians to see the family as a secure institution that protected people psychologically from the threats of war, nurtured good citizens, and demonstrated the superiority of American economic principles, political institutions, and cultural values.5


5 For a sustained argument about the family's place in Cold War political ideology, see May, Homeward Bound.
The “Baby Boom” brought with it vast social and cultural implications. The age of marriage dropped from 21.5 years in 1940 to 20.1 in 1956 for women. Women began to have children earlier in their marriages, narrowing the time between marriage and the birth of their first child from an average of two years in the 1930s to thirteen months in the late 1950s. The number of married women who remained childless shrunk from 15 percent in the 1930s to 8 percent in the 1950s. Most American couples planned pregnancies and the spacing of their children, but on average they planned to have more children closer together. Divorce statistics reflected this new investment in the family. In 1945 and 1946 the war visited its predicted havoc on American marriages: the number of divorces per 1000 women jumped from 8.5 in 1939 and 17.9 in 1946. However, the divorce rate quickly fell again and stabilized at familiar rates. The number of divorces per 1000 women measured 9.1 in 1951; throughout the 1950s, the popular press commonly stated that 1 in 5 American marriages were ending in divorce, a statistic large enough to ensure hand-wringing from commentators. But the divorce rate would not again climb significantly until the 1960s.6

Conservative Protestants found in these trends a set of conditions that suited their tendency to view modern society as being in a state of crisis yet also on the verge of redemption by religious revival and the renewal of private institutions. It was therefore

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with no small amount of enthusiasm that some conservative Protestant pastors and advice writers joined other Americans in embracing the promise held out by the family and other venues for self-improvement. In this paper, I will argue that conservative Protestants picked up on Cold War political and social concerns, wedding them to their own religious and moral ideas. One product of this fusion was a revised vision of the self that relied on the power of religious faith to contain and order the unruly forces of the self and nation, lest the war to renew civilization and beat communism be lost. It also brought conservative Protestant writers into dialog with a host of new trends in mainstream advice literature produced by marriage and educational experts eager to stabilize and improve the middle-class family against various threats that beset it. One result of this development was a robust evangelistic and educational effort to capture the heart and mind of the American teenager and to stem the rising tide of sexual misbehavior that pastors—and, notoriously, biologist and sex researcher Dr. Kinsey—believed were evident among middle-class youth and adults.

**New Opportunities in an “Atomic Age”**

Just what the dawning of the “Cold War” meant for conservative Protestant social thought can be best perceived when their earlier eschatological beliefs, tendency toward social critique, and the success of their evangelistic efforts are taken into consideration. Pessimistic about human progress yet eager to redeem American culture and to present
themselves as its leaders, conservative Protestants proved capable of acting as both prophets and cheerleaders. Their larger interests in the social problems of the Cold War make the most sense when viewed in this context.

The tone that many conservative Protestants took when viewing current events during the opening years of the Cold War was one of ambivalent optimism. An illustrative example of this mindset can be seen in their response to the threat of nuclear weapons, a topic that provoked images of apocalypse like no other. In 1948 Wilbur Smith, professor of biblical studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, emerged as the most prolific and probably best-known conservative Protestant figure to reflect on the significance of the development of atomic weapons during the early days of the Cold War. His conclusions reflected the cosmic terms in which revivalistic Protestants tended to view world events. It seemed to Smith that the political, scientific, and spiritual effects of the atomic bomb had reverberated throughout the world. Human beings had cracked nature's most closely guarded secrets, the Soviet Union and the United States were braced for war at any time, and people everywhere were gripped with fear. The Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists had warned in the starkest terms that the deployment of atomic weapons would bring disastrous consequences. In their nearly apocalyptic words, “we approach what may be the hour before midnight.” For Smith, the international military situation was terrible news, a sign that humanity had fallen and stood in desperate need of salvation, just as the Bible claimed.

Smith responded to this apparently grim news with a certain relish. He did not encourage wild speculations about the end times, but he nonetheless believed the Bible
had predicted recent events with startling accuracy. Science and current events had vindicated those who trusted in Scripture as God's testament not only for spiritual salvation but for the future course of history:

For years, Bible students who have dared to speak of the Biblical teaching that this age will end in catastrophe were laughed at, called all kinds of names—literalists, fanatics, chiliasts, medievalists, etc., etc. Now the atomic bomb seems to be persuading some who delighted in ridiculing those who had earnestly tried to interpret the eschatological portions of the Word of God in a sober way, to recognize that this earth may be nigh unto disaster, a final disaster more terrible than was ever depicted by any modern student of prophesy.

In this gloomy vindication of the personal conviction of faithful Christians, Smith discovered a glimmer of hope: it seemed that citizens recently jarred awake by the threat of self-annihilation might be ready to return to God. After all, he explained, only true faith and quiet confidence in God's love and benevolent plans could dispel the terrible dread and fear that had gripped American hearts. Christ also offered the only sure way out of the evil future that seemed to lie right around the corner. Inherently suspicious of multinational powers due to Revelation's foretelling of the rise of an “anti-Christ” and generally pessimistic about secular efforts to achieve peace, conservative Protestants like Smith found little encouragement in international discussions about the regulation of nuclear weaponry. These efforts, just like secular efforts to prevent the last two world wars, represented the valiant but vain striving of humanity. The world would have to turn to Christ, not politicians, for salvation. If it did, the world might perhaps survive midnight
and return to the embrace of Christianity. If it did not repent and the worst happened, believers who died in the oncoming nuclear holocaust would go to heaven, and the survivors would continue to preach the good news.7

The dark certainty and note of self-congratulation that attended these predictions sprang from two wells of feeling long nurtured in the conservative Protestant subculture. The first was a pronounced sense that modern Americans had abandoned God, bringing about social and moral disorder. The second was an equally pronounced sense that God had not abandoned modern America, that the private realms of the soul, the sanctified home of believers, the prayer-guided efforts of Bible-believing churches and missions organizations were still the daily recipients of divine grace. The future might seem uncertain, but Christ would soon be back to set all right. In the meanwhile, it might still be possible for a revival of Christian faith, long-nurtured in the private recesses of individuals' souls and among the small gatherings of God's faithful, to turn back the tides of sin, social disorder, and international intrigue.

In such pivotal times, the importance of the Christian home could not have seemed greater. Ken Anderson, novelist and father of seven, explained that the threat of the atom bomb and of possible persecution had redoubled his dedication to nurturing his family's spiritual growth through family worship and frank discussion of contemporary events. The Andersons studied *Foxes' Book of Martyrs* and strove to deepen their faith, should they have to face a national emergency or even persecution from the Communists. “God does reward you for living intelligently in these dark days,” he enjoined, “Also, you can expect God to judge you if you fail to rise to the full stature of Christian parenthood in this kind of world.”

Others stressed that the Christian home not only had to preserve the faith in dangerous days but also held the power to save the nation. America needed revival, and revival required the strengthening of the Christian home as a center of education, prayer, and daily Christian living. “Old-time revivals,” fundamentalist Madelle Hawkins told readers of her booklet *The Christian Home*, had disappeared because Christian parents had allowed their children to attend movies, read worldly magazines, and select unchristian amusements. The unsuspecting parents soon found that under such conditions “the spiritual temperature falls, the Bible loses its interest, and the family altar is no more.” When the influence of the Christian home was lost so were the souls of its children and the zeal of the church.

Raising the same point in his book *How to Have a Family Altar* (1951), director of the Family Altar League of America Norman V. Williams explained that no power

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greater than the home existed; the church, the faith, and civilization would rise and fall according to the private faithfulness of true believers. The text “Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 18:18)—which had originally been used by the Roman Catholic Church to support church authority and by Protestants to describe the power of the local church “where one or two are gathered together”—became in Williams' hands proof of the power of the Christian family. “God didn't make the course and destiny of nations and of individuals dependent on the decisions of Congresses and Parliaments, nor did He lay this power in the hands of rulers and kings; but rather God placed it in the hands of the praying family!” Williams proclaimed. “This is why the devil cannot ruin nations or men until he has destroyed the homes of prayer!”

Hawkins and Williams had in mind great revivals of the sort that had followed the preaching of Dwight L. Moody and Billy Sunday: powerful preaching to eager crowds whom the Holy Spirit convicted of sin and spilled onto the sawdust trail. Missouri Synod leaders embraced a vision of revival that turned even greater attention to ordinary church and home life. They doubted the efficacy of commitments made during periods of “temporary emotional excitement,” but they trusted the power of long nurture in the family and church to cultivate repentance and commitment that affected both the internal and external transformation of sinners. America needed a revival of institutional church life, because the church's use of biblical preaching, prayer, and the means of grace were the Holy Spirit's choice tools in saving souls and for providing “the most effective power

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for a real return to true morality.” The church's associated institutions, the church school and the family, filled equally critical roles in guiding children into a knowledge of the gospel.11

Those who believed that private devotion had the potential to reshape the public world found some reasons to be optimistic. When conservative Protestants compiled their church attendance numbers, they found ample reason to believe that the prayers of God's people were proving effectual. Memberships to organized religious groups grew by 30 percent during the two decades following World War II, while the American population grew 19 percent. Consequently, a greater percentage of Americans in the 1950s belonged to churches than had in the immediately preceding decades, and individual congregations often experienced rapid growth. Church giving also rose, not only because churches had more members but because individual Americans donated more of their money to churches. Church construction, which helped to address long overdue repairs to existing buildings and the need for new churches in the ever-expanding suburbs, commenced at impressive rates. Nationally, in 1945 churches spent 26 million dollars on construction; in 1960 that investment had grown to over a billion. To match the needs of young couples, church programs also offered expansive Sunday school offerings and other child-centered programs. American families were going to churches, and churches were expressing their commitment to families.12

While churches grew, revival seemed to be palpable. Nowhere was this trend more evident than in the emergence of Billy Graham as the nation's best known evangelist. Launching his career as a Youth for Christ evangelist as World War II wound down, Graham embraced important aspects of the new, more upbeat style that had come to typify Youth for Christ revival meetings: warm-hearted appeals, mass meetings, and rousing music. In the late 1940s revival efforts among all the conservative groups were meeting with encouraging responses, and the results of Graham's citywide crusades were particularly stunning. Coming off a series of successful crusades, he founded the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) in 1950, which coordinated crusades in the United States and abroad at which Graham was the central speaker. BGEA leadership, coordination between local churches to produce funds and volunteers, and ambitious advertising efforts helped to pack entire stadiums. The large number of commitments or re-commitments to Christ that resulted at the meetings met many observers' wildest expectations.

These successes exemplified movement of conservative Protestants, particularly the neo-evangelicals, closer to the national mainstream. On the one hand, Graham's convictions were firmly rooted in the conviction that Americans needed to hear the rebuke of a modern-day prophet who accepted scriptural authority and spoke God's truth boldly. The traditional fundamental call to personal repentance and faith in Christ made up the substance of his messages, even if he delivered those messages in an upbeat, patriotic manner that resonated with broad audiences. On the other hand, Graham's

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crusades relied on cooperation among many different conservative churches in the cities he visited, and he became increasingly inclusive in his appeals for support. In 1957 Graham invited representatives of mainline churches in New York City to sponsor his upcoming crusade in that city. This conservative ecumenism generated some opposition from mainline churches, where some leaders objected to his methods or message. It also caused concern in some fundamentalist quarters, where leaders balked at Graham's growing tolerance of theological error. Although Graham had enjoyed broad fundamentalist support during the first several years of his career, even receiving an honorary doctorate from Bob Jones University in 1949, Bob Jones, Sr. denounced Graham in the late 1950s for his congeniality toward the mainline. Nonetheless, Graham emerged from the heady early years of his career as the popular face of neo-evangelicalism and as the single best-known conservative Protestant in America. Revivals and renewals were booming across the conservative Protestant spectrum, and Graham exemplified the energy and power of that trend.

As the icon of Cold War evangelicalism, Graham enjoyed better social and political regard than any fundamentalist in the generation that preceded him. Newspaper and magazine coverage of his crusades was ample and generally positive. In 1948 Graham's crusade in Los Angeles attracted tremendous press attention after radio personality Stuart Hamblen and a few other notables converted under Graham's influence. Newspaper giant William Randolph Hearst contributed to the enthusiasm by instructing his papers to cover the Graham crusade. Overnight, Graham became a household name, a position he succeeded in maintaining for the rest of his career. Always
interested in events that draw large crowds, newspapers tended to describe Graham's turnouts and his messages in a favorable light, while Henry Luce, founder of Time Life Inc. and a committed Presbyterian, became an enthusiastic booster.¹³

Graham also ventured cautiously onto political ground. He attempted to stay out of partisan politics, but he hoped to see Christianity return to the center of American public life. Like his fundamentalist and Southern Baptist forebears, Graham believed that all international and domestic social problems stemmed primarily from humanity's alienation from God and personal sin. With this assumption foremost in his mind, he thought two great issues confronted Americans: danger from within in the form of moral rot, and danger from without in the form of atheistic communism. Both immorality and materialism denied the reality of human sin and the necessity of salvation. Both therefore threatened not only the eternal destiny of individual souls but also the future of the nation. Graham's Cold War vision for a nationwide revival of Christianity therefore centered on revivals in churches and at crusades like his own, on the personal decision of political leaders to set an example in prayerfully seeking God's face, and a public commitment of political leaders to opposing communism for its hostility to the American way of life and its persecution of religious persons.

From almost the beginning of Graham's career as a young and wildly successful evangelist, he reached out to the presidents and won their attention. Due to early blunders on Graham's part and President Harry Truman's suspicion of Graham, his overtures to that president were rebuffed. However, he did better with the next administration. Thanks

to Graham's increasingly important circle of personal connections, he obtained a rare
opportunity to speak with Eisenhower prior to his presidential bid in 1952 and urged him
to run for the office. That event forged a continuing relationship between Graham and the
new president. Eisenhower may well have noted that Graham's popularity was
indisputable, a fact that usually ingratiates presidents and politicians. In addition, he
shared Graham's concerns about cultural weakness and viewed the struggle against
communism on equally stark terms. Although he did not share all of Graham's specific
beliefs or his commitment to membership in institutional churches, these important
similarities made Eisenhower receptive to advice from Graham. Jumping at the
opportunity, Graham urged the president-elect to set an example for the nation by going
to church and by calling the nation to repentance and prayer; to his delight, Eisenhower
included a prayer for God's help in his Inaugural Address and spoke regularly on the
importance of religion, defined generally, to the nation. The president also attended
National Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC, opened Cabinet meetings with prayer,
became the first president to be baptized in office, and signed into law the bill that added
the words “under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance. Graham would, in turn, invoke
Eisenhower in his sermons and *Hour of Decision* radio broadcasts.¹⁴

Graham's affirmation of American values and opposition to communism
continued throughout the Cold War, and so did his congenial relationship with the
American presidents. In 1953 Graham lamented the drawing of the DMZ Line across
Korea and the stalemate it declared between democracy and communism in Asia.

¹⁴ Nancy Gibbs and Michael Duffy, *The Preacher and the Presidents: Billy Graham in the White
House* (New York: Center Street, 2007).
Launching into an evangelistic appeal, he explained that these events demonstrated that Eisenhower had been right to pray for God's assistance at his recent inauguration. The American people should follow suit by admitting that in their personal and political life, “We have come to an hour when we cannot compromise any further with the forces of evil.”

The same year, he confronted alleged radical elements in American labor by calling upon Americans to “keep our spiritual and military guards up” and to promote “a revival of patriotic loyalty.” When the confrontation between a shoe-waving First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev and American representatives over Soviet control in Eastern Europe splashed across the news in 1960, Graham announced that “the moving of gigantic spiritual forces of evil” and an increase of “demon power” were evident in Soviet beliefs and ambitions. Behind the scenes and before the press, Graham also continued to offer each president spiritual counsel and support, his observations of the mood of the American people, and even political advice. Although he rarely received quite the same regard he received from Eisenhower, every one of them accepted.

The cultural panache of Graham and figures like him fostered an upbeat assessment of the contribution of Christian families and local churches to national revival. It therefore also deepened the conviction among conservative Protestants that Christian pastors and evangelists should make sexual morality and family life an important focuses of their preaching. The success of Graham—indeed, of religious figures and institutions generally during the 1950s—demonstrated to observers that religious


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messages focusing on the revival of the individual and, through that, moral and national order, not only appealed to audiences but might have their desired effect. Accordingly, Graham's explicitly political comments were overshadowed by his interest in personal sin, including sexual immorality and family problems. The home figured largely in his messages on juvenile delinquency, which used news stories about vandalism and violence to demonstrate the results of parents and schools forgetting God and allowing their children to “go wild.” Likewise, he identified repentance and greater adherence to the biblical view of human institutions as the only solution to divorce, “the Number One social problem of America.” Their relationships would endure only when people discarded the secular notion that they were refined animals and committed themselves to the higher, religious view of marriage and home life. Intact homes would enjoy success when prayer and family worship bound the family together.  

The salience of family success and sexual integrity to Graham's social witness went beyond merely solving immediate social problems. According to Graham, sex life and family commitments did not just shape the nation; they shaped a person's basic

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character and revealed her true spiritual condition. In an “Hour of Decision” message on immorality, he stressed that people carried on their bodies and in their manners the “marks” of their impurity:

First, the sin of impurity marks. In the days of slavery a slave could be identified by the marks of his master. When men become mastered by sin it is inescapable the marks of sin are upon them. The reddened eyes and bloated cheeks of the alcoholic, the nervous twitch of the dope fiend, the lewd stare of the impure, and haughty look of the proud are all imprints of inner wickedness. Immorality, which is the sin perversion and unnaturalness, has a way of making those who harbor it unnatural appearing. The shifty eye, the embarrassed blush, the suggestive glance, these are marks of the impure, the outward signs of inward impurity.

Graham reported that onlookers viewing a certain woman who had been “divorced four times” felt that she looked “haggard, tired, and worn.” Patients with venereal disease wore the imprint of their sin on their bodies. The “show girls of London,” “beat girls of New Orleans,” and “the common prostitutes of Tokyo” could tell no happier story. In the cases of the divorced woman, the dying patient, and the tantalizing prostitute, “the artificially of their appearance” was “a symbol of their inner shame and emptiness.”

For Graham and for many other pastors and evangelists, calling people back to God and preserving the American nation would also mean restoring sinners to sexual order. That task would prove troublesome.

Mastering Eros

Although the 1950s are sometimes remembered nostalgically as an era of sexual restraint and “family values,” the anxiety that had prevailed over the sexual behavior of young Americans during World War II remained pronounced. Indeed, one of the most

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18 Billy Graham, Moral Impurity (Minneapolis: Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 1959).
controversial events of the “long decade” was the publication of Alfred Kinsey's research into American sexual behavior. A biologist turned sex researcher, Kinsey raised the possibility that the forces of the libido undercut the sexual norms that many Americans were trying to uphold and that conservative Protestants regarded as essential moral standards.

Kinsey, a professor at Indiana University Bloomington who had previously studied variations in populations of gall wasps, had begun in the late 1930s to compile detailed sexual histories from volunteers. Promise of confidentiality and a list of approximately two hundred questions, which Kinsey fired off rapidly, encouraged interviewees to disclose what specific sexual outlets they had used to achieve orgasm, at what ages practices began, and how often behaviors were practiced. Kinsey's compilation and interpretation of his findings resulted in two voluminous reports, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953). These reports recorded strikingly high rates of behavior that many Americans believed to be immoral or at least questionable: 68 percent of males and 50 percent of females had engaged in premarital coitus; 50 percent of married men had an extramarital sexual encounter; 26 percent of married women had an extramarital sexual encounter by their 40s; 69 percent of white males experienced coitus with a prostitute at least one time; 92 percent of males and 62 percent of females masturbated. On a sex-point spectrum Kinsey used to
understand sexual orientation, 10 percent of men rated predominately homosexual for at least three years of their lives. Thirty-seven percent reported at least one homosexual experience at some point in their lives.\(^{19}\)

The conservative Protestant response to the Kinsey studies reveals much about what they believed regarding the state of American mores. In broad terms, they agreed with Kinsey's discovery that premarital intercourse and adultery were common. The editor of *Eternity* magazine reported that he believed “the statistics of the report were true”—at least for highly educated, urban women who were not evangelical Christians. Jack Wyrtzen, youth evangelist and founder of Word of Life, concluded that the Kinsey studies revealed the “moral deprivation” of the persons interviewed to be so great that it recalled the sins of Greece and Rome as they teetered on the brink of collapse: “They even had their own Kinsey reports in those days . . . men priding themselves on their lustful prowess.” Such moral conditions made a people “sitting ducks for the attacks of enemies from both within and without”—a fatal flaw anytime, but especially during the Cold War. “I tell you, we're living in the last days, these loose, last days,” he proclaimed. “Anyone with clear eyes can see that, even with one eye shut!” Neo-evangelical leader Harold Ockenga commented that Kinsey had demonstrated there was indeed “a general breakdown of morals in our nation.” The Missouri Synod's venerable and aged Walter Maier read some of Kinsey's statistics in a *Lutheran Hour* broadcast to demonstrate that

“a teacher of science, at a state university!” had verified that the gospel-preaching pastors' concerns about sin were well founded. In this limited sense, Kinsey's studies did not present much of a challenge to their view of American morality or its remedy.\textsuperscript{20}

In fact, conservative Protestants' own inquiries into the sexual behavior of church members brought back results that they considered alarming. In 1949 Donald Hoke, president of Columbia Bible College, warned of a “universal moral breakdown among youth,” even of youth who attended conservative churches. Hoke explained that he had given a sex talk at an unnamed but “well-known youth Bible conference” at which he had distributed questionnaires to the young men in attendance. An overwhelming number of attendees reported that they approved of necking or petting, while 78 percent reported having engaged in “illicit relations.” A much smaller number admitted to “self-abuse” (masturbation):

Seventy-eight percent of these boys between the ages of fifteen and twenty reported having illicit relations with girls. However, it is probable that some of the boys might have interpreted the question as referring to the taking of indecent liberties with a girl. The majority of these indicated that such behavior occurred after their conversion.

Eighty percent of the boys reported being favorable to necking and even petting (familiarity with a girl beyond kissing and embracing). Only nine percent believed necking was wrong.

Here are the typical remarks of the boys on this question: “I think it is natural” (to kiss and caress girl friends). . . . I think it depends on the girl, but for my girl it is o.k. . . . Not until after three dates. . . . It should be done in moderation with a Christian girl whom you know well. . . . O.K. If you do it in front of the Lord.”

Twenty percent of the boys reported self-abuse.\textsuperscript{21}


Hoke's survey method and selection of a sample were far from scientific ones, but they seemed to confirm what other prominent fundamentalist and evangelical leaders believed they were witnessing in their churches. Hoke repeated that anecdotes from Christian colleges and Bible institutes seemed to reveal serious lapses in sexual conduct between dating couples; in one case, an Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship staff person revealed that some young people had asked whether fornication was actually a sin. When *Christian Life* solicited responses to Hoke's article, it received replies agreeing with Hoke's conclusions from John R. Rice of *Sword of the Lord*, Billy Graham, Robert. A. Cook of Youth for Christ, H. A. Ironside of Moody Memorial Church, Bob Jones Sr. of Bob Jones University, Baptist pastor R. S. Beal, and several presidents or deans serving at Christian colleges and Bible institutes.22

When the Family Life Committee of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod conducted its own survey of premarital sexual activity among its members, it discovered results problematic enough to support a recommendation that the Synod revise its official doctrine on the topic of engagement. The occasion for the Committee's investigation of the question lay in the development of disagreements within the Synod over the proper doctrinal stance on engagement. Historically, the Missouri Synod had regarded engagement as a finished marriage contract that made the engaged couple effectively husband and wife but denied them the conjugal privileges until the time of the wedding. The breaking of an engagement was therefore viewed as adultery and could result in

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church discipline. However, this position was out-of-sync with mainstream American views of engagement, which regarded the pledge to marry as a mere promise which could be broken at will—and which ought to be broken if serious doubts arose about the wisdom of the impending marriage. As a result, some members of the Synod considered the official views to be confusing and anachronistic.

In order to study this problem, the Family Life Committee set out to ascertain the effect that this view of engagement had on the sexual ethics of Lutherans. They distributed five thousand surveys to Lutheran families in the Missouri, Augustana, and Evangelical Lutheran Synods to gauge participants' opinions about engagement, views of premarital sexual behavior, and premarital sexual behavior. Missouri Synod respondents hailed from 375 congregations. These surveys found that 69 percent of Missouri Synod clergy believed that engagement was as binding as marriage. Laity shared that belief at a rate of 47 percent; 55 percent of active members agreed, and 43 percent of inactive members did. Only about a quarter of members in the other Synods held the same viewpoint. They also found that premarital sex among Lutherans was alarmingly high and might necessitate that the Synod revisit the utility of its teaching on engagement.

When the Family Life Committee compiled the survey results and compared them to the findings of Kinsey and other recent surveys of sexual behavior, they were able to report that Lutheran respondents admitted “far lower” rates of premarital sex than the Kinsey studies had reported of the American populace. In addition, they were able report rates of premarital sex several percentage points lower than those Kinsey had reported for devout Protestants. [Table 1]
Although these statistics gave a better impression of church members' moral conduct than those compiled by Kinsey's studies, they indicated rates of premarital sex far in excess of what the Committee wished to see. The numbers also outstripped what survey respondents themselves approved of morally; only 7 percent of Missouri Synod clergy and 8 percent of Missouri Synod laity reported that they approved of premarital sex.

Troubled by these numbers, the Committee concluded that a contributing factor to the lapse of Missouri Synod members from their own moral standards might be lack of moral clarity about what behavior was permissible during engagement. The self-reported sexual behavior of seven hundred unmarried young people in the Missouri Synod indicated that rates of premarital sex rose dramatically after engagement. Ninety-five percent reported that they disapproved of premarital sex during courtship, while approximately 87 percent disapproved of it during engagement. Unmarried youth from the same congregations proved more permissive in practice: 20 percent of inactive members reported engaging in premarital sex during courtship, and 35 percent during engagement.
10 percent of active members reported engaging in premarital sex during courtship, and 40 percent during engagement. Faced with these statistics, Committee members concluded that the traditional and widely-accepted view that engagement was as binding as marriage was doing little to improve the conduct of young couples and might even be providing “tacit permission for premarital sex relations.” In order to discourage premarital sex, they recommended that Synod teaching on the topic be changed.23

Conservative Protestant leaders’ trepidation about American morality also led them to accept and repeat statistics and observations that highlighted America's moral lapses. Nine years after it published Hoke's observations, Christian Life cited unattributed statistics indicating that 70 percent of brides had engaged in premarital sex, a rate “twice as prevalent as a generation ago.” The article stated that Christian young people contributed to these disturbing numbers, despite the fact that many had enjoyed the benefits of Christian homes, youth groups, and secondary schools. The article further intimated that Christian colleges and Bible institutes were also not exempt from these trends and repeated a vague statement that homosexual behavior had been reported at seminaries.24

These indicators could be interpreted as evidence that morals were not only declining but that society itself was in transition. Christianity Today offered a positive review of The American Sex Revolution, in which Pitirim Sorokin argued that Americans


had developed a “sensate” cultural mentality. According to Sorokin's typologies of culture, sensate outlooks were typified by a shallow acknowledgment only of material reality. The failure of laws, morals, and rituals supporting marriage, the institution that guided young men and women into the responsibilities of adulthood, were a major symptom of this transformation. As a proponent of a cyclical view of social development, Sorokin argued that these developments were the precursors to a civilization's collapse. Analyses like these complemented the sense of cultural urgency that many conservative Protestants already felt about national morality and their tendency to view it as the pillar on which society rested.25

The deep concerns that conservative Protestants harbored toward American sexual behavior framed the assessments that conservative Protestants made about the Kinsey reports. Aside from statements of broad agreement with Kinsey's discovery that American conduct fell short of the standards that churches sought to perpetuate, only one major review of the Reports was positive. Wayne Oates, professor of religion and pastoral care at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, argued that in the face of disappointing trends in public behavior, pastors and others who sought to counsel individuals about their problems would find Kinsey's detailed studies helpful to developing an better picture of American social problems. Oates also noted Kinsey made several specific observations that Oates thought pastors would find helpful in developing more effective church programs. One was the knowledge that religious beliefs did shape sexual conduct, but only in a small portion of the total US population. Only about 26.6 percent of the

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people Kinsey studied had been religious, and those persons reported around a quarter less sexual activity than their non-religious counterparts. Another was Kinsey's finding that the pattern of sexual behavior that coalesced during a man's teen years stuck with him into his 50s. Oates thought these findings might guide church programs.

In addition, Oates thought Kinsey's findings about the high rate of marital infidelity might help to guide pastoral counselors in handling that issue. According to Kinsey, up to half of married men committed adultery at some point in their marriages. Combined with the biographical details obtained in case histories, this fact had led Kinsey to conclude that the survival of a marriage often rested not on the model sexual behavior of spouses but rather on their “determination that it [the marriage] shall persist.” Oates elaborated on this point by suggesting that the Christian pastor could save church members' marriages and marital happiness by stressing that “marriage is an eternal relationship and by showing them in his own marriage, his educational ministry, and his counseling ministry how to make it so.”

Nonetheless, some conservative Protestants were skeptical of Kinsey's findings and motivations. They were willing to concede that a state of moral crisis existed, but they found Kinsey's portrait of the mass of respectable, middle-class Americans leading a double life hard to grant credibility. The suggestion of Kinsey in the Female Report that even most women were promiscuous by traditional standards elicited particularly strong disbelief and suspicion. In a revival message devoted to the topic of the Kinsey studies, Billy Graham asserted that Kinsey “certainly could not have interviewed any of the

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millions of born again Christian women in this country who place the highest price on virtue, decency, and modesty.” Clyde Narramore, an evangelical psychologist, published a booklet in which he doubted Kinsey's numbers and patriotism. He warned that the Reports would damage America's reputation abroad and demoralize soldiers stationed in Korea, who would deduce from the Female Report that their girlfriends and wives back home were probably cheating on them. In the minds of both Graham and Narramore, it was one thing to suggest that respectable churches and communities were beset by attacks from Satan, that immoral trends existed among youth from socially or racially less “respectable” families, or that good people sometimes failed. It was another to suggest that immorality was the norm among almost everybody.²⁷

Southern Baptist E. J. Daniel joined the evangelical Graham and Narramore in questioning Kinsey's statistics. The provocative title of his book, *I Accuse Kinsey!*, was accompanied by cover graphics of a giant hand whose pointer finger was outstretched. Next to it, an graphic of an embracing couple, rendered in the style of pulp fiction illustrations, encouraged the reader to ask if Kinsey's lurid picture of American mores was real life or fiction. Daniel's suspicion was that the illicit love pictured on his book cover was likely the product rather than the subject of Kinsey's research. He built a two-part argument for this assertion. First, he argued that the women whom Kinsey interviewed for the Female Report were not representative of the general population but were, by virtue of their very consent to be interviewed, unreliable. He charged that ordinary women, even ones who willingly visit professionals for help with their sex lives,

often concealed the truth; abnormal women were prone to flights of fancy and exaggeration. Kinsey therefore had little chance of obtaining the true facts. Daniels also found it bizarre that Kinsey reported that 50 percent of his interviewees slept in the nude. Daniels asserted that this behavior indicated that the women interviewed could not have been average women. Second, Daniels hoped to counter Kinsey's findings by conducting his own voluntary survey among two thousand of the “born again” women whom Graham claimed were absent from Kinsey's pool of interviewees—listeners of his radio show. Daniels' respondents, whom he admitted were not representative of the total population of American women but still an interesting counterpoint, returned less shocking statistics: 26 percent reported that they had engaged in premarital “fornication;” of those, only 10.93 percent said they expressed no regret over that experience; 9.1 percent of married women reported that they had committed adultery. If conservative Protestants were always ready to chide America for her errors, they also identified with middle-class values.28

The desire to keep American morals on track lay behind the second objection aired by Kinsey's conservative Protestant critics. They feared how the wide distribution of Kinsey's findings would affect America morals. The usual response of conservative Protestants to concerning social trends was to acknowledge and repudiate them, holding higher religious and cultural ideals as normative and warning those who deviated of their peril. However, Kinsey's purpose in publicizing his findings seemed less salutary. There had long existed in the literature of conservative Protestant groups the suspicion that a vanguard of anti-Christian, probably atheistic, college professors were attempting to

unseat their students' faith in marriage as the natural and best state in which to organize sexual and family life. Kinsey appeared to them to be the latest member of this club. Kinsey's conclusions, they noted, were not only shocking: he seemed bent on distributing this news to the broadest possible audience. Rather than marketing his detailed statistical studies to academics and experts, he announced the forthcoming publication of his books a month before they were published. Recognizing a hot topic, the popular press quickly reported his most important and sensational findings. In consequence, both Kinsey studies seized positions on the New York Times bestseller list soon after their release.

Edgy conservatives saw in these actions evidence that goals of social revolution, not disinterested or impartial scientific interest, underlay the Kinsey reports. Calling Kinsey the latest installment in a long line of moral relativists that included Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, and Friedrich Schleiermacher, Billy Graham charged that the wide distribution of Kinsey's claims would weaken families and personal morals:

Happily married husbands and wives are going to start suspecting each other when they read that one out of every four wives is unfaithful to her husband. . . . It will cause children to doubt the fidelity of their parents and will lead to various types of moral abuses.

Because Kinsey would not condemn the practices he chronicled, seemed to regard sexual expression as a positive good wherever it did not cause harm, and in fact suggested that many traditionally condemned sexual practices might contribute to sexual adjustment, the impact of the reports would undoubtedly be the lowering of morals:

We all agree with Dr. Kinsey that moral conditions in America are bad. But his report for wholesale public consumption, appealing to the lower instincts in human nature, is aggravating the situation. This book is going to teach young people how to indulge in premarital relations and get away
with it. It is going to teach young people that what so many are doing must not be wrong. It is going to teach our young people terrifying perversions that they have never even heard of before.²⁹

The circulation of the Kinsey reports was not the only rub. When conservative Protestants accused respectable Americans of moral failing, they did so with the presupposition that morally good behavior and the normative behavior of strong civilizations was a higher and better standard from which sinful individuals had fallen and to which God could reconcile them. If there was any doubt about what those sexual and marital standards were, the Bible settled the issue. By stark contrast, Kinsey argued, often pointedly, that behaviors that were very common in a population should be regarded as natural. He stressed that the job of asking moral questions lay outside science and therefore outside of his purview. He was measuring behavior and variations in behavior and cataloging it; using this method, he hoped to bypass philosophical discussions of sex to understand the behavior of biological organisms. To religious audiences who were used to viewing certain religious and social ideals as normative, this approach was unsettling.

Kinsey made it even more unsettling by stating that his statistical findings pointed to great flaws in existing beliefs, laws, and religious teachings that sought to understand and control sexual behavior. He argued that too many laws criminalized and penalized common, normal behavior, while psychiatry and religion pinned common behaviors as abnormal or deviant. Kinsey's clear and strong belief was that existing social values ought to be changed to reflect the apparent facts of human behavior. Until they changed,

²⁹ Billy Graham, The Bible and Dr. Kinsey (Minneapolis: Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 1953).
law enforcement, psychologists, religious leaders, and teachers would continue to spread misperceptions about sex and fail to speak to real human needs. This suggestion received limited acceptance from religious leaders, one of the foremost advocates being Seward Hiltner, University of Chicago associate professor of pastoral psychology. Hiltner challenged Kinsey's narrow “biologism” but argued that the findings were an opportunity for Christianity to shed its “legalism” about sexual ethics. Other mainline leaders, most vocally Reinhold Neibuhr, criticized Kinsey for failing to view sex as equally a question of humanity personality, creative life, and religious values and therefore failing to understand sex at all. Conservative Protestants generally followed Niebuhr's leanings, advancing the idea, as C. W. Ward derisively put it, that Kinsey was claiming “That because a lot of people do a thing it must be right.”

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Taming Teenagers

The importance that conservative Protestants placed on maintaining respect for Christian ideals of sexual morality had a powerful effect on the messages they disseminated to teenagers between the mid-1940s and the end of the Baby Boom. Little worried conservative Protestants more than juvenile delinquency, the threat that young people were lapsing from moral norms and that parents and communities lacked the power to shape their ideals and behavior.

The high rate of juvenile delinquency during the recent world war had stemmed, commentators had believed, from the stresses and exigencies of life on the home front.

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However, rather than disappearing with the return of normalcy, alleged misbehavior by youth continued unabated into the postwar years. Law enforcement and the press alike warned Americans about twin horrors that made American streets unsafe: organized crime and criminal acts by children and teenagers. Between 1951 and 1957 arrests of youth rose 55 percent. Alongside high-profile stories about violent crime made famous by the press, these statistics gave the impression that lawlessness had become a new epidemic.\(^{31}\)

Affluence was almost certainly a contributing factor to the perceived epidemic of teenage irreverence. Cold War American families offered their young people unprecedented access to education, automobiles, allowances, and part-time jobs. Teenagers' consumer dollars, which were spent on everything from clothes to music to movies, helped to create a national youth culture that flourished in secondary schools. It also proved unfamiliar terrain to parents and other observers, many of whom believed they were witnessing the emergence of a rebellious generation of youth who were out of control.

Youth tested their boundaries by engaging in all kinds of “delinquent” behavior: they hung out on the streets at night, they took over movie theaters, they engaged openly in “necking” and “petting,” they formed gangs, they became truants, they vandalized property, they drank, they attended rambunctious dance parties, and they took cars on wild escapades. When adults tried to rein in their behavior, youth “acted out.” Youth developed a new reputation as virtual bloodhounds for hypocrisy; any contradiction perceived between adult words and behavior was said to convince young people that their

would-be teachers were “phonies.” The emergence of Rock 'n' Roll appeared as the special genre of music created for youth that inspired ample adult concern, including conservative Protestants who perceived in its beats and lyrics too much suggestion of dancing and lust. Meanwhile, movies helped to immortalize James Dean and Marlon Brando as “young rebels.” All these developments cemented the notion that American teenagers possessed identities and tastes separate from those of their elders. This prospect generated a continual flood of concerned news coverage throughout the 1950s, which emphasized that American youth had gone utterly wild. Unable to accept direction from adults and unguided by morality, a new breed of wild criminal had supposedly emerged.32

Little reflected this concern more than the nation's intense concern about comic books, which were wildly popular with American children and teenagers. An impressive 95 percent of boys and 91 percent of girls aged six to eleven read comics. Young men between twelve and seventeen read them at the smaller but still impressive rate of 87 percent, while their female counterparts indulged at a rate of 81 percent. At least on the surface, this choice in reading material did not seem all bad to many parents. Many stories championed the achievements of Western democracy and politics and embraced a patriotic suspicion of communists. Superhero comics, which had been popular during World War II, were losing market share but remained prominent. However, comic book writers straddled many genres, with crime detection, romance, and westerns ranking among the most popular. Further, critics decried them for an alleged preoccupation with criminal behavior, violence, gore, and sex. When psychiatrist Frederic Wertham published an indictment of comic books, *The Seduction of the Innocent* (1954), he

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32 Palladino, 155-173.
charged that comic book publishers were providing youth with nothing less than “correspondence courses in crime.” American homes, he stressed, could never be safe while comic book sales flourished. In response to these warnings, in 1954 the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency launched an investigation into comic book publishers. Several cities moved to ban comics. 33 Most articles in conservative Protestant publications encouraged parents either to forbid comic reading entirely or to restrict their children's exposure to the more benign “adventure” comics. At best, frequent comic reading wasted time better devoted to worthy forms of literature; at worst, comics could probe “but another tool of Satan to fill the minds of people with impure thoughts.”

Comic books were the tip of the iceberg. The new delinquent had arrived, some conservative Protestants speculated, because long periods of war and the Depression had placed stress on the social order, while a great poverty of religious commitment left communities with no spiritual power to combat its effects. Writing for the *Lutheran Witness*, police Sargent Paul Lippold of Portland explained, “The younger generations have known only wars, forced hatred, political propaganda, and economic strife. Religion in the home has been almost non-existent and is even ridiculed by many, while family life has deteriorated.” With a possible third world war on the horizon, this deadly combination of weak homes, social pressure, and lack of faith would continue to deepen the crisis if the church did not respond effectively. The solution had to be just as drastic

and spectacular as the problem. Lippold thought that repentance and a forsaking of all
evil in the life of the believer and the church would be necessary, as well as outreach to
people who had gotten in trouble with the law.34

The conviction of conservative Protestant leaders that the destructive forces of sex
and violence threatened youth reverberated in their statements about the mission of
families. Homes, they stressed, must tame the chaotic forces within society and redirect
them to constructive ends. “The stable, well-ordered, godly home functions at the very
center of our national life like a powerful centripetal force that keeps it from flying to
pieces,” Assemblies of God pastor Frank M. Boyd explained in his forward to Alice
—an early leader in the Assemblies of God whom Boyd affectionately named “one of the
all-too-few 'mothers in Israel'”—warned readers that premarital sex, inappropriate
magazines, and crime threatened to ensnare children whose homes had lost control over
them due to lack of attention, lack of discipline, parental selfishness, working mothers, or
ignorance about teenage problems. Loine Honderick, also of the Assemblies of God,
advanced similar arguments in his book, Battlements for Thy House (1946). Quoting a
local news article, Honderick asserted, “the most wonderful potentiality in the world is
not atomic energy, but the life of a child.” Honderick argued that to harness that potential,
children had to be saved by hearing the Gospel in the home. The mission of parents was
therefore “to see our children become followers of Christ with a biblical experience of
Salvation, possessing true moral character, the fruit of their faith.” They would then form
more Christian homes, whose members would all gather before God's throne in Heaven.

Stressing the classic themes of discipline and the family altar, especially the power of parenting to overcome juvenile delinquency, she stressed that diligent parents could “shut out the spirit of the world . . . by making our homes natural, spiritual fortresses.” The idea that Christian discipline must be used to tame the chaotic, violent energy within human nature appeared as well in statements from Free Methodist bishop and psychologist Leslie Marston. Resurrecting themes from his book *From Chaos to Character* (1935, 1944), Marston stressed that home training could build order in the personality. “Chaos threatens the American family—and America,” he explained. “But chaos is not inevitable if the integrating forces of moral responsibility and religious faith are directed to the building of personal, family, and national character.” As in earlier decades, conservative Protestant authors continued to quote J. Edgar Hoover's articles on the link between weak homes, lack of religious instruction, and crime.35

Advice literature written for teenagers also communicated the sense that a young person's life was threatened by violent and chaotic forces. In her book, *Confidentially, Girls!,* Church of God member Elizabeth Pistole explained to teenagers that the powerful feelings they experienced in adolescence might stem from their maladjustment to the

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pressures of the modern world, peers, parents, and school. “Your parents lived through
two world wars, the Korean conflict, and a cold war. All too often war leaves a feeling of
uncertainty and a 'I don't care attitude.' Many teenagers were little tots in their home
watching their parents 'eat, drink, and try to be merry' in a disparate attempt to forget the
horrors of war.”

In homes that had not cast away fear with confidence in God's providence, the fear that pervaded the international scene had taken its toll on the feelings of teenagers. The stress of these many factors led to constant self-criticism or inspired antisocial behaviors like drinking or stealing.

Whether or not they drew connections between international events and personal life, most authors took it as a given that teenagers focused most of their attention on powerful inner feelings and impulses. It's Tough to be a Teenager (1955), Youth for Christ's Robert A. Cook titled his advice book for youth. Teenagers, after all, had to worry about fitting in with their “gang,” understanding their “old-fashioned” parents across a wide generation gap, choosing a career, and falling in love. In a short time, a young person's spiritual condition and the mental habits she cultivated could either lead her to commit heinous crimes or become a social success. The high stakes of these challenges made teenage decisions some of the most pressured and potentially disastrous of one's life. Managing one's sexual instincts particularly stood out among the factors that could make teenage life a pressure cooker. Cook likened falling in love to nothing less than lighting a fuse. “Lovemaking takes the combustible elements of your nature and sets

37 Pistole, 9-14, 74-78.
them very much on fire,” he warned. If allowed to burn uncontrolled, passion that began with simple hand holding would lead—“Bloie!”—to an explosion that left the unfortunate lover picking up the scattered “fragments” of his life.³⁸

These concerns about the destructive implications of youthful impulses echoed conservative Protestants' earlier interest in character, the avoidance of questionable pastimes, and the living of a separated life. The older theological and devotional heavyweights, particularly among fundamentalists and Pentecostals, still contrasted temporary pleasure to the pursuit of holiness. In his sermon “Youth in Search of Pleasure,” fundamentalist pastor William Bell Riley exemplified many veteran pastors' perspectives on the challenges facing youth. He warned that the natural human inclination to seek pleasure held special sway over youth owing to their immaturity and often led them into sin. The temptations that beset them included the “lusts of the flesh” (sexual immorality), “the lust of the eyes” (the viewing of immoral material, particularly at movie theaters), and “the pride of life” (love of inappropriate, costly clothing and of luxury). Unless youth learned to seek God's face rather than transient gratification, they would lose the capacity to truly enjoy life as well as their souls.³⁹ In many respects, the generation following Riley's concurred. William Orr's Cold-War Era booklets *What Every Boy Should Know* and *What Every Girl Should Know* also summed up necessary life lessons in a manner any reader from the 1920s or '30s would have recognized:

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Christ, build solid habits that exercise body and spirit, live boldly for God, value your family, reject evolution, join an athletic team, don't watch movies, don't dance, don't smoke, don't drink, don't engage in petting, don't have premarital sex, do date other Christians, and do marry a worthy mate. As before, character training and a distinctly Christian life pattern prepared the faithful youth uniquely for marriage, the natural goal of most normal people. 

While the new sermons and advice literature for youth stressed old themes, they also began to acknowledge that the teenage years had become for American youth a separate and unique set of social experiences that practically transported teenagers to a different mental planet than the one their parents inhabited. They accepted as a matter of course that Christian youth would travel in the same social world as other American teenagers and share most of the same experiences and dilemmas. They stressed that parents and churches would have to work hard to relate to their teenagers' perspectives and needs, if they wished to guide them through that distinct period of development, help them to understand their feelings, and show them how to transition successfully into the adult world.

As a significant aspect of the teenage experience and an expression of a young person's sexual maturation, dating represented a special problem. Earlier literature nodded toward the practice of dating, which by the twenties had become a widespread practice that was of intense interest and importance to young people. Nonetheless, advice writers had focused almost entirely on the high-minded and serious nature of courtship.

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By contrast, postwar literature embraced the practice of casual dating in the early teenage years as an important opportunity to have fun and learn how to be sociable with members of the opposite sex. Bertrand Williams encouraged boys to find “gal pals,” hopefully a number of them. According to Williams, a boy could see more than one gal pal at the same time, and he was not supposed to establish special understandings with any of them. He found girls intriguing because God was preparing him to marry one day, but that decision was still a few years away. Other authors took a similar perspective, often arguing against teenagers “going steady”—dating a single person exclusively—because of the importance of delaying serious commitment and gaining valuable practice socializing with members of the opposite sex. They cautioned that going steady limited a young person's experience base, robbed him of valuable opportunities to hone his social skills, and moved him to thoughts of sex and marriage too soon. Adolescence was about personal growth, particularly about learning social roles and honing social skills.41

Eager to direct teenagers' social development, conservative Protestants packaged their suggestions in an attractive wrapper. They stressed that Christian character and Christian living offered the surest path to obtaining that coveted popularity with one's peers. They argued that Christians who cultivated a biblical view of life and a healthy interest in other people should want to learn common courtesy and practice approaching

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events with a positive attitude. The hallmarks of middle-class sociability and social
success were therefore desirable, even necessary, cultural accoutrements for the
Christian. Robert Cook included excessive talking about oneself, sloppy dressing, over-
dressing, bad breath, crass language, hurtful remarks, failing to keep one's word, and
lateness as traits to avoid. Good traits included the ability to flash an enthusiastic smile,
good conversation skills, interest in other people, kindness, thoughtfulness,
cooperativeness, and attractive dressing habits. Verna Joiner advised young people who
wanted to date to learn courtesy, responsibility, firm standards of conduct, and the tricks
of behaving pleasantly and expressing romantic interest appropriately. He or she also had
to “be interesting” as well as “interested.” A substantial knowledge base, ability to
comment on topics other people found interesting, and an authentic, personal set of
convictions made one attractive and to the right kind of partners. Elizabeth Walker
Strachan's *Dear Ann*, a book of letters between sisters who give their hearts to Christ
during their dating years, presented etiquette, charm, a diligent attention to appearance,
and friendliness as “an almost foolproof recipe for popularity.” These principles, initially
learned by the girls before their conversions, formed the substance of their social plan for
winning the attention of men after their conversions as well. Christianity enriched their
quest by providing them with higher standards of physical purity, emotional comfort,
self-confidence, and aspiration to date Christian men and begin Christian marriages.42

42 Cook, 16-18; Joiner, iii-5, 21-34; Elizabeth Walker Strachan, “*Dear Ann*” (*For Girls – Mostly
about Boys*) (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), whole text, esp. p. 12. For similar arguments in other advice
books for teenagers, see Streeter, 11-22; Mel Johnson, *How About That?* (Minneapolis, MN: Tips for Teens,
1963), 1-4, 18-19; Billy Graham, “When Christ Was a Teenager,” in *Billy Graham Talks to Teenagers*
also gave this impression, presenting social courtesy as the obvious complement to moral living and a key
to personal influence and success. See Marie Acomb Riley, *A Handbook of Christian Etiquette* (St. Paul,
If common social graces were indicative of a good Christian, so was “standing out” due to one's Christian commitment, but in a way that was likely to attract admiration. Most advice writers and Christian leaders hoped to keep Christian youth away from activities they considered out-of-bounds, with the full knowledge that dancing, drinking, movies, and casual kisses were prominent features of modern teenage life. To compensate for the alienation a Christian teenager might feel, they assured youth that they had their own special “gang” of young people within the church whose approval they should seek; at the same time, they urged parents and church leaders to recognize that for every secular social activity a Christian teenager might be denied, a comparable opportunity to enjoy clean fun should be offered by their homes and churches. This way, Christian youth remained pure without “missing out.” Advice writers further reassured young people that while taking a stand for Christ might sometimes seem unexciting or embarrassing, their worldly peers would respect them for sticking up for their principles. “Popularity is based on respect—for the influence you wield,” Robert Cook explained. Keeping a consistent Christian testimony and speaking up for one's convictions contributed to one's ability to win friends.43

Writers also reiterated older conservative Protestant concerns for mental and physical soundness, with a new emphasis: the importance of a toned body, a clean conscience, a solid character, and a chipper attitude to social success. Noting that “charm schools” across the country filled quickly with teenagers eager to exude a likable personality and maximize their good looks, Elizabeth Pistole reminded teenagers to pay

attention to the “inner qualities” that were part of “God's beauty counter”—but she did
not condemn the charm schools. To the contrary, she urged teenagers to learn the rules of
etiquette, reassured them that acne would soon pass, and advised them to respond to fears
about their weight by learning to select healthy meals.44

Bertrand Williams described charm, clean living, and a “can-do” attitude toward
life as the “magic slippers” that made a girl popular. Describing one model young lady,
he observed, “Letta, however, knew that she was not beautiful, and so she made herself
charming, and kept her spiritual life clean and wholesome, as all you girls can.” She
played up her most attractive physical feature, “a wreathing smile that showed the
evenest row of white teeth one could imagine.” She presented her interest in Christian
activities and her avoidance of petting and cigarettes as proof that she was “young and
vibrant,” willing to commit herself fully to a cause and excited about living her life to the
fullest. Her enthusiasm enlivened all her features and made her popular with everyone.
“Vibrant with youth and energy,” and “a picture of true girlhood,” her body reflected her
positive attitude and commitment to self-improvement. “Her muscles were solid from
exercise,” he observed, “and her girlish physique, five-three in height, and tipping the
scales at a hundred and fifteen, was strong and straight.”

If some women had to rely on their personalities for popularity, advice writers
encouraged girls also to exploit on their natural beauty – and to do everything they could
to enhance it. Alongside Letta, Bertrand Williams presented the significantly more
comely “Betty Jo,” whose overt pursuit of beauty made her a role model:

44 Pistole, 15-25.
Betty Jo was a girl who realized that a prized possession was an alluring body in which to house her mind and spirit. She did everything in her power to keep her body sound, clean, and healthy. She was athletic but not a fool over sports, for she felt that, after all, the exercise, the fresh air and the companionship were more important than breaking records. She knew that a strong and beautiful body is God's housing for a consecrated heart.

Williams explained to his readers that they could enjoy similar results by avoiding cigarettes and alcohol, getting plenty of exercise, taking vitamins, getting enough sleep, and practicing good personal hygiene.

These were mainstream American values. Williams explained forthrightly that an ideal body—fit, slender, sculpted, healthy, animated by a zest for life, committed to God's service—was the product of Christianity and American, middle-class life. Nowhere was this clearer than when he described “Dasha,” an immigrant who arrives in America malnourished, unconfident, unpoised, and unchristian, and her transformation into a young lady who would turn heads in any high school. Exposure to the Christian gospel, good food, training in good posture, and a few beauty tips work together to effect Dasha's metamorphosis:

I think you ought to meet Dasha. She is a war orphan from one of those little countries Hitler swallowed up. Her parents were killed, and she escaped to England, where American kindness picked her up and brought her to the land of freedom. If course she was undernourished for a sixteen-year-old, and as scrawny as a “bag of bones.”

Her spiritual life had been undernourished. She knew little about true Christian living, and had not experienced the joy of being born again through the Spirit.

'Bone-bags,' you know, can soon be filled out with good rich foods, and souls can be brought under submission to the Lord through proper instruction. Dasha ate rich foods supplied by the kind of home where she stayed, and being Christian, the family taught her about Christ and His power to altar one's entire personality.
This little war orphan didn't know how to walk gracefully like the American sisters with whom she lived and went to school. Her parents had been peasants, and she took on the walk of girls bowed beneath heavy loads.

When Dasha's American family provides her with the advantages of middle-class American life, she transforms. Her American sisters show her how balancing a book on her head will help her to learn good posture. Her new family also teachers her about “the wonderful love of Christ which could change her inner life.” A few months after her move to the United States, the unredeemed, slumped, and unassuming Dasha has a new life in Christ and presents herself as a striking young woman capable of wowing her high school peers:

I was met at my friend's door by a striking brunette, standing about five-feet four, slender and not scrawny, with ruddy cheeks and firm lips, and the most attractive mop of blue-black hair done with an upswing I have seen in a long time.

If less effusive in his praise of male virility, William's advice to young men was similar: follow Christ, eat right, exercise, and become a success!  

Dorothy Haskin, author of For Girls Only (1956), used some of the well-known neo-evangelical leaders to demonstrate to teenage girls that Christian living, physical attractiveness, and talent went hand-in-hand:

When Billy Graham, internationally known evangelist, met Ruth Bell (now Mrs. Graham), she was one of the most dated girls on the Wheaton College campus. To have been so popular, obviously she must have been a girl with an attractive appearance and a pleasing personality. And she still is!

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45 Williams, Boys, 38-39, 52, 54; Williams, Girls, 10, 19-21, 26-26, 29-35,
Rudy Atwood, well-known Christian musician, plays piano for the Old-Fashioned Revival Hour on national radio hookup. His wife, Grace, is a petite, oval-faced girl with wavy hair, possessing both outer and inner loveliness and beauty.

Dr. Louis H. Evans is the former pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood, one of the largest churches in the United States, and now Presbyterian minister-at-large. He, too, is married to a charming woman. Marie Evans has dusky hair, a trim figure and a gracious manner.

Percy Crawford has been a nationally known Christian figure for over twenty years. He conducts Youth on the March radio and TV program. His wife is both charming in manner and smart in appearance. Her hands, as she plays the piano, are poems of grace.

The wives of many prominent Christians are examples of that attractiveness that all Christian girls could and should have. Many of our Christian girls are beautiful. It is to be expected that they should be.

Haskin explained to readers that God had created them to be beautiful. By developing bodies and personalities that any American could not help but esteem, they were realizing part of God's plan for their lives.

Haskin's choice role models aided her in communicating the ends toward which she thought the potential of a woman's sexuality or force of personality should be directed. As the wives of pastors and evangelists, women such as Ruth Bell Graham, Grace Atwood, Marie Evans, and Ruth Crawford provided Haskin with proof that the nation's finest women did their part by marrying and acting as accessories to their well-known husbands. They had clean testimonies, they built up their husbands' reputations and careers, and they skillfully managed their families. Haskin argued that Christian girls should aspire to similar roles. Applauding three college girls who met each week to pray for husbands, she explained, “All three had the same ambition: each wanted a husband and all the happy dreams he symbolized. . . . Marriage is the normal manner of living,
and a husband should be the prime objective of the average girl. Therefore, she should pray for the right one.” The Christian woman did not only understand how to make friends and win dates: she knew how to win a wedding proposal and manage a home.46

She also knew how to shop. Some conservative Protestant churches, particularly within fundamentalist and Pentecostal folds, retained strict restrictions on women's dress, often rejecting many contemporary styles as too revealing and prohibiting the “worldly” application of jewelry or makeup. Jack Wyrtzen, founder of Word of Life in 1940, chided that “Never in the history of fashion has so little material been raised so high to reveal so much that needs to covered so badly.” Christian girls should eschew these trends, he insisted, by searching for an “individual style” through selecting long dresses with soft lines.47 Others took a gentler and more permissive approach, stressing the value of modest but fashionable, attractive outfits. Dorothy Haskin urged her teenage readers to study which hair and clothing styles suited them. Christian girls had to avoid clothing choices that invited lustful glances from men, but they were also wise to avoid clothes that made them appear “ordinary.” “To want to be well-dressed is merely self-respect, not pride,” she explained. Self-respect meant selecting flattering clothes and assembling complete outfits that included nice accessories. Hats were a good idea, she stressed, because most men liked them.48

The new convergence of middle-class expectations, teenage social life, and Christian living often added religious imperative to teenage anxieties about unattractive

46 Dorothy Clark Haskin, For Girls Only (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956).
48 Haskin.
features or flabby bodies. The notion that Christian discipline and devotion ought to have both great and beneficial effects on the body was well established in varied discourses, ranging from the revolutionary promises of fasting to Pentecostal faith-healing. Consciously or unconsciously, advice writers searching for the perfect intersection between saving faith and a deeply-felt desire to cultivate personal appeal and power dipped into this well and drew up lectures on the importance of physical education and dieting.  

Haskin, for example, recommended that teenage girls eat a variety of foods, check out health food stores, and take a second helping of vegetables to eliminate acne and to shed extra pounds. A flabby body was usually not an accident of genes but instead evidence of a lack of Christian self-discipline. “The stout girl usually excuses, 'I am naturally fat.' But if you look at her, you will also see that she naturally likes ice cream, rich pastry, cream sauces, and casserole dishes,” she chided. These tastes not only doomed a girl to social failure; they also displeased God: “It is not honoring to the Lord, whose creation you are, to have an overweight, sluggish body.” Girls would do well to recall that to obey the Lord, the prophet Daniel had eaten “no pleasant bread.” If tasty foods had to be traded for godliness and social success, the thoughtful Christian girl would make the necessary sacrifices.  

The appeal of advice literature for parents and teenagers to conquer chaos within the self and society by building a sociable personality, an attractive body, and a principled mental and spiritual life shaped how writers handled the header topic of sex. Much of the

49 The best full-length study of these themes, including their culmination in recent evangelical dieting self-help books, is R. Marie Griffith, *Born Again Bodies: Flesh and Spirit in American Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

50 Haskin, 7.
religious advice literature conservative Protestants had generated from the 1930s to the
mid-1940s presented Christian moral standards as a key to sexual health and bodily vigor.
This literature remained in print and on personal or pastoral bookshelves well into the
next decade. In addition, conservative periodicals were still recommending Oscar
Lowry’s and Clayton Derstine's works. Further, many pastors and advice writers
continued to argue that immorality, no matter how widespread, could be demonstrated to
be abnormal or harmful based on its physical effects. It seemed evident to religious
commentators that if the same God who had designed the human body had also authored
Scripture, then the Bible's teachings on sex represented nothing less than an owner's
manual to the proper care of the body. For example, Jack Wyrtzen's booklet *Youth's
Purity Problems* (1954) opened with the claim from the medical director of Life
Insurance Company that youth could be certain that doctors still found that “immorality”
was far from “normal”; they were “being called upon to treat an ever-increasing number
of patients with emotional, nervous, or mental problems . . . found to be the result of
improper or illicit sex activities.”

However, the younger authors who produced brand new titles shifted their focus
from bodily health to mental health and life success. These authors affirmed an approach
to sex education that was, in its basic assumptions, similar to the approach that was
becoming increasingly implemented in American schools during the 1940s. Termed
“family life education” and other terms suggesting preparation for adult social life, the

advertisement, Zondervan Press, *Moody Monthly* February 1944, back cover; bibliography in Irene
Klingberg, “Sex Education is the Parents' Job,” July 1948, 23-24, 36; Marian Ainlay, “You, Your Child, and

52 Wyrtzen, *Youth's Purity Problems*, 5-6.
new curricula embedded information about sex into a larger discussion about the personal physical, social, and emotional challenges of growing up and assuming adult responsibilities and social roles. Conservative Protestants readily embraced the tone taken by family curricula that focused on helping young people to understand and discuss their identities as men and women and their future social roles within a heterosexual society in which marriage, parenthood, and distinct economic and social roles for the sexes were considered typical. This approach encouraged students to think about these vast issues and to voice their thoughts and questions. This dynamic left some room for students to form their own opinions, especially when teachers allowed them the room to do so. Of course, it also helped socialize students into views about sexuality and identity that were acceptable to teachers and peers and therefore also reinforced existing norms.53

Conservative Protestants usually affirmed the value of sex education in the home, repeating observations from sex education advocates that very few youth received adequate explanations from their parents. In Christian Life, Irene Klingberg repeated recent findings that a half of young people received no instruction from their parents and asserted that those who did receive instruction were frequently given too little information. In view of this fact, Klingberg prevailed upon parents to counter immorality among youth by adopting a positive program of sex education in the home. This education would begin in infancy, during which time parents were to avoid

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53 Susan K. Freeman, Sex Goes to School: Girls and Sex Education Before the 1960s (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2008).
communicating the idea that the body was dirty or that sex was an embarrassing or shameful topic. As the child matured, parental discussion would offer an explanation of the physical, religious, and social facts about sex.\footnote{Irene Klingberg, “Sex Education is the Parents' Job,” \textit{Christian Life} July 1948, 23-24, 36.}

The question of addressing sex education in schools was more controversial. The growth in the number of school districts offering sex education to students during the 1940s and 1950s did sometimes draw criticism from conservative religious parents. In addition, many conservative Protestant authors advocated sex education in the home without commenting explicitly on the propriety of offering instruction in public schools. Instead, they stressed the importance that children receive a religiously informed presentation of sex education and addressed their recommendations explicitly to parents. Some, however, argued that the church, home, and school shared responsibility for ensuring that young people received sex education. Advancing this position, Alfred Schmieding, a member of the Missouri Synod and a child psychologist, argued that since many homes failed to provide such instruction schools ought to provide “educational leadership.” He thought the church ought to impress upon parents the importance of sex to a child's “religious and spiritual well-being.”\footnote{Alfred Schmieding, \textit{Sex in Childhood and Youth} (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 1-15.}

Some conservative Protestants also affirmed the emphasis of family life education on presenting information about sex within a holistic program of reflection about adult social roles. In \textit{Christian Life}, Virginia Matson lauded the outlook of a new generation of parents:
Christian parents today are realizing that a well-rounded Christian child must know the proper relationships of the sexes and understand their differences and natural desires. Christian parents are recalling the fact that God initially created the sex relationship and called it good. . . . Parents today are realizing that sex education is important.

At stake was the child's mental and spiritual health, whether his feelings about sex and understanding of it would be integrated into his “personal relationship with God” and “Christian view of life.”

Literature written for teenagers reflected these emphases. When discussing the meaning and consequences of sex, writers began to retreat from medical discussions. Newly published advice literature for teenagers mentioned pregnancy as a serious misfortune and a risk that sexually active, unmarried girls could not reliably avoid. However, this risk was the one danger routinely invoked or discussed with any specificity. For the most part, venereal diseases no longer had names nor were their effects described. The notion that masturbation might cause bodily weakness, which had been so long discredited in mainstream literature, finally vanished from the fresh generation of conservative Protestant teenage advice literature.

Rather than focusing on medical problems, writers elected to describe the importance of sexual conduct to one's psychological and social development into a happy and sociable person. Christian psychologist Clyde Narramore explained to his teenage readers that “all sex problems are personality problems.” Likewise, Lutheran William Hulme, author of several books counseling youth about sex and the challenges of teenage life, argued that sex problems were “fed by underground streams” from deep within a person. The “sex urge,” he explained, was “highly emotional in nature” and therefore

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impossible to control consciously when unmet needs from within the psyche fueled its fires. Baptist writers W. Melville Capper and H. Morgan Williams made the same point, describing sex as “a vast potential energy in the personality which can be released through various channels.”

Advice writers were quick to seize the emotional dimensions of sexual behavior as a key basis on which the Cold War teenager's quest for personal well-being and social success rested. “God has made us so that we cannot share the intimate joys of life with more than one person or else we dull their true meaning,” Elizabeth Pistole told her young readers. Verna Joiner warned that sexual experience before marriage removed the “exquisite pleasure” of expressing her commitment to her husband by offering him her virginity. Sexual mistakes were “permanent in their impact on personality and future relationships.” B. H. Sreeter stated that “modern scientific investigation has proved that the more impure you are before marriage, the less chance you have of being happy after marriage.” “Boredom” and “neurotic self-affliction” loomed as unwelcoming outcomes of immorality. William Hulme cautioned that unmarried persons who became sexually involved were likely to lose respect for one another. If they continually experimented with petting without having sex, the resulting sexual tension could give rise to arguments.

The neighbors might be also be watching. Sexual conduct, advice writers stressed, would become an important component of a young man or young woman's reputation.

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58 Joiner, 70; Streeter, 76; Pistole, 51; Hulme, 33-46.
with peers, love interests, and the community at large. They cautioned that although many young people engaged in petting or premarital sex, doing so would ultimately damage one's prospect of earning respect or marrying well. This rule was especially important for young women, who were reminded that the whole community would be watching their behavior and passing judgment on it. The respectable girl, Verna Joiner contended, “avoids the Wild Bill who tries to kiss on the first date. She likes the protective sort of boy who shows concern for her welfare, one who would do nothing to cause her parents to distrust him or to cause neighbors to gossip.”

Once it became difficult to claim that masturbation resulted in medical harm, conservative Protestants instead began to associate social and psychological problems with the practice. “While it is freely admitted that modern research has proved beyond all doubt that this habit may be practiced for years without scarcely any devitalization, the spiritual and mental effects are devastating,” evangelist Frank Lawes warned in his book, *The Sanctity of Sex* (1948). In the postwar literature, masturbation's harm now lay in the fact that it delivered sexual pleasure without connection to another human being. Since it deviated from the unitive purposes of sex in marriage, Lawes regarded the act as inherently self-centered and antisocial. The young person who indulged in it frequently retreated into solitude, where “immense powers of emotion are vainly squandered.” Obsession with inner fantasies separated the youth from other people and poisoned his relationship with God. In his advice book for adolescent men, Herbert Streeter explained that masturbation delivered no physical harm but was mentally dangerous because it resulted in lust, guilt, lack of self-control, and anti-social attitudes. Consequently, a young

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person with a habit of masturbating risked “poor marital adjustment.” “You condition yourself to a certain way of releasing sexual tension,” Streeter explained. “This way is self-centered. It is almost as if you are in love with yourself. It becomes hard to allow the emotions of your love to flow out toward your wife.” Medical risk disappeared and was replaced by the threat of permanent damage to the personality, which had only so much energy to devote to its self-development. No longer were youth who masturbated at risk of losing precious fluids; instead, they depleted limited reserves of social capital.60

The notion that the proper management of sexual energy was essential to personality development served to reinforce a long-standing emphasis by advice writers on sublimation. Sublimation was an idea that Kinsey, not to mention the general flow of twentieth-century values toward self-expression, regarded as problematic. Nonetheless, it appealed tremendously to conservative Protestants who hoped to recommend Christian moral principles not as a puritanical denial of sex but as a guideline for conserving and utilizing a vital internal resource. Typifying this approach, evangelist Frank Lawes described a positive Christian sex life as one that acknowledged and celebrated the goodness of sex while having the power to redirect sexual energy toward any number of alternative, healthful ends when a morally acceptable sexual outlet was not available.

In view of significant lapses of many people from biblical standards of sexual morality, Lawes regarded the proper management of sexual energy to be nothing less than an achievement of supreme spiritual commitment and effort made possible only by God's grace. Aware of the state of morals in “the cities” and also of the conclusions reached in

Kinsey's *Male Report*, Lawes regarded sex as a doubled-edged sword. On one hand, the great sexual energy that swelled up in healthy adults led easily to lust; secular knowledge and discussion of sex tended toward vulgarity. On the other hand, this great reservoir could be used for tremendous good, as when it promoted fellowship between husband and wife. Most of all, Lawes thought that the very power of the sexual instinct made it not merely into a physical or social problem but also a key area of the spiritual life that could be sanctified.

Bringing order to chaos through Christ's power, Lawes explained to his readers, spelled the difference between sex leading to great peril and sex leading to God's greatest blessings. Lawes therefore stressed that in order to manage his sex life, the faithful believer sought earnestly to conform his life, motivations, and thoughts to God's holy thoughts. Viewed through the lens of Scripture, things which seemed dirty and base in secular terms became holy, a basis for praise to God and a source of earthly happiness. Sex knowledge, Lawes stressed, was not only intellectual and theological but devotional. The believer could benefit from the “divine method of absolute candor” about sex evident in the Bible, if he embraced knowledge of biological facts as a gift and consecrated that knowledge to God in prayer. To that end, Lawes instructed readers of his chapter on basic biological facts about sex to set the chapter aside, until they had spiritually prepared themselves to receive “such intimate knowledge”:

But before we cross the threshold into the sacred realms of such intimate knowledge, will you lay down this book and kneeling at your Saviour's feet, surrender the key of that dark cupboard of secrets? Will you ask him now to let the searching gaze of his holy presence sanctify the whole of
your thought-life?—seeking also forgiveness for ever thinking something he had made could be vulgar, shameful, unclean? . . . what follows may only defile unless a pure heart is yours first of all. 61

To Lawes, the great forces boiling within meant that only two options existed: “Christ – or chaos!” 62

**Conclusion**

The end of World War II brought relief from an active state of war, better economic conditions, and an optimistic social mood. Nonetheless, the threat of international, political, and personal disorder still pressed on American minds. Conservative Protestant evangelists, pastors, and advice writers were keenly aware of the physical and spiritual dangers posed by international events and by problematic trends in American social life. Their assessments of moral conditions in postwar America communicated especially pointed concern for the widespread lapse of Americans, especially youth, from biblical standards of sexual morality.

Conservative Protestants responded to these conditions by articulating their characteristic hope for revival. Many still identified middle-class social values with evangelical Christian religious and cultural ideals. They believed that American morals and religious ideals had slipped, but they also expected the efforts of churches and homes to restore America's Christian and moral heritage. The emergence of Billy Graham as a culturally respected and politically influential icon fueled this conceit.

61 Lawes, 17-18.

62 Lawes, 11-12.
With this hope for the renewal of Christian civilization in mind, conservative Protestant writers re-articulated the viewpoint that Christian conversion and a separate, sanctified life brought the believer happiness and a more useful life. They both sympathized with and encouraged the desire of many Americans for a sense of happiness, security, and control in the face of threats of chaos from aboard, within American social life, or within the self. In fact, they presented the requirements of the Christian life as nothing less than a blueprint for planning and executing a successful life. When they addressed teenagers, conservative Protestants advanced this message with special urgency. They reassured teenagers that the difficult requirements of the Christian life were not at odds with their ordinary desires to succeed at making friends, winning love, and developing a body or a personality of which they could be proud. To the contrary, it would save them from the pain of making tragic mistakes, especially in regard to sexual conduct. This plea for Christianity's relevance to Cold War culture recognized contemporary aspirations, at least those which seemed wholesome, as pressing concerns that faith in Christ could help the individual to address.

This pattern of thought would also guide many conservative Protestant writers as they assessed Cold War social attitudes toward the American family—and made them their own.
In 1950 a husband and father of two shared with the readers of the Southern Baptist Convention's *Home Life* magazine the recent realization that he lacked the close, emotional connection he ought to have with his children. Financially, the family had fallen on hard times. Their uninsured business had recently burned to the ground. Concerned that his family might lose their house, the stressed father returned home one evening short of temper. The house he entered was a mess, due mainly to his children leaving objects on the floor. On this occasion, his son's prized violin was among the toys and clutter, where, as fate would have it, the tired father stepped on it. Succumbing to anger, the father launched into a heated lecture about the importance of money and taking care of one's possessions, promised to throw out the next item he found on the floor, and sent the children to bed. He then descended into the basement with the broken violin, where he set it on a table before checking the furnace, which he slammed shut in frustration. When the discouraged father ascended the basement stairs, he overheard his son crying over the loss of the violin and pleading with his mother for permission to sell his bike in order to purchase another one. Based on his father's anger and the noise of the slammed furnace door, the boy believed that his father had burned the wounded violin in the furnace.
Upon hearing his son's perception of the situation, the father reflected that he was falling short of his responsibilities as a parent. Suddenly contrite, he realized that his son was afraid of him and believed that his father had no sympathy with his feelings. This had been the kind of emotional distance that the father had experienced with his own father years ago, and it was not a pattern he wished to repeat. He immediately took pains to explain to his son that the violin was on the shelf downstairs, awaiting repair, and to reassure him. Next, taking the resourceful attitude of his son as a model to be emulated, he then reassured his tear-stained wife that, somehow, they would rebuild the family's financial prospects.¹

The Baptist father's warning about the familial cost of personal stress, uncontrolled anger, and stern discipline was meant to convey a set of ideals about self-improvement and the cultivation of an emotionally close family life that was becoming increasingly prominent in both mainstream and religious advice literature. During the Cold War years, pastors and lay advice writers, especially those producing books and articles for Southern Baptist, Missouri Synod Lutheran, or neo-evangelical audiences, adopted these themes in earnest in the hopes of strengthening the family, improving the effectiveness of parental instruction, and building individuals equipped with spiritual defenses against the chaos of contemporary politics and social conditions from without and the bubbling forces of sexual and emotional impulses from within.

This decision made them participants in an important chapter of American social history, a moment in which conservative social aspirations were colliding with new ideals. Describing the conservative impulse of the postwar years, historians of the family

and of American culture have often noted, in the words of Stephanie Coontz, that “never before had so many people agreed that only one kind of family”—the middle-class, male breadwinner family—“was 'normal.'” As postwar prosperity enabled the parents of the Baby Boom generation to settle into marriage andparenthood, Americans not only took for granted the social and political importance of this family model but also vested tremendous optimism in the happiness that family life offered. Yet even as American observers found reason to embrace domesticity, the results of this trend were not entirely a return to traditional ideals. Historians have often noted that the Cold War family reflected new developments: the growing autonomy of the nuclear family, the rise in employment and real wages, the suburban housing boom, the expansion of the consumer economy, the greater rise in leisure time, and the greater availability of education as a result of the GI Bill. These factors encouraged middle-class Americans to think of the nuclear family as an autonomous, safe haven for realizing their cultural goals, including the realization of their desire to develop as individual persons, to enjoy companionship with others, to relax, and to enjoy a vast array of products meant to make life better and more interesting. In addition, Alan Petigny has argued that the rush of young Americans to college on the GI Bill, to the church altar, and to bookstores in search of advice by experts on marriage and child rearing accelerated the acceptance of liberalizing intellectual and cultural trends that had been brewing since the turn of the century. These trends included a greater awareness by Americans of psychology and progressive educational ideas, both aspects of modern thought with vast implications for family life. 

In this chapter, I will describe the response of conservative Protestant advice writers, particularly those who hailed from the relatively moderate Southern Baptist Convention, Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and neo-evangelical movement, to this potent mixture of ideas. I will do so by surveying their appropriation of an increasingly prominent idea in postwar writing about the family: that the modern family ought to nurture the growth and happiness of every personality within its ranks. I argue that some writers recognized that Americans brought to postwar home life new ideals of affection, reciprocity, and personal growth. They therefore attempted to re-articulate older views of authority in the home in terms of this new emphasis on personality development. This shift in thinking could serve multiple ends; after all, it advanced the powerful notion that the validity of authority rested partly on its ability to recognize and meet individual needs. The intent of advice writers, however, was to guarantee the survival of core religious values and the spread of the gospel.

The New Christian Family

During the “long decade” of the late 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s pastors and advice writers began to explore new ideological territory. Although sermons and evangelistic appeals still described the contemporary family as a declension from an earlier, more Christian pattern, advice writers often described changes to family life partly as predictable shifts brought about by observable social forces. Although they expressed concern about the implications of these changes, these writers traded the condemnation and hyperbole of revivalism for more moderate language. The modern family living in the modern world could be Christian, they promised, and the new Christian family had much to offer family members, the church, and society at large.

This new tone was in part the outgrowth of conservative Protestants' earlier engagement with the topic of family living. Conservative Protestant protest against steady, if not always even, changes to the American family—shifting sexual standards and behavior, rising divorce rates, greater materialism in public and private life, and the apparent “lawlessness” of the criminal and the carefree—had not only shaped thousands of sermons and revival messages but also helped to entrench in the popular mind an important idea: the family was changing, and so it possessed qualities and faced challenges different from those of its predecessors. In addition, conservative Protestant protest had always coexisted with a pragmatic interest in recognizing and implementing useful, commonsense solutions to problems. As a consequence, the same denominations and movements who warned against the aims and methods of a secularizing academy also produced such sanctioned reiterations of the practical findings of modern child study.

These authors were not alone. During the middle decades of the twentieth century, conservative Protestant educators from across the conservative spectrum who hoped to build effective church ministries and programs quietly completed degrees in education, psychology, or related social sciences. Gertrude Nystrom, who published four books on family life through Moody Press, earned a master's in education. The experienced and widely published Grace Sloan Overton—a teacher, administrator, and author concerned with public speaking, adolescent psychology, and youth movements—became the author of books and articles published by the Southern Baptist Convention's Sunday School Board and Broadman Press. Carl Henry Kardatzke, author of *The Home Christian*, held an MA from Columbia as well as a PhD from the University of Kentucky and could boast a long teaching career, a professorate in education at Anderson College, ordination in the Church of God (Anderson, IN), and the position of director of education in the same denomination. Elizabeth Pistole, also a member of the Church of God (Anderson), held an MA from Ball State University and published advice literature until beginning a teaching career in language arts and psychology in 1965. Fellow Church of God member
Verna Joiner pursued a career as a teacher, a pastor of youth and home missions, and a superintendent of a working girl's home before becoming an author in her late 50s. The fictional subjects of her book *This Home We Build*—typical, if model, parents of two children—turned to Scripture and works of psychology as they sought to understand their children's needs.  

The activities of the committees appointed to study family life within the Southern Baptist Convention and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod exemplified similar trends. The editorial pen of Joe Burton, the head of the Home Curriculum Department of the Sunday School Board, approved articles and textbooks that liberally cited findings and suggestions from mainstream advice literature. Joe Burton himself turned to Paul Popenoe, the nation's best-known marriage expert during the 1940s and 1950s, for inspiration and material. *Home Life Magazine*, edited by Burton, included articles by both conservative Protestant authors and mainstream advice writers such as Dr. Benjamin Spock, whose best-selling *Baby and Child Care* (1946) helped to popularize a more relaxed and progressive approach to child rearing and discipline.  

Meanwhile, the Family Life Committee at the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod sought to expand and improve the breadth and depth of the Synod's thinking on American family life. The committee argued that rapid shifts in American family life necessitated a

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systematic reconsideration and repackaging of church teaching on the topic. In its second meeting, the Family Life Committee specified its goals to include a “fact-finding program” about the contemporary American family that would facilitate an assessment of its current nature and needs. It also reconsidered the reticence that earlier leaders such as Walter Maier and A.C. Stellhorn had expressed toward the contributions of psychologists and sociologists. The Committee argued that theologians studied God's Word without special reference to its social application, while sociologists studied social problems without special reference to God's Word; the Committee hoped to integrate the insights offered by both groups. Likewise, the Committee would seek to consider the latest findings in “psychology, psychiatry, and psychosomatics” in order to discern the psychologically sound principles contained in Christ's teachings. In line with this goal, the Committee provided subscriptions to a wide swath of magazines, journals, and conference papers about the family to its members. The publishing activities of Committee members such as Otto Geiseman, author of *Make Yours a Happy Marriage*, and the kind of denominational publishing they backed were informed partly by their interest in the larger American conversation, both secular and religious, on the American family and its challenges.5

The novel nature of the Family Life Committee's plan to prepare “a re-examination of our traditional pattern on the basis of sound scholarship” required it to explain its actions to a Synod whose heritage included a staunch tradition of guarding Lutheran theological orthodoxy and rather strictly limiting the Church's work to the

5 Minutes of April 16, 1947, p 1, Minutes of Family Life Committee, Records of the Board of Parish Education-Family Life Committee, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, MO.
preaching of the gospel. In the first academic study it edited, a volume of ideas for building church programs to meet the family's needs at each stage of its life cycle, Family Life Committee secretary Oscar Feucht responded to the objection that the suggestions could represent an accommodation to the Social Gospel. “The practical approach outlined in this book,” he stressed, “should not be confused with twentieth-century activism in the church.” Rather, the symposium recognized that the home was a valid and necessary target of biblical ministry. It was also made logically necessary by the Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, who performed their priestly functions most naturally through the roles they played in their own homes. As such, the contributing authors took as their goal not the creation of the generic American “morally good” family but rather a “Christian family” in which God's Spirit was active.  

Some leaders, the neo-evangelicals most explicitly, were also searching for new rhetoric and attitudes that would command the respect and attention of upcoming generations of Americans. In his well-circulated critique, *The Uneasy Conscience of Fundamentalism*, Carl F. H. Henry indicted fundamentalism for disengaging too thoroughly from questions of social reform and social ministry. He argued that evangelicals should retain a hearty emphasis on the necessity of personal regeneration but apply Christian teaching more pointedly to immediate, practical social concerns. Neo-evangelical leaders and publications argued that conservative Christians should enter public life and bring a Christian witness to a wide range of academic and professional fields. They also envisioned a less oppositional rhetorical and intellectual approach to

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handling practical personal and social problems. “We fundamentalists doggedly, and sometimes cantankerously, cling to our complete Victorianism of thought and language; and the world looks at us, smiles at our naiveté—and goes about capturing the masses,” William Ward Ayer, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in New York, observed. Hoping to substitute honey for vinegar, he argued that the church shed its unlovely attitude for a less repetitive, less antiquated, less exaggerated, and more respectable style of addressing issues.

Francis Vander Velde, a member of the Reformed Church, expressed both the ambivalence of many conservative commentators about the content of advice literature and their interest in creating a biblical yet engaged response of their own. The need for an appropriate response appeared obvious, when Christian social ideals and the reality of American life were compared. In her book *Christian Home and Family Life* (1959), Velde contended that the question confronting the newlyweds of the 1950s was whether they could succeed in making “their love remain as beautiful” as it had seemed on their wedding day. “That is the question that hovers over every new home in this age when the sanctity and permanence of marriage are broken every day.” Divorce, although slightly reduced in recent years, still ended approximately one in five marriages, owing to divorce laws that allowed divorce for “almost any reason” and a deadening of the public conscience about divorce. Marriages suffered, too, from a “lack of preparation” due to the erroneous perception that “marriage means living all the time with the one it was fun to date.” The actual challenges presented by sharing all aspects of one's life in marriage

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were far greater: “the blending of two differing personalities . . . the working together harmoniously toward a common goal for the mutual enrichment of life, and the praise of the Lord.”

Velde observed that churches had responded to the problem with “marital study committees” to study statistics and expert advice. Meanwhile, “a small army of sociologists and psychologists” were busy studying every conceivable problem with the home, including the question of how religion might contribute to family life. In consequence, “an endless stream of opinions” were available to churches and homemakers. Velde expressed some concern about that trend, noting that “sociologists are making a noble effort to stem the tide [of divorce]; the religious groups that go all out for the 'house on the sands' are generally liberal. We disagree with both, and are dubious of their success.” Yet the conservative church also needed to respond. Velde asked, “but what are we doing in this day of home crisis? How much oil are we, the Christian church, pouring upon the troubled waters?” She urged conservative Christians to study Old Testament teaching on marriage, proceed to the New Testament's response to marriage problems in the Roman world, and use both as a basis for offering practical solutions for troubled contemporary marriages. Accordingly, Velde's own suggestions were rooted in multiple Scripture texts and the language those texts employed, while her understanding of contemporary problems and possible solutions were drawn partly from advice literature.  

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As a consequence of all these factors, during the postwar years more conservative Protestants were beginning to describe the American family as a new institution facing unique challenges. Beginning in the first issue of the Southern Baptist Convention's new family magazine, *Home Life*, Southern Baptist pastor and seminary professor T. B. Maston published a series of articles about “the changing American family.” Maston admitted readily that all of the following were reshaping American social life: greater control of fertility, greater leisure time, isolation from extended family, greater life expectancy, greater rates of divorce, and a more egalitarian attitude that valued a “50/50” division of authority between husbands and wives. The social function of the home had also diminished; although it had once been the center of family members' economic and social activities, under modern conditions the home had surrendered labor and recreation to the marketplace and education to schools.9

Lutheran R. W. Bertram, a professor at Valparaiso University, shared Maston’s impression that the moral and social dilemmas the rising generation faced were unique. Bertram thought contemporary youth were liable to give up high moral standards partly because the pressure that weighed on them was greater than any previous generations had confronted. “Wickedness is more obvious and suffering more grotesque than before,” he

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explained. Due to mobility, over the course of his life the modern youth would “have to
meet and like many people of every kind, work at several different jobs, and live in a
number of different communities.” Family ties and kin networks offered him little aid,
because “society today severs him from kith and kin as early and dramatically as
possible.” If he hoped to find solace in a wife, he could scarcely expect life in this
department to be problem-free. After winning a bride “he can expect to hold her,
according to the American bluebird ideal, not by relying on parents or in-laws, not by
asserting some kind of male superiority, unfortunately not even by marriage vow or her
motherhood, but solely and supremely by his own capacity for loving her, dependably
and sympathetically, and for keeping her ‘in love' with him.” The moral obligation to love
one's neighbor became high ideals indeed considering the extreme level of
resourcefulness and responsibility required of even average people.10

Given the greater autonomy of individuals, the crumbling ability of traditional
authority to impose its will easily on others, and the power of new stresses on persons
and institutions, conservative Protestants found much to criticize. As they had in the
1920s and 1930s, the apparent hedonism and individualism of modern life, often
interpreted as symptomatic of a materialistic outlook, were particularly likely to elicit
admonitions to place family and religious responsibilities before the pursuit of personal
needs. This mindset fit well with the contemporary milieu, in which more people were
embracing parenthood. On average, couples were marrying younger, and women who
came of age in the fifties had, on average, more children than her counterpart from the

thirties: 3.2 children per woman, up from 2.4. Conservative Protestants encouraged this trend. Some authors noted that truly large families were almost unheard of, a development that they linked to the “selfishness” of parents and their newfound ambition to realize a full middle-class lifestyle. “Christians have too heavily imbibed the spirit of the age,” one advocate of large families charged. “They are too busy acquiring new furniture, a car, a vacuum cleaner, radio, and clothes, to be bothered with babies.” Assemblies God leader Alice Reyonds Flower, herself a mother to six, reminded her readers that “ancient patriarchs” regarded the coming of children as a blessing who would “perpetuate their name and testimony in the earth.” In the Sunday School Times, W. Wyeth Willard ranked birth control next to divorce and Hollywood as the greatest enemies of the Christian family. “Unrestrained and thoughtless birth control” resulted in the dying out of families, the shriveling up of churches, and the loss of a conservative evangelical majority in America. To realize God's will in family life, Willard thought that families ought to contain between four and twelve children. If scarce, families who met

11 May, 136-37.

12 Alice Reynolds Flower, Building Her House Well (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1949), 47.


It should be noted that this advocacy of large families did not necessarily mean that conservative Protestant advice writers advocated a strong systemic objection to birth control. While postwar warnings that small families meant selfish parents and decreased Christian influence echoed the earlier fears by conservative Protestants of “race suicide,” they commented more on the character of parents than the methods they used to limit or space births. In fact, authors were often notably silent on the question of birth control methods. By the late 1950s moderate evangelicals and others sometimes made positive comment on the decision-making power that birth control offered to parents. Evangelical sociology professor Dwight Hervey Small argued that knowledge of birth control enabled persons to exercise Biblical dominion over creation so that it could be made to serve the intelligent goals of wise people. See Design for Christian Marriage, 90-109. As the first birth control pill became available in 1961, Christian psychologist Clyde Narramore explained to readers of his booklet, A Christian View of Birth Control, that parents should have the number of children whom God led them to have. This number would vary according to divine plan and

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Willard's criteria were difficult to miss in conservative Protestant periodical literature, where they peered out from photographs and became sources of advice. Perhaps their most prominent representative was Doris Coffin Aldrich, wife of the president of Multnomah School of the Bible, whose inspirational column “Out of the Mixing Bowl” shared the spiritual lessons she observed in day-to-day life as a mother of nine.¹⁴

But postwar writers were also optimistic. Maston assured Baptist readers of his series on “the changing home” that “a better type of home will emerge from the ‘present chaos.’” He observed that the perennial need of humanity was for homes that provided a space in which individuals could experience companionship and mutual respect and in which the growing personalities of children could be protected and nurtured. Even as the home surrendered some of its economic and social roles, it would remain a vital force in the lives of persons if it could provide this valuable service. Home Life editor Joe Burton agreed. He asserted that people universally sought to establish families because of marriage's “affectional quality”—its promise of “a new type of companionship” based on “mutual respect, admiration, confidence, love.” Marriage and parenthood were above all opportunities “to love and be loved.” For that reason, most persons—nine out of ten, according to Burton—would marry by age 45, regardless of “stature, complexion, health, wealth, intelligence, nationality, climate, education, or any other factor.” Another Baptist,

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Harold B. Tribble, argued that Americans' hope that family life would promote individual growth and happiness cohered with the distinctive doctrines of the Baptist tradition—“the competency of the individual under God in all matters of religion,” “the priesthood of all believers,” “the autonomy of the local church,” and “the separation of church and state.” Each of these doctrines placed special value on the judgments and needs of the individual seeking God. Given this heritage, Tribble thought Baptists ought to bring to family life a unique respect for the value of each person.15

Many evangelical writers echoed these views. Gertrude Nystrom, the author of four advice books for Moody Press, affirmed that “the home is still a social unit made up of persons whose mutual affection has drawn them together for the realization of a broader responsibility to society, the continuance of the race, and the development of men and women of character and capacity.” Dwight Hervey Small likewise detected in the modern search for “togetherness” and intimacy in family life a value compatible with the evangelical doctrine that God intended marriage to be a reflection of the union between humanity and God made possible by Christ's sacrifice. It established a new “oneness” between the sexes made possible by mutual devotion and service to God. Success in marriage reflected the “personality development” of both spouses, especially their capacity to overcome “self-devotion” and build “personal intimacy . . . achieved at every level of being: spiritual, rational, social, emotional, physical.”16


The postwar tendency to describe the home's most indisputable and important role as the nurture of individual citizens brought questions of personality development to the fore. Earlier a major preoccupation of mainstream literature and a sometimes-interest of conservative Protestant writers, this topic figured more largely in conservative Protestant writing during the Cold War years. Distinct from “character,” ability to regulate oneself in order to realize middle-class economic goals and to live in accordance with the dictates of transcendent moral law or civic virtue, the concept of “personality” in both its professional and popular uses evoked the ideal of a person who had successfully passed through each of the stages of personal growth to become an individual whose skills and powers were fully mature, so that she became properly “adjusted” to her environment and other people, yet also a unique individual able to distinguish herself from the crowd. The second concept never completely replaced the first, but it did make its way into the conservative Protestant lexicon, where it testified to the universality of a consumer-oriented economy and culture in which the cultivation of a happy, expressive, and individualized self was considered a basic component of full adulthood.

In keeping with this priority, advice to parents from conservative Protestant writers began to portray the main purpose of daily home life to be meeting the deep social, psychological, spiritual, and emotional needs of family members, both through the atmosphere cultivated in the home and the quality of the relationships family members cultivated with one another. The family became the institution in which people received all of their essential life lessons, learned appropriate responses to conflict, learned to play, learned to pray, learned how to act like good American citizens—and learned how to live
as Christians. As a book sponsored by the Missouri Synod's Family Life Committee explained it, “In the educational world much stress is placed on building well-integrated personalities—persons who possess poise and self-confidence and who feel at ease in social circles. The Christian home has the far more important privilege of building well-integrated spiritual personalities, boys and girls who feel 'at home' with God and with God's people in God's service.”

People needed families; healthy families fulfilled human needs.

This emphasis on the importance of the individual paired readily with an advocacy of “democracy” within the family. When they employed this term, writers did not mean to suggest that the family should be egalitarian; for the most part, they accepted that the Bible specified separate roles for men and women and placed parents in authority over children. But they did mean that all family members ought to have a stake in the family's collective life so that they would feel their voices were being heard and their needs were being met. For example, Carl Kardatzke, a pastor in the Church of God (Anderson) and professor of education, pressed his readers to fight autocracy in both politics and the family. “Every person,” he urged, “must feel that he has the opportunity in marriage to realize the highest and fullest development.” Accordingly, he advocated that families overcome conflicts not by placing one person in a position of ultimate authority, but by inventing “creative solutions” that reflected the perspectives of multiple family members. T. B. Maston concurred, arguing that although men and women ordinarily filled different roles in the home, husbands ought to include their wives in

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family decisions, treating them as a full partners. Likewise, Lutheran Armin Oldson explained that he endorsed the trend toward a more relaxed, less authoritarian family in which the traditional divisions of authority and responsibility were more porous. “I believe in a democratic form of family relations,” he explained. “I know many modern husbands who . . . help their wives with the dishes as they have time and even take care of the baby sometimes and enjoy it.”

Airing similar convictions, some authors recommended that parents call “family councils” at which husbands, wives, and children could communicate about important topics. Through discussion, every family member would understand important topics affecting their collective life, find solutions to problems, and understand their role in making family life work. Doris Anderson argued that “a wise family government is one in which discipline is administered as a democratic rather than as a totalitarian influence.” She suggested that parents might organize a “family court” in which the father acted as the judge, the mother as the court clerk, and the children as the jury. Carl Kardatzke imagined that family government might begin with a meeting between husband and wife, who would benefit from discussing “money, sex-adjustment, in-laws, neighbors, religion” in a “businesslike” fashion that promoted “mutual” decision-making. When their children were old enough to participate in the meetings, they would focus on topics the entire family might discuss. The “businesslike” atmosphere would remain, complete with official minutes.

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Advice writers also stressed the value of shared recreational time to forge family bonds and to give everyone an opportunity for self-expression. In a booklet for teenagers, Southern Baptist Ralph Phelps argued that the home should be “fun,” a center of “activities and social life,” and a place to feel “at ease.” When they addressed parents, writers explained that hobbies and games—not, incidentally, television—kept children busy and drew the family closer together. According to Verna Joiner, the author of several postwar advice books, even chores presented an opportunity. “Now I can see the vacuum cleaner, the clothes washer, dryer, dishwasher all joining arms to draw us into closer working fellowship,” she explained. “For, after all, the vacuum cleaner and waxer will not run alone, and the dishes will not stack themselves.” Gertrude Nystrom explained that when families selected a range of leisure activities that reflected the needs and interests of all family members, each person would enjoy the opportunity “to express himself as an individual and become an integrated part of our family life.”

The dual emphasis of conservative Protestants on authority and democracy also surfaced in their handling of the topic of child discipline. As in earlier times, most conservative Protestants thought that instilling discipline and the willingness to submit to duly ordained authority were absolutely central to the development of character. The logic had been that a person who did not first learn to respect his parents would also find

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submitting to God or to human law difficult. Edith Gunderson, for example, warned that “authority, the old-fashioned way” made for “weak, repressed characters” in children. On the other hand, “untrammeled freedom” gave too much reign to the child's natural proclivity to sin. She advised parents to ignore minor offenses and mistakes, but to enforce important rules swiftly and firmly, permitting no objection to the parent's command. Similarly, Madelle Hawkins advocated that parents begin by making all of a child's decisions, gradually giving her greater decision-making power as she aged. They might rescind some of her privileges when she used her freedom to lapse from the Christian life. “I do not fear discipline nearly as much as I do the present-day deplorable laxity,” she concluded. Pastors concurred. Charles Farah prevailed upon parents to win “implicit obedience” from their children, and Norman V. Williams argued that the use of the rod as “medicine” for childhood “willfulness.” Thus many authors tended to affirm the diligent pursuit of child study but tossed barbs at the allegedly cushy opinions of psychologists and lenient parents. They cited the reluctance of some parents to spank as proof that modern sentimentality may have gone too far. The occasional sore bottom, they assured readers, had served their own children well. 21

Nonetheless, many writers advocated a parenting style that depended on nurture more than punishment. They adopted a tough, countercultural rhetoric while in fact

offering advice that was clearly mainstream and stressed the importance of personality
development through loving, fair, participatory relationships. Writing in *Home Life*, Lea
Zwettler criticized parents who placed their determination that children must “be made to
obey his parent's orders” as an excuse to be “domineering.” As an example of
domineering behavior, she recounted her observation of a mother who repeatedly
attempted to prevent her young son from squirming during church by yanking the child's
arm. That failing, she threatened to spank him. She then ignored the frustrated child when
he began to cry quietly. “This is a point on which all authorities are agreed,” she chided,
“there must be some explanation and a justifiable reason for commands and
punishments.” In view of the lack of “kindly guidance” displayed in the church pew
before her, Lea explained that she “couldn't help but wonder if this mother truly loved her
child very much.”

Zwettler was not alone in her opinions. Irene Klingberg, who regularly published
articles with *Christian Life*, warned that modern families had so overreacted to the
“highly disciplined, hypercritical Victorian Era” that they had fallen into a “miasma of
expressionistic debauchery.” Yet when Klingberg provided a list of ten suggestions for
restoring authority in the home, old-fashioned physical punishment fell halfway down her
list. Alongside it, she advocated that parents pray more frequently and earnestly, model
Christian living, earn their children's respect by staying informed about the world, avoid a
judgmental tone, “guide” children with “kindness and love that is not possessive,”
imagine the world from their children's perspective, and “teach the beauty of self-
discipline.” Anna Mow described discipline primarily as a positive training program that

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preferred internalizing parental values over punishment. “When we see discipline as a positive directive in life,” she asserted, “we no longer do something to the child but for him or with him so that he will want to change for the better.” Doris Anderson warned against trying to create “angelic” children whose natural energy was “bottled up.” Parents might control or direct childhood energy, but little tea-kettles with tight lids would soon blow their tops. “Make discipline fun,” she explained, “a part of the warmth and understanding which, by God's grace, you want to permeate your home.” Likewise, Gertrude Nystrom considered corporeal punishment a “last resort” to be employed only after other forms of correction had failed. Verna Joiner disapproved of “iron-clad domination” by parents who demanded “unquestioned, exacting obedience” as well as of parents whose “unmuzzled darlings” had grown up “uninhibited.” Her ideal parents were “firm but fair.”

**Togetherness and the Restoration of Christian Fatherhood**

To a certain extent, this emphasis on the rights and needs of individual family members can be described as a liberalizing tendency, because it inherently restricted the basis on which authority could be exercised. It also introduced a language of needs and rights that are susceptible to a wide number of interpretations and uses. However, it is

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worth noting that conservative Protestant writers usually sought to use these ideals to
revitalize traditional structures of authority. The whole point of family togetherness and
the exercise of loving discipline was not family cohesiveness for its own sake. It was to
provide an environment in which parents could successfully bring their children to
salvation and guide them into an adult life of Christian commitment. It is here that the
popular image of parents as concerned, responsive, and affectionate blended with older
ideas of authority in a way that was uniquely evangelical.

Like their predecessors, the advice writers of the 1940s and 1950s were deeply
aware that even as the male breadwinner role assigned special social and familial
authority to men, it also threatened the father's authority by removing him from the
home's daily activity for most of his waking hours. In a modern, industrialized economy,
a man's physical and emotional remoteness from the daily rhythms of home life
threatened to render him irrelevant and ineffectual, particularly to the cultural and
religious work that conservative Protestants believed the home had to accomplish.²⁴

Conservative Protestant advice writers suggested that a commitment to promoting
“family togetherness” offered one solution to this problem. The new American family
renounced autocracy, providing room for the voices and feelings of women and children;
a man's work removed him from the home during many of its waking hours; children's
schooling and pastimes might send them far afield. But times of family togetherness
could provide a forum in which fathers might gently restore their leadership through their
involvement in the family's most important periods of bonding and religious instruction.

²⁴ For a few examples among many, see: “A Father's Duty to His Children,” Sunday School Times
January 8, 1949, 21-22, 35; Theodore Brownfield, “Here's Where Father Comes In,” Home Life Aug. 1948,
5-6; Brauer, 7-8; Velde, 33.
“Fair play in the 'home game' calls for a sharing of all the phases of the home's activities,” Southern Baptist William Hall Preston reminded fathers in *Home Life*. When a father helped to organize the entire family in chores or family games, he preserved his parental role in their children's life. Fathers could likewise play an active role at the dinner table, stimulating family conversation, learning about his children's lives and bringing up spiritual topics of discussion. He might also take over some aspect of their spiritual training by leading family worship or assigning his children Scripture memory verses. Since these activities were participatory, the father became an interested friend and a kind leader rather than a distant patriarch.\textsuperscript{25}

Spiritual practices were of special importance. When writers described what parents, especially fathers, ought to be doing, they pictured adults living alongside their children, continually inserting Scripture and Bible stories into everyday life. Witness *Christian Living*’s depiction of Billy Graham, the evangelical best known and most often described and photographed, at home with his family. The article explained that on Sundays Rev. Graham sat with his children and told them Bible stories. The Grahams then played games, took a family hike, or engaged in another activity that reflected the spiritual focus of the Lord's Day. Such images of intimacy and companionship rooted the relationship between parent and child in a biblical drama. The parent, loving God, loves his children and draws near to them in order to teach them about the God of the Scriptures, the God in whose presence he lives. In fact, he reenacts the pattern laid out in

Deut. 11:19, in which parents are told to teach their children when getting up and lying down, when sitting at home or traveling along the road. Perceiving parental attention and concern, the children reciprocate and, by degrees, come to hold similar convictions.  

The instructions that advice writers provided for holding the family altar repeated this dual emphasis on democratic participation and affectionate authority. Writers described the family altar as a daily event that brought the entire family together for a brief period of Bible reading and prayer. The practice focused the family's daily routine on spiritual things and guaranteed that religious instruction continued every day of the week. At the center of this ritual was the Bible. The centrality of the text had a democratizing implication: the family altar could not be counted successful unless every family member understood the day's message and felt its power in their lives. Thus the Bible itself, not human authority, was supposed to occupy the center of attention. “The important thing is that our homes and our children should become saturated with the wonderful law of God—the Word of God,” Elizabeth Walker Strachen wrote in the *King's Business*. Madelle Hawkins explained that problems with child discipline were rooted first in the inborn sin nature of the child and second in the common failure of parents to make the Bible a central part of their family's daily life. “If a guest should visit your home tomorrow, would he be struck with the fact that God's Word had a central place there? Or would he find it in a stack of books somewhere, or maybe it could not be found at all?” Norman Williams emphasized that “a portion of God's Word should be read carefully, prayerfully, and in such a way as to bring out the meaning.” This meant,

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especially when young children were present, that lessons be kept simple and heartfelt: that is, centered squarely on their needs. Writers stressed as well that children ought to participate by reading verses aloud and learning to pray.\textsuperscript{27}

At the same time, the instruction method indicated a clear hierarchy. As parents recited and taught Scripture, they established their own obedience to God and demonstrated their effort to carry out God's will. As Norman Williams explained, this continual demonstration that the parent was not acting out of his own volition but instead seeking to do God's will established the parent's authority on a sound basis. Williams contended that in discipline “the willfulness of the parent will rather entrench the willfulness of the child all the more firmly.” But a parent who practiced the spiritual discipline of surrendering themselves to God inspired trust and so would rear “disciplined and obedient children.” The practice of Christian spirituality allowed the parent to avoid the evils of both parental autocracy and parental weakness by rooting his actions in submission to a higher, ultimate authority.\textsuperscript{28}

The ritual of family worship might establish the spiritual authority of either parent. It had long been a topic in conservative Protestant memories of family religion to recall the prayers of mothers and their faithfulness in bringing together whatever family members they could for domestic worship. The faithful mother, a least in retelling,


asserted herself with the hope of not so much establishing herself as the family's spiritual paragon as to make up for male lapses. Nonetheless, at least for periods of time, there can be little doubt that the mother was in practical terms the sustainer of domestic religion.

In a pair of articles published in 1948, *Moody Monthly* admitted this fact. In the first article, Moody writers revealed their findings about the use of the family altar in the childhood homes of Moody Bible Institute students; in the second, they discussed the importance of the family altar and provided directions for establishing one. Moody's poll revealed, as advocates of the family altar so often feared, that family worship often was not practiced at all, even among families who succeeded in producing the next crop of Christian leaders. Fifty-five percent of 345 Moody students who returned surveys reported that their families had practiced family worship. (The actual percentage of students out of the whole student body may have been less, the surveyors feared, due to the fact that those with no history of family worship may have been less likely to return a survey.) Out of 156 students who reported growing up with a family altar, 51 percent indicated that their father had led the family in worship, 19 percent indicated that their father and mother had shared the responsibility, and 30 percent indicated that their mother had been responsible. Acknowledging this reality, the accompanying article offered readers examples of family altars superintended by mothers as well as fathers. In both cases, the mother's instruction of children was necessitated by the father's work hours.²⁹

Nonetheless, advice writers made it clear that family rituals, worship especially, would ideally reassert not simply parental authority in general but the authority of

husbands and fathers in particular. Most postwar illustrations of the family altar usually pictured the Bible or Bible storybook resting in the hands of the father. His children were often pictured closest to him, with his wife watching the arrangement intently and lovingly. The spiritually mature and responsible father inspired attention and admiration from all on the basis of his spiritual headship expressed in kindness and concerted attention to his family's needs.\(^{30}\)

**Democracy and Gender Order**

Just as “democratic” Christian family life promised to establish fatherly authority through shared spiritual experiences, its advocates imagined that the nurturing family also provided a basis on which to assign a distinct role to women. In fact, it necessitated the mother's willingness to respect her husband's assertion of leadership and to dedicate herself wholeheartedly to her special role within the modern, affectionate family as the nurturer of developing personalities.

Even among those authors who emphasized reciprocity and “democracy” within the home, the question of gender order still demanded attention. No discussion of the Christian home bypassed the contentious question of what role the Bible instructed the sexes to assume within marriage. Advice writers generally believed the matter was inherently in need of explication and that modern men and women found the topic perplexing. Even Americans' renewed enthusiasm for marriage and parenthood during the 1950s did little to change conservative Protestant concerns that women might not be

\(^{30}\) For one of many discussions of the father's participation in family activities, see: William Hall Preston, “The Fine Art of Togetherness,” *Home Life* March 1947, 3, 13. For some representative illustrations of the family altar published in Baptist and evangelical books and magazines, see attached images.
sufficiently dedicated to domestic life; as Frances Vander Velde noted, most young college women seemed to express optimism about marriage, and most became full-time mothers. Yet most also reported on surveys that they did not look forward to this role, and Velde suspected that they were not adequately prepared for it. To remedy this perceived lapse, she directed readers to the Bible for instruction on their proper roles and responsibilities, regarding it not merely as authoritative on that point but also as a manual of human relations that laid out the principles and rules necessary for unlocking the way to a successful, fully Christian family life.

Concern about gender order was also kept alive partly by the fiercely separatist voices within the fundamentalist movement. John Rice, whose promotion of his books on family life made him one of the best-circulated fundamentalist voices on family life, guarded against the use of any language in this writing that seemed to contravene the supreme obligation of people to respect the authority of God or of those authorities whom God's Word established. He therefore doubted the usefulness of the “twaddle” that mainstream advice literature offered couples. By advocating greater companionship and gestures of kindness between family members, they suggested a wholesome-enough goal. But in doing so, they sidestepped the reality of human rebelliousness and sin, which Rice regarded as the root to all problems in marriage and home life:

It is well enough to tell husband and wife to stay sweethearts, and that everybody must talk nicely in the home and say 'please' and 'thank you'; that husbands must be courtly and keep wooing their wives, and that wives must be soft-spoken and dress up for their husbands. But home problems are deeper than that and the needs of perplexed and troubled and sinning husbands and wives are greater than that.
Rice regarded most family problems to stem from a simple and severe failure to recognize and follow God's will as recorded in the Bible. Husbands and wives often lapsed from their respective roles as men and woman, with the result that men became ineffective and women surrendered their essential and indispensable and unique roles. This rebellion against divine standards and the shirking of responsibility lay at the root of myriads of family problems; repentance and obedience were the only remedies.\textsuperscript{31}

More moderate voices accepted that the Bible prescribed unique roles for men and women as a matter of course, but they balanced that conviction with a strong emphasis on mutual respect and collaborative decision-making. For example, Lutheran pastor and Family Life Committee member Otto A. Geisemen warned young couples that they would forfeit their chance of marital happiness unless they acquired “a correct view of marriage, a right attitude towards one another.” This outlook included an understanding that God called upon men to support their wives financially and wives to remain employed solely in the home. In this arrangement, a wife was to defer to her husband's judgment when the two could not agree. On the other hand, Geiseman stopped short of considering a marriage relationship ideal when a husband frequently invoked his authority in a way that disregarded his wife's opinions. He expected that most couples would prefer to make decisions on a “50/50 basis.” An ideal marriage involved the blending of personalities, including union on physical, intellectual, and spiritual levels.

\textsuperscript{31} John R. Rice, \textit{The Home: Courtship, Marriage, and Children} (Wheaton, IL: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1945), ix-x.
Expressing similar thoughts in colloquial language, Sam Olive McGinnis explained to readers of *Home Life* that he thought “being a MAN” meant reserving the right to make final decisions in his household. But he planned to involve his wife in most decisions:

Me and Millie are getting married next month. There's one thing I've made up my mind about. . . . I'm going to be the man in our house. By that I don't mean to be a dictator, either. It's kinda hard to say in so many words, but my pa taught me a long time ago that a woman really wants her husband to be a MAN, even if she sometimes acts like she wants to boss him. Now, Millie's got sense and judgment that's a lot better than mine often, and we'll work most things out together. But what I mean is that in big decisions, I'll make 'em—no, that's not exactly right either, because she'll make some of them alone and help in all of them.32

Authors who took up this line of argumentation often asserted that fathers were entitled to what Norman Williams called the “authority and dignity of his position,” but most moderated this principle by citing biblical passages that stressed all Christian leadership must be carried out through love and servanthood. To love his wife as Christ loved the Church, the husband had to possess *agape*, an unconditional, generous, giving love that sought her happiness, delighted in her qualities, and focused on her needs. To become such a superlative example of manhood and to obtain the truest and deepest unity with his wife, with whom he was “one flesh,” the Christian husband knelt next to his wife as both submitted themselves completely to God in a spirit of true worship and meekness. This submission to God would bring unity between the husband and wife as they “work together in the common everyday tasks and problems of their married life.” Chicago pastor Harold Branch argued the husband's responsibility to love his wife involved kindness, thoughtfulness, bigheartedness, a willingness to hear her counsel, and surrender


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to Christ by her side. Missouri Synod author Harry Coiner explained that “the role of the father is to be a rule of love, not tyranny.” In theory if not in practice, the head of the home did as much submitting and self-humbling as everyone else.  

Alice Reynolds Flower incorporated these messages into the advice she offered to Pentecostal pastors and pastor's wives about the special circumstances in which ministry placed them. Given Pentecostalism's strong heritage of women's contributions to Christian service, she cautioned wives that they ought to resist the temptation to allow their own hopes for ministry to interfere with their support for their husband's pastoral ministry or with the success of their home lives. A woman should not marry with the goal to pursue an independent ministry from that of her husband. “God's plan is that you be 'heirs together in the grace of life,'” she explained. “This implies a perfect union of heart, a single vision, completeness of service to each other.” The wife's dedication to being a seamless part of her husband's ministry would not only prosper their efforts but also make the pastor's home a model to others. “Then they will be able to appreciate His grace and wisdom to make their household a smooth-running affair, so lubricated by God that there will be no room for dissension. . . . In these days of disintegrating home life such testimony is overwhelmingly needed and reaches further than all your public expression by word of mouth.”

The deportment of the pastor and his wife within the home would also have a profound influence on their children. The mutuality that husband and wife cultivated, she

33Williams, *The Christian Family*, 5-15, 58; Branch, 17-25; *Parents are Teachers* (Parent Guidance Series No. 6) (St. Louis: Concordia, 1960s), 15. For similar, representative discussions, see: Velde, 23-30; Davis, 48-61.

urged, ought to be expressed rather than hidden by a misguided sense of reserve or propriety. “Planting a kiss . . . is certainly not a disgraceful thing for any preacher to do, however dignified he may seem to be. . . . At least the children know that father and mother love each other heartily and are not ashamed to show it; for, after all, it is that indefinable thing called love that makes the Christian home a bit of heaven on earth.”  

These descriptions sent an ambiguous message. They censured husbands for making heavy-handed or self-centered demands as well as for coldness or indifference. However, they did not necessarily have the effect of empowering a wife to insist that her feelings or demands be heard. While advice writers insisted that it was her husband's duty to listen to her, respect her, and love her, they also cautioned that she could not seize the reins of family government from his hands or introduce strife into her marriage. Such self-assertion selfishly introduced discord and placed her family at risk. She could sway her husband to her point of view only by loving him unconditionally and demonstrating her submission. Success in family life depended on the prior decision of the husband to act Christianly as a husband and father; if he did not, the wife's single option to improve her lot was to persuade by example to submit his heart and thought more closely to God.  

Consistent with this view, women were often instructed both to avoid self-assertion in family life but nonetheless take decisive action to save their marriages or their children. C. M. Ward, a pastor and the personality behind the Assemblies of God's Revivaltime radio program, devoted a fourth of his booklet Deterrents to Divorce to the topic of wives submissively and coyly winning back the affections of their husbands.  

35Flower, Building, 41-42.  
Using Esther as an example, he described how the ancient queen had responded to her husband's inattention and love of “bad company” by seeking the prayers of God's people, donning beautiful clothes, preparing a fabulous meal, and flattering his sense of importance. Since she was assigned to a lesser role than her husband and king, she got results by accepting her position and using all the tools available to her, even if shrewdly. If it took a bit of flattery to make the king take note of her request, so be it.\(^{37}\)

Obedience to Scripture did not just hold out the promise of an effective pattern of behavior and clear organization of responsibility within the family; it also promised to defeat selfishness, that corrosive force that conservative Protestants continually suspected to be at the heart of family disintegration. Advice writers were often quick to identify the faithful Christian's disregard of self-interest as both a spiritual value and a skeleton key to unlocking the promises of a good family life. Pushing this logic to its most conservative implication, in the prophesy magazine *Revelation* an anonymous “Wife and Mother” argued that Christian home life—and motherhood in particular—required the individual to put aside the question of personal rights for the higher goal of service. The Christian woman disregarded “the rights of women, the need of her individuality, birth control and the best methods for living together in armed truce or general peace.” These rationalistic considerations were relevant to the “legalized unions” of unbelievers, but a true “Christian marriage” was intended to be “an earthly picture of a heavenly union.” “It is based on love,” she explained. “If a woman married for love, self for her ceases to exist. It is not a question of what comes to her from the husband, what of love, of care, of tenderness, or of consideration. Those questions can no longer exist. . . . Love, selfless

love, has to exist if you want a Christian home.” Although not everyone was so extreme as to suggest that self-consideration ought entirely to be set aside, advice writers often admonished readers to put the good of their families before their own interests.

“Submission is the rule of the new Christian order,” G. G. Findlay wrote as an entry in The Expositor's Bible (1943, 1947) on “Christian Marriage,” which Home Life reprinted in 1951. Under that system, a wife was in no way her husband's “inferior,” but elected to submit to him. He contended, “Sympathetic obedience—which is true submission—can only subsist between equals.” Expressing a similar conviction, Norman Williams wrote that “Christian marriage is full of happiness, but it is a happiness given by the Lord Jesus Christ to those who are willing to pay the price and deny themselves.” Harold Branch advised couples that a successful marriage rested partly on their willingness to disregard personal needs and man their positions, even in the face of adversity: “Marriage is a 'job' that people are to see through. . . . They are to stay manfully at the post of duty.” This idea that marriage meant uncomfortable sacrifice for the greater good of a happy home elevated adherence to traditional gender roles from merely a biblically correct pattern of living to a symbol of personal dedication and a lubricant to harmonious relationships.  

“Democratic” family principles placed a premium on a family life in which everyone's needs, the wife's included, were met. However, by picturing the home as an institution for tending to developing personalities, this family model made the woman's ability to sustain complete and selfless devotion to others particularly necessary. If a

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38 Wife and Mother, “Tangled Marriages,” Revelation June 1941, 266, 299-300.

husband and father could hope to fulfill his emotional and spiritual role in the family during a few, well-planned hours per week, then the continual, detailed work involved in noticing and tending to the emotional and spiritual growth of family members fell to his wife.

As in older advice literature, the responsibilities of the mother to provide a clean and comfortable home filled with emotional warmth, culture, stories, uplifting pictures, and other niceties formed an imperative that promised to occupy much of a woman's time. One article estimated that it took the average mother six hours per day to care for a baby. If she were very efficient, cooking and housework would take her four-and-one-half hours. She would have up to five waking hours remaining in which to devise ways to create a good home culture and cultivate a pleasant disposition in herself. It would not do to be harried: an anxious housekeeper would undo much of her hard work by making her family anxious and uncomfortable. In fact, the exemplary mother pulled off all her tasks not only without becoming frazzled but also with a large pool of emotional energy in store. *Home Life*’s Nell Duncan praised one of her profiled mothers, Mrs. Burke, for her accomplishment in this area. “Every happiness which affects the lives of any one of those dear ones of hers, is of vital concern to Mrs. Burke,” Duncan reported. “She is never so preoccupied with her own thoughts and activities that she is not conscious of their need to share a joy or sorrow with her. They can always be sure of her undivided interest.” In
Christian Life, Roberta Stewart concurred: “You must all live godly lives in front of your children, making sure you maintain a sweet, consistent testimony despite any aggravation.”

Authors expected fathers to be involved, but the expectation of such “undivided interest” from mothers placed women under special scrutiny. The lion's share of writers' advice and criticism was directed to mothers. This strong leaning probably stemmed from the fact that it seemed self-evident that most fathers would work outside the home, leaving mothers as the primary caregivers of children. These arrangements made women's roles, which had already been the subject of extensive comment and debate for decades, the subject of explicit discussion. It was possible to imagine a dedicated Christian home with a lukewarm father; it was harder to imagine one occupied by a lukewarm mother. For this reason, authors were more likely to assign the blame for family troubles on the mother's failure to fulfill her responsibilities. For example, when Leslie Flynn of the Christian Home League described a family whose fortunes had been turned around by the establishment of a family altar, he called more attention to the agency of the “working mother,” whose busyness prevented family worship and whose inaction allowed her sons to escape Sunday church services. Although the story implies

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that neither parent had attempted to initiate a family altar, the “enthusiastic father” is absent from the narrative until both parents are convinced by a special church service on family worship to sign the pledge:

Though the parents had become Christians two years before, things were going downgrade spiritually. The working mother had no time for family worship, neither was she urging her two teen-age sons to attend church. Then came a special service in the church. A layman, representing the Christian Home League, pointed out to the breakdown of home life in America and pleaded with hearers to establish family altars. The parents signed the covenant. The mother made time for family devotions. Both boys have come along wonderfully. . . The enthusiastic father has since arranged several family altar services in nearby churches.  

In at least this tale, the mother’s decision to “make time” forms the pivot on which the fate of family worship hangs.

J. Harold Smith, the voice of the Radio Bible Hour, argued explicitly what Leslie Flynn only implied. When summarizing the main responsibilities of husbands and wives in sustaining their marriages, he assigned a much lengthier list of emotional and spiritual tasks to women. He reminded husbands that their main role consisted of arduous work in the pursuit of income for the family; their chief duty to their wives consisted of treating them with the great love and gentle concern to which they were entitled. In return, the wife forgave any ill temper carried over from his trying work life, kept herself fresh and attractive, refrained from discussing his faults with others, kept an attractive home, valued her family above all other personal pursuits, and encouraged her husband in his spiritual life (especially if he failed in that crucial area). She stood alone as the crucial human link who held family life together, and so the family could not afford to see her

weaken and break. “Husbands rather pride themselves on being the heads of the household, but it is only a pleasant delusion,” he asserted. “To whom do the children go when there is trouble? . . . Tell the truth husband, where do you go when trouble besets you?” Formal leadership belonged to the husband, but the practical power over home life rested in the mother's hands.42

The mother's ability to act as the family's comforter and savvy counselor seemed particularly important when her roles as a parent were described. In her book, Living with Teeners, Grace Overton Sloan described the ideal parents as the family's virtual live-in psychologist. In Sloan's view, successful parenting required not only familiarity with childhood development but continual observation. Since teenagers were at a critical turning point in their transition from childhood to adulthood, they possessed a complex and continually shifting mixture of needs that only the most insightful onlookers could perceive correctly. They sometimes required loving guidance, a sympathetic ear, and a parent privy to their ongoing needs and struggles; at other times, they required authority figures who could establish firm boundaries; and at other moments still, they required neither of these so much as a parent who understood the teenager's need for privacy and a measure of independence in making decisions. In view of these complex social needs, the wise parent strove to prevent the fragmentation of family life, insisting teenagers remain involved in family activities; but neither would she lose sight of her teenager's need to form friendships outside the family and to experiment with new views and mannerisms. Thus, as the parent always in the home, the mother had an extraordinary number of hats to wear. She was at once a law-giver and a sympathetic listener, an involved parent and a

42 Smith, 33-40. Quote is from p. 39.
respecter of privacy, a source of clear expectations and an tolerant observer of the teenager's unique interests and tendencies. To perform all these roles and to discern when to assume them, she had to possess “rare humility as well as stamina and courage.” An informal counselor to the adolescent psyche and whose office door remained cracked day and night, the ideal mother practiced a series of informed interventions that molded the developing youth into a mature adult, all the while maintaining superb control of her own feelings and needs in order to achieve her objectives. Overton reflected that one teenage girl “just about said what parents are for” when she observed, “She [my mother] not only manages her own emotions but she helps me manage mine.”

The apparent need of Christian families for such emotional and spiritual gatekeepers fostered a renewed emphasis on the importance of motherhood. Although American culture, conservative Protestant institutional networks included, had allowed both single and married women space to pursue full- and part-time careers, following World War II the dictates of marriage and motherhood received renewed emphasis. The family history of advice writer Gertrude Nystrom exemplified this trend. Sadie, Gertrude's mother, came of age in the 1890s in a respectable Methodist family. Early training to become a teacher had set her on the course of an equally respectable career choice for a single young woman. But it was not to be. At seventeen, Sadie shocked her family when she discovered the existence of itinerant street evangelists and resolved to

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join a band of lay women evangelists. On pain of being disowned, she left home and for thirteen years conducted itinerant work. The Free Methodist Church granted her a preacher's license at age 23. Marriage at age 30 made Sadie a pastor's wife. After her husband passed away, she spent sixteen years as the pastor of his church. Several suitors offered her a more traditional life pattern, but she chose to remain at her post.

By contrast, Gertrude pursued ambitious but more traditional goals. Entering her teen years in the 1920s, she dated extensively and married young. Sadie personally officiated her daughter's marriage at seventeen, the same age at which she had left home for an uncertain future in single Christian work. Sadie worried that early marriage might end Gertrude's college career, but the fear turned out to be baseless. Gertrude successfully completed her bachelors degree, which she followed with teaching and graduate work. Just as Sadie was beginning to wonder if she would see grandchildren, Gertrude announced that for her “PhD” would stand for “Prefer to Have Daughter.” The birth of her first child turned her attention to home. In the 1950s Gertrude was known as mother to two young adults and an advice writer who instructed other women in the mysteries of succeeding at marriage and parenthood.44

Even relatively moderate sources of advice encouraged women to focus on their domestic roles. For example, a series of articles in the Southern Baptist magazine Home Life profiling exemplary contemporary Baptist families usually featured women whose employment had ended with their marriages. Featured mothers frequently contributed to church through the Women’s Missionary Union, Sunday School teaching, or through

appropriately feminine personal hobbies, such as flower arranging. Outside civic activities might include the PTO or other “activities which grow out of her interest in her home.” Even appeals to mothers to volunteer in church work sometimes came loaded with the message that their work inside the home came first. In the evangelical magazine *Christian Life*, an advertisement from Scripture Press for its Sunday school curriculum pictured a mother who proclaimed, “My Daughter Came First!” Mothers were too busy to write Sunday school lessons from scratch, the ad-writers observed, which was why Scripture Press provided teachers with convenient, prepared lesson plans.\(^{45}\)

Some writers went out of their way to repudiate any trend that seemed to blur the distinction between the sexes, especially the employment of married women. After noting that professional women were obtaining greater acceptance, Frances Vander Velde argued that “the world needs fewer Ingrid Bergmans, Ann Fogarties, Helena Rubinstein, or even Madame Curie and Jane Addamses than it needs good mothers.” Too many modern women “zig-zagged” through life with “divided purpose,” she asserted. Rather than pouring their time into academic and professional training few ever used, they would benefit from instead esteeming and studying homemaking.\(^{46}\) Madelle Hawkins


\(^{46}\) Velde, 40-42.
encouraged women to embrace wholehearted dedication to the home—including the invisibility that often came with it. She enjoined, “Mother, if there are going to be beautiful blossoms in your home garden, someone is going to have to pay the price; someone must be willing to be planted out of sight, perhaps.” A woman's true audience was not the world, but God. “But the great loving Gardener has not forgotten where you are. And when you present Him with your sons and you daughters . . . that will be your Coronation Day.” Consistent with this view, Hawkins' booklet *The Christian Home* urged mothers to remember that a holy life, high standards of conduct in the home, earnest prayer, and motherly dedication to home life won eternal souls for God's kingdom.47

**Conclusion**

During the late 1940s and 1950s many conservative Protestant writers who sought to advise couples on gender roles, child rearing, and family worship adopted much of the tone and content of mainstream advice literature. Southern Baptists, neo-evangelicals, and Missouri Synod Lutheran authors were particularly likely to comment positively on the value of family “togetherness,” emotional intimacy between family members, greater give-and-take between husbands and wives, and less authoritarian parenting styles. Tying together their endorsement of these trends was an overarching affinity for the idea that families ought to focus on the development of individual personalities. Inside the building of Christian personalities, they pressed, lay the future of America.

The readiness of Cold War conservative Protestants to accept and promote these ideas reveals some important facts about the relationship of conservative Protestant communities to the larger culture of America's growing middle class. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that conservative Protestant writers and publishers were the products of the same cultural, economic, political, and psychological conditions as everyone else. As they had in the sermons and advice literature of previous decades, they articulated the language and values specific to evangelical, Protestant Christianity and (in the case of writers belonging to the Missouri Synod) to confessional Lutheranism. They retained a strong critique of materialism and unbelief, alongside a conviction that God called upon believers to discover life's happiness and purposes by embracing their responsibilities to God and to other people. They also argued strenuously that only the Christian home benefited from a special relationship to God's promises and plans for the world and from the aid of the Holy Spirit. But they also understood, felt, and tried to live out many of the values of their next-door neighbors.

An examination of these shared values provides an important clue into what Americans in general, and conservative Protestants in particular, imagined about themselves and the families in which they lived. The values that many conservative Protestants and their neighbors shared included a strong faith in the importance of private institutions, especially the family. They also included faith that domestic life could meet those spiritual, emotional, and psychological needs that other institutions met less perfectly: the desire for honesty, affection, safety, recognition of individual value, and help becoming a fully happy and prosperous person. These had been key values in the
past generation's deepest hopes for the home; as Americans fought the Cold War, postwar affluence and the independence of the nuclear, suburban family whet the hunger of Americans to realize these benefits.

Conservative Protestants' enthusiasm for popular ideals also grew from the fact that the ideals of cooperation and emotional intimacy in family life resonated with existing conservative religious values. They fit well with conservative Protestantism’s historic emphasis on the importance of personal development and experience. They also called to mind the emotional and spiritual comforts that conservative Protestants had long associated with domestic life. New family ideals may have traded earlier notions of authority for a more relaxed set of social relationships, but it was also true that leading writers and experts largely employed these ideals to reach conservative and moderate conclusions that conservative Protestants found agreeable. Most marriage and family advice writers of the 1940s and 1950s believed that a warmer and more cooperative family life would strengthen traditional social roles and institutions by helping to prevent divorce and curb juvenile delinquency. And by promoting male breadwinner and female homemaking roles, many writers sought to preserve older ideas about gender order by adapting them to the economic and demographic conditions prevailing in the nation's growing suburbs. Conservative Protestants hoped that the new family would be a revitalized family—and a family governed according biblical commands.

The growing acceptance of psychology and psychological language among conservative Protestants would also help to feed these hopes.
CHAPTER EIGHT
EVANGELIZING THE PSYCHE: PSYCHOLOGY, CONSERVATIVE PROTESTANTS, AND COLD WAR MARRIAGE

“Many a Christian worker is prejudiced against the subject matter of psychology,” Hildreth Cross wrote in the preface to the first explicitly evangelical college textbook on psychology. Cross hoped that her book, *An Introduction to Psychology: An Evangelical Approach* (1952), would help to combat this impression. She continued:

> It is true that this subject is presented by the vast majority of professors in such a way as to question, if not to oppose openly, those tenets of our faith that we Christians hold dearer than life itself. Even though such prejudices are justified far more often than not, it is the firm belief of Christian psychologists that there is much of value in this field. Self-understanding and discernment into the problems and needs of another are our privileges as followers of the Christ. We make no apology for many basic and sound psychological principles and laws when they are presented in a manner to build faith rather than to destroy it.

Cross had been presenting psychological truth “screened through the Word of God” to students at Taylor University for years. Her attempt at a full textbook summarizing the attempts of scientists to understand the workings of the human mind proved the product of both intellectual and spiritual effort. She testified that while editing she had “found many occasions to ask the Father for help . . . Ah, He stood at the typewriter and was my closest Counselor!”

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Cross’ earnest apology for psychology testified to the longstanding suspicion that fundamentalists, evangelicals, and other conservative Protestants harbored toward the field; her dedication to teach it also testified to the efforts of some conservative Protestants to promote it. This fledgling interest in psychology helped to move portions of the conservative Protestant movement into greater dialog with what critics and historians have sometimes dubbed “the therapeutic culture”: the environment in which modern persons have embraced self-understanding and self-improvement through therapeutic methods. This ethos seemed to be flourishing at mid-century, as the postwar quest for personal happiness and social success led Americans in record numbers to purchase self-help literature and to patronize psychologists and counselors. The “can-do attitude” of the postwar years sprung partly from the belief of Americans that scientists and other experts offered insight into and power over a wide range of human problems. Fueling this confidence was the assertion of Sigmund Freud that the study of the psyche and its treatment through psychotherapy could provide relief from anxiety and its many effects. Embracing this idea with more optimism than Freud ever ventured, the mental hygiene movement and modern psychologists proposed not only to treat human problems but to enable individuals and humanity in general to improve themselves. Most recently, World War II had brought increasing numbers of Americans into contact with thousands

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Those attempting to describe and date the rise of a therapeutic culture have been many. Among the most prominent cultural critics of this development have been Philip Rieff and Christopher Lasch. Rieff has argued that the rise of Freudian psychology, especially of the more optimistic assessment of human problems and capacities embraced by many of Freud's successors, helped to give rise to a belief in the possibility of achieving self-understanding and personal betterment through therapy, as well as to a pervasive “therapeutic ethos.” See Freud: The Mind of the Moralist, New York: Viking, 1959; The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith after Freud, New York: Harper and Row, 1966. Lasch has observed, and bemoaned, the developments in postwar consumer culture and the mass media in the 1950s and 1960s that have promoted self-indulgence and self-expression as new values, thereby producing “the narcissistic man” See The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in An Age of Diminishing Expectations, New York: Norton, 1978.
of psychologists employed by the Army. College courses, which became available to millions of veterans, exposed still more Americans to psychologists and their work. Experts and self-styled experts did their best to encourage American energy and optimism.\(^3\)

For all these reasons, in the mid-1940s and 1950s Americans seemed more cognizant of the question of mental health and its adversaries, especially anxiety and stress. Those who offered solutions prospered. Americans responded with enthusiasm to the advice in Rabbi Joshua Loth Liebman's *Peace of Mind* (1946) that they flee the oppression of anxiety like Israel had fled captivity in Egypt, turning Liebman into a minor celebrity and placing his book on the bestseller list. The term “peace of mind” subsequently became a popular term. Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking* (1952), the single best-selling, faith-based self-help book of the 1950s, instructed people to seek happiness and success through Bible reading, prayer, and an optimistic outlook. When the first tranquilizers hit the market in the mid-1950s, almost overnight the promise of a quick, effective, and scientific source of relief made “peace pills” into America's most often prescribed medicine.\(^4\)

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Focusing on evangelicals and Southern Baptists, this chapter argues that between the 1940s and the close of the 1960s conservative Protestants became increasingly interested in moving beyond their traditions' earlier suspicion of modern psychology's ideas and methods. In particular, it explores how advocates of pastoral counseling and “Christian psychology” encouraged the adoption of those ideas associated with the “affectionate family” model discussed in my previous chapter, especially the ideals of emotional intimacy between family members and the commitment of the family to developing the personalities of its members. I view these developments as partly indicative of the zealous pragmatism of Protestants from revivalistic traditions about adopting popular or useful ideas—a quality that has promoted the perception on the part of some observers that conservative religious movements were selling out or accommodating themselves to the surrounding culture during the postwar years. However, I also contend that conservative Protestants were adopting these developments because they discerned in them opportunities for the integration of psychological and theological concepts. They also saw in such an integration the opportunity to minister to real human needs, especially the need of American families for stronger marriages and

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5 Historians have often noted the adoption by religion of the tenants of the therapeutic cultural trends have ultimately been destructive to the former. Rieff and Lasch have discussed the tendency to present itself as a form of personal therapy. In his study of anti-modern thought among middle class Americans at the turn-of-the-century, T. J. Jackson Lears, has likewise argued that even as middle-class persons protested the scientific positivism and mass production by embracing art, handmade goods, Eastern mysticism, and liturgical religion, they often embraced art and religion as a form of personal therapy or as a private form of escape. As such, they did not so much challenge modernity as adapt to it. (No Place of Grace, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). David Harrington Watt has studied postwar evangelicalism and concluded that its embrace of psychology, family values, and other prominent features of mainstream culture brought about a loss of the movement's religious vitality by way of removing its prophetic and anti-modern outlook. See A Transforming Faith: Explorations of Twentieth-Century American Evangelism (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991). Alan Petigny views the boom of postwar membership to religious organizations as deceptive, in that it covered over a pronounced loss of interest in asserting sectarian identity of particular theological claims. See Permissive Society, 53-99.
more effective parenting. This larger project encouraged conservative Protestants to adopt the judgments of mainstream marriage advice literature about the state of the American family and the measures necessary to rectify it; it also presented conservative Protestant convictions about sin and salvation as relevant to those concerns—in fact, as the only truly effective remedy for Americans' marital problems.

**The Psychologist as Friend and Foe**

The conservative Protestant dialog with modern psychology in the twentieth century has been a spirited and tense one. At mid-century young fundamentalists and evangelical leaders were the children of a movement whose sermons and editorials had expressed pointed suspicion of the field. Yet within a few decades, some of evangelicalism's best-known figures would identify themselves as Christian psychologists and counselors. This transformation becomes intelligible when the roots of conservative Protestant objection to psychology, as well as the very great incentive to participate in the larger American conversation about psychology, are understood.

Conservative Protestant objections to modern psychology were rooted largely in the latter's adoption of particular ideas that seemed to challenge religious understandings of the human person as well as its creation of new cultural authorities who rivaled Christian pastors for the treatment of souls. However, conservative Protestants would ultimately also be influenced by the fact that many mainline Protestants argued that the study of psychology and the adoption of its methods, especially of counseling, fit well with Protestantism's interest in understanding and ministering to the needs of individuals.
Meanwhile, the mission of conservative Protestants to proclaim the gospel of personal sin, repentance, and new life frequently brought conservative Protestants to agree that the innermost motivations and feelings of people were of foremost importance. The experience of religious conversation and the sanctified life included, its proponents contended, greater confidence and happiness as well as victory over mental problems like anxiety and inner conflict. This interest in the redemption of the mind was a fertile ground on which a conservative Protestant conversation with professional and popular understandings of psychology could grow.

*Freud and Conservative Protestant Dissonance*

Until the end of the nineteenth century American evangelicals had few inherent objections to the study of the human mind. They approached that question much as they approached the study of medicine or biology, as a study of creation that testified to divine handiwork and yielded useful knowledge. In addition, because theologians and clergy in the evangelical tradition viewed the individual as the main theater through which God's saving action in the world was realized, philosophical and medical inquiries into the working of the mind drew their interest. Indeed, revivals elicited reflections on the human mind and its states. Jonathan Edwards, a theologian and major figure in the First Great Awakening, bequeathed a vast intellectual legacy to Congregationalism that included reflections on faculty psychology. *Religious Affections*, one of his most masterful works, brought those thoughts to bear on the question of distinguishing between true and false religious experience. Likewise, the Second Great Awakening produced Charles Finney, a pioneer of modern revival methods who argued that revivals...
could be planned and executed by persons with an understanding of the human heart and mind. The growing emphasis on pastoral care during the nineteenth century likewise relied on the clergyman's ability to understand and appeal appropriately to the reason, sentiment, and will of those for whom he cared.⁶

The hostility of some conservative Protestants toward the field of psychology as it developed in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries was rooted in the fact that leaders in the field largely heralded from outside conservative Protestant ranks. Many conservative Protestants saw the modern psychologist as an intruder onto the role once held by Christian pastors. Problems that had once been taken to clergy, who would direct the sufferer to seek solutions through faith and Christian living, were instead being taken to a new authoritative class of professionals who presented themselves as uniquely qualified to treat a person's problems. Moreover, modern psychologists did not employ familiar religious assumptions or methods. Conservative Protestants viewed ordinary psychological distress as the common and expected result of sin. The usual help required was pastoral: the preaching of the gospel to the unbeliever and the delivering of wise spiritual counsel to the believer. In this, Scripture was “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). Modern psychologists competed with this moral and spiritual understanding of mental health by viewing mental distress of all types and severity as conditions whose mysteries yielded themselves up to scientific inquiry. Consequently, the modern psychologist's methods aimed to resolve psychological problems not by appealing to concepts of guilt, redemption, or Christian discipline and practice but rather by applying various

⁶ Holifield, 67-158.
therapeutic methods to the patient. Thus the psychologist and psychiatrist appeared to be substitute-pastors purveying a gospel of science. Just as the evolutionary biologist removed God from natural history, so the modern psychologist removed God from the problems of the human mind.

It did not help that many preeminent psychologists and educators of the twentieth century were well-known for embracing a materialist view of the human person. Sigmund Freud, the father of the psychoanalytic school of psychology and the symbol of modern psychology to most Americans, viewed bodies and minds as material things, and he contended that human behavior could be comprehended through empirical study. Other leading figures took the same view. John Dewey discussed education and behavior primarily with reference to their social contexts and the hands-on, empirical process by which students gather information and reach judgments. B. F. Skinner, a leading member of the behaviorist school of psychology, viewed all behavior as the product of prior conditioning. Conservative periodicals, sermons, and advice literature tended to decry these trends toward “atheism,” “pragmatism,” and “behaviorism” in education and social science.

It also did not help that while working from this standpoint, Freud had proposed a novel understanding of the human mind. To those who viewed human beings as sinful but rational beings in need of making a conscious response to the gospel, the basic tenants of Sigmund Freud's work were foreign and startling. Freud divided the mind into three metaphorical parts: the id (the part of the mind containing impulses, especially the libido), the ego (the part of the mind that makes realistic decisions), and the superego (the
part of the mind that makes critical and moral judgments). He posited that from the earliest days of a person's life, the impulses of id were powerful and basic to his functioning. But since uncontrolled action on basic impulses imperiled the survival of the individual, the "ego" emerged in order to perform the critical function of regulating the id. The superego became the repository of morals, religious structures, and other societal rules, which further influenced the regulatory activity of the ego. Freud argued that through these basic processes, the impulses of the id could be too greatly frustrated. Impulses that had been suppressed were known to the conscious mind and relatively harmless. However, impulses that were too threatening to the conscious mind were repressed—consigned to the subconscious, where they remained unknown to the conscious mind but still had great influence over the personality. These repressed thoughts caused neurotic behaviors and mental illnesses. Civilization tended to exacerbate this problem, because the moral and religious systems developed over many generations necessitated the repression of a wide range of basic impulses, especially sexual ones. The job of the therapist was to discover the contents of the unconscious mind through psychoanalysis in order to discover the root of the illness and treat it. Contrary to traditional American evangelical thought of the time, psychotherapists viewed human mental life as hidden and non-rational, to proceed from sex drives that existed even during a person's earliest days, and inhibited by the rational and moralizing compartments of the mind. Insofar as God was a phantom imagined by the neurotic mind, God was as likely to be a cause of mental illness as the solution of it.
Psychology's reputation as a secular science that was indifferent or even hostile to religion encouraged many vocal conservative Protestant leaders to downplay its findings and efficacy. Pastors, polemicists, and editorial writers challenged its whole view of man. “The New Psychology is wrong because it belittles reason, downplays moral responsibility, and paints religion as an escape from reality,” one barb-thrower wrote. Others observed that secular psychologists often seemed hostile to religion, viewing it as a cause of neurosis. This contention could be supported with juicy anecdotes; one stemmed from an incident during World War II, when an army psychologist allegedly informed GIs with exclusivist views of salvation that they were unsuited to certain leadership positions in the military. Since critics questioned the assumptions that underlay modern psychology, they also tended to present its conclusions and its therapies as at best limited in their ability to apprehend the human mind or heal it. “Psychopathology,” one writer quipped, “has never been and will never be completely successful.” It was not helpful to the spiritual life, either. “Many carnal, worldly Christians believe they can be cured of so-called nervousness by modern psychological therapies,” an unnamed missionary told Christian psychologist Donald Tweedie. “Patients may be helped by these treatments and relieved of some symptoms, but this does not deliver them from fear and guilt. I have never seen them lifted out of their worldly state or drawn any closer to God by the psychological reasoning of man.”

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The Protestant Dialog with Modern Psychology

Nonetheless, some Protestants, particularly those in the Protestant mainline, were amenable to the growing field of psychology. This fact repelled conservative Protestants who harbored strong objections to the intellectual direction taken by mainline churches and seminaries. However, it also meant that American Protestantism harbored a growing conversation with the field of psychology that left open the potential for conservative Protestant participation.

At the height of the denominational and intellectual battles between “fundamentalists” and “modernists” a generation before, both sides had made much of the fact that many mainline Protestant theologians had begun to view the modern person and his problems in new ways. Leading mainline thinkers and pastors began to find in evolution a reason to value gradual development and struggle, in psychology new regard for the powers of non-rational and subconscious aspects of the self, and in contemporary social conditions a clarion call to move the focus of theology and ministry from classic evangelical doctrines to social action. These commitments made the growth of the individual personality and a person's ability to realize her latent potential as a member of the local and universal human community into the central focus of Christian ministry. Consequently, mainline pastoral theologians advocated what historian E. Brooks Holifield has called a “natural style” of pastoral care. This model was concerned with identifying and enlarging those elements in the individual's developing consciousness that would aid in her attaining a better adjustment to her circumstances, limitations, relationship to others, relationship to God, and participation in her communities.\(^8\)

\(^8\) Holifield, 56-65, 159-294.
Many permutations of this model sprang up, but its advocates shared a belief that pastoral use of the social sciences brought pastoral ministry more in tune with elemental and immediate human needs. British Methodist Leslie D. Weatherhead, the well-known liberal pastor of the City Church in London, considered Christianity to be “that form of religion, distinguished by a new way of life, which is the response of the entire individual—mind, feeling, and will—to the impact which the living Christ makes upon him.” Weatherhead argued that a genuine encounter with Christ tended to effect a greater integration of the personality. Such a person helped to make the world “a much happier and healthier place than it is.” Christian faith “makes men more brotherly, more ready to love his neighbor. It makes him act unselfishly, control his temper, forgo private ambition, and, in many cases, for no visible reward, embark on some piece of service that involves poverty and loneliness, discomfort and even death.” Christianity promoted health by allowing believers to build up a sound mind through reflection on pure and high-minded thoughts, through the building of a life centered on others rather than narrowly on the self, and through the enjoyment of communion with and worship of God. The last factor was no mere accoutrement of the fully-developed personality. Since Weatherhead viewed human beings not merely as bodies and minds but also as souls, the fullest possible integration could not be obtained without “the fullest possible functioning of all our powers,” including the religious instinct.  

The national fascination with psychology during the 1940s and 1950s only encouraged these trends in mainline seminaries and churches. Psychologists, educators, and theologians alike were still discussing the importance of people being “well-adjusted” in confronting their circumstances, their responsibilities, and other people. Many were also toning down their emphasis on adjustment in favor of defining true growth in terms of the more individualistic goal of achieving “self-actualization” or “self-realization,” the process by which an individual constructed his own values, freely interpreted his problems, and reached his own decisions. Through this process, he might develop a sense of selfhood and purpose that would not simply adapt him to his society or institutions but also liberate him from their harmful or overly exacting demands.\(^\text{10}\)

In the postwar years seminaries increasingly stressed the value of pastoral counseling as a means of helping individuals with their problems. And one of the most influential architects of modern counseling psychology became Carl Rogers. Rogers’ counseling model, “client-centered therapy,” required the counselor to create an accepting, non-threatening atmosphere. All persons, Rogers thought, were impelled by a “forward-moving tendency” to build a well-adjusted, sociable self out of their own perceptions and values as well as those of other people and institutions. Likewise, they took in and interpreted novel experiences and information. However, disjunctures between personal perceptions, those of society, and new or threatening information could impede growth and result in a maladjusted concept of the self. At this point of crisis, the counselor could come to his client’s aid by offering unconditional positive regard and empathy. Free from the pressures of judgment, the counselee could better understand,

\(^{10}\) Holifield, 159-294.
clarify, and take ownership of her feelings, experiences, and problems. It was important, Rogers stressed, that the counselor not offer solutions or advice, but instead facilitate the process by which the counselee came to understand and accept himself so that he could move forward in his growth to maturity. Most teachers of pastoral counseling did not go quite so far as Rogers: to varying degrees, they emphasized that the pastor ought to practice “directive listening” or take an “educative approach.” But whatever role the counselor was to play, the evangelical Victorian formula of the pastor instructing distressed or confused persons about doctrinal truth and moral laws during sermons and home visits were giving way to a view of the pastor as a sympathetic listener—a father-figure who achieved more by his nurture and acceptance than by his role as expositor, law-giver, or teacher.11

While Rogers provided some of the more popular counseling methods, existentialist and theologian Paul Tillich helped to provide the intellectual underpinnings for mainline interaction with psychology. Tillich's Systematic Theology laid out his “method of correlation” for translating the gospel message into terms relevant to the immediate human dilemmas understood by existentialist philosophy. His popular work, The Courage to Be, also exemplified this approach by articulating a path to belief and meaningful living by way of Christian existentialism. According to Tillich, much of humanity's main dilemma rested in anxiety over the inevitable fact that humans were threatened with a certain and sudden fall into non-being. People coped with this anxiety in various ways, often through clinging to religious dogma, embracing a vigorous work ethic, descending into addiction, or attempting suicide. “The courage to be,” to embrace

11 Holifield, 294-306.
life as meaningful despite its finiteness, could be found by forsaking these paths to embrace the transcendent reality called God and the belief that God is loving and forgiving. Tillich's approach to finding meaning in life, which had obvious utility to clergy, also appealed to mental health professionals. Explaining Tillich's appeal to this audience, Wayne Oates of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary reflected, “Tillich spoke out of our broken culture, but spoke believing. . . . I believe the most significant motive in the coming of these psychiatrists and psychologists to Tillich was their yearning for meaning, for help in the capacity to care.” “Belief-ful realism,” a term Tillich coined, had the capacity to draw believer and psychologist together.12

Also buoying Protestant interest in psychology was the receptivity of some psychologists toward religious ideas. Even though Freud had viewed psychology as a scientific attempt to explain the human mind in materialist terms, competing psychoanalytic schools emerged that challenged this perspective. Carl Jung rejected the materialism and empiricism of Freud's thought for a different understanding of the subconscious and of therapy. Jung discussed not a subconscious containing repressed thoughts and impulses but an “unconscious” that lay outside the reaches of conscious thought and outside the reach of the scientific method. A romantic more than a scientist, Jung argued that myth, archetypes, and dreams provided the clearest gateways into the unconscious. Binding humans together were shared mental strictrures, a collective unconscious, that united the creative thought-worlds of individuals and the symbols which populated them. In addition, each individual engaged consciously and

unconsciously in a rich mental life of her own creative impulse. Although not an adherent
to traditional religious beliefs, Jung argued that these dimensions of the psyche made
religious symbols and mystical experience essential to mental functioning and health. The
natural tendency of persons was not strictly toward predetermined biological goals but
toward a more spiritual process of individualization, wherein individuals became open to
content beyond that contained in their own egos through exploring religion and
spirituality, dreams, and questioning the content of their existing worldviews. For Jung,
psychological maturation was the result of a successful movement in this direction, while
neurosis resulted from a mental life that had become too disconnected from the collective
unconscious. Healing from neurosis came from openness toward the larger psychic world
of humanity in order to bring one's inner life into dialog with it.

Certain developments within the field of psychology during the 1940s and 1950s
were also friendly to those who wished to integrate theological concepts with
psychological ideas and therapy. In the 1940s, O. Hobart Mowrer, professor of
psychology at the University of Illinois, began to question certain central premises that
underlay Freudian theory. Mowrer had suffered from a severe episode of depression in
1940 for which psychoanalysis failed to provide lasting relief. Inspired partly by his
professional contacts with Henry Stack Sullivan—a fellow psychologist who argued that
events in interpersonal relationships could cause or affect mental illness—he began to
investigate the significance of interpersonal relationships to mental health. He concluded
that morality and sin were important concepts to understanding and treating mental
illness. Unlike Freud, who viewed false guilt produced by the ego's frustration of the id as
a source of psychological problems, Mowrer argued that guilt feelings were often accurate assessments of actual moral wrongdoing that the sufferer had concealed from others. Guilt could bring the mind to past failures and could motivate the sufferer to expose his secrets and rectify them, thereby breaking their power and refreshing damaged relationships. Mowrer used these principles to develop Integrity Therapy, a method that used group support and pressure to extract confessions and begin healing. In the 1960s psychiatrist William Glasser developed a similar approach called Reality Therapy, which treated all human behaviors as products of conscious choices rather than the inevitable result of earlier events. Instead of delving into a person's hidden past, practitioners of Reality Therapy stressed the present-day steps people had to take to restore broken relationships.13

Existentialist psychology, which also gained a following in the 1950s and 1960s, held out promise as well. In the 1950s Vicktor Frankl, a Jewish neurologist and psychiatrist, developed Logotherapy, a new approach to the treatment of mental illness. Basing his new therapy on his struggle to discover a meaning to live during his suffering in the German concentration camps Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, Frankl posited that human beings could find meaning in even the worst circumstances and that the human existential impulse, the “will to meaning,” lay at the center of mental health. Donald Tweedie, professor at evangelical Gordon College and later director of the Pasadena Community Counseling Center at Fuller Seminary, called Frankl's existential approach to human problems to be a “refreshing contrast to the theories and practices based on

materialistic, mechanistic presupposition which pervades large areas of the field of mental health.” Logotherapy thereby offered “an honest appraisal of the religious factors of human existence.”

The Gospel of Freedom from Worry

Although much of the religious dialog with psychology took place within the Protestant mainline, conservative Protestants sustained an intense interest in the affective aspects of religious experience. This interest ultimately led them to discuss psychological themes, especially the achievement of personal feelings of well-being and common forms of mental distress, such as anxiety or worry. All conservative Protestants believed that Jesus Christ had come into the world to save sinners, so that through his blood they might be reborn into new life. This language was particularly important to members of revival traditions, who viewed the experience of being “born again” as a conscious act of will to repent as well as an emotional experience of confessing sin and turning to God. They argued that this new life would be felt in the innermost, secret places of a person. It broke the power of sin, brought God's peace, and inspired love toward God and others. The Keswick Movement, which exerted great influence on fundamentalism, had promised a “triumphant life” to the believer who sought holiness. The Wesleyan holiness movement sought this same power through prayer, intense religious experience, and strict standards of holy living. Pentecostals had from the first embraced the radical, empowering presence of the Holy Spirit in daily life. Other conservatives, as well as many mainline Protestants, expected that Christian beliefs promoted a healthy understanding of the self; faith and

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14 Donald Tweedie, Jesus and Logotherapy (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1961), 30, 179; Malony, 4.
prayer brought healing, peace, the fruits of the spirit, and many other benefits to the troubled mind and soul. Biblical verses on uncertainty, fear, and anxiety encouraged these interpretations. For all, the meaning of verses such as Phil. 4:6—"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God"—seemed a clarion call to turn to God to receive God's peace.

During the postwar years, this conviction sung out from books and articles that emphasized the emotional dimensions of Christian devotion. The salience of this topic can be seen when the articles in conservative Protestant periodicals are examined. For example, a reader who subscribed to the evangelical periodical *Sunday* from September 1946 to September 1947 had the opportunity to read no fewer than four articles on the topic of Christian happiness. “One of the keynotes of the New Testament is life and joy—Christian experience that lifts one above the cares and calamities of life, and makes living a vibrant, happy experience,” writer Ken Anderson urged in his article, “Christians Should Be Happy.” Turning to the promises of the 91st Psalm, which reflects on the idea that “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty,” J. DeCourcy Rayner presented God's promise of “God's loving presence” as well as deliverance from trouble as the antidotes to “doubts and misgivings.” Ruth Russell argued that a “happy, smiling Christian” could be an important evangelistic tool and chided believers who appeared overly judgmental or unhappy. “To worry reveals a disrespect for the Lord, for He has promised to watch over, guide, and protect us,” she explained. By reminding oneself of God's promises and

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seeking joy in prayer, Scripture reading, worship, and service, the believer could exchange worry for “positive happiness.”\textsuperscript{17} H. H. Savage described the longings common to all unredeemed persons as the search “for inner harmony—some way to resolve the discords and the tensions that so often dominate our lives.” However, neither inner harmony nor harmony between people was possible while sin separated people from God. In acknowledging personal sin and beginning to love God, the true believer would find that “discord and fear will disappear,” replaced by “a peaceful harmony with God that comes from daily fellowship with Him who loves us and has taught us to love Him.”\textsuperscript{18}

Books composed specifically to respond to the problem of worry and anxiety likewise communicated the expectation that true Christian devotion would tend to improve mental health. In his booklet \textit{Quit Worrying} (1939), Baptist evangelist Charles Weigle, who composed the hymn “No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus” following his first wife’s abandonment of him and subsequent death, instructed believers to regard worry as a destructive force and to banish it from their minds. “Worry is a mental disease,” he explained, one that doctors blamed for the death of more people than any other affliction. Continual apprehension about events that had not yet happened led to medical problems, clouded judgment, robbed people of happiness, and offered its sufferers no aid in devising solutions to their problems. Besides harming the person and


\textsuperscript{18} H. H. Savage, “Toward a Happier Life,” \textit{Sunday} August 1947, 19-20, 100-101. There are so many additional examples of descriptions of conversion and the Christian life that takes this tone that it is impossible to list them. However, some typical examples include: Leslie Flynn, “Christians Should Laugh – And Like It!” \textit{Sunday} May 1945, 42-44, 46-47; Mabel Harrison, “The Secret of Happiness,” \textit{Sunday} March 1946, 36-37, 78.
being “absolutely” useless, it was also a sin, evidence of unbelief among non-Christians and a lack of faith among believers. Those convinced that “God is interested in our welfare,” that “Our Lord is greater than all circumstances,” and that “He is equal to any, and every emergency,” could abide in God. Thus Jesus Christ never worried, and Christians were wrong to worry. Driving home the same point, in *God's Cure for Anxious Care* (1948) fellow Baptist evangelist John R. Rice directed believers to conquer anxiety with the transforming knowledge that God was at hand, that Christ meets every need, and that prayer could banish anxiety and prepare the heart to see and trust in God. It was unnecessary, he said, for Christians to go about as though they were oppressed:

What kind of Christians are those we see about us! Their faces are sad. Their minds are continually burdened with the things of the world. They are as anxious about money as if there were no God. They worry about tomorrow as if God did not love them, as if God did not answer prayer. Their very life every day shows a lack of faith in God. You cannot trust and worry at the same time. . . . In other words, worry is the mark of a poor Christian.

The solution to psychological distress was gospel truth and the long “praying through” of problems until deliverance was obtained.¹⁹

These beliefs were also communicated in the attempts of evangelists like Billy Graham to tailor their evangelistic appeals to the concerns of the day. One of the most popular tracts of the postwar era, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's *Steps to Peace with God* (1954), informed unconverted readers that “God loves you and wants you to have abundant life.” Billy Graham’s messages bore titles that included *The Despair of Loneliness* (1952), *The Cause and Cure of Uncertainty* (1956), *The Cure for Worry* (1959), *The Cure for Discouragement* (1954), and *The Cure for Anxiety* (1957).20

The responses of audiences to these messages reveal the expectations they articulated and the hopes they fueled. The testimonies that listeners sent to the Billy Graham Association articulated a warm and enthusiastic belief that saving faith opened the way for personal healing from the stresses and personal dilemmas that people faced. Testimonies often stressed the magnitude of personal suffering, the futility of personal and secular efforts to find solutions, and the superlative power of God to remedy psychological distress. Congratulating Billy Graham on a recent message about the overcoming of mental difficulties, one woman shared:

> My husband and I are both Christians. I have never known such peace, joy, and happiness as I have since I accepted whole-heartedly Jesus Christ as my one and only Savior!
> Tonight you “hit the nail on the head” by discussing the mental problems in the nation today. We seem to live in such a stepped-up pace of life, tension galore, problems, anxiety, frustrations, uneasiness,


unhappiness, sin, etc., etc. To know and trust in the Lord solves all! I am an elated Christian. My life is completely changed! When we surrender to Christ we are more than doubly rewarded with His returns. Just one example: since I have been one of His, I have been without pain, which I had experienced morning, noon, and night for the past 3 years or more! I no longer am “alone” . . . .

(Since I have become a Christian, I have decided that I no longer need the services of a psychiatrist. The Lord is my psychiatrist now, and one can find no better one! If only more people would place their problems and disturbances upon the Lord!)  

Three beliefs stand out as important to this writer’s testimony. She readily accepted that Americans were afflicted with mental problems, professed to have experienced this pain herself, and attributed her triumph over these feelings to saving faith. When combined in a personal narrative, the three-fold set of beliefs provided the script according to which others could themselves achieve a victorious life.

Concerns about the effect of psychological distress on family life became evident in testimonies as well. One testimony described how the nervous breakdown of a young woman had placed stress on her family. She remained unchanged under professional treatment but was able to return to life as a “good wife and mother” after her conversion:

In most lives there is a thorn. Mine was a lovely daughter-in-law that had a nervous breakdown. We did everything time or money could do to no avail. Even a psychiatrist and shock treatments. Her beloved father died [and] we all felt it was the last straw and there was nothing left but prayer we just couldn't reach her.

You came on television from N.C. I think. I prayed “Lord let Billy reach this poor distressed soul”. I prayed all the time you preached. Nobody said a word. I think everybody in the room felt the way I did. I prayed and somehow you said every word exactly as I wanted you to. Each word seemed solely for this one girl. If we searched the world for right words for the right time, it could not have been more right. The seed was planted. I've tried to keep them nourished and cared for.

It has been months now and the girl is a different person. Again the same lovely girl we once had and a good mother and wife. In another testimony, a wife and mother confesses that until faith provided healing, two serious problems dominated her life: she had suffered a nervous collapse, and her marriage was ending. “We were actually on the verge of separation and I was under a doctor's care for my nerves,” she explained. She asked God to save her, then rejoiced over the conversion of the other members of her family in subsequent weeks. The results banished her most pressing problems: “The Lord was so good and has transformed our home into a real home. . . . Now my health has been restored, I have gained weight and we have both found that our love for each other in Christ is so much sweeter and richer.”

The interest of conservative Protestants in the mental life of individuals brought them into a lively, if somewhat strained, relationship with the mainstream American conversation about psychological problems. As the voices quoted above reveal, believers' faith in the power of the gospel message to transform people often discounted the help available from doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and other professionals. The convention of many sermons and personal testimonies was to cite pressing personal need, the ultimate failure of human aid, and the sufficiency of God to provide healing. Statistics about poor mental health in the populace were often recited, not as evidence that more professional therapists were needed but as evidence of a widespread spiritual malaise that only conversion could address.

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It was, therefore, with a mixture of embarrassment and optimism that Christians' struggles with mental problems were sometimes described. In 1950 the evangelical magazine *Eternity* admitted to readers that not all Christians could relate stories in which faith had restored mental health. “Many people are concerned,” an editorial writer admitted, “that so many, including professing Christians, are developing neuroses and psychoses.” As an example, the editorial writer cited an example of a young Christian worker whose ministry with child evangelism and Christian education had met with success. Then, events during World War II had dealt her a shock. In 1950 she was still undergoing treatment. The editorial writer admitted the severity of the patient's condition, yet also elected to regard her mental condition as the byproduct of her failure to rely on God. According to the editorial writer, the patient herself regarded her inner life deficient by Christian standards, due to the self-absorption that afflicted her:

> How much I need something outside of myself. I realize it. A person who is absorbed only in his own little world, and his own little ideas, and his own little everything, is not good for anything. That is the kind of person I have become. And I hate it. I used to be interested in people and what they thought about, and what they believed in. Now my own little life is my only care. . . . I just go my own selfish way, working toward my own happiness and knowing I'm on the wrong road the whole while. Frustrating thought.

The editorial writer took the patient's words as a lesson in the spiritual and mental wages of failing to surrender oneself to God:

> Yes, a frustrating, and from the point of view of the mind and nerves it is a dangerous thought. Such a situation can lead to a psychiatrist. For a while it is true that as she is going her own way she is not far from the right way. For what does the Word of God say? 'The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the Word of God, which we preach' (Rom. 10:8). There is one failure and one failure only; the failure to let go and surrender the entire life to the Word of God.
If one will not surrender to the Lord, he is likely to find himself lying on the psychiatrist's couch and hearing a soothing voice say, 'Now relax and try to surrender your mind to me. Just let yourself go and talk.' The right talking to the Lord now will save you a lot of time in the future. And the Lord does not charge $10 an hour, either.

Psychiatrists might sometimes be needed, the editorial writer implied, but God strove to put the professionals out of business.24

Nonetheless, the interest of conservative Protestants in mental health also opened the way for a friendlier conversation about the relevance of psychology to pastoral care.

The Rise of Christian Psychology

The receptivity of conservative Protestants—Southern Baptists and evangelicals especially—to psychology and counseling grew significantly over the course of the “long decade” of the 1950s. This fact becomes evident when three expressions of that interest are considered: the appearance of conservative Protestant institutions offering professional training in psychology and counseling, the appearance of articles and books from conservative Protestant publishers on mental health, and the appearance of popular conservative Protestant figures who self-identified as “Christian psychologists.” Collectively, these trends contributed to the conservative Protestant conversation on marriage and family life, both by promoting the concept that personality development made people happy and useful and by seeking to apply that principle to Christian families.

An interest in popular or academic discussions of psychology was far from universal among conservative Protestant writers and readers, and the ideals of the “affectionate family” penetrated conservative Protestant advice literature through wider means than the acceptance of psychology per se. Nonetheless, the advent of “Christian psychology” helped to promote those trends. At the very least, it reflected the broad push evangelicals and other moderate voices were making toward the “integration” of mainstream cultural aspirations and values with conservative Protestant preaching and teaching during the 1950s.

Pastoral Counseling and Clinical Psychology

In the 1940s and 1950s important elements of the new view of pastoral care were making their way outside of the bastions of liberal theology. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary proved the most prominent early example of this trend. Owing to the diversity that existed within its ranks and its moderate leadership, the Southern Baptist Convention became home to one of the earliest attempts by a theologically conservative seminary to promote reflection on the usefulness of psychology and counseling to the Christian pastor. In the 1920s the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was home to professor of education Gaines Dobbins, who joined many mainline religious educators arguing that the study of psychology could aid pastors in their ministries. Wayne Oates, whom the seminary hired as a professor of psychology of religion and pastoral care in 1947, was an admirer and student of Paul Tillich. Due to his leadership, the Seminary vastly expanded its offerings in pastoral counseling during the postwar years, including the development of a doctoral program in the field. Historian E.
Brooks Holifield has noted that alongside Carroll Wise of Garrett Biblical Institute, Steward Hiltner of the University of Chicago, and Paul Johnson of Boston University, Wayne Oates became one of the most influential scholars and advocates of pastoral counseling.25

From this significant leadership position, Oates argued tirelessly for a view of Christian ministry that took seriously the mental health needs of individuals and communities, particularly the needs of rural communities that had been underserved by professionals and denominations. These interests placed Oates in careful and sustained conversation with the emerging world of pastoral psychology, even as they tied Oates to the Southern communities his denomination served and to the distinctive tenents of Southern Baptist doctrine. On one hand, Oates offered a forceful apology for the importance of psychology to the ministries of Southern Baptists. Pastors, he argued, could best aid their parishioners by remaining privy to psychology's insight into human problems and by carrying those concepts with them as they ministered to individuals in private consultation, home visits, hospital ministries, and other venues. Offering qualified praise for Carl Rogers' views, he stressed the problems that a conformist and highly competitive modern, middle-class culture exacted on persons, stressing the need for the individual to develop a sense of acceptance and self-worth apart from the legalistic pressures and demands of institutions. On the other hand, Oates' Baptist convictions led him to balance this emphasis on the counselee's needs for self-directed growth with a strong concern for the role of the Christian pastor. Oates envisioned counseling sessions

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as a dialog between the important players: the counselee, the pastor, and the Holy Spirit. The pastor acted as the voice of a specific faith community whose messages lay claim on the individual's unfolding journey to knowledge of himself and God.

Oates' conservative theological commitments also led him to argue that a proper integration of psychology and theology should not turn the Christian pastor into just another professional therapist. While Oates thought that pastors would find the insights of psychology invaluable aids to ministry, he also thought that they ought to retain traditional theological language and concepts. Their special role as teachers and shepherds of Christian communities still defined their spiritual vocation and their professional obligations. Thus Oates' moderate approach valued the insights of psychology and the practice of counseling without erasing the specific commitments of Baptist belief. Indeed, he presented counseling ministry as a return to the original spirit of Christ's ministry on earth that utilized the very best of modern scientific insight:

The Interpersonal Ministry called counseling is not a passing fad. It may well be a return to the method of Jesus in dealing with people both as individuals and as members of groups. His conversational ministry with individuals demonstrates the art of counseling at its best. His approach, his insight, and his understanding of the conflicts in human personality and relationships enabled Jesus to turn even a brief interview into a counseling experience.

The Christian ministry is at last beginning to use knowledge gained through years of study and research in the field of social sciences. We are learning to interpret this knowledge in light of scriptural teaching and to apply these insights to meet the needs of people for inner release and social adjustment in accordance with God's redemptive purpose. To be sure, the gospel is “the power of God” in initiating the redemptive process, and the Holy Spirit is the power by whom man may gain a true knowledge of himself and of his relationships to God and his fellow man. Even so, the

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26 Holifield, 275, 304-05, 321-22, 342.
more we can learn about the nature of man and his mental and social reactions to his environment, the better the Holy Spirit can use us to help guide man into the will and purpose of God.27

While Oates' career at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary exemplified the movement of mainline concern about pastoral care into Southern Baptist ranks, at other conservative Protestant institutions college courses in psychology and seminary classes in pastoral counseling helped to introduce a generation of young leaders to the field. Hildreth Cross, whose efforts at Taylor were mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, was one example out of many. The fruit of these educational opportunities were evident in the careers of conservative Protestant students: despite the suspicion of psychology that existed in conservative churches, theologically conservative students and professionals were enrolling in psychology programs and joining conservative churches. One of the best-known evangelical counselors, Henry Brandt, graduated from Houghton College before earning his MA in clinical psychology from Wayne State in 1949 and a PhD in marriage and family counseling from Cornell in 1952.

The presence of such persons within conservative Protestant ranks helped to bring about neo-evangelicalism's first significant graduate program in psychology. As early as 1951 Fuller Seminary President Harold Ockenga had privately expressed interest in seeing the flagship evangelical seminary expand its offerings in psychology. However, the catalyst was a personal connection between the Fuller community and a counselor named John Finch.

Wayne Oates, Premarital Pastoral Care and Counseling (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), vii. An earlier version of this booklet was published in 1953.
Like a host of other theological conservatives who quietly decided to take courses in psychology and open practices, John Finch had left his job as a Methodist pastor in order to train in psychology. He later joined the same church that Dr. Weyerhaeuser, later a member of Fuller Seminary's Board of Trustees, attended. Around the same time, Dr. Weyerhaeuser’s wife, Annette, was struggling with a personal problem. The Weyerhaeusers owned a vacation home on Gig Harbor, Washington, that they had traveled to each summer by ferry. However, construction on a new bridge was soon to make the ferry obsolete, and Annette suffered from severe phobia of heights that made crossing a bridge unthinkable. Like many evangelicals, Annette knew she needed help but was reluctant to consult a professional because of the “anti-religious” bias that she felt most psychologists harbored. John Finch, an ardent believer and a psychologist, provided an alternative. She later explained in an essay that therapy provided the aid that she needed and helped her to bring her personal faith to bear on the anxiety she was facing:

Many hours were spent in therapy—open-ended sessions in which the depths of my heart and mind were plumbed. . . . The anxiety and agony were the voice of my true self, struggling desperately for its very life. It was the voice of the Spirit, calling me back to truth in the inward parts. . . . The experience was painful, bewildering, elated, deep, insightful, colorful and vital. The deeper I went into myself, the more I was amazed to find a clear and fuller concept and experience of God—not as “Someone-out-there” but as an inner presence; one who understands, loves, and knows already my falseness and forgives, who is not a dictator to be pleased, but a presence who longs for cooperation. Who is Christ? He is my inner brother, my Savior who has gone before, the expression of God's love, my model. Who is Spirit? He is the inner voice, the friendly enemy, the inimical friend, who will not let me rest in falseness, but struggles with me to the end that I may emerge more and more the unique person God created me to be.  

In 1961 Finch's connection with the Weyerhaeusers brought him to the campus of Fuller Seminary to give a series of lectures on the disposition of psychology toward theology and the possibility of constructing a serious approach to psychology based on a Christian anthropology. Finch argued passionately that a greater entente between psychology and theology could and ought to be forged, but not because Freud had provided a theoretical basis for it. Freud had left little doubt about his materialist assumptions and left only a shaky theoretical basis for conducting theologically informed psychological research. Nonetheless, Finch argued that the father of psychoanalysis provoked questions that could not easily be answered by his own biologism—a problem that had led directly and indirectly to the friendlier lines of inquiry opened by some of his successors. Jung, Adler, Otto Rank, James Jackson Putnam, Ludwig Binswanger and a host of others set out to describe human life partly in terms of “spirit,” a concept they named and framed in various ways. As a result, free will (as opposed to biological determinism), self-transcendence (the striving of a person to become something greater than she currently is), and the importance of “values” to the subjective world of patients had all become themes for discussion across the psychoanalytic schools.29

Although it was not their intent, it seemed to Finch that these pioneers had laid the groundwork for speculation about whether Christians might conduct a scientific study of the empirically observable dimensions of the human psyche, while also using Christian anthropology as a basis for understanding the psyche's phenomenological dimensions.

Using Reinhold Niebuhr, Emil Brunner, Soren Kierkegaard, and Nicholas Berdyaev as representatives of Christian reflection on the nature of man as possessing the “image of God,” Finch identified three commonalities between the psychotherapist's view of the human spirit and the Christian tradition's view of it: both saw the spirit to be striving for self-transcendence, both observed that it seemed unable to objectify itself, and both viewed it as possessing at least limited freedom to determine its course of action. The similarity of these paradigms suggested that psychology and theology might furnish mutually helpful perspectives.30

Finch's lectures were not only well-received; they also became a catalyst for serious discussions of a graduate program in psychology at Fuller. Finch, along with director of development Donald Weber, and professor of pastoral counseling Paul D. Fairweather, began to discuss their shared belief that a full graduate program in clinical psychology would be ideal for nurturing the development of a “Christian psychology” that integrated insights from research in psychology with theology.31 Their efforts led to the opening of the School of Psychology at Fuller Seminary in 1964.

No single model existed among the faculty of the school of psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary. The exploratory committee who laid the groundwork for the new program decided that they should not impose any preconceived model of how psychology and theology ought to be integrated on the school or its faculty. Instead, the goal of the school would be the training of Christian professionals and the pioneering of new ideas


31 Malony, 1-139.
on integrating psychology and theology based on reputable original research. But they tended to agree with Finch that a Christian psychology must uphold the conviction that the advance of science had not proved God absent from or inconsequential to the ordinary affairs and pressing needs of humanity. They needed to create a strain of psychoanalytic thought that was “spiritological.” Paul D. Fairweather argued that God and “god-substitutes” had proven persistent in their power over the psyche and its problems. Some psychologists might regard the religious instinct to worship God or to fashion false gods delusional or the product of neurosis, but this negativity did not change the immovable fact that the human soul persistently searched for God. In fact, the denial of one's spiritual nature through the apparent rationality of empiricism contained “the seeds of neurotism” itself because, Fairweather thought, “if man is truly spirit in nature, he [the materialist] must become less reasonable with himself rather than more reasonable with himself as a spiritual being.” Persistent disbelief of one's spiritual nature might even amount to denial on the part of the “defensive scientific intellectualizer.” People's ultimate problems would not be solved unless psychology could recognize them as whole persons. Lee Travis, dean of the school of psychology, stated that to understand humanity fully, “We will search man out organically, mentally, socially, and spiritually,” a high task for scientist and poet alike. Spirituality could not be ousted from the psychologist's understanding of the human person because one of his persistent dilemmas rested in that area. Physical union and social union, the first two significant quests of the psyche, could not stand alone:

32 “A Proposed Graduate School of Christian Psychology,” Appendix, Malony, 201-205.

The third or *spiritual* union is born in man's discontent with his lonely and transitory station . . . Every single conceivable earthly union, at times and in ways, fails him. In his struggle against illness, insanity, and evil, only an impelling appropriate role in the scheme of creation will sustain him. And in the cosmic creativity, buried deep within his own resources, man may find his place in a harmony much wider than himself or anybody else. . . A unitive consciousness will displace his usual self-regardful separateness. An experience of *allness* abides in the submission of his individual person into all else. He will become one with himself only when he is not self-containing and was never meant to be, but just a channel of the life energies of the universe. He will become particularized in the infinite, where the whole is both the song of creation and the singer himself, without beginning and without end. Is this mysticism? And if so, is it bad? Certainly it need not be, but instead it can be a continuing experience of the divine presence in the encounter and activities of daily living.\(^{34}\)

During the following decade, other major evangelical institutions followed Fuller's example. Clyde Narramore founded the Rosemead School of Psychology in 1970, which was incorporated into Biola University in 1977. The same year, Wheaton College established its graduate program in psychology. Besides the full clinical programs available through such venues as these, coursework in pastoral counseling became common fare inside of seminaries.

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\(^{34}\) Lee Edward Travis, “Man: In Search of Him,” Appendix, Malony, 218-227.

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Much of the material observed that mental health was a pervasive problem for Americans and that Christians ought to adopt psychological ideas and language when articulating the gospel message. As W. Curry Mavis, author of *The Psychology of Christian Experience* (1963) would later reflect when looking back on the “long decade” of the 1950s, “Our generation needs voices that 'speak eternal truth in its own dialect.'

The dialect of our own age is strongly psychological and people interpret their

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experiences in light of psychology.” Mavis' treatment of Christian conversion and growth in grace explained how these processes addressed “problems of personal maladjustment” within the “psychological-spiritual climate” that prevailed in modern American life.36 Likewise, in Principles of Mental Health for Christian Living (1956), Charles Benton Eavey set out to explain how the “infinite, eternal, personal God” was the only thing able to satisfy the “innumerable hungers and needs” of the human person. In their original perfection, Adam and Eve had enjoyed perfect harmony between their body and soul and perfect harmony with God. In this unfallen state they naturally tended to fulfill the purpose for which God had created them. The Fall ruptured these harmonies. Due to human sin, the spirit became “dead” to God, and the soul could no longer find fulfillment or realize its purpose. Without a connection to God, the soul fell under the improper domination of the body and its appetites. Sin was therefore the ultimate source of humanity's disintegration, the essential root of problems rooted in the mind. Salvation involved the re-harmonization of a person with herself and with God. This reality had a powerful and immediately apprehensible emotional component. “Which of us does not feel,” he asked, “at least at times, that God has made it possible for us to live a life of inward rest and outward victory?” Believers often failed to experience this victory, but Christ's grace made a fuller experience of salvation possible. “If we lack in any way, it is not because our Lord has failed to make abundant provision for the supply of our every need, or because He is willing to do for us more and better than we can ask or think. . . . Whatever lack there is, is in ourselves because we do not 'come to him,' we do not 'ask Him,' we do not 'trust in Him.'” Mental health rested on how well a person’s physical and

psychological needs were met, how realistically she understood her circumstances, and how well she adjusted to them; Christ promoted the mental well-being of the believer by meeting her spiritual needs, encouraging sound habits, and fostering attitudes and emotions that contributed to adjustment.37

Magazine articles also explained that the gospel's relevance to the problems of contemporary Americans rested in the fact that the Christian life sustained mental health and thereby protected the believer from a host of concerning personal and familial problems. Writing for Moody Monthly in 1946, Virginia Whitman reported that one in twenty-two Americans would be admitted to a mental hospital at some point in their lives. Believers, especially those in full-time Christian work, faced “breakdowns” and jumpy “nerves.” The root of these widespread symptoms of mental illness were unmet needs; psychologists had demonstrated that human beings required “physical well-being,” recognition, security, and nurturing relationships. When one of those needs remained unfilled, an individual experienced frustration. That frustration either found a productive outlet or became repressed—in which case it gave rise to a variety of maladjusted behaviors, including “persistent irritation, constant fatigue, or so-called breakdown, to delinquency, eccentricity, or violent insanity.” The answer to these dangers was “God's psychiatry,” as revealed in the Bible. In the pages of Scripture, one learned that God had already recognized and made provision for all of humanity's needs. God had provided creation for humanity's use. God had acted on humanity's need for social connection and a sex life by offering sound principles for living in community with

others, calling upon believers to serve others, and uniting Adam and Eve in marriage.

Christ's self-sacrifice on the cross provided the opportunity for sinners to acknowledge their guilt and expunge it, while God's promises to believers provided a bulwark against worry and anxiety. “The program of relationship and fellowship between an individual and God and between him and his fellow man, as prescribed in the Bible for the believer, if embraced and practiced, constitutes the best mental hygiene movement ever proposed,” she concluded. If such a message offered an apology for Christian belief more than a legitimization of the services of professional psychologists, it nonetheless brought psychological concepts front-and-center to the quest to understand fallen humanity and God's redemption of God's people.38

While some authors trumpeted the therapeutic benefits of faith and the Christian life, some additionally asserted that readers ought to turn to counselors for aid with their problems. Also writing for *Moody Monthly*, Harold Larson contended that psychology unlocked the mysteries of the “human personality, with its countless reactions to life situations in a myriad of patterns.” Problems arose when a person's “primal” need had gone unsatisfied at some prior time in life, leading the person to seek satisfaction for that hunger in alternative, sometimes destructive ways. The results included delusions, emotional distress, problems in relationships with others, or unhealthy notions about the person’s relationship to God. In these cases, a person could benefit from the aid of a counselor, who could help to trace the individual’s problems back to their original cause, likely childhood experiences or unconfessed sin. The Christian counselor could offer the best aid because he helped people to understand the spiritual dimensions of their

difficulties and encouraged them to establish better mental habits and healthful patterns of conduct through faith in God, service to others, and sanctified living. By coming to understand the truth of the gospel as well as “the workings of the mind under the trying conditions of life” and “the why and wherefores of our actions and feelings,” the believer could achieve both “self-discovery” and “self-mastery.”

Larson thought that the great need of men and women for help in understanding and mastering themselves called for a redefinition of the pastor's role. “In the Middle Ages the pastor was the 'curé'—the shepherd of the flock. People came to him for advice on every detail of their lives,” he explained. The modern pastor had come to believe that his primary role was “evangelistic,” a view Larson hoped would give way before a more holistic view of the pastor as “a counselor to his people in order to help them meet the upsetting problems of modern life.” This special work required both thorough biblical training and familiarity with psychology.

Probably the most well-known advocate of the Christian study and use of psychology and counseling techniques became Clyde Narramore. Originally a psychologist with the Los Angeles County public schools, Narramore began his career as a popular advice writer concerned with youth problems. Following his first book, *Understanding and Guiding Teenagers* (1946), he published extensively through

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Zondervan Press, producing booklets and advice books that address adolescent problems, women's issues, sex education, self-esteem, depression, anxiety, stress, marriage, and parenting.

Evangelical periodical editors and radio stations also offered Narramore a warm reception. A feature article by Dorothy Haskin introduced Narramore to readers of *Christian Life* and *Moody Monthly* as “a prominent Christian psychologist” with a high view of Scripture and the sufficiency of Christ. *Moody Monthly* subsequently ran an eleven-article series by Narramore under the title “Your Psychological Problems,” in addition to two articles about living with an unsaved mate. *King's Business* published a column, Talking it Over, in which Narramore answered questions submitted by readers. It also distributed a booklet by Narramore, “Christian Psychology, How It Can Help You” (1956). His Christian radio program, *Psychology for Living*, began in the early 1950s and brought Narramore's opinions to thousands. Encouraged by this reception, Narramore left his job with the public schools in 1958 to found the Narramore Christian Foundation, which offered training to counselors, offered counseling support to missionary families, and distributed Christian psychological literature.41

Narramore's success was soon repeated by other psychologists and writers. Among the most influential included Henry Brandt, a marriage counselor who built a prolific career working for a variety of evangelical institutions, and John Drakefield, professor and founder of the Baptist Marriage and Family Counseling Center at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Both committed their careers to

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counseling and to improving the ministries of evangelical and Baptist churches. A
graduate of Houghton College, Henry Brandt pursued an MA in clinical psychology from
Wayne State in 1949, followed by a PhD in marriage and family counseling at Cornell in
1952. Building on those foundations, Brandt embarked on an energetic career during
which he preached with Youth for Christ, served as a dean of men at Houghton College,
supervised nurseries and refined teaching principles of the Lamaze program, ran a private
family and marriage counseling practice, developed a counseling clinic for missionaries,
taught at several evangelical colleges and universities, interviewed potential Campus
Crusade for Christ staff members, and became a popular conference speaker. Besides
Brandt's service with a variety of evangelical institutions, he disseminated his ideas
widely through a decade on Moody Bible Institute Radio (1961-1971) and through the
publication of more than twenty popular advice books. John W. Drakeford centered his
efforts on teaching counseling to future pastors as a professor at Southwestern and,
beginning in 1967, on producing 41 books.42

Brandt and Drakefield took up the same cause as Narramore, training counselors
and offering direction to readers and counselees. Also like Narramore, they built this
pursuit on the conviction that psychology could help the Christian to describe the human
condition and common human problems, while the Bible offered an authoritative
theological explanation for the problems people confronted: sin. It also pointed to the one
source of salvation, Christ. Finally, it laid out the path to overcoming sin and to
conducting a more godly, and happier, life. When writing about marriage, Brandt

online, see http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=19369 (accessed Nov. 1, 2010).
presented the Bible as a “guidebook” of instructions: “Accepting the Word of God as our
guidebook implies that you use it as a engineer does his handbook,” Brandt explained.
“You will be seeking the authoritative guidance needed to keep your marriage on an even
keel.” Thus therapeutic self-understanding—and a better understanding of one's marriage
—included a recognition of psychological truth and a confrontation with truth of the
gospel and the authority of Scripture.  

Henry Brandt's description of the average, troubled man or woman exemplified
this conviction. Brandt contended that two respected community members might appear
identical. They worked hard at their jobs, readily volunteered to help others, attended
church, spent time with their families, and appeared to embrace the best middle-class
values; they might be neighbors. But for many persons, a darker truth lay beneath these
appearances. They were doing the right things, but they were still falling short. The great
call on every life, acknowledged or not, was to love God and to allow their feelings and
conduct toward others to reflect that love. However, those who also lacked the spiritual
understanding or ability both to feel this love in their innermost selves and to express it in
their outward actions suffered the effects of their shortcomings. They either did not know
how to improve that situation, or they denied its existence. In either case, they suffered
from their unresolved problems and unacknowledged contradictions, responding to their
inner conflicts and guilt with a series of responses whose effects psychologists had
chronicled: “rationalization, regression, suppression, extroversion, introversion,
compartmental thinking, and projection.” Even severe disturbances, such as “paranoia”

“schizophrenia,” “or other psychoses,” could be the result of unconfessed and unresolved sin in a person's life. Socially, such persons left “broken homes, crime, vice, even murder or suicide” in their wake.\textsuperscript{44}

While psychologists could point out the effects and cost of this problem and even offer some relief from its symptoms, the Bible revealed that God held the ultimate solution. It proclaimed the gospel of God's forgiveness through Christ, which removed the need for concealment of the truth or the psychological strain of guilt feelings. It also provided both the theological truths and practical instructions that made possible a renewed life in which the happiness of the individual and his success in relationships were realized, albeit never perfectly. These larger truths facilitated a person's adjustment by enabling her to view smaller events in their proper context. In particular, it communicated that loving God was the single “adequate goal” of life and the only one capable of reordering a person's life and relationships. Only by patterning one’s own love on the divine model could true personal maturity and better relationships become possible. For the Christian, the lifelong quest to apply Scriptural teaching and to grow in one's love for God promised deliverance. Conversely, “years of counseling experience disclose that Christians who are wrestling for peace of mind are those who give lip service to their beliefs, but do another.”\textsuperscript{45}

The conviction that psychological problems were evidence of both complex, ongoing conditions and actual moral guilt brought both Henry Brandt and John W. Drakeford to draw from the ideas of O. Hobart Mowrer. In fact, Drakeford had studied


\textsuperscript{45} Brandt, \textit{Building the Christian Home}, 19, 28-37,
with Mowrer and promoted his model of treating people. In *Integrity Therapy* (1967) and later *People to People Therapy* (1976), he assured his readers that the pastor who used Integrity Therapy would not find the practice of counseling to be at odds with biblical principles, as some feared. Instead, the counseling pastor “now discovers his religious convictions concerning the nature of man represent the wisdom of the ages and have within them many clues to both man's hurt and healing.” Since Integrity Therapy used confession and accountability in the context of small groups to bring people toward honesty about their problems and healing, Integrity Therapy allowed believers to apply the biblical concepts of sin, guilt, confession, and redemption to help people overcome their problems. Besides offering a path to effective ministry, Integrity Therapy also removed counseling from the context that had helped fuel conservative reservations about the practice: its control by a special class of professionals who did not share conservatives' religious convictions. Because Integrity Therapy relied on a small group that could theoretically be run by anyone who had received training in the method, any pastor or layperson could become a counselor.46

*Questioning “Christian Psychology”*

Understanding the influence of the trend among conservative Protestants, particularly among evangelicals and Baptists, toward greater use of ideas and techniques from the field of psychology can perhaps be best measured by noting the negative responses to that trend. In the 1920s and 1930s the conservative Protestant conversation with psychology was muted; by the early 1970s its engagement was prominent enough to...
stir a strong reaction from the critics of integration. Their protest demonstrates two important facts. First, Christian psychology enjoyed only limited appeal. Second, critics were themselves searching ardently for an effective response to rising personal and social problems in the congregations and communities, enough to consider Christian counseling as an approach and reject it hotly.

Jay E. Adams, arguably the greatest critic of Christian psychology based on an integration model, arrived at his convictions after beginning to follow the same path as Narramore or Brandt. His journey started with a pressing need: as a young Reformed pastor, Adams was committed to preaching the gospel to his congregation. However, he soon found that his skills seemed ill-suited to the task. His seminary training had taught him how to prepare sermons, not how to handle people who came to him in deep personal distress. His resolve to better live up to his calling sent him first to works of psychology, which contained concepts that to Adams seemed foreign to the gospel message. He found Roger's counseling methods particularly problematic. Rogers argued that many weeks or months of sessions would be required, over the course of which the counselor was not supposed to speak out of God's Word with any sort of authority but instead allow the client's thoughts and ideas to drive the conversation. Adams countered that the “client-centered” approach could not be found in Scripture, and that it required the pastor to abdicate his biblical role. In addition, Adams thought the long duration of the counseling and the lack of clear direction promised only dubious results. He was also disturbed by the suggestion of most psychologists, including Christian psychologists like Narramore, that some psychological problems were too severe for an ordinary counselor to treat. The
prospect of referring a counselee to a non-Christian for specialized therapy seemed spiritually dangerous. Was it not the pastor's job to solve people's problems using the Word of God? Where Narramore and other Christian counselors saw a harmony of effort so long as biblical authority could still be maintained, Adams and others who trusted the Bible alone for guidance balked at the introduction of what appeared to be two competing sets of authority. The Christian, it seemed, ought to be looking to God rather than to men.

Despite his misgivings, Adams took classes in pastoral counseling, only to find that his objections still dogged him. Still searching for direction, in 1965 he enrolled in the University of Illinois to study with O. Hobart Mowrer, one of the same psychologists from whom Drakeford and Brandt had drawn inspiration. Adams was especially attracted to Mowrer's approach because he repudiated psychoanalytic thought and refused to view individuals as victims of inner conflicts, other people, or any other outside factor. Further, Mowrer's suggestion that psychological problems were moral in nature seemed to invite the minister to expound Christian teaching about sin and salvation freely and forcefully. Following his time in Illinois, Adams embraced the practice of counseling but argued for a model of counseling that rejected all secular approaches to the practice—Mowrer's Integrity Therapy included—in favor of using Scripture alone to interpret and resolve the counselee's problems.47 His first book, Competent to Counsel (1970), laid out his

47 Jay E. Adams, Competent to Counsel (Grand Rapids: Ministry Resources Library, Zondervan, 1970), i-xxii.
understanding of the purpose and techniques of counseling from a biblical perspective. Later hired to teach at Westminster Theological Seminary, Adams followed his first volume with several books outlining his methods.\textsuperscript{48}

By turning to Scripture for direction on how to counsel, Adams sought to restore the centrality of the gospel to all ministry work, to articulate the relevance of Reformed theological ideas to practical concerns, to restore hope to sufferers, and to preserve the special calling of the Christian pastor. Adams decried the fact that Freud's theories had reclassified a large range of personal and behavior problems as sicknesses best treated according to a medical model. Under this paradigm, people suffered from afflictions whose origins lay outside their control. As such, modern psychology removed not only blame but also hope from its patients. It seemed to Adams that the Bible's approach to human problems could scarcely be more different. In the Bible, individuals were not hapless victims; they were guilty of sin and prisoners to the wages of sin. In Christ's redemptive action on the cross, individuals also had hope of real salvation. Hope lay not in professional ministrations but in the work of the Holy Spirit through the means of grace, especially through the preaching of God's Word. The Holy Spirit met the person where they were, enabling them to turn to God in faith and to repent of the sins that lay at the heart of their problems. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life also made Christian living, healing, and Christian growth possible. The Christian counselor

could assist others only because the Holy Spirit gave him the gifts necessary to the task. He relied on the power of God's word and the Spirit's own will and timing in dealing with those who sought help.

The role of the Christian counselor, then, was to use Scripture to help people to see the sin in their lives and to understand its effects. With the aid of the Holy Spirit, the Christian counselor's supreme task was to confront persons with the grim truth of their sin and the far greater power of the gospel to break sin's power and guide a person out of his situation. To understand the task of the counselor, Adams turned to Colossians 1:28, in which Paul related, “We proclaim him [Christ], confronting every man nouthetically, and teaching every man with all wisdom in order that we may present every man complete in Christ.” According to Adams, the Greek word nouthesis, meaning roughly “to instruct,” connoted the interchange between a teacher and a person who needs to be confronted about a problem. Adams concluded that the scriptural use of confrontation was threefold: to persuade the counselee of the existence of a problem that must be overcome, to effect a change in the counselee’s “personality and behavior” through verbal rebuke, and to express loving concern for the counselee’s well-being. Consistent with this model, the bulk of Adams' work described the methods he used in pastoral confrontation and the proper responses to a variety of personal problems based on his exposition of Scripture.49

Adams' work, coming as it did in the midst of burgeoning conservative Protestant interest in psychology, generated mixed responses. Proponents of integration found

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49 Adams returns to these themes many times across his writing. Some clear articulations of his ideas can be found in Adams, Competent to Counsel: The Christian Counselor's Manual (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House); “The Big Umbrella,” in Essays on Counseling (Grand Rapids: Ministry Resources Library, Zondervan Publishing House, 1972), 3-35.
Adams' characterization of psychological ideas too simple and objected to his rejection of
dialog in both the classroom and the counseling office. His methods appeared rigid and
unsympathetic to the complexity of mental problems and the suffering people
experienced when confronted with depression, anxiety, and other difficulties. On the
other hand, Adams' work struck a cord among others: nouthetic counseling quickly
emerged as an alternative to “Christian psychology.”

At least one adopter shared a journey similar to the one Adams had trod. William
Goode, a graduate of Bob Jones University and pastor to independent Baptist churches,
would later recount that he discovered the people to whom he ministered in his church in
Gary, Indiana, confronted him with problems that Goode was initially unsure of how to
handle. He was suspicious of psychology but felt encouraged when he discovered that
Clyde Narramore argued for the possibility of Christian psychology and was an active
member of an evangelical church. But when he attended Clyde Narramore's Rosemead
Institute just after its founding in 1970, he was troubled by Narramore's assertion that
pastors refer people to trained psychologists for help with certain problems. He returned
to Gary disappointed but later became an enthusiastic practitioner of nouthetic
counseling.\textsuperscript{50}

Adams' protest against the integration approach to theology and psychology
attests to the fact that psychologists' ideas and methods still generated significant
controversy at the close of the 1960s. But amid this firestorm existed a fundamental fact:
both sides had embraced the idea that there is a great need in every community for

\textsuperscript{50} “A New Battle for the Bible” (a history of the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors),
counselors who recognize and treat a host of personal difficulties. Although the principles governing pastoral counseling have been a source of controversy, the open door of the counselor's office increasingly has been viewed as a necessary complement to pulpit ministry.

**Marriage and Family Counseling**

The larger conversation about psychology and religion in conservative Protestant churches shaped the beliefs and attitudes of their members toward marriage and the family. Advocates of pastoral counseling and “Christian psychology” numbered marriage and family problems among the difficulties that an informed use of psychology could help to alleviate. In fact, the better-known and most prolific Christian psychologists made family problems a major focus of their writing. Narramore returned to the topic many times, especially in conjunction with his interest in child rearing, education, and youth problems. A marriage counselor by training, Henry Brandt published primarily on marriage and family issues. All but a few of John Drakeford's books concerned marriage and sexuality.

These interests stemmed largely from the fact that conservative Protestant leaders ranked family and sexual problems among the most pressing American social issues. No doubt this emphasis was also encouraged by the fact that in the 1940s and 1950s mainstream marriage advice books and articles worked tirelessly to warn couples about
the danger of divorce. As historian Kristin Celello has recently argued, marriage advice literature and marriage counselors advanced the idea that all marriages required “work” in order to guard against mediocrity, unhappiness, and divorce.\textsuperscript{51}

The most influential purveyor of this idea during the 1940s and 1950s was Paul Popenoe. His rise to prominence as a marriage expert grew out of a belief that the promotion of marriage and parenthood was necessary to ensure that members of the American middle class and other “fit” persons produced children and directed the future of civilization. To this end, Popenoe promoted eugenic science and advocated the sterilization of “unfit” persons in the 1910s and 1920s. He then founded the American Institute for Family Relations in the 1930s to offer eugenic and marital counseling to couples. When eugenics later became associated with Nazism and fell out of public favor, Popenoe recast himself as a counselor in order to promote stable and fecund marriages. In this role, he could advocate the rewards of a happy married life and show people the path toward achieving it. In so doing, he could encourage couples who met the requirements of marriage and parenthood to prepare properly for marriage and to have children. To those with troubled marriages, he held out the possibility of counseling and personal reformation.\textsuperscript{52}

As promoters of the Christian home and its religious mission, conservative Protestant leaders were attracted to the idea that marital success depended on commitment and personal development. It provided an explanation for the apparent


\textsuperscript{52} Wendy Kline, \textit{Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
fragility of many marriages; even more important, it held out the hope that most couples could resolve their marital difficulties. Joe Burton, head of the Home Curriculum Department of the Sunday School Board, was so impressed by Paul Popenoe's writings that he dedicated a full chapter of *Tomorrow You Marry* (1950), a Baptist Training Union textbook on courtship and marriage for young adults, to summarizing Popenoe's repudiation of what he called the American pattern of “Bogus Marriage”: the romantic picture of true love as an all-consuming, headlong plummet into affection. Popenoe had affirmed that marriage was the fulfillment of humanity's deepest emotional longings. As he stated in one book, it “has so much to offer, so much to contribute to life, that no one can afford to miss it.” But he stressed that the enjoyment of this experience rested on the ability of potential marriage partners to assume adult responsibilities, express selfless concern for others, and develop a more mature, constant love for their intended. Popenoe—and Burton derivatively—contrasted this genuine experience of love to “the counterfeit pattern” portrayed in movies, in which a “sudden visitation” of powerful attraction carried away the lover and caused him to toss aside all practical concerns about family, career, or money to obtain his heart's desire. Mere romance required no genuine love at all; it was instead “nothing more than an infantile love of self . . . the immature questing of a grown-up infant seeking a sensation.”

In an article for *Moody Monthly* titled “Case Studies in Counseling,” Horace Larson was equally eager to stress that the problems within individuals were the chief cause of marital problems and that obtaining help was an important first step in

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improving one's family life. Larson estimated that 30 percent of the Christian people who came to him for counseling were “not happy in their married life.” With the “master and slave” model of marriage thoroughly outdated, marriage demanded the highest level of emotional maturity: the ability to know oneself, share oneself, and accept another person. Unfortunately, these refined goals proved elusive to those who were struggling with psychological problems. Having failed to confront the problems that already prevented them from living fully functional adult lives, “people with deep-set personality problems” who married went on to “create a larger problem” in their marriages.\(^\text{54}\)

In *Christian Life* magazine, writer Irene Klingberg followed suit. She contributed a series of articles in which she argued that the development of the personality into maturity and free of significant problems was the prerequisite of marital success. Following the special concern of conservative Protestants and Americans generally for the ability of mothers to perform their roles as nurturers and relationship-builders, she also used this paradigm to build a case for women to accept their social roles as homemakers and to apply themselves to managing the difficulties in their marriages.

“Today, discontent in marriage among Christians seems to be a growing thing affecting an alarming number of Christian adults,” she cautioned. The problem, she explained, was Christian naivete. “For a long time, evangelical Christians drifted along on the bland assumption that if both partners in marriage are Christians, this fact automatically assures a successful, wedded life.” Shared belief would be insufficient if both partners had not also succeeded in moving from the self-centeredness of babyhood to the “other-centeredness” of adulthood.

According to Klingberg, the pursuit of personal growth would help to prevent and remedy marital problems. In her brief recounting of a person's development, she explained that the infant perceived only its own needs and relied utterly on parents. With the advent of early childhood, the child learned to recognize the needs of others and acquired information about his world. As the child grew, he acquired greater powers of judgment, greater independence, more advanced social skills, and a more complicated religious life. The onset of adolescence increased his quest for independence, awakened his sex life, and propelled the youth into a quest to define and own fully his beliefs. The adult stood ready to shoulder adult social responsibilities of a career and a family life and possessed the capacity to focus on the higher cause of serving others before himself. Successful passage from one developmental stage to the next, up to the realization of full maturity, depended upon the individual finding fulfillment of his basic psychological needs. It depended also on his success in becoming “well-adjusted”—able to perceive his circumstances accurately and adapt to them. The result was a fully mature adult who was self-reflective enough to recognize his own needs, in possession of an undistorted self-concept, and able to express his emotions and desires through acceptable outlets. He would possess the ability to identify with others, deny himself, and compromise—to transcend his immediate wants and live productively in a marriage, family, church, and nation. His less enviable counterparts suffered from deficiencies in their prior development that had yet to be overcome.

This development determined the success of a person in his marriage. “Marriage,” she contended, “should wait until the individual is willing to bring the entire personality
into this fellowship . . . a deep sharing of the self with another in the finest of friendships.” A “self-centered” person could not hope to succeed in the “realm of living out a workable experience energized by the self-effacing power of love.” Therefore, all people contemplating marriage would benefit from careful self-examination and a realistic assessment of the “real qualities of the prospective partner, for marriage will sooner or later reveal the true personality.” Choice qualities included the ability to cooperate and to “get along” with others, slowness to find fault, the resiliency to weather difficulties and overcome bad moods, and sincere interest in the welfare of others. The presence of these strengths were signs that a prospective partner had passed at least into the stage of “early maturity,” the point at which a person accepted adult responsibilities, grew out of dependence on parents, and supported himself financially. Such a person was poised to move into full maturity, which marked him as an individual who “accepts himself, his failures and successes as well as his place in the plan of God for his life” and “is able to love someone else more dearly than he loves himself.”

Narramore likewise stressed that marital problems were often rooted in a person's childhood and adult experiences. Subject to the daily grind, husband and wife alike were liable to see “insecurities and frustrations” from childhood and adolescence resurface. Any of a large number of earlier personal difficulties or unresolved emotions could introduce conflicts or misunderstandings into an otherwise healthy marriage. An adolescent who failed to grow sufficiently independent from his parents might later cling too tightly to his spouse or be fearful of adult decisions. Likewise, a person who failed to

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develop the ability to give and receive affection in their teenage years might later have difficulty expressing affection for her spouse. A youth who never adjusted to his sex role would, when expected to conform to typical adult expectations, feel dissatisfied. Unresolved childhood conflict with a parent could interfere with feelings toward one's spouse. Lingering attachments to a former boyfriend or girlfriend could lead to an unfair comparison between one's present-day life and an idealized, alternative future. Lack of understanding of the opposite sex could lead to misunderstandings. Emotional or mental disturbances could cloud judgment. In all these cases, a marriage relationship could be improved if the troubled parties could be made to understand and confront their problems.\footnote{Narramore, \textit{Women's World}, 129-148. Narramore, \textit{Psychology of Counseling}, 184-205.}

These convictions encouraged advocates of pastoral counseling to become ardent proponents of the affectionate, cooperative, “democratic” ideal of family life championed in such conservative Protestant magazines as \textit{Home Life}, \textit{Christian Life}, and \textit{Moody Monthly}. Clyde Narramore outlined the “structure of a good marriage” in the following terms:

\begin{quote}
Each partner accepts the appropriate role of his or her own sex. Both husband and wife understand the desirability of good health. Marital happiness depends, to a large extent, on companionship, working together as a family unit. These are more important than money, prestige, and most other factors. Both marriage partners have satisfactory opportunities for expressing and developing their own personalities and abilities. Children may be a blessing, but they do not automatically bring happiness to a home. . . . Full and constructive use of special family times helps to involve the husband and wife and make them feel that their marriage is more
\end{quote}
satisfying. Family meals, conversations, outings, holidays, anniversaries, projects, sports, pets, and other 'together times and things' improve the climate of the home.

Spiritual conversation and dedicated Christian living are essential in a radiantly happy marriage. Deep spirituality is the 'glue' that holds marriage together.\textsuperscript{57}

Likewise, Brandt extolled the satisfactions of a spiritually motivated and emotionally intimate family life. A proper approach to sexual intimacy involved the exercise of “due benevolence” in order to achieve a “mutually satisfying relationship.”\textsuperscript{58}

Honesty and specificity in communication were necessary in view of the fact that “both the husband and wife have a right to know each other's mind about each other; in fact about everything that concerns the relationship.” A lack of frank, intimate communication, especially when silence was maintained in order to avoid voicing frustration or disagreement, was a common and serious source of marital trouble.\textsuperscript{59}

Brandt argued that a clear order of authority in the home was necessary, but balanced by a strong ethic of cooperation and mutuality. Comparing the roles of husbands and wives to those of business partners or the president and vice-president of a bank, Brandt stressed that successful partners understood and shared information about their enterprise as well as collaborating in the formation of policy and the making of decisions. The order of authority between them allowed for efficient procedure and a means to make effective decisions in cases where disagreement could not be resolved.\textsuperscript{60}

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\textsuperscript{57} Narramore, \textit{Psychology of Counseling}, 204-05.
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\textsuperscript{58} Brandt, \textit{Building a Christian Home}, 119-120.
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\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{59} Brandt, \textit{Building a Christian Home}, 60-72. Quote is from pg. 61.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{60} Brandt, \textit{Building a Christian Home}, 40-59.
\end{flushright}
involved the guidance of each child through each stage of psychological development, with special attention paid to providing children with “developmental tasks”—requirements and experiences that were appropriate for the child given his stage of development and his need for help in progressing toward the next stage of maturity.61

Drakefield picked up the same themes, especially in his writing about marital communication, a topic in which he took a special interest. He argued that the effort necessary to gain self-understanding, understanding of one's partner, and the skills needed to maintain healthy communication, whether acquired by independent effort or in the counselor's office, had the potential to strengthen marital relationships and repair marital problems. These assets were necessary, Drakeford thought, because while men and women had the potential for harmonious living, their distinct natures and the breakdown of mutual understanding under the trials of everyday life worked against marital happiness. The solution was to value honest communication and intimacy enough to cultivate them. “Men and women are different down to the very cells in their bodies,” John Drakeford explained to couples in his first book on marriage, Home: The Laboratory of Life (1965). It was therefore impossible for them to get along unless they appreciated their separate natures and learned to complement each other, rather than continually descending into conflict. Through overcoming differences to achieve meaningful communication, they would come to grapple with six distinct perceptions affecting relationships: “each partner as they are in reality,” “each partner as they see themselves,” and “each partner as they see each other.” Realistic self-assessment and

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61 Brandt, Building a Christian Home, 94-102.

The idea that successful marriages were the product of the personal qualities and skills of each participant made the contributions of both husbands and wives seem vital. Nonetheless, these requirements also directed attention to the special role of women, whom writers and no doubt also many readers assumed were more likely to have the qualities and skills required to fix marriage and family problems. For those who did not, self-improvement held out hope that the tremendous responsibilities that postwar advice writers placed on the American mother could be fulfilled, provided women developed to their full potential. Irene Klingberg argued that women's unhappiness in their marriages stemmed from their inability to manage disappointments and develop appropriate responses to the challenges of wifehood and motherhood. She observed that many women had come to expect more companionship from their husbands, more recognition for their ideas, and more satisfaction from their marriage. When these desires went unfulfilled, wives were apt to compile a laundry list of complaints against their husbands that became the basis for longstanding bitterness or the decision to seek fulfillment in activities outside the home. She expressed sympathy for their feelings, but she also
marshaled the concept of psychological differences rooted in sex to remove legitimacy from their feelings of discontent. Marital success could not be realized, she argued, unless husbands and wives accepted the fact that the sexes were “different in nearly every conceivable way.” Men and women did not communicate in the same manner; they did not express emotions in the same way; they did not have the same needs. It took patient effort to perceive and fulfill a spouse's needs—and it was the wife's special responsibility to be the most adaptable and emotionally competent family member.

Klingberg explained that much of the understanding and adaptation would have to come from the wife's end. She could take more suffering, endure longer, and love more strongly. Due to this basic difference, “to a large extent, the success or failure of the marriage depends upon the wife using the resiliency God has given her.” Since the wife possessed the qualities of personality to act as a helpmate, it was her special responsibility to resist indulgence in bitterness when her husband failed to understand all her emotional needs. Her family would need to be forgiven for forgetting to thank her for performing housework, “the most thankless job in the world.” Finally, the wife would need to accept her own sensitivity, plumb herself for her hidden resiliency, and learn to meet her own emotional needs. Traveling along the hard road to full maturity, “Women . . . must grow for the sake of their own selves, for their husbands, for their children.”

The woman who did not grow properly into this role was maladjusted. Klingberg pictured a typical troubled wife as a woman who under the grind of daily life had come to perceive her husband as emotionally unsupportive, lukewarm about church activities, and
insensitive to her preferences. Growing apathetic about achieving satisfaction in home life, she sought to fill her unmet needs through a career. The career provided her with the benefits of personal money, friends, and accomplishments, but she remained unhappy. Discouraged, she sought counseling from her pastor, who explained to her that her husband's behavior was “normal.” The wife's unhappiness did not ultimately stem from her husband's disappointing behavior, the pastor pronounced, but instead from her abnormal attitudes and attempts to escape from her problems. The wife had sought “the hard way out of her difficulties,” when she really needed to “adjust” to her biblical role as a wife and mother.64

If Klingberg's position seemed less than forgiving, Clyde Narramore's position on the same topic exemplified how the focus on personal happiness and self-development modified some evangelicals' views of women's roles. Like Klingberg, Narramore perceived marital adjustment to include the acceptance of one's expected sex role. But in conservative Protestant dialog on this question, he proved a moderate voice who tended to stress women's pursuit of self-development and service within the constraints of her social responsibilities. On one hand, he thought that women’s self-development both in and outside the home were worthy goals and necessary ones for the advancement of the gospel. It was vital, he explained, that women not be confined to “diapers and dishes, dishes and diapers—day in, and day out.” Narramore admitted that some housewives expressed frustration with the continual supervision of small children or with the endless stream of housework that the typical home presented her. He even conceded that gifted

women who, if unmarried, would likely have excelled in the professions, might face particularly intense frustration if they did not use their spare time as wives and mothers to challenge themselves socially and intellectually. Both mothers and the community could benefit when such women devoted themselves to church work and community projects. These ends could, in some circumstances, justify the employment, especially for single women or mothers without small children. One woman might work in order to pay for her child's tuition to a private Christian school. A comfortable older woman might work in order to dedicate her income to missions.

On the other hand, Narramore emphasized that for most women outside work conflicted too greatly with their responsibilities in the home. Preoccupied mothers were unable to meet their children's social and psychological needs, placing them at risk of becoming delinquents. There was no substitute for mother, not only because the father was expected to be at work but also because mothers seemed to possess the necessary emotional requirements for the job. “You have a special place to fill just by being a woman,” Narramore explained to women readers. “When God created a companion for the first man in the garden of Eden, He endowed her with the attributes of beauty, gentleness, love, a sensitive nature, and an understanding heart.”

The idea that women possessed unique attributes and experiences made them seem uniquely able to shape emotional and spiritual characters of their marriages. According to Narramore, the very process of marrying and becoming a mother helped to propel women into adult responsibilities and attitudes. “Ordinarily, a woman's role as wife and mother brings to her some marks of maturity. Giving birth to a child, consulting

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medical specialists, caring for and guiding young lives, and adjusting to a mate, all tend to help a woman leave the land of make-believe and to settle down in the land of reality,” he argued. All too often, the young mother found that her husband was still immature, which led to his “failure to assume family responsibilities,” among other problems. In these circumstances his wife's response had to be both superlative and psychologically informed. It was imperative, Narramore explained, that the wife not attempt to combat immature behavior with immature behavior. It was far more productive for her to realize that “No woman gets a ready-made husband,” and that “she takes him for better or worse, with all that implies, and it is her assignment to make him better, not worse.” He suggested that she do everything in her power to communicate honestly and to encourage her husband to do the same. If she had difficulty bringing up certain topics, she might casually place articles where he was likely to discover and read them on his own. If she suspected serious problems in her marriage, she could suggest that he attend counseling with her.

If this high calling seemed to push beyond the ability of the wife and mother, Narramore reassured readers that personal growth was possible. Family life could at times feel like a trial, but a woman could work on improving her perspective and attitude. “Here, attitude is everything,” he asserted. A mature women approached obstacles that drove some to “burn out and frustration” as a “thrilling challenge” surmountable with wise planning of one's home activities and judicious discipline of one's children. Moreover, the Christian mother's attitude should be particularly positive and high-minded: she could approach her labor in the home as a ministry rather than an empty

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obligation. “Missionaries do not stay on foreign fields because life is so easy and pleasant. . . . So it is with mother,” he explained. “She takes these tasks in stride, motivated by the love in her heart for her children and for her Lord. She does not feel mistreated or trapped.” Since she did not feel trapped, she would also avoid the “hidden persuaders” that motivated some mothers to work for less than noble reasons: the promise of unneeded extra income, attention, or diversion. Mothers sought these benefits primarily because of personal insecurities, not for their family's greater good.67

Conclusion

During the “long decade” of the 1940s to mid-1960s conservative Protestants' opinions about psychology were sharply divided. To an earlier generation of conservative Protestant leaders, modern psychology had, by virtue of its association with an “atheistic” worldview, been suspect. Many conservative Protestants' suspicions of professionals and experts whose religious convictions did not match their own encouraged this mindset. However, by the 1950s more theological conservatives were joining mainline Protestants in viewing an understanding of psychological principles as a helpful aid to ministry. In addition, the quest for “peace,” for victory over worry and anxiety, for the prevention of mental breakdown, and for social success captured the imagination of mainstream Americans and conservative Protestants alike. At the very least, conservative Protestants hoped to address the concerns of Americans for a sound mental life by presenting Christ as the one, true solution to that need. For an increasingly visible minority of writers, this meant recognizing psychological language as a valid means of describing human

67 Narramore, Women's World, 58-62, 114-128. For quote see p. 120.
problems and articulating the power of the gospel. Nothing illustrated this later trend more than the emergence of self-professed “Christian psychologists,” who worked both to popularize psychological concepts among conservative Protestant audiences and to reassure believers that properly vetted and trained believers could offer psychological counsel without reneging on their commitment to biblical authority or the gospel message.

The greater receptivity of some conservative Protestants to psychological language and to the practice of seeing a counselor was a significant ideological shift. It facilitated their acceptance of an important, related idea: that Americans ought to vest interest in the healthy development of individual personalities. This goal, psychologists and other experts increasingly argued, required the lifelong effort of individuals, their families, and their communities, but it held out an explanation for personal and social problems as well as a means of solving them. Conservative Protestants who adopted this same hope saw in the Cold War interest in self-understanding and self-improvement a productive outlook that could bring Americans to recognize their need for God and for the benefits of a vibrant Christian life. Significantly, they also saw a commitment to self-improvement, at least when sought through Christian repentance and rebirth, to be a means of building a more Christian nation.

This nation included stronger marriages and more effective, more nurturing homes. Authors of popular books on Christian psychology made the American family their most prominent concern. They urged Americans to believe that an emotionally fulfilling marriage was possible. Similarly, they urged Christian parents to improve their
efforts by becoming better informed about their psychological needs and better able to meet those needs. As such, they became some of the most enthusiastic proponents of the idea that greater self-understanding, renewed personal commitment to one's marriage and one's children, improved personalities, and better-developed social skills might produce a more effective and more emotionally satisfying family life.
CHAPTER NINE

“As Maturity Developed in Christ, So Did Happiness in Marriage”:
EVANGELICAL MARRIAGE IN COLD WAR LOS ANGELES

In 1963 Billy Graham returned to Los Angeles, the city in which his first major crusade had brought him national fame in 1949. In advance of the crusade, newspapers began sizing up the popularity and meaning of Graham and his message. In the *Los Angeles Times*, Sherwood Wirt argued that historians of the future might conclude that the crusade of 1949 had proved so successful because “God was in it.” Revival long prayed for by conservative evangelicals seemed to have arrived, he observed, with the result that “divorced couples were reconciled; entire families were converted,” among other wonders for which middle-class Americans hoped and evangelicals prayed. The same day, reporter Lance Zanitz ventured that the significance of the “Graham phenomenon” could be found in the fact that the evangelist drew many thousands of people everywhere he went, always to hear “a message which, in essentials, must of necessity be the same every time it is delivered.” Zanitz was impressed that Graham's message appeared to draw warm responses from all of Graham's audiences, whether they were humble or sophisticated. Dan L. Trapp, religion editor for the *Los Angeles Times*, quoted the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) Crusade Director Walter

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Smyth's upbeat assessment of Graham's work: “He has been able to cut across social lines, to influence chiefs of state as well as people in ordinary walks of life. World conditions have favored him and his ministry.” These optimistic assessments may have overstated the universality of Graham's appeal, but they represent the efforts of reporters and supporters to explain the runaway success of an evangelistic message that promised personal redemption and adjustment to the social expectations that prevailed in the United States, Australia, and Europe.

Graham met the expectations of his boosters. Between the revival meetings of August 15 and September 8, 1963, local papers reported a cumulative attendance of 910,340 persons. Graham's messages covered his expected span of topics: the universality of sin, sin's terrible penalty, and the necessity of repentance and faith in Christ. Following his usual convention, Graham stressed the importance of personal conversion and personal morality to the future of Western civilization. The dawning of World War III would appear as a result of human sin, Graham warned in one message; yet even the worst criminals—people as evil as Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichman, who had been responsible for the worst tragedies during the last world war—could be saved if they turned to God. Other messages presented the gospel as the solution to problems in race relations, labor, war, and the threat of dictatorship. Playing his political cards, Graham decried supreme court rulings removing prayer from public schools and warned against the government's increasing incursion into private life.

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4 Numbers were obtained by adding together all attendance numbers reported in the Los Angeles Times' daily coverage of the crusade.
According to Graham, the fact that all human problems stemmed from the individual's unmet hunger to know God meant that the future of the world rested on decisions that young people, married couples, and parents made about their lives and problems. Calling adults back to morality and responsibility, Graham cast Los Angeles as a city of people who had fled their pasts. “There are thousands of people in Los Angeles who are trying to escape the responsibilities of life through alcohol, sex, amusements, and materialism . . . ,” he proclaimed. “In this city there are thousands of misfits who have been uprooted from their homes in the East, and they are 'lost' from God, the church, and morality.” Many, Graham surmised, had grown up in Christian homes but had left the piety of their parents behind; 1963 was the year to return. Graham's messages for the youth, delivered at special youth meetings, placed special stress on sexual morality. Youth, of whom “there are now 25 percent more of than a few years ago,” held the power to change the world. They were also caught between the “mixed up” feelings of adolescence, suspended between conflicting impulses and facing problems that would direct the future course of their lives and the world. They searched for security in conformity, suffered from a lack of knowledge of right and wrong and a lack of authority, were so “sophisticated” that they were “cut off from home ties,” and were “obsessed with sex, but at the same time troubled and conscious-stricken.” They were inclined to delinquency and crime by the need for thrills and meaning in life that only devotion to Christ could ultimately provide. To conquer these problems, youth had to turn to Christ and “submit to him fully so that he can control us.” This personal transformation extended especially to sex life. “It should challenge every young American . . . that they
should live clean, wholesome and pure lives in the midst of a sex-obsessed age,” Graham urged. “It will be hard and tough, but Jesus never promised that the Christian life would be easy.” Those who turned to Christ could make the United States a moral influence around the world.5

Graham's revival sermons—along with the subtexts they contained about adolescent life, marriage, and family life—were the most important aspect of a ministry that was beginning to widen its scope of activities from evangelistic rallies to education and publishing. Besides conducting several evangelistic crusades each year, by 1963 Billy Graham had become the author of several books, including the inspirational titles Peace with God (1953), The Secrets of Happiness (1955).6 Three years earlier the BGEA had begun distribution of its popular magazine, Decision. Consistent with this new emphasis, staff at the BGEA considered augmenting the organization's trickle of comments on family life by publishing a Bible study for evangelicals about the Christian family. The ambition to publish a Bible study ultimately went unrealized, but the potential project prompted the BGEA to launch a fact-finding project: in addition to disseminating messages on Christian living, it asked its constituents about the their own

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challenges in bringing faith to bear on the vicissitudes of their personal lives. Solely or largely in conjunction with its pre-crusade work, the BGEA distributed surveys to participants of several Los Angeles churches. In reply, 160 persons returned questionnaires about their marriages.

The surveys were not designed to provide scientific measurements and therefore their results should not be considered as reliable as a survey distributed to a large, random sample of evangelicals. They were distributed to a fairly specific demographic group, who had the option of participating in the measurement. Nonetheless, the surveys do provide a rare snapshot of what a largely suburban, middle-class group of practicing evangelicals believed about topics often touched upon by Cold War advice literature and sermons. In general, they revealed that middle class evangelicals with an interest in the work of the BGEA accepted the dream of an affectionate marriage and a harmonious family life and expected Christian faith to bring them closer to realizing those ideals.

**Purpose, Format, and Scope of the BGEA Surveys**

The idea to base a Bible study on the problems reported by actual evangelicals probably originated with Billy Graham's Research Assistant, Robert Ferm. Ferm had already created questionnaires to gather data from people who had made decisions for Christ at Billy Graham crusades, an ongoing research project that became the basis of several books in which Ferm argued that the crusades had meaningful, lasting effects on converts.7 At the very least, it is clear that respondents were instructed to remit their

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7 Robert Ferm's books about Christian conversion and the success of Billy Graham crusades include: *They Met God at the New York Crusade* (Minneapolis: Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 1957); *Cooperative Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958); *Persuaded to Live: Conversion Stories from Billy Graham Crusades* (Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1958); *The Psychology of*
completed surveys to his office, the Research Department at BGEA Headquarters in Minneapolis. Ferm took enough interest in the survey results to keep them among his papers.

The format of the surveys reflected the BGEA’s intention to gather data from evangelicals about several aspects of their family lives. The BGEA distributed three survey instruments: a ten-page form consisting of eight pages of questions for married couples, plus additional, short sections for singles and children in the home; a short independent form for children; and a short independent form for singles. One hundred sixty persons completed and returned the eight-page survey directed to married persons. However, few singles or children completed the surveys or survey sections targeted to them. In view of the limited data available about either group, this chapter focuses exclusively on replies to the surveys intended for married persons.

The surveys for married persons promised respondents anonymity in exchange for their replies to several groupings of questions: general information about age, marital status, and background; how happy respondents rated their marriage; the major problems respondents faced in the areas of home life, finances, social activities, religion, relations with in-laws, and sex; the personality characteristics of respondents and their spouses; the challenges that respondents faced as parents; the nature of their preparation for marriage; and what Scripture or advice they had found helpful for dealing with problems about the home. [See Appendix A] Each of the sections invited respondents to elaborate with written comments and provided a wide side margin for that purpose.

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The circumstances under which the surveys were distributed make them an effective measure of what committed evangelicals hailing largely from a middle-class, suburban background thought about their family lives. Comments respondents included on their survey forms suggest that BGEA staff member Dan Piatt distributed some or all of the surveys to participants in training classes that he conducted for volunteer counselors during the days leading up to the crusade. As a result, survey respondents best represented the opinions of evangelical believers who sustained an active interest in ministry. The survey instructions played on these commitments, urging respondents to make the “sacrifice of time” necessary to complete the survey carefully:

A Bible study is being planned on the home. We feel there is tremendous need at this time for a Bible study of this nature, but we need your help! You can make a vital contribution, regardless of age or status, by completing the section, or sections, of this questionnaire most applicable. We know you're busy, but we're going to ask you to make whatever sacrifice of your time is necessary to complete this questionnaire and send it in. We can't get ahead in this study without your help. You will not be asked your name. We are interested in facts.

This earnest request for “facts” and the promise of anonymity probably encouraged the disclosure of personal information. The advance knowledge that information would be used to create educational and devotional material likely also encouraged respondents to record more freely and more enthusiastically the difficulties and thoughts that resonated strongest with their beliefs and concerns as Christian believers. The surveys, then, are best interpreted as measuring the attitudes of evangelicals who personally identified Christian faith as important to their lives and who were likely to discuss their family lives from that perspective.
In addition, the crusade volunteers to whom the surveys were distributed shared a middle-class, suburban, and Protestant background. Survey respondents hailed primarily from the suburbs surrounding Los Angeles. [Table 1] Consistent with their addresses, most of the fifty-four male survey respondents identified a middle-class occupation. Out of the 106 female respondents, seventy-one respondents (66 percent) reported that they were occupied solely as a homemaker at the time they filled out the survey, while thirty-two respondents (30 percent) reported full or part-time employment. [Table 2] The vast majority of respondents also shared a thoroughly Protestant religious background: All but two respondents volunteered their current religious affiliation, and all named a Protestant church, denomination, or tradition. Eighty-five percent (136 respondents) also identified one or more Protestant traditions as their religious background; out the remaining 15 percent, just over 11 percent (18 persons) identified a non-Protestant or non-religious background and just under 4 percent (6 persons) failed to respond to the question. [Tables 3 and 4] Two-thirds of this predominantly Protestant group (108 persons; 66.25 percent of respondents) reported that they had “become a Christian”—a question most understood to be asking when they had made a conscious, adult decision to follow Jesus Christ—ten or more years earlier. These shared characteristics made respondents best representative of a particular subset of evangelicals: the suburban, middle-class, and staunchly Protestant demographic that was one of the most important supports to the growing evangelical movement.
### TABLE 1

CITIES OF RESIDENCE, ALL RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canoga Park</td>
<td>Chatsworth</td>
<td>Culver City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encino</td>
<td>Glendale</td>
<td>Granada Hills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iano Oaks</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>North Hollywood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northridge</td>
<td>Pacoma</td>
<td>Palmdale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rededay</td>
<td>Roseda</td>
<td>Sepulveda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherman Oaks</td>
<td>Sylmar</td>
<td>Tulsa, OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Nuys</td>
<td>West Van Nuys</td>
<td>Woodland Hills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 2

**OCCUPATIONS OF RESPONDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations (Men)</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Occupations (Women)</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engineering and Design</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Homemaking</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking, Business, Management</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Secretarial and Clerical Work</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aviation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and Merchandising</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ministry</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ministry (Pastor's Wife)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dental Assistantship</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV/Film Production</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Child Care</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire-fighting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Real Estate</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Work</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sewing Machine Operation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Telephone Operation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinetmaking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Electronic Design</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rug Cleaning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dog Grooming</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Employed (Machine Shop)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Work (Lab)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Work (Instruments)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Representation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegible Response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
### TABLE 3

CURRENT RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION, ALL RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Other Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Village Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Brethren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Nazarene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionary Church</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>No Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal (Assemblies of God, Foursquare, Pentecostal Holiness)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Looking for a church; active but unaffiliated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covenant</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Christian Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Disciples of Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Denominational</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Evangelical Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Church</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Independent Fundamental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian and Missionary Alliance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Full Gospel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Methodist</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Unspecified Church Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Background</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Other Church Background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Reformed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant (Unspecified)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Brethren and Methodist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Brethren, Christian Church, &amp; Presbyterian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Catholic and Protestant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Christian and Missionary Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None; Infrequent Church Participation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Christian Church and Methodist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist and Presbyterian</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Church of Christ and Methodist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Congregational and Union Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal (Assemblies of God, Church of God, Foursquare)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Christian Church and Presbyterian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mennonite</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Christian Science and Reformed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brethren</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Disciples of Christ and Methodist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Disciples of Christ and Presbyterian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Church</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Episcopalian and Presbyterian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Science</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lutheran and Presbyterian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Christ</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Methodist and Pentecostal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covenant and Congregational</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Methodist and Presbyterian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episcopalian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Non-Practicing Jewish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Fundamental</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Non-Denominational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nazarene</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey pool also reflects the perspectives of evangelicals of varying ages. The respondent pool was split evenly between persons 40 years of age or younger and persons of at least 41 years of age. [Figure 1] About 70 percent of all respondents (112 persons) had begun their current or most recent marriage between August 1943 and August 1963.
[Figure 2] The respondent pool, then, represented the perspectives of more than one generation of men and women, the plurality of whom had begun their married lives during or after World War II. In addition, the plurality of the survey pool—about two-thirds of it—were women, a fact that gives a feminine perspective much better representation in the survey results. [Figure 3]
FIGURE 1

![Pie chart showing age distribution of respondents.]

Age of Respondents:
- 18-30 Years: 26
- 31-40 Years: 53
- 41-50 Years: 45
- 51+ Years: 34
- No Response: 2

FIGURE 2

![Pie chart showing length of marriage or most recent marriage of respondents.]

Length of Respondents' Current or Most Recent Marriage:
- 0-10 Years: 36
- 11-20 Years: 58
- 21-30 Years: 54
- 31+ Years: 10
- No Response: 2
Evangelical Attitudes Toward Marriage

One of the most striking statistical aspects of the BGEA's survey respondents is the overwhelming number who perceived—or at least wished to report—that their marriages were happy. Of the 160 survey respondents, ninety-eight (61.25 percent of all respondents) reported that their marriages were “very happy,” while another forty-five respondents (27.5 percent of all respondents) reported that they were “moderately...
happy.” Only about fourteen respondents (approximately 8.75 percent of all respondents) reported that they were “neither happy nor unhappy” to “very unhappy.” Four respondents (2.5 percent) did not answer the question. [See Figure 4]

The source of respondents' positive perceptions of their marriages may be partly rooted in the fact that most of them embodied the American postwar ideal of enjoying an intact marriage to a single spouse. Out of 160 respondents, 137 (85.63 percent of all respondents) were either married to their first spouse or remarried following the death of their first spouse. Eleven persons were in a second marriage and did not indicate the cause was the death of the prior spouse; two reported that they had been married three times. One had divorced and not remarried, and one had been widowed and not

549
remarried. One respondent was still single. The remaining seven respondents did not answer the question. At least in very general contours, then, these evangelicals reflected the general trend of middle-class Americans during the 1950s and early 1960s away from the rapidly-rising divorce rates of earlier decades. [See Figure 5]

FIGURE 5

Marital Status and Number of Marriages

It seems likely that survey respondents not only reflected social ideals typical of middle-class Americans between WWII and the 1960s, but may also have been an exemplary group compared to the general memberships of their churches. Divorce still carried some stigma in the larger culture, and within conservative churches divorced-and-remarried persons could face special scrutiny. Given these facts, it is reasonable to surmise that some of those who suffered less marital success may not have been as active

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8 The two respondents who reported on a marriage that had ended by death or divorce have been counted and treated equally with all other responses, since they still reflect the opinion of evangelical individuals to an actual marriage experience. Likewise, I have also chosen to count the responses of the single respondent, since he regarded the marriage questions as relevant enough to his situation to complete the survey.
in church life and therefore may not have received a survey form from Dan Piatt. It is also possible that those who could report an intact marriage, or who conformed to social or religious expectations in other ways, were either more willing to share personal information or to believe that the information they provided might be valuable. Indeed, at least two persons who cared enough to write BGEA about the survey declined to fill out the instrument themselves.  

9 One was a grief-stricken mother who regretted that her daughter, who had recently died of a serious illness, had been caused “heartache and anxiety” over her parents’ separation. “There was a time I could have answered all these questions but for some reason or other now I'm at a loss as to what my status is? . . . You see our house was divided for selfish reasons (I'm sure). . . . Now our selfishness is no more, but it's too late.  

10 The other correspondent was a jubilant woman in her mid-30s, who had married a year earlier and had found that the new marriage was fulfilling her best expectations. “All through courtship we had real blessings from the Lord studying his Word and always having prayer together,” she shared. “My desires at the age of 34 were for a partner who would share in spiritual desires and in this atmosphere love would rule and reign the home. My wishes have been completely fulfilled and my husband has constantly reaffirmed that his longings have at last been fulfilled too.” Recently married and newly a mother, the respondent felt that her marital relationship did not yet suffer from major difficulties. In view of this fact, she explained that she and her husband “have

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9 Since these letters were accompanied by blank survey forms, I have not counted either correspondent among the 160 survey correspondents.

10 Letter from an anonymous writer to Dan Piatt. Attachment to Survey 27 (Blank), Folder 1-11.

For the duration of this chapter, I will identify all surveys by the number of the folder in which it is stored, then by its numerical position within the folder. The topmost survey in each folder is numbered 1. All surveys are housed in Box1:10-16, Papers of Robert Ferm, Billy Graham Center Archives, Wheaton, IL.
read your questionnaires and feel our answers would not be a good sampling for your purposes.” Both the grieving and jubilant respondents believed that their experiences were not typical enough to be of value.11

If their own explanations are any guide, the most important source of respondents' positive assessments of their marriages lay in the role they expected faith to play in their lives. Respondents expected that Christian faith would prosper their home lives by helping them to overcome personal difficulties and perform the responsibilities of mature adults. As one respondent put it, he experienced mostly “normal” problems in his marriage. These difficulties could undermine the couple's happiness, if it were not for their Christian faith. “My wife and I have what could be considered the normal pitfalls in our marriage, e.g. sometimes irritable, sometimes tired, sometimes caught up in society's 'keeping up with the Jone's,' etc.,” he admitted. “Only our Christian faith keeps us in the 'very happy' column.”12 Moreover, respondents sometimes considered ordinary or routine problems as obstacles that mature adults—especially those empowered by Christian faith—ought to be able to overcome. “My problems are all in the past, I hope. I have had them—big ones—but when they get too big for me, I give them to Christ as he asks,” a wife of twenty-six years shared. She was even more optimistic about most of the problems identified on the survey: “But all the little ones as 99 percent of the type you list—should be easily settled by the couple unless one or both are very immature or selfish.”13 Putting

11 Letter, Attachment to Survey 29 (blank), Folder 1-11.
12 Survey 20, Folder 1-11.
13 Survey 17, Folder 1-14.
an equally positive spin on her experiences, a wife of five years who rated her marriage “Very Happy” wrote, “Of course there are times of unhappiness, but they result in growth and increased understanding.”

Such “normal pitfalls” were the sort of difficulties that evangelicals regarded as occasions for perseverance and prayer. Respondents viewed their marital happiness or perceived ability to manage their marital problems as tied to—even dependent upon—their attempt to counterbalance indulgence in a problematic behavior or attitude with the power of faith. “Sometimes we get caught up in the general rat race of city living, but having Christ as head of our home, helps us to overcome this problem,” a wife of five years shared. Another young wife agreed, writing “We've had many little and big trials, etc., during our 2 years, but we're both saved and rely on God for our strength. Even before we met we had prayed much about our mate and feel our prayers were answered.” A wife of twenty years recounted that her argumentative attitude changed when her conversion brought her to place a higher subjective value on her marriage:

[Before] My conversion (1959) my marriage was certainly not a happy one. My husband was converted a year before me and even before this time, ours was a rocky affair—I was always dissatisfied and nagging and only after being found by our Lord and Saviour did I realize what a blessing my husband and my marriage were.

14 Survey 18, Folder 1-11.
15 Survey 21, Folder 1-11.
16 Survey 1, Folder 1-13.
17 Survey 12, Folder 1-11.
Also testifying to the power of faith to overcome personal immaturity and vice, a husband of six years explained that his marriage had “some tough moments and the first years were very trying as both of us were young and immature. But our common love of the Lord Jesus held us together. Outside of Christ I am sure we'd [have] been divorced.”

In a couple of cases, respondents shared problems that most people would have agreed were reasonable causes of concern but cited that the Christian faith had enabled them to cope. “For the past 8 years my husband has been a weekend alcoholic, one wife confessed. She also indicated that she and her husband experienced “no Christian fellowship” and that she attended church alone. Nonetheless, her sense of well-being had shifted following her recent conversion. “Since I've become a Christian, it's been the happiest year of my life—my resentment changed.” Another writer shared, “Our marriage is becoming more satisfactory as time goes on—due to our combined effort to serve God, and overcome past mistakes through the help of Jesus,” she explained. “Only when I realized that real security rested on him and not in material things and people, was I able to face some of many complex problems.” One of these “complex problems” was the refusal of her husband's adult children from a previous marriage to accept her. Her husband focused on pleasing his children and entertaining them on weekends, in consequence leaving her alone. Christian devotional life helped her to manage her frustration:

His children refused to allow me to visit them with him, etc. It was humiliating and embarrassing to me. Then my husband refuses to go out socially—except to church—even to church parties with me, because of a guilt feeling he has about neglecting his children even though our children

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Survey 7, Folder 1-12.

Survey 26, Folder 1-14.
are in their 30s. Then his mistrust of me in money matters caused trouble. Only when I took this problem to the Lord did I find peace and an inner contentment that they cannot destroy—even today though he has taken all his grandchildren and daughter on an outing—I now do not mind being left behind. Praise God!20

Couples who shared common Christian values also identified their shared convictions as an element that promoted a sense of fellowship and unity that their separate responsibilities and failures to communicate in other areas did not provide. After twenty-six years of marriage, a full-time housewife explained:

My husband is not as “outgoing” characteristically as I, tho' always well-liked when one gets acquainted with him. He has an inflexible attitude which sometimes causes friction between us and between him and the children. It is due mainly to our inability to communicate, I believe. However, I specify our marriage as “very happy” as compared with most others I've observed and I feel this is due to our agreement that on basics such as belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, in Christian ethics and conduct, etc. [Emphasis author's]21

Likewise, personal devotion and mutual fellowship growing from the couple's conversion sixteen years earlier helped one husband and wife of twenty-eight years to enjoy a closer relationship. The wife reported:

Since both saved and filled with Holy Spirit truly our lives have been transformed and there is a glorious unity of spirit. Truly this of the Lord as we were of very different temperaments and had personality clashes before saved. Prayer changes things and people.22

20 Survey 2, Folder 1-15.
21 Survey 7, Folder 1-14.
Summing up the operative assumption behind many of the comments offered about happiness in marriage, a husband who rated his marriage of twenty-two years “Very Happy” explained, “As maturity developed in Christ so did happiness in marriage.”

In a few cases, respondents were so interested in advancing the view that God aided them in overcoming problems that they claimed not to have any. “I am sorry I am unable to give you any information that is helpful,” one respondent wrote. “God solves my problems before they occur. All I need to do is find God's will.” Another wrote, “As I look back upon the years I had with my beloved husband it seems I've never had any of the problems suggested. We prayed for guidance and our Lord directed.” Another explained that her husband's earnest Christian commitment to leadership in the home had guarded against most common family troubles: “I have not felt answering the sections on the following pages necessary—as our home is blessedly trouble-free. I have a Christian husband who is the head of our home—both loving and considerate—Christ is honored in our home and because of Him I trust we will raise our two sons in This Love.”

**Evangelical Marriage Problems: The Daily Grind and Beyond**

The optimism that most respondents expressed about their marriages sprung from a powerful, shared assumption that marital happiness rested largely on the success of married persons in fulfilling their responsibilities and in developing satisfying emotional


24 Survey 5, Folder 1-13.

25 Survey 6, Folder 1-15.

26 Survey 21, Folder 1-14.
and spiritual connections with their spouses and children. Respondents reasoned that faith could be expected to prosper marriages because it redeemed the personal and social life of the believer and enlivened his relationships. Respondents expressed these beliefs most clearly when they discussed the importance of Jesus Christ to their marriages, but these convictions also shaped their perceptions of the main challenges they faced in every area of their marriages.

Respondents expressed concern for a wide range of marital problems, but the issues they considered most troubling related closely to their quest to establish an emotionally intimate and spiritually vibrant family life. As one might expect, some respondents identified marital problems that included their family’s ability to handle routine problems and to fulfill basic material, social, or religious responsibilities. These issues were too practical to be avoided. However, respondents expressed as great or greater concern for those aspects of home life that touched on the more qualitative aspects of their lives, such as the achievement of emotional intimacy, the infusion of Christian values into the home, and the development of spiritual unity between husband and wife.

In-Laws

The BGEA asked respondents to report problems they encountered in five areas: “Ongoing Home Situation,” “Social Activities,” “Mutual Friends,” “Religion,” “Finances,” “Relations with In-laws,” and “Sex Relations.” Out of these categories, the fewest number of respondents expressed concern about “Relations with In-Laws.” Only 20 percent of respondents reported any kind of problem in this category, a fact which
suggests that respondents expected and succeeded in realizing the mainstream expectation that marriage ought to free a couple to begin a new household unburdened by the overweening demands of extended family. In response to the survey questions that specifically asked respondents to indicate whether they experienced problems associated with failure to become mentally independent of their parents, “Adjusting to Advice from In-Laws” and “Responsibility to Leave Father and Mother,” only a handful of respondents replied affirmatively. Only six reported that a relative's advice had been a source of difficulty, while only five respondents thought the responsibility to “leave father and mother” had been a sore point in their marriage. According to respondents, troubling financial ties were no more common: just six respondents claimed to have problems relating to financial responsibility for their in-laws, while two reported problems stemming from relatives living in the home. No respondents indicated that they experienced the problem of in-laws “subsidizing” their marriage.

Significantly, fifteen people—a little less than half of those who reported problems with in-laws—reported that their difficulties stemmed neither from their own adjustment to independence nor from financial entanglements, but instead from unacceptable behavior by a parent. “In-laws just won't leave us alone,” stated a wife of seven years. A young wife married less than two years explained that her parents were too dependent: “My parents expect us to keep them occupied. They have virtually no outside activities.” Another wife reported that her parents had caused the couple so much “grief” earlier in her marriage that her husband still felt distant from them.27 Complaints of this nature

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27 Survey 34, Folder 1-10; Survey 18, Folder 1-10; Survey 38, Folder 1-10.
suggested that some couples troubled by in-law problems believed in and longed for
greater autonomy but could not enjoy it because parents failed to respect the boundaries
that couples, advice literature, and media increasingly regarded as essential. [See Table 5]
TABLE 5
IN-LAW RELATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage (All Respondents)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>48.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Problem [Write-In Response]</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>33.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusting to advice of in-laws and making your own decisions</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility to “leave father and mother and cleave unto mate”’s</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem of living in same house</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial responsibility for in-laws</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-laws subsidizing marriage</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All percentages are rounded to nearest hundredth.

The low number of reported problems with in-laws could easily have sprung from two factors. One possibility is that some couples may have allowed relatives to live with them but simply did not regard this arrangement as a marital problem. The survey implied that relatives living in the home ought to be regarded as a problem; if respondents did not agree with this premise, they may have skipped the question. Indeed, three respondents provided written responses that challenged the assumption behind the question. Two indicated that they had shared their home with another family member and found the experience to be a blessing, while a third reported being able to care cheerfully for an ill sister. Demographic factors may also have affected respondents' concerns about in-laws. Much of the growth of urban and suburban Southern California was the result of the migration of Americans from other regions into the area for the benefits of the climate.
and for white-collar job opportunities created by the postwar economic boom and defense contracts. Many couples may have lived too far away from their extended families for significant meddling to have taken place. Additionally, many survey couples had been married several years and had therefore had ample opportunity to pass through the initial period of marital adjustment during which boundaries with in-laws were more likely to be negotiated.

Whatever the case, this very low rate of concern for in-law relations compared to the other categories reveals an important fact about the concerns of respondents: the nuclear family, along with its various needs and conflicts, ranked foremost in their minds.

Ongoing Home Situation

With in-laws causing marital woes in only a small minority of cases, the relationship of couples to the urban and suburban social worlds associated with jobs, churches, peer social networks, and recreational opportunities emerged as more prominent sources of concern. It was also in these areas that respondents' positive assessments of their ability to fulfill basic responsibilities associated with daily routines and responsibilities became most evident, as well as the greater salience of their collective concern about the qualitative aspects of home, social, and religious life.

Nowhere were respondents' concerns about problems relating to daily routine clearer than in their replies to the section dedicated to “Ongoing Home Situation.” Out of the problems covered by this section, television posted the most vexing problem, drawing complaints from twenty-six respondents. Other difficulties trailed in the number of
replies they drew: Getting Up in Morning (23), Mealtimes (19), Care of Home (18), Other Recreational Activities (13), Getting Mate/Children Off in Morning (6), and Return of Husband from Work (5). [See Table 6]

TABLE 6
ONGOING HOME SITUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of All Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Problems [Write-In Response]</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart to Heart Communication</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>35.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Up in Morning</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mealtimes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care of Home</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Recreational Activities</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Husband and/or Children Off in Morning</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return of Husband from Work</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those who reported difficulty with one or more of these above problems commonly cited persistent trouble with fatigue, lack of time, different sleep/wake schedules, standards of cleanliness, or dislike for housework. Wives were particularly likely to report feeling tired or inefficient. “He prefers everything in its place and I'm too sloppy to maintain it that way,” one wife wrote. Another reported similarly, “I am very slow and inefficient and never 'caught up.’” A third reported, “I find it extremely difficult
Some husbands offered the same reports about their wives. “My wife could have more pride in her house than she shows,” one criticized, while another noted “Wife not as neat as husband.” Wives who faulted their husbands for home problems related to routine saw the husband’s lack of energy or pro-activity as a source of trouble. “Husband does not care to—or enjoy—and will not accept responsibilities of the upkeep of the home,” one gripped, while a second expressed frustration over the effect of mate's inaction on her own attitude: “Working and doing all of [the] housework without help or assistance from husband sometimes makes me a nag and short tempered.”

Philosophical and spiritual problems also weighed heavily on respondents' minds, especially on the question of whether their family's habits reflected spiritual values. Television drew the greatest number of complaints because it intruded into daily routines and proved difficult to regulate. Respondents noted that their families watched television “too much,” found that it “interfered with homework” or other responsibilities in the home, and induced children to “watch more television than they should at a time.” The conflict it generated troubled parents. “Hard to restrict children's TV gracefully,” one mother reported.

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28 Survey 19, Folder 1-14; Survey 4, Folder 1-15; Survey 30, Folder 1-15.
29 Survey 5, Folder 1-11.
30 Survey 9, Folder 1-15.
31 Survey 11, Folder 1-11.
32 Survey 8, Folder 1-14.
33 Survey 12, Folder 1-10.
34 Survey 14, Folder 1-10.
Another observed, “Children want it and I always have to say no.”\textsuperscript{35} The allure of television and the difficulty of restricting it naturally led some to worry that their family's television viewing proceeded without being subjected to the family's spiritual values. “Children watch almost anything they like,” one mother wrote. “Dad retires to bedroom to read—feel we should decide together on programs, etc.”\textsuperscript{36}

The greatest complaint about mealtimes was that they were too hectic, so the ideals of family togetherness was lost. Predominating were comments such as “Mealtimes are rather hectic–4 children,”\textsuperscript{37} “many outsiders, esp. children . . . Our home is a 'grand hotel',”\textsuperscript{38} “meals not planned or scheduled,”\textsuperscript{39} “husband is away so much at mealtime.”\textsuperscript{40} One respondent described how chaos and different parenting styles could undermine her picture of an ideal family meal: “would like it to be a time of conversation and family unity but children usually are laughing and playing—I insist on eating without playing—my husband is very lax on disciplining or in making children obey.”\textsuperscript{41} Another reported, “Mealtimes aren't relaxed and enjoyable but hurried and often spent in correcting our daughter's table manners, etc.”\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{35} Survey 16, Folder 1-15. \textsuperscript{36} Survey 12, Folder 1-11. \textsuperscript{37} Survey 4, Folder 1-15. \textsuperscript{38} Survey 5, Folder 1-15. \textsuperscript{39} Survey 16, Folder 1-15. \textsuperscript{40} Survey 29, Folder 1-15. \textsuperscript{41} Survey 12, Folder 1-11. \textsuperscript{42} Survey 18, Folder 1-11.
By far the most persistent day-to-day concern among respondents related to a single item, “Heart to Heart Communication.” Fifty-six respondents reported difficulties in this area, twice as many as reported difficulty with any other aspect of their day-to-day lives. Some reported a general lack of communication on any topic outside of essential matters. “There is no heart-to-heart communication. Life is one series of regular habits,” reported a respondent who rated her marriage “moderately unhappy.” Another rated her marriage “moderately happy” but in regard to heartfelt communication reported “there just isn't any.” Respondents of both sexes indicated that the wife in their household wished for more communication than her husband offered. One wife commented, “There are so many topics I would like to discuss, such as religion, politics, etc, but only rarely do we get into such a discussion. He doesn't tell me much about his work, or care to express himself on topics and so I'm starved for stimulating conversation.” Another concluded that her husband made good decisions with the Lord's direction but wished he would discuss important matters more fully: “Husband is very quiet—I am more outspoken and would like to be able to talk things out with my husband—he seems unable to do this or doesn't feel the need. He is very self-reliant in his own make-up and yet relies on the Lord, I believe for guidance.” A husband admitted, “We don't seem to have much time for conversation. My wife especially feels I don't share my work and all problems. I guess she's right, and its my fault.” Some respondents pointed out that the

43 Survey 9, Folder 1-14.
44 Survey 18, Folder 1-14.
45 Survey 23, Folder 1-11.
46 Survey 12, Folder 1-11.
47 Survey 22, Folder 1-11.
differing responsibilities of housewives and their husbands created a gap of interest and respect that undermined the communication that they craved. “I realize this is a common complaint especially since my husband is a successful business man and his mind is very busy on important matters. My problems are very small to him,” one wife explained. A husband confessed, “Difference in education and scope of interests. Restricts common interests. I have a hard time respecting her opinion on matters outside the home.”

In the quest for an intimate family life, religion could prove either a source of help or a source of greater frustration. Calling up a common expectation about the result of shared piety in the home, one respondent claimed that “as we both grow closer to the Lord we find it easy to communicate.” A less fortunate respondent revealed the opposite situation: “Lack of companionship but most of all a lack of seeing eye to eye on spiritual things.” Another replied, “We have no Christian fellowship. My husband won't go to church.” The most effusive report concerning a lack of communication on spiritual matters came from a wife who felt ridiculed for her religious views. Her communication problems, she explained, were rooted in “The fact that my husband does not know the Lord—he feels I am mental because of my great love for the Lord. He doesn't respect me as a person—Therefore there is no communication. He lives to have a good time, so our attitudes and motivations are completely different.” On the happiness of her eleven-year marriage (“Very Unhappy”), she commented, “My purpose and goal is to know, love,
serve God. My husband is not a Christian and there is continuous conflict.” A husband's actions, but also the wife's perception of a great and insurmountable spiritual void separating her in all ways from her husband's feelings and priorities, broke down any subjective sense she had of family unity—or the possibility of it, outside of his conversion.⁵²

Social Life and Mutual Friends

The concern respondents expressed about intimacy in marriage carried over to the responses they supplied to questions about their social lives, mutual friends, and religious life. In these areas, respondents often reported difficulty related to time and other routine matters, but their answers also focused heavily on questions of religious standards, personal values, and the quest to achieve a sense of shared values and active religious commitment.

Consistent with their assessments of their “Ongoing Home Situation,” most respondents believed that their social lives met at least basic standards of success. When presented with the yes or no question, “Do you have wholesome recreation?” One hundred one respondents (63.1 percent) offered a definite yes, while just twenty-four (15 percent) replied with a definite no. The remaining thirty-five respondents (21.9 percent) did not respond to the question. Questions asking respondents to identify specific problems with social activities likewise offer an impression of well-being on the part of

⁵² Survey 6, Folder 1-16.
most respondents with a significant minority experiencing frustration. Thirty-four persons—21.25 % of the survey pool—judged their social involvement “insufficient.” Only seven respondents thought their families were “over-active.” [Table 7]
### TABLE 7
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of Responses</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Problems [Write-In Response]</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overly Active</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreement Over Type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mate causes embarrassment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too shy/quiet</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overly boisterous</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overly attentive to opposite</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sex</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other problems: (please specify)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do You Have Wholesome Recreation?</td>
<td>35 (21.88%)</td>
<td>101 (63.13%)</td>
<td>24 (15%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents who reported difficulty with at least one aspect of their social lives revealed difficulties that ranged from routine frustrations to incompatible preferences or personality tendencies that got in the way of an active social life. The most common routine frustration specified in written comments proved to be lack of time, energy, or interest on the part of one or more family members. Personality conflict—an echo,
perhaps, of the dearth of “heart to heart communication” many respondents reported—
presented obstacles to almost 20 percent of all respondents. By far the most common
personality conflict emerged when one spouse judged their partner either too shy or too
boisterous. Additionally, respondents used the category “Other” to report a variety of
specific behaviors that vexed them: excessive discussion of money in social situations,
displays of emotional immaturity, or public criticism of family members.

Respondents also indicated that philosophical and religious commitments played a
large role in the failure or success of their social lives. For a few respondents, differing
values stood in the way of shared enjoyment of social activities. A few wives complained:
“Wife tends to be more involved in church activities than husband,” “My husband doesn't
like to plan ahead for these [church functions]. My husband doesn't like social affairs,”
“husband wanted no part in church functions.” Another reported active antagonism
between husband and wife over the questions of recreation and church involvement: “We
have none due to a mixed marriage. I don't approve of his and he doesn't go to church
activities. It is a very lonesome life with hardly any friends.”

More commonly, respondents revealed that church involvement did not separate
couples; to the contrary, it provided many with the lion's share of their opportunities for
social connections and recreation outside of the home. Some respondents embraced that
arrangement as a positive option; others merely noted that church provided most of their
social outlets, sometimes because their opportunities for non-religious activities were
constricted by various factors. Writing about the role of church functions in their social

53 Survey 16, Folder 1-12.
lives, representative comments included: “[Church functions] our only outside interest,”
“shopping and church attendance are about our biggest functions,”
“Church-centered altogether,” “Our social activities very satisfying—centered in church and family get-
together,” and “Our social activities are, by choice, almost entirely limited to dinners
with church friends, occasional swim parties, barbeques, etc.” For one couple, church
provided some of the few social activities they could afford: “Because of a tight budget, we
don't have social activities outside of church.” A young wife included her and her
husband's actual schedule. Church activities occupied nearly every evening:

I work—and we are usually gone every night of the week except one
Sun. night-church.
Mon. home
Tues Church baseball team
Wed Prayer meeting
Thurs (always some meeting comes up)
Fri Baseball practice
Sat. All other things that didn't get done during the other days.

As the above schedule hints, some respondents and respondent spouses felt that
their church involvement dominated their social activities or even their lives. One
respondent asked the persistent question of those stretched thin by apparent obligation:

“How many [church functions] should we attend?” Another respondent revealed they
“could have more recreation” but that “church activities take our time.”

54 Survey 13, Folder 1-11.
55 Survey 16, Folder 1-11.
56 Survey 7, Folder 1-13.
57 Survey 2, Folder 1-13.
58 Survey 4, Folder 1-12.
59 Survey 19, Folder 1-11.
60 Survey 13, Folder 1-12.
commented, “[Church functions] sometimes too many—they hinder family life.” 61 “We don't have anything we like to do together such as fishing, etc. This is not a problem,” one respondent claimed. However, she also admitted that her husband felt they were too involved in church activities. She conceded, “it would help us if we did do something together besides church.” 62

In some cases, church demands became sources of tension or conflict. “We disagree on how many church activities to participate in. Sunday is becoming too busy with church activities, especially with 2 teenagers who should participate in program, etc,” one respondent reported. 63 Another explained, “Husband has very little concept of how much time necessary housekeeping takes. . . . He expects things to get done but allows no time for me to do them. In that we are constantly on the go—mostly to church.” 64 A husband expressed regret that his family believed he was too quick to volunteer his time at church: “Sometimes I have interference from family after I've felt a definite urge to serve.” 65

While church life dominated the social obligations of some respondents, others felt that they ought to cut their remaining ties to secular friends and activities due to the thread their influence posed to Christian living. “We still continue to see our non-Christian friends,” a wife reported. “I find this has quite a bearing on my own spiritual

61 Survey 20, Folder 1-12.
62 Survey 15, Folder 1-10.
63 Survey 6, Folder 1-11.
64 Survey 19, Folder 1-11.
65 Survey 32, Folder 1-15.
life. After being with people, who aren't evangelical, for any length of time I find myself procrastinating on my devotional life. Yet we do discuss Christ a little bit when the opportunity arises. They know a church association."

The most closely related question category, “Mutual Friends,” generated responses that likewise reveal the importance that the institutional church and shared religious belief played in respondents’ social lives. On the whole, fewer respondents reported problems forming friendships than they did with finding adequate opportunities for socializing and recreation: the question set on mutual friends attracted just fifty-nine reports of difficulty from respondents, far less than the question of social activities. Out of these, about twenty-four persons reported that they had difficulty “Finding and maintaining mutual friends.” [Table 8]

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66 Survey 26, Folder 1-15.
TABLE 8
MUTUAL FRIENDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage (All Respondents)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>39.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Problems [Write-In Response]</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty Finding and Maintaining Mutual Friends</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreement, e.g. mate prefers non-Christians, etc.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Close Friends in Home</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mates Dislikes My Friends</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Dislike Mate's Friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mate's Friends Dislike Me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consistent with the picture of evangelical recreational life revealed in the section on Social Activities, respondents who reported difficulties with developing friendships offered explanations in which religious barriers predominated. “Some of his friends (for a long time) are non-Christians,” a wife explained, and it did not seem that the couple could convert them.67 Another wife found the religious difference too troubling to inspire the desire for closer attachment. “Husband is very gracious to my friends and I enjoy but do not always approve of his friends,” she explained. “Many of his friends amuse themselves by telling 'off colored' jokes, and are obviously not Christians.”68 “ Others noted that their unwillingness to associate too intimately with non-Christians or to

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67 Survey 5, Folder 1-14.
68 Survey 2, Folder 1-11.
participate in mainstream pastimes isolated them. Respondents reported: “We have to keep refusing invitations as we don't dance, drink, etc.”; friends and working companions, while wonderful people, have a tendency to drink too much”; there were too few potential friends “that are interested in church activities and a clean life.”

Especially for respondents who kept social distance from worldly peers, the local church often supplied the social connections they sought. It provided access to friends with shared beliefs; in some cases, involvement in church sufficiently dominated a family's schedule that a failure to form close social ties at church proved isolating. A twenty-nine-year-old wife reported “difficulty finding dedicated Christian friends our own age with whom to associate.” She explained, “We know and visit many older Christian friends, but all the younger Christian friends are more interested in their house, or work, etc. rather than wanting to fellowship or discuss Christian topics.”

Religion

Respondents' simmering concerns about the emotional and spiritual dimensions of family life became more pronounced when they discussed their family's religious life. Their replies to questions on religion highlighted the importance of participation in religious organizations to their families. Respondents also communicated a widespread perception of failure to achieve personal and family devotional life after the pattern that respondents considered ideal. On one hand, only eight (5 percent) of the respondents

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69 Survey 10, Folder 1-14.
70 Survey 26, Folder 1-14.
71 Survey 22, Folder 1-14.
72 Survey 19, Folder 1-14.
reported difficulty with church attendance, a criteria that one might consider the most basic measure of recognizable commitment to religious devotion and socialization. Likewise, only small numbers of respondents reported living with a spouse who was either non-religious or who possessed substantially different religious views. Most respondents were married to fellow evangelicals with varying levels of personal commitment and intensity.

On the other hand, many respondents believed their family lives fell short in the loftier goal of infusing Christian devotion into their daily lives and routines. Twenty-nine respondents reported difficulty with their family's degree of dedication, often citing concerns about the cavalier attitude of a less spiritually motivated evangelical spouse toward church activities, Christian ethics, or private religious practice. Somewhat fewer respondents, thirty-four persons, reported difficulty “making Jesus Christ the center of the home,” a phrase that evangelicals used to mean the subjective feeling that the family’s activities, thoughts and priorities were ordered by God and Christian teaching. Almost all of the thirty-five respondents who identified stewardship as a problem believed that they failed to dedicate sufficient time or money to God's service. [Table 9]
TABLE 9
RELIGION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of Reposes</th>
<th>Percentage (All Respondents)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Problems [Write-In Response]</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing a Family Altar</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>40.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Devotions</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talent</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making Jesus Christ Center of Home</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of dedication</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mate non-religious</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church attendance</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in faith or denomination</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological differences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a group, respondents found the infusion of Christian devotion into home life to be the most elusive spiritual goal. While issues relating to the degree of dedication or to sufficient levels of participation in the local church concerned about a fifth of respondents, almost 29 percent of the respondents identified problems with holding personal devotions. Problems holding a family altar drew more replies than any other single item listed in any category on the survey: sixty-five definite reports of difficulty, a little over 40 percent of the survey pool. The largest obstacle appeared to be developing consistent habits when many found time scarce. “We do not get up early enough to enjoy
breakfast together or to have family worship in a leisurely, thoughtful way,” a young wife in a dual-income household explained. 73 A husband with a homemaker wife and children also ran up against scheduling difficulties. “Many attempts to organize a family altar have failed. I go to work early in the morning and in the evening just have time for supper and get off to an activity and when I return its about in the middle of an exciting TV program which lasts till after bedtime.” 74 Respondents also faulted a lack of sufficient motivation. Doubting her husband's spiritual zeal, a wife and mother complained, “My husband is a Los Angeles City fireman and he must work many Sundays of the year and he has never developed any habits of Bible study since coming to know the Lord 5 years ago.” In her estimation, the family's spiritual life suffered as a result. “This is most frustrating, when I know in my heart that with my 3 sons, it really should be father leading them.” 75 The number of responses in this area demonstrate two significant realities about evangelical spiritual practice in the home. On one hand, respondents embraced the ideal of personal and corporate devotion in the home to such a high degree that large numbers worried about their deficiency. On the other hand, the salience of the ideal did not prevent the pressures of time, energy, schedule conflicts, or the challenge of winning daily commitment from a spouse from derailing success.

73 Survey 8, Folder 1-11.
74 Survey 32, Folder 1-15.
75 Survey 24, Folder 1-15.
Sex Relations and Emotional Intimacy

Respondents proved more reluctant to respond to questions on the topic of sex relations than they were to questions about either social or religious life; those who did weigh in overwhelmingly reported concerns about their ability to achieve a warmly sexual marriage.

Only a small fraction of the survey pool reported difficulty arising from sexual immorality. Eight people, about 5 percent of respondents, claimed that they had committed adultery or believed a current or previous spouse had done so. Likewise, just one respondent indicated that their marriage had been “consummated due to pregnancy or fear of pregnancy.” The low number of admissions to behavior most evangelicals would have considered immoral may have reflected a reticence to disclose that information about those topics, or they may point to the fact that evangelical moral views kept respondents away from the most shocking sexual transgressions.

Sex education generated no greater rate of concern. Only seven respondents thought ignorance of the facts of human anatomy or sex relations had presented an obstacle to marital happiness. Confident that they had been exposed to at least the minimal amount of information needed—or at least feeling any deficiency was remedied without significant difficulty—most respondents attributed their problems to personal factors rather than to a deficiency in education or available information.

Twice as many respondents—just 10 percent of the survey pool—reported concerns related to birth control or conception. Comments touching explicitly on birth control were few and revealed few details, even though the controversial birth control pill
had just recently become widely available and in 1963 became the family planning option of choice for 2.3 million American women. A single respondent expressed concern about the propriety of birth control, asking simply, “Does the Lord approve of birth control?”76 Others expressed concern about the issue without specifying what measures, if any, they were taking to plan their family. In one case, a couple who between them had four children already from previous marriages had just given birth to a fifth child. “It could happen again,” the wife observed, admitting that as a result she was plagued with “a certain guilt feeling when I consider the Lord is the guide of life and I enjoy the sex relationship.”77 A new mother explained, “We are concerned about not having our children too close together because we only want 2 or 3—whatever we can afford.”78 Three respondents were somewhat more specific. One wife shared that her husband had gotten a vasectomy following their third pregnancy, a fact she considered one of her “greatest blessings.” A mother to six stated that she was concerned about further pregnancy and cryptically explained that “just knowing he is concerned and careful makes a difference.”79 The third reported inconsistent use of birth control without specifying the method: “We have generally used birth control (but not very rigorously) [and] have thus not generally 'planned' our 4 children—yet I would not now wish to change 'timing' of any—so God must know best.”80 These anecdotes raise as many questions as they answer. The relative reticence of respondents to delve into the topic in

76 Survey 2, Folder 1-11.
77 Survey 4, Folder 1-11.
78 Survey 11, Folder 1-11.
79 Survey 14, Folder 1-10.
80 Survey 17, Folder 1-12.
detail—or to comment at all—hints that they may have regarded the topic as off-limits; it also raises the possibility that whatever methods were (or were not) being employed, respondents did not regard the details as important enough to divulge. Whatever the reason, few respondents stated that they were rigorously employing a particular method.

When compared to the low response rate to questions about adultery, sex education, and birth control, the issues most clearly related to sexual adjustment emerged as the dominant concern of most respondents who identified problems in the area of sex relations. More respondents reported difficulty stemming from “Difference in Sex Drive” and “Attitude Toward Sex” than they reported for any other factor. [Table 10]

**TABLE 10**

**SEX RELATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of All Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>35.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Problems [Write-In Response]</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in sex drive</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>25.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward sex</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_mate _self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern over birth control or conception</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_mate _self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adultery _mate _self</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of information:</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_human anatomy _mate _self</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_sex relations _mate _self</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selfishness on part of mate</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to hold in confidence all confidential matters _mate _self</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These results suggest that as a group respondents were more concerned about achievement of a warm and positive sex relationship than they were about other issues. While a few respondents thought they lacked a basic sex education or had fallen into overt immorality, almost two and a half times as many thought that the deficiencies in their or their spouse's “Attitude Toward Sex” had caused problems in their sexual relationship. With seven responses, “Selfishness of Mate,” proved a minor variation on that theme.

The most popular response by far was “Difference in Sex Drive.” A quarter of all respondents and nearly half of those reporting problems in their sex relationship identified it as a source of difficulty. Echoing the belief commonly affirmed in popular opinion and advice literature, virtually all respondents named the husband as the party with the greater sex appetite. To most respondents, wives seemed to have smaller drives and a more difficult time enjoying sex relations. Perceptions of the severity of the problem ranged from mild difficulty to completely different sets of needs:

Usual difference—wife slower than husband

My h[usband] is far more interested in sex than I. Much of the time I just plain don't want to be bothered, usually because I'm tired.  

Not a problem—just that he has more drive and we both understand and accept this.

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81 Survey 8, Folder 1-11.
82 Survey 13, Folder 1-11.
83 Survey 6, Folder 1-12.
Wife seems to have somewhat less sex drive than I. But I think we generally experience mutual love and compatible sex relations. 84

Husband cannot understand why we are different in this [sex drive] 85

Wife has no desire. 86

Just one respondent, a wife, reported that her sexual appetite outstripped that of her husband. Her gynecologist judged that her desires were “abnormal.” Her husband's, she reported, were “subnormal.” She confided that the “Greatest spiritual battle I fight is desire to find emotional fulfillment and sexual satisfaction outside home.” 87

Respondent comments communicated a couple of core assumptions about their sexual differences. First, a difference in sexual appetite was expected and had to be accepted. Differences in sexual appetite was a simple fact that required husbands to practice self-moderation and wives to offer understanding. For example, a wife who judged her sex life a success believed that she and her husband’s ability to communicate with and care for one another had promoted their adjustment. “No real problem here,” she happily reported. “We are both articulate enough and at ease with each other so express ourselves. Here, too, respect concern for each other far out weighs any selfishness.” 88

Another wife offered much the same evaluation of her and her husband's initial difficulties. “This has caused some unhappiness in the past but we've learned to adjust to

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84 Survey 17, Folder 1-12.
85 Survey 18, Folder 1-12.
86 Survey 19, Folder 1-12.
87 Survey 15, Folder 1-11.
88 Survey 7, Folder 1-11.
each other's wishes.”  

Another ranked her husband's thoughtfulness as a cause of happiness and expected that attribute to prevent problems: “In this I have the most wonderful husband who ever lived. He is thoughtful and considerate. If there is any failure, it is on my part.”

The expectation that personal effort and personal values would aid in mutual understanding and greater harmony in the area of sex emerged from the comments of respondents who described their own difficulty with sexual adjustment. One couple, each of whom submitted a survey, named the wife's reluctance to have sex as an occasion for better communication and prayer. The husband wrote:

> When first married, my wife and I knew very little about sex relations. I was a rather normal male with lots of sex drive. My wife, due to past problems, was stand-offish although she tried to please me. That caused a great deal of frustration and mostly within myself. A combination of prayer, the will to please each other, education, and many talks have just about corrected the situation.

The wife's recounting of events closely matched her husband's:

> Due to past experiences I was very cold and standoffish when we were first married. I found it hard to completely let myself go now that I was married. With lots of understanding on the part of my husband and constant prayer I am finally coming out of it.

Other respondents also reported turning to prayer for help. A husband reported that the difference in sex drive between him and his wife “calls for temperance which was and

89 Survey 7, Folder 1-14.

90 Survey 30, Folder 1-15.

91 Survey 20, Folder 1-11.

92 Survey 21, Folder 1-11.
is maintained by the grace of God.”\footnote{Survey 25, Folder 1-14.} A wife reported, “We have made our sexual adjustments very well thanks to his patience and understanding and my being able to get the Lord to help me.”\footnote{Survey 3, Folder 1-11.}

The assumption of respondents that emotional and spiritual connection enriched sex life also manifested itself among respondents who sought a different holy grail: greater congruity between their sex lives and their emotional lives. The problem, they explained, was not their ability to experience or provide sexual pleasure but instead their achievement of sexual satisfaction divorced from strong feelings of emotional intimacy. Explained one commentator, “Seems we both enjoy this relationship but need to develop more an attitude of pleasing each other mentally and emotionally as well as physically. We're working toward emotional communication that satisfies.”\footnote{Survey 19, Folder 1-11.} Two others noted being able to match their husband's demands but felt their sex lives would improve if their emotional connection to their husbands improved. More problematically, a wife reported offering sex without great affection or interest: “Very little interest on my part due to lack of Love which I feel is essential for this although I try not to let this be known to avoid him committing adultery.”\footnote{Survey 16, Folder 1-12.} Another wife reported, “My husband does not realize I don't love him. He is a 'cold' person, therefore is not very demanding. He does not realize there are any problems.” She explained that she managed to enjoy their physical relationship but only with great effort and at the price of concealing her own, ambiguous feelings.
“[Sex is] difficult for me because of my lack of love for him, yet this is not manifested in my attitude for I do reach climax,” she admitted. “However this is a matter of daily prayer.”

Financial Conduct

Arguably, financial conduct is the real test of any set of convictions. What respondents revealed about financial issues, then, are doubly useful. First, they suggest some common perceptions among members of the survey pool about their financial situations: the vast majority of respondent families enjoyed a household income great enough to meet basic expenses, making the dominant concerns among those who reported financial problems to be earning enough to enjoy more privilege associated with a middle-class lifestyle and the management of a middle-class budget. After the desire for more income, respondents' greatest concerns were—as in their concerns about their home situations, social lives, religious lives, and sexual relationships—centered on relational issues: balancing work and family priorities, and agreeing on and sticking to a family budget. Second, respondents' comments about finances reveal some dimensions of how crucial decisions were made in their households and therefore into the gender roles couples were assuming in actual situations.

Just as relatively few respondents reported problems with daily routine or with the achievement of minimal social involvement, few people reported devastating financial problems. The problems respondents identified were those expected from a subgroup that enjoyed middle class incomes. Half of all respondents either skipped the section on

97 Survey 9, Folder 1-14.
financial problems completely or wrote that they experienced no problems in that area.

Out of the half of respondents who did report one or more financial problems, twenty-six persons—16.25 percent of the whole and 32.5 percent of those reporting a financial problem—indicated that their household income was “Insufficient.” However, only nine people reported that they experienced difficulty meeting financial obligations on time.

These responses suggest that most respondents were concerned not about their ability to afford basic needs but rather their inability to attain the lifestyle they desired. [Table 11]
TABLE 11
FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of All Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>28.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Problem [Write-In Response]</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient Income</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penny-Pinching by Mate or Self</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreement over Budgeting</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-concern with Job Responsibility and Consequent Neglect of Family</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overspending by Mate or Self</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to Meet Obligations When Due</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreement over Who Should Handle Finances</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreement over Wife Working</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The written comments that respondents supplied about the severity of their financial problems confirms this picture. Several respondents reported that they were grateful not to suffer from significant financial want. “First time in life that finances were not a real problem,” one respondent shared. Another went out of her way to explain that the spiritual discipline of tithing had been part of personal financial strategy that had met all their needs. “We have always discussed our finances and determined to give tithes and offerings 1st—we have always been able to live on my husband's income and have raised 4 children and our home is Paid for.”

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98 Survey 2, Folder 1-15.

99 Survey 20, Folder 1-12.
reported, “the Lord just this [week] opened a door to a better job for my husband. We have no problems over finances and we love to give to the Lord.” \(^{100}\) Another respondent reported that her family did “not really” suffer from an insufficient income but that her husband “must work too long and hard to meet the money needs and wants.” \(^{101}\)

Most of those claiming insufficient income explained they found that their household income necessitated tight budgeting or that concerns about finances prevented them from fulfilling some goals. Most, however, qualified their complaints by noting that they were getting by or were merely feeling outpaced by the living standards of people in their churches and neighborhoods. Comments included:

- Sometimes finances really trouble us. Not the lack of, but just how we could spend the money. We tithe 10 percent but find our over all management of money is poor. \(^{102}\)

- My husband makes a fairly good salary but we do not seem to be able to “keep up with the Jones” who make similar or less salary. Feel we manage our money pretty well so can only suppose “Mr Jones” is over-spending. \(^{103}\)

- It's sort of hard to make ends meet and enjoy some of life's material things off our salary. \(^{104}\)

- Although we are less than $500.00 in debt, and also keep a strict budget, we seem to end up with nothing left for some necessities. (Tithe our Gross income religiously) \(^{105}\)

\(^{100}\) Survey 9, Folder 1-13.

\(^{101}\) Survey 16, Folder 1-15.

\(^{102}\) Survey 7, Folder 1-12.

\(^{103}\) Survey 7, Folder 1-14.

\(^{104}\) Survey 5, Folder 1-14.

\(^{105}\) Survey 15, Folder 1-15.
We would like to have a little more income, but it really isn't a big problem.\textsuperscript{106}

Our family is expected by some to live as well as other members of church on a very limited income; but I, along with my husband, feel that it is better to live on a small salary and not have me leave our family to teach school again. My husband works outside the church occasionally (part time).\textsuperscript{107}

The mere ability to get by, then, was far from the primary concern of most respondents, even those who wished for a greater income.

The more subjective and value-laden questions of achieving a balance between work and family life and of achieving agreement about the family budget drew responses from a smaller portion of respondents. Nineteen respondents reported penny-pinching by themselves or their mate; eleven reported overspending by themselves or mate; fourteen reported disagreements over budgeting. Thirteen believed that “over-concern” with work had deleterious effects on family life.

Respondents who supplied written comments about these problem areas most often reported difficulties with their ability to communicate, agree on goals, and harmonize their spending habits. A wife who had watched her husband go to school for engineering and law expressed disappointment over his recent revelation that he planned to return to school yet again for a degree in medicine, because “He feels medicine will be more satisfying.” Money was not short, but unity of purpose was. “I have difficulty understanding why husband feels he must find complete satisfaction in work,” she confessed.\textsuperscript{108} Another wife reported that her husband's lack of involvement in financial

\textsuperscript{106} Survey 25, Folder 1-15.

\textsuperscript{107} Survey 29, Folder 1-15.

\textsuperscript{108} Survey 2, Folder 1-11.
decisions left her feeling that they fell short in the areas of intimacy and communication: “He never asks me what I spend or on what—gives me complete freedom and some might think I'm crazy to complain but I feel he shows no interest whatsoever.”\textsuperscript{109} A peer with the opposite problem reported that her husband's desire to make all the decisions edged her out of the process and left the couple's children with no experience or insight into handling money. “I feel that we should live on a budget, and that we should decide as a family what major items items we should purchase,” she extolled. “My husband feels that he alone should decide what we will buy and where. He insists that the children, although they are teen-agers, should know nothing about our income or how much we spend for any particular item. I feel that they should be included in some of the decisions to help them know something about money management.”\textsuperscript{110} Another wife reported that in an attempt to take control over the family finances, her husband disregarded and disrespected her own abilities. “Husband has made me feel inadequate about handling finances regardless of commercial training and experience before marriage and handling all household expenditures and savings for 14 years,” she criticized. “I've been put on the defensive if I spend for anything other than the necessities of life.”\textsuperscript{111} A counterpart with similar difficulties found a way to circumvent the same problem: “Husband seems to resent providing for clothing etc for me. So I work part time to buy for myself.”\textsuperscript{112} In each

\textsuperscript{109} Survey 12, Folder 1-11.

\textsuperscript{110} Survey 30, Folder 1-15.

\textsuperscript{111} Survey 21, Folder 1-15.

\textsuperscript{112} Survey 31, Folder 1-10.

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of these cases, respondents demonstrated their attraction to an ideal of financial management that was participatory and that reflected shared goals and feelings. They also found those ideals impossible to realize in their particular cases.

Some respondents who reported success with financial management also indicated that they had achieved a good working relationship not by implementing a cooperative model but by reaching a mutual decision about who in the household would be in charge of financial decisions. Not surprisingly, for many couples that person was the husband. In such cases, women offered varying degrees of input but expressed their trust that their husbands made decisions either with the family's spiritual values or well-being in mind. A wife wrote, “This [money] isn't a problem now because he handles the finances and all I get is grocery money when its gone I'm through spending. He always buys the things that I say are needed for the home or children.” A husband reported, “She would like to have a phone and I don't want the bill but we don't have a problem because she is submissive.” One wife confessed that she and her husband had significantly different opinions on spending but concluded that her husband's perspective was the most moderate and grounded. “We began saving together for a happier future—a camper, etc but now that he has the money saved he will not use any of it for our good. Our yard is not landscaped after 5 years and he will not do the work—nor let me have it done. Our furnishings are shabby—yet we cannot replace or repair them.” Ultimately, however, she regarded her husband's inclinations as wiser and downplayed her own leanings. “I am grateful for his thrift since we owe no one. I think he is wiser than I in money matters, but

113 Survey 19, Folder 1-14.
114 Survey 25, Folder 1-14.
I am headstrong and impatient. Only the Lord can help me and does.”\textsuperscript{115} Another wife came to the same conclusion, noting that she wanted to give more money to church but conceded “My husband handles the money but it all goes for the family good with a fair amount for community responsibilities.”\textsuperscript{116}

Some couples found it most expedient to place the purse strings in the hand's of the wife. “Wife handles money by mutual consent,” a husband revealed. “I'm a bit apt to dispose of money like there was no tomorrow. I am inclined to feel that we should have a more sacrificial financial ministry, but would not force my more practical mate beyond the bounds of reasonableness.”\textsuperscript{117} A wife wrote, “We worked this out long ago. I handle money pay all bills and this is the way my husband likes it.”\textsuperscript{118} Another revealed that her husband, a weekend alcoholic, allowed her to manage the finances. “Husband . . . Willing for me to handle all money, checking account, and pay all bills.” She reported no savings and too much income spent on alcohol, but otherwise reported sufficient funds and financial prowess to meet all basic needs.\textsuperscript{119} Another wife who managed her family's budget noted that her husband felt threatened by insecure about her role but ultimately liked the arrangement: “My husband always claims he can manage better but when I offer

\textsuperscript{115} Survey 3, Folder 1-15. 
\textsuperscript{116} Survey 6, Folder 1-12. 
\textsuperscript{117} Survey 17, Folder 1-15. 
\textsuperscript{118} Survey 36, Folder 1-10. 
\textsuperscript{119} Survey 35, Folder 1-10.
to turn the check writing to him that ends the argument so I think its his male ego that gets disturbed because he knows so little where we are but he truly doesn't want to bother or take time.”

The topic of financial contributions to church generated complaints that tend to reinforce the patterns of household authority evidenced in respondents' comments about budgeting. In the question set on “Religion,” twenty-one persons reported that they faced challenges in practicing Christian stewardship of finances, a category they generally interpreted as being a question about the size of their financial contributions to church. A few respondents simply reported that they did not tithe; others cited the issue as a source of conflict. In most cases, the party identifying conflict on the issue were women who wished to make a greater commitment to their local churches but faced opposition from a reluctant husband. The women were not in a position to make unilateral decisions on the family budget, a fact that suggests their husbands made the final decisions or at least shared significantly in the decision-making process. “I can't get my husband to tithe. Gives generous offerings, but can't see tithing,” one wife explained. “Mate does not want to tithe,” another wrote, although he had been corralled into church participation. “Mate serves as an usher, deacon . . . (but unwillingly),” she revealed. A third wife who was unable to get her husband to tithe resolved the question for herself by assigning him spiritual authority and circumscribing her own financial responsibility as the portion of the budget she controlled: “My husband has not become a tither I have always tithed and

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120 Survey 29, Folder 1-10.
121 Survey 5, Folder 1-14.
122 Survey 9, Folder 1-14.
never questioned it. This disturbed me at first until the Lord revealed to me that He holds me accountable only to the money that comes into my hands.” In reaching this decision, she reaffirmed traditional gender roles rooted in his role as the bread-winner. “The Lord gave me the Wisdom to 'keep hands off’ and let my husband handle the finances also to be content with whether my husband can provide and to stay at home and be a wife and mother.”123 In only one comment did a husband express the same dilemma. He wanted to give more than their tithe, but found that his wife argued that the family contribute “10 percent maximum.”124 She possessed enough input into family finances to convince him to reign in his contributions.

**Where the Rubber Meets the Road: Child Discipline and Gender Roles**

The patterns of conduct that some respondents discussed in their comments on finances raise important questions about what respondents believed about household authority. The survey questions were not specifically formulated to pose this question, but some respondents' replies do suggest some general beliefs and points of concern. The greatest concerns parents aired about child rearing centered on the questions of child discipline, a fact that suggests they thought this topic was important but also felt uncertain about what rules and methods they ought to implement. Concerns about emotional nurture also emerged as a concern for many respondents. Likewise,

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123 Survey 3, Folder 1-11.
respondents' comments about male headship provide evidence of both the importance of that ideal and the high degree to which it had become bound up with respondents' desire for greater cooperation and intimacy in their marriages.

*Discipline and Nurture*

On questions related to parenting, more respondents reported concerns about rules and discipline than any other topic. Respondents cited no single item in this category more often than “Disagreement between parents on discipline, rules, limits, punishment, etc.” (39 responses). Almost as many named “Lack of Emotional Control” (37 responses) and “Inconsistency in follow-through” (35 responses) on the part of one or more family members as barriers to the effective enforcement of family rules. The relatively high rate of concern among respondents for these issues point not only to concerns for maintaining authority, but also to uncertainty over which rules and punishments were most appropriate and concern about parental ability to employ proper techniques. [Table 12]
TABLE 12  
MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of All Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>38.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Problems (Write-in response)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreement between parents regarding discipline, rules, limits, punishment, etc.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>24.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of emotional control _Self _Mate _Children</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>23.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistency in follow-through</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other problems in discipline or punishment of children</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mate puts children first and couplehood suffers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy of children</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn't like children</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favoritism of one child over another</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favoritism of one child over another</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreement regarding the number of children</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fewer parents identified specific problems with their child's behavior.

Nonetheless, those who did respond indicated that the child discipline weighed heavily on their minds. Problems with a child's willingness to perform household chores drew the greatest number of replies (34 responses), followed by “Clashes of Will” (29), “Motivations of school and/or home work” (29), “Shows Disrespect” (23), “Emotional Disturbances” (22), “Children misbehave” (14), “Lack of Self-Discipline” (13) and

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“Children are disobedient” (12), a potpourri of concerns ranging from the development of a personal work ethic to children's failure to respect their parents and their parents' standards.

Authority, however, was not respondents' sole concern. Consistent with respondent concerns about communication and emotional intimacy in family life, parenting problems that centered on establishing deeper relationships with children drew a relatively high number of replies. The leading concern of this type by far proved “Spending time with each child,” which twenty-seven respondents cited as a difficulty. “Family Conferences,” an item of periodic discussions in parenting literature recommending a more equitable, communicative style of parenting, trailed significantly but still received fourteen votes from parents who liked the idea but felt their family had not implemented the principle well in practice. [Table 13]
# TABLE 13

**PROBLEMS WITH CHILDREN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of All Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>35.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Problem (Write-in response)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Responsibility for Home (Chores)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivations of school and/or home work (to achieve up to level of ability)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clashes of will (parent-child)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending time with each child</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows disrespect</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional disturbances (“acting out,” etc)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children misbehave</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family conferences</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of self-discipline</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children are disobedient</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual problems of children (guilt feelings, etc)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temper tantrums</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thumb sucking</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed wetting</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's allowances</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating problems</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental problems</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gender Roles

The salience of respondents' concerns about gender roles cannot be deducted by tabulating their replies to any single question; the surveys did not solicit respondents' opinions on this topic or query them about their success in implementing their ideals about authority in marriage in their day-to-day lives. However, a general idea of respondents' feelings on this topic can be obtained from the supplemental, written comments of respondents who spontaneously elected to discuss the issue.

Those respondents who brought up the topic of gender roles expressed opinions similar to those expounded in evangelical advice literature. They affirmed male headship as an ideal but admitted readily that wives were sometimes compelled to take the lead when their husbands proved unwilling. They also presented male headship as an ideal that affirmed male authority but placed a burden on the husband to behave as a sensitive and benevolent leader who could be counted upon to solicit his wife's advice and consider her feelings.

In a few cases, respondents cited a husband's willingness to lead as the cause of marital happiness. “We have deep love and respect for each other. My husband is head of our home,” a satisfied wife reported. “We have had 25 blessed years of married life. Christ is head of the home.”¹²⁵ Far more commonly, respondents complained that their husband's lack of leadership lay behind family problems. “Husband devotes full time to study. Not interested or aware of responsibilities of father role or head of household role,” a young wife complained. Elsewhere on the survey form, she noted that “Child raising

¹²⁵ Survey 24, Folder 1-11.
[is] left entirely to wife including religious training.”126 Another wife thrust unhappily into spiritual leadership complained, “Sometimes when try to talk over a matter with my husband I find he makes some smart remark that shows he isn't assuming his place of being head of the home. Then I go to the Lord and handle the matter myself according to the way I feel the Lord would have it done.”127 One of her peers would have commiserated: “I am afraid I am too often the head of this house when that isn't my job,” she admitted after describing herself as “domineering.”128 Another respondent named the “need for father to be 'Head' of the house” as one of her family's biggest problems.129

Wives also expressed concern in cases where husbands proved reluctant to take the lead in enforcing family rules. The wife who complained that her husband appeared “not interested or aware of father role” wrote that “Wife entirely responsible for disciplining and caring for children. Husband plays with children as a toy and puts them aside when he is interested in something else.”130 Another aired the same complaint, observing that “All discipline, punishment and training of children left to me—mate answers with a flat “no” if appealed to—only interested in ending discussion without being 'bothered'. Never tries to see others sides and render fair judgment. Loves children but considers financial support [only] duty.”131 Others reported, “[husband] would not

126 Survey 2, Folder 1-11.
127 Survey 3, Folder 1-11.
128 Survey 23, Folder 1-11.
129 Survey 24, Folder 1-15.
130 Survey 2, Folder 1-11.
131 Survey 15, Folder 1-11.
father with [sic] children if it was not forced on him,”132 “He is too tired and busy to spend time with oldest son,”133 and “I have most of the discipline because husband works nights, sleeps in morning.”134

Just as wives sometimes took over finances, two respondents who believed their husbands ought to discipline their children took up the role themselves and conceded that they might perform better than their mates in that role. One shared:

> It has been up to me to train the children. I have made a time each day for private Bible reading and study of S.S. lesson with each child. Now each child is truly born again and the Holy Spirit is controlling them. I have tried to make rules and regulations that are strict enough to give them the feeling of being loved and a sense of security. My husband has not interfered and helps back up the rules I have made. Sometimes I have felt it unfair that I have to do most all of the disciplining but then I observed that he becomes angry and might be abusive, where I discipline in the Lord and never feel anger.135

The other respondent explained, “My husband has always felt it up to me to discipline, but I feel that a boy after the age of 8 or 9 needs his father and grows away from mother in many very important ways and the father needs to be the one who rules and is looked up to for instruction and guidance. Therefore should be the one at this time to lay down the law and then to follow thru to its conclusion.” However, she also noted that her husband was too harsh when he did discipline. “My husband makes rules and likes the

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132 Survey 14, Folder 1-12.
133 Survey 7, Folder 1-15.
134 Survey 15, Folder 1-15.
135 Survey 3, Folder 1-11.
job of being boss, but only follows thru by getting very quickly angered and spanks while in this state of confusion. I believe in spanking by both parents, but done with intelligent self control.”

When respondents invoked male leadership, they were generally longing for a model of family government that would embody personal obedience to Scripture and the kind of structured but intimate family life portrayed in evangelical advice literature. As one wife expressed her convictions, “I am of the opinion that Father should be the head and leader of the house and family as God and Christ is the head and leader of each Christian.” She believed that her family life failed to exemplify this model because her husband only invoked authority haphazardly on topics that mattered to him but otherwise left her to worry about family affairs. From her perspective, one of her family's biggest problems was the “Refusal of mate to accept any responsibility of home and family except financial and 'veto' power.” As this comment illustrates, wives championed their husband's authority in order to call their husbands to greater investment in the family's day-to-day life. Personal power seemed a reasonable—and biblical—tradeoff for the fate of not being left alone to manage family routines and problems.

Accordingly, a couple of wives called foul when their husband's invoked male authority to justify insensitive or domineering behavior. A female respondent explained that her understanding of scriptural gender roles called men to love their wives rather than merely take charge: “Men should be the head of the house—but should cherish the

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137 Survey 15, Folder 1-11.
Wife. So often only the first part is stressed.”138 Another reported that her husband used headship as a substitute for communication. “My husband feel[s] that a wife should not know where her husband is, when he will be home, or any of his 'personal' business, even though it affects her. He has nothing to hide—he simply feels that he is the Head of the House, and that is that.” She explained that “He has purchased company equipment, several automobiles and burned large sums of money without even telling me that he was considering those things. Although all these were for the benefit of his family, I would have felt better if he had discussed them with me first. Elsewhere on the survey, she explained that her husband's interpretation of headship excluded her from decision-making: “The marriage is not a partnership. 'The husband is head of the house and a partnership has two heads.' Husbands own words.”139 A second wife cited her husband's unwillingness to allow her participation in family decisions was not only problematic but also un-American:

Husband born of foreign-born parents—Man head of the house—Refuses to even discuss home plans with me, if not awarding to his way of thinking his needs. Dogmatic and unbending—His word is “law”! [Emphasis author's]140

Although the behavior of individual couples varied, those most willing to speak enthusiastically on the topic of headship advanced a moderate ideal that sought a middle ground in between egalitarianism and authoritarianism.


139 Survey 30, Folder 1-15.

140 Survey 15, Folder 1-11.
Counseling, Psychology, and the Quest for a Better Marriage

The surveys also provide some helpful clues into how much BGEA’s middle-class Los Angeles audience looked to the postwar interest in psychology to understand and address their problems. Tellingly, almost a full page of the survey instrument called upon respondents to identify personality traits and to indicate whether they experienced common inter-relational issues related to personality. The survey author’s interest in preparation for marriage was also evident in the inclusion of a question asking respondents to identify if they had received premarital counseling from a minister, doctor, or other outside party. The willingness of respondents to identify the options listed as difficulties they or their spouse faced points to a general familiarity with the postwar concern for these issues, or at least their possession of feelings and experiences similar to those advice literature deemed prevalent among Americans.

Respondents proved willing to respond to questions about personality qualities, traits, and conflicts: 125 respondents chose to answer one or more questions in this category, with just twenty-six skipping the question and eight writing comments to the effect that they experienced no problems related to personality. Equally significant are the personality traits they identified when asked to select items from a long list of choices to describe themselves and a spouse. Those traits that received the widest discussion in self-help books, magazines, and popular media received the greatest number of reports. A personal tendency toward “Nervousness” (40 responses), “Depression” (28), and “Inadequacy Feelings” (25)—all difficulties frequently identified in self-help literature as pervasive psychological or developmental problems—ranked in the four traits
respondents most often attributed to themselves or a spouse. Another top response, “Critical” (38 responses), reflected a pervasive willingness to attribute unresolved conflicts between spouses to personality attributes. The next most frequently cited traits were more neutral measures of personality tendencies extensively discussed in popular literature: Impulsive (21 responses), Aggressive (19 responses)/Passive (15 responses), Cold (17 responses), and Introversion (17 responses)/Over Active (14 responses).

Additional concepts important in self-help literature, Independence (17 responses)/Dependency (10 responses), proved somewhat less salient. Notably, the trait that advice literature usually viewed as problematic, psychological dependency, received far fewer citations than its more positive opposite, independence. [Table 14]
TABLE 14
PERSONALITY FACTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits (Mate or Self)</th>
<th>No. of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of All Respondents (160)</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents Replying to Question (125)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nervous</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>32.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23.75%</td>
<td>23.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depressive</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16.88%</td>
<td>21.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequacy feelings</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15.63%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulsive</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13.13%</td>
<td>16.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11.88%</td>
<td>15.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10.63%</td>
<td>13.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10.63%</td>
<td>13.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.75%</td>
<td>11.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over Active</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.75%</td>
<td>11.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martyr complex</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
<td>9.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard-Boiled</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.75%</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurotic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paranoid</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.88%</td>
<td>2.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

In one case, a personality trait assigned by respondents both to herself and her spouse was counted twice.
TABLE 14 (CONT.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of All Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immaturity _mate_self</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalities Conflict</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Respect for Partner _mate_self</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mate Wants to Remake Me</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Traits Causing Problems:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom Monopolizing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sloppiness</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meticulousness</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning Gloom</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late or Early Riser</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Cleanliness</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic or Non-Athletic</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even if respondents believed that personality traits discussed in popular literature described members of their family, only a small portion saw these personality traits as a source of marital difficulty. Only around 9 to 11 percent of respondents reported that their marriage suffered from personality conflict (18 responses), lack of mutual respect (15 responses), or lack of acceptance for a spouse's differences manifested in attempts to “remake” them (14 responses). A higher number of respondents named immaturity, a topic prominent in literature on human development, as a problem for either themselves or their mate (26 responses).

These results suggest that respondents were familiar with some of the language and concepts provided by the survey author and deemed them relevant descriptions of their or their spouse's behavior. They also suggest that those personality traits resonating
with the greatest number of respondents were concepts that magazine, books, and other mainstream sources of advice had made important concepts to a wide swatch of Americans. They do not reveal how respondents used these concepts or how important they were to their understanding of family relationships. Only one reply hints at an answer to that question, a respondent who provided a detailed explanation of a persistent tendency she faced, how she came to understand it, and how she went about solving her problem.

The respondent in question revealed that she had all her life entertained secret infatuations with men, including (earlier in her life) Billy Graham. She concluded that her proclivity for developing crushes on men was rooted in her childhood search for a father figure:

My mother was divorced when I was a baby and did not remarry until I was ten years old. However, I rejected my step-father as a father to me, and as a result I grew to adulthood without ever knowing or loving anyone as a father. I was quiet and reserved in all my actions, but inside my mind I was usually in love with some attractive, intelligent and likable man, ranging all the way from Van Johnson when I was just a girl to Billy Graham when I was a senior in high school. I can still remember how disappointed I was to learn that he was married.

After her marriage, she turned her affections toward a succession of men whose spiritual lives she admired. When the object of affection became a flirtatious neighbor with whom she developed too much rapport, she was forced to conclude that her secret admirations were beginning to pose a serious danger to her marriage. Deeply concerned about the temptations she faced, she applied prayer to the problem of overcoming the seemingly overwhelming impulse in her personality:
But in conclusion, I can now say that the Lord has shown me the “way of escape” of I Cor. 10:13... After many months of trying to handle a situation I knew I wasn't winning, I became frightened as I realized that if I should go to their home and find him alone, I would be powerless to resist any advances. So I really went to prayer about the sin that I was entangled in. I had tried staying away from their home, but when you see a person coming and going everyday, not visiting them will hardly get him out of your mind. But the Lord really did more than I could ask or think; the next time I saw him (and he was alone) I felt little more than if he were a stranger to me, and my mixed up vision has been clearing ever since. I surely praise God for this deliverance.

From that point, she fell back on God's power to address her persistent and unaddressed mental habit of nurturing crushes:

But then I asked Him what was to keep a new temptation from arising. To this I believe he has shown me that the whole difficulty lay in my attitude. I had been admiring certain men with a sort of open-end attitude that allowed for almost anything to develop if the feeling were mutual. Naturally I had never realized this and at first glance it almost seems too simple, but I believe it is true and this is my “way of escape”—no open-ended admirations.¹⁴²

It is impossible to know how many other respondents would have turned to popular understandings of psychology to explain a persistent personal problem. Nonetheless, this example does demonstrate that in at least one case, popular psychology provided her with a way to identify and explain her feelings, while evangelical faith provided her with the means to regain spiritual and mental control of her inner life. Authors of evangelical advice literature who proscribed conversion, church involvement, and private religious devotion to counteract common psychological problems would have agreed wholeheartedly.

In addition to demonstrating at least general familiarity with concepts central to popular discussions of psychology and personality development, around half of all

¹⁴² Survey 19, Folder 1-14.
respondents revealed that they followed the path recommended by marriage experts and advocates of pastoral counseling to seek counsel prior to marriage. Out of this group, forty-two (26.4 percent of all respondents) turned to a minister, twenty-eight (17.6 percent of all respondents) to a doctor, and twenty-three (14.5 percent of all respondents) to another source. Seventy-two respondents (45 percent of all respondents) indicated that they had not received counseling or had relied on God alone for counsel. [See Table 15]

TABLE 15

SOURCES OF PREMARITAL COUNSEL, ALL RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Kind of Counsel Did You Have Prior to Marriage?</th>
<th>No. of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of All Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>45.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>26.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (All Responses)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent-supplied responses:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sermons, Church Presentations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends, Non-Parent Relatives</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Courses, Personnel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Counselor (Non-minister)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since counseling from a doctor or minister were the only two options named on the survey, respondents were left to imagine what additional help might qualify for inclusion in the “Other” category. As a result, respondents who selected this option most likely recorded their use of a source that some of their peers who remained silent on the
topic also would have identified as relevant, had they had been asked about it explicitly. Nonetheless, if nothing else, the write-in responses that the question solicited indicate a range of the sources of information to which some of the couples turned: Books (7 responses), Parents (6), College Courses or Personnel (4), Church Presentations (2), Friends and Relatives (2), and professional counselors (2).

The low number of individuals citing use of a professional counselor suggests that whatever level of interest respondents had in personality and spiritual growth, few sought out professional marriage counselors who were not ministers. In fact, including the two respondents who sought premarital counseling, only five respondents mentioned consulting a marriage counselor over the course of their engagement and marriage. An additional person expressed her desire to visit a counselor prior to a recent divorce; her ex-husband proved unreceptive to the suggestion. The lack of any survey questions asking respondents specifically about this topic makes this count of contacts with a professional counselor unreliable, but this low number does suggest the possibility that respondents were far more likely to seek help from informational spiritual resources or a pastor.

One statistical fact would have pleased advocates of marriage counseling: respondents with younger marriages reported a far greater use of external resources in preparing for marriage. A comparison of surveys from respondents married before the autumn of 1945 (60 surveys) to those married during or after the fall of 1945 (99 surveys) reveals a significant rise in use of counsel from ministers, doctors, and other sources of information among the younger group. Out of those respondents married before the
autumn of 1945, 61.7 percent reported that they received no premarital counsel or failed to respond to the question; among those married after that time, the percentage fell to 42.4 percent. Likewise, 11.7 percent of the older group reported receiving the counsel of a minister, while 38.4 percent of the younger group reported doing so. Similarly, the number of respondents who sought help from doctors increased from 10 to 23.7 percent. The portion of respondents who turned to help from other sources grew from 10 to 15.2 percent. The two respondents who saw professional counselors for premarital counsel were married after 1945. All of those indicating they received information from college courses took those courses in 1943 or later. [Table 16]
TABLE 16
COMPARISON OF SOURCES OF PREMARITAL COUNSEL
USED BY COUPLES MARRIED BEFORE AND AFTER AUGUST 1945

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent-supplied</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responses:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sermons, Church presentations</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends, Non-Parent relatives</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Courses, Personnel Counselor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These numbers exclude one respondent, who reported his marital status as single.

Conclusion

Responses to the BGEA surveys reveal some general attitudes and problems faced by 160 evangelicals in 1963, after fifteen years of heightened interest in the family on the part of American culture and conservative Protestant subculture. They verify that some of the themes central to conservative Protestant advice literature during the “long decade” of the 1950s in fact were shared by committed rank-and-file evangelicals, at least those from
suburban and middle-class backgrounds. Most important among these was the expectation that marriage, usually portrayed in advice literature as an emotional and spiritual bond between two people that bound them together in mutual commitment and care, could find the power to sustain it in Christian faith.

Overall, respondents embraced a picture of marriage that prized emotional and sexual intimacy. They were not, for the most part, deeply concerned about the most basic or most functional aspects of family life: most felt their basic social and financial needs were being met, if imperfectly. They expressed their greatest concern for perceived deficiencies in communication between family members and for mutual involvement of husbands and wives in home and religious life. Those who proved most vocal about the classic problems of gender roles or authority were focused less on the question of power and more on the building of Christian character and obtaining reassurance of continuing mutual concern.

Among some respondents, these priorities went hand-in-hand with an awareness of the psychological problems and personality traits that advice literature helped to make ubiquitous topics of discussion in American culture. They also may have promoted a rising interest among younger couples in the counsel available from doctors, advice literature, and other sources of information. More universally, these interests brought respondents primarily to religious sources for interpreting and solving personal difficulties. Most respondents pointed to Christian devotion and values as a source of strength, shared purpose, and high ideals. They therefore also embraced Christian belief and institutional church involvement both as personal religious commitments and as aids
in reaching cherished family goals. The fruits of this collective decision were mixed. On one hand, respondents turned overwhelmingly to the local church to sustain their religious and family lives. Sunday services, church functions, and volunteer ministries provided opportunities for consistent religious practice and for social ties. Christian faith and participation in religious institutions drew many couples closer together, even as it caused tension between those who did not share religious views or did not match each other in their degree of religious intensity. On the other hand, many respondents expressed a deep interest in private religious devotion or family worship but ultimately found it difficult to put their ideals into practice. The ultimate form of spiritual family togetherness, the family altar, proved particularly elusive before the onward march of suburban schedules and the vicissitudes of daily cooperation between spouses. Suspended somewhere between the Egypt of marital discord and the Promised Land of idyllic unity and cooperation, evangelical respondents expressed unflagging optimism about the success of their marriages and the relevance of evangelical faith to daily life.
In 1963 Beverly LaHaye attended a Gospel Light Sunday School Conference in Forest Home, California. A self-identified Southern Baptist, Beverly was wife to Tim LaHaye, the conservative Baptist pastor of Scott Memorial Baptist Church in San Diego. A wife of fifteen years and mother to four, Beverly faced a number of problems typical of millions of other married couples. She and her husband Tim had very different personalities. Often decisive, Tim liked to lay bold new plans and leap into their implementation with enthusiasm; Beverly liked to think new ideas over and had trouble making decisions. Tim was confident; Beverly often felt that she did not measure up to the high standards of life as a pastor's wife. When frustrated, Tim got angry. When Beverly got frustrated, she exercised passive resistance. In addition, the couple's small conflicts drove them crazy. As Beverly would later recount, every day Tim would roll up his socks and leave them right in the middle of the bedroom floor. This behavior repeated, despite the fact that Beverly liked to keep things neat and had told her husband many times how much this habit annoyed her.¹

Beverly and Tim remained married. Neither of them threatened divorce. Their blessings seemed many. They had married as college students who were both committed to God's work. At his previous church, Tim had enjoyed a productive ministry that had enabled him to oversee two big church expansion projects. In addition, the couple had healthy children whom they loved. However, neither of them felt the peace, joy, or unity of heart that they had hoped marriage could deliver. Tim would later claim that on a scale of 1 to 100, with 100 representing the greatest possible marital happiness, that he would have rated his marriage a 25.  

But the LaHaye's perception of their marriage was about to change. At the Gospel Light Conference, Biblical counselor Henry Brandt gave a series of talks throughout the week on the topic of marriage. Well-aware that her marriage was less than idyllic, Beverly LaHaye gave Brandt her rapt attention. He explained that common marital conflicts and psychological problems could be resolved by honest self-examination and confession of sin. Believers could turn to God for the healing and power necessary to live new lives directed by the Holy Spirit. Their marriages could improve. In fact, a person's marriage could not help but improve as she became closer to God and followed the Bible's teachings. These messages deeply affected Beverly, who began to pray that she would be filled with the Holy Spirit. She also called Tim and urged him to join her at the conference. He arrived just in time to hear Brandt discuss anger, one of his chief personal difficulties. Also moved, Tim too began to seek the blessing of a Spirit-filled life and a

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better marriage. Both Beverly and Tim later reported that their marriage improved dramatically as both pastor and pastor's wife sought to bring themselves and their married life under Holy Spirit's control.³

This watershed experience led Tim and Beverly to new, more ambitious projects. Deeply impressed by Brandt's ideas, Tim became interested in adding counseling to his list of ministerial activities. He began in earnest to study personality types, common marital problems, and how life patterned on the Bible and nurtured by continual fellowship with God could solve personal problems. Thus equipped, he began to counsel laypersons and other pastors. In the 1970s he began to write self-help books: *The Spirit-Controlled Temperament* (1966), *How to Be Happy Though Married* (1970), *Transformed Temperaments* (1972), and *How to Win Over Depression* (1974), followed by over a dozen more about marriage, child-rearing, depression, stress, sex, politics, and Bible prophesy. Meanwhile, Beverly began to emerge as a leader in her own right. Following the path of other pastors’ wives who established reputations and ministries of their own, she wrote companion self-help books on women and children, *The Spirit-Controlled Woman* (1976) and *How to Develop Your Child's Temperament* (1977). She also served as her husband's co-author for *The Act of Marriage: The Beauty of Sexual Love* (1976) and *Spirit-Controlled Family Living* (1978). During the same period Tim and Beverly also began to teach Family Life Seminars that instructed attendees to overcome

marital and parenting difficulties with the aid of the Holy Spirit. These seminars became a subject of the project Tim submitted for his DMin, which he earned from Western Conservative Baptist Seminary in 1978.⁴

In the late 1970s the LaHayes' roles as authors and teachers bled seamlessly into political advocacy. In 1978 Beverly founded Concerned Women for America, a pro-family and anti-feminist public policy group that became one of the most well-known and influential organs of the New Christian Right. Tim simultaneously co-founded the Institute for Creation Research with creationist Henry Morris. In 1979 he helped to convince Jerry Falwell to found the Moral Majority and served on its board of directors. In addition, he launched several political organizations of his own: the Council for National Policy, the Coalition for Traditional Values, and Coalition for Religious Freedom.

Tim and Beverly LaHaye were not the only major leaders of the Christian Right to emerge from a background of pastoral or professional work in counseling. A few years before Henry Brandt would inspire the LaHayes to become counselors and teachers, James Dobson, Jr., an undergraduate at Pasadena College from 1954-1958, met with Clyde Narramore. One of the first evangelical writers to popularize Christian psychology, Narramore had volunteered to talk with any student at the Nazarene college who was contemplating a career in mental health. Under the influence of Paul Culbertson, professor of psychology at Pasadena, the young Dobson had decided to major in psychology. But Dobson still had to decide what he would do with his degree. True to his

vision to see more evangelicals enter psychology and related fields, Narramore encouraged Dobson to become a psychologist. He assured the young Dobson that the study of psychology was consistent with Christian theology. He also impressed upon him the importance of pursuing a doctorate in the field. Dobson did just that, enrolling in the University of Southern California in 1959 and completing his doctoral work in psychology in 1967. During his early graduate school years Dobson served at various positions as a counselor and psychologist. In 1966 he accepted a position with USC Children's Hospital in Los Angeles, where he continued to work after graduation, and later also a position as professor of pediatrics at USC School of Medicine. During the opening years of his career he performed clinical research into the development of children with phenylketonuria, a rare genetic condition that causes mental retardation.\(^5\)

Dobson's professional work dovetailed with the conviction he received from his Nazarene background about the importance of the family. His maternal great-grandfather had received a promise from God that his descendents would go into ministry for four generations, a legacy that had passed to Dobson through successive generations' commitment to the holiness faith. His family history included both dedicated laypersons and ministers, including one ordained woman. It also included Dobson's father, James Sr., a pastor whose dedication to the gospel had made a deep impression on his James, Jr., his only child. Even though Dobson did not receive a call to ordained ministry, this family

legacy drove home to him the importance of family and a powerful sense of mission.\textsuperscript{6} And over time Dobson began to believe that his calling as a psychiatrist and counselor was to help the American family. As a young professional Dobson felt that everywhere he turned, he found evidence that the dysfunction of families was one of the great personal and social problems confronting Americans. Dobson's wife, Shirley, had passed through the challenges of life with an alcoholic father and her parents’ eventual divorce. His professional work with children and families had brought him face-to-face with the added burden that family problems placed on families with special needs children. While Dobson labored over his graduate work and early research, the turmoil of the 1960s transformed the nation.\textsuperscript{7}

Guided by his concern for the family, Dobson began to expand his professional activities to include counseling people one day per week. As a parent to two young children, he also began to reflect on his philosophy of child-rearing. His first popular book, \textit{Dare to Discipline} (1970), was the product of those reflections. In it, Dobson stressed the importance of loving discipline within the home to the creation of happy and responsible children. The book appealed to conservative Protestant audiences, especially in the wake of the 1960s, selling two million copies within the first few years of production and prompting Dobson to publish a long line of additional books on child rearing and marriage. In 1977 he started \textit{Focus on the Family}, a radio ministry that broadcast family advice. The broadcast soon absorbed all of Dobson's time and, by providing him with a platform for discussing morality and policy, pushed him toward

\textsuperscript{6} Buss, 11-26.

\textsuperscript{7} Buss, 32, 37-38, 55, 243.
political involvement. As the head of a non-profit, Dobson strove to remain non-partisan, but the ministry increasingly advocated that citizens take action about issues and legislation that related to Christian morals and the family. In 1983 Dobson founded a think tank, the Family Research Council, whose explicit purpose was to bring conservative voice on family issues to Washington, DC.\(^8\)

The careers of Tim LaHaye, Beverly LaHaye, and Dr. James Dobson testify to the vital link between the longstanding history of conservative Protestant interest in improving American family life and American marriages and the emergence of an organized, pro-family political movement in the late 1970s. However, the vast majority of histories of the New Christian Right have focused on the immediate political, intellectual, and cultural circumstances of 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. This chapter seeks to add to this body of literature by focusing on the significance of the fact that some of the most important leaders in the New Christian Right have cultivated careers as counselors, psychologists, and authors of advice literature.

Although many of the New Christian Right’s high-profile leaders have been pastors with media empires, the extreme statements and politicking of televangelists such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson have limited their ability to hold on to broad coalitions, even within conservative Protestant communities. By contrast, the LaHayes and Dobson have routinely associated their political agendas with their missions as counselors and teachers dedicated to improving the lives of individual people and their

\(^8\) The figure of 2 million copies sold is drawn from Dan Gilgoff, *The Jesus Machine: How James Dobson, Focus on the Family, and Evangelical America are Winning the Culture War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 23. Gilgoff also attempts to tease out the tight-rope that Dobson has walked between political involvement, an activity that Focus on the Family increasingly did with great effectiveness, and Dobson's conviction that the ministry's purpose was to focus on family and advice and moral issues. See pp. 7-17, 29-42.
families. Readers know them as trusted authorities who have dedicated themselves to providing solutions rooted both in the authority of the Bible and in a biblically grounded interpretation of a second cultural authority, modern psychology. Finally, throughout their writing and speaking careers, they have advanced the argument that the family histories and personal faith journeys of ordinary Americans, themselves included, determine the shape of adult lives and the future course of the nation. They have argued that this connection between the personal, private life of individuals and the aggregate political life of the nation makes the family the most important social and political question facing the country, a question for which all ordinary, concerned citizens must contend. I argue that, when added to the political and social circumstances of the past three decades, these roots explain both the intensity of conservative Protestant support for the New Christian Right and for the ability of its leaders to appeal to a wide swath of potential audiences. Although many of their ideas are specifically Christian, the concerns and ideas they espouse are also recognizable to a wide audience, because they are rooted in the essential elements of a broad cultural conversation about the meaning of marriage and family life.

Cultural Earthquakes and the Family

Dr. James Dobson and the LaHayes built a growing personal and professional interest in the American family during the mid- to late-1960s, a brief span of years during

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9 For example, scholars and other observers have noted that the bulk of Focus on the Family's activity centers on its dissemination of practical advice and operation of a correspondence department and telephone hotline through which listeners can request help, and that this aspect of its operations accounts for the ministry's influence both in and outside of politics. See: Gilgoff, 18-42; Rumi Yasutake, “Beyond Dr. Dobson: Women, Girls, and Focus on the Family,” in Women in Twentieth-Century Protestantism, edited by Margaret Lamberts Bendroth and Virginia Lieson Brereton (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002).
which the American cultural, political, and social climate shifted dramatically. From the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s the social outlook of conservative Protestants, especially that of moderate-minded evangelicals and Southern Baptists, had been informed by a strong postwar consensus sustained by both political parties and popular culture. That consensus had been expressed in a certain decorum in political discourse that accepted the broad aims of the New Deal, recognized the importance of states’ rights and “free enterprise,” and supported anticommunist foreign policy. It had a religious element as well; according to many politicians and cultural commentators, the United States was a religious nation whose citizens adhered to the many traditions falling under the “Judeo-Christian” umbrella. At least in theory, American civic religion—optimistic, individualistic, nonsectarian—supported warm-hearted patriotism, morality, and a respect for the rule of law. Most importantly, it distinguished the United States from its bitter enemy, atheistic Soviet communism. Dwight D. Eisenhower, who expressed support for religion in office and thereby had encouraged the early aspirations of Billy Graham to bring evangelical counsel to America's political leaders, had lent special support to this American political-religious consensus by adding the phrases “One nation, under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance and “In God We Trust” to American coinage. Conservative confidence in the strength of American public religion was not shaken until the early 1960s, when controversy over the election of Catholic John F. Kennedy in 1960 brought the predominance of Protestantism into question. Soon thereafter, the Supreme Court ruled in Engel v. Vitale (1962) and Abington Township v. Schempp (1963) that official school

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prayers and Bible reading in public schools violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.11 Future controversies notwithstanding, in the 1940s and 1950s evangelical fears about the end of the world meshed easily with American anticommunism, while its optimism about national revival, Christian missions, and the American family fit well with the optimism and pragmatism of the postwar economic revival and the emergence of the United States as a superpower. The Christian family stood out from its neighbors not so much by its lifestyle or its basic attitude but by its reliance on the gospel of Christ to make the dream of postwar familial bliss possible.

The consensus had stress points, however. Some significant dissenters to the consensus existed, even in the 1950s. Senator Joseph McCarthy's indictment of even respectable politicians as communists broke the usual rules of the consensus, as did nascent libertarian leader William F. Buckley’s early charges that the mainstream politicians' anticommunist program was insufficiently aggressive. The John Birch Society, founded in 1958 by Robert Welch, likewise brought charges of communist infiltration and sympathy against moderate American leaders and prominent institutions. Separatist fundamentalist leaders expressed a long history of virulent anticommunism and their own highly critical stance toward mainstream institutions by echoing the political accusations of the Far Right. Likewise, members of the Old Left occasionally still offered competing perspectives, as did the artistic protest of the Beats and the more carefree yarns of rock and roll and the youth culture. The consensus belied the actual diversity that existed just under the surface of America's cultural waters. But if fragile, the consensus fit well with the temperament and the aims of Southern Baptists, evangelicals, and other

11 Williams, 49-67; Martin, 47-73.
more moderate conservative Protestants. It was therefore to the chagrin of many that the
dramatic events of the mid- to late-1960s fractured the consensus of the early Cold War
beyond repair.¹²

During the social upheavals that many Americans would later refer to simply as
“the Sixties,” the uneasy consensus that had sustained American public life began to fall
apart. Several developments propelled American social life and the American political
conversation in new directions: the rise of the civil rights movement, protest against the
Vietnam War and the assumptions behind American foreign policy, the appearance of a
campus “counterculture” that bucked middle-class social standards and embraced drug
use, evidence of a “new morality” in the sex conduct of young people, a sudden rise in
divorce, and the emergence of second-wave feminism and the gay rights movement.
These events simultaneously challenged both American policy as well as the moral and
familial ideas that many Americans had regarded as “normal” just a few years earlier.

The most important and devastating of the critiques of American society and
politics came from the civil rights movement, which in the 1950s began forcing the issue
of racial segregation into the public eye, revealing one of the most blatant contradictions
between American political values and established social order. In 1954 the Supreme
Court ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education* ruled “separate but equal” schools
unconstitutional, requiring schools to integrate. In 1955 the refusal of Rosa Parks to
surrender her seat on a public bus led to the Montgomery Bus Boycotts. The Boycotts
also brought Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference
to national prominence. In 1960 sit-ins by young black activists at segregated lunch

¹² Lytle, 13-51; Williams, 33-48.
counters, private parks, and public buildings began to force integration, and the Student
Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) mobilized black students to further civil
rights aims. Black and white “Freedom Riders” drove non-segregated buses across the
Deep South in 1961, provoking violent resistance from police and local communities. So
did non-violent protests against segregation, as well as voter registration drives that
aimed to increase black political participation. The increasing confrontation between
activists and the racial norms made the reality of white racial privilege painfully evident
to a rising generation. The resulting public and academic debate made questions of
power, inequality, and the ugly underbelly of established social rules more important. It
also pushed the national debate, especially among college students, away from the rosy
patriotism of the early Cold War to a spirit of social critique and self-discovery through
dissent and protest. Politically, in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of
1965, and the Civil Rights Act of 1968 the Johnson administration acknowledged these
realities and set about making segregation and various forms of discrimination illegal.
The black power movement pressed the envelope even further, engaging in more extreme
tactics and advancing a more radical critique of American democracy and a more
nationalistic, separatist vision for black Americans.\(^13\)

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\(^{13}\) The Civil Rights Movement has generated one of the largest and most robust historiographical
discussions in American history during the twentieth century. For one, fairly typical overview, see: See
also Lytle, 116-140, 147-162. For two classic histories of the SNCC and Martin Luther King Jr., see: Adam
Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin
Luther King, Jr.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987) and David Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin
Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 1955-1968* (New York: W. Morrow,
1986). For one history of the black power movement, see Peniel E. Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour:
The cultural waters stirred by the civil rights movement quickly brought activists to seize on a second issue, American involvement in the Vietnam War. In 1964 the commitment to large numbers of American combat troops to fighting the Viet Cong in Vietnam sparked opposition from a variety of critics. The coalition of persons involved in the anti-war movement was diverse, including both established supporters of peace and nuclear disarmament movements to new members of the New Left searching ways to question the established order to build a just world. It is not clear that widespread protest ended, or even shortened, American involvement in the Vietnam War. But the high cost and duration of the war, the unprecedented news coverage of its progression, and reports of atrocities such as the My Lai Massacre in 1968 all furthered the anti-war cause. More than any other event, for young activists in New Left student organizations such as Students for a Democratic Society, the controversy of Vietnam called into question anticommunism, the policy of containment, the political power of the “military-industrial complex,” and Western imperialism. For conservative defenders of anti-communist military action, the Vietnam War called upon Americans to recommit themselves to the fight against a dangerous political enemy both abroad and at home, both of which—especially by the late 1960s—were becoming increasingly radical and disdainful of “law and order.” Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) was particularly effective at recruiting American students to the cause of libertarianism and a hard line against communism. By
the time the US pulled out of Vietnam in 1973, questions about the mission of American foreign policy and the legitimacy of military and police power had polarized Americans and fractured the earlier anticommunist consensus.14

On college campuses, the criticisms of the civil rights and anti-war movements against American politics and society coexisted with the rise of “the counterculture.” Although not actually a unified movement, “the counterculture” was an epitaph observers adopted to describe a new and bewildering phenomenon. It was the creation of students in the mid- to late-1960s who began searching for a way to reject the cultural and social ideals of middle-class, suburban America and to create an alternative cultural and political consciousness. Partly inspired by the writing of the Beats and long-simmering critiques of the technocratic and bureaucratic nation, the “hippies” commenced a quest to 'drop out' of society and form a new kind of community by donning relaxed clothes, growing their hair long, embracing the inherent value of beauty and fun, experimenting with drug use to “expand consciousness,” engaging in casual sex, and searching for transformative personal and religious experiences. Sometimes profound, sometimes incoherent, and sometimes apolitical, hippie philosophy lacked the ideological clarity and political intensity of the ideas articulated by members of the New Left. But there were

significant overlaps between the two groups, as politically active students saw in hippie
culture an aesthetic style and life path that reflected their critique of middle-class
American culture and dominant political ideas.\textsuperscript{15}

The political, social, and cultural challenges launched by the civil rights
movement, the anti-war movement, and the counterculture would have been more than
sufficient to trouble conservative Protestant pastors and lay leaders. By calling into
question white racial privilege, impugning the quest to spread American ideals abroad,
critiquing anticommunist policy, and discarding evangelical teaching on intoxicating
substances and premarital sex, the left-leaning movements of the 1960s attacked the basis
of Cold War conservative Protestantism's anti-communist, pro-American crusade for
moral order at home and the spread of the gospel overseas. But the 1960s did more than
raise questions about American politics and race relations; the decade also brought the
rise of a second wave of the women's movement, the first movement for the legal rights
for homosexuals, and a “sexual revolution” that stretched far beyond the boundaries of
the college campus. Far more than the frequent lapses of individuals from the dominant
moral code of the 1950s had done, these developments challenged the ideas that men and
women would remain mainly chaste before marriage, marry before pursuing parenthood,
or assume that accepted gender identities were fixed or necessary.

First, second wave feminism questioned the domestic ideals of the previous
fifteen years. Despite the belief on the part of most middle-class Americans that the male-
breadwinner, female-homemaker model of family life was normal, in actuality women

\textsuperscript{15} Timothy Miller, \textit{The '60s Communes: Hippies and Beyond} (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999); Timothy Miller, \textit{The Hippies and American Values} (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991); Lytle, 194-216.
had been entering the workforce in greater numbers following World War II, albeit into “feminine” jobs that were often low-paying and repetitive. In addition, the lives of both breadwinner husbands and homemaker wives had been transformed by the new suburban context and postwar affluence, making the privacy of the nuclear family and the emotional bonds between family members into new ideals. These new realities pushed some women toward the conclusion that the middle-class wife, prepared by her education and personal skill for a larger social role, was in fact isolated in the comfort of suburbia and prevented by prevailing gender norms from pursuing those rights or interests not strictly connected to her family. In *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Betty Friedan, a housewife with a long prior history of activism in the labor movement, repudiated the efforts of advertisements, psychologists, women's magazines, and women's education to define homemaking as the healthy, normal, and solitary occupation of women. She argued that the “feminine mystique” these forces sold to the public had perpetuated a peculiar restlessness among middle-class women borne from the fact that their confinement to proscribed domestic roles prevented them from living and acting as full persons. Women, she argued, could find relief from seeking further education and employment. Concern for women's status also led to the appointment of a Presidential Commission on the Status of Women in 1961. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 and title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 both prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex.16

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Meanwhile, women in the civil rights movement and in the New Left began to see that the intellectual tools they used to question American imperialism and white privilege could also be used to critique patriarchy. One could argue that as a class, women had been oppressed and prevented from enjoying the same privileges as men, even within the civil rights and anti-war movements. Due to these facts, second wave feminists argued that a renewed women's movement was necessary. Betty Friedan founded the National Organization of Women (NOW) in 1966 to advocate for the enforcement of the Civil Rights Act’s prohibition of sex discrimination and for women's public rights more generally. After the Supreme Court struck down existing legal barriers to abortion in its landmark case *Roe v. Wade* (1973), NOW made the defense of the right to abortion another of its dearest causes. In addition, from the mid-1960s forward, feminist theorists and activists associated with the more radical women's liberation movement would also advance more controversial critiques of the gendered basis of social power and for female social, economic, and sexual independence from men.\(^1\)

While some women were revisiting the question of women's roles in society, some homosexuals began to build an more activistic movement that began to assert that shared sexual orientation made homosexuals a class with interests and rights. Like a lot of the 1960s ferment, this movement had roots in the 1950s, when a small homophile movement spearhead by the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis had begun to meet in cities with gay populations, such as Los Angeles and New York, to provide

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mutual support and to work toward integrating homosexuals into the larger society. At first, the homophile movement pressed for toleration and the decriminalization of sodomy and took a largely conciliatory tone. Members of the homophile movement also tended to accept the prevailing view among psychologists that homosexuality was an illness that might be corrected by psychoanalysis, a belief further cemented in public and professional opinion by the inclusion of homosexuality in the American Psychiatric Association’s first Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) in 1952. The classification stigmatized homosexuality, but it encouraged greater toleration than did the view that it was sinful or criminal.

But by the late 1960s the growth of movements to secure rights for minorities were encouraging gay and lesbian activists to press for the idea that homosexuals were a minority group who ought to combat negative stereotypes and campaign for legal rights and protections. The symbolic beginning of the new wave of activism arrived in the form of the Stonewall Riots in 1969, in which a police crackdown on a gay bar, the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, led to a spontaneous series of riots by bar patrons. The image of gays and lesbians fighting back against the police, a far cry from the usual routine during police crackdowns as well as from the stereotype of gay men as passive, presented a public face that a new generation of activists would embrace and perpetuate. Following the Stonewall Riots, new organizations such as the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance began actively encouraging homosexuals to "come out of the closet" and staging “zaps” (surprise protests and sit-ins) against media outlets or politicians who portrayed homosexuality negatively or supported repressive policies. In 1973 the Gay
Rights Task Force emerged out the Gay Activists Alliance to lobby for gay rights. In addition, gay and lesbian rights activists and sympathetic psychiatrists also began to assert that homosexuality did not fit the definition of a mental illness. Instead, they contended that it was an orientation as normal as heterosexuality. Under pressure from both groups, the APA dropped homosexuality from the DSM in 1973. In an humorous twist, at about the same time psychologist George Weinberg popularized the concept of homophobia in 1971 to explain the visceral reactions of straights to the idea of homosexuals and homosexuality. Henceforth, gay activists could claim that their opponents were disturbed parties. During the 1970s this concerned activism began to change portrayals of homosexuality in the media and to modify public opinion. Activists also forced liberal politicians who championed minority rights to state their opinions on the rights of homosexuals. As in so many areas, within the space of a decade or less, social questions that had been largely ignored by public discourse had suddenly been made unavoidable topics of debate. 

The advent of second wave feminism and the gay and lesbian rights movement coincided with, and in part reflected, significant a “sexual revolution” borne from the greater effectiveness of birth control; from the growth of more permissive attitudes toward premarital sex, especially among young people; and from changes in the legal restriction on obscenity. In the 1950s many communities had placed a strong stigma on motherhood out of wedlock and urged women to maintain chastity before marriage, an

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apparent consensus that belied the fact that many young people in fact engaged in petting and premarital sex and found some toleration for it so long as women married when they found themselves pregnant. But in the 1960s popular support for these prohibitions began to relax. More women went to work in the 1960s and stayed single longer; some of them took advantage of a growing and more sexually permissive singles culture rooted in urban bars. In 1960 the Food and Drug Administration approved Enovid, the first birth control pill. By far the most effective form of birth control ever created, “the pill” made it possible for women to have sex with only a small risk of pregnancy. For women, never before had sexual pleasure not carried significant risk of motherhood. Partly empowered by “the pill” but largely inspired by a new sense of cultural and moral liberation, many participants in the growing campus counterculture rejected middle-class moral standards, some experimenting with recreational sex and alternative family arrangements. Finally, some members of the women's liberation movement championed female liberation from male paradigms regarding sex, as well as from the constraints of heterosexual marriage. Finally—and perhaps most importantly—sex did not become merely the preoccupation of students, working singles, or social reformers but also of the popular media. In a single decade, from 1957 to 1967, the Supreme Court heard a number of cases testing the limits of obscenity laws. It handed down rulings that empowered the government only to criminalize sexually explicit material that “deals with sex in a manner appealing to prurient interest.” It then narrowed this criteria to the point that obscene literature ceased to be a meaningful category. These steps effectively legalized most pornography, which the invention of the VHS cassette in 1971 made into a booming industry. It also had the
derivative effect of quickly relaxing the standards for depicting sex on TV programs and movies. As a result, by the close of the 1960s, and to even greater degrees in the 1970s, popular depictions of sex and American attitudes toward sex began to shift quickly.\textsuperscript{19}

The swift changes in politics and morals proved deeply polarizing to American cultural and political life. Conservative Protestants were fast drawn into the fray, and not always onto the same side of it. Politically, neo-evangicals had leaned strongly toward the Republican party, fundamentalists more often toward the Far Right, and Southern Baptists toward the Democratic Party. They generally shared a strong anticommunist stance. Some conservative Protestants—particularly southern fundamentalists—expressed the typical suspicions held by critics of the civil rights movement, charging that it was a movement led by radicals, most likely communists, who would weaken and destabilize the nation. More moderate voices, most prominently Billy Graham, offered cautious support for the civil rights movement but became increasingly shy as the black power movement championed increasingly radical stances and as race riots shook American cities in the late 1960s. Likewise, when confronted by unruly students or activists employing confrontational tactics many evangelicals appealed to the need for “law and order.” Exemplifying this political preference, Billy Graham all but endorsed Richard Nixon's bid for the presidency in 1968 and extended Nixon his personal loyalty until the Watergate scandal made it clear that Nixon had been an exemplar of neither Graham's morals nor his respect for law.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{19} Freedman and D'Emilio, \textit{Intimate Matters}, 287-288, 301-325.

\textsuperscript{20} Gibbs and Duffy; Williams, 33-132; Martin, 95-97, 145-147.
Conservative Protestant college students and student organizations often leaned conservative on political and moral issues but were also diverse in their opinions and their political loyalties. Some young evangelicals adopted the critique of American power, racism, and sexism prevalent among the New Left and hippies. The “Jesus People” movement in particular emerged as a magnet for those who wanted to fashion a Christian strain of the counterculture committed to what they saw as a prophetic, gospel-based repudiation of American sin and that embraced the dress styles and musical tastes of the contemporary college campus. An “evangelical left” also emerged during the 1960s that is best represented today by the organization Sojourners. Understanding that youth were drawn to the quest of the counterculture for a new and vital way of connecting to others and to the divine, some college ministries tried to couch traditional views in these terms. In 1967-1968 the Baptist Student, the Southern Baptist Convention's magazine for college students, introduced edgy artwork to its covers and dedicated its first two pages to a new column, “Students Speak Out,” in which student commentators editorialized on such vital issues as justice, peace, and poverty. The editors noted that they might not agree but that freedom of conscience had always been a part of the Baptist tradition. The main pages of Baptist Student also adopted this sensitivity to the expressive individualism of the contemporary campus. In the November 1968 issue, dedicated to the theme of communication and connection, R. Lofton Hudson pressed, “We all want so earnestly to be heard, wish to get through to the other person, to get in touch with our fellow

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creatures.” Quoting writer Carl Sandberg rather than platitudinous religious leaders or evangelical heroes, Loften claimed that Christ had provided an example of someone who didn't make “fake passes.” Pressing the need for a more meaningful connection between generations, a two-page poem, “Sideburns Don't Make Me Immoral,” expressed a young man’s plea for his parents acceptance, asking, “Allow me to let the red hang down and move with the wind/Why is your spectrum so limited?” Later, the poem asserted, “We shut out nothing. We accept/The full array of colors and sounds. I don't want/to hurt you, but are you too immobile to move with us?”

While some older commentators and students tried to stage a rapprochement between the new sensibilities and social ideas of the campus and the established church, the nascent New Right also attracted conservative Protestants. Evangelical campus organizations strove to maintain traditional forms of the Christian devotion and to reassert evangelical moral standards; Campus Crusade for Christ, headed by former California businessman Bill Bright, went even further, hoping that its evangelistic efforts would also convert American students to renewed commitment to the “free enterprise” system and anticommunism and protect them from the errors of the campus counterculture.

In the 1970s a tightly-packed series of events related to the controversies generated during the 1960s created an unusual circumstance in which a wide swatch of fundamentalists, evangelicals, Southern Baptists, and other conservative Protestant

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groups began to see their shared allegiance to moral order and the Christian family as something more than a common evangelistic social strategy and cultural project: they began to see the family, moral values, and religious faith itself as under concerted political attack that justified a vigorous, organized defense in both political and cultural realms. Nowhere is this clearer than in the myriad of ways that the emerging “culture wars” affected public schools. The topic of sex education proved particularly explosive. Conservative Protestants writing about sex education in the 1940s and early 1950s tended to portray both the efforts of parents and public schools in a positive light. However, new programs on sex often generated at least some local criticism, and in the context of the shifting sexual mores parents became more likely to fear that school curricula might be perpetrating the sexual revolution. In Anaheim, California, mothers drawn mainly from area churches marshaled behind Eleanor Howe, a Roman Catholic, in 1968 to oppose the school district's Family Life and Sex Education Program, which had been launched three years earlier. Teachers and defenders saw the curriculum as matter-of-fact and viewed classroom discussion as a basis for students to ask questions and reflect on their values; critical parents charged that the curriculum revealed too much, touched on inappropriate context, and did not appear to proscribe adherence to the social and religious values they viewed as inseparable from a proper understanding of sex. After the skirmishes in Anaheim, activism from conservative religious parents would be a continuous feature of the American conversation on sex education.
Mary Caldrone and her organization, the Sex Information and Education Council (SIECUS), alleging that the program was calculated to undermine socially conservative values.²⁴

Soon, sex education proved only the most controversial of many cultural issues raised by conservative activists who began to scrutinize their schools' curriculum. Controversy broke out over textbooks that seemed insufficiently committed to promoting the good of “free enterprise,” that praised the New Deal, or that reflected a more multicultural emphasis. Parents began to search for, and to find, reading selections they believed attacked their Christian religion, content they found particularly offensive in light of the fact that the Supreme Court had ruled school prayer and Bible reading unconstitutional. Finally, as homosexual activism became more visible in the 1970s, Anita Bryant, a Floridian mother and evangelical, attacked new measures in Dade County, Florida that prevented discrimination against homosexual school teachers. In some areas, these concerns combined with anxiety over school integration and school busing. The result was the foundation of hundreds of private Christian schools, a cause that a few decades earlier had mainly been a preoccupation of Roman Catholics and conservative Lutheran groups such as the Missouri Synod.²⁵

In these controversies, parents not only suspected “liberals” and perhaps communists of conspiring against their values but also learned to suspect the government itself of mischief. Many activists already hailed from the strongly anti-communist and anti-collectivist Far Right, a [political contingent whose enthusiasm had been stirred by

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²⁴ Martin, 100-116,

²⁵ Martin, 117-143; Williams, 134-42, 146-53.
Barry Goldwater's campaign for president in 1964, or from the more moderate Republican tradition. Increasingly, these activists connected suspicion for centralized power, economic libertarianism, and socially conservative values as interlinked causes. In this ideology, the federal government was particularly suspect. In addition, the government response to independent Christian schools seemed to confirm this picture. During the early 1970s the Internal Revenue Service moved to remove the tax-exempt status of private schools and universities that maintained racial segregation. In consequence, it informed Bob Jones University, one of the most influential of the separatist fundamentalist colleges, that it planned to revoke its tax-exempt status because the university at that time did not admit black students and maintained rules barring interracial dating or the hiring of staff in interracial marriages. After a series of legal battles, the IRS made good on its threat in 1976, a decision that the Supreme Court later upheld in *Bob Jones v. United States* (1983). Those who ran and supported local Christian schools, especially those that were initially segregated, viewed the government's action to constitute religious persecution. When paired with the battles over school curriculum and busing, the IRS threat spurred activism. Christian School Action, an organization Robert Billings founded under the advisement of Paul Weyrich of the Heritage Foundation, began to advocate for the rights of religious private schools. Jerry Falwell, also a leader in the movement toward Christian private schools, helped to advance Billings' cause.26

The similar groundswell of activism from religious social conservatives met the advance of second wave feminism. One of the dearest causes of the National Organization of Women was the Equal Rights Amendment, a constitutional amendment

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26 Martin, 168-73.
originally proposed by Alice Paul and backed by National Women's Party in 1923. If ratified, the Amendment would have made discrimination on the basis of sex unconstitutional. However, the controversy over feminism sealed the ERA's fate. The Amendment received a two-thirds majority vote from the House and Senate in 1972, but had to go to the state legislatures for approval. Although initially uncontroversial to the leadership of either the Republican or the Democratic parties, popular uncertainty about gender roles and suspicion toward the feminist movement had the potential to generate tremendous enthusiasm. Always on the quest to mobilize support for a strong anti-communist foreign policy and opposition to federal social programs, Phyllis Schlafly, a Barry Goldwater supporter and activist, opposed the ERA in *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* and quickly found that it was a lightening rod issue. Her organization, Stop ERA, Beverly LaHaye's Concerned Women for America, and many smaller, state-level organizations mobilized large numbers of religiously conservative women to oppose the ERA. As with the public school controversies, conservative women were responding to what they believed was an attack on their values masterminded by radicals and powerful interests. In 1983 the ERA fell three states short of the necessary thirty-eight required for ratification, a testament to both feminist influence and the groundswell of social conservative activism that opposed feminist aims.27

Similar confrontations occurred when Jimmy Carter sought to spur dialog on public policy and the American family by calling for a White House Conference on the Family, to be held subsequently in Baltimore, Minneapolis, and Los Angeles. Fearing that

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representatives from the feminist movement would dominate the agenda, activists on the New Right immediately mobilized conservative religious women to send likeminded delegates to participate in the state conferences held as a run-up to the national conference, at which a portion of the delegates were to be chosen. Consequently, virtually every delegate elected at the Virginia Convention was from the conservative contingent, a fact that prompted feminists and the leaders in other states to push back against the floods of conservative enthusiasm. In the wrangling that ensued, left-leaning participants felt besieged by the conservatives and began taking measures to ensure a diverse representation at the conference, while the conservatives came to the conclusion that their opponents were edging them out of the process. During these early events, moderate conservative activist Jerry Regier approached John Carr, a Roman Catholic whom Jimmy Carter had appointed to organize the conference, to air his concerns that conservative Protestant leaders had not been included among the speakers at the conference. Revealing the deep fault lines that existed and the investment that conservative Protestant churches had already invested in ministry to the American family, Regier explained to Carr that he had unwittingly ignored the entire conservative Protestant industry of family ministries and advice literature. As writer William Martin quotes in his history of the Christian Right, Regier explained:

In the evangelical world, family seminars, marriage seminars, children's seminars, parenting courses, those kinds of things, were natural and normal, and speakers traveled all over and tapes were disseminated. It was just a natural part of our world. To see a White House conference on the family was going to take place and these people weren't even a part of it created a feeling that 'Something's wrong here.'

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28 Martin, 179-80.
Carr responded by inviting several evangelical leaders to participate in the conference: Dr. James Dobson, psychiatrist and head of Focus on the Family; Jay Allen Peterson, an evangelical marriage advice writer; Robert Duncan, an executive in National Association of Evangelicals; and Bill Gothard, fundamentalist and founder of the Family Life Seminars. However, efforts at conciliation fell flat. Conservative activists interpreted the entire purpose of the conference as an attempt by the government and liberal activists to create new government programs, as well as an ideological tool of feminists and homosexuals to advance their agendas. They viewed the airing of contrary viewpoints as attacks on the traditional family. Their tactics reflected these convictions. Conservative delegates leapt to microphones to speak out on the controversial “culture war” issues and planned walk-outs from all three conferences. Meanwhile, delegates who did not hail from the conservative faction interpreted the conservatives' actions as attempts to take over the conferences. Feminists, gay and lesbian activists, and other participants bristled over the conservatives' suggestion that discussions about their families did not belong at the conference. The resulting impasse was representative of mutual distrust that was coming to define the “culture wars.”

These events helped to bring greater numbers of prominent evangelicals and church members into the New Right. Leaders such as Paul Weyrich of the Heritage Foundation and Phyllis Schlafly of the *Phyllis Schlafly Report* and the Eagle Forum adopted causes important to religious conservatives and urged conservative Protestant leaders to get involved in politics. They were helped in this quest not only by growing concerns about education, sexual morality, feminism, and homosexuality but also about a

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29 Martin, 173-189; Williams, 142-145
new issue: abortion. Initially, the pro-life cause had been largely the purview of Roman Catholics, who were numerous among the leadership of the New Right. By contrast, conservative Protestants were less adamant. They had typically decried abortion mainly as an example of female selfishness, the murderous rejection by the potential nurturer of her social role. Following this tradition, separatist fundamentalists, always the watchdogs of mainstream immorality, were among the earliest conservative Protestants to decry the liberalization of state abortion laws in the 1960s and *Roe v. Wade* in 1973. But evangelicals and Southern Baptists expressed mixed opinions on therapeutic abortion. Immediately following *Roe v. Wade* only a few singled abortion out as an issue of special concern. However, that pattern was about to change.

Conservative Protestants began to hear about abortion not just from Roman Catholic activists, who increasingly looked like political and cultural allies, but also from a few of their own. The most influential voice was Francis Schaeffer, a conservative Presbyterian and thinker whose writings were dedicated to converting youth and to getting Christians to place themselves in dialog with the larger Christian tradition in a way that allowed them to benefit from its insights and claim its controversies as their purview. In *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* (1979), Schaeffer had dispatched both a book and video series explaining the horror of abortion in stock terms and casting it as the central moral question confronting modern civilization. Due to this advocacy, by the 1980s conservative Protestants who were particularly concerned with preserving the family and with reclaiming the culture began to see abortion as not only relevant but as the non-negotiable, central question of the culture wars.\(^{30}\)

Partly in response to their conversation with leaders in the New Right and from their increasingly tenacious objection to abortion, feminism, and other controversial topics, political activism from well-known pastors and writers led them to found dozens of organizations. A listing of just a portion of them testifies to the intensity of politicking by emergent Christian Right's most dedicated leaders. In 1975 Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ joined with colleague Republican congressman John Conlan to start a small publishing company dedicated to distributing literature on political activism. He subsequently founded the Christian Freedom Foundation and Intercessors for America in 1975, both of which taught pastors and concerned laypeople how to organize politically, as well as the Christian Embassy, a Christian outreach to elected officials, government employees, military officers, diplomats, and other public servants. In 1978 Christian School Action reorganized as the National Christian Action Coalition and took up a broader spread of “pro-family” issues. In 1979 Robert Grant brought conservative activists opposed to the ERA, gay rights, and abortion together in the Christian Voice. Employing a tactic later used widely by pro-family groups, he urged Christians to form alliances across denominational lines and produced a “Moral Report Card” for elected officials that suggested how elected officials had performed in adhering to a conservative religious platform on moral issues. The same year, Beverly LaHaye launched Concerned Women for America, which aimed to oppose the National Organization for Women by organizing conservative religious women behind pro-family issues. In 1979 conversations with several other prominent activists and pastors motivated Jerry Falwell, pastor of Thomas Road Baptist church and the voice of the Old Time Gospel Hour to
carry his support for single-issue campaigns for Christian private schools and against homosexuality into new ambitions. His new organization, the Moral Majority, mobilized conservative Christian voters, especially fundamentalists and Baptists, to vote for a pro-family, economically conservative, anticommunist agenda. Psychologist Dr. James Dobson began speaking out about pro-family issues over his radio program *Focus on the Family* and founded a pro-family think tank, The Family Research Council, in 1983. When the Moral Majority, the most visible of these organizations during the early to mid-1980s, began to lose influence, charismatic televangelist Pat Robertson filled the void it left with a new organization, the Christian Coalition. Under the leadership of its president, Ralph Reed, the Christian Coalition began mobilizing conservative religious voters in 1988. Due to these efforts, the plight of the American family fast moved from growing cultural concern to a political cause célèbre, a new reason for crossing denominational lines, and the new face of a more confident and aggressive conservative Protestantism.  

At the root of conservative Protestant activism was both their longstanding concern about the family and a fear that new foes and vast social changes required a new kind of activism. At no time since the 1920s had conservative Protestants felt their own leadership over American young people and American culture was so quickly slipping, and at no previous point, with the possible exception of support for the Temperance Movement and National Prohibition, had large numbers of conservative Protestants articulated a shared political agenda that led them as a group into partisan politics. The moral and cultural stirrings that so concerned them begged for explanation, preferably an

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explanation that would enable God's people to hold on to their dream of a Christian
America. Explanations were forthcoming. Some of them reveal not merely particular
controversies and political conditions that made possible the rise of the New Christian
Right, but also a deeper and more mainstream set of assumptions about the family and the
value of self-fulfillment. These ideals helped to sustain and give substance to
conservative Protestants' optimism about the American family, as well as to help
conservative Protestant leaders to assert the values of socially conservative ideas and to
explain the source of the “culture wars.”

**The Search for Happiness and Order**

Appeals from leaders on the emerging New Christian Right to respond politically
to the threats of feminism, homosexuality, abortion, pornography and other potential foes
were influential in mobilizing a new political movement. Of at least equal importance
was the way in which the already-established conversation conservative Protestants were
conducting about the family in advice literature acknowledged and attempted to respond
to the problems and stresses of the 1960s and 1970s. Many ordinary people were
mobilized partly because leaders whom they already trusted as sources of direction
created bridges between existing private concerns and politics. It was no accident that
most of the early leaders of the New Right such as Jerry Falwell of Thomas Road Baptist
Church and the *Old-Time Gospel Hour*, James D. Kennedy of Coral Ridge Presbyterian
Church and the *Coral Ridge Hour*, and Pat Robertson of the *700 Club* and the Christian
Broadcasting Network were pastors who conducted well-known television or radio
ministries that thousands or even a couple million people tuned into for inspiration. It is also no wonder that three of the most influential voices were Dr. James Dobson, whose radio program *Focus on the Family* and numerous advice books reached millions, and Tim and Beverly LaHaye, who conducted Family Life Seminars across the country during the 1970s and published a steady stream of advice literature before and during the launch of their political efforts. After acquiring news about concerning cultural or political issues from these familiar sources, ordinary churchgoers spread the word about local or national political issues that they considered important to their families and churches.

Information about the family may well have reached the largest number of people through the expansion of conservative Protestant publishing about marriage and child rearing during the 1970s. As family issues became more controversial and as Christian publishing itself began to expand in the number of publishers and in sheer volume, the number of titles produced about the family exploded. The production of family advice literature from Zondervan and Moody presses, two major presses in operation for the entire period of 1945-1980, provides an interesting anecdote. The combined production of the two presses from 1945-1949 were ten advice books on marriage, family life, life advice to adolescents, and child study; from 1970-1974 the presses produced more than thirty-five books fitting the same description. In addition to increases in the volume from older presses, new publishers such Tyndale House (1962-) became major sources of inspirational and advice literature.
The upsurge of advice literature from conservative Protestant publishers served to disseminate further the messages that books and periodicals had been broadcasting during the early years of the Cold War about the importance of an intimate marriage, effective parenting, a well-managed home, family worship, and shared family activities. There were also subtle but important shifts in the content of the books being produced. Many couples who had been newly-weds in the 1940s and 1950s entered the first or second decades of their marriages. In addition, as parents of the Baby Boom generation aged, the social changes of the late 1960s and 1970s shifted attitudes toward romance and marriage and made the rules regarding gender roles and marital expectations seem less fixed. Reflecting some of these factors, the national divorce rate began to climb rapidly. The interests of advice writers shifted accordingly. Books increasingly emphasized the importance of improving struggling family relationships with better communication and fair and effective conflict management. Others told husbands and wives how to decode the complex signals the opposite sex sent. Married persons could not expect their spouse automatically to make sense to them, because men and women were different in their preferences and basic needs. To resolve conflict and restore intimacy in marriage, it was necessary to remember and accommodate the proclivities of the opposite sex. More couples brought home books with titles like *The Art of Understanding Your Mate* (1970), *What Wives Wished Their Husbands Knew about Women* (1975), *Everything You Need to Know to Stay Married and Like It* (1972), *You and Yours: Building Interpersonal Relationships* (1972), *How to Keep Your Family Together and Still Have Fun* (1969). Topics on which couples had been briefed in the 1950s were increasingly presented as
pressing problems of established families that, if left unresolved, might lead to family
disintegration. Often, popular psychology provided some of the emergency help couples
required.

In *How to Keep Your Family Together and Still Have Fun* (1969), Marion Leach
Jacobson, also the author of Family Fun Workshops, expressed this new emphasis by
providing families with strategies for enjoying time together. She admitted that everyone
knew shared family time was important but that such ventures could be “uncomfortable if
not painful.” “Personalities clash,” she explained, “and interests conflict.”32 Her book
encouraged parents to build a more positive marital relationship in order to increase the
happiness of the entire family and examine the ways in which their own psychological
hang-ups might be ruining shared family experiences. Perhaps, she cautioned, a parent's
own “self-centered reactions” spoiled times of recreation. “Could it be 'self' in you that
really causes much of the trouble?” she asked. “Damage to your ego when they show you
disrespect? Inconvenience and added work for you when they are disorderly and
irresponsible? Shame and embarrassment when they do no show up well before others?
Frustration when they insist on what they want instead of accepting what you want?”
Personal conversion to Christ could lead to “personal wholeness” and therefore would
help parents to overcome these shortcomings.33 With those demons exorcised, Jacobson

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33 Jacobsen, 13-14.
went on to explain how parents could plan to make family meals, bedtime, birthdays and social occasions, family game night, games, hobbies, cultural events, and other opportunities into meaningful times of fellowship and recreation.\textsuperscript{34}

The new advice books also contended that some of the main premises of America's revolution in attitudes toward the importance of sexual experience were both healthy and biblical. Beginning in the late 1960s conservative Protestant writers began to produce the first explicit Christian sex manuals, books that discussed techniques to achieving sexual pleasure within marriage.\textsuperscript{35} Three of the most influential early examples were Herbert J. Miles \textit{Sexual Happiness in Marriage} (1967), Tim and Beverly LaHaye's \textit{The Act of Marriage: The Beauty of Sexual Love} (1976), and Ed and Gaye Wheat's \textit{Intended for Pleasure: Sex Technique and Sexual Fulfillment in Christian Marriage} (1977). Moving far beyond the reticence of those writers who wrote about sex forty or fifty years before—or even fifteen years before—the authors of Christian sex manuals did not merely assert that the human body and the sex drive were created by God and inherently good. Unlike earlier advice writers, they also did not expect couples to learn the details of the sex act from personal experience or from physicians. Reflecting the new attitude, Miles told how, in the mid-1950s, a bright student had confronted him with the request to discuss sexual adjustment prior to his impending nuptials. He had assumed that Miles, professor of sociology at Carson-Newman College and the instructor of a course on marriage and family, would be able to answer his several pages of probing, detailed

\textsuperscript{34} Jacobsen, 29-121.

\textsuperscript{35} For an in-depth discussion of recent Protestant sex manuals as a genre, see Amy DeRogatis, “What Would Jesus Do? Sexuality and Salvation in Protestant Evangelical Sex Manuals, 1950s to Present,” \textit{Church History} 74, no. 1 (March 2005), 97-137.
questions. After finding himself unprepared, Miles spent the next decade reading available literature, counseling students, surveying married students about their sexual experiences. His successors in the manual writing venture assumed that young people were asking more detailed questions and deserved answers.\textsuperscript{36}

The new sex manuals explained that sex was not simply a physical need or God's divine plan for propagating the race. Sex also presented the opportunity for self-expression and the pursuit of intense physical pleasure. Few experiences in life excelled the pleasure of orgasm, authors praised, and the regular achievement of mutual orgasm would create, in Miles' words, a “personal pleasure relationship” between couples that drew them closer together and enlivened all the other aspects of their marriage. As Tim and Beverly LaHaye enthusiastically proclaimed, sex was a source of “enjoyment and fulfillment” that involved the “sublime, intimate interlocking of mind, heart, emotions, and body in a passionate eruptive climax that engulfs the participants in a wave of innocent relaxation that thoroughly expresses their love.”\textsuperscript{37} Understanding that some conservative Protestant readers might be shy of seeing sexual pleasure discussed so forthrightly in a Christian book, they turned to several biblical passages that alluded to sex play or intercourse. They interpreted these verses as proof that God specifically blessed the pursuit of sensual pleasure and that the Bible itself contained instructions for having a good time in bed.\textsuperscript{38}


\textsuperscript{37} Miles, 43; Tim and Beverly LaHaye, \textit{The Act of Marriage: The Beauty of Sexual Love} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 14, 15;

Pressing this point further, they drew readily from research about human sexuality. They cautioned that many sex therapists and sex researchers accepted philosophies or methods with which Christians must disagree, but they also argued that all married persons ought to understand how their reproductive system worked, the causes of sexual dysfunction, and the methods they could use to ensure an active and satisfying sex life. They argued that if couples were to achieve these ends, they required a great deal of specific information. The main problem with the secular sex manuals was their failure to articulate a Christian view of sexual morality, leaving readers who were concerned about remaining faithful to God without direction about what ideas were appropriate for a believer. To meet believers' needs for both explicit information and direction, authors outlined a Christian philosophy of sex that endorsed pleasure without moral anarchy. They then moved into specific instructions on how to commence lovemaking. Miles and the LaHayes described the steps each should take on their wedding night to have a positive experience and to avoid common mistakes, such as not anticipating a virgin wife's discomfort with her first experience of intercourse. The LaHayes discussed, in turn, allowing time to relax the night of the first encounter, then proceeding through “the great unveiling,” foreplay, sexual climax, and the “afterglow.” In their books, Miles, the LaHayes, and the Wheats provided information on the stages of sexual arousal, how orgasms felt, how a woman's experience of coitus and of orgasm differed from a man's, common sexual positions, and techniques for overcoming common problems in the sexual response of either sex.  

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Writers were particularly emphatic about the fact that sex was good and that virtually all women were capable of enjoying marital sex. To achieve a successful long-term sexual relationship, they discussed the importance of spouses communicating their sexual needs clearly and of both partners successfully achieving orgasm. All agreed, as Miles put it, “Both husband and wife have definite sexual needs that should be met in marriage.” In support of this position, Miles, the LaHayes, and the Wheats all cited I Cor. 7:3 as evidence that couples should abstain from sex only for short periods and that husbands and wives ought to consider their bodies to be the property of their spouse and their goal in intercourse to be ensuring that their spouse reached climax.\textsuperscript{40}

To a degree unprecedented by earlier writers, conservative Protestant manual writers were also influenced by the recent findings about the female body, especially the groundbreaking medical study from Masters and Johnson, \textit{Human Sexual Response} (1966). While they still considered the female orgasm one of the central problems in marital adjustment, they moved away from the common belief that women had far smaller sex drives, as well as from the suggestion that some women were “frigid” and blocked by some fault of their own from being able to respond sexually to their husbands. Instead, they stressed that most sexual problems would clear up once a couple understood that God had sanctioned sex, they confronted conflicts or other psychological barriers to intimacy, and learned the proper techniques for pleasing one another. They also repeated the news from sex researchers Masters and Johnson that clitoral orgasms were not substantially different from nor inferior to vaginal orgasms, as many psychologists had

\textsuperscript{40} Miles, 31-32; LaHaye, \textit{Act}, 18-20, 21-43, 60-61; Wheat, 19.
formerly asserted. Thus women should not fear that they had the wrong kind of orgasms, and couples should engage in love play meant to stimulate the clitoris and anything else that kept the wife's libido in play.41

Equally notable is the fact that the new sexual manual writers discarded the mental image of the self-controlled husband and wife dedicating themselves to days or weeks of self-restraint as an ordinary part of marriage. Chastity was necessary before marriage, but after marriage one could not engage in sex too often nor be too immodest with one's life partner. Miles reported that the 151 couples he counseled and then surveyed about their love lives reported, on average, sexual contact every 3.3 days. The LaHayes argued that semen build-up pressed men to crave sexual release every two days or so.

The frequency of intercourse between normal couples obviously raised questions about birth control. Major sex manual writers mentioned the importance of parenthood in God's plan, and the LaHayes expressed the personal opinion (based on their own views, they cautioned, rather than the Bible) that couples ought to have four or five children. However, they traded the fear of earlier advice writers that low birth rates would destroy the church for the fear that bad sex would destroy marriages. They touted the safety and effectiveness of the birth control pill and explained the advantages of condoms, spermicide, diaphragms, and IUDs. They also explained how to follow the rhythm method but expressed skepticism about its effectiveness and about the ability of couples to abstain from sex for several days on end every month. Poking good-natured fun at the

41 Miles, 62-70; LaHaye, Act, 102-154; Wheat, 103-04. For brief descriptions of the importance of Masters and Johnson's work, especially the understanding of female sexual response, see: Thomas Maier, Masters of Sex: The Life and Times of William Masters and Virginia Johnson, the Couple Who Taught America How to Love (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 159-163; D'Emilio and Freedman, 312-13.
method once recommended as most natural and God-honoring, the LaHayes explained, “People who use the rhythm method are called parents.” For the first time, advice writers implied that methods of family planning that privileged an uninhibited quest for sexual pleasure--at least, within the confines of marriage--were the preferable choice.  

Altogether, they argued that the very success of marriage depended upon achieving a satisfying sex life and that Christian faith and morals aided couples in achieving a vigorous love life. In fact, the LaHaye's argued that Bible-believing Christians had better sex than their secular peers. Based on surveys distributed to participants in the LaHaye's Family Life Seminars, they argued that the self-reported achievement of female orgasm by Christians was far higher than the rate turned up by sex researchers' studies of the general population. From this evidence, the LaHayes concluded that sex was not merely permissible to Christians, but that the Spirit-filled life might even mean the achievement of the very rewards promised by the larger sexual revolution, all without violating Christian moral principles.  

While some writers responded to the mass quest for sex fulfillment with an open Bible and a loving embrace, others discussed the claims of the feminist movement. No longer would it do to note that people were uncertain about gender roles and needed to be told the rules. Now it was necessary to respond to the activism of women themselves. “Women during the past decade have contrived to place themselves very much in the center of attention. They are talked about, puzzled about, argued about, legislated about,” Elisabeth Elliot wrote in Let Me Be a Woman (1976), and “and it is women who have

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42 LaHaye, Act, 182-194. Quoted portion, 190.

43 LaHaye, Act, 195-217.
done most of the talking, arguing and legislating.” Elliot was one of the more influential evangelical women who took on feminism, because she was already an evangelical hero. The wife of missionary Jim Elliot, she was one of the women widowed in the slaying of five missionaries by the Waodani Indians in 1956. The modern martyr story was the most well-known tale of contemporary heroism on the mission field, and Elliot had continued the story by traveling to the tribe who had killed her husband and conducting missions work there for two years. It was with this spirit of submission that Elliot approached the question of modern women's mission. Elliot, who stressed that her Calvinist theology taught the importance of human submission to an all-powerful God who masterfully governed creation, regarded the rise of a renewed quest for women's equality as a hubristic revolt against God's design. The creation of two sexes had been no accident of biology or history, nor had anyone become male or female by an accident of birth. Divine purpose lay behind a woman's creation as female. As a person crafted to be the submissive helpmate for man, this was the mission she was meant to fulfill and would be happiest fulfilling. Elliot argued that the question of power or rights raised by feminists were far less important than this essential point. The believer's model for living was Christ's self-giving love and service to others, not a crusade for personal rights. Self-knowledge and a full life came from recognition of the divine purpose with which one had been created.⁴⁴

During the 1970s, a cadre of other female writers advanced similar points. This new crop of authors often accepted the feminist movement's affirmation of empowerment

for women but argued that traditional roles were the true basis of power and self-
fulfillment. Jill Renich, daughter of influential missionary R. A. Torrey and voice behind
a radio program called Between Us Women, wrote To Have and to Hold: The Feminine
Mystique at Work in a Happy Marriage (1972). The workbook called women to pursue a
marriage that provided “companionship and purposeful living” as well as “happiness and
success,” mainly by accepting their responsibility to provide spiritual, mental, sexual, and
emotional support to their husbands. In pursuing this relational mission, Renich asserted
that “a woman with strength of character and the freedom of self-acceptance can channel
her strength behind her husband without losing her own individuality.” In Ms. Means
these points by stressing the importance of self-acceptance, self-confidence, and the
pursuit of a full life under the assurance of God's love and forgiveness. She also stressed
that self-acceptance involved banishing negativity, overcoming low self-esteem,
embracing one's sexuality, and affirming one's essential nature as a woman with a special
social role. “Once we've accepted femininity,” she explained, “we can get on with being a
person—a feminine person.” Maxine Hancock recast her acceptance of the submissive
wifely role and homemaking as her vocation as an informed and empowering choice. She
explained to readers that she understood the appeal of feminism. She “was not a
particularly domestic sort of woman,” and it annoyed her to hear homilies from men
about women's roles. But she accepted her subordinate and domestic roles because God
had called her to do so. No man had been given the power to impose his will upon her,
but as a man's equal, she had the option choosing to submit out of love for God and for
her family. She rejected the idea of “liberation” from that role, viewing the rejection of it as an exercise in self-interested individualism that had no place in the Christian life. She explained that the Christian woman “knows that any emancipation which frees her only to serve her own self-interests is just another kind of servitude.” The Christian would find true liberation in affirming her choice to submit to God's will. Likewise, Judith Mills, a member of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, adopted a similar approach, articulating her own philosophy of womanhood in the form a series of letters between herself and a fictional young feminist. Sympathizing with the concerns of her imaginary correspondent, she vied for the idea that traditional Christian ideas of womanhood offered a true path to personal satisfaction.45

This picture of the aggressively domestic woman combined readily with the value that the sex manual writers were placing on sex fulfillment in marriage. In *The Total Woman*, Marabel Morgan disseminated the content of a series of workshops she had developed to teach women how to claim a more forthright sexuality and a personal plan for making their marriages deliver the companionship and reciprocity they desired. In order to renew the romance, heart-to-heart communication, and fun in their marriages, Morgan pressed women to accept their Biblical roles and to throw themselves into the kind of home- and relationship-building that Cold War advice literature so often recommended. According to Morgan, the cranky, lonely, unkempt housewife ought to remake her attitude, seeking not to sulk or shout her way back into her husband's graces.

but instead to accept, admire, adapt to, and appreciate her husband and his preferences. By offering him what he needed and wanted, the wife restored herself as the object of her husband's affection and made him more willing to take her needs into account. Most important, she understood that her marriage could never rate more than “C+” unless the couple enjoyed an active sex life. Drawing partly from Herbert Miles' *Sexual Happiness in Marriage*, she urged women to focus on fulfilling their husbands sexual needs, which were likely to be great. She also urged wives to overcome any negative attitudes toward sex so that they could enjoy the experience and bring to sex the creativity it needed to remain exciting. Morgan was herself particularly fond of dressing up in costumes and sexy lingerie, and she encouraged her readers to adopt the same tactic.⁴⁶

Some conservative Protestants, especially separatist fundamentalists, responded to the apparent crisis in family life and gender roles by reasserting particularly strict views of gender roles and of duly ordained authority within home and church. The most successful promoter of a strongly hierarchical mode of viewing human relationships—and significantly also the best at combining his endorsement of authority with strong undertones of a self-improvement workshop—proved to be Bill Gothard, a graduate of Wheaton College who began his career as a youth minister who worked with inner-city youth and church youth groups in the Chicago area. This resume inspired Wheaton College to ask him to teach a course on youth ministry in 1964. Building on that course, Gothard began teaching small seminars in 1966 and subsequently founded the Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, which was dedicated to teaching youth and parents how to avoid and overcome common life problems. In the 1970s Gothard's seminars attracted

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audiences of hundreds and sometimes thousands. Attendees, some of whom attended multiple conferences and remained active in Gothard's organization for many years, were drawn to Gothard's teaching because he offered an entire life philosophy built on biblical proof-texts. He did not merely purport to teach a few biblically-based self-help principles, but instead to decode from Scripture an elaborate series of bedrock principles for relating to God, running one's family, governing one's finances, building friendships, dating, and living a moral life. Gothard made use of elaborate charts and lists that related concepts to each and rooted each concept in biblical passages.

The essential premise of Basic Youth Conflicts was that Scripture laid out “non-optional principles” that all persons had to follow to succeed in life. The principles were not simply good rules of thumb or inherited wisdom, but commands revealed in the inerrant words of Scripture. The sinner was apt to reject this wisdom, but the Holy Spirit would help the ardent, redeemed believer to apprehend the truths that Scripture offered. Airing the usual fundamentalist and evangelical convictions about the universality of truth taught in Scripture, Gothard also taught that God's truths were timeless and applied equally to all persons, whether or not they acknowledged Jesus Christ as the Lord of their lives. As the Institute for Basic Youth Conflicts posted recently on its website, “Every person, regardless of culture, background, religion, education, or social status, must either follow these principles or experience the consequences of violating them.”

Gothard taught that the implementation of biblical principles, which he grouped under several general subject areas, could structure a person's life and necessitated the

development of the specific character qualities necessary to living them out. In conference notes produced in 1979, the broad headings were: self-acceptance (acceptance of appearance, abilities, and background), authority and responsibility (understanding one's proper place in God-ordained hierarchies of authority), conscience (ridding oneself of fault toward others), rights (dealing properly with offenses against oneself and the power of forgiveness), freedom (the responsibility to regard one's choices as opportunities to do what is morally right), success (the necessity of reflecting on Scripture and patterning one's own thoughts on God's), purpose (discerning God's will for one's life), and friendship and engagement (learning to develop wholesome relationships). The implementation of the life principles depended largely on the daily discipline of examining all of one's thoughts, feelings, and problems in light of Scripture. On that basis, the believer could evaluate his activities and relationships on the basis of God's will and purpose, identify areas of sin and weakness, and emerge with the insight and power to live as God instructed her. 48

If Gothard's intense biblicism recalled an older tradition of fundamentalist and evangelical adherence to biblical authority, Gothard's tendency to view the Bible as a manual of life principles also gave his teaching the flavor of a business seminar or a self-improvement class. Participants in Youth Conflict seminars during the 1970s received a red three-ring binder—later, the binder became an oversized, bound, red volume—filled with notes and charts laying out Gothard's life principles, the various elements of personal problems, and steps for building a godly life. Observers have described how

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Gothard could fire off information for three hours a night. During the sessions, attendees would scribble furiously into their handouts. After the seminar, the notebooks offered the alumnus a life guidebook for relating any personal problem to Gothard's larger schema for building a successful life.

Gothard thought that there could be a comprehensive schema because he believed that all problems related back to basic causes as well as to one another. As one chart explained, the “root causes” of all life problems were rebellion against or miscomprehension of a basic life principle that God had established in the Bible. For example, a myriad of personal problems might originate in a single point of rebellion, such as “Refusing to dedicate personal rights and possessions to God.” “Root causes” always gave rise to one or more “root problems,” such as “greed.” These first two levels of inner reality were hidden from the observation of outsiders, but they resulted in a large number of visible problems. From the sin of greed, multiple “surface causes” might quickly spring up: “insecurity, worry, anger, envy, jealousy, tension.” These “inner conflicts” in turn gave rise to a variety of practical life problems, including “illnesses, wrong priorities, financial problems, lying, stealing, cheating, arguing.”

The path to resolving one's own problems—or to helping another resolve theirs—was to trace any apparently isolated problem back to its roots.

Likewise, the key to preventing future problems lay in a highly conservative variant of the power of positive thinking. One of Gothard's foundational principles was “self-acceptance” based on the recognition that God created all persons to have

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“fellowship with him through Jesus Christ” and to “experience the full potential of Christ working in and through these bodies our ours.” All temptations to sin came directly from Satan, who “is aware of the potential which God has put within our lives” and who “desires to destroy it or at least partially diminish its potential.” Satan accomplished his ends by causing people to believe false things about God and to rebel against their designer.50

If Gothard's emphasis on personality problems and the journey of the individual toward the actualizing of his potential were reflective of mainstream evangelical writing, Gothard's overwhelming emphasis on submission to authority made him a particularly extreme and controversial figure. Gothard's seminars presented the individual's journey to spiritual maturity as intimately connected to the concept of submission to God. Likewise, submission to God required one to successfully pattern all of one's social relationships on biblical teaching. And according to Gothard, the Bible taught that all relationships were structured by the proper ordering of power between people, according to their position within a biblically-ordained hierarchy. In that hierarchy, God wielded ultimate authority. Under God, husbands and fathers had special authority to govern. Wives and children fell underneath their husband or father. Hierarchical power structures also governed church life, civic life, and work life. Consistent with this picture of organizational life, the Institute for Basic Youth Conflicts was governed on a hierarchical structure in which Gothard acted as head and Institute members were arrayed in varying levels of authority underneath of him.

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Gothard's interest in the question of authority was not only notable for the degree to which it emphasized the necessity of submission or leadership, according to one's position in a God-ordained hierarchy of power. It was also unusual for its explanation of why such an individual ought to submit to another. Gothard went beyond the usual arguments about established authority as God-ordained or natural, claiming instead that by placing oneself under a higher authority, a person ensured that he would receive guidance toward proper life choices and protection from temptation and sin. The authority of a husband or father, then, offered an “umbrella of protection” to those whom God had placed under him. Building on the concept of the authority as a form of personal protection, Gothard taught it was necessary not only for children and young teenagers to submit to their fathers, but also for unmarried adult children to do so. Gothard discouraged youth (especially daughters) from moving away from home, unless they were leaving to marry and establish a new family.

According to Gothard, the family's umbrella of protection not only protected subordinate family members but also established the vital controls on individual behavior. When authority was properly established in a family and that authority was in turn submitted properly to God, then the family controlled the development of individuals and placed a tight rein on unrighteous behavior in the nation. Problems in national life therefore reflected family failure; in fact, any problem arising in the lives of family members testified to the existence of a deeper problem within the family's collective life:

The very foundation of the church as well as the nation is the family. When the family begins pulling apart, God often allows a member of the
family to have a problem which he cannot resolve. It is God's intention to use this problem as a motivating factor to bring the entire family together.51

Ideally, the godly family would rally not only to help the individual to overcome his problem but to reform itself so that it would more perfectly exhibit God's life principles.

Although Gothard's promise to provide a full life philosophy and his call to restore the authority of pastors, parents, and other authority figures appealed to evangelicals searching for a means of rearing faithful Christian youth, the authoritarianism that underlay Gothard's teaching ultimately marginalized him from the evangelical mainstream. Although voices strongly emphasizing authority had always been present and sometimes quite loud, virtually all conservative Protestant advice literature took a much softer view of social relationships in which sensitivity and service moderated power. Accordingly, Gothard has drawn fierce criticism. Critics have commonly accused Gothard of behaving in an authoritarian manner toward those inside of his organization and of inspiring a disconcerting loyalty among some seminar alumni. Critics have also argued that Gothard views obedience to authority so highly that he uses the paradigm to reinterpret Scriptural passages in unorthodox ways. In Luke 2:39-52, the boy Jesus lingers in the Temple for three days unbeknownst to his parents, impressing the teachers of the law with his knowledge. When his frightened parents finally reunite with him, he questions their concern, asking “Did you not know that I must be about my father's business?” Ordinarily, interpreters argue that the story teaches Christ's identity and mission, one unique and higher than the plans of his parents to return quietly home.

51 “How to Get the Most From Your Problems,” in Bill Gothard, Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts: Research in the Principles of Life (n.l.: Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, 1979), 7.
from Jerusalem. By contrast, Gothard has cited the story an example of Jesus' submission to his parents, demonstrated by his willingness to return home with them. According to Gothard, Jesus’ compliance, rather than his exceptional wisdom, caused him grow “in favour with God and man.”52

The content of mainstream marriage advice literature during the 1970s, especially when considered alongside the metiotic rise of Bill Gothard, suggest a number of conclusions about conservative Protestant writers and their audiences. Writers noticed and attempted to answer people’s questions about how to interpret and respond to new social movements and trends. They thought, likely accurately, that audiences wanted to know how to respond to these developments in a way that would be faithful to Scripture and that would protect them and their families from making devastating mistakes in their social views or moral choices. Authors were particularly eager to build on a pattern they had already established in earlier advice literature: asserting that established social roles were the keys to health and happiness. In the context of the late 1960s and 1970s this quest meant in part rejecting the claims of social movements that questioned the legitimacy of a power structure that delineated men from women, but it also meant accepting the basic claim that happiness, even self-fulfillment, personhood, and dignity, were legitimate goals that perceptive, assertive believers could claim as their own. By giving couples the tools for better communication and a more satisfying sex life, and by encouraging women to adopt a plucky enthusiasm for the importance of housewifery, advice writers in the 1970s laid claim to the therapeutic culture's ideals with redoubled

enthusiasm, even as they offered more deliberate and intense resistance to those who followed the quest for self-fulfillment into new social rules or previously prohibited moral behavior. As controversial and idiosyncratic as his ideas proved, Bill Gothard exemplified this larger quest for a practical and biblical means of restoring order and cracking the keys to life success. The need to arrest the social chaos of the era, especially among youth, made the reassertion of authority particularly appealing. Yet even one of the era's most ardent defenders of the importance of submission to authority presented that submission as a gateway to a vigorous, successful life free from the oppression of sin and the impediments of human weakness and failure.

This quest for stronger families and better lives would also be taken up by members of the emerging New Right, who helped to build a political movement on the foundations of the Christian vision for a therapeutic culture.

**Child Discipline and the Nation**

While conservative Protestants wrangled with America's changing social life, some writers emerged not only as prolific self-help or family advice writers but also as political crusaders for the American family. Dr. James Dobson's foray into the limelight occurred when a publishing executive stumbled across the young professional and realized that he possessed the perfect credentials—evangelical faith and professional training in psychology—for creating a bestselling book. The executive, retired marketing director Francis Heatherly, had visited the Dobsons’ church and joined them for dinner. In the course of their conversation, he learned that Dobson was interested in communicating
his thoughts on parenting to a larger audience than his usual slate of PTA meetings and church events. Heatherly immediately contacted his friends in the Christian publishing industry. Dobson soon received offers of a book contract from Zondervan and Tyndale House. Another publisher, Word, learned that Dobson gave seminars and arranged to film one of them for release on VHS tape. Despite poor production quality, the tapes sold a far larger number of copies than anyone predicted. In a short time, Dobson the professional psychologist was reborn as Dobson the parenting guru.53

The exposure that Tyndale House provided to Dobson enabled him to interpret for his readers the current state of American beliefs about parenting and to offer corrections in light of the social disorder that had clearly been growing in recent years. In this quest, Dobson joined a cacophony of voices that were criticizing child-rearing experts who had peddled a gentler, more forgiving philosophy of child rearing twenty years earlier.

Benjamin Spock, whose Baby Book had outsold nearly everything published in the English language following World War II, took the blunt of the blame. Spock had made himself a convenient whipping boy by becoming one of the antiwar movement’s best-known supporters. Spock's decision served to confirm to some observers that the doctor who had urged toleration of childhood perspectives ultimately proved too soft to stand up to the rebellion of those same children two decades later. Dobson concurred, repudiating Spock as a symbol of parental cushiness.54

Dobson was not in fact dissenting from the entire body of prior thought on child-rearing so much as he was recalibrating its language and emphases to respond to the

53 Buss, 38, 41-42, 66-68.

times. It had never been the intention of most writers to oppose the cultivation of house rules and self-discipline in children. Dobson was, in fact, not really repudiating Spock's actual ideas but rather a general attitude of “permissiveness” that seemed to have grown up around his advocacy of a more relaxed style of parenting that emphasized understanding and reciprocity. Spock had been attempting to counteract harsh discipline, parental authoritarianism, and over-attachment to strict rules, all of which seemed to contravene postwar dreams of the home as a place of comfort and mutual understanding. By his own admission, Dobson was not so much disagreeing with their vision as he was observing that parents had overreacted to the previous era's harshness toward children. The proverbial pendulum had swung from strictness to the opposite extreme. Dobson was trying to bring the pendulum back toward the middle, restoring a balance between permissiveness and discipline.55

Dobson pictured parenting as equal parts discipline and unreserved, unqualified love for the child as a unique individual. The covers of early editions of Dare to Discipline relayed this message. One of the early trade paperbacks pictured a perfectly straight see-saw held in balance over a central point. On one side, “love” exerted downward pressure. On the other, “control” exerted equal force. Similarly, an early mass market paperback depicted a couple and two children walking on a beach. The son hangs close to his mother, subtly seeking her companionship and protection. Meanwhile, the daughter holds her father's hand and pulls him ahead slightly as she studies the action of her feet upon sand. The two children seem inherently to be expressing the twin needs of children for both protection and expression, while the image of the family conveyed the

impression that the parents not only superintended their children’s play on the beach but also shared the experience with them. Beneath this tableau lay the book’s title and the message, “Permissiveness doesn't work. Now a famous child psychologist shows how firm commitment is the key to real love.”

These images were meant to communicate that children required fierce, unconditional parental love. This love treasured their needs and feelings, and it expressed that concern through appropriate and effective application of both affirmation and direction. Young people were “badly in need of wise and understanding parents who can anchor them during their personal crises,” Dobson pressed. Mothers and fathers could only become that kind of anchor when they had first established and maintained the respect of their child. From early childhood, a parent could expect children to misbehave. Much misbehavior had to be met with parental tolerance for mistakes, frustrations, and the “childishness” of their offspring. “Reasonable” rules and a calm, fair handling of conflicts were imperative. Simple rewards and punishments provided incentives for learning good habits, such as making one’s bed and arriving to the school bus stop on time. But sometimes a greater parental response was necessary. Beginning in early childhood, parents could also expect their children to present them with direct, willful challenges to their authority, a dare that had to be met with a firm response. The response—a spanking—communicated the necessity of respect immediately and on the most elemental level, by way of the instinct organisms possess to avoid behaviors they associated with pain. The periodic establishment of such respect formed the foundation

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on which parents gained the ability to set rules, build habits of self-discipline, and form the pattern of self-control and respect for others they would need to succeed in interacting with teachers, employers, and peers.

Dobson's most adamant pronouncements were against permissiveness, which he discerned was the trend of the hour. But his intent was to pave a middle way between the permissiveness and disciplinarianism. In Dobson's view, the parental exercise of discipline was meant to create “mutual respect,” a “two-way” street along which the child's regard for parental authority and guidance traveled in one direction and parental respect for the child traveled in the other. In this model of the parent-child relationship, corporeal punishment had a limited but important role. 57 Dobson assured readers that even though corporeal punishment had been controversial by some child-rearing experts, this method was preferable to the alternative parental option: nagging and verbal bullying. When reared by a parent who merely nagged and pleaded, the child would quickly deduce that parental threats were unenforced, empty words. 58 An effective parent was one who could establish and maintain fair household rules. In cases where the child expressed total disrespect for his parents and for the parents' authority to set and enforce those rules, corporeal punishment firmly and decisively communicated that blatant disrespect or “sassiness” would not be tolerated. In cases of outright childhood rebellion, a spanking that was just harsh enough to produce spontaneous crying served to bring the child quickly into line and reestablish the parent-child bond. Dobson instructed parents to wait for and use the moment following punishment, when a spanked child was likely to

57 Dobson, Dare (1970), 27, 31.
58 Dobson, Dare (1970), 37-43.
feel calmer from his “emotional ventilation.” “At that moment you can talk heart to heart,” Dobson revealed, “You can tell him how much you love him, and how important he is to you. You can explain why he was punished and how he can avoid the difficulty next time.” Since the goal of the punishment was simply to enforce a principle and maintain the respect that underlay the parent-child relationship, both child abuse or disciplining out of anger were unjustified acts of parental aggression. Just as permissiveness could destroy a child for life, parental bullying could inflict lasting psychological damage. “Parents can absolutely destroy a child through the application of harsh, oppressive, whimsical, unloving, and/or capricious punishment.” he explained. Later in the book, he explained further that under parental discipline that was too harsh “a child suffers the humiliation of total domination.” He elaborated:

   The atmosphere is icy and rigid, and he lives in constant fear. He is unable to make his own decisions and his personality is squelched beneath the hobnob of parental authority. Lasting characteristics of dependency, overwhelming hostility, and psychosis can emerge from this overbearing oppression.

To grow up with healthy attitudes, a child had to learn to respect and obey authority; he also had to know that in discipline only his behavior, not his person, was being rejected. Further, Dobson stressed that parents who expected respect out of children were to return the favor by seeking to understand the child's perspective and feelings. While defiance warranted punishment, an expression of genuine anger or opinion was to be

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59 Dobson, Dare (1970), 35.
60 Dobson, Dare (1970), 29.
61 Dobson, Dare (1970), 46.
62 Dobson, Dare (1970), 36.
encouraged, heard, and replied to in a reasonable way. Moreover, punishment was a small element in a larger program of parental training meant to instill not mere compliance in the child, but self-discipline. Instilling self-discipline was in turn one part of a larger parental program of building the child's overall happiness and self-esteem. Setting reasonable boundaries created a feeling of security; denying a child's every whim allowed him to appreciate and gain full “pleasure” from those wishes that were granted. Parental involvement and interest in the child's life allowed them to express their love and regard; conversely, sarcastic or belittling remarks could leave permanent damage on the child’s mind. “Self-esteem is the most fragile attribute in human nature: it can be damaged by a very minor incident,” Dobson cautioned, “and its reconstruction is often difficult to engineer.”

Dobson enlarged on his thoughts on self-esteem in his second parenting book, *Hide or Seek* (1974). In it, Dobson charged that American culture was deeply hostile to the idea that all people possessed inherent self-worth, defining standards for human value that were dependent upon frequently unachievable standards of intelligence and beauty. Just as disobedience or respect for authority started during a child's earliest days, so children became privy to these cultural standards early in their lives. “Most of our little ones have observed very early that some people are valuable and some aren't. . . . We parents inadvertently teach this system to them. . . . The result is widespread inferiority—which has probably included you and me in its toll.” Dobson urged parents to stress their child's inherent worth in order to combat “the present epidemic of self-doubt.”

Instrumental to that process was parental identification with the child and willingness to

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offer him the unconditional regard that he would likely fail to receive from most other people. This goal entailed a complete program of prevention and psychological support in the home, starting with the elimination of common problems arising from parental insensitivity, lack of time, or sibling rivalry. It included shielding children from the American culture's implicit emphasis on beauty and sexiness as long as possible, as well as helping them to build self-confidence and self-acceptance. It also meant remaining aware of the child's efforts to cope with inferiority feelings through the psychological tactics of conformity, denial, or compensation.  

Dobson's tough version of the intensive parenting of the past two decades sold well among evangelicals of the early 1970s. Dare to Discipline became one of the best-known evangelical parenting books, and Focus on the Family quickly became the must-have radio program for Christian radio stations. Due to both of these successes, Dobson's subsequent books had ready-made audiences. After Dare to Discipline and Hide or Seek, Dobson published What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew about Women (1975), which concerned depression and frustration in women and how men could better meet their wives' needs. The Strong-Willed Child (1978) applied the principles from Dare to Discipline to management of children who most enjoyed challenging rules and crossing boundaries. Preparing for Adolescence (1978) discussed sex and teenage problems for teenage audiences. Love Must Be Tough (1983) stressed the importance of reestablishing respect between family members when a marriage fell into crisis.

The popularity of Dobson's books and the runaway success of his radio program call for explanation. Undoubtedly there were many factors, but one of the chief causes lay  

64 Dobson, Hide or Seek (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1974). Quoted portions, 7-8, 47.
in the fact that conservative Protestants were looking for clear guidelines for how to parent and how to strengthen marriage at a time when social rules were becoming less clear and when the children of the middle class seemed to be in revolt. Dobson not only spelled out guidelines for parents but explained how the failure of the American family had produced the youth crisis of the 1960s. The undisciplined child, Dobson cautioned, was inherently un-American in his temperament. He was “a tyrant and dictator” who sought “to overthrow constituted government in the home” and to extend his control over his “heady empire.” The youth culture of the 1960s was an expression of the home's failure both to discipline and to build self-esteem in such petty tyrants. In Dare to Discipline, Dobson argued that drug use, sexual promiscuity, and youth violence all testified to the failure of homes to control youth attitudes and behavior. In Hide or Seek, Dobson credited the counterculture for seeing through the inadequate American value system that praised above all else “beauty, intelligence, and money”:

Consider the behavior of the social dropout, referred to generally as the 'hippie.' He attempts to be as ugly as possible, often characterized by unkempt hair and the absence of makeup worn by females. He rejects formal education in all varieties, refusing to apply his intellectual potential in the traditional manner. . . . And, finally, he spurns the entire work ethic whereby materialism is generated.

In one extreme case, the assault of a family on the self-esteem of one growing boy had resulted in the death of President Kennedy in 1963. Dobson reconstructed Lee Harvey Oswald's life story to reveal how his aggressive, uncaring mother and lack of a father had left him with no love or support for his ego. Inevitable failure in school, then

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65 Dobson, Dare (1970), 11, 34, 46.
66 Dobson, Dare (1970), 167-217.
67 Dobson, Hide, 45-46.
in military service, and finally in marriage sent Oswald after the blood of a man whose “Camelot” represented everything Oswald had never been permitted to enjoy. The behavior of hippies and assassins might be self-destructive, but according to Dobson they were also natural and expected psychological responses to an inadequate home life.

Dobson's concern about firm but emotionally intensive parenting also provided him with ample reason to weigh in on the controversy over women's proper roles and personal needs. His approach seemed to strike a chord with many conservative Protestant listeners. Like many antifeminist writers, he asserted the importance of “traditional,” middle-class domestic roles for women. Concurring with earlier writers who had argued that some women were insufficiently interested or able to care for their family’s very large pool of physical and psychological needs, Dobson expressed special concern about the pressures on women. The increase in women's employment since World War II and the appearance of the second-wave feminist movement particularly concerned him, largely because the first had innocently deprived American homes of some of the care and attention they required, and the second because it seemed to be marshaling an organized attack on the pattern of home life that Dobson viewed as essential to the salvation of souls and the survival of democracy. These were powerful concerns that resonated with some people.

What may have resonated even more, especially with the millions of women who read Dobson's books and tuned into his radio broadcasts, was Dobson's warm concern for the housewife's problems. Aided partly by a speaking voice and slight drawl that communicated deep fatherly warmth to many female listeners, Dobson articulated and

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sympathized with how frustrating some women found their roles within the home. There was, first, “the lack of respect and status” that housewives suffered, both in the opinions of feminists and in the eyes of American culture more generally. Second, he admitted the “‘home-work’ imposes some special frustrations and tensions on women, and we should face them squarely.” Dobson thought the homemaker's principle frustration was loneliness. Mothers were often isolated from other adults, unappreciated by tired husbands, and made to feel that they were not a part of their husband's better-recognized and better-valued public life. Unintentionally conceding some of what Betty Friedan had described in *The Feminine Mystique*, Dobson related that as a counselor he had found that these factors left many “unmet needs” in women. They described feelings of depression that lacked a precise, single cause. In the face of such unease, Dobson observed that wives “are often totally incapable of explaining their feelings to their husbands.” Meanwhile, men often entirely misunderstood the cause of their wives' “nagging, complaining, self-pity, and eye-gouging hostility”—all these were the wife and mother's bids for appreciation and pleas for intimacy. Dobson attempted to recognize women's problems, urged husbands to understand their wives, and argued that women desperately needed affirmation and support from men, from society, and—especially when both of the former were lacking—from each other. Dobson urged women to bind together in Bible studies, to share their experiences, and to encourage one another. He urged them to take control of their frustrations and feelings, to chose a more positive frame of mind, and to cultivate their own self-esteem and mental health. He also urged them to explain to their husbands in clear terms how they felt and how they needed him
to behave as a husband and father. Dobson also used his writings and broadcasts as opportunities to praise the women in his audience and to explain that someone indeed understood their problems and appreciated their effort. One can only guess how many women, after spending the day changing diapers and noticing their strategically-placed copy of *What Wives Wished Their Husbands Knew about Women* had not moved even a centimeter from its original location on the back of the toilet, appreciated praise from the congenial husband and counselor Dr. James Dobson, even if it was only over the radio.

By diagnosing women's discontent to be the result of lack of appreciation, Dobson recognized the strange restlessness and depression of some housewives and also offered a different interpretation of it than that of Betty Friedan and other spokespersons of the emerging feminist movement. Dobson saw the wife and mother's dilemma not as an inevitable function of her confinement and isolation, but of the failure of families to develop the ideal of a companionate marriage: men failed to appreciate and love their wives. If women's craving for status and emotional intimacy could be met—if the American picture of companionship and sexual intimacy could be realized—many of women's problems would disappear. As feminists were beginning to question the premises behind this ideal, Dobson asserted the romantic, companionate marriage was a means of defining women's roles and of fulfilling their needs. Pauline texts urging wives to submit to husbands and husbands to love their wives seemed to throw the weight of biblical authority behind this model of family life.

Dobson's advocacy for companionship in the Christian marriage and strong relationships between parents and children remained his main preoccupation as a minor
celebrity, but they also began to make Dobson one of the New Christian Right's most influential figures. First and foremost, Dobson was acting as a psychologist, counselor, and friend to his audiences and readers. He wanted to help families. But inherent in the project was the conviction that the family itself, when properly managed, was a powerful cultural tool that deserved the utmost attention—and, he would increasingly conclude, political defense. Dobson encouraged his audiences to believe that despite recent problems, marriages could be saved and families could be made effective shapers of youth. To a subculture of conservative Protestants who were becoming well-accustomed to the idea of counseling, psychology, self-help, small group topical studies, and other practical helps to modern life, Dobson the psychologist combined in one icon the professionalism of the psychologist and the moral intensity of a kind pastor. Dobson frequently stressed that American families were in crisis, but also that concerned individuals could reclaim their families from the neglect and the cultural confusion that threatened them. As a psychologist, Dobson pressed how concerned he was about the nation's future, but he also offered a diagnosis for the present cultural malaise and renewed hope for people's private hopes and dreams.

This orientation toward moral intensity and scientific optimism guided Dobson steadily toward political involvement. The quest to fix the lapses in culture, or else live witness its collapse, made the line between morals and politics fuzzy for Dobson. As Dobson emerged as a child-rearing expert, he also began to warn readers and listeners about the social and political conditions under which he believed contentious parents were laboring. One of the early causes to seize his attention was the availability of
pornography and portrayal of sexuality in the media, topics that had invited the finger-wagging of moralists for years and had, in the preceding decade, become a point of special concern in light of changing technology, new laws, and new industry standards. Dobson also placed special stress on the dangers of the sexual revolution on teenagers. Beginning with *Dare to Discipline*, he warned parents that the “traditional concept of morality is dead” among the majority of high school students today,” a fact that placed every child at risk for suffering unplanned pregnancies or contracting a venereal disease. In addition, Dobson argued that premarital sex was unhealthy psychologically, accounting for problems with teenager self-image and depression. He stressed the importance of sex education in the school, especially for those children whose parents could not or would not educate their children in such matters at home. But he also warned that public school curricula were entirely inadequate because they taught children about sex without attempting to instill a code of sexual morality. Dobson argued that parents therefore had to be bold enough not only to spank their children but also to shape the emerging attitudes of their adolescents toward sex, usually in direct contradiction to what other teenagers, the media, and sometimes school teachers would strive to teach them.69

For Dobson, the media presented a particularly menacing specter, because it invaded private spaces and represented a large, immoral financial interest. “Television carries the sexual revolution into every living room,” he observed. Over the years publishers, advertisers, and “the entertainment industry” had learned that undermining

69 Dobson, *Dare*, 167-189, 17-19.
morality and selling sex made money. The quest for profits made the leaders of the mass media, if not quite the architects of a conspiracy, into a power block whose interests ran counter to the cause of parents and of Christian nation-building.70

One of Dobson's first forays into politics came when his prominence as a family expert led to his appointment to the Commission on Pornography created by Ronald Reagan’s Attorney General, Edwin Meese. In that position, Dobson helped to produce the “Meese Report” (1986) which argued that the wide availability of pornographic materials harmed families and inspired deviant people to commit crimes. The problem included the large soft pornography industry. It also included a more clandestine and more sinister hard-core pornography industry. The Report, and Dobson himself, stressed that this darker underbelly was run by organized crime and peddled homosexual, sadomasochist, and violent films that motivated sex criminals to prowl for innocent victims. Dobson acquired additional support for this view when, in 1989, convicted serial killer Ted Bundy asked Dobson to grant him an interview in which related to Dobson how watching pornography had fueled his appetites to rape and kill. Dobson released the interview on tape, allowing it to stand as positive proof of his position that the government and local communities failed to protect families from salacious material—with unthinkable results.71

If Dobson regarded pornography and sexualized entertainment as something between unprincipled pursuit of profit and organized conspiracy, he was certain that activists in the feminist movement as well as the lesbian and gay rights movements were

70 Dobson, Dare, 167-68.
71 Buss, 85, 103.
conspiring to change American social attitudes. These small but organized movements were dangerous, Dobson thought, because they were both vocal and adept at carving out a home for themselves in the universities and in bringing their concerns before the government. Dobson expressed concern about the agenda of the National Women's Conference in 1977. In 1979, he asked the audience of *Focus on the Family* to contact the organizer of the White House Conference on the Family to request that he be invited. Once there, Dobson was more genteel than some of the shriller foot-soldiers on the emerging “pro-family” right. Unlike those activists who walked out of the White House Conference in Baltimore, Dobson stayed to advocate for his viewpoints and to write the dissenting minority report. Pressing for dialog fit his agenda and his identity as a professional psychologist. But the direction taken at government-funded conferences about women and families troubled him. Dobson continued to express his suspicions about the women's movement. In 1995, Dobson sent observers to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, then described for *Focus* listeners the presence of seminars about lesbian sex, abortion, goddess worship, and other topics that struck conservative religious audiences as frightening, immoral, and exotic. Such examples set the terms of the culture war and encouraged the earnest parent to imagine their basic values and interests as standing in direct opposition to the ideas and programs of the people who led major American institutions.72

In the face of such conditions, Dobson argued that formerly uninvolved citizens ought to become interested in politics. Although constrained by the rules barring non-profits from political activism, during the 1980s Dobson periodically broke from his

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72 Gilgoff, 31; Dobson, James, "Focus on the Family," Newsletter, October 1995.
usual routine of advising families to call upon listeners to contact their representatives over legislation affecting public religious practice or the family. During the 1990s and 2000s, that involvement went up markedly in response to such diverse issues as abortion, “marriage penalty” in the tax code, the rights of private religious organizations to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, the rights of private and home schools, and homosexual marriage. Dobson urged listeners to pick their political heroes and enemies entirely on the basis of their beliefs about family and moral issues. Further, Dobson's on-air appeals for listeners to call and write their congressional representatives generated such deluges at congressional offices that politicians quickly learned to take Dobson seriously, and the Republican Party came to view Dobson's fans as a source of votes. In response, Dobson kept stirring his listeners to action. Thus, Dobson, who professed to stay out of partisan politics and remained dedicated mainly to disseminating family advice, nonetheless became one of the most influential voices in the New Christian Right. It is vital, he argued over the course of four decades of radio broadcasts, that men and women go home to build godly homes and rear godly children. And it is vital that their government protect and empower them as they carry out that mission.73

The Spirit-Controlled Life and Christian Politics

As Dr. James Dobson labored to improve American marriages and parenting techniques, conservative Baptist Tim LaHaye and his wife Beverly also began to produce copious amounts of advice literature and to move into political involvement. Trained by fundamentalist colleges for ministry, they shared neither Dobson's Nazarene background

73 Gilgoff, 17-42.
nor his professional credentials. In fact, the LaHayes were suspicious of secular psychology on the grounds that it promoted “atheism, evolution, amorality, autonomous self-centered man, and socialist one-world view.” Since it made erroneous assumptions about the nature of persons, it was potentially dangerous to those seeking help and to those who studied it without a biblical perspective. Nonetheless, following their encounter with Henry Brandt in 1963, the LaHayes adopted the idea that psychological problems were real and pervasive; they also asserted that they were caused by sin and that the one remedy to sin—Jesus Christ—could provide a true path toward self-improvement. Submission to God's will and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit could break sin's power and transform a person—which on practical, psychological terms meant that a person could be born again as a more confident, happier, kinder, more moral human being who was no longer subject to the oppression and pain brought upon them by sin. That promise held out hope for individuals, for families—and for politics.

When Tim and Beveley LaHaye began writing self-help books, they argued that ordinary methods of self-help could not resolve human problems or make a fuller, happier life possible. However, the goals of a happy life or a successful marriage could be obtained through another means: the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit addressed the psychological issues within the person, opening the way to a successful life to those who went through the process of Christian conversion and life under God's power. A person's inborn temperament, which LaHaye defined as “the combination of inborn traits that subconsciously affects man's behavior,” was weak, afflicted by sin, and

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could only be improved so far by simple human effort. On the foundation of temperament, people built character, which Tim defined as “the result of your natural temperament modified by childhood training, education, and basic attitudes, beliefs, principles, and motivations.” Out of the character flowed personality, “the outward expression of ourselves.” Since the foundation of this complex edifice—temperament, or inborn human nature—was rotten, people failed to realize their dearest goals. They ran up against the basic conflict Paul had described when discussing the gap between the way he wished to act and the way he in fact behaved. In Romans 7:18-20, Paul had said, “for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.” According to LaHaye, Paul—like so many after him—was being pushed around by an “uncontrollable force” within. Gaining control over sin and the self was the central problem of the American seeking to improve himself.\textsuperscript{75}

Self-improvement would only be possible when people changed their inborn temperament with God's help. Tim LaHaye explained, quoting Henry Brandt, that a mature person is one who “is sufficiently objective about himself to have examined both his strengths and his weaknesses and has a planned program for overcoming his weaknesses.”\textsuperscript{76} In LaHaye's opinion, this program involved using philosophers' and psychologists' categories for describing the range of human temperaments to identify one's natural tendencies, strengths, and weaknesses. He expressed appreciation for Jung's classification of people as introverts and extroverts. He also found handy the ancient

\textsuperscript{75} Tim LaHaye, \textit{Spirit-Controlled Temperament} (Wheaton, IL: 1966), 5-7.

\textsuperscript{76} Tim LaHaye, \textit{Temperament}, 110.
Greek classification of temperaments as falling into four categories, each originally thought to arise from the predominance of different bodily fluids within the person. Tim chose to employ this paradigm for describing temperament in virtually all of his self-help books. The descriptions of the four temperament types rang true to Tim, and a fourfold model also seemed to strike the right balance between the simplicity and nuance necessary for a useful counseling tool.77

LaHaye explained to readers that each of the four temperament types had natural strengths and weaknesses; this nature could be redeemed and transformed by the Holy Spirit, who could help a person to overcome the weaknesses and emerge as a happier, more effective person. Those with a sanguine temperament were warm, energetic, sociable, at ease in conversation, craving of friendship with many people, able to relax and enjoy themselves, and motivated primarily by their feelings. Those with a choleric temperament were hot-tempered, active, strong-willed, independent, determined, and confident in reaching judgments. A melancholy person was analytical, perfectionistic, self-sacrificing, dependable, emotionally sensitive, and frequently moody. Finally, those with phlegmatic temperaments were even-tempered, frequently happy and self-controlled, laid back, routine-oriented, and sometimes hard to motivate. Each of these types possessed gifts for making relationships work and organizations run. But each type also had natural weaknesses. Phlegmatic and melancholy temperaments were particularly prone to fear, whereas the sanguine and choleric temperaments were particularly prone to anger.78

77 Tim LaHaye, Temperament, 5-7.
78 Tim LaHaye, Temperament, 10-43, 70, 88.
By submitting himself to the direction of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit-filled believer acquired “nine characteristics,” listed by Paul in Galations 5:22-23 as the “fruits of the Spirit”: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control. Accessible to all of the temperament types, these attributes transformed the inner nature and behavior of those who came to possess them. These qualities could not be acquired through independent effort but when a person became aware of his weaknesses and made the conscious decision to submit himself entirely to God's control. Such a person “retains his individuality,” but was marked by a new, “submissive spirit.” The difference between self-assertion and submission were in fact so stark that the latter was proof-positive of a Spirit-filled believer. LaHaye contended, “A singing, thanks-giving heart and a submissive spirit, independent of circumstances, are so unnatural that they can only be ours through the filling of the Holy Spirit.”

The decision either to fall into a rebellious, selfish frame of mind or to a submissive, God-centered frame of mind was the pivot around which a person's basic attitudes and their successes in social relationships turned. The LaHayes argued that for all four temperaments, most sin and personal problems sprung from one of two roots: fear or anger. When wronged or confronted with a problem, the decision to respond in anger involved the self-interested decision to focus on how one had been wronged, one's grievances against another person, and one's desire for vindication. Once indulged, the impulse to anger led a person to make bad decisions, to push other people away, or to become a slave to the object of the hatred. Likewise, the decision to fear resulted in a self-absorbed dwelling on one's perceived inadequacies or potential impending

79 Tim LaHaye, Temperament, 57-68.

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misfortune. It led people to view situations incorrectly, to make self-destructive decisions, and to repel others. Both anger and fear had the potential to ruin mental stability and personal health, as well as to corrupt one's relationships with other people.

The opposite course to indulging in fear and anger, and thereby falling prey to their many negative effects, was to instead seek God's help and power, thereby exemplifying the fruits of the Spirit. When believers turned to fear or anger, they “squelched the Spirit.” But when they instead turned to the Bible for direction and invoked the Holy Spirit's power, they experienced inestimable blessing and found the power necessary to change their dispositions, their decisions, and their negative habits. The result was the kind of total life adjustment that promoted personal happiness and stronger relationships. Describing the fruits of the Spirit, LaHaye contended “a person manifesting these characteristics is going to be a happy, well-adjusted, mature, and very fruitful human being.”

This conviction that one could remedy most psychological or relational difficulties through the exercise of many small acts of free will shaped the perspective the LaHayes brought to the topic of depression. Tim LaHaye was particularly interested in the topic, perhaps because he regarded the frequency of depression in the population as evidence that many people had lost a spiritual vision for life that could challenge them, motivate them, and give them the divine resources they needed to cope with their circumstances. In addition, Tim experienced four bouts of depression in 1969.\footnote{For Tim LaHaye's comments about the spiritual causes for the rising rate of depression, see Temperament, 96-97. For comments his own depression, see How to Win over Depression (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 11-12.}

According to his books, depression—especially the gloom, apathy, and lack of energy it
wrought—represented the polar opposite of the “abundant life” that God wished his children to enjoy. “No Christian filled with the Holy Spirit is going to be depressed,” Tim explained. Depression was therefore a preventable and treatable spiritual problem. Tim admitted that there were many causes of depression, including temperamental predisposition, biological malfunction, illness, disappointment, life changes, facing a difficult situation with no apparent remedy, and an inadequate philosophy of life. He admitted that since depression stemmed from multiple causes some patients found relief from professional treatment, including drugs, electroshock therapy, or psychotherapy. Nonetheless, Tim recommended “spiritual therapy” for most cases of depression. He argued that the primary root of most depression was in the mind, especially in the habit of engaging in the sin of self-pity. Those who succumbed to this temptation might have substantial cause or reason to pity themselves, but their self-absorbed response to adverse conditions was counterproductive. A person's selfish perseveration on his situation and feelings pulled him into a depression and kept him in a depressed state. Anger and fear, the constant enemies of the Spirit-controlled life, threatened to encourage emotional distress and self-pity. By getting control of one's thought life through prayer, confession, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, most depressed persons could break free from depression.82

In adopting this framework for viewing mental health, the LaHayes repudiated some of the most important beliefs of professional psychology about some mental illness. They only tentatively acknowledged the powerful effects of a person's past experiences,

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the control of a complex psychological condition over a person's perceptions and ability to make choices, or the organic root of mental illness. For example, Tim LaHaye discounted the idea that a person could have “a guilt complex,” let alone a religion-induced one. Recounting a conversation with Clyde Narramore during his training to become a counselor, Tim quoted Narramore as saying, “People have guilt-complexes because they are guilty!”83 One can well imagine how such pronouncements felt to believers who found that their prayerful attempts at surrender to the Holy Spirit did not cure their mental pain in the way that LaHaye predicted. The appeal of this view, however, was clear. By assigning moral agency to people, it also offered a clear (even if difficult) path to escape. It also transformed religion from a potential source of guilt and neurosis, the stuff of which therapists’ nightmares were made, to a practical program of repairing and improving the self through the daily practice of self-examination, prayer, submission, and praise.

This perspective shaped how Tim and Beverly LaHaye viewed problems in the family. In their advice books and at Family Life Seminars, the husband and wife team argued passionately that husbands and wives needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit in order for their life together to flourish. After counseling 2500 couples about their marriages, Tim asserted that in his church counseling program he spent “little time on symptoms and problems; instead we concentrate on the Spirit-Controlled life.” A couple who submitted themselves to the Spirit did not need counseling, nor could counseling be

83 Tim LaHaye, Temperament, 91.
successful unless they were willing to submit themselves to God's leading. That meant daily seeking to understand the Bible, confessing sin, and surrendering oneself to the control of the Holy Spirit in order to find the power to do what it says.\footnote{Tim and Beverly LaHaye, \textit{Spirit-Controlled Family Living} (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1978), 37-38.}

In fact, the LaHayes argued that the Bible specifically instructed believers to pursue the Spirit-controlled life in the context of their family lives. It was not correct that one primarily experienced the Holy Spirit's presence in church, the LaHayes argued in \textit{Spirit-Controlled Family Living}. The real test came when one went home and tried to follow the Bible in everyday life as a husband and father or a wife and mother. They observed that Ephesians 5:17-6:3 instructed believers to seek the filling of the Holy Spirit, then moved directly to commanding wives to submit to husbands, men to love their wives, and children to obey their parents. Obeying these commands, regardless of the conduct of other family members, and seeking God's power every day would result in personal happiness and improve the relationships of everyone else. What would happen, the LaHayes asked, if the spouse who normally vexed you suddenly began exemplifying the fruits of the Spirit? Surely, you would be happier and your conduct toward them would change. Just as the LaHayes preferred to focus on individual agency in their discussions of depression and mental illness, they urged readers and counselees to focus on the role of their own rebellion and weakness in family life and to disregard personal defensiveness and grievances during family arguments. Correspondingly, they argued that
all the most common problems in married life—anger, fear, selfishness, infidelity, self-rejection, and depression—were feelings or tendencies over which individual family members had control.85

Like so many other conservative Protestant advice writers, the LaHayes argued that the cultivation of a full Christian life in the context of the family meant that husbands and wives would assume separate and distinct gender roles; the sexes were equals in value but not in function or authority. One accepted these roles primarily because they were biblical, and secondly because the Bible, being an infallible guide to human purpose and happiness, laid out rules of gender roles that ensured that the psychological needs of both partners would be fully met. “True submission” by the wife to her husband enabled her to meet his need to be loved and recognized as a person imbued by God with special qualities and a special calling within the church and family life. In submitting, the wife acknowledged that which was masculine and unique in him, his strength and leadership qualities. She submitted to him in order to allow him to be what God intended him to be, trusting the Holy Spirit, not her, to confront him and direct him. She expressed her perspective to him, but only in a spirit of submission and love. As a result, his need to act as a man, be seen as a man, and fulfill his mission of man would be made possible. And as she sought to obey the Bible, her surrender to the Holy Spirit gave her the power she needed to find happiness in herself and in God, as well as to become the woman her husband and children needed her to be. She became a “home manager” who implemented her husbands decisions and policies, her husband's emotional supporter and sexual

85 Tim and Beverly LaHaye, Family Living, 37-42.
companion, and her children's “mother-teacher.” Biblical obedience therefore brought marital harmony, spiritual experience, and well-adjusted children; rebellion brought the opposite result.⁸⁶

Similarly, husbands assumed the responsibility to lead, even when they did not want to or when their wives had naturally forceful or decisive personalities. To meet her needs, he had to exert the effort to be in control and to excel at his role as a husband and father so well that she would be happy to follow him. He would afford her respect as an equal who merely filled a subordinate role in his “company” and who was happiest and most effective when he excelled as a leader. His responsibility was always to solicit his wife's opinion, pray to God for guidance, and ensure he was not making decisions out of selfish motivations. Even if he sometimes made decisions that contradicted her views, his conduct would allow her to preserve her sense of “personhood” and “respect.” Nonetheless, he ultimately was responsible for understanding family finances, balancing home and church life, and his family’s spiritual needs. This role conferred upon him the obligation to be a good lover, communicator, and teacher. Just as his wife sought to fulfill him sexually and emotionally, he had to work on expressing love, which was patient, kind, generous, humble, polite, unselfish, gracious, trusting, sincere, and unfailing. The spirit-controlled husband would strive to help with the chores, to make time for his wife, and to verbalize his feelings toward his wife. As a “father-teacher,” he was to assume responsibility for disciplining and instructing children, while also being kind enough not to “provoke them to wrath.” His instruction would aim both to instill self-discipline, an important component of children’s “maturing into adulthood,” and to offer them...

⁸⁶ Tim and Beverly LaHaye, *Family Living*, 80-105
encouragement and praise as they successfully learned and grew. Finally, if success in all those areas seemed like a tall order, the LaHayes urged couples to remember that no one was perfect and to trust their families to God in prayer.

The LaHayes' confidence that religious conversion and the pursuit of personal holiness through God's power could make American ambitions of self-knowledge, self-improvement, and self-fulfillment possible led them toward a schema for interpreting the country's post-sixties malaise. According to the LaHayes, one's life story was as a product of decisions—to convert to Christ or reject Christ, to submit to the Holy Spirit or rebel, to turn to self or to turn to God. Therefore, daily, private spiritual reality was the pivot on which all other events turned. At any given moment, every person was making the decision to turn one of two directions, toward God and a better life or away from God and toward destruction. Put in terms more familiar to the therapeutic culture, individual people could be whole, effective, and happy. Their families could be strengthened, improved, and made exemplars of cooperation and happiness. Those who understood the biblical principles for achieving these hallowed goals might really achieve these rewards and help to prosper the nation. But first they had to take the necessary steps. Thus there were two broad classes of people who tended toward different fates, sin or salvation, unhappiness or happiness, institution-building or institution-destroying. If the nation appeared to be in great distress, it was because too many people had taken the path of unbelief and unhappiness.

The idea that a person was always following one of two paths—the road to holiness and wholeness or the road to sin and brokenness interlocked with the LaHayes'

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evolving political convictions. The LaHayes' cultural outlook had initially been formed
by the southern fundamentalism of Bob Jones University, which tended to view humanity
as divided into two camps: faithful believers who remained pure in the midst an apostate
and sinful culture, and everyone else. Like many other fundamentalists, the LaHayes also
accepted a premillennial dispensationalist view of eschatology that anticipated a
imminent return of Christ during which one section of humanity would be raptured and
the rest left on earth to witness the end of history; Tim cultivated a lively interest in Bible
prophesy throughout his career, an interest that has crested in recent years in his
bestselling _Left Behind_ novel series. These religious views complemented the LaHayes'
early political views. In the 1950s Tim LaHaye began to give talks at John Birch Society
meetings in California and in the 1960s supported Barry Goldwater, actions that
suggested a political outlook that pitted communist conspirators and powerful elites
against the freedom-loving everyman.\textsuperscript{88} By the mid-1970s the LaHayes distilled this
dualistic understanding of religion, culture, and politics into the view then ascendent
among the New Christian Right and devotees of Francis Schaeffer that all political and
social issues connected back to the contest between two philosophies, “secular
humanism” and “Christianity,” and their agents. In the LaHayes' writings secular
humanists formed a pervasive and well-organized conspiracy to evangelize the whole
world. Whether or not one intended to take a side on that conflict or was even aware of its
existence, the position a person took on any given issue as well as one's daily life conduct
advanced the cause of one camp or the other. Thus, personal life and political outcomes
were inextricably intertwined.

\textsuperscript{88} Williams, 72-73.
The idea that one’s political goals rose directly from one’s private beliefs and social commitments provided the LaHayes with a means of constructing a political identity for fundamentalists and evangelicals. In the spiritual-political economy the LaHayes believed to underlay national life, the individual’s relationship to God and resulting success in life was the bedrock that supported his political instincts and convictions. Accordingly, as the LaHayes strove to became political leaders they contended that the pursuit of the Spirit-controlled life gave one the power not only to succeed in family life but also the qualifications necessary to rise up politically to defend Christian belief and the Christian family. Just as Nixon and Reagan appealed to the existence of a “silent majority” that needed to stir itself to action, the LaHayes argued that ordinary Americans already had access to the wisdom and power they needed to fix the nation; they just needed to tap into it. In the preface to Beverly’s book *The Spirit-Controlled Woman* (1976), Tim praised his wife for her success in submitting to the Holy Spirit, overcoming her fears, and becoming a better life companion. Her personal success in these areas had enabled her to emerge as a public figure alongside her husband.

Additionally, she been able teach hundreds of other women to enjoy the same triumph:

I can testify that since you surrendered yourself completely to God some thirteen years ago, your temperament has been controlled by the Holy Spirit. I have witnessed a sweet, soft-spirited worry machine who is afraid of her own shadow be transformed into a gracious, outgoing, radiant woman. Through this transformation and the lectures you have given on the Spirit-filled life, God has used you to inspire thousands of women to accept him and the abundant life he offers. . . .

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Since you became a Spirit-filled woman, I find you much more exciting and easier to love. I have a hunch other husbands will have the same experience after their wives learn the joys of being a *Spirit-Controlled Woman*.

This picture of Beverly as an empowered, Spirit-controlled woman able to excel in her private and public roles translated easily into her emerging identity as a political leader. In 1995 the publication of a revised edition of the *Spirit-Controlled Woman* inspired Tim to add a note to his original preface in which he presented Beverly’s political motivations and prowess as direct expressions of the personal qualities she had been building for the past two decades:

P.S. Many years have passed … and the story is incredibly better. Little did we dream back then that God would recognize your deep concern for the moral and cultural decline in our nation and lead you to start Concerned Women for America. Today, you—a former “fearful woman”—serve as president of the largest pro-family women's organization in the country. You have established yourself as a respected Christian leader in Washington, as one who has known and worked with U.S. Presidents, cabinet members, senators, and congressmen, and who has even appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee to testify on behalf of three Supreme Court nominees—an unbelievably scary environment. On top of that, you have birthed a daily radio talk show here in the nation's capital that is now the largest of its kind led by a woman and is carried to almost every city in the nation. You have proven in your life that God is “able to supply all our needs” if we just step out by faith and follow His leading. I admire the fact that you never limited God by unbelief. And best of all, you have not lost your gracious, Christlike spirit.”

Beverly concurred with Tim's assessment. As she called women to oppose the Equal Rights Amendment and the other causes espoused by the feminist movement, she portrayed their success in personal life and religious ministry as the qualifications necessary to discern the needs of the nation and take the lead in national politics. Just as

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the LaHayes viewed personal and family problems as the result of two, polar opposite mental paths—selfishness or submission—they also viewed politics as a war between two worldviews whose adherents exemplified the selfish or submissive orientations. According to Beverly, what distinguished the Christian woman from her secular or feminist neighbor was her basic aim in life, her vision for the future of the nation, and her whole mental framework. Christian women were by nature and by choice invested in the well-being of their families, and that orientation conferred on them the moral authority and moral obligation to lead. “The woman has been gifted by God to bring life into the world,” Beverly explained. “Deep within her spirit, she has a God-given mothering instinct, which seeks to protect and comfort those around her.”91 This orientation made them the inherent enemies of communism, secular humanism, and other ideologies advanced by “subversives” who attacked traditional values and the integrity of American families. “Who but a woman is as deeply concerned about her children and her home?” Beveley asked. “Who but a woman has the time, the intuition, and the drive to restore our nation?”92 In a passage that prefigured—perhaps even inspired—vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin's recent portrayal of conservative women as “mama grizzlies,” Beverly argued the ordinarily mild and loving housewife would prove absolutely tenacious when her home and children were threatened:

Someone once remarked that perhaps it is because God has implanted in a woman's heart and mind an aggressiveness that shows itself most obviously when her children or husband is threatened. Even in the animal

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kingdom, we see examples of lionesses fighting to the death to protect their offspring, and normally docile mother dogs will become vicious when they sense that their puppies are danger.\textsuperscript{93}

By contrast, Beverly LaHaye explained that second-wave feminists championed “liberation” from motherhood and traditional morality. They aimed to create a total social revolution in which promiscuous sex would be considered normal, in which women were identical to men, and in which Christianity was banished. In short, just as the Christian woman inherently sought to honor God and protect her family, the secular feminist sought to reverse Americans’ esteem for the family, at least for Beverly’s picture of it, and called into question traditional religious beliefs. When Beverly made opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment the first goal in her early fight against Betty Friedan and the National Organization of Women, she contended that the ERA was just a convenient step of the feminists toward this larger goal to remake every aspect of culture and government. “The ERA is just a stepping stone to the ultimate goal of revolution in our existing American society: a change to an atheistic, humanist nation,” she explained to the wives and mothers she aimed to mobilize. “The passage of the amendment is just one cog in the wheel. If not by means of the ERA, they will strive to accomplish their goals through some other method.” In Beverly’s opinion, the ERA would not only strike traditional notions of sex difference from US law but would empower the federal government to usher in a “unisex” society and to give the network of secular humanists in national life

\textsuperscript{93} Beverly LaHaye, \textit{Who But a Woman?}, 15.
additional powers to enact their varied political agendas through the long arm of federal power. Thus, the legal erosion of differences between men and women and secularization is intertwined and inseparable.94

While urging Christian women to reject feminist claims and the secular humanist philosophy she suspected lay behind them, Beverly acknowledged that Christian women lived in a changed social and political environment that required their cultivation of a new model of Christian womanhood. Her articulation of Christian womanhood made traditional social and religious assumptions about women into an argument for her political interests and action. Implicitly, the rebellion of second wave feminism against the assumptions of middle-class American culture upped the ante for traditionalists: Beverly surmised that if the future of the nation lay in political battle between two diametrically opposed worldviews who made gender roles and family life integral parts of their visions, then it was also incumbent on Christian women to be as empowered and militant as their secular counterparts. Although she was calling upon women to exercise their expanding public rights to be heard in politics, Beverly interpreted this empowerment in terms of a traditional Christian vocabulary that ignored questions of structural power and instead couched political power in terms of the personal quality of holiness. For scriptural inspiration, she turned to Luke 14:34, “Salt [is] good: but if the salt hath lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?” Using this biblical metaphor, Beverly argued that an unpolicitized, unmotivated woman who ignored politics was like “salt” that lost its “saltiness.” For too long, Beverly argued, Christian women had been “tasteless,” that is, “quiet and uninvolved.” Meanwhile, the less quiescent feminists had

been promoting immorality and humanism and would, if left unopposed, create a “libertine society” and an “amoral culture.” In response, the housewife had to become “salty in prayer and action.”

Tim Lahaye's revealingly titled book *The Unhappy Gays: What Everyone Should Know about Homosexuality* (1978) exemplified the LaHaye's conviction that the cultural and political wars of the 1970s and 1980s were a contest between two kinds of people who differed from one another on the most basic spiritual and psychological levels. According to Tim, what distinguished a straight person from a homosexual was not simply a single behavior but a “total life and thinking process.” As a result, “the homosexual world and the straight world are polar opposites.” That fact required an explanation of the origins of homosexuality and the gay lifestyle and subculture. Tim drew from books, counselors, and some interviews with unnamed homosexuals to construct his picture of homosexuality. Out of those sources, Tim did learn and repeat at least one of the points the gay rights movement had tried to advance: stereotypes of all homosexual men as “effeminate” or weak-willed were inaccurate. In fact, there were several types of homosexual men, and one could not easily pick them out from the rest of the population. However, Tim's concessions to the gay rights movements' portrayal of homosexuality ended with that point. He rejected the claim of most gay rights activists that homosexuality was either “normal” or inborn, portraying it instead as a combination of predisposition, the poor role modeling of aggressive mothers and weak or absent fathers, overly permissive child-rearing techniques, early childhood sexual experience, and a habit of fantasizing about homosexual sex. He also portrayed the essential “facts”

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about homosexuality in terms that were couched to shock conservative religious readers. According to LaHaye, homosexuals were inherently more promiscuous than heterosexual men, so that fidelity to a single partner was rarely maintained. In fact, Tim argued even the most promiscuous heterosexuals could not ever approach the number of sexual liaisons that many homosexuals supposedly had during a lifetime. In addition, he argued that homosexuals, being unable to marry or raise families, pursued sex merely for its own sake and therefore valued only the shallow pursuit of transient pleasure. This cheapened and selfish view of sex led, in turn, to an “insatiable quest for the erotic” that led to shocking and extreme sexual behavior, especially to sadomasochism.96

Building on these perceptions, he argued strenuously that gay sexuality was fundamentally destructive to the achievement of real or lasting happiness. Fully embracing the romanticized picture of heterosexual marriage, LaHaye argued that people were ordinarily most fulfilled emotionally and physically by entering a monogamous, lifelong relationship. In such a relationship, one's sex life sustained an emotional and spiritual bond and committed a couple to parenthood, childrearing, and responsibility to the community. Insofar as homosexual relationships lacked these qualities, their ability to deliver lasting personal satisfaction decreased accordingly. Most homosexuals were profoundly lonely, LaHaye argued, because their partners' lack of fidelity frustrated “the basic desire to share one's intimate self with an intimate other.” Further, without legal marriage, social pressure to remain together, or children to rear, there was no social “glue” encouraging homosexual couples to sustain committed relationships. The pain of

continually losing potential life partners forced the homosexual to face breakups over and over again. Finally, homosexuals’ failure to establish a family allowed them to indulge in a selfish and ultimately unrewarding lifestyle of sex and materialism.\textsuperscript{97}

In addition to their inability to enjoy lasting relationships motivated by selfless goals, Tim Lahaye thought that homosexuals were bound to be unhappy because of the alienation that homosexuality brought from God, family, and friends. Since the practicing homosexual was in active rebellion against God, he could not experience the blessings of fellowship with God or the filling of the Holy Spirit. God's absence left the proverbial “God-shaped vacuum” in the homosexual's life that no substitute source of joy could ever supply. In addition, the homosexual often retained a number of associated psychological problems that either led to or resulted from his sexuality. Tim argued that at the root of male homosexuality often lay an unresolved resentment toward women that inhibited his future relationships with women. He also argued that most homosexuals initially experienced profound guilt over their sex acts; those whose natural consciences were not deadened by their ongoing sin were dogged by a persistent sense of inadequacy and guilt. Perhaps worst of all, the homosexual faced inevitable rejection from family members and friends if he admitted to his lifestyle. But if he kept his sex life a secret, he labored under the terrible psychological and moral burden of lying and maintaining a double life based on lies.

Tim LaHaye's concession that rejection of one's parents, siblings, friends, and coworkers was often a source of great pain and hardship to homosexuals raised a potential critique of Tim LaHaye's own position on homosexuality. To some of Tim

\textsuperscript{97} LaHaye, \textit{Unhappy Gays}, 37-59. Quoted portion, 43.
LaHaye's contemporaries, the high cost of a double life and the harm wrought by the social rejection homosexuals faced were one of the clearest reasons to support a gay and lesbian rights movement that urged homosexuals to “come out of the closet” and vie for greater social acceptance. Tim LaHaye disagreed. He was willing to contend that sympathetic ministries seeking to convert the homosexual to heterosexuality were needed, but he was unwilling to reach the conclusion that compassion necessitated greater moral or social acceptance of homosexuality. Instead, he implied that such rejection was the inevitable byproduct of the “natural” revulsion of heterosexuals to the idea of the homosexual sex. Further, he contended that the religious and social cost of sexual immorality was too great to justify the extension of moral acceptance to homosexuality. As a result, Tim saw it as inevitable that homosexuality's past and future personal costs would include loneliness, social isolation, poor self-esteem, unemployment and “welfarism,” illness, depression, and suicide. If homosexuality was the “opposite” of Spirit-controlled, heterosexual marriage, then the psychological effects of the two life patterns must also be polar opposites.98

Six years later, Beverly LaHaye marshaled a similar analysis of the feminist movement in her book The Restless Woman (1984). To write the book, Beverly dispatched two members of her staff at Concerned Women for America to research the true nature of the feminist movement and to throw light on women's true problems. Although feminist writers were challenging the idea that women's happiness and best interests lay in their conformity to established norms, Beverly and her assistants did not have to look far to find literature arguing the contrary viewpoint. The LaHayes were

98 Tim LaHaye, Unhappy Gays, 45-46, 48-49, 97-142.
indebted to the advice literature of the 1950s and 1960s for their own vision for a warm, companionable family life made possible by distinct gender roles and a self-improvement regime. From Christian psychologists such as Clyde Narramore and Henry Brandt, they had learned one might succeed in life with the power of religious piety, self-examination, confession, and prayer. This era had produced an antifeminist undercurrent in psychological writing by psychologists and psychiatrists who viewed depression or dissatisfaction in housewives to be a sign of personal maladjustment or neurosis. In 1947, Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia F. Farnham produced *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex*, one of the most strident expressions of this perspective. The book cast the entire feminist movement as a result of neurosis in its leaders. This data provided Beverly LaHaye with ammunition to use against Betty Friedan and her allies.  

Inspired by Lundberg and Farnham, Beverly contended that the contest between feminists and Christian women was as much a psychological battle as an ideological one. She explained that people had the free will to choose either a path of love or hate. The first path involved the rejection of the cause of self-fulfillment for service to others. This love was the mysterious power behind human happiness and development. It also, paradoxically, enabled the giver to enjoy a truly fulfilling life. The second path, hatred, was the path that feminists and other women who experienced a strange restlessness with their responsibilities and roles had taken. Leaders in the feminist movement had often suffered from poor home lives and had responded to their difficulties by rejecting men, moral standards, and their roles as wives and mothers. Repeating Lundberg and

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99 In the acknowledges of *The Restless Woman*, Beverly Lahaye credited a volunteer, Glorya Hammers, and her research assistant, Michael Jameson, with helping her conduct research. See Beverly Lahaye, *Restless Woman* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 7.
Farnham's analysis of Mary Wollstonecraft’s life in *Woman: The Lost Sex*, she argued that the eighteenth-century feminist had suffered from a home life in which her alcoholic father had regularly beat her mother. As a result, she had grown into “a tortured woman—a woman who had been deprived of a loving home environment where she could have grown into a happy, well-adjusted adult.” Wollstonecraft did finally marry her second lover, after which she died in childbirth. But her children reflected their mother's disposition. One of her daughters committed suicide, and a second had an affair with a married man that caused the suicide of his wife. This sad tale would have been unknown, had Wollstonecraft not expressed her neurosis by penning *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), the “Magna Carta” of the feminist movement.\(^{100}\)

Moving onto the nineteenth-century feminists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucy Stone, LaHaye had less evidence of unhappiness or alleged mental illness, so she argued instead that the women were all religiously or morally radical, a symptom that their parents had failed to instill in them a vital evangelical faith. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, she argued, had been turned away from evangelicalism by a father who had made the faith seem too harsh. She noted that Lucy Stone possessed liberal views on Scripture. Finally, LaHaye repeated biographical details from Victoria Woodhull's life to point out that she had been the divorced wife of an alcoholic, advocated spiritualism, pawned her sister's psychic abilities, and published “lurid” information on abortion, sex, and birth control in her feminist paper, *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly*.\(^{101}\)

\(^{100}\) LaHaye, *Restless Woman*, 19-21, 47-49.

\(^{101}\) LaHaye, *Restless Woman*, 49-54.
Turning to contemporary feminists, LaHaye then argued that sad home lives had caused each to spin a hate-filled social philosophy. She argued that Betty Friedan's mother had resented her marriage for forcing her to break off her job as a journalist, made life miserable for her “weak-willed” husband, and turned to gambling. Gloria Steinem's parents had divorced and thereby set her on a path toward feminism, socialism, and atheism. Mary Caldrone, the author of a sex education curriculum opposed by leaders in the New Christian Right, allegedly encouraged teenagers to have sex because she had been abandoned by her mother and neglected by her father. Turning to Andrea Dworkin, a feminist theorist and activist, LaHaye supplied no family history on her subject, possibly surmising that the fact that Dworkin was, in her estimation, “one of the most rabid man-haters” spoke for itself. All in all, Lahaye argued that feminists and similarly-minded women were projecting their anger toward their parents onto society and its rules. As a result, they sought to bring about a social revolution:

These women are the tragic victims of parental neglect. They have grown up filled with paranoia and impulsive hatred that drives them relentlessly toward their goals.

In a very real sense, these women are mentally disturbed. They developed these emotional difficulties because they failed to receive love and discipline in their homes.”

If bizarre, the assumptions that Beverly LaHaye made about the childhoods and psychological makeups of feminists seemed to her like the logical corollary to her belief that traditional social roles and evangelical religion provided the secret to personal significance and happiness. The converse, she surmised, must also be true: any attempt to question traditional social roles or to reject evangelical religion either arose from or led to

102 LaHaye, Restless Woman, 78-85.

103 LaHaye, Restless Woman, 85.
profound unhappiness. As she explained to readers, “If we obey Him [God], we will live happy lives; if we choose to disobey, we will end up living in terror and futility until the day we die.”

Beverly's conclusion also shows that she understood that the groundswell of discussion about women's roles and rights during the 1960s, '70s, and '80s implicitly challenged her view that domesticity ought to lead to happiness. If a woman's prescribed role was so natural and so deeply satisfying, then one had to explain why there had been a “woman problem” ever since the industrial revolution. One also had to explain why so many contemporary women had described a strange “restlessness” within their roles and had consequently begun to experiment with new social views. Indeed, Beverly herself testified that she was not describing the feelings of a few oddballs or radicals, but a widespread affliction that touched both radical feminists and evangelical women:

What is a restless woman? She's a woman who has been 'liberated' from traditional moral standards, yet now finds herself feeling empty and without goals; she's the suburban housewife whose children are in school all day; she's the Christian mother caring for her young who feels she's not contributing enough to the work of the church; she's the young educated women has become a mother, yet feels unchallenged at home; she's the so-called liberated woman who has demanded the right to control her own body and has ultimately snuffed out the life of another human being; she's the radical feminist who is determined to restructure our society according to her own version of utopia.

... Restlessness is usually influenced by excessive pressure—whether it be financial instability, the lack of self-worth or fulfillment, the gnawing pressure caused by greed or demanding selfish rights, or having one's priorities distorted out of focus. ... In essence, the restless woman is any woman who is uneasy and dissatisfied with her lot in life. She feels hollow—filled with anxiety—desolate within her spirit. She has few answers, but plenty of questions about her reason for existence. She questions her personal fulfillment and struggles like a butterfly trying to break out of a cocoon. In her restless quest for 'happiness' or personal

104 LaHaye, Restless Woman, 22.
fulfillment, she grows more discontent. She often feels as if she is chasing a mirage in a desert. The closer she seems to get to her goal of satisfaction, the more distant it becomes.\textsuperscript{105}

Pulling from her own views of sin, free will, and the personal challenges of holiness, Beverly was most comfortable viewing Betty Friedan's “problem without a name” as the product of a heart not fully surrendered to God and therefore not at peace with itself. The ordinary problems of life, interpreted through an unbelieving frame of reference, led women to uncertainty and discontent. The problem was pervasive because sin was pervasive. As a result, feminists' claims that women's main problem was a social system that denied them the equal rights and full status of persons was incorrect. In the pursuit of greater rights for women, one might articulate some valid points—Beverly frequently insisted, for example, that she supported “equal pay for equal work.” But she also thought that feminists' call for public rights and social liberation would only perpetuate women's restlessness if those causes led them to revolt against women's unique nature and role in society. While feminism sowed self-destructive and socially-destructive discontent, Christianity brought self-acceptance of one's unique role and the power to flourish in it.

Thus Beverly's attempts to contrast her own outlook to that of the feminist movement throws into high relief the gap that existed between the vision of self-fulfillment that many conservative Protestant advice writers were articulating and the vision for self-fulfillment that they thought the feminist movement and other crusades for minority rights were articulating. Beverly exemplified how anti-feminists of the 1970s and 1980s accepted the goal of self-fulfillment and paired it with the traditional notions

\textsuperscript{105} LaHaye, Restless Woman, 10-11.
of roles and social responsibility, viewing rights as a potentially valuable but secondary question. This essential affirmation of the importance of the individual and her pursuit of happiness according to the dictates of the therapeutic culture brought them into partial agreement with feminists—both sides agreed, at least cursorily, that social institutions ought to allow women to live full lives and to engage in the basic human pursuit of happiness. But by asserting that established laws, institutions, and concepts of gender difference defied these values and placed women in impossible dilemmas, the feminists threatened the very social institution that conservative women associated with the survival of Protestant Christianity, their own cosmic significance, and their own chance at private joy. As the individualism and expressiveness of modern American culture united people in the expectation that personal happiness was a basic birthright, their competing religious and social paths toward that goal inspired conflict and helped to fuel the culture wars.

Conclusion

In the late 1960s and 1970s, conservative Protestant writing on the topics of the marriage, women’s roles, and child rearing expanded and took on new emphases. This literary output testifies the efforts of writers to interpret and respond to questions raised by some of the most significant events of the twentieth century: the success of the civil rights movement, the appearance of a robust antiwar movement, the organization of second wave feminism, the formation of large and vocal movement for LGBT rights, the establishment of new precedents related to the separation of church and state, and the rise
of a “new morality” that reflected more relaxed attitudes toward sex and the right of individuals to sexual fulfillment. These developments shook the nervous optimism that many conservative Protestants had nurtured during the 1940s and 1950s about the possibility of evangelizing the American nation. In particular, they suggested significant difficulties in, or at least uncertainties about, the American family. Since conservative Protestants viewed the family as one of their most vital assets, they were eager to protect it.

The authors of advice literature responded to these trends largely by falling back on the family ideal they had cultivated during the earlier years of the Cold War. Social upheaval, especially social changes associated with young people and youth culture, tended to create greater emphasis on reestablishing the authority of the Bible, husbands, parents, and traditional moral standards. But this concern also subsisted alongside private hopes for happy life that fit the expectations of the therapeutic culture and modern ideals of self-expression. As writers insisted on the relevance of Biblical guidelines for gender roles and other aspects of family life, they argued that those prescriptions would help people to build emotionally close, happy family lives that met the ideals of self-fulfillment. They also continued to insist that the true path to self-fulfillment lay in first accepting the necessity of social responsibility and self-denial, partly in order to pattern one’s life on the divine pattern and partly in order to lay the foundations for reciprocity in family relationships. If practiced by both spouses, a marital ethic of service and dedication to personal self-improvement would promote a sense of well-being and enable both to find their needs met. If practiced by only one spouse, he or she might hope that
improved behavior would transform the relationship. This pattern of repudiating selfishness while accepting the ideal of self-fulfillment shaped many discussions of women’s lives and problems. It also cross-pollinated with conservative Protestants’ growing interest in psychology and techniques for understanding and improving relationships.

Some of the most influential leaders of the New Christian Right were also advice writers who attempted to improve people’s lives and family relationships. During the 1950s and 1960s, Dr. James Dobson, Tim LaHaye, and Beverly LaHaye adopted interests in psychology and counseling that inspired them to write large bodies of advice literature, to become popular speakers, and (in Dobson’s case) to host a popular radio program dedicated to family advice. In their published work, they adopted the themes dominant in the conservative Protestant advice literature, fusing social traditionalism with ideals of a emotionally intimate relationships, personal happiness, and the right to express and seek recognition of personal desires and needs. On this basis, they articulated critiques of feminism and decried the “permissiveness” of “the sixties” and the liberal political and social trends they associated with that decade. They also encouraged conservative Protestant audiences to view the modern family, along with the promise of personal happiness and personal influence that it represented, as under attack from liberalism and in need of defense. Calling upon Americans to preserve of these private hopes and dreams against the designs of social liberalism and secularism, they successfully mobilized some conservative Protestants to support the political agenda of the New Christian Right.
Whether or not they remain connected to Republican politics, the ideals that advice writers have promoted—continuing hope in the religious and cultural work of the Christian family and faith in the possibility of religion and psychology improve people—will likely remain important features of the conservative Protestant social imagination.
## APPENDIX A

### ROUGH DUPLICATION OF SURVEY INSTRUMENT (MINUS COLUMN MARGINS PROVIDED FOR COMMENTS)

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<td>1.</td>
<td>Please check below where you feel there is a problem with your home. Then specify more exactly the nature of the problem in the space on the right.</td>
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<td>II. Financial Problems:</td>
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<td>1. Insufficient income</td>
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<td>2. Disagreement over wife working</td>
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<td>3. Disagreement over budgeting</td>
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<td>4. Disagreement over who shall handle finances</td>
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<td>5. Failure in meeting obligations when due</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Overspending by <em>mate</em> self</td>
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<td>7. Penny-pinching by <em>mate</em> self</td>
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<td>8. Over-concern with job responsibility and consequent neglect of family</td>
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<td>9. Other (please specify)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Activities</td>
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<td>1. Insufficient</td>
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<td>2. Overactive</td>
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<td>3. Disagreement in type of activities:</td>
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<td>Secular Church functions</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>4. Mate causes embarrassment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Too shy/quiet</td>
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<td>Overly boisterous</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overly attentive to opposite sex</td>
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<td>Other (please specify)</td>
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<td>5. Other problems: (please specify)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Do you have wholesome recreation together.</td>
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<td><em><strong>Yes</strong></em> No</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV. Mutual Friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Disagreement, e.g., mate prefers non-Christians, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Difficulty in mingling and maintaining mutual friends</td>
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<td>3. Mate dislikes my friends (generally)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I dislike my mate's friends (generally)</td>
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<td>5. Mate's friends dislike me.</td>
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<td>6. Very close friends (or previous friends) in home</td>
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<td>7. Other (please specify)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
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<td>1. Difference in faith or denomination</td>
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<td>2. Mate non-religious</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Theological differences</td>
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<td>4. Degree of dedication</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Establishing a family altar</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Private devotions</td>
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<td>7. Church attendance</td>
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<td>8. Stewardship of:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talent</td>
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<td>Finances</td>
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<td>9. Making Jesus Christ center of home</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Other (please specify)</td>
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<tr>
<td>V. In-Law Relations:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Adjusting to advice of in-laws and making your own decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Responsibility to “leave father and mother and cleave unto mate”</td>
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<tr>
<td>___self___mate</td>
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<td>3. Problem of living in same house</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Financial responsibility for in-laws</td>
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<td>5. In-laws subsidizing marriage</td>
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<td>6. Other (please specify)</td>
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<td>VII. Sex Relations:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Attitude toward sex <em>mate</em> self</td>
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<td>2. Lack of information:</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>human anatomy</em> <em>mate</em> self</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>sex relations</em> <em>mate</em> self</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Concern over birth control of conception <em>mate</em> self</td>
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<td>4. Difference in sex drive</td>
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<td>5. Selfishness on part of mate</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Failure to hold in confidence all confidential matters <em>mate</em> self</td>
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<td>7. Adultery <em>mate</em> self</td>
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<td>8. Other (please specify)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Please check below where you feel there is a problem with your home. Then specify more exactly the nature of the problem in the space on the right.

### VIII. Personality Factors

1. Personality traits (note if self or mate by putting S or M in square)
   - Depressive
   - Subjective
   - Hard-boiled
   - Passive
   - Impulsive
   - Over Active
   - Neurotic
   - Dependency
   - Possessive
   - Jealousy
   - Nervous
   - Cold
   - Aggressive
   - Critical
   - Paranoid
   - Under active
   - Introversion
   - Independence
   - Inadequacy feelings
   - Martyr complex
   - ___ Personality factors conflict rather than complement.

2. Lack of respect for partner
   - ___ mate
   - ___ self

3. Immaturity
   - ___ mate
   - ___ self

4. ___ Mate wants to remake me.

5. Specific traits causing problems:
   - (S in square for self, M for mate)
     - Bathroom monopolizing
     - Sloppiness
     - Meticulousness
     - Morning gloom
     - Late or early riser
     - Lack of cleanliness
     - Athletic or non-athletic
     - Other (please specify)

### IX. Other Problems

1. Sex role in marriage
   - ___ mate
   - ___ self

2. Education or lack of it
   - ___ mate
   - ___ self

3. Separation of husband and wife (travel, job, etc)

4. The triangle
   - ___ mate
   - ___ self

5. Ethics in marriage:
   - Companionship
   - Courtesy
   - Criticisms and arguments in public
   - Decisions made without consulting mate
   - Jokes at partner's expense
   - Devotes too much leisure time to former chums
   - Suggests unloyalty of mate
   - Others (please specify)

6. Specific traits causing problems:
   - Please list five most important problems below (most severe at top of list)

7. What kind of counsel did you have before marriage
   - ___ Minister
   - ___ Doctor
   - ___ None
   - ___ Other (please specify)

8. Was your marriage consummated due to pre-marital relations (pregnancy or fear of pregnancy)?
   - ___ Yes
   - ___ No

9. What do you feel are the basic problems in these age categories:
   - ___ 20 to 25 years of age
   - ___ 25 to 30 years of age
   - ___ 30 to 40 years of age
   - ___ 40 to 50 years of age
   - ___ 50 and over

10. The following Scripture verses, or passage, has been helpful in solving one or more of the problems mentioned in the preceding pages:

11. The following suggestion was helpful in solving one or more problems mentioned:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
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<th>VII</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
### PARENTS:

Please check below where you feel there is a problem in your home. Then specify more exactly the nature of the problem in the space on the right.

1. **Management of children:**
   1. Disagreement between parents regarding discipline, rules, limits, punishment, etc. (Underline which one)
   2. Other problems in discipline or punishment of children
   3. Inconsistency in follow-through
   4. Lack of emotional control ___ mate ___ self
   5. Doesn't like children. ___ mate ___ self
   6. Disagreement regarding the number of children
   7. Jealousy of children
   8. Mate puts children first and couplehood suffers
   9. Favoritism of one child over another
   10. Other (please specify)

### Problems with Children

1. Children misbehave
2. Children are disobedient
3. Children's responsibility in the home (Chores)
4. Children's allowances
5. Family conferences
6. Spending time with each child
7. Motivations of school and/or home work (to achieve up to level of ability)
8. Spiritual problems of children (guilt feelings, etc)
9. Emotional disturbances ("acting out," etc)
10. Environmental problems
11. Dating problems

---

### CHILDREN:

1. Problems with Parents:
   1. Parents don't act as though they love me when I do wrong
   2. Parents don't understand me
   3. They are unfair
   4. Parents don't treat me as an individual in my own right (I am an extension of themselves)
   5. Parents expect me to do right and be honest but they tell "white lies" and disobey traffic laws
   6. Parents leave me alone too much (they are not at home)
   7. Parents don't spend time alone with me
   8. Parents don't give me encouragement (they nag too much and don't praise sufficiently)
   9. Parents don't pray with me
10. Parents show favoritism
11. Parents don't let me use my own initiative
12. Parents are too fearful and frustrate me in normal activities other children do
13. Discipline is too harsh
14. Discipline is too inconsistent
15. Lack of discipline

---

### SINGLE:

Age ___ ___ Engaged ___ Not engaged ___ Not engaged but open to marriage

Of the things that concern me most about preparation for marriage, I would like to see the following covered in the Bible study on the home.
ARCHIVE AND MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

Billy Graham Center Archives, Wheaton, IL
   Ephemera of Henry Wellington Stough
   Papers of Robert O. Ferm
   Papers of Lois Vashti Gregory
   Papers of William Ashley “Billy” Sunday and Helen Amelia (Thompson) Sunday

Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, MO
   Papers of August C. Stellhorn
   Records of the Board of Parish Education, Family Life Commission
   Papers of Otto Geiseman

David du Plessis Archive, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA
   Charles E. Fuller Collection

Dixon Pentecostal Research Center, Cleveland, TN

Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center Archives, Springfield, MO

Fundamentalism File, Bob Jones University, Greenville, SC
   Papers of W. O. H. Garman
   Topical Files

Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, TN
   Papers of Frank Hartwell Leavell

PERIODICALS AND NEWSPAPERS

Alabama Baptist
Baptist Advance
Baptist Courier
Baptist and Reflector
Baptist Record
Baptist Standard
Baptist Student
Boston Herald
Christian Index
Christian Life
Christian Workers Magazine
Christian Youth
Christianity Today
Christ’s Ambassadors Herald
Church of God Evangel
Concordia Magazine
Eternity
Florida Baptist Witness
Herald and Presbyter
Herald of Gospel Liberty
Home Department Magazine
Home Life
Indianapolis Morning Star
Institute Tie
King's Business
Latter Rain Evangel
Lighted Pathway
Los Angeles Times
Lutheran Witness
Moody Bible Institute Monthly
Moody Monthly
National Radio Chapel Announcer
Newsweek
Northwestern Pilot
Our Hope
Our Pentecostal Boys and Girls
Pentecostal Evangel
Record of Christian Work
Religious Herald
Revelation
Review and Expositor
Sunday
Sunday School Times
Sword of the Lord
United Evangelical Action
Walther League Messenger
Watchman-Examiner
Western Christian Advocate
Western Recorder
Window of YWA
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