

SEX, THE SACRED, AND THE STATE: THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION
AND THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT, 1960-1985

by

LAURA ANNE BRISCOE

(Under the Direction of Bethany Moreton)

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relationship between the gendered cosmology of the Southern Baptist Convention and its conception of the state as a major player in the Christian Right. Southern Baptists understood the state through the lens of Christian citizenship, a model of civic engagement predicated on male judiciousness and authority, in contrast to female nurturance and submission.

INDEX WORDS: Southern Baptist Convention, Christian Right, submission,
separation of church and state, Christian citizenship

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DEDICATION

For my parents and grandparents.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In June 1982, over 40,000 members of the Southern Baptist Convention met in New Orleans' Superdome for the convention's annual pastors' conference. The meeting was a star-studded event, featuring a musical performance by Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash, followed by a fiery evangelism appeal from Billy Graham, the nationally renowned Baptist preacher. The highlight of the event, however, came with the closing address, delivered by Vice President George H.W. Bush. In his speech, Bush condemned trends in "legal abortion, use of drugs, widespread pornography, sexual conduct and marriage" which had been setting the United States on a downward spiral for the past twenty-five years. He called on the SBC to help reverse those trends, appealing to the spiritual and political sensibilities of the nation's largest Protestant denomination: "The famous wall of separation between church and state is there to keep the state from interfering with the churches, not to keep the churches or individual religious leaders or ordinary church members from participating in our politics."¹

To modern observers, Bush's speech might barely solicit a second glance. After all, in recent years, the Southern Baptist Convention has made a name for itself as a politically savvy evangelical powerhouse, hardly shying away from "participating in...

¹ "Pastor's Conference Hears Message on 'Great Texts,'" *Baptist Press*, June 15, 1982, 2, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives (hereafter SBHLA) Digital Resources, *Baptist Press* (hereafter *BP*) collection, accessed January 8, 2015, <http://media.sbhl.org/s3.amazonaws.com/5470,15-Jun-1982.pdf>; Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 202.

politics,” as Bush had put it. For example, in 2011, Richard Land, then president of the SBC’s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, wrote an open letter to presidential hopeful Newt Gingrich with advice for gaining the support of “large numbers of Evangelicals, particularly women,” which included Gingrich apologizing for beginning an affair with his future third wife while still married to his second.² Land has not been the only one to recognize the political influence of the Southern Baptist Convention. In 2004, the Bush/Cheney re-election campaign sponsored a pastors’ reception where guests could pledge to “organize a ‘party for the president’ with other pastors.” SBC president Jack Graham happily accepted his invitation, declaring that “[y]ou can’t separate what you believe from the political process.”³ In the late 1990s, the SBC even counted among its own some of the most powerful politicians in the United States, including Bill Clinton, Al Gore, Trent Lott, Strom Thurmond, Dick Gephardt, and Tom DeLay.⁴ On the state level, too, the SBC has wielded political power. After finishing out the term of a governor who resigned from his post amid a fraud scandal, Mike Huckabee, a Southern Baptist pastor, was officially elected governor of Arkansas in 1999. Dennis Rainey, one of Huckabee’s closest friends and the director of Family Life Ministries, reminded the governor-elect to “surround [himself] daily with godly council and godly advice. If there

² Richard D. Land, “An Open Letter to Newt Gingrich,” *Christian Post*, November 29, 2011, accessed March 7, 2015, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/dr-richard-land-an-open-letter-to-newt-gingrich-63393/>.

³ David D. Kirkpatrick, “Bush Allies Till Fertile Soil, Among Baptists, for Votes,” *New York Times*, June 18, 2004, accessed March 7, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/18/us/2004-campaign-strategy-bush-allies-till-fertile-soil-among-baptists-for-votes.html>.

⁴ Laurie Goodstein, “Look Who’s Leading the Country,” *New York Times*, June 14, 1998, accessed March 7, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/06/14/weekinreview/the-nation-look-who-s-leading-the-country.html>.

has been a day when a man of virtue and integrity needed to step forward and lead and stand, it is now.”⁵

Clearly, the SBC has enjoyed a mutually beneficial courtship with the political side of American life, especially the Republican Party, in the years since Vice President Bush’s speech on church/state separation at the 1982 pastors’ conference. Many Southern Baptists have found favor with this relationship, and some feel that it has been a long time coming. Richard Land, for example, said of the sheer number of Southern Baptist politicians in 1998: “We’re no longer out in the cold. We’re on the inside now. We don’t have to explain to Bill Clinton and Al Gore how important Southern Baptists are to the political life of this nation. We had to explain it to George Bush.”⁶ Yet in the years leading up to Bush’s 1982 speech, the convention’s relationship with conservative politics had not been a story of love at first sight, nor was it a foregone conclusion. In fact, until well into the 1970s, the Southern Baptist leadership had staunchly supported the separation of church and state on both spiritual and political grounds. It was not until the late 1970s, when a fundamentalist contingency began to seize power in the SBC, that the convention changed its stance on church/state separation, paving the way for Southern Baptists to become fully entrenched in what has become known as the Christian Right.

The fundamentalist takeover of the SBC did not merely facilitate the convention’s relationship with the Christian Right, however. Instead, the takeover was the central

⁵ Trennis Henderson, “Ark. Gov. Mike Huckabee Begins Elected Term With Spiritual Focus,” *Baptist Press*, January 21, 1999, accessed March 7, 2015, <http://www.bpnews.net/866/ark-gov-mike-huckabee-begins-elected-term-with-spiritual-focus>. Issues of *Baptist Press* published before 1996 are only digitally available on the SBHLA website; issues published after 1996 are hosted on the official website of *Baptist Press*.

⁶ Goodstein, “Look Who’s Leading the Country.”

factor in the convention's alignment with conservative politics, though understanding the internal workings of that process has proven to be a difficult challenge. Indeed, in the decades since the SBC's fundamentalist shift, historians of the denomination have attacked from every angle the question of how Southern Baptists, once so staunchly supportive of church/state separation that a leading Baptist journalist opposed the federal regulation of birth control on the grounds that it was a church-supported issue, came to be such intimate bedfellows with the Republican Party.⁷ The answers to this question have been varied, though most scholars have concluded that fundamentalists sought to seize power either for personal glory or because of a genuine belief in the tenets of fundamentalism.⁸

Yet the story is not so cut-and-dry, and its implications do not stop at the sanctuary doors. Missing from the work done so far on the Southern Baptist Convention's relationship with conservative politics is what *kind* of power fundamentalists were seeking and were successful in attaining, as well as how that specific type of power shaped the SBC's involvement with the Christian Right. This is the central concern of this thesis. Southern Baptist fundamentalists did not merely want to be in charge of the convention when they overtook the SBC and attached it to the Christian Right. Instead,

⁷ "Editorial Supports Birth Control Data," *Baptist Press*, January 10, 1964, 4, SBHLA Digital Resources, BP collection, accessed January 12, 2015, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/1843,10-Jan-1964.pdf>.

⁸ These institutional histories include but are not limited to: Bill Leonard, *God's Last and Only Hope: The Fragmentation of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1990); Arthur Emery Farnsley II, *Southern Baptist Politics: Authority and Power in the Restructuring of an American Denomination* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Walter B. Shurden, *The Struggle for the Soul of the SBC: Moderate Responses to the Fundamentalist Movement* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1994); David T. Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land: Conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention, 1969-1991* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1996); Oran P. Smith, *The Rise of Baptist Republicanism* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2000); and Carl L. Kell, *In the Name of the Father: The Rhetoric of the New Southern Baptist Convention* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2001).

the fundamentalists' power grab was propelled by their understanding of conservative Protestant masculinity, in the form of Christian citizenship, and a gendered form of authority predicated on the model of male headship and female submission taught by the SBC. This thesis argues that the place of gender within Southern Baptists' cosmology not only paved the way for the convention's political involvement but also guided the trajectory the convention took in rewriting its stance on the separation of church and state. In the process, Southern Baptists legitimated their involvement with politics by marrying the older concept of Christian citizenship to the doctrine of male headship. Ultimately, this understanding of masculinity – and with it, femininity – informed the terms of engagement between religious and political conservatism and underwrote the Christian Right's negotiation of the relationship between sex, the sacred, and the state.

A number of scholars have been interested in the place of gender in the courtship between evangelical Christianity and political conservatism. Sociologists Nancy Ammerman and Julie Ingersoll have shown that the stances of individual Southern Baptists on issues like abortion and working mothers distinguished conservative Baptists from their liberal and moderate counterparts. Moreover, these gender issues carried with them value judgments for those on either side of the debate; according to Ingersoll, such conflicts served “as markers that separate[d] the ‘good guys’ from the ‘bad guys.’”⁹ What made gender so central to conservative conceptions of spirituality was the idea of a divine order, God's blueprint for the world. Within this divine order, men and women were each designed to hold one set of responsibilities and roles uniquely suited to their respective

⁹ Nancy T. Ammerman, *Baptist Battles: Social Change and Religious Conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 93; Julie Ingersoll, *Evangelical Christian Women: War Stories in the Gender Battles* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2003), 47.

sex, and any violation of this order meant spiritual corruption. Seth Dowland and W. Bradford Wilcox have both made substantial contributions to the scholarship on the uses of this divine order rhetoric. Dowland has attributed the rise of “family values” politics, the three cornerstones of which he identified as homosexuality, feminism, and abortion, to the Christian Right’s fixation on preserving divine order. According to Dowland, preserving the gendered divine order was present in every facet of conservative evangelicalism prior to the formation of the Christian Right, in everything from sex-segregated classes at private Christian schools like Jerry Falwell’s Lynchburg Christian Academy to backlash against the *Roe v. Wade* decision, viewed by many conservative evangelicals as “a direct assault on the gendered family order instituted by the Bible.”¹⁰ Similarly, Wilcox has written extensively on the idea that male authority in conservative evangelicalism is derived from a literal reading of the Bible which asserts that “God has established a divine order that extends to the ordering of the family along gendered lines.”¹¹

The chief concerns of this project lie in an extension of the scholarly work done by Ammerman, Ingersoll, Dowland, Wilcox, and a host of other historians and sociologists. If the belief in divine order maintains that there are separate roles for men and women as ordained by God, and if this belief is at the center of conservative Christian ideology, how has that influenced the Christian Right’s relationship with the state? If the work of the Christian Right, with all its beliefs about the place of men and

¹⁰ Seth Dowland, “Defending Manhood: Gender, Social Order, and the Rise of the Christian Right in the South, 1965-1995” (doctoral dissertation, Duke University, 2007), 47; Seth Dowland, “‘Family Values’ and the Formation of a Christian Right Agenda,” *Church History* 78, no. 3 (September 2009), 617.

¹¹ W. Bradford Wilcox, *Soft Patriarchs, New Men: How Christianity Shapes Fathers and Husbands* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 57-58, 171. Quote is on 171.

women in God's order, has been to chip away at the "wall of separation," what have been the implications for the state? Has the Christian Right as a state actor codified its beliefs in sacred masculinity and femininity? Drawing on the works of Carole Pateman and Susan Hekman, this thesis argues that both church and state operated within masculinist frameworks which asserted the primacy of male authority and that these frameworks dovetailed neatly in the formation of the Christian Right.

These changes in the Southern Baptist Convention and its relationship with the Christian Right are tracked in this thesis over the course of three chapters. Chapter Two shows that the basis of Baptists' support for church/state separation hit a high point in the 1960s due to their understanding of Christian citizenship, a concept with roots in both classical liberalism and Baptist theological traditions. Classical liberalism's emphasis on the (male) individual and his autonomy combined with Southern Baptists' beliefs in the authority of local churches and the Protestant tenet of the priesthood of believers to form the foundation for Baptists' support of church/state separation on one major issue: Catholicism. Southern Baptists opposed the political activism of the Catholic Church, whom they viewed as attempting to establish a theocracy in the United States and whose allegiance to the Pope and emphasis on ecclesiastical hierarchy were viewed as antithetical to Baptist values. Southern Baptists took particular issue with Catholic support for federal aid to parochial schools, a subject which dominated Baptist newspapers in the early 1960s. Baptists also somewhat curiously associated Catholicism with "godless" communism on the basis that both were oppressive, "tyrannical"

institutions set on world domination.¹² Southern Baptist men performed and exercised their particular brand of masculinity, grounded in Christian citizenship, through their opposition to the Catholic Church. In this way, support for the separation of church and state became a defining characteristic of Southern Baptist masculinity and Christian citizenship.

Chapter Three demonstrates that this conception of Christian citizenship became untenable for Southern Baptist men in the 1970s because of the state's seeming complacency toward the "new morality," the shorthand term for a swath of anxieties about the perceived moral degeneracies Americans had been cultivating since the 1960s. The new morality encompassed everything from rising crime rates to the free love movement, though, perhaps surprisingly, not abortion or homosexuality. In the eyes of conservative Baptists, the most damning evidence for the influence of the new morality on American culture was the women's liberation movement and the concurrent changing sex roles for women in the 1970s. Conservative Baptists railed against the women's liberation movement for violating the gendered divine order while simultaneously condemning politicians and the government for allowing, and even encouraging, such violations to occur. Chapter Three analyzes the rhetoric and activities of the Southern Baptist Convention and other conservative Christians, including Beverly LaHaye, Jerry Falwell, and even Phyllis Schlafly, a devout Catholic, as they identified the central threats to divine order posed by women's liberation and attempted to combat them. The chapter ends by considering why the apparent erosion of femininity was believed to be so

¹² "Resolution Concerning Communism and Other Forms of Tyranny, 1953," Southern Baptist Convention, accessed February 16, 2015, <http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/357/resolutions-concerning-communism-and-other-forms-of-tyranny>.

threatening to Baptist masculinity and discusses how Southern Baptists' conception of Christian citizenship seemed to be at a crossroads because of women's liberation.

Finally, Chapter Four charts the place of Baptist masculinity in reconfiguring the convention's stance on the separation of church and state in the late 1970s, the years leading up to the initial heyday of the Christian Right and the fundamentalist takeover of the SBC, culminating with the election of fundamentalist pastor Adrian Rogers to the convention's presidency in 1979, which Barry Hankins and Thomas Kidd have called "one of the most significant religious events of the twentieth century."¹³ As fundamentalists put an increased emphasis on biblical literalism and divine order, promoting proper Christian masculinity and femininity became one of the primary concerns of the convention. This concern led to a renewed focus on the doctrine of male headship and female submission. By the time the Southern Baptist Convention had become wholly entrenched in the Christian Right, its men had rewritten the guidelines of Christian citizenship. By placing increased emphasis on divinely granted male authority, Southern Baptist men legitimated their maneuvers into the political sphere as rational actors blessed with judiciousness. As fundamentalists saw it, they were not seeking political control in the way that Catholics had in the 1960s. Instead, they believed their political involvement was divinely mandated and that they were simply seeking to ensure adherence to God's plan. Where Southern Baptists' ideal Christian citizen of the 1960s had been the sentry at the wall of the separation of church and state, by the 1980s, he stood poised with hammer and chisel in hand to tear it down.

¹³ Barry Hankins and Thomas S. Kidd, *Baptists in America: A History* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 228.

JUSTIFICATION

Using the developments in the Southern Baptist Convention during the 1960s and 1970s as a case study to explain and examine the centrality in breaching the church/state divide is ideal for a number of reasons. First, while other Protestant denominations, most notably the Lutheran and Presbyterian Churches, also experienced controversies over increasing denominational conservatism during this time period, the SBC, as the nation's largest Protestant denomination, was certainly the most high-profile. Moreover, though the denomination has been known as the Southern Baptist Convention since its creation in the 1840s, when it left the American Baptist Convention to uphold slavery, it was and is "Southern" in name only, with congregations in all fifty states and an impressively sizable population. By 1979, the year the fundamentalist pastor Adrian Rogers was elected to the SBC's presidency, the convention boasted 13.2 million members and operated four of the world's five largest seminaries.¹⁴ The SBC also wielded considerable financial might; between 1969 and 1979, its net worth increased from \$2.3 billion to \$3.3 billion, adjusted for inflation.¹⁵ Finally, one of the proudest moments for the convention came with Jimmy Carter's victory in the 1976 presidential election. Carter, a Southern Baptist from Plains, Georgia, proudly and publicly proclaimed that he was a "born-again

¹⁴ "No Errors? Southern Baptist Convention," *Time*, July 2, 1979, 61; Joe Contreras and Kenneth L. Woodward, "The Battling Baptists," *Newsweek*, June 22, 1981, 88.

¹⁵ Clifton J. Allen, ed., *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention Nineteen Hundred and Seventy* (Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1970), 243-245, SBHLA Digital Resources, Southern Baptist Convention Annuals collection (hereafter SBC Annuals), accessed April 20, 2014, http://media2.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/annuals/SBC_Annual_1970.pdf; Martin B. Bradley, ed., *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention Nineteen Hundred and Eighty* (Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1980), 210-212, SBHLA Digital Resources, SBC Annuals, http://media2.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/annuals/SBC_Annual_1980.pdf. Inflation adjustment calculated in 2013 dollars at <http://www.measuringworth.com>.

Christian” who sought God’s guidance in all his decisions.¹⁶ Although Carter’s more left-leaning political stances garnered criticism from the increasingly conservative SBC toward the end of his administration, particularly when it came to issues such as his support for the Equal Rights Amendment and his opposition to school prayer, his campaign and election proved to be a momentous occasion for the convention.¹⁷ It had attracted new attention to the denomination, with *U.S. News & World Report*, for example, running an article during Carter’s campaign explaining the beliefs of Southern Baptists.¹⁸ Even some fundamentalist Baptists, distrustful though they were of much of Carter’s politics, believed that a Southern Baptist in the White House could be a blessing for the denomination and the United States as a whole. One such fundamentalist pastor from New Mexico proclaimed, for example, that Carter could be “a prophet to a broken and weary world.”¹⁹

This project is not merely a denominational history of the Southern Baptist Convention, however, for a few reasons. On the most basic level, although this thesis’ main focus is the SBC, it incorporates viewpoints from figures outside the convention who were nevertheless key players in the Christian Right, particularly when it came to advocating the importance of sex roles. These include Jerry Falwell, Beverly LaHaye, and Phyllis Schlafly. In a broader sense, this thesis moves beyond denominational history

¹⁶ “President Carter Visits Georgia,” *Plains (Georgia) Monitor*, April 14, 1977, 12. “Born-again,” according to one Southern Baptist pastor interviewed on the term during Carter’s presidential campaign, “means asking Christ to forgive you of your sins. You ask the Lord to become the savior of your soul and the Lord of your life. Born-again Christians place the Lord as the head of their lives.” From Wayne Svoboda, “Carter’s Beliefs May Help,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, July 31, 1976, 9.

¹⁷ Edward E. Plowman, “Campaign ’80: An Analysis and Update,” *Washington & World Religion Report*, September 30, 1980, box 123, folder 9, Wesley J. Pippert papers (hereafter Pippert papers), Wheaton College Archives and Special Collections, Wheaton, IL (hereafter Wheaton College).

¹⁸ “Southern Baptists – Who They Are, What They Believe,” *U.S. News & World Report*, July 19, 1976, 25-26.

¹⁹ “Speak Out in Election Year, Baptist Pastors Urged,” *Baptist Bulletin*, July 31, 1976, 4.

because its concern is not merely the story of what happened in the SBC but instead how the convention's fixation on the place of gender in its cosmology helped to construct the relationship between sex, the sacred, and the state in the last decades of the Cold War. In other words, the focus here is not the Southern Baptist Convention but instead how Southern Baptist men, some of the most influential members of the Christian Right, understood their God-given masculinity vis-à-vis the state.

Moreover, gender enjoys the starring role in this thesis because it would be difficult to write any history of American Christianity without centering masculinity, femininity, and their relationship to one another. The necessity of considering women in particular in American religious history has been put best by Ann Braude: "One cannot tell a story unless one knows who the characters are." By this, Braude meant that "women constitute the majority of participants in religion in the United States," and "the numerical dominance of women in all but a few religious groups constitutes one of the most consistent features of American religion, and one of the least explained."²⁰ Numeral dominance aside, women form the gravitational center of evangelical Christianity. Christopher Ellison et al. have shown that not only do "women often comprise the majority of members in their congregations," but "they attend religious services more frequently than men do; and they pray and read religious materials more often."²¹

Yet women are the primary "characters" in only a few sections of this thesis. While I wholeheartedly agree with Braude's assertion that women form the center of

²⁰ Ann Braude, "Women's History *is* American Religious History," in *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, ed. Thomas A. Tweed (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 88.

²¹ Christopher G. Ellison, Carolyn Pevey, and Christine L. Williams, "Male God Imagery and Female Submission: Lessons from a Southern Baptist Ladies' Bible Class," *Qualitative Sociology* 19, no. 2 (Summer 1996), 174.

American religious life, I am interested in the question of how masculinity works to construct femininity and how the perceived erosion of femininity poses a threat to masculinity, especially within a group like the Southern Baptists, whose worldview is largely defined by the concept of divinely mandated male authority. I wrestle with these and other questions in this thesis as I consider how the state became such an attractive tool for Southern Baptist men to exert their divinely granted authority when their masculinity had been expressed through the opposite just decades earlier.

TERMINOLOGY

Before making these considerations, however, a few definitions are in order, especially for those terms which evade easy description. The most important terms to define for the purposes of this thesis are *fundamentalism*, *Christian Right*, and *gender*. I use George Marsden's definition of fundamentalism here: a twentieth-century Protestant movement opposed to modernism with beliefs in "the guaranteed verbal inerrancy of Scripture, divine creation as opposed to biological evolution, and a dispensational-premillennial scheme that explained historical change in terms of divine control."²² I am fond of this definition because it pairs neatly with the definition of fundamentalism used by those in the Southern Baptist Convention. Albert McClellan, a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, identified the "five basic tenets" of fundamentalism in

²² George M. Marsden, "Fundamentalism as an American Phenomenon, A Comparison with English Evangelicalism," *Church History* 46, no. 1 (June 1977), 215. Dispensational pre-millennialism combines premillennialism, "belief in Christ's personal return to set up his earthly kingdom," with dispensationalism, which divides history into dispensations (eras). "Each of the dispensations may be regarded as a new test of the natural man, and each ends in judgment – marking his utter failure in every dispensation," according to C.I. Scofield, annotator of the Scofield Bible. Quotes are from Timothy Weber, "Dispensational Premillennialism: The Dispensationalist Era," *Christianity Today*, January 1, 1999, accessed February 12, 2015, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/1999/issue61/61h034.html>.

1983: “verbal inspiration of the Bible, substitutionary atonement, bodily resurrection, virgin birth of Christ and dispensational millennialism.”²³

The “Christian Right,” also commonly referred to as the “Religious Right,” at its most basic means the loosely organized political bloc which gained traction in the late 1970s and remained a cultural powerhouse through the 1980s, spearheaded by high-profile figures like Jerry Falwell, Ralph Reed, and Francis Schaeffer. More specifically, my definition aligns with Grant Wacker’s which identifies four basic assumptions which form the foundation of the Christian Right’s worldview. The first is “the assumption that moral absolutes exist as surely as surely as mathematical or geological absolutes.” This is the underpinning of the concept that God has a rigidly ordered divine plan for mankind organized around sex roles. The second assumption Wacker identifies is that “ideas about big things like the nature of the universe inevitably affect little things, such as how individuals choose to act in the details of daily life.” This explains how sacred moral absolutes could be distilled into debates over complex issues like abortion and homosexuality. Third, Wacker asserts, the Christian Right “assumes... that government’s proper goal is to cultivate virtue, not to interfere with the natural operations of the marketplace or workplace.” This phrasing is key: *natural* operations. In the SBC, at least, the concept of Christian citizenship which would ultimately form the basis for the convention’s alignment with the Christian Right was underwritten by classical liberalism and its assumption of the existence of natural laws. Moreover, the SBC valued the state as a tool to cultivate Christian citizenship but was wary of its intrusion into private life.

²³ Bob Allen, “SBC Returning to Middle Ground Says McClellan,” *Baptist Press*, March 14, 1983, 3, SBHLLA Digital Resources, *BP* collection, accessed February 15, 2015, <http://media.sbhlla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/5608,14-Mar-1983.pdf>.

Finally, the fourth assumption Wacker lists is “the assumption that all successful societies need to operate within a framework of common assumptions.” Here, Wacker means that the Christian Right believed that nations like the United States needed to have a common set of moral values, but they needed to be the *correct* values, as the SBC’s reaction to the “new morality” showed.²⁴ Deviation from the proper morality was cause for direct action by Christian citizens within the logic of the SBC.

Finally, my definition of gender draws largely on Judith Butler’s. I use the word to mean the set of social relations and roles prescribed for males and females continually produced and performed by “a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame,” the fundamental basis of which is compulsory heterosexuality.²⁵ I also use it to mean “a central organizing principle and core symbolic system” which creates a hierarchy in which females are subjugated under males, as expressed by Julie Ingersoll.²⁶ The idea that gender is performed and commonly understood through culturally significant symbols is particularly important to this thesis because of Southern Baptists’ emphasis on the markers of masculinity and femininity. Being able to identify that a woman was adhering to the proper form of Christian femininity was critical to ensuring that the divine order was being upheld. Men and women who broke away from this order were seen as a threat to society as a whole, and it was up to Christian citizens to prevent that from happening.

²⁴ Grant Wacker, “The Christian Right,” National Humanities Center, last modified October 2000, accessed November 27, 2014, http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/chr_rght.htm.

²⁵ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1990), 25.

²⁶ Ingersoll, *Evangelical Christian Women*, 16.

CHAPTER 2:

CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP

Near the southern tip of Chile, the Cardenal Antonio Samoré mountain pass carves an asphalt corridor through the Patagonian Andes, connecting Chile's Route 215 with Argentina's Route 231. Today it is a popular commercial highway, serving over 31,000 trucks each year, and its status as one of the few paved highways in the region has made it something of a minor landmark; a Google Image search of the pass results, for example, in several tourist photographs of the blue metal sign marking its highest point.²⁷ Merely fifty years ago, however, the Samoré pass was barely there at all. Instead, those who sought access to the mountains had to make the trek off-road or on foot across the rugged, unforgiving terrain of the Chilean Andes.

This is exactly what an American man named Tom Scanlon was doing in early 1962. Scanlon, a volunteer in President John F. Kennedy's year-old Peace Corps program, had been assigned a post near Río Negro and the highway, there lay a village of Araucanian Mapuche Indians, and this was where Tom Scanlon had set his sights. He had heard from fellow Peace Corps volunteers that the Araucanians were self-professed communists, and, mindful of what President Kennedy had called "the rising threat of communism in Latin America" not even a year earlier, Scanlon became determined to

²⁷ "Disputa con Chile por la reapertura del paso Samoré," *La Nación*, August 4, 2011, 12.

change the minds of the villagers.²⁸ As the story went, Scanlon had driven his Jeep up the winding path to the village four times to speak to the chief, and each time, the chief ignored him. Finally, impressed (or perhaps annoyed) by Scanlon's persistence, the chief told him, "You are not going to talk us out of being communists." Scanlon answered that he was only trying to help the village, whose poverty was well-known throughout the region. The chief considered Scanlon's response; he wholeheartedly believed that only the communists had ever truly cared about his village, but he could not deny Scanlon's commitment. Reluctantly, the chief compromised: he would allow Scanlon to bring his Peace Corps colleagues to the village to speak to the Araucanians about communism, but only if Scanlon were willing to park his Jeep at the head of the ten-mile trail to the village and make the journey on foot through the five feet of snow which would blanket southern Chile in the coming weeks. Sure that Scanlon would be deterred by the proposal, the chief was taken aback when he accepted without hesitation. The next day, one of Scanlon's friends found him checking the thermometer on the Río Negro Peace Corps station with obsessive diligence. He asked Scanlon what exactly he was doing; Scanlon looked up and answered, "I am waiting for the snow."²⁹

Five months later and six thousand miles north of Río Negro, this was the story Paul Geren was telling a rapt audience of Baptist Brotherhood Commission members at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. Geren, the deputy director of the

²⁸ John F. Kennedy, "President John F. Kennedy's Annual Address to a Joint Session of Congress on the State of the Union, May 25, 1961," C-SPAN, last modified 2014, accessed November 24, 2014, <http://legacy.c-span.org/Transcripts/SOTU-1961.aspx>.

²⁹ John F. Kennedy, "Remarks of Welcome to Participants in the Summer Intern Program for College Students, June 10, 1962," The American Presidency Project of the University of California, Santa Barbara, last modified 2014, accessed November 24, 2014, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9082>; Paul Geren, "Crisis of Communism" (speech, annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, San Francisco, CA, June 7, 1962), box 6, folder 6, Wilmer Clemont Fields papers (hereafter Fields papers), SBHLA, Nashville, TN.

Peace Corps and former vice-president of the Southern Baptist-affiliated Baylor University, hoped that the speech would spur the men of the Brotherhood Commission to commit themselves to the fight against communism, no matter how great the obstacle.³⁰ Just as Tom Scanlon had waited for the snow to fall in the Chilean mountains, so too, Geren believed, should the men of the United States' largest Protestant denomination be willing to do whatever necessary to prevent the infiltration of communism in their own country. To Southern Baptists, communism's "slave state ideals" threatened the fundamental beliefs of their denomination: "free church, free state, and liberty of conscience," in the words of a 1953 Baptist General Convention of Texas anti-communism resolution.³¹

Southern Baptists believed that communism threatened autonomy and self-rule, two of their most dearly held values. The autonomy of local churches, for example, had long been one of the distinguishing factors of the convention, evidence of Baptists' reverence for self-governance.³² Baptists also believed that their emphasis on autonomy made them fundamentally different from the United States' only Christian group larger than their own: the Catholic Church. The Catholic hierarchy, Baptists argued, had created a system as corrupt and evil as communism, one in which the Church had become closer to a totalitarian government than a religious institution. A 1953 SBC anti-communist and anti-Catholic resolution charged that "millions of people throughout the world today are

³⁰ Roy Jennings, "SBC General Roundup for Friday AMs," *Baptist Press*, June 7, 1962, 1, SBHLa Digital Resources, *BP* collection, accessed November 24, 2014, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/1597,07-Jun-1962.pdf>.

³¹ "Texas Baptists Pass No Curtain of Secrecy," *Baptist Press*, November 23, 1953, 4, SBHLa Digital Resources, *BP* collection, accessed November 24, 2014, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/117,23-Nov-1953.pdf>.

³² Farnsley, *Southern Baptist Politics*, 37; Diane Winston, "The Southern Baptist Story," in *Southern Baptists Observed: Multiple Perspectives on a Changing Denomination*, ed. Nancy T. Ammerman (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee, 1993), 19.

denied the benefits of religious, economic, and political freedom by communism and other forms of tyranny, and... the denial of these benefits is most conspicuous in these lands, either formerly or now dominated by a state church.” The resolution went on to identify those “state churches” by name: “the Roman Catholic hierarchy.”³³

Southern Baptists supported this view of the Catholic Church by pointing to a number of factors, including Catholic lobbying for federal aid to parochial schools (known colloquially as “parochiaid”). While Baptists opposed Catholic political involvement, they did not, however, view themselves as apathetic citizens. Southern Baptists in the 1960s upheld a model of civic engagement they called Christian citizenship, which called for obeying civil authority while acting as positive forces in the name of Christ in their own communities. Christian citizenship meant “the application of Christian principles to everyday life,” and Baptist efforts to cultivate this type of citizenship “grew out of the conviction that unless every part of the Christian’s witness is undergirded by Christian morality, it is incomplete and ineffectual.”³⁴ The chairmen of the Citizenship Committee at Baylor University, the SBC’s largest postsecondary institution, explained how this worked when applied: “Christian citizenship is a daily way of life – it’s how we treat our roommates and friends. It’s how we react to race problems, and how we cooperate with campus activities and later civic duties like voting and serving on juries and school boards.”³⁵

³³ “Resolution Concerning Communism and Other Forms of Tyranny, 1953.”

³⁴ Ross Coggins, “Commission Helps Apply Gospel to Daily Living,” *Baptist Press*, January 31, 1962, 1, SBHLA Digital Resources, *BP* collection, accessed February 16, 2015, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/1269,31-Jan-1962.pdf>.

³⁵ “Annual Week of Citizenship Begins Monday,” *Baylor Lariat*, May 7, 1954, 1, Baylor University Library Digital Collections (hereafter Baylor Digital Collections), *Baylor Lariat* collection (hereafter *BL* collection), accessed March 10, 2015, <http://digitalcollections.baylor.edu/cdm/ref/collection/lariat/id/36367>.

Adhering to those duties was, indeed, one of the cornerstones of Christian citizenship. One 1965 Baptist pamphlet on the subject suggested that a Christian could look to the Bible to learn how to better “discharge his duties to God and country.” While Christians were understood to be “citizens of two worlds,” Earth and heaven, the Bible reminded them that “civic government is of divine appointment” and that a Christian “should obey laws,” “use moral discernment in his support of civil government,” “pay taxes,” and “pray for those in authority.”³⁶ This did not mean, however, that Christians should detach their religious beliefs from civic engagement. In fact, according to Leonard Duce, assistant dean of Baylor University in 1955, Christian citizenship meant that “the Christian has an obligation to express his life and experience in the most effective citizenship possible.” The “vital center of Christian citizenship,” Duce wrote, was the Christian’s ability “to see the disparity between the divine ideal and the human expression and yet feel the imperative of the former as it moves him to improve the latter.” Yet there was another critical aspect to Christian citizenship, that “the Christian’s duty to God can never be identified completely with any particular expression of citizenship, for the latter is always relative and imperfect.”³⁷ This, Baptists, believed, was what separated them from Catholics. While the SBC asserted that the Catholic Church’s main goal was to establish a divinely ordained theocracy, Baptists viewed their own civic involvement as an expression of their faith within a world which was not, and could

³⁶ Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, *The Bible Speaks on Christian Citizenship* (Dallas, TX: Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1965), 2, Baylor Digital Collections, Institute of Church-State Studies Vertical Files collection (hereafter Church-State collection), last modified October 2, 2006, accessed March 10, 2015, <http://digitalcollections.baylor.edu/cdm/ref/collection/cs-vert/id/506>.

³⁷ Leonard A. Duce, “Christianity and Citizenship,” *Baylor Lariat*, April 19, 1955, 2, Baylor Digital Collections, *BL* collection, accessed March 10, 2015, <http://digitalcollections.baylor.edu/cdm/ref/collection/lariat/id/36585>.

never be, godly. In other words, Baptists sought to improve the world, while they believed Catholics sought to rule it. The influential Southern Baptist Herschel Hobbs, known as “Mr. Baptist,” explained this by stating that Christians should seek to change the world through “witness,” not try to subject it to authoritarian rule. “Genuine Christian citizenship,” wrote Hobbs, meant “evangelism in shoes.”³⁸

The other core component of Christian citizenship was its inheritance of classical liberal values. John Locke, for example, advocated the principle of dual citizenship, in which “[t]he religious citizen would obey God within God’s proper jurisdiction, and would obey the magistrate within the magistrate’s proper jurisdiction,” in the words of Michael McConnell.³⁹ The famous evangelist Dwight L. Moody expressed this another way in the nineteenth century: “Indeed I am a citizen of heaven, but at the present I vote in Cook County, Illinois.”⁴⁰

The influence of liberalism on Christian citizenship was evident, too, in Baptists’ regard for private property and the free market. Though Baptists maintained that no economic or governmental system could be “completely Christian” in a world “cursed by greed, selfishness, dishonesty, and sin,” they did express an alliance with capitalism.⁴¹ Paul Geren, who told the story of Tom Scanlon to the Baptist Brotherhood Commission, explained that although Baptists could never call a given economic system “godly,” “this

³⁸ Herschel H. Hobbs, *What Baptists Believe* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1964), 98; David S. Dockery, “The Life and Legacy of Herschel H. Hobbs (1907-1995),” *Southern Baptist Theological Journal* 7, no. 1 (Spring 2003), 62.

³⁹ Michael W. McConnell, “Believers as Equal Citizens,” in *Obligations of Citizenship and Demands of Faith: Religious Accommodation in Pluralist Democracies*, ed. Nancy L. Rosenblum (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 93.

⁴⁰ Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, *The Bible Speaks on Christian Citizenship*, 1.

⁴¹ E. Earl Joiner, “What Kind of Economy Should Christians Sell?” *Baptist Press*, October 6, 1963, 1, SBHLA Digital Resources, *BP* collection, accessed March 13, 2015, <http://media.sbhla.org/s3.amazonaws.com/1799,06-Oct-1963.pdf>.

[did] not make it impossible for a Christian to render judgments concerning economic systems.” Geren favored free enterprise because it provided Americans with “more freedom as persons and more freedom in the churches.”⁴² Such thinking was in line with classical liberalism’s belief that private property and liberty are intimately intertwined and inseparable from one another; for example, ownership of private property allows individuals liberty in the form of being able to sell their labor, invest capital, or enter contracts if they so desire.⁴³

The Baptist understanding of Christian citizenship was related to classical liberalism in one other critical way: the equivocation of “citizen” with “male.” Susan Hekman has explained this brilliantly in her summary of Carole Pateman’s critique of liberalism. Hekman argued that women are alienated under liberalism because liberalism equates sexual difference with political difference: “To be masculine is to have rationality and thus ownership of one’s person; to be female is to have neither. To be masculine is to be a full member of society, both economically and politically. To be female is not to be either.”⁴⁴ She based this on Carole Pateman’s understanding of the function of contracts within a liberal society. For Pateman, Hekman said, “contracts are the constitutive force of liberal society; they create the political basis of that society and sustain it through myriad contract relationships.”⁴⁵ In Pateman’s view, liberalism has historically maintained that only men have the natural capacity to own private property and enter

⁴² Paul Geren, “Dream of Own Business? In Soviet Union, Nyet!” *Baptist Press*, June 12, 1961, 8, SBHLA Digital Resources, *BP* collection, accessed March 13, 2015, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/1148,12-Jun-1961.pdf>.

⁴³ Shane D. Courtland, Gerald Gaus, and David Schmidtz, eds., *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. “Liberalism,” last modified March 21, 2015, accessed April 2, 2015, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/liberalism/>.

⁴⁴ Susan J. Hekman, *Private Selves, Public Identities: Reconsidering Identity Politics* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 40.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

contracts, thereby allowing them to assume the full rights and responsibilities of the liberal citizen. In other words, liberalism's social contract was merely an iteration of a pre-existing sexual contract, both of which were understood to be part of the laws of nature.⁴⁶ Hekman also incorporated Carol Gilligan's argument that men and women are socialized to employ different "voices." From the time they are children, Gilligan argued, men develop "justice" voices imbued with "rationality and autonomy," while women develop "caring" voices characterized by "nurturing and relational skills." The rational male "justice" voice defines what the liberal polity identifies as the "public" sphere, while the female "caring" voice represents the "private" sphere.⁴⁷ In this way, the male voice becomes universalized, assumed to speak for everyone.

The Southern Baptist Convention of the 1960s reproduced these concepts through its Christian citizenship ideal. While male authority under classical liberalism was legitimated by the laws of nature, however, it was legitimated by the laws of God in the SBC. This is explored more fully in Chapter Three and its focus on the SBC's belief in a gendered divine order, but it is important here, too, because of how Baptists conceived of the state within the framework of Christian (male) citizenship. Because one of the major aspects of Christian citizenship involved engaging with the civil government of a liberal polity, and because the liberal polity excluded women from full citizenship, Southern Baptists necessarily equated "citizen" with "male." This tacit assumption also supported the idea that men, as rational beings, were better suited for decision-making and civic duty. This meant that Baptist men had legitimate access to the state and that their political

⁴⁶ Ibid., 41; Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1988), 110.

⁴⁷ Hekman, *Private Selves, Public Identities*, 42. Hekman was drawing on Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

autonomy was both naturally and divinely granted. They had to be careful, however, to ensure that the state protected their interests as Christian citizens. To do so, they became guardians of the liberal state both as natural men and Christians, and this meant, on the one hand, using their rationality and understanding of the world to shape the state, and on the other, protecting it from those who would seek to violate the separation of church and state valued by both liberalism and its spiritual brother, Christian citizenship.

CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP AND THE “CATHOLIC PROBLEM”

The main way in which Southern Baptist men exercised their Christian citizenship in the 1960s was through their opposition to Roman Catholic political activism. As Philip Hamburger has argued, Catholicism represented the antithesis of personal and religious autonomy to Protestant groups like the Southern Baptists in the twentieth century, so much so that anti-Catholicism led Protestants to “elevate separation of church and state as an American ideal.”⁴⁸ Indeed, by 1968, a vast majority of Baptist pastors reported “holding to... a firm conviction of church-state separation.”⁴⁹ Baptists opposed Catholicism primarily for its adherence to a strict ecclesiastical hierarchy and its emphasis on papal, rather than individual, authority. In addition, Baptists were suspicious that Catholic political activism, particularly when it came to the parochial issue, was an attempt by the Vatican at bringing the United States under its control. The campaign and election of John F. Kennedy, America’s first Catholic president, did not alleviate Baptist anxiety in this regard. Baptists also closely associated the Catholic Church with the Civil Rights Movement and communism, two other issues they perceived to be major threats to

⁴⁸ Philip Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 201-202.

⁴⁹ Patricia Loving and Jerry Robinson, Jr., *Attitudes of Baptist Ministers on Separation of Church and State* (Houston, TX: Research Center of Houston Baptist College, 1968), 6.

church/state separation. What seemed to Southern Baptists to be such blatant disregard for the separation of church and state also represented an affront to their sense of Christian citizenship (and, by extension, masculinity), and defending the state against Catholic political maneuvering meant that they were fulfilling their roles as Christian citizens.

Chief among Southern Baptists' opposition to Catholicism in the 1960s was the nature of authority within the Catholic Church, especially when it came to the status of the Pope. Southern Baptists had a long tradition of distrust of the Catholic Church, and much of it was due to the Catholic doctrine of papal infallibility, established by the Church in 1870 during the First Vatican Council (Vatican I). The papal infallibility doctrine declared that "the Pontiff is infallible, not in his *private*, but in his *official* character, when he speaks *ex Cathedra*... as the Father and Teacher of all Christians," in the words of the Archbishop of Baltimore, who was present at Vatican I.⁵⁰ This distinction, however, was inconsequential to Southern Baptists. In the eyes of Baptists, when the Catholic Church announced the doctrine of papal infallibility, it was attempting to grant a Christ-like quality to an imperfect human, one that Baptist theology and its understanding of the gospel could not abide. In other words, Baptists believed that the papal infallibility doctrine granted the Pope authority that only God was able to have. D.G. Whittinghill, a Baptist missionary to Italy, condemned the Church on these grounds in 1910:

⁵⁰ Martin John Spalding, *Pastoral Letter on the Papal Infallibility* (Baltimore, MD: Kelly, Piet, and Co., 1870), 13-14. Italics in original.

Romanism is incompatible with civil and religious liberty or with intellectual and material progress. Can an institution be divine which subverts the primitive doctrines of Christianity, bitterly persecutes His followers, substitutes human for divine authority, withholds the Word of God from millions, enslaves the mind and conscience, sells pardons for sins, grants indulgences, worships images and saints, teaches a corrupt system of morals, and opposes every free political and religious institution in the world?⁵¹

In 1920, George Truett, then pastor of Dallas First Baptist Church, similarly lambasted the Catholic Church in his famous “Baptists and Religious Liberty” speech on the steps of the National Capitol. Truett called the Church and its papal infallibility doctrine “the very antithesis” of religious liberty and the separation of church and state because of the enormous amount of power implied by infallibility.⁵² Though J. David Holcomb has disagreed with Philip Hamburger’s assessment and argued that Truett’s support for church/state separation arose from his understanding of religious liberty in the Baptist tradition rather than any notion of anti-Catholicism, it is clear that later Southern Baptists drew on Truett’s “Baptists and Religious Liberty” speech to support church/state separation in an effort to combat Catholic activism.⁵³ W.A. Criswell, Truett’s successor as pastor at Dallas First Baptist Church, stated in a sermon in memory of Truett that the problem with the Catholic Church was not that it was simply another brand of Christianity. Instead, “the problem lies in this: that the Roman Catholic institution, hierarchy, is not only a religion, it is a political tyranny.”⁵⁴

⁵¹ D.G. Whittinghill, “The Italian Mission,” in *Southern Baptist Foreign Missions*, ed. T. Bronson Ray (Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1910), 148.

⁵² George W. Truett, “Baptists and Religious Liberty,” *Reformed Reader*, accessed March 7, 2015, <http://www.reformedreader.org/baptistsandreligiousliberty.htm>.

⁵³ J. David Holcomb, “A Millstone Hanged About His Neck? George W. Truett, Anti-Catholicism, and Baptist Conceptions of Religious Liberty,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 43, no. 3 (Summer/Fall 2008), 79.

⁵⁴ W.A. Criswell, “George Truett and Religious Liberty, July 3, 1960” Criswell Sermon Library, accessed March 7, 2015, <http://www.wacriswell.com/sermons/1960/george-truett-and-religious-liberty/>.

Indeed, Southern Baptists and other anti-Catholic Protestants frequently characterized the Catholic Church as a violent dictatorship in the 1960s, drawing on contemporary examples to make their case. Clyde W. Taylor, secretary of public affairs for the National Association of Evangelicals, lamented the state of Protestantism in Spain, where Catholicism was the national religion under the Franco regime. According to Taylor, Protestant churches across Spain were being closed, and “Protestant petitions for the opening of churches [were] delayed for years or completely ignored.”⁵⁵ C. Stanley Lowell, editor of the evangelical weekly newsmagazine *Christianity Today*, was also critical of Catholicism in Spain. In the early 1960s, he wrote an essay describing José M. de Arielza, the Spanish ambassador of the United States, as dismissive when asked about the government’s closing of the Protestant Union Theological Seminary in Madrid. Lowell summed up Arielza’s answer in his own words: “Why should the Roman Church run the risk of competition when it has the power to eliminate it?”⁵⁶ W.A. Criswell painted a decidedly more gruesome scene in 1960, claiming that 89 Protestant church leaders had been murdered under the rule of the Catholic Church in Colombia during the 1950s.⁵⁷ Similar stories from Italy, Chile, and other predominantly Catholic countries, particularly those where Baptist missionaries were stationed, dominated Southern Baptist newspaper headlines in the late 1950s and early 1960s.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ John J. Hurt, “E.S. James Credited by Liberty Organization,” *Baptist Press*, February 11, 1960, 1, SBHLLA Digital Resources, *BP* collection, accessed March 12, 2015, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/1429,11-Feb-1960.pdf>.

⁵⁶ C. Stanley Lowell, *If the U.S. Becomes 51% Catholic!* (Washington, DC: Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State, c. 1961), 2, Baylor Digital Collections, Church-State collection, last modified February 2, 2007, accessed March 7, 2015, <http://digitalcollections.baylor.edu/cdm/ref/collection/cs-vert/id/5696>.

⁵⁷ Criswell, “George Truett and Religious Liberty.”

⁵⁸ Ricky Floyd Dobbs, “Continuities in American Anti-Catholicism: The *Texas Baptist Standard* and the Coming of the 1960 Election,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 42, no. 1 (Winter 2007), 88.

According to Baptists, the Catholic Church believed it could act both as a national religion and a religious nation because the Vatican was in fact a diplomatic entity, a point they emphasized by referring to the Church not as the Catholic Church but as the Roman Catholic Church or Romanism. The dual nature of the Vatican was one of the major reasons the Southern Baptist Convention so ardently opposed John F. Kennedy during his presidential campaign. Baptists charged that Catholics were required to pledge allegiance to the Pope and the Vatican above all else, and they believed that a Catholic president would cater to papal, rather than popular, interests. Raymond William Gribbin, a Catholic priest, attempted to answer this objection in 1960 by explaining that “as the ruler of an American Catholic, the Pope remains only a spiritual ruler.”⁵⁹ His explanation, and others like, fell on deaf ears, at least in the SBC. Baptists proclaimed that if elected, Kennedy’s every move would be subject to the authority of the Pope. The Baptist State Convention of Michigan, for example, passed a resolution in November 1960 on the upcoming presidential election, opposing “the election of a Catholic for the Presidency of the United States” because “the Roman Catholic Church is both a religious and political organization, and because of [its] insistent opposition to the principles of separation of church and state, and because of [its] political domination in countries with a Catholic majority.”⁶⁰ Similarly, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs predicted that a

⁵⁹ “Priest Answers Question About Catholic President,” *Baptist Press*, March 2, 1960, 4, SBHLA Digital Resources, *BP* collection, accessed March 7, 2015, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/1009,02-Mar-1960.pdf>.

⁶⁰ “Michigan Against Catholic Nominee,” *Baptist Press*, November 6, 1960, 1, SBHLA Digital Resources, *BP* collection, accessed March 7, 2015, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/1126,06-Nov-1960.pdf>.

Catholic president would encounter frequent conflict between the White House and the “subordination of personal judgment to local ecclesiastical authorities.”⁶¹

Even when Kennedy repeatedly assured the public that he would not be under the thumb of the Vatican, Southern Baptists called it a bluff. In the minds of many in the SBC, Kennedy could be either a Catholic or the president, but not both, and some Baptists were quite explicit about this opinion. After Kennedy made a campaign stop in Austin, Texas, and restated his unwavering support for the separation of church and state, the 30,000-member Permian Basin Baptist Association passed a resolution stating that Kennedy was “either denying the teachings of the church or... seeking to delude the American people.”⁶² Gene Puckett, editor of the *Ohio Baptist Messenger*, put it more bluntly: “If Kennedy insists that he will think for himself and resist the pressures of the Roman Church, then he is not a true Catholic.”⁶³

Southern Baptists did not believe that they were merely theorizing about the political threat that the Catholic Church might pose. Instead, they saw Catholic political activism, especially Catholic support for parochialism, as one of the most prominent threats to church/state separation in the early 1960s. In 1961, Congress held hearings on whether or not to include parochial schools in President Kennedy’s proposed \$2 billion grant program for public elementary and secondary schools.⁶⁴ Among the possible solutions to

⁶¹ W. Barry Garrett, “Kennedy Confirms Poling’s Report,” *Baptist Press*, January 14, 1960, 7, SBHLA Digital Resources, *BP* collection, accessed March 8, 2015, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/1414,14-Jan-1960.pdf>.

⁶² “Kennedy Visit Rekindles Texas Baptist Reaction,” *Baptist Press*, September 16, 1960, 1-2, SBHLA Digital Resources, *BP* collection, accessed March 8, 2015, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/1099,16-Sept-1960.pdf>.

⁶³ “July News Spotlights Kennedy Nomination,” *Baptist Press*, August 5, 1960, 1, SBHLA Digital Resources, *BP* collection, accessed March 8, 2015, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/1077,05-Aug-1960.pdf>.

⁶⁴ John D. Morris, “Congress Studies New School Plan,” *New York Times*, March 10, 1961, 1.

the issue were that parochial schools might receive outright grants or long-term, low-interest federal loans, or that parents of parochial schoolchildren might be granted income tax deductions, exemptions, or credits.⁶⁵ Baptists and many other Protestants were unequivocally opposed to such suggestions. In agreement with representatives from the National Lutheran Council, the National Association of Evangelicals, and Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State, C. Emanuel Carson, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, denounced any attempts to extend federal aid to nonpublic schools. According to Carson, any such aid posed a major threat to the separation of church and state. "In this dilemma," Carson declared, "we deem it doubtful that full protection of the freedom of the church can be harmonized with fully responsible government administration in this kind of joint endeavor."⁶⁶ According to the *Baptist Press*, Catholics were unhappy about this opposition, though the wire service's reporters were not unbiased in their appraisal of the situation: "The Roman Catholic bishops announced that if their schools did not get a piece of the public pie, they would fight to keep everybody else from getting any pie... The White House fumed and became adamant in its determination not to be pushed around by the hierarchy."⁶⁷

Southern Baptists' understanding of Christian citizenship informed their response to the Catholic push for parochial aid in a number of ways. First, and most obvious, Baptists believed that Catholics sought to breach the wall of church/state separation. Baptists

⁶⁵ W. Barry Garret, "Church-State Crisis Hovers Over Nation," *Baptist Press*, March 20, 1961, 1, SBHLA Digital Resources, *BP* collection, accessed March 8, 2015, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/1491,20-Mar-1961.pdf>.

⁶⁶ "Baptists, Other Groups Oppose Parochial Aid," *Baptist Press*, June 8, 1961, 2, SBHLA Digital Resources, *BP* collection, accessed March 8, 2015, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/1145,08-Jun-1961.pdf>.

⁶⁷ Garrett, "Church-State Crisis Hovers Over Nation," 1.

viewed themselves as the protectors of this wall of separation, and in opposing the Catholic Church, they were carrying out their duties as Christian citizens. Yet also coloring the Baptist response to the parochialism issue was the conception of masculinity which shaped the contours of Christian citizenship. Baptist men understood themselves as rational beings opposed to the irrationality of the Catholic Church. This was evident in Baptists' repeated dismissals of Catholic qualifiers on doctrines such as papal infallibility; the message from Baptists, it seemed, was that Catholic arguments were illogical.

Christian citizenship and masculinity also informed the connection Southern Baptists made between the Catholic Church and communism, however tenuous it may have been. Indeed, Andrew M. Manis has argued that Southern Baptists' "worldview was triangular rather than exclusively dualistic, and they understood America as locked in mortal combat with the Vatican as well as the Kremlin."⁶⁸ In 1961, the year of the congressional showdown over parochialism, the SBC passed a convention voicing this belief in no uncertain terms:

WHEREAS our understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ has led us to place strong emphasis on (a) the voluntary quality of religious faith and participation, (b) the importance of freedom for the church, (c) the rights of all men to be free from coercion of law in matters of religious practice and support... WHEREAS a communist pattern has developed in the world which by imposing a state monopoly on education denies the churches the freedom which they need for the proper spiritual nurture of the children, WHEREAS the Roman Catholic leadership in our own country is currently in aggressive campaign to press our Federal Government into a program of tax support for church operated schools...

⁶⁸ Andrew M. Manis, *Southern Religions in Civil Conflict: Civil Rights and the Culture Wars* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2002), 69.

THEREFORE, be it resolved... we voice vigorous opposition to the use of tax money for grants or other direct aid to church schools on all educational levels.⁶⁹

The adjectives alone in this resolution paint a testosterone-fueled picture; Catholics were “aggressive,” while Baptists were “vigorous” in their response. This was similar to the wording in the *Baptist Press* article on the congressional parochiaid debates, in which the White House (occupied, curiously enough, by a Catholic) refused to be “pushed around” by the Church.⁷⁰ At the heart of Baptist men’s opposition to both Catholicism and communism, however, was not a sense of machismo. Instead, it was their understanding of Christian citizenship. Baptists perceived both the Catholic Church and communism as oppressive institutions which deprived those under their control of their natural and God-given rights. The threat of each meant the alienation of man from his autonomy; instead of being able to live under self-rule, he was subjected to the illegitimate rule of another.

The tenet of self-rule was a fragile one, however, based as it was on the assumption that the Christian citizen was indeed judicious and understood that adherence to divine order was in his best interests. In the decade between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s, the underlying assumption of Christian citizenship – that men were naturally suited for citizenship based on their God-given capacity for using sound judgment – would be challenged externally and, it seemed, proven internally in the Southern Baptist Convention. The challengers would not be Catholics or communists; instead, they would be wives and mothers.

⁶⁹ “Resolution on Religious Liberty and Education, 1961,” Southern Baptist Convention, accessed February 16, 2015, <http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/469/resolution-on-religious-liberty-and-education>.

⁷⁰ Garrett, “Church-State Crisis Hovers Over Nation,” 1.

CHAPTER 3:

THE NEW MORALITY

On July 14, 1964, nearly 16,000 men and women sat sweating in furs and tweed suits inside San Francisco's Cow Palace, a cavernous converted barn which had risen from humble Depression-era beginnings as an agricultural arena to a place in the national spotlight as the site of the 1964 Republican National Convention.⁷¹ The convention is remembered now as a decisive, watershed event, the moment Republicans saw their party's moderate leanings, embodied in New York State Governor Nelson Rockefeller, fall away to be replaced by the hard-nosed conservatism of Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater, who famously proclaimed at the convention that extremism in the defense of liberty was no vice – and that moderation in the defense of justice was no virtue.⁷² On July 14, however, the convention was only in its second day, and Nelson Rockefeller was preparing to take the stage to make his bid for the party's presidential nomination. While tensions in the Cow Palace were running high, with no help from the stale, stuffy air, the conservative bloc on the arena's newly carpeted floor was not Rockefeller's only obstacle to the nomination. As cries of "You dirty lover, you dirty lover!" echoed from the

⁷¹ Eugene Patterson, "Carpeting in the Cow Barn," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 14, 1964, 4.

⁷² "In the High Drama of its 1964 Convention, GOP Hung a Right Turn," interview of Sam Tanenhaus by Robert Siegel, *All Things Considered*, NPR, July 10, 2014; Rick Perlstein, "1964 Republican Convention: Revolution from the Right," *Smithsonian Magazine*, August 2008, accessed February 12, 2015, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/1964-republican-convention-revolution-from-the-right-915921>.

balcony, Rockefeller took the stage to face not only the burgeoning right-wing element in the Republican Party. He was staring down, too, the demons of his own reputation.⁷³

Two and a half years earlier, in November 1961, Nelson Rockefeller had announced that he and his wife of thirty-one years, Mary Todhunter Clark Rockefeller, had agreed to an “amicable” separation. While the initial grounds for the divorce remained a secret, Todhunter Clark’s divorce suit claimed that she had been treated “with extreme cruelty, entirely mental in character, which caused [her] great unhappiness and injured her personal health,” though Rockefeller’s attorney denied each allegation.⁷⁴ While the news of the separation was scandalous enough to cause immediate speculation that it could cost Rockefeller the 1964 Republican presidential nomination, the major outrage came with the announcement in spring 1963 of Rockefeller’s remarriage to a fellow divorcee named Margaretta “Happy” Murphy. Though Murphy had ended her marriage to her husband just one month prior to the announcement of her marriage to Rockefeller, she and the governor were reported to have already been romantically and sexually involved for over five years.⁷⁵ The news made waves across the country, with Republican National Committeeman Carl Shipley calling the marriage “political suicide” and over a thousand Americans, most of them women, writing their congressmen to condemn the relationship.⁷⁶

⁷³ “Disappearing Taboo,” *Time*, September 6, 1976, 10; Richard Norton Smith, “Rockefeller’s Last Stand,” *Politico*, October 21, 2014, accessed February 12, 2015, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/10/nelson-rockefellers-last-stand-112072.htm>.

⁷⁴ “On the Rocks,” *Time*, November 24, 1961, 78; “Forever at an End,” *Time*, March 23, 1962, 17.

⁷⁵ “Divorce and the Voter,” *Time*, February 23, 1962, 29; Kay Herring, “Romney Cited GOP’s Choice,” *Baylor Lariat*, April 6, 1962, 2, Baylor Digital Collections, *BL* Collection, accessed February 12, 2015, <http://digitalcollections.baylor.edu/cdm/ref/collection/lariat/id/14581>.

⁷⁶ Stanley Meiser, “View of Rockefeller Remarriage Here Reported: ‘Political Suicide,’” *Washington Post*, *Times Herald*, May 2, 1963, A8; Warren Weaver, Jr., “Protests Mount on Rockefeller,” *New York Times*, May 26, 1963, 39.

Yet high-profile and salacious though his divorce and remarriage were, Nelson Rockefeller was not alone. In 1962, the year his divorce was finalized, 413,000 divorces had been granted in the United States; five years later, that number would grow to 523,000.⁷⁷ The increase in divorce rates, however, did not necessarily translate into greater general social acceptance of divorce, as the Rockefeller scandal demonstrated. Instead, many Americans, particularly those in conservative religious communities, found themselves deeply troubled by the rising incidence of marital dissolution. The pastor of New York's Madison Avenue Baptist Church, for example, condemned Rockefeller in a 1963 sermon: "Under no circumstances is a man justified to leave his wife for another, someone he finds more attractive. Preoccupation with these passions is sinful."⁷⁸

The rising divorce rate was just one of many symptoms of "the new morality," which had turned America's "traditional values" upside down. One evangelical pamphlet declared of the "new morality": "Suddenly, yesterday's heroes are today's arch villains. The sacred has been profaned and black and white have turned to gray."⁷⁹ Evidence for the new morality was abundant. The year of Rockefeller's divorce, Billy Graham proclaimed that "millions of Americans [were] in bondage to narcotics, alcohol, gambling, sexual immorality, pride, and a hundred other tyrants."⁸⁰ The message was clear: Americans were living life unrestrained with no sense of self-control.

This was especially evident, it seemed to Baptists, in the apparent breakdown of law and order in the decade stretching from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. In 1964, for

⁷⁷ Alexander A. Plateris, ed., *100 Years of Marriage and Divorce Statistics: United States, 1867-1967* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1973), 22.

⁷⁸ "Divorce Weighed in Baptist Sermon," *New York Times*, May 13, 1963, 23.

⁷⁹ *The Family in Crisis... A Way Out* (Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Welfare Agency, 1972), in box 3, folder 3, National Association of Evangelicals records (hereafter NAE records), Wheaton College.

⁸⁰ Kenneth Dole, "Speech by Billy Graham Closes Baptists' Jubilee," *Washington Post, Times Herald*, May 25, 1964, D6.

example, Senator Herman Talmadge had given a speech called “The Christian in Today’s World” to the Georgia Baptist Convention and warned that “the real dangers facing America” were the “insidious cancer” of “moral and economic decay, a breakdown of law and order and the increasing inability to tell the difference between right and wrong.”⁸¹ Two years later, Bobby Elledge, a Southern Baptist pastor from North Carolina, lamented “the age of rebellion”: “People everywhere are rebelling against constituted authority... Lawlessness seems to be the order of the day.”⁸² In 1970, fed up with such “lawlessness,” the SBC passed a resolution proclaiming that “a breakdown in law and order [was] being used by some to destroy [America’s] form of government” and asking that local pastors use their sermons and church programming to emphasize “the value of law and order in an intelligent society.”⁸³

Talmadge and Elledge were not alone in their assessments of American morality in the 1960s and 1970s. Southern Baptists and many other Americans were left feeling disenchanted by the crime that seemed to dominate the headlines. Though there has been some question as to whether the growing crime rate of the 1960 was exaggerated in the media to advance conservative political efforts, especially considering that “law and order” was one of Richard Nixon’s key talking points during his 1968 presidential campaign, crime was indeed on the rise.⁸⁴ Between 1960 and 1975, the number of

⁸¹ “Senator Talmadge Featured Speaker at Ga. Baptist Convention,” *Vidalia (Georgia) Advance*, November 5, 1964; “Baptists Told U.S. Adrift,” *Savannah Morning News*, November 11, 1964. Both in box 6, folder 6, Georgiana Vertical Files Collection, Hargrett Library.

⁸² Bobby Elledge, “Annual Association Evangelism Report,” in *Alleghany Baptist Association, North Carolina, Twentieth Annual Session* (1966), Internet Archive, last modified April 15, 2013, accessed March 20, 2015, <https://archive.org/details/annualsession19661970alle>.

⁸³ Charles T. Carter, “Resolution no. 11 – On Law and Order,” *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, Nineteen Hundred and Seventy*, 80-81.

⁸⁴ Dennis D. Loo and Ruth-Ellen M. Grimes, “Polls, Politics, and Crime: The ‘Law and Order’ Issue of the 1960s,” *Western Criminology Review* 5, no. 1 (2004), 50-67.

reported violent crimes nationwide increased from 288,460 to 1,039,710, a change of nearly 260 percent.⁸⁵ By the early 1970s, violence was also being displayed frequently on Americans' televisions with the news broadcasting of the Vietnam War in addition to frequent primetime depictions of murder and assault disproportionate to their real-world occurrence.⁸⁶ Southern Baptists had also become disaffected by the Watergate affair and the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy. In 1968, Baptists passed a resolution calling Robert Kennedy's assassination "the latest in a series of tragedies which have shaken the world in recent years," and the convention's vice president-elect called it part of a "series of similar violent crimes against individuals and society."⁸⁷ The assassination prompted W.A. Criswell to call on Baptists to "rededicate [themselves] to a nation committed to law and order."⁸⁸

Americans, including Southern Baptists, were taking notice. National poll results between 1965 and 1971 demonstrated growing anxiety about crime and dissatisfaction with the steps being taken to combat it. More than half those surveyed in a 1965 Gallup poll believed crime had risen over the past five years, and a 1971 Harris poll reported that 55 percent of Americans were "more worried about violence and safety on the streets" compared to the previous year. Over half of the women surveyed by Gallup in 1972

⁸⁵ U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Estimated Crime in United States – Total," Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics, last modified March 29, 2010, accessed June 3, 2014, <http://www.bjs.gov/ucrdata/Search/Crime/State/RunCrimeStatebyState.cfm>. "Violent crime" here means murder, non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

⁸⁶ Joseph R. Dominick, "Crime and Law Enforcement on Prime-Time Television," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (Summer 1973), 246.

⁸⁷ "SBC Expressed Concern Over Kennedy Murder," *Baptist Press*, June 6, 1968, 2, SBHLA Digital Resources, *BP* Collection, accessed March 20, 2015, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/2612,06-Jun-1968.pdf>.

⁸⁸ "Criswell Challenges First, Dallas, to Reach All Races," *Baptist Press*, June 11, 1968, 1, SBHLA Digital Resources, *BP* Collection, accessed March 20, 2015, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/2615,11-Jun-1968.pdf>.

believed that crime was a major threat, and a 1971 Baptist VIEWpoll showed that over 80 percent of Southern Baptist pastors and Sunday School teachers felt that the courts “were not harsh enough with criminals.”⁸⁹ Clearly, it seemed, something had to be done.

The breakdown of law and order should have been seen as a threat by the men of the Southern Baptist Convention. After all, obedience to a just civil government formed one of the cornerstones of Christian citizenship, and a society with no respect for the law and order of man could not be expected to have respect for the law and order of God. Moreover, unrestrained violence was evidence of a citizenry unable to apply sound judgment, to practice self-control. Yet for all their fear over the apparent breakdown of law and order in civil society, the Christian citizens of the Southern Baptist Convention had their focus elsewhere during the 1960s. The greatest threat to Christian citizenship and its attendant masculinity, it seemed, was not the threat of robbery or murder. Instead, it was the threat of women.

WOMEN’S LIBERATION

The 116th annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, held in June 1973 in Portland, Oregon, was, by all accounts, rather uneventful. Most of the workshops and lectures drew on the conference’s official theme, “Share the Word Now,” a reminder to attendees that now, more than ever – after the tumultuous 1960s and especially in light of the Watergate scandal – America needed Christ, and more specifically, Christians who could spread the gospel.⁹⁰ Mrs. Richard (Jessie) Sappington, however, had something

⁸⁹ Hazel Erskine, “The Polls: Fear of Violence and Crime,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (Spring 1974), 132, 135, 142; Ken Hayes, “Baptists Want Stronger Treatment for Criminals,” *Baptist Press*, August 19, 1971, 6.

⁹⁰ “SBC Program to Emphasize Theme, ‘Share the Word Now,’” *Baptist Press*, March 6, 1973, 1, SBHLA Digital Resources, *BP Collection*, accessed April 30, 2014, <http://media.sbhl.org.s3.amazonaws.com/3543,06-Mar-1973.pdf>.

else in mind. Mrs. Sappington submitted for consideration by the convention a resolution which affirmed “the line of submission in the Christian home”: Christ as the head of the man, man as the head of the woman, and mother and father as heads of the children in Christ.⁹¹ Sappington was motivated by what she saw as “a great attack by the members of the women’s liberation movements upon Scriptural precepts of the woman’s place in society.”⁹² Yet when the time came for the resolution’s consideration before the appropriate committee, it was “watered down,” made to emphasize the contributions of women in the church while making no mention of women’s “place in society.” Sappington was incensed; she chastised the resolutions committee for giving into “feminist demands” in front of the 8,800 messengers present at the convention, ninety percent of whom were men. The audience responded with “a hearty ‘aye’” in solidarity with Sappington’s indignation.⁹³

Though Jessie Sappington’s proposed resolution was rejected in its original form, she was only a few years ahead of the rest of the Southern Baptist Convention in condemning women’s liberation. As the 1970s stretched on, Baptists became more and more concerned with the role of women in American society. Women’s increased presence in the workforce, the passage of no-fault divorce laws, and a whole host of other cultural changes began to make it clear that the gendered divine order was being threatened. Moreover, violation of divine order did not put only Baptist masculinity at

⁹¹ Mrs. Richard Sappington, “Resolution #14: Women’s Liberation,” *Baptist Press*, June 12, 1973, 23, SBHLA Digital Resources, *BP* Collection, accessed April 30, 2014, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/3597,12-JUN-1973.pdf>.

⁹² Robert O’Brien, “Women’s Lib Resolution,” *Baptist Press*, June 14, 1973, 114, SBHLA Digital Resources, *BP* Collection, accessed April 30, 2014, <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/3604,14-Jun-1973.PDF>.

⁹³ Russell Chandler, “Southern Baptists: Beside Still Waters,” *Christianity Today*, July 6, 1973, 49.

risk; Baptist women, too, had a vested interest in ensuring that their place in the universe would remain stable.

There was indeed a definite material basis for SBC women's objections to feminist or sexually liberal prescriptions, especially when it came to issues of women's roles in marriage. Feminists were seen as leading a "vicious assault on the monogamous Christian home and family," as Moral Majority leader Jerry Falwell proclaimed, with the institution of marriage seemingly feminism's public enemy number one.⁹⁴ Marriage remained the most accessible avenue for women to achieve financial security and stability; the median adjusted household income for married women in 1970 was \$46,669 (in 2007 dollars), while the median adjusted household income for unmarried women in the same year was \$30,597.⁹⁵ Beyond the strictly financial advantages of marriage, however, there existed deeply personal reasons for wanting to ensure the continuation of marriage as an institution. Because cultural precepts generally dictated that men control family finances while women would oversee the management of the household, many women were unprepared to assume both roles. As Seth Dowland has demonstrated, Christian schools and churches generally prepared women for homemaking and childrearing, often through mandatory home economics programs, while preparing men to enter the workforce and serve as the family wage-earner, through elective business classes and mandatory shop classes.⁹⁶ Many conservative Christian women who opposed feminism grew up in these or similar environments and simply did not possess the skills

⁹⁴ Jerry Falwell, "Why is America Important to God?" *The Liberty Journal-Champion*, September 28, 1979, 1.

⁹⁵ D'Vera Cohn and Richard Fry, *Women, Men and the New Economics of Marriage* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2010), 3.

⁹⁶ Bob Harris, "Academy Still Educates with a Purpose," *The Liberty Journal-Champion*, August 4, 1978, 1; Dowland, "Defending Manhood," 47-56.

which would allow them to navigate adulthood successfully without a husband. Finally, married women who did suddenly find themselves without a husband, whether through death or divorce, were “confronted with the responsibility of becoming ‘head of the household,’ and of assuming the family finances,” as one Virginia church counselor put it.⁹⁷

Still, it was simply likely that many women in the SBC supported the sex roles placed upon them by divine order because they genuinely believed in the efficacy of those roles.⁹⁸ Christopher Ellison et al. have suggested that fundamentalist Southern Baptist women “experience personal autonomy and self-esteem within this very patriarchal institution” because their churches give them a sense of belonging and emphasize their ability to communicate directly with God.⁹⁹ Whatever the reason, many Southern Baptist women – though certainly not all – took seriously the task of cultivating their femininity.¹⁰⁰

CHRISTIAN WOMANHOOD

“Where oh where are the womenly women?” bemoaned a section of a Southern Baptist women’s college brochure for the 1970-1971 academic year.¹⁰¹ Though SBC women did their part in cultivating virtuous Christian womanhood – from hosting self-help workshops for mothers seeking to serve their husbands and families better to

⁹⁷ Brenda Easterling, “A Widow: What to Do?” *The Liberty Journal-Champion*, July 7, 1978, 5.

⁹⁸ R. Marie Griffith has described the appeal of a gendered order in *God’s Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000). Griffith suggests that women find the stability of absolute roles to be comforting rather than limiting.

⁹⁹ Ellison, et al., “Male God Imagery and Female Submission,” 189.

¹⁰⁰ Many of the female discontents of Southern Baptist fundamentalism and its emphasis on gendered order have written essays for Carl L. Kell’s edited collection, *Exiled: Voices of the Southern Baptist Convention Holy War* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2006).

¹⁰¹ “Girls are Still Girls at Tift,” Tift College brochure, 1970-1971, box 9, folder 9, Georgiana Ephemera Collection, Hargrett Library.

awarding “Ph.T.” (“Putting Husband Through”) “degrees” to seminary wives at their husbands’ commencement ceremonies – many simply could not shake the feeling that femininity was endangered in modern-day America.¹⁰² To be sure, Baptists felt that most of the blame for this could be placed on feminists. Feminist books like *The New Assertive Woman* explicitly rejected femininity and tried to “undo years of ‘feminization,’” and over 100 feminists picketed the 1968 Miss America pageant and the part it played in sexism’s “degrading, mindless boob-girlie system.”¹⁰³ In addition, feminism was also blamed, for example, for the so-called decay of the family, with evangelicals pointing to feminists like Kate Millett as evidence that women’s liberation advocated for the abolition of the family because it, in the words of one of Millett’s evangelical critics, “oppress[e]d and enslave[d] women.”¹⁰⁴

To counteract the apparent dearth of “womenly women” and feminism’s rejection of feminization, many SBC churches and their women members took up the task of exalting those women who exuded the ideal traits of proper Christian womanhood: a nurturing spirit, and peaceful and positive outlook, and above all, a submissive heart. For example, Mrs. Ruth Parker Jenkins, Sunday School teacher of forty years at Athens First Baptist Church in Athens, Georgia, took her all-female classes (the students of which she referred to as “her girls”) to serve in soup kitchens, dress dolls for the Salvation Army at Christmas, and make care packages for soldiers in Vietnam – extending their role of Christian motherhood beyond the walls of their homes. She also bragged that “her girls,”

¹⁰² Robert Meade, “Special Graduation Held for Cancer Victim’s Husband,” *Baptist Press*, February 5, 1973, 4.

¹⁰³ Lynn Bloom, Karen Coburn, and Joan Pearlman, *The New Assertive Woman* (New York, NY: Delacorte Press, 1975), quoted in *Breakthrough: A Feminist Newspaper* 1, no. 1 (January 1976), 11; Art Buchwald, “The Bra Burners,” *New York Post*, September 12, 1968, 42.

¹⁰⁴ Armand M. Nicholi II, “The Fractured Family: Following it into the Future,” *Christianity Today*, May 25, 1979, 11.

“some of the most original hostesses in Athens,” “gave the most beautiful parties in town.”¹⁰⁵ This was an especially meaningful compliment in a religious culture where being a hostess was not only a chance to socialize with friends and family put an opportunity to spread the gospel through serving her guests; as one Baptist woman put it, “a Christian hostess entertains out of a desire to minister rather than to show off.”¹⁰⁶ Jenkins’ relationship with “her girls” was so strong that she became something of a mother figure to many of them. One student of Jenkins eulogized her at her funeral, lauding her for her positive nature and sunny outlook, qualities highly desired in the ideal Christian woman: “Her life was an inspiration to me. She was ever cheerful and always earnest in everything she did. Truly she lit ‘many a fire in a cold room’ and helped thousands to understand their purpose in life and more clearly see their potential for goodness.”¹⁰⁷

No church was more adept, however, at exalting those women who embodied Christian feminine ideals than Jerry Falwell’s Thomas Road Baptist Church (TRBC), a mega-church located in Lynchburg, Virginia, and attended by 10,000 worshipers every Sunday during the late 1970s and early 1980s.¹⁰⁸ TRBC was the nucleus of the Falwell empire, which by 1980 would include Liberty Baptist College, Liberty Baptist Seminary, Thomas Road Bible Institute, Lynchburg Christian Academy, Elim Home for Alcoholics, and, of course, Moral Majority. Though TRBC would not be affiliated officially with the SBC until the 1990s, the church had enjoyed a reciprocally sympathetic relationship with

¹⁰⁵ “Forty Years of Service, 1933-1973: A Tribute to Our Beloved Teacher, Ruth Parker Jenkins,” Athens (Ga.) First Baptist Church special program, 1973, box 16, folder 15, Georgiana Ephemera Collection, Hargrett Library.

¹⁰⁶ Brenda Easterling, “Evelyn Snyder: ‘Ideal,’” *The Liberty Journal-Champion*, November 10, 1978, 8.

¹⁰⁷ “Forty Years of Service, 1933-1973.”

¹⁰⁸ Denise Kulp, “Inside Right-Wing Women’s Culture,” *Off Our Backs: A Woman’s News Journal*, May 31, 1985, 16.

the convention ever since Falwell founded it in 1956, and both church and convention agreed on most major doctrinal points, including the 1970s' evangelical hot button issue of biblical inerrancy.¹⁰⁹ In addition, Falwell was close friends with many SBC presidents, and he often made financial contributions to the convention.¹¹⁰

The Liberty Journal-Champion, a newspaper officially staffed and printed by Liberty Baptist College students but mailed to paid subscribers nationwide, ran regular features of women who served as exemplars of Christian womanhood in Falwell-associated institutions. Mrs. Emmitt Godsey, for example, was a woman whose chief priorities were “her family and the local church. She [was] a wife who [stood] by her husband, and who, with him, [stood] faithful in places of responsibility and Christian leadership.”¹¹¹ TRBC member Donna Hindson found “joy... in being a homemaker” and felt that “being a Christian wife and mother [was] a high calling.”¹¹² Seventy-four year old church counselor “Mama” Lind was praised for always having “a pleasant word for everyone” she met, and Amanda Horsley, who oversaw Elim Home for Alcoholics with her husband, was known as a “friend and ‘mother’ to many” who kept “a feminine touch on the home in addition to doing secretarial work for the ministry.”¹¹³

The most revered woman of all, however, within the Falwell network of ministries was the wife of Jerry Falwell himself, Macel. Though she remained out of the

¹⁰⁹ Wilmer C. Fields, “The Southern Baptists: Not Just Whistling Dixie!” *Saturday Evening Post*, April 1983, 74.

¹¹⁰ Mark E. Gaskins, “Cracks in the Wall? Changing Attitudes Toward the Separation of Church and State Among Southern Baptists,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 43, no. 3 (Summer/Fall 2008), 100.

¹¹¹ Brenda Easterling, “Family and Church are Priorities: Godseys: Faithful,” *The Liberty Journal-Champion*, June 9, 1978, 6.

¹¹² Wanda Watson, “Donna Hindson Uses Talents for Christian Service, Maintains Fulltime Job as Wife, Mother,” *The Liberty Journal-Champion*, April 6, 1979, 5.

¹¹³ James E. Moore, “Mama Lind: Counselor,” *The Liberty Journal-Champion*, April 6, 1979, 11; Brenda Easterling, “Mrs. Horsley: Mother Help,” *The Liberty Journal-Champion*, November 10, 1978, 4.

spotlight for the most part because of her own shyness, she nevertheless served as an exemplary role model of Christian womanhood to the women of the Falwell ministries. In his 1980 treatise on America's moral decay, Jerry Falwell praised his wife for being "proud to be called a housewife," and a story on Macel was the central feature of the 1978 Mother's Day edition of *The Liberty Journal-Champion*, which praised her for her balance between femininity and modesty:

Macel has the admiration of both men and women for the way she looks and the way she takes care of her husband and her family. Men are gentlemen around her because she commands respect. She never tries to be cute, flirty or too informal with people. She is friendly, yet direct. Jerry doesn't expect Macel to do men's work; Macel doesn't cut the grass, bring in wood for the fire or carry out the garbage... Macel keeps a home well suited for the Falwell family; that is a haven for her husband and children, that is a credit to the members of the church, both poor and wealthy, and that brings honor to the Lord.¹¹⁴

The purpose in profiling Macel Falwell and the myriad other women of Thomas Road Baptist Church and its affiliated ministries was to provide models of Christian womanhood to the readers of *The Liberty Journal-Champion*. By running articles and ads which celebrated the women who upheld the proper Christian ideals of femininity, the *Journal-Champion* – and, by extension, the Falwell ministries – provided what it saw as a much-needed counterbalance to media saturated with feminist representations of women in television shows such as *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. In addition, the article assignments themselves subtly communicated a belief in enforcing sex roles. While most (though not all) male-authored articles covered economics, particularly in support of free enterprise, or political developments, virtually all female-authored articles reported on

¹¹⁴ Jerry Falwell, *Listen, America!* (New York, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1980), 124; Elmer Towns, "The Woman Behind the Man: Macel Falwell: Wife, Mother, Counselor," *The Liberty Journal-Champion*, May 12, 1978, 9.

women's activities on campus or in the church. In this way, Falwell and his ministries neatly exemplified what was believed to be the needed steps to ensure the perpetuation of sex roles and God's divine order.

In addition to providing models for Christian womanhood, Falwell's ministries sought to give women first-hand experience in developing and cultivating their femininity. The Falwell-sponsored national annual evangelical mega-convention known as Super Conference offered at its 1978 meeting workshops specifically designed to reach women, such as "The Christian Mother," "The Christian Wife," and "Planning Ladies' Retreats."¹¹⁵ The women of the Ladies' Fellowship of TRBC were constantly "on standby" to "be of service to the church" through providing goods for bake sales, opening their homes to visitors, and preparing meals for families in need.¹¹⁶ At the 1979 TRBC Christian Women's Retreat, women took part in a workshop called "Parade of Pious Personalities," with characters such as "Sally Spiritual, Harriet Hurry, Joyce Judgement, Gertrude Grudge, Winnie Witness, Mary Martyr, Dori Deprocate [sic] and Debbie Depressed."¹¹⁷ These highly gendered messages were not exclusively broadcast to the adult women of the church; teenaged girls had their own versions of these hyper-feminine organizations and events. For example, TRBC regularly hosted "girls' nights," usually attended by forty to fifty high school-aged girls, featuring "practical courses in beauty, cake decorating, candy making and how to dress correctly."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ "Second Super Conference to Emphasize Ladies' Meeting," *The Liberty Journal-Champion*, September 15, 1978, 8.

¹¹⁶ "Mrs. Celeste Wemp, Ladies' Fellowship Active in Ministry of Thomas Road," *The Liberty Journal-Champion*, May 2, 1978, 8.

¹¹⁷ Wanda Watson, "Women's Retreat at Eagle Eyrie Encourages Wives, Mothers," *The Liberty Journal-Champion*, April 20, 1979, 5.

¹¹⁸ "Youth Aflame: Girls' Night," *The Liberty Journal-Champion*, May 12, 1978, 8.

Such events provided a way for women to define womanhood seemingly on their own terms. Though the strictly defined precepts advocated for in these workshops, classes, and groups were certainly products of both the patriarchal and religious culture in which they were created, the women who participated and spearheaded them believed that they were swimming against the tide of feminism and secular humanism, that these events constituted small acts of rebellion against a worldview which they believed to threaten their own. Indeed, some evangelical women used the cause of antifeminist Christian womanhood as a rallying cry. Majlis Parke, the president of the Women's Fellowship of the National Association of Evangelicals, channeled this animus into her appeal to her fellow Christian women:

We have listened too much to the secular world telling us what women are and what we should be; how we should act and how we should not act. It is time to put femininity and God-fearing womanhood back into the female image.¹¹⁹

Beyond their churches and communities, the SBC and its women had at their disposal an arsenal of new literature calling for the imposition of sex roles and, by extension, God's divine ordination of the place of man and woman in society and the family. Such literature, printed most often in the form of Christian self-help books and advertised in magazines like *Christianity Today* and reviewed in Baptist periodicals such as *Baptist Press*, was authored by both men and women, and many of these books, though not all, identified both sexes as their audience. The purpose here was to remind both men and women of their places in society – men in positions of leadership and women in positions of submission. Linda Dillow's *Creative Counterpart* sought to help

¹¹⁹ "ERA Extension 'A Pandora's Box,' Says Evangelical Women's Leader," *NAE News*, August 21, 1978, box 38, folder 17, NAE records, Wheaton College.

women make peace with their place in society by acknowledging that sex were indeed borne out of “arbitrary discriminations based on sex,” though “not *unjustly* arbitrary,” as “God set it up this way” because “He knows that this is the best arrangement.”¹²⁰ Beverly LaHaye, wife of pastor Tim LaHaye and founder of Concerned Women for America, agreed when she pointed to 1 Corinthians 11:3, which spoke on the subordination of woman to man in the model of the subordination of man to Christ: “Anything short of this kind of relationship among Christ, man, woman, and God is deficient in the divine order and plan for mankind.”¹²¹ Similarly, Godfrey Exel warned his male readers that America “may be heading for a matriarchal society unless we get back to fulfilling our husband-wife roles according to God’s plan – not our own.”¹²² James Dobson, founder of the parachurch organization Focus on the Family and prolific Christian self-help author who sold nearly three million books in five years, put it somewhat more apocalyptically: “Morality and immorality are not defined by man’s changing attitudes and social customs. They are determined by the God of the universe, whose timeless standards cannot be ignored with impunity!”¹²³ And Phyllis Schlafly, “sweetheart of the silent majority,” wrote poetically of God’s divine plan for men and women in her 1981 treatise on Christian womanhood:

It should not surprise us that God established such an orderly relationship for the family unit, because we can see His desire for order and interdependence in the amazingly intricate, organized, and balanced universe that He created. Who can fail to admire His genius and design in

¹²⁰ Linda Dillow, *Creative Counterpart* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1977), 122.

¹²¹ Beverly LaHaye, *I am a Woman by God’s Design* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1980), 43. 1 Corinthians 11:3 (KJV): “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.”

¹²² Godfrey W. Exel, *Live Happily with the Woman You Love* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1977), 47.

¹²³ Rodney Clapp, “Meet James Dobson, His Father’s Son,” *Christianity Today*, May 7, 1982, 14; James Dobson, *What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1975), 142.

the organization and balance evident in a delicate rosebud, in the design of a snowflake, in the minute details of an insect's eyes, and in the workings of the human body?¹²⁴

The availability of such literature – often printed in mass-market paperback form and advertised at low prices – meant that the diffusion of these ideas was not only possible but incredibly easily achievable. In addition, radio broadcasts such as the *Old Time Gospel Hour* and telecasts of church services and programs like Pat Robertson's *700 Club* – which were becoming so ubiquitous that the mainstream media dubbed the phenomenon the rise of the “electric church” – provided a way for instantaneous transmission of religious and cultural dictates into the homes of millions of Americans. Indeed, 14 million Americans viewed telecasts on newly-founded networks such as Jim Bakker's PTL and Pat Robertson's CBN every week, while 47 million tuned in to hear church radio broadcasts and Christian-themed programs such as James Dobson's *Focus on the Family*.¹²⁵ This level of accessibility and extent of reach provided ample opportunity for messages about sex roles and God's plan for society to be both transmitted and consumed – an opportunity which Christian media seized, using airtime to condemn everything from abortion to public schools to homosexuality.¹²⁶ In short, the world was immoral, and correcting its course toward a path of righteousness, which certainly included rejecting feminism and upholding Christian womanhood, was of the utmost importance, and this message was broadcast – literally – to millions of Americans every day, including Southern Baptists.

¹²⁴ Phyllis Schlafly, *The Power of the Christian Woman* (Cincinnati, OH: The Standard Publishing Company, 1981), 14.

¹²⁵ Richard A. Blake, “Catholic, Protestant, Electric,” *America*, March 15, 1980, 211.

¹²⁶ For a contemporaneous study on religious broadcasting and its impact on American Christians, see Sandra H. Dickinson, “Characterizing the Message of the Electric Church,” *Florida Communication Journal* 11, no. 1 (1983), 16-26.

More locally, Southern Baptist women experienced and embraced their religious mandate to exemplify Christian womanhood in the form of highly gendered church involvement. Beyond attending and leading workshops and classes, SBC women were important parts of their local churches, but for the most part, their involvement – as in most other mainline Protestant churches – reflected feminine values and often mirrored the labor they performed at home, a fact not lost on one *Christianity Today* commentator, who noted that “women’s work in the church,” which included overseeing church socials, cooking church suppers, and teaching Sunday School, was “nothing more than a strenuous extension of the same things they [did] at home.”¹²⁷

Women’s representation in the governing bodies of the SBC and on the staffs of their local churches followed this pattern – their only significant representation was in those bodies and positions whose duties were traditionally feminine. For example, in 1971, women on the church staff at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Toccoa, Georgia, held such positions as church secretary, WMU president, and church hostess.¹²⁸ Similarly, in 1977, five of the ten general officers of Blockhouse Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Georgia, were women, but their positions were Sunday School director, church training director, president of the Baptist women, choir director, and pianist, while a classified advertisement for a Baptist church secretary in Tallahassee, Florida, called for a “single lady in her thirties” who would be “sensitive to the needs of others” and “faithful to Christ and loyal to her pastor.”¹²⁹ On the national scale, too, women’s responsibilities

¹²⁷ Charles H. Beiger, “Women in the Church: More Than Mothers?” *Christianity Today*, March 19, 1982, 13.

¹²⁸ *Ebenezer Echoes* newsletter (Ebenezer Baptist Church, Toccoa, GA), vol. 3, no. 16, August 1971, box 15, folder 15, Georgiana Ephemera Collection, Hargrett Library.

¹²⁹ “Church Secretary Needed in Tallahassee, Florida,” *The Liberty Journal-Champion*, October 12, 1979, 11; Blockhouse Baptist Church (Jacksonville, Ga.) Centennial Program, October 23, 1977, box 9, folder 20, Georgiana Ephemera Collection, Hargrett Library.

were relegated to traditionally feminine activities. Of the twelve executive committees of the SBC, nine contained no women members, and the three that did were the Denominational Calendar Committee, the Home Mission Board, and the Foreign Mission Board, all of which entailed responsibilities which required their women to act as overseers of, but not participants in, Christian citizenship.

Still, some Baptist women had been able to venture into typically male-dominated areas of denominational life. In early 1974, women in Texas, Kentucky, Georgia, North Carolina, and Washington, DC, were ordained as deacons in Southern Baptist churches.¹³⁰ Though the number of women ordained in the SBC was small, it was still unsettling to some Baptists, particularly men. One Baptist layman named Robert Cate wrote, “Though women have had significant leadership in our churches over the years, these recent steps into a male dominated area have caused much anxiety, a lot of serious thought and prayer, and some antagonism and bitterness.”¹³¹

Even limited gains such as these were viewed as evidence of women’s liberation and required rhetorical pushback, and the SBC provided it in spades. In her submitted resolution at the 1973 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, Jessie Sappington proposed that Southern Baptists “reaffirm... the Christian woman’s recognition that ‘in Christ,’ she is free (liberated) indeed.”¹³² Similarly, Beverly LaHaye proclaimed that a woman’s “living in [her] spiritual relationship to God” was “the only [basis] for total freedom and liberation,” and that “if every Christian woman would do what God has

¹³⁰ “Woman Ordained, Approved for Chaplaincy Training,” *Baptist Press*, January 29, 1974, 3; “Texas Church Elects Three Women Deacons,” *Baptist Press*, February 18, 1974, 3; “Baptist Women Ordained in Kentucky, Georgia,” *Baptist Press*, March 11, 1974, 2; “Baptists Ordain Women in Ecumenical Service,” *Baptist Press*, April 1, 1974, 1-2.

¹³¹ Robert L. Cate, “One Observer’s Analysis: Shall We Have Women Deacons in Baptist Churches?” *Baptist Press*, April 9, 1974, 2.

¹³² Sappington, “Resolution #14,” 23.

designed her to do: expose the evils of darkness, since she is a salty influence for righteousness and truth, then woman can be free, indeed!”¹³³ And Kenneth Chafin, pastor of South Main Street Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, and a longtime executive official of the SBC, reminded the 4,500 member audience at the 1973 Woman’s Missionary Union annual meeting that “Christian women... are the only truly liberated women.”¹³⁴ These assertions could be affirmed doctrinally by SBC teachings; Southern Baptist Theological Seminary professor E. Glenn Hinson, for example, drew on Colossians and other Pauline writings to argue that “the truly liberated wife is the one who has voluntarily given herself over to her husband as to the Lord.”¹³⁵

Despite all the cultivation of Christian womanhood the women of the SBC had undertaken, evidence of changing sex roles still continued to mount. The SBC’s Christian citizens were faced with a major issue: how could they combat such a blatant violation of divine order? The problem was only compounded by the state’s apparent support of women’s liberation, with the Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973 and President Carter’s support for the Equal Rights Amendment. The men of the Southern Baptist Convention would be forced to reconsider their stance on political activism – after all, how better to fight the state to use it as a weapon?

¹³³ LaHaye, *I am a Woman by God’s Design*, 13, 154.

¹³⁴ “Christian Women are Truly Liberated, Baptists Told,” *Baptist Press*, June 11, 1973, 4.

¹³⁵ E. Glenn Hinson, “The Christian Household in Colossians,” *Review and Expositor* 70, no. 4 (Fall 1973), 497.

CHAPTER 4:

FUNDAMENTALISM AND SUBMISSION

In July 1961, Broadman Press, the official publishing auxiliary of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, printed 4,000 copies of *The Message of Genesis* by Ralph H. Elliott, a professor of the Old Testament at the Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City. The book was a commentary on the first book of the Bible, and while other biblical commentaries had come and gone for years without fanfare, Elliott's caused an immediate firestorm. Elliott argued in *The Message of Genesis* that the first eleven chapters of Genesis, which include the stories of Creation, Adam and Eve, the global flood, and the Tower of Babel, were symbol rather than literal representations of historical fact.¹³⁶ Conservatives in the SBC were outraged, with the pastor of Houston's First Baptist Church calling the book "poison" in an op-ed widely circulated in Baptist state newspapers.¹³⁷

Over the next year and a half, the controversy surrounding *The Message of Genesis* became the most high-profile issue, with an official press release ahead of the convention's 1962 meeting listing "allegations of liberal theology" as one of Southern Baptists' major concerns.¹³⁸ Indeed, at the meeting, the convention's resolutions committee unanimously approved a motion which called on Southern Baptists to

¹³⁶ Walter B. Shurden, *Not a Silent People: Controversies That Have Shaped Southern Baptists* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1995), 70.

¹³⁷ K. Owen White, "Death in the Pot," *Baptist Standard*, January 10, 1962, SBHLA, WCF, box 6, folder 6.

¹³⁸ Theo Sommerkamp, *Baptist Press*, June 2, 1962, 1.

“reaffirm their faith in the *entire* Bible as the authoritative, authentic, infallible Word of God,” with a special committee formed to pen an official confessional document on the convention’s stance on biblical interpretation.¹³⁹ Finally, in October 1962, the Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary dismissed Elliott from its faculty after he refused to approve Broadman’s decision to withhold the book from further publication, and just two months later, readers of the SBC’s wire service, *Baptist Press*, voted the Elliott controversy the number one news story of 1962 in the Southern Baptist Convention, beating out stories on school prayer and parochialism.¹⁴⁰

The controversy surrounding Ralph Elliott and *The Message of Genesis* marked a turning point for the Southern Baptist Convention. Over the next decade and a half, similar stories would pepper Southern Baptist press releases and state newspapers across the country. In 1970, for example, F. Eugene Garman was barred from returning to his home church in Zion, Illinois, because he circulated a list of eight reasons he did not believe that the Bible was infallible.¹⁴¹ Though the SBC had experienced waves of conservatism in previous decades, most notably in the 1920s, it entered its most long-lasting stretch of conservatism in the midcentury era, with 1962 given by many denominational historians as the year the trend began.¹⁴² Wracked with uncertainty over the future of Protestant Christianity’s survival in an ever-changing world, much of the SBC’s internal politics paralleled the development of the conservative movement in the

¹³⁹ James W. Merritt, ed., *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention Nineteen Hundred and Sixty-Two* (Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1962), 68. Italics in original.

¹⁴⁰ Jerry L. Faught II, “The Ralph Elliott Controversy: Competing Philosophies of Southern Baptist Seminary Education,” *Baptist History & Heritage* 34, no. 3 (Summer/Fall 1999), 22; “Elliott Dismissal No. 1 Story of 1962,” *Baptist Press*, December 13, 1962, 3.

¹⁴¹ “Church Ousts Member Who Says Bible is Not Infallible,” *Baptist Press*, February 5, 1970, 3.

¹⁴² Walter B. Shurden, “Problem of Authority in the Southern Baptist Convention,” *Review & Expositor: A Baptist Theological Journal* 75, no. 2 (Spring 1978), 219-234.

nation at large. The election of biblical fundamentalist Adrian Rogers to the SBC presidency in June 1979, for example, came in the same month that Jerry Falwell founded Moral Majority and Beverly LaHaye founded Concerned Women for America, and the next year, Ronald Reagan's election to the presidency would mark the political triumph of the Christian Right.¹⁴³

The election of Adrian Rogers, though not the first to put a biblical fundamentalist in the office of SBC president, marked a watershed event in several years' worth of struggle between conservatives and their more liberal and moderate counterparts. Debate over a convention-wide policy on biblical interpretation had come and gone in waves since nearly the beginning of the SBC's history, and many Southern Baptists who witnessed the major midcentury conservative push in the 1962 remembered well similar inerrancy controversies of the 1920s. As James Thompson and Barry Hankins have demonstrated, those earlier controversies were linked to broader uncertainties in American life brought on, for example, by the first Red Scare and debates over evolution.¹⁴⁴

These debates petered out over the next few decades as Christian denominations of all stripes experienced a dip in fervor and participation, but by 1962, with the Cold War in full force, the convention was once again embroiled in the inerrancy controversy. With television becoming more widely available, scenes of instability, especially from the racial violence and protests of the Civil Rights Movement (and, later, Vietnam), were

¹⁴³ Jonathan Merritt, "The Religious Right Turns 33: What Have We Learned?" *Atlantic*, June 8, 2012, last modified June 8, 2012, accessed November 23, 2014, <http://www.theatlantic.com/archive/2012/06/the-religious-right-turns-33-what-have-we-learned/258204>.

¹⁴⁴ James T. Thompson, Jr., *Tried as by Fire: Southern Baptists and the Religious Controversies of the 1920s* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1982); Barry Hankins, *God's Rascal: J. Frank Norris & the Beginnings of Southern Fundamentalism* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1999).

able to reach Americans' living rooms with a rapidity previously unimaginable. As Margaret Lamberts Bendroth has demonstrated extensively, this climate of uncertainty impelled evangelical Christians to identify divine truths which would provide a stabilizing, healing foundation for a culturally and morally ill world.¹⁴⁵ In 1962, conservatives revised the convention's confessional declaration, the Baptist Faith and Message, to advocate biblical fundamentalism, their version of those "divine truths" identified by Bendroth, in response to what they perceived as a rapidly changing world, and over the next decade and a half, visions of protests, crime, and immorality would drive conservatives in the SBC to push more urgently for stricter enforcement of that declaration. One messenger (delegate) to the convention's 1970 meeting, for example, motioned that all Southern Baptist seminaries "require of all their teachers to annually affirm their belief in the entire Bible as being the only infallible, inerrant, inspired Word of God, through a signed statement to this effect." The punishment for instructors who did not agree to such an affirmation or who "question[ed] the validity of this position" would be "considered having resigned," according to the proposal.¹⁴⁶

By the time of Adrian Rogers' election in 1979, the bad blood between conservatives and their moderate and liberal counterparts had only worsened. Just a year before Rogers' election, one moderate convention official privately accused the fundamentalist bloc of threatening the convention's stability, while another moderate pastor publicly condemned fundamentalists for attempting to "control the mind and shape

¹⁴⁵ Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism & Gender, 1875 to the Present* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 105-27.

¹⁴⁶ Glennon Culwell, "Motion Number 27," *Baptist Press*, June 2, 1970, 24.

of politics at every level” in the months following the election.¹⁴⁷ Fundamentalists had been lobbing similar charges at moderates for years, claiming, in the words of one conservative pastor, that “Bible doubting liberals” would “destroy much of the effectiveness” of the SBC, and former convention president W.A. Criswell had once called moderates and liberals “termites” who were “gnawing at [the SBC’s] fundamentalist foundations.”¹⁴⁸

Key to the fundamentalist movement was the place of men and women within God’s divine order, and the most direct way to ensure adherence to that order was through the doctrine of submission. Southern Baptists were explicit in expressing this. At the Mid-Continent Christian Women’s Concerns Conference in 1980, evangelist Barbara Taylor defined submission for the 4,000 women present: “For a woman, biblical submission is to discover and yield to her position in God’s divine order.” This divine order, Taylor said, was dependent on sex roles. “God gave each of us roles. Man is submitted to God and woman is submitted to man. American needs this kind of order.”¹⁴⁹

Why would women support the doctrine of submission? In the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, a wave of ethnographic and sociological works explored this question, beginning with Nancy T. Ammerman’s *Bible Believers*, released in 1987. Ammerman, a sociologist of religion at Emory University’s Candler School of Theology at the time of the book’s publication, conducted ethnographic research through participant observation and by performing interviews at Southside Gospel Church (a

¹⁴⁷ Charles H. Ashcraft to W.C. Fields, March 15, 1978; Warren Carr, “On Politicized Christianity’s False Prophets” (sermon, Wake Forest Baptist Church, Wake Forest, NC, November 4, 1979). Both in SBHLA, WCF, box 6, folder 6.

¹⁴⁸ Special Report of Concerned Georgia Baptists, July 1975, SBHLA, WCF, box 6, folder 6; “Bickering Baptists,” *Time*, June 15, 1970, 58.

¹⁴⁹ Roy Jennings, “Biblical Submission Explained to Women,” *Baptist Press*, May 20, 1980, 3.

pseudonym) in Connecticut from June 1979 to May 1980.¹⁵⁰ Southside, which promoted itself as “Independent, Fundamental, Premillennial, and Baptist,” belonged to a theological strain which Ammerman identified as Fundamentalism, the formal affiliation of conservative dogma such as that outlined by *The Fundamentals* (1910-1915).¹⁵¹ For Ammerman, Southside served as a conduit through which broader fundamentalist trends might be understood. In particular, she used Southside to situate fundamentalists within the “modern world,” positioning the congregation as a separatist church who rejected modernism and thereby engaging in what Axel R. Schafer would call the perpetuation of the “backlash theory” more than twenty-five years later.

Though *Bible Believers* is not exclusively a study of fundamentalist women, it does provide insight into the gendered configurations of fundamentalist congregations, particularly in chapter eight, “Husbands and Wives.” Southside’s members believed in a form of domesticity undergirded by the authority of a Christian man and the submission of his Christian wife.¹⁵² Ammerman asserted that Southside women who submitted in their marriages “embrace[d] both the rewards and the limitations of their role” in doing so.¹⁵³ Ammerman based this assertion on women such as “Janet,” who learned to submit to her husband after a divorce seemed imminent because their marriage had attempted to accommodate two independent personalities; once one party – her husband – was allowed authority, Janet claimed, the issues in their marriage stopped.¹⁵⁴ Later publications by other sociologists, including R. Marie Griffith (1997) and Brenda Brasher (1998), would

¹⁵⁰ Nancy T. Ammerman, *Bible Believers: Fundamentalists in the Modern World* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 10.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 136-40.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 142.

follow this thread of argumentation: when women experience some form of benefit from their situation, no matter how repressive or oppressive it may seem, that situation has the potential to be empowering.

in 1997, R. Marie Griffith published *God's Daughters*, an ethnographic study of Women's Aglow Fellowship, first organized in 1967, and, at the time of publication, the "largest interdenominational women's evangelical organization in the world," with fellowships in more than 120 countries.¹⁵⁵ Griffith was especially concerned with the process by which Aglow women experienced "healing," or the physical release of their pain and guilt, often caused by domestic problems or abuse suffered as children. This healing act was achieved through "victory and transformation" in Christ and served two purposes: first, to relieve oneself of emotional pain, and second, to build bonds of intimacy with fellow women who were undergoing the same experience. Indeed, Griffith showed, many of the healing transformations occurred for Aglow women in public settings, small groups comprised of other women whose relationships mirrored the familial relationship of a happy, comforting home.¹⁵⁶

In addition, Griffith argued that, somewhat paradoxically, through "willing and joyous submission," the women of Aglow were able to achieve a modicum of power in their lives. Griffith explained this line of thought by asserting that submission "provide[d] women a strategy for getting what they want[ed]," which was often a desire to evoke in their husbands a more gentle nature, especially among those women who had experienced previous abuse. "In this sense," Griffith argued, "submission may tactically

¹⁵⁵ R. Marie Griffith, *God's Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1997), 27.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 110-20.

help the relatively powerless recover their power and create a space within which they can feel both fulfilled and free.”¹⁵⁷ Thus Griffith found in the process of submission a means by which the women of Aglow could achieve a form of empowerment.

The next year, in 1998, Brenda Brasher published *Godly Women*, which complemented Griffith’s *God’s Daughters* so neatly that the two formed a virtual diptych. Brasher argued that there exists a “paradox” in the world of fundamentalist women, “that fundamentalist women could be powerful people in a religious cosmos generally conceded to be organized around their disempowerment,” and that she sought “to discover the extent to which this paradox actually exists.” Brasher concluded that the conditions of that paradox do, indeed, exist, that the “restrictive religious identity [fundamentalist women] embrace improves their ability to direct the course of their lives and empowers them in their relationships with others.”¹⁵⁸ Like Griffith, Brasher took an ethnographic approach to the study of women fundamentalists, conducting research as a participant observer at two fundamentalist congregations in southern California which she referred to as Mount Olive and Bay Chapel, both of which had sizeable, active women’s ministry programs.¹⁵⁹

Brasher argued that the congregational women’s programs at Mount Olive and Bay Chapel “create[d] and sustain[ed] a special symbolic world, parallel to the general one but empowering to fundamentalist women.”¹⁶⁰ Brasher supported this claim by identifying women’s ministries as havens within a male-dominated structure wherein

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 186.

¹⁵⁸ Brenda Brasher, *Godly Women: Fundamentalism and Female Power* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 3-4.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

women were able to “become skilled at developing spiritual resources” for themselves and fellow women within their churches while at the same time strengthening female relationships. Such involvement in organizations created especially for women, Brasher argued, empowered the women of Mount Olive and Bay Chapel because they were provided with a space in which *only* women could act as leaders, teachers, and policy shapers.¹⁶¹

In 2003, Julie Ingersoll published *Evangelical Christian Women*, an immensely important intervention in the sociology of conservative evangelical women. Ingersoll refuted what she saw as a move toward labeling conservative evangelical women’s gendered experiences – particularly those involving submission – as “empowering,” arguing instead that the politics of gender conflicts within evangelicalism harmed women.¹⁶² Ingersoll took aim in particular at Griffith and Brasher, claiming that Griffith gave “no voice to the women who have chafed under patriarchy” and that Brasher took at face value women’s stories about their lives without considering “the alternative voices.”¹⁶³ This was not necessarily a new argument; in her review of *God’s Daughters*, for example, Elaine Lawless said that Griffith did not demonstrate sufficiently that the “empowerment” women gained in Aglow translated to power outside the organization, asserting that the views of submission advocated for by Aglow instead merely upheld the status quo.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, Margaret Bendroth had demonstrated in her 1993 history of women in fundamentalist congregations that, though women may have been given some

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁶² Ingersoll, 3.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 5, 7.

¹⁶⁴ Elaine J. Lawless, “Review of *God’s Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission* and *Godly Women: Fundamentalism and Female Power*,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 67, no. 4 (December 1999), 895.

authority in their churches, the power to make decisions and influence policy still lay in the hands of men.¹⁶⁵ The underlying theme behind these assertions is that women who partake in women's fellowships or who gain some benefit from submission are not, in fact, empowered, because their roles are still determined by a structure which relegates them to the status of subordinate. To put it more simply, if the entire congregation addressed the needs of both men and women sufficiently, there would be no need for women's ministries.

To challenge the claims made by scholars like Griffith and Brasher, who sketched sympathetic images of submissive fundamentalist women, Ingersoll conducted ethnographic and archival research to bring to the fore the voices of women who had found themselves squarely in the crosshairs of religious clashes over gender.¹⁶⁶ As Nancy Ammerman had demonstrated earlier, conflict over gender did not necessarily represent conflict over only women's issues.¹⁶⁷ Yet Ingersoll elaborated on this point where Ammerman did not by showing that "gender battles" made cultural casualties out of evangelical women, who often felt unsupported and unappreciated in their roles because of the way in which they created subordinates out of women.¹⁶⁸ In this way, Ingersoll was able to make an important contribution to scholarship on the role of women in evangelical settings, providing an alternative appraisal of what other scholars had classified as "empowering."

¹⁶⁵ Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender, 1875 to the Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 27.

¹⁶⁶ Ingersoll, 8.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

I include this lengthy literature review because it is important to understand the stakes when it comes to submission. On the one hand, in the view of Griffith and Brasher, submission can be seen as empowering women, especially those who find aspects of submission to be comforting. On the other hand, in the view of Ingersoll, any empowerment women may feel in embracing submission must be understood in its limited capacity. Because women are excluded from church leadership roles, for example, they do not hold meaningful power outside the realms of “women’s work” or women’s Bible study. This mirrors the alienation experienced by women under liberalism. In that case, women are excluded from citizenship because of the laws of nature; in this case, they are excluded from Christian citizenship, from making decisions concerning their own place in the church.

The same model which subordinated women granted males in the SBC authority. This authority allowed them to align with the Christian Right in order to combat violations against divine order – namely, women’s liberation. In the same way, the liberal precepts of Christian citizenship had established men as the only rightful inheritors of authority under God. In terms of the Christian Right and its relationship with the state, this has meant that female alienation under classical liberalism has been reiterated, but now it is divinely ordained, a hard argument to counter. Future scholars might consider what role race or sexual orientation has played in this process, how the Christian Right has reproduced white supremacy or heteronormativity in ways similar to its reproduction of patriarchy under submission. Certainly there is a wealth of work to be done on these questions, and the subject will remain compelling for as long as Southern Baptists and other evangelicals are aligned with the Christian Right.

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