THE CORE BELIEFS OF SOUTHERN EVANGELICALS:

A PSYCHO-SOCIAL INVESTIGATION OF THE

EVANGELICAL MEGACHURCH PHENOMENON

By

Jennifer Eaton Dyer

Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Graduate School of Vanderbilt University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Religion

May, 2007

Nashville, Tennessee

Approved:

Professor Lewis V. Baldwin

Professor David Carlton

Professor Volney P. Gay

For my loving husband, John
and my patient, supportive parents, Mark and Debbie Eaton

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On the eve of finalizing this dissertation in the winter of 2007, there are many to whom I am truly grateful for their support, aid, and guidance through my academic career. Special thanks to my dissertation committee: Lewis Baldwin, David Carlton, and Volney Gay for their instruction, advice, and the shaping of my work at Vanderbilt University. Many thanks also to Professors Penny Long Marler and W. T. Edwards whose classes and conversations at Samford University started me on this journey.

I am also indebted to the DATA Foundation staff for their support of my academic work as well. Thank you for offering me the opportunity to *do* the work of religion: to care for the least of these.

I am especially grateful for my wonderful family and friends. Thanks to my dear husband, John, for continuing to live with me after comprehensive exams and encouraging me in my dissertation writing and loving me still; to my parents, whose support is immeasurable; to my extended family, including my grandparents, for their encouragement; and to my closest friends, for listening.

Thanks to all for your inspiration.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

"Then feel all like one family party, same in the theatre, all in the same swim.
They do.
I'm sure of that.
Not so lonely.
In our confraternity…Blind faith.
Same in the arms of kingdom come.
Lulls all pain.
Wake this time next year."

<div align="right">--James Joyce, Ulysses</div>

INTRODUCTION

Life experience does not make one an expert in any subject. Yet, the experience itself alongside reflection and analysis—a process of learning, retrospect, distancing, watching, and embracing once again—does offer helpful tools in the writing and investigating of a subject. I say this to open with a bit of autobiographical material of my experience with Evangelicalism in the South. This experience, filled with remembrances of community and moments of joy, laced with guilt and shame, conjure images and memories of church worlds in the different stages of life thus far. However good or bad, this influences my writing.

Granddaddy Eaton was a Church of Christ preacher. His education at David Lipscomb University and his life career networking the structure of the Churches of Christ throughout the Southeast instigated a journey of faith for my father and thusly my family. These travels, for me, began in an affluent Church of Christ in Middle Tennessee. Needing a dramatic shift away from the rigor and legalism of the Church of Christ, my parents left the denomination to embrace a new church, one out of an upstart charismatic movement in the mid-eighties. This brought forth fresh, unruly religious experiences among a community who lacked leadership but together sought something new.

Since that time, I have left this community of faith to sample the different flavors of the subculture of Evangelicalism in the South for periods of months and years. These have included summer camps in Southwestern Kentucky led by a former ex-NBA player and evangelical speaker, Bob Warren; the conservative teachings of Christianity at an affluent private high school in the suburbs of Nashville; retreats on sexuality of teen

Christians from an Evangelical perspective; the chapels at universities in South Carolina and Alabama; and the worship services of Baptist churches, Southern Baptist churches, Presbyterian Church of America churches, and Bible churches. Employment at a prominent Christian publishing company, working closely with leaders in the Christian music industry, and private discussions with some of the country's most influential pastors and writers have been unique experiences in the past few years which have also influenced and re-shaped my understanding of Evangelicals. Almost all of these experiences have been in the South. This experience does provide a unique background from which I write this dissertation.

Most recently, I spent almost a year, starting the first half of this dissertation, living in the great Southwest, Albuquerque, New Mexico. As we drove along I-40 from Nashville through various states to arrive on western side of the Sandia Mountains, I was reminded of the same journey by Walker Percy's twenty-five year old protagonist, Will Barrett, in *The Last Gentleman*. Just as Will Barrett's vision cleared as he moved outside the humidity of the South into the arid climate of the Southwest, I hoped my mind had followed a similar route. While I did finish the dissertation back in Tennessee, the brief stint of writing away provided a nice kind of clarity and objectivity afforded by the respite from Southern culture. On the drive back, the South welcomed me once again--shortly within its borders--with a religious tract in the attempt to save my soul, placed, where else, but in a bathroom stall at a rest stop.

<center>**********</center>

Since the end of World War II, there has been a slow and steady rise in the membership of conservative churches, namely Evangelical types. Conversely, there has

been a slow, yet steady decline in mainline churches. Though this phenomenon has moved at the rate of a glacier, it has taken some notice from sociologists of religion. My fascination with this trend serves as a catalyst for this dissertation. I will ask the question as to why moderate Evangelicals are attending the megachurch? And why are these churches growing?

Although, the primary questions include the following: What do Evangelicals believe? Is there a basic worldview or a system of core beliefs that might unite Evangelicals, however variegated in the colorful quilt of denominations across class, race, and political stripe? The effort of this dissertation is to discern these core beliefs as a foundation for the evangelical sector of Christianity.

With the rough and tumble rise of Evangelicalism in the South amidst the formative centuries of the United States, there was an uncanny growth of this "born-again" religion in the "wild-west" Southern states. The usual triumvirate of denominations, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist, come to mind. With these beginnings, there was a nesting of Evangelicals in the South, a greater number statistically than any other region in the United States. Again, the goal is not to ask why there is a higher concentration of Evangelicals in the South, but if there is something, if anything, particular to being from the South that finds a harmonizing worldview in embracing beliefs of Evangelicalism.

The past thirty years, more specifically, has catapulted the churches under the banner of Evangelicalism from their quiet sidelines to the limelight. Evangelicals have taken the stage politically and commercially. The advent of Billy Graham's Crusades, the New Christian Right, the Moral Majority, James Dobson's ministries aligned with the

rise of the Christian marketplace (publishing, music, radio, education) has created a different, more powerful space for Evangelicals in the United States and the world today. This dissertation focuses on this paramount moment for Southern Evangelicals, from the inauguration of President Clinton in 1992 until President George W. Bush's continued presidency through 2006. Though no Evangelicals are interviewed, I will use sources caricaturing Evangelicals from biographies, autobiographical material, literature, films, music, and website materials of megachurches. Because evangelical denominations vary from the Church of Christ to the Church of God in Christ, I focus only upon those individuals and churches among suburban megachurches in the South for investigation.

This being said, I cannot talk about the Evangelical church today without accounting for megachurch leaders such as Bishop Charles E. Blake in West Angeles or Rick Warren in Lake Forest, California. Nor I can fail to mention the influence of Bill Hybels and the Willow Creek Association of South Barrington, Illinois, or the hub of churches and ministries nestled in Colorado Springs, Colorado. However, I will argue that the South is the stronghold for Evangelicalism, and its influence has spread across regions in the United States—even to Hawaii. Much like Starbucks or Blockbuster, it seems no metropolitan area now lacks a larger, non-denominational, Evangelical church, from Albuquerque to New York City. Perhaps this is the religious aspect of the continued process of Egerton's "Southernization of America."

This dissertation begins with the assumption that Evangelicals, born-again Christians, differ by degree but not kind, with Fundamentalists. As noted, Evangelicalism is a canopy under which a panoply of faith communities, including non-denominational, Pentecostalism, Holiness, Charismatic, and Fundamentalist, exists. To date, the studies of

Southern Religion have yet to produce a work with psychological analysis as its primary methodology. Using theories both from psychology of religion and sociology of religion, this dissertation will elucidate thought worlds of Southern Evangelicals that manifest themselves in language, affect, and action. Put generally, the first part of this dissertation concerns itself with a current portraiture of evangelical and Southern culture and their interplay, and the latter part of the dissertation serves as a psycho-social investigation of the former. Because this dissertation rests upon the cognitive theory that there is a correlation between behavior and core beliefs, it might seem an easier read from the last chapter to the first. In the effort, however, to demonstrate the connection between the "macro" evangelical subculture to the "micro" evangelical individual, and his/her unconscious core beliefs, it is necessary to move through the dissertation from the level of culture to the worldview of the individual.

Exploring the internal worldviews and core beliefs of Southern Evangelicals in megachurches is essential to understanding the behavior of Evangelicals as a whole, particularly religiously and politically. This investigation will be a contribution to the studies of Evangelicalism. In the tradition of a "hermeneutic of suspicion," I take a predominantly atheistic approach to this work, assuming that God and the God-image are constructions. Removing the possibility of the variable of something Other, a transcendent or immanent Supreme Being, assuming that the Divine is a psychological or sociological product, allows for a particularly human based analysis. Sociological models from Max Weber, rational choice theory, Victor Turner, and Erving Goffman provide unique insights in understanding the center of evangelical subculture, the experience of the worship service. Psychological models from object-relations theory, psychoanalytic

developmental theory, and cognitive theory will provide certain aspects by which to better understand the worldviews of Southern Evangelicals. Each model will provide tools by which to elicit core beliefs.

The first chapter opens with a broad-sweeping description of Evangelicals. To understand Evangelicals in the South at the turn of the twenty-first century, it is helpful to trace themes of Evangelicalism from the revivals on the Southwestern frontier in the nineteenth century. The cyclical patterns of spiritual renewal, emotional and "rational"[1] revivals, and doctrinal reform spin through the centuries despite the eras. These patterns are helpful in situating and understanding Evangelicals today. Also, I juxtapose Evangelicals to Fundamentalists in the attempt to differentiate the two, showing both their similarities and their differences. Generally, Evangelicals lack the militancy and separatist spirit of Fundamentalists, though many beliefs and lifestyles are indeed shared. Finally, I immerse the reader in the rising subculture of Evangelicalism in its commerce, education, music, books, and politics. It is a culture providing a lifestyle for its adherents, complete with leisure, celebrities, employment, teaching, and activities. Evangelicalism has become a lifestyle providing a kind of enclave and status for its members. This portraiture of the subculture demonstrates the manifest behavior and the products of that behavior as well as its increasing presence in the marketplace, political arenas, and global initiatives. The evangelical subculture is flanked by the capitalistic market of the western world on one side and Southern culture on the other. With the depiction of this life world, the question of core beliefs can be better investigated given this material. Thus, the first

---

[1] In using the word "rational" to describe surges of interest in fervent seeking of "reason or logic," I mean it in a unique sense. What I call "rational revivals" were those periods of growth in academic interest, however, that growth was sought only to support the already present religious beliefs. That is, "facts" were sought not to refute beliefs but only to support them.

chapter answers the question of how the core beliefs of Evangelicals are made manifest in religious, economic, political, and social life.

Chapter two reviews the descriptive work of chapter one, describing the pied face of Evangelicalism today, by examining it through a Southern lens. Given the rich heritage of Evangelicalism in the Southern part of the United States, I explore the elusive work of describing and defining "the South" and how themes of Southern culture and themes of Evangelicalism have influenced one another, braiding their cultures amidst growth and change, in myth, perception, and reality. The first hurdle is the attempt to understand and describe Southern culture in its origins, continuity (or lack thereof), and its complexity (in class, race, status, and European and African influences). I establish a kind of regionalism as a model to begin the discussion of Southern religion. Then, in fleshing out Southern civil religions and their overarching influences on Evangelicalism, I examine both the works of C.R.Wilson and Andrew Manis contrasting the "religion of the lost cause" attributed to Whites and inherited by Southern Baptists to the prophetic religion of the Civil Rights movement attributed to Blacks and inherited by the National Baptist churches. These civil religions are important in the untangling of the dynamics of race and religion in Southern culture. Finally, I contrast Southern Evangelicalism to the religious practices of Jewish communities in the South to get at that which is different about the evangelical subculture in the region today. The history of Evangelicalism in the South is like a concert including movements from Bartok to Schumann to Bach. Its history is rich, yet harsh-- sometimes terrifying, sometimes melodically smooth, and sometimes experienced as a two- or three-part invention. It is interrupted with shameful moments of crisis, despair, and abuse. Without the lens of Southern culture by which to

interpret Evangelicalism, one might miss the depth of its complexity or the fullness of its flavor.

With the tracing of the threads and themes and interplay of influence between Southern civil religion and American civil religion, alongside the "messiness" of intertwining of Southern history, culture, and Evangelicalism, the background for chapter three is set. Chapters one and two unfold to allow the reader to place appropriately the megachurch within a particular historical and cultural context in order to better understand its rise at the turn of the twenty-first century. In this chapter, I first approach the understanding of the growth in membership and attendance of the evangelical megachurch from a Weberian perspective. Using Weber's foundational theory of understanding the megachurch as undergoing a cycle of rationalization and religious fervor concomitant with Stark and Bainbridge's typology of the church as moving from a more formal religion to a splitting unto a sect-like religion, I trace the origins of the megachurch. While adhering to basic theological premises of an evangelical church, the adherents have a sense of continuity from their traditional Christian experience in a denominational church while enjoying the creative play of the liminal space in this new community of believers. Inside the walls of the church, the evangelical megachurch has changed the performance of the worship, dress, and atmosphere, attracting middle class Baby Boomers by the thousands. Turning to the theories of Wade Clark Roof, Erving Goffman, and Victor Turner, I demonstrate that the megachurch today can best be observed not as a marketplace, as do most rational choice theorists, but as a theatre. This model provides a framework for the latter three chapters by which to understand the linkage between behavior and belief, from performance to script.

Shifting from a sociological perspective of the evangelical megachurch to the psychology of the Evangelical, I move from the macro-community as theatre to the micro-individual as character. I spend the final three chapters of the dissertation from a psychological perspective utilizing different approaches to understanding the narrative, pathogenic beliefs, and core beliefs of Southern Evangelicals. In chapter four, however, I employ object relations theory as an approach by which to unfold the personal myth of Evangelicals. Given the language of splitting and projective identification, I attempt to link the Southern cultural myth with that of the personal myth: both share the same foundation. With this foundation, for myth as a premise for object relations theory, I explore the work of Donald W. Winnicott and Heinz Kohut. Their theories of object relations and the self elucidate religion and transitional phenomenon as well as the religion of the self for Southern Evangelicals in the megachurch. The development of interpersonal relationships and the images of the divine coalesce in these theories, explaining how Evangelicals wrestle with the complexity of this playing and reality, true and false selves, and mature forms of narcissism, to name a few. Evangelicalism, in the end, does not suffice as a setting for cure. As a good example of a Southern Evangelical personal myth, I draw upon the writings and autobiography of Franklin Graham to flesh out patterns of external, interpersonal, and intrapsychic conflicts in the attempt to enter the internal world of a Southern Evangelical.

Given the attempt to enter the arena of the mind, chapter five sets out to define and describe the unconscious beliefs that undergird the personal myth. Using a psychoanalytic developmental approach, I investigate the unconscious guilt and unconscious pathogenic beliefs which seem to serve as a catalyst for language, affect, and

behavior. Because God is so heavily, and literally, named as "Father" for Evangelicals, I explore how the influence of that metaphor shapes their experience of the world. I explore the disjuncture between the rhetoric of "benevolence" and the interpretation of "wrath" in the Evangelical's worldview and particular processing of theodicy. There is much contradiction which must be "force-fit," like bad puzzle pieces, for the worldview to achieve a real coherency. This work elicits language and emotions of guilt and pathogenic beliefs. With film, testimonies, confessional writings, website materials, and other Evangelical "self-help" writings, I demonstrate that there is much evidence and implicit recognition of pathogenic beliefs in the lives of Evangelicals. Conversely, I do not find much evidence for positive beliefs. Though there is a growing shift among Evangelicals, albeit socially and politically, the newfound interests seem to be a response to secular influence, not religious. Moreover, along these same lines, I argue that the work of myth and ritual, or "self-help" in the evangelical church to bring about "healing" for suffering individuals cannot ultimately provide a "cure" due to its inherent reliance upon faith and the God-parent. Lastly, I use the theory of faith development to better frame Evangelicals in the megachurch: between two stages of faith, Mythic-Literal and Synthetic Conventional. These categories may help describe the interface of ego, culture, society, and faith for Evangelicals as well as provide a kind of "predictor" for where their beliefs and practices may be heading.

In the final chapter, I address the driving question for the dissertation: Are there core beliefs which undergird evangelical beliefs, and if so, what are they? The language and categories of cognitive theory best address this question even above both object-relations theory and psychoanalytic developmental theory. Cognitive theory, developed

to meet the needs of those suffering from anxiety or depression, assumes the connection between behavior and belief. Language offers a window into the mind by providing materials describing thought and affect for investigation. Evangelical pastors and authors have written copious amounts of "self-help"-like books in the past decade addressing specifically issues of anxiety, guilt, shame, fear, doubt, and depression. I turn to those writers, including their own personal testimonies, to demonstrate thoughts and affects that are recognized and assumed within the evangelical community. The evidence of language (within the writings) reveals common patterns of negative automatic thinking. And because thought and affect are reciprocal in influencing the other, I point to some specific ways of thinking that result in some kinds of manifest behavior while at the same time pointing to particular unconscious beliefs. Between automatic thinking and core beliefs lie intermediate conditional beliefs. These beliefs provide attitudes, rules, and assumptions which support the rationale of automatic thinking. They are also undergirded by the most fundamental of beliefs: core beliefs. In juxtaposing this theory with the evangelical worldview, I find that Evangelicals struggle with both feelings and core beliefs of helplessness and unloveability. This is indicative in their interpretation of Scripture, their doctrinal codes, their metaphors of God, and the current bestselling books within the evangelical subculture. These unconscious core beliefs then serve as the catalyst for myth, ritual, practices, and consumption of Evangelicals in the megachurch today. These core beliefs also serve as a possible common denominator, uniting Evangelicals across a spectrum of class, color, and denomination, given shared fundamental religious beliefs about human nature, salvation, sin, and the trinity.

After the peaking of the New Christian Right movement in the 1980's, there was a new kind of Evangelicalism emerging. This new movement, from roughly 1992 to 2005, had different concerns, issues, and language than that of the Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell era. These new Evangelicals, aptly named moderate Evangelicals, retreated, albeit lightly, from the intensity of the culture wars to re-focus upon the self. An abundance of "self-help" Christian books have sold by the millions, addressing issues of those in the pews: anxiety and narcissism. This dissertation is an investigation of the most foundational level of psychological beliefs, undergirding both Southern and religious doctrinal beliefs, to discern a possible catalyst for the uncanny rise of the evangelical subculture. Cognitive theory's language of core beliefs, namely helplessness and unloveability, best describes the beliefs which shape the worldview, actions, and behaviors of Evangelicals in the megachurch today.

CHAPTER I

THE EVANGELICAL PHENOMENON:
THE HISTORY, THEMES, AND SUBCULTURE

Introduction

Since the first century, evangelical Christians have sought spiritual renewal,

emotional or rational revival, and doctrinal reform. In this chapter, I will briefly review

the history of southern Evangelicalism. In doing so, I hope to uncover the common

threads that connect this movement from the nineteenth century South up to the twenty-

first century. Secondly, I comment on the similarities and differences of Evangelicals and

Fundamentalists, especially since the Civil War. This is important for distinguishing

Evangelicals throughout the dissertation. I note the several ways to define, count, and

understand Evangelicals, in all their categories. To better understand Evangelicals *today*,

I describe their current subculture, especially in its interface with commerce, to describe

the publishing, music, radio, and broadcasting industries, private education, and

parachurch conferences and organizations. This description of the "parachurch" offers a

lens into the evangelical subculture in which they live, move, and have their being.

Finally, given that this dissertation will specifically focus upon the Clinton and "Bush

43" years, I examine the political and socio-cultural contexts for the evangelical

landscape, especially from 1992-2006, to highlight the change in evangelical leadership,

concerns of political issues, and increased interest in culture, in order to track the

morphing face of Evangelicalism in America today .

Awakenings and Revivals in the United States

William G. McCloughlin, a historian of religion, defines an awakening as a social process, a revitalization of culture: "a period of fundamental social and intellectual reorientation of the American belief-value system, behavior patterns, and institutional structure." [2] He then describes five religious-cultural awakenings in the United States: The Puritan awakening, The First Great Awakening (1730-1760), The Second Great Awakening (1800-1830), The Third Great Awakening (1890-1920), and The Fourth Great Awakening (1960-?). He argues that each awakening begins in a time of conflict and stress, yet each emerges to bear influence for social reform.

From 1720-1760, there were regional uprisings of churches and communities who were experiencing revival. For example, Jonathan Edwards' church of over 200 families was "awakened" to his emotional preaching of grace, faith, affection, and righteousness. Perhaps his most famous sermon was "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," in which he delineates the depravity of humankind and the wrath of a divine power.[3] Although, it should be said that most of his sermons, in general, recognized the teachings of love and peace of Jesus Christ. The church and the town responded with a flood of conversions, dedicating their lives to the gospel of Jesus. The theological tradition of Edwards' Calvinistic doctrines are still dominant themes, particularly regarding theological anthropology, for many Evangelicals today.

In Britain, George Whitefield practiced his oratory skills in London and Bristol with outstanding response. With charisma and charm, Whitefield led a revival bringing about hundreds of new conversions. Having studied with the Wesley brothers at Oxford,

---

[2] William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1978) 10.
[3] Harold P. Simonson, ed., *Selected Writings of Jonathan Edwards* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1992).

he invited John Wesley to join him in Bristol in the revival. At the same time, the

Wesley's urged Whitefield to travel to Georgia, describing the intense need for the gospel

in the Southern colonies. Though they were met with resistance from the Native

Americans, the colonists, and the slaves, Whitefield was able to connect a bit better with

the community in and around Savannah. Mark Noll, an historian of evangelicalism, notes

the following:

> To Whitefield, formal doctrine was mostly irrelevant, but not the lived experience
> of God's grace in Christ. […] In the pulpit he simply exuded energy; his speech
> was to the highest degree dramatic; he offered breathtaking impersonations of
> biblical characters and needy sinners; he fired his listener's imagination; he wept
> profusely, often and with stunning effect.[4]

By 1740, the Great Awakening was escalating rapidly as the Wesley's worked

with the Moravians in London and across Britain and George Whitefield traveled up and

down the coast of North America offering a spiritual renewal to crowds, at times, of over

15,000 people. By 1744, the Wesleys convened the first annual conference for

Methodism, consolidating a movement to become a denomination.

Edwin Gaustad, in his *A Religious History of America* (1980)*,* describes the Great

Awakening of the 1740s in Virginia: "Evangelical religion rode that wave into the

hinterlands of Virginia, sweeping across the land with such force that it could be neither

ejected nor defeated. Indeed by the end of that century the Evangelicals had totally

transformed the society no less than the religion of colonial Virginia."[5] Not only in

Virginia, but also in the Carolinas and Georgia did religious dissent arise among the

settlers. During the back country expansion, people migrated from Pennsylvania and the

tidewater region to spill into the Carolina piedmont with their various languages,

---

[4] Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys* (Downers
Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2003), 88-89.
[5] Edward Gaustad, *A Religious History of America* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1990), 46.

ethnicities, and enmities. Germans settled near Winston-Salem, North Carolina practicing Reformed, Lutheran, and Moravian Christianity; the Scotch-Irish, though generally irreligious, tended to practice Presbyterianism; and, the Baptists brought a kind of Evangelicalism.

More specifically, concerning the South from the eighteenth century forward, Evangelicalism grew, albeit slowly. Don Mathews in his classic work, *Religion in the Old South* (1977), outlines the social, religious, and historical processes to uncover "how and why Evangelicalism became the predominant mood of the South."[6] In doing so, he traces the rise of Evangelicals in economic and social status as Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians. His work also treats both slave religion and the religion of women with detail. However, he does leave gaps of information of particular classes and value-judgments across those classes. Christine Leigh Heyrman seeks to fill those gaps in her more nuanced work, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (1997).

In *Southern Cross*, Heyrman traces the rocky beginnings of the exotic Evangelicalism in the South (which, she argues, takes almost a century to take root) due to class/status issues, political hierarchy issues, a separation of moral behaviors, religious divide (i.e. Anglican vs. Baptist), marriage choices, complexity of slavery, and a fear of change of stability in their daily lives.[7] Yet, because a handful of Evangelicals between 1775-1850 wrestled to change perceptions of religion in the South, Evangelicalism eventually did begin to flourish.

On the other hand, regarding the naming of the First Great Awakening, Jon Butler, a historian of religion, contends that the revivals' "social and political effects

---

[6] Don Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press.1977), xiii.
[7] Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

were *minimal* and usually *local*, although they could traumatize communities in which they upset, if only temporarily, familiar patterns of worship and social behavior [italics mine]."[8] Thus, an *awakening*, he argues, would be a strong word for the regional revivals and their effect upon the growth of churches and reform.

For the purposes of this dissertation, it is important to see the rise of revivals, the need for a "felt" religion, the dissent against formal religion, an experienced grace, and a growing movement of people seeking spiritual renewal, revival, and reform. These revivals, perhaps as an "awakening," are evidence of a growing Evangelicalism in Britain and the North American colonies.

During the early part of the nineteenth century, the various revivals in New England, the Midwest, and the South could be called the *Second Great Awakening*. In the Southern states, camp meetings were among the first efforts to congregate those who had moved to a sparse frontier. Churches were yet to be built, and at camp meetings, people could socialize, release emotion, and practice religion. John Boles attempts to "reenter the world of the evangelical through literature: sermons, diaries, journals, and hymns" to study the camp meetings at the turn of the century.[9] In this book, exploring the origins of the Southern evangelical mind, he argues that the camp meetings were not purely emotional settings. On the contrary, there was a "vigorous cerebral element" of rationality revealed in their language and practices.

The camp meetings did aid in the establishment of a more egalitarian atmosphere, providing a movement toward community for the disparate settlers on the new frontier.

---

[8] Jon Butler, "Enthusiasm Described and Decried: The Great Awakening as Interpretive Fiction," in *Religion in American History: A Reader,* edited by Jon Butler and Harry S Stout (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 122.
[9] John Boles, *The Great Revival, 1787-1805: The Origins of the Southern Evangelical Mind* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1972).

However, any attempt of social reform for equality, including advocacy for the abolition of slavery, was discouraged, silenced, or left unquestioned. Nationally, manifestations of the Second Great Awakening could be seen in the weaving of patriotism with religion, especially in the wake of the Revolutionary War. Perhaps the most famous hymn to emerge out of the mid-nineteenth century was Julia Ward Howe's "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Other evangelist writings and sermons included those from Peter Cartwright, Lyman Beecher, Henry Ward Beecher, Charles Grandison Finney, Dwight L. Moody, and Samuel P. Jones.[10]

The *Third Great Awakening*, or rise of revivals and movements, occurred over a thirty year period at the turn of the twentieth century. During this time, the South was struggling with restructuring, reforming, and rebuilding the South, Southern culture, and Southern religion in the aftermath of the Civil War. Charles R. Wilson writes extensively about the "Religion of the Lost Cause," the expanding myths and rituals which followed the war.[11] In the attempt to regain a sense of identity and cohesion, hymns, sermons, and praxis immortalized the generals and soldiers of the South. Thus, there was a kind of resurrection of Southern religion in the attempt to reinstitute the Southern way of living and being in the world, in place and in action. At the same time in the North, Billy Sunday was becoming a national prophet and the Social Gospel movement was taking shape. Fundamentalists were collaborating at Bible conferences with shared concerns of Biblical literalism, pre-millennialism, and Darwinism, to name a few. With the reporting of H.L. Mencken, the Scopes Trial of Dayton, Tennessee, however, made a mockery

---

[10] William McCoughlin, *The American Evangelicals, 1800-1900: An Anthology* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1976).
[11] Charles R. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: Religion of the Lost Cause* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980).

nationwide of the Fundamentalists' beliefs of the origins of the world as represented by William Jennings Bryan. The conservative side of Evangelicals developed camps and conferences, but otherwise they remained outside the public eye.

Finally, the *Fourth Great Awakening* dates from 1960 until, perhaps, today because of the ministry of Billy Graham. As a Youth for Christ advocate and minister, Graham launched his career as a fiery, young evangelist. Soon, he found himself preaching in tent revivals reminiscent of the camp meetings of the early nineteenth century. Graham drew thousands to his, soon to be called, crusades in the "Canvas Cathedral." As a spiritual adviser to presidents from Dwight Eisenhower to Bill Clinton, Graham has held a profound impact through consultation to leaders and teachings to people around the world in search of meaning for their life.[12] His message has remained fresh, yet neutral, focusing on sin, the need for a Savior, and the hope of salvation. With the advent of media outreach through radio broadcasts and later television, Graham's evangelism sparking and maintaining revivals throughout the latter part of the twentieth century has been unprecedented. Graham also brought a unity to Evangelicals, despite one's denomination, through his foundational teachings.

Especially in the Southern region of the United States, Evangelicalism has been and remains a movement which has ebbed and flowed among the generations. At times, there are multiple and intense revivals, awakenings, and at times the spreading of the gospel in the public sphere lies dormant. There is a seemingly common thread, however, from the first century to the twentieth, from Jerusalem to the Delta, so to speak, in tracing the history and definition of Evangelicalism. Evangelicalism seems to arise from a leader

---

[12] Billy Graham's autobiography, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997) is an extensive portrait of his life, ministry, and reflections.

and a group of followers who stand in dissent to the current doctrines and liturgy of the church. In Christianity, this leader and his followers (sometimes 'her' followers) tend to worship and teach outside the walls of the church, revisiting basic teachings of Christianity in order to solidify a more personal myth(s), doctrines, and rituals. As noted, Evangelicalism is a grassroots movement that arises with fervor among a people seeking to hear 'good news' amidst a world of change, uncertainty, and conflict.

Understanding the Differences in Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism Today

One major question standing before Evangelicals and Fundamentalists prior to 1940 in the United States was whether churches should or should not separate from their denominations. Given this line in the sand, there was a marked split in 1941. Those who wished to unite and coordinate with other denominations formed the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), and those who wished to separate formed the more conservative organization, the American Council of Christian Churches.[13] As Joel Carpenter notes, "With the formation of the NAE, the embryo of a distinction was taking shape. It was tied to the idea that 'Evangelicals' were a coalition with a positive purpose, and that they were to be differentiated from militant Fundamentalism."[14] These Evangelicals, as they are today, attempt to steer a course between moderates and Fundamentalists. Today, the NAE claims over 53 denominations representing over 45,000 churches. This may represent over 40 million people in the United States.[15]

---

[13] Heading these splits were two rival seminarians from Westminster Theological Seminary: Harold Ockenga, who helped launch the NAE and Carl McIntire who began the ACCC. Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 48.

[14] Ibid., 152.

[15] *National Association of Evangelicals*: Message from the President- http://www.nae.net/index.cfm

Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism among Christians in America today could be pictured as a Venn diagram. While separate, they still overlap in many areas, including their statement of faith about the Bible, Trinity, Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and salvation. Areas of disagreement may include the role of women in the church (authority issues), stances on public policy (political issues), and the level of reaction against society to protect and maintain a particular role of religion (militantism). Put simply, George Marsden declares that "a fundamentalist is an evangelical who is angry about something."[16] Moreover, many denominations and communities that these nominal umbrella organizations represent may find themselves in both evangelical and fundamentalist camps. Mark Noll and George Marsden remind their readers that Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism are more than a mere collection of denominations, churches, or individuals, they are *movements*.

Because Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism are movements, their identities have been difficult to ascertain as they seek to define themselves and as others seek to describe them and/or count them. Mark Noll notes three different methods for measuring Evangelicals: 1) surveys asking questions about self-definition, beliefs, and denominations; 2) a count of persons who claim membership or affiliation with designated evangelical denominations; or 3) a survey allowing people to use the word "evangelical" to describe their beliefs, actions, or denomination.[17] Using method one, the Angus Reid Survey of Toronto in 1996, reveals that "about 19 percent of Americans use some combination of the labels, 'evangelical,' 'Pentecostal,' 'charismatic,' or

---

[16] George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 1.

[17] Mark Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd., 2001), 29-43.

'fundamentalist' for themselves."[18] Using method two, John Green, a political scientist

concerned with the interface of religion and politics, shows in his "The American

Religious Landscape: A Baseline for 2004" that 26.3 percent of the total population are

Evangelical Protestants.[19] Yet, using method three, the Religious Identity and Influence

Survey done by Christian Smith in 1996, we find that conservative Protestants make up

29 percent of the American population.[20] Thus, we may approximate who Evangelicals

are and how many claim to be evangelical, but the estimate is elusive, uncovering many

varieties of colors and shades of Evangelicals.[21]

Martin Marty and Scott Appleby's five volume series (1995) on

Fundamentalisms, religious and political, reaches a description after examining multiple

cases and the writings from many scholars on the phenomenon. They conclude that

Fundamentalisms share one commonality: they are militant, revivalist cultural

movements. More specifically, they argue that Fundamentalisms share five ideological

and four organizational characteristics. Ideologically, they exhibit the following:

reactivity to the marginalization of religion, selectivity, moral manicheanism, absolutism

and inerrancy, and millennialism and messianism. Organizationally, they share the

following: an elect, chosen membership, sharp boundaries, authoritarian organization,

---

[18] Ibid., 32.

[19] John Green, "The American Religious Landscape: A Baseline for 2004," 3:
http://pewforum.org/publications/surveys/green-full.pdf.

[20] Christian Smith, *Christian America? What Evangelicals Really Want* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 17.

[21] See Robert E. Webber's *Common Roots: A Call to Evangelical Maturity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 32, for a good table delineating the multifarious kinds of Evangelicals, 'Fourteen Categories of Protestant Evangelicals,' including descriptions of a "subcultural evangelical group," "major emphasis," and "symbols."

and behavioral requirements.[22] Evangelical communities, of course, demonstrate some of these ideological and organizational characteristics as well. Yet, they seem to lack, as noted earlier, the militant element.

Finally, Jon Stone suggests "a boundary approach" to explain evangelical diversity. Using the boundary discourse of Barth (1969), Douglas (1984), and Cohen (1985), Stone discusses the dynamic nature of group boundaries and explains the conflict and cooperation as well as interaction and restrictions around Evangelicalism from 1940 to 1990. He does this in the attempt to describe Evangelicalism beyond the ordinary binary categories of liberal and conservative. His work is a good contribution to the discussion of the definitions of Evangelicalism and in offering a new theoretical direction. As he notes, "it can lend a measure of analytical insight into the social structural dilemmas and definitional ambiguities caused by Evangelicalism's ambivalent approach to traditional faith and modern life, no less from its desire to reconcile the two."[23]

The Current Subculture of Evangelicalism

With the advent of Billy Graham came an increasing interest among Evangelicals to maintain "emotionality" in their personal religious experiences beyond the church. In turn, revivals instigated interest in a more in-depth education in order to learn more about the Bible as God's holy word. Their hope was that a Biblical education might proffer a legitimating mechanism of the myths and doctrines of Evangelicals. To satisfy the

---

[22] Gabriel A. Almond, Emmanuel Sivan, and R. Scott Appleby, "Fundamentalism: Genus and Species," in *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, edited by Martin E. Marty and Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995), 405-408.
[23] Jon Stone, *On the Boundaries of American Evangelicalism: The Postwar Evangelical Coalition* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 183-184.

interest, emotionally and cognitively, a subculture of Evangelicalism arose in the latter part of the twentieth century to provide a market of books, music, media, education, and entertainment for persons interested in immersing themselves in an entirely evangelical way of living and being in the world. The goal of these products is to provide a "felt" experience alongside a rational, learning experience for a particular, counter-cultural lifestyle. The South, especially Nashville, Tennessee, then became a hub of industry for publishing Christian literature and music.

Christian Publishing

Since Martin Luther declared the importance of Scripture alone for salvation, the Bible has been a centerpiece in most Christian homes in continental Europe, Britain, and the American colonies. Colleen McDannell writes, "For most of America's history, the Christian Bible was not merely the writings from the Old and New Testaments. During the nineteenth century, the Bible became the center of a material Protestantism."[24] The Bible was the most accessible and most necessary of Christian literature. After World War II, in the 1950's, the phenomena of Christian bookstores began to appear as separate entities from other bookstores. The Christian Booksellers Association (CBA), a trade association, launched out of Moody Press to coordinate and advise booksellers how to maximize their business. Their convention meets annually as the biggest event of the year for the CBA market.

The Southern Baptist Convention launched its publishing house as the Baptist Sunday School Board in 1893. One hundred years later, it had purchased two publishing houses which later merged: Broadman and Holman. Today, Broadman & Holman is the

---

[24] Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 68.

12

publishing house for Lifeway Christian Resources in Nashville, Tennessee. Thomas

Nelson, Inc. also was founded in Nashville, Tennessee. Sam Moore bought Thomas

Nelson in 1969, and since then, it bought and created some eight different publishing

imprints.[25] A smaller press, NavPress launched in 1975 in Nashville as well, and though

it releases only about fifty titles per year, they have many bestsellers in the Christian

market.

The biggest competitor to these presses may be the Zondervan imprint. Zondervan

was bought by HarperCollins Publishers in the early 1990s, but the original Zondervan

publishing company began in 1931. Baker Book House, like Thomas Nelson, owns six

different imprints including Revell, founded by Dwight Moody over 125 years ago, and

Bethany, which is about a fifty year old company. Finally, Intervarsity Press was

established in 1939-1940 in the Midwest where it imported books from Britain for its

Intervarsity Ministry. Today, it too is a thriving Christian publisher.

With the growing publishing industry of Christian books, there was a need to

coordinate the evangelical publishers in particular. The Evangelical Christian Publishers

Association (ECPA) formed in 1974 to meet that need as a trade association providing

information on consumers, technology, and marketing for their members. Its statement of

faith is synonymous to that of the National Association of Evangelicals. To date, it

reports over 270 members who combine a total of $2.4 billion in revenue.[26]

The Association of American Publishers reports that the net sales of religious

publishing increased by 5.6 percent (from 2003) totaling $1.33 billion. Using these

figures, the religious publishing industry took 5.6 percent of the U.S. market share of net

---

[25] For a detailed history of Thomas Nelson Publishers, see Sam Moore, *American By Choice: The Remarkable Fulfillment of an Immigrant's Dreams* (Nashville: Nelson, 1998).
[26] *ECPA*, Industry Resources: http://www.ecpa.org/resources/moreinfo.html.

sales in publishing in 2004.[27] In 2003, Barna Research released their finding that "Half of all adult book buyers (50%)…had purchased at least one Christian book title in the last year. According to adults, nearly one out of every five books they purchased last year (19%) were Christian volumes."[28] Thus, *The Economist* safely reports, "The definition of religious books is vague—but religious publishing is undoubtedly growing much faster than the industry as a whole."[29] Christian publishing, especially within the past five years, has become a booming industry.

Authors like Rick Warren, who has sold over 25 million copies to date of his *The Purpose Driven Life* (2002), for example, lead not only in the CBA but also in the ABA market as well. Max Lucado, Beth Moore, John Eldridge, and Bruce Wilkinson are other authors who have found extraordinary success in book sales for their ministries and their publishers.

Contemporary Christian Music

In the sixties and seventies, the Civil Rights movement, the death of JFK, the steps of Neil Armstrong, Vietnam War, the sexual revolution, and rock n' roll, changed the face of America and the world. At the same time, evangelical Christianity was on the rise. Amidst the complexity of the sociological factors for this increase of members in Evangelical churches, however, Billy Graham's *Youth for Christ* crusades were at the forefront, saving the souls of thousands, perhaps millions, of youths while galvanizing support for political figures. *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the New Religious Right*

---

[27] *AAP*, Industry statistics: http://www.publishers.org/industry/index.cfm.
[28] *The BARNA Group*, "Half of All Americans Read Christian Books and One-Third Buy Them," January 27, 2003.
[29] "Onward Christian Shoppers," *The Economist*, Dec. 1, 2005: Washington DC: http://www.economist.com/business/displaystory.cfm?story_id=5259490

in America, a series of videos from PBS, captures footage from these events, revealing guitar-strumming, attractive teens singing about their love for the Lord in the early crusades of the sixties.[30] Billy Graham opened the door for a new genre of music as he promoted and endorsed the "Jesus Music" in his crusades that would transform worship in the conservative Christian church.

Charlie Peacock, a recording artist, songwriter, and producer, traces the history of Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) from its rudimentary beginnings in the musical *Good News* (1967) to Amy Grant's album, *Behind the Eyes* (1997).[31] He claims that in the wake of the Southern Baptist musicals, the Jesus Movement of the late 60's and 70's really launched CCM as a genre. To rightly credit them for their strict religious beliefs, Peacock notes that they initially focused on the following elements:

> (1) the imminent return of Jesus in the form of the Rapture, (2) the worship of God using the contemporary instrumentation and style of the time,
> (3) evangelism, and the use of music in evangelism, especially evangelism targeted at youth, and (4) charismatic revival. [32]

Since that time, the first generation's expectations for the rapture has receded to the background of their faith, especially after several prophetic dates have come and gone with no sign of the second coming. Moreover, the charismatic revival has also waned as an influence. Peacock polls most Christian artists to be nondenominational, Baptist, or Presbyterian Church of America:[33] namely, conservative Evangelicals.

Although the Jesus Movement musicians verbally adhered to fundamentalist claims about Christianity, the styles of the music were enticingly secular. Jay R. Howard

---

[30] David Van Taylor, producer, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the New Religious Right in America*, Vol 1. "The Early Crusades, 1950-1968," PBS Video. 1996.
[31] Charlie Peacock, *At the Crossroads: An Insider's Look at the Past, Present, and Future of Contemporary Christian Music* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1999).
[32] Ibid., 42.
[33] Ibid., 43.

and John M. Streck, in their *Apostles of Rock* (1999), delineate the moral objection as being the rock 'n' roll style and a "savage beat" closely aligned with demonic forces (with racist overtones).[34] While Elvis Presley's pelvic thrust did frighten most Evangelicals with seduction and sexuality, I think we could hardly call the forebears of CCM rock 'n' roll artists. In 1969, the Dove awards went to artists like Bill Gaither and James Blackwood, not Bob Dylan or Noel Paul Stookey (formerly with Peter, Paul, and Mary). Those who are in the CCM business use the language of "sacred" or "secular" to discuss the sacred/profane dichotomy.

Today, however, rock 'n' roll, among other styles of music, have inevitably influenced the instrumentation and creation of CCM. In 2003, the Dove awards inducted Pat Boone, notably a secular artist, and the controversial Amy Grant into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame. Furthermore, the GMA (Gospel Music Association) invited bands like *Sixpence None the Richer*, *Rock 'n' Roll Worship Circus*, and *Audio Adrenaline* to entertain the audience. This is definitely a different time and a different place for CCM. Pioneers in this field, such as Amy Grant and others, have fought to blend secular styles, rhythms, and lyrics with Christian beliefs for a fusion of the sacred and the profane.

Evangelicals are the creators and the listeners to CCM. To the right of Evangelicals, Fundamentalists denounce the seductive rhythm of the music. For them, the music is the handiwork of the devil, a symbol of the profane. Nancy Tatom Ammerman, after living among a fundamentalist community for a year, writes that "they [i.e. Fundamentalists] are…unwilling to accept 'Christian' rock. As they see it, music with a strong beat is inherently seductive, and no amount of good intentions can turn one of

---

[34] John Howard and John M. Streck. *Apostles of Rock*: *The Splintered World of Contemporary Christian Music*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 33-36.

Satan's tools into something a believer should enjoy."[35] To the left of Evangelicals,

mainline or liberal Christians "frequently reduce Jesus movement charismatics to holy-

roller caricatures."[36] Because neither of these groups comprises the CCM 'market' nor

uses electronic music in their worship services, the real oppositions and debates lie within

evangelical camps.

Like the umbrella publishing trade organizations CBA or ECPA, the Christian

music community also works under a trade organization, the Gospel Music Association

(GMA). The GMA was established in 1964 and serves "to expose, promote, and celebrate

the gospel through music."[37] CCM centered itself in Nashville, Tennessee as did the

GMA, because many of the rising producers, record labels, recording studios,

managements, and artists who lived there.

Peter Applebome's *Dixie Rising: How the South is Shaping American Values,*

Politics, and Culture (1996) contains a series of portraits of Southern cities to

demonstrate how components of their history, growth, or productions are influencing the

nation at large. Yet, his chapter, "Nashville, TN: How Bud, Garth, Tim and the Renfro

Valley Home Folks Took over America," is less like portrait and more like a series of

glossy postcards. Like the clip of Robert Altman's *Nashville* (1975) which graces the

opening page, his piece is a series of colorful personalities to demonstrate the characters

"behind the scenes" of Nashville's glitz and glamour of the Country Music industry.

Unfortunately, this is the idealized, slick image of Nashville, not an accurate

representation of the lives of her people. Since the time of his research circa 1995, many

---

[35] Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Bible Believers: Fundamentalists in the Modern World* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 85.
[36] Peacock, *At the Crossroads*, 90.
[37] *GMA*: GMA Info, About us: http://www.gospelmusic.org/gmainfo/aboutus.aspx.

things in Nashville and the surrounding areas have changed, including the Christian

music industry.

Applebome talks at length about Country Music, but after a visit to EMI in

Maryland farms, he merely nods and gawks at the Christian Music industry. Regarding a

magazine, *Release*, he states the following:

> All the people in the photos were utter ciphers. They could have been…[a] part of a bizarre fantasy some incredibly rich man was playing out for fun—a whole fake company putting out fake CDs by made-up artists with names like Out of the Gray, Charlie Peacock, the Water Eugenes, and Margaret Becker."[38]

Having worked with and befriended Charlie Peacock and Margaret Becker, I know that

they are perhaps the most "normal" of all CCM artists and are well respected as writers,

authors, and producers among the CCM industry. Both give substantial portions of their

income to the benefit of others, and both give substantial portions of their time to

nonprofit agencies. Applebome's understanding of this industry, seemingly based upon a

browsing of a bad rag, does not capture the momentum of this genre of music. The artists

have the faces of "the girl next door" with wholesome lyrics that are palatable for

families weary of a culture obsessed with the stereotypical "sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll."

Bud Wendell, head of Gaylord Entertainment Co., claimed in February 1997 that

"Contemporary Christian music needs more exposure…[and] we can bust it wide

open,"[39] *but* by 2001, he sold Word Entertainment to Warner Music Group.[40] Since then,

surprisingly, the Christian music industry has shown a steady increase to report 6.7

percent of the U.S. Market share by 2002.

---

[38] Peter Applebome, *Dixie Rising: How the South is Shaping American Values, Politics, and Culture* (New York: Times Books Random House, 1996), 261.
[39] Jim Patterson, "Gaylord to Focus on Christian Music," *Memphis, The Commercial Appeal,* February 12, 1997.
[40] "Gaylord sells Word Entertainment to Warner Music," *Associated Press.* November 26, 2001.

Here, I want to highlight the importance of this industry as *more* than a "freak show" that Applebome assumes. Over the past few decades, artists of color have expanded this industry across Black and Hispanic lines. From hip-hop to rap to gospel to pop, the Christian music industry proffers a broad array of music that goes beyond the walls of the church. In 2004, the GMA reports that "more than 60 percent of gospel music sales occurred in the general market [versus the Christian bookstore]."[41] In fact, GMA consumer demographics reports that 84 percent of consumers are White and 11 percent are Black, both almost parallel to the U.S. population. According to these demographics, CCM may cut across race, class, age, and geographic lines. Like the Christian Publishing industry, CCM is a vibrant industry that has a growing audience.[42]

Christian Broadcasting: Radio and Television

Christian radio broadcasting has been an important part of the Evangelical culture since the 1920s. While mainline denominations and Catholics were granted gratis time on the air, Fundamentalists bought time for the next few decades until their popularity exceeded their counterparts.[43] Celebrities like Paul Radar, Aimee Semple McPherson, and Charles Fuller brought charismatic personalities, a conservative message, and a connection with the greater world into the homes of millions. Perhaps the most of famous of the three was Charles Fuller's Old-Fashioned Revival Hour. Joel Carpenter reports, "In

---

[41] GMA Press Release, 1/7/04.
[42] Heather Hendershot writes at length about the interface of commerce and Christianity in her excellent book, *Shaking the World for Jesus: Media and Conservative Evangelical Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). Ch. 2, "Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music?: Christian Music and the Secular Maketplace," especially focuses on the CCM industry and its crossover into mainstream music and its rise in the marketplace. This issue of commerce and sales is also taken up by Charlie Peacock in his *At the Crossroads* (1999).
[43] See Tona J. Hangen, *Redeeming the Dial: Radio, Religion, and Popular Culture in America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002) for the history of Christian broadcasting and its prominent radio evangelists.

1942 and 1943 the Old-Fashioned Revival Hour had the largest audience in national

network radio. It surpassed even the most popular shows, such as Bob Hope's and the

Ford Symphony Hour. By 1944, the program's listening audience was estimated at

twenty million."[44]

Just as the establishment of the National Association of Evangelicals inspired the

Christian Booksellers Association (CBA), so also did it inspire the National Religious

Broadcasters (NRB) after World War II. The NRB now serves over 1400 members

internationally to promote excellence in communications while protecting access to

Christian radio.[45] The NRB includes communications corporations which own and run

the Christian music and Christian talk radio stations across the U.S. The Barna Group's

research shows that though Christian radio has declined by 10 percent since 1992, "nearly

half of all adults – 46%-- listen to Christian radio broadcast in a typical month….one out

of every six U.S. adults (16%) listens to Christian radio broadcast on a daily basis."[46]

Given the interest of this dissertation in Southern religion, it should be noted that

according to this same survey, the region where people were most likely to tune into

Christian programming was the South, where 56% of people listen each month.[47]

Winning NRB's "Best Radio Talk Show," James Dobson's *Focus in the Family* is

perhaps the most far-reaching Christian radio broadcast, reaching over 1600 radio

stations across the United States alone.

---

[44] Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism*, 1997, 139.
[45] *NRB*: Who are we? http://www.nrb.org/partner/1,,308766,00.html
[46] *The Barna Group, Ltd*, "More People Use Christian Media Than Attend Church," March 14, 2005, http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=184
[47] Ibid.

Again, according to the same survey, about 45% of people tune into Christian television each month. This percentage has not changed since 1992.[48] Trinity Broadcasting touts itself as the largest U.S. religious network, according to Neilsen Net Weekly Circulation report—February 2004, reaching 92.5 million households. Christian Broadcasting Network, founded by Dr. Pat Robertson, is perhaps the second largest U.S. religious network. Though an octogenarian, Robertson's *The 700 Club* is "seen daily by approximately one million viewers."[49] They have the capacity to reach 1.5 billion people worldwide throughout the year.[50] To put this into perspective, CNN Primetime News with Wolf Blitzer has about 645,000 viewers on an average night. Julia Lesage, in her article, "Christian Media," demonstrates how conservative Christian media outlets like *The 700 Club* "expects" to educate and activate their audiences to connect and affect public policy. She even describes their use of emotionality to ensure these results.[51]

Christian Education: Private Education

Six years after the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, in 1636, Harvard College was founded. Though Harvard was not a religiously affiliated school, "the school was permeated with the religious commitment that characterized the colony as a whole, a 1646 rule stipulating that every student 'shall consider the main end of his life and studies to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life.'"[52]From the beginning of higher education in America, understanding the Bible and Christianity seemed the end goals of

---

[48] Ibid.
[49] *CBN*, "The 700 Club: Show, history, format, and highlights," http://www.cbn.com/700club/ShowInfo/About/about700club.asp
[50] Ibid.
[51] Julia Lesage, "Christian Media," in *Media Culture and the Religious Right*, ed. by Linda Kintz and Julia Lesage (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 21-50.
[52] Gaustad, *A Religious History of America*, 62.

learning. Over the centuries, of course, higher education has become increasingly secularized, especially given the separation of church and state and the rise of the public, government-funded school systems.

The First Reader for Southern Schools (1864) was used to teach the alphabet and "first" words and the first lesson asks the teacher "to ascertain whether the pupils can identify all the letters." The letters presented read as follows: "Jesus loves men. Be like him. I will. Prize peace and quiet. Fix your heart on good." At the end of the reader, the last lessons, 53-59 are advanced, lengthy readings from or about Scripture, especially gospel stories, messages, and prayers.[53]

Yet, a century later, two major cases, *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) and *Abingdon v. Schempp* (1963), declared that recitation of Bible passages and the Lord's Prayer were unconstitutional. Whereas many led outcries against this prohibition of prayer and Scripture in the schools systems, Martin Luther King, Jr. called this "sound and good, reaffirming something basic in the nation: separation of church and state."[54] Of course this follows on the heels of the passing of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) to end segregation in schools. Many "White" schools during these decades, especially in the South, were fighting desegregation and finding ways of redistricting schools to maintain the status quo. Thus, the sixties were a time of conflict and turmoil in the public school system over race and religion.

Yet, by the end of the sixties, desegregation had been mandated and almost overnight, busing was required. This led to an uprising in private education for elementary and secondary schools. Nashville, Tennessee, is a good example. Most of the

---

[53] *The First Reader of Southern Schools* (Raleigh: The North Carolina Christian Advocate Publishing Company), 1864.

[54] Gaustad, *A Religious History of America*, 321.

private schools in the area, like in other parts of the South, were founded or expanded in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Era. These schools included Brentwood Academy (1969), Father Ryan (1970), Franklin Road Academy (1971), or Ezell-Harding (1979), to name a few. These were the "White flight" schools where parents could send their children under the guise, conscious or unconscious, of proclaimed "Christian" values, a safer environment, and more sound education.

Why was there such an uprising of private schools around 1970? By 1971, Nashville finally began busing students to implement integration in schools. A decade later, over 20,000 White students had left Nashville public schools due to the resistance of busing. "In response, Nashville school board members…turned to magnet schools."[55] These magnet schools provided an answer for a racially diverse student body, no busing requirement, and an increased level of academics. In spite of this attempted solution, by 1998, the order on busing was lifted for metro public schools. "In 1998 there was only one regular Metro school where 90% or more of the students were Black. Today there are nine."[56] It seems that not only has the elimination of busing increased re-segregation, but the high rate of private school attendance also exacerbates the racial divide, at least in Nashville.

Beyond the flux of private schools opening as an adjunct to corresponding mega-churches over the past twenty-five years, there has also been a rise in attendance of Christian colleges and universities. The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) notes that Christian education is booming. The CCCU has 102 members in the United States. With statistics from the U.S. Department of Education, the CCCU shows

---

[55] Jay Hamburg, "Racial imbalance returns to schools," *The Tennessean,* July 13, 2003.
[56] Ibid.

that there has been a 67 percent increase in enrollment in Christian affiliated colleges and universities between 1992 and 2002. This far exceeds the growth of private colleges and universities at a rate of 11 percent, or public colleges and universities at -.7 percent. Of course, their numbers are still small at 216,000 compared to 3.5 million in private schools alone.[57] But, it is a substantial increase showing much interest in a faith-based education at the turn of the twenty-first century.

As the evangelical culture grows in sophistication in its usage of technology, communications, and involvement in public policy, so too will its nurturing of educational institutions. Though many would deny race is still an issue which encourages parents and students to choose private education, most would admit that issues of status and class do play a role. Evangelicals are seeking a perpetual Sunday school; one that will nurture their children's spirituality and relationship with their God and Son, Jesus Christ. Providing education, whether it is a home school or a church-based school, is one way to ensure a specific Christian environment for the mind and the soul.

Christian Parachurch: Festivals, Concerts, and Conferences

Outside the walls of the church, Evangelicals have come together, met, and broken bread for centuries. It is here, among "para-church" organization(s), that Evangelicals have experienced perhaps the most emotion, power, and influence. Later, this will be discussed as a "third-space": a liminal space between the secular world (home, work, marketplace, etc) and the church. From this space arose the charisma of the camp meetings in the eighteenth century, the Bible meetings and conferences of the

---

[57] *CCCU statistics*: About the state of Christian higher education,
http://www.cccu.org/about/about_print.asp?contentID=29&ChildContentID=0

nineteenth century, and the Billy Graham crusades of the twentieth centuries. At its center is the essence of the tent revival.

With the growth of the CCM industry, Evangelicals were able to create their own concerts and festivals. Today, Christian music artists play in the same auditoriums, halls, and venues as professional basketball teams or other rock 'n' roll bands. Also, there are a number of Christian music festivals which take place across the nation largely in the summers. The oldest of these festivals, Cornerstone, compares itself to the famous Woodstock festival. An average of 25,000 teens and young adults attend this four day festival, annually, camping out in fields surrounding the concert stages. There, young adults watch their favorite Christian music bands. Of course, these festivals also hold high profit margins in sales of merchandise. Expo tents and booths are set up to sell Christian paraphernalia, from t-shirts to music to bumper stickers, and Christian organizations host booths for a chance to promote awareness for their issues or causes. It is a kind of a Christian bazaar. Other festivals include Spirit West Coast (70,000 in attendance in 2005), Creation East (65,000 in attendance in 2005), Creation West, Soulfest, and Lifest.

Other parachurch organizations are based upon gender, such as Promise Keepers or Women of Faith. Promise Keepers had its nascent beginnings with football Coach Bill McCartney of the University of Colorado at a Fellowship of Christian Athletes meeting. By 2000, they claimed to have held over 100 conferences reaching over 5 million men. Their peak, however, was in 1996 hosting 22 conferences entitled, "Break down the Walls," in stadiums across the United States hosting over 1.1 million men.[58] In the journal *Sociology of Religion,* Rhys Williams describes Promise Keepers as "a

---

[58] *Promise Keepers*: The History of Promise Keepers, http://www.promisekeepers.org/genr12

reactionary reassertion of patriarchal authority; they are a pawn of Christian Right political operatives; they are another sign of our current evangelical religious revival; they are part of a new phenomenon—men coming to terms with their own vulnerabilities and responsibilities."[59] He captures the goals, vision, and mission of Promise Keepers well here, especially as a response to feminism, modernization, and gay rights. Michael A. Messner compares the *Mythopoetic Men's Movement* launched by Robert Bly's *Iron John* to the Promise Keepers' movement. Both rely on an essentialism to define gender, but "Promise Keepers relies entirely on a fundamentalist biblical interpretation of essentially fixed and categorically different natures of women and men."[60] Ignoring the differences among men, this rigid, biblical masculine identity provides a space for men to reclaim a mythic, nostalgic notion of "manhood," and for women to expect a responsible husband and father.[61]

By the first part of the 2000 decade, though, Promise Keepers suffered financial difficulties, struggled with issues of multiculturalism, and its initial broad-reaching appeal declined as men began to question the romanticized masculinities being put forth by the organization.[62] Today, it seeks to create a more international outreach including a specific subsidiary component for youth.

---

[59] Rhys Williams, "Introduction: Promise Keepers: A Comment on Religion and Social Movements" in *Sociology of Religion* 61/1 (2000): 1-10.

[60] Michael A. Messner, *Politics of Masculinities: Men in Movements* (Walnut Creek: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2000), 27.

[61] Judith Newton's *From Panthers to Promise Keepers: Rethinking the Men's Movement* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), especially in Ch. 8. "Doing the Work of Love: Promise Keepers on Work, Marriage, and Fathering," interviews men involved in Promise Keepers (and their wives) to assess the pros and cons, noting that men dealing with anger and identity were becoming better husbands and fathers, yet PK omitted the role(s) of women and the inclusion of gays in the movement.

[62] For a detailed analysis of Promise Keepers in recasting subcultural identity theory (especially dealing with masculinity theories), see John P. Bartkowski, *The Promise Keepers: Servants, Soldiers and Godly Men* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004).

Women of Faith began with the leadership of Stephen Arterburn, an evangelical speaker and writer on women's issues, in 1996. Since then, it has grown increasingly in its outreach, peaking in 2003 where speakers traveled to 28 cities speaking to over 362,000 women.[63] Just two years prior to that, Thomas Nelson Publishing Company bought them. The weekend conference is a two-day retreat for evangelical women to escape the monotony and stress of their daily lives to be entertained with charismatic speakers, talented recording artists, humorous skits, and an experience of worship. It is also a marketplace to stock up one's evangelical library with books by the speakers and music by the singers. It boasts over 2 million members to date. Though Women of Faith has not had the publicity, analysis, or following of Promise Keepers, it has held a steady rate of interest and support from women over the past decade. Unlike Promise Keepers, Women of Faith is not a reactionary organization attempting to redefine roles and identities for evangelical women. On the contrary, it is a place of retreat for women where they are encouraged to nourish their relationship with Jesus Christ, not necessarily one another or their families. The thrust of the conference is to aid in replenishing needs for the individual woman through religious experience.

Megachurches and bigger churches hold conferences almost weekly. These conferences reflect different topics for worship, leadership, outreach, missions, and political or gender-based issues. These are held as revivalistic kinds of seminars, reinvigorating the church members in their ministry for the church. One good example is the annual "Leadership Summit" conference held by Willow Creek Community Church's Bill Hybels every August. The conference is transmitted by satellite to "satellite" Willow

---

[63] *Women of Faith*: Company Overview, historical overview: http://www.promisekeepers.org/genr12

Creek churches across America and around the world. Over one million leaders are reached in this one weekend conference in this format.

The parachurch also includes the Crusades, now, of Franklin Graham, since Billy Graham's Crusades came to an end in New York City in 2005. Also, the works of non-governmental, faith-based organizations doing work as service providers in developing nations are growing. The more prominent of these groups may include Samaritan's Purse, World Vision, Compassion International, or Operation Blessing. These groups are supported by Evangelicals, largely, through child sponsorship programs, specialty drives, or bulk funding. These groups represent a large amount of development assistance for individuals and communities. In addition, these groups have smartly partnered with Christian music artists to promote their work at concerts and festivals. They have also coordinated with speakers and conference tours. In this way, Evangelicals can enjoy a Christian leisure experience while providing a donation for the poor in the same venue.

The Political Context of Evangelicals (1979-2005)

The New Christian Right and the New South (1979-1999)

Disillusioned with the presidency of Jimmy Carter, the religious right of America united on issues of abortion, AIDS, homosexuality, family, sex education, and feminism to form the New Christian Right (NCR) in the 1980s. Leading the way was Jerry Falwell, a Southern Baptist minister in Virginia, who launched the Moral Majority, Inc. in 1979. Other organizations like the Christian Voice, Religious Roundtable, and Christian Coalition also comprised the NCR. Secular humanism was the common enemy that was

to be defeated. Visions of grandiosity overwhelmed many of the leaders of these organizations. Some, during the eighties, were perhaps the most powerful voices in the nation. By 1989, however, the Moral Majority collapsed as the Clinton regime came into power. Today, with the advent of George W. Bush as president, the religious right has grown in power once again.

Steve Bruce, a sociologist of religion who has written extensively on Fundamentalism, notes that the time and context were ripe for the NCR to rise to power. According to his studies, one major factor for the rise of the NCR was the preceding rise of the New South. With Jimmy Carter elected as President, shifts in the economy, and the increasing importance of oil, the Sunbelt, as an expansion of the Southeast, was growing in economic and political prowess. "The genesis of many movements follows periods of improvement in the circumstances of those mobilized. Improvement not only increases expectations...; it also improves morale."[64]

During this period, televangelism was also on the rise, particularly in the South. While statistics are varied and conflicting, we know that leading religious figures like Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and Jim Bakker captured a broader audience than many religious leaders prior to this medium. The growing interest in the electronic church alongside the continued increase of evangelical Protestant adherents gave these leaders a burgeoning constituency to whom they could appeal religiously and politically. They were part of the continued effort to continue the "Great Switch," which began in the late 1920s, to swing White Democrats to vote Republican.

Because the NCR comprises a variety of organizations, there is not a single unifying principle or concept. Robert Wuthnow, a sociologist of religion, writes about

---

[64] Steve Bruce, *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 46.

"sets of themes" among the NCR: "economic libertarianism, social traditionalism, and militant anti-communism."[65] Economic libertarianism addresses current economic interests with special emphasis on freedom and individualism. Social traditionalism concerns include the breakdown of the 'family,' the decay of morality, community, and restraint. And, militant anti-communism seeks total mobilization against the foreign enemy.[66] Thus, the domestic enemy for NCR includes "liberals" and their influence in the courts, schools, and society. The umbrella of these set of themes then encompasses a set of religious and political issues.

With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America (1996), illustrates the culture wars focusing on public policy issues of abortion, family, sex education, homosexuality, and HIV/AIDS. This collection of films reveals voices on both sides of the religio-political battles as well as coverage of actual events across this period. While the different groups fundamentally agreed on the stances for the given issues (i.e. pro-life, anti-feminist, pro-family, anti-gay, etc.), they often disagreed on the ways in which to implement their beliefs on those positions. Thus, some were more militant than others.

In "Drawing the Composite Picture," Walter Capps claims that overall, the NCR held two major foci: "it wished to be a revitalization movement, and it aspired to be the civil religion."[67] This correlates well with the intentions of the religious South. In the wake of the upward mobility of the South, the NCR wanted to 'ride the wave' of change for power and success in the name of conservative religion. Whether conservative

---

[65] Robert C. Liebman and Robert Wuthnow, *The New Christian Right: Mobilization and Legitimation* (New York: Aldine Publishing Co., 1983), 15.
[66] Ibid., 16-17.
[67] Walter Capps, *The New Religious Right* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), 206-207.

Mormon, Jewish, Catholic, or Christian, the organized groups could agree on particular conservative values. Just as the South had successfully created a Southern civil religion during the Reconstruction and beyond, these leaders wanted to capitalize on this civil religion to 'canopy' the nation. Pushing aside their differences, the NCR united on the above religious and political conservative commonalities in the hopes to gain control over seemingly pervasive liberal agendas. Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and Bob Jones had a different perspective and a different agenda for their groups. All were from the South.

Though their power began to fade with the election of Bill Clinton into the presidency, various NCR groups, such as National Religious Broadcasters and the Family Research Council, are still strong today. As for the three profiles given, each continues to have a platform for his voice: Jerry Falwell still preaches at Thomas Road Baptist Church, Pat Robertson still hosts *The 700 Club*, and Bob Jones III still runs Bob Jones University. Much of their political power has diminished, but each continues to have a strong constituency, notably Southern, which supports their ministries.

Since 2002, new issues and new faces among Evangelicals have arisen in politics, among them, the issues of AIDS and poverty in Africa. After a special meeting with Bono, the lead singer of the Irish band, U2, the CCM community in Nashville raised their voices to urge President George W. Bush and Congress to support a historic funding for Africa to combat this disease of biblical proportion. President Bush responded with his PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) and MCA (Millennium Challenge Account). For three years, this community has stood strong, lobbying on these issues with the grassroots movement, The ONE Campaign.

In 2001, World Vision commissioned BARNA Research Group, Ltd to conduct a poll of the current response to the AIDS pandemic in Africa, "Americans' Interest in Assisting the International AIDS Crisis." Rich Stearns, the President of World Vision, reports, "When evangelical Christians were asked whether they would be willing to donate money to help children orphaned by AIDS, only 7 percent answered that they definitely would. More than half said that they probably or definitely would *not* help."[68] Since that time, the percentage has crept to 14 percent.[69] Though not substantial, these issues have become the leading concerns of Pastors Rick Warren, Bill Hybels, and their wives. Both have launched efforts in Africa, and both have heavily participated in governmental urging for funds particular to these issues. Others, including Jim Wallis, Tony Campolo, Max Lucado, and Bishop T.D. Jakes, also now incorporate these particular issues in their writings and their ministries.

One way to group these different Evangelicals is by religious and political rhetoric. In the attempt to show the different groups of religious voters in the 2004 election, John Green and Steven Waldman describe twelve very different "tribes" of American politics. Evangelicals were grouped in the following "tribes": the religious right, moderate Evangelicals, and the religious left. In breaking down the religious groups and their political affiliations, Green and Waldman show that there is quite a complicated collection of groups that comprise what the media and public call the "religious right" or the "religious left." Representative of "the religious right" included the "old guard" of Evangelicals including James Dobson, Jerry Falwell, and Pat Robertson. "Moderate

---

[68] Jenny Eaton and Kate Etue, eds., *The AWAKE Project: Uniting Against the African AIDS Crisis* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002), 141.

[69] Cathleen Falsani, "Why don't more Evangelicals care about AIDS?," in *The Chicago Sun-Times*, Dec. 3, 2004.

Evangelicals" could be represented by Max Lucado, Rick Warren, or Bill Hybels, and "the religious left" includes a rising group of voices, mostly Democratic, represented by faith leaders such as Jim Wallis, Tony Campolo, or Bob Edgar.[70] For the purposes of this dissertation, I will be concentrating on the burgeoning middle, the moderate Evangelicals amidst the growing rift between the religious left and the religious right. These moderate evangelical leaders and church members represent largely those in the suburban megachurch.

Socio-Cultural Context (1992-2005): The Evangelical Landscape

Historical and Cultural Context in the United States (1992-2005)

With the advent of a Democratic administration under President Bill Clinton in 1992, the New Christian Right (NCR) had a new enemy. Quickly, with the leadership of Ralph Reed, a strategic plan was devised to unite economic and religious conservatives over "family tax-relief." The synergy over the tax cuts, the "mis-steps" of the Clinton administration, alongside the doubling of membership of the Christian Coalition in 1993, they believed, led to the "sweeping Republican victories of 1994."[71] However, it should be noted that an "October 1995 survey indicated that eight in ten Republicans did not think of themselves as members of the Religious Right."[72] This indicates that though the Christian Coalition had a hard-working and effective grassroots effort, the actual majority

---

[70] John Green and Steven Waldman, "The Twelve Tribes of American Politics," on Beliefnet.com: http://beliefnet.com/story/153/story_15355.html. A similar article, same title, was published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, Januarly/February 2006.
[71] William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996), 329-331.
[72] Ibid., 339.

of Evangelicals did not feel a religious kinship with this group. At the same time, Dr. James Dobson's *Focus on the Family* and Coach Bill McCartney's Promise Keepers were growing in movement and influence with a focus, not necessarily to transform politics but instead culture. This shift of interest was also evident among evangelical subculture.

Over the latter part of the nineties, the Christian Coalition waned in its influence and its outreach. Ralph Reed stepped down, and the respect for the leadership of Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell declined. New faith leadership arose to provide better cultural outlets (i.e. conferences, seminars, media, leisure) for participation while at the same time instilling a sense of self-esteem. These cultural outlets were not about a separation from the larger American culture, but they creatively synthesized American culture with evangelical language, which lessened a sense of marginalization. This kind of focus on evangelical culture welcomed those on the fringes of Evangelicalism seeking groups or experiences that might deepen life's meaning or purpose. In this way, Evangelicalism experienced a transformation from the NCR in the nineties and the early part of the twenty-first century.

Evangelical Faith Leaders: Changing of the Guard

Christian Smith describes four common analytical fallacies in the attempt to define Evangelicals. The first is "the representative elite fallacy." He notes, "A most common error that observers of Evangelicals make is to presume that evangelical leaders speak as representatives of ordinary Evangelicals." [73] He recognizes the complexities of evangelical laypersons as well as the spectrum of ideological and religious differences among evangelical elites. Yet even with this assessment, it is important to observe

---

[73] Smith, *Christian America? What Evangelicals Really Want,* 2000, 7.

emerging elites, their language, their theology, and their followings. Their readers, church members, and "fans" do adhere to their teachings comprising then a constituency of believers of whom certain assumptions can be made.

The voices of Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, and Bob Jones, while at the height of their power in the eighties, maintained a steady decrescendo throughout the nineties unto today. Their voices are still heard, but the late Baby Boomer and Gen X generations especially do not resonate with their vitriolic language toward others or their radically exclusive theologies.

In their place, there have arisen evangelical faith leaders focused more upon the following for Christian culture: a transformation of the American culture, providing methods for combating anxiety and crisis, finding a community of support, and finding purpose in life. These leaders have found a voice as pastors, authors, and speakers in the public sphere. Though they range in their theological, political, and religious beliefs, they are a new generation of evangelical elites. TIME magazine issued a cover story in 2005 touting the "The Top 25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America."[74] Moderate Evangelicals included the following: Billy Graham, Rick Warren, Bishop T.D. Jakes, Doug Coe, Joyce Meyer, Bill Hybels, and Brian McClaren to name a few. Added to this list, I also would include Jim Wallis, Joel Osteen, and Max Lucado. I will be reviewing some their writings, sermons, and transcripts of interviews in the following chapters of this dissertation. However, I will also be looking at other notable Evangelicals' writings and positions of religious right, or fundamentalist Evangelicals, such as Franklin Graham, Richard Land, and James Dobson.

---

[74] David Van Biema, et al. "The Top 25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America," *TIME*, Feb. 7, 2005.

Conclusion: What is the Face of Evangelicalism Today?

There are many faces of Evangelicalism today, and the categories by which to define Evangelicals are increasing as new leaders come into power, new issues come in vogue, and new organizations come to the forefront of marketing. Evangelicals, arguably, share a common goal: to bring "good news" to the world. For Jim Wallis, that news is of social justice to the poor, calling for a radical change among conservatives in beliefs and praxis. Yet, for James Dobson, that news is "truth" he (and others like him) holds about sexuality, gender, and families. In a world where there is increasing globalization and awareness of other realities, Evangelicals now have the luxury to reflect upon a new trajectory of interacting with cultures, even beyond the United States. In the wake of the NCR, Evangelicals have bought Christian "self-help" books by the millions, sought "purpose" and meaning in their own lives, considered changes in their own beliefs and behaviors, and imagined new ways of providing care to the world. It is a time of change, and it is a time of divide. My hope is to capture the worldview especially of "moderate Evangelicals" who regularly attend suburban megachurches and participate in the comprehensive evangelical subculture today.

In this chapter, I took the liberty to trace themes of Evangelicalism. These themes included the dissent against formal religion, the need for a felt religion, the rise of rational and emotional revivals, an experienced sense of grace, and a growing movement of people seeking spiritual renewal and reform. These themes and movements are important to show because Evangelicalism is not a static group of people but a fluid, organic movement that demonstrates basic patterns to define this sector of Christianity. The life, behavior, and subculture of Evangelicals at the turn of the twenty-first century

are best understood in the context of the tradition and history of this movement and its cyclical patterns. To isolate Evangelicals from this context would truncate the historical approach in understanding born-again Christians, particularly from the South.

Likewise, much of this chapter was dedicated to detailed descriptions of the evangelical subculture. The trajectory of growth in Christian publishing, music, education, radio and tv broadcasting, and festivals and conferences were outlined and delineated in order to exhibit the growth of the Christian marketplace, and thusly, the evangelical lifestyle, again, with hubs in the Southeastern region of the United States. Entering into the life-world of the evangelical is a crucial part of understanding their behavior, affect, thought-life, and worldview.

In the next chapter, I hope to explain what, if anything, is characteristically "Southern" about Evangelicalism or "evangelical" about the South. This explanation may better depict the change going on in the broader evangelical movement today.

CHAPTER II

THE SOUTHERNIZATION OF EVANGELICALISM

Introduction

Flannery O'Connor, a prominent Southern fiction writer, once observed that the South is not so much "Christ-centered" as "Christ-haunted." While O'Connor did not elaborate on this overtly in her writings, I will ruminate upon this religious description of the South in considering the culture and the religion of the region. Here, I am concerned with the underpinning mythic and ritual structure that provides a psycho-social framework by which Southerners, across race, may have understood and continue to understand their identity and the distinctive cultural identity of the region, over and against greater America. Given this psycho-social investigation, I want to seek out the "wandering ghost of Jesus" (i.e. conservative Evangelicalism) in the Southern region, as cultural evidence that his presence suffuses the landscape and beyond, affecting greater America.

Where is the South? John Shelton Reid, a renowned Southern historian, states, "The South is where Southerners live." Is it a collection of states? If so, must those states have been a part of the Confederacy? Does it include the Caribbean? Does the weather play a role in signifying what or where we understand the South to be?[75] Is the South

---

[75] Ulrich B. Phillips begins his *Life and Labor in the Old South* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1929) with the following: "Let us begin by discussing the weather," signifying the importance of the climate of the South as a characteristic. Of course, this climate was imperative for cotton, sugar cane, tobacco, and other crops grown to sustain the economy.

defined by its land and agriculture?[76] Where and what is "the Bible Belt?"[77] The South

means different things to different people of different races in different eras. For the

purposes of this work, the South, or being Southern, will be considered less a place and

more a construct. That is, I will focus less on the geographical or political boundaries of

the Southeastern portion of the United States, and more sharply focus on the symbols,

rituals, myths, and realities that constitute the experience and perception of this land and

its people, from what we call the "Old South" unto the "New South." In doing so, I

especially want to explore how and why the South may have become the most

evangelical region in the nation.

In chapter one, the beginnings of Evangelicalism were traced largely to the

Southeastern region of the United States. George Whitefield and the Wesley brothers

launched revivals for the Great Awakening in Georgia, first readers for children

promoted a kind of evangelical Christianity in the nineteenth century, the origins of many

Christian publishing houses were founded in the South (still finding their center in

Nashville, Tennessee), Christian radio finds its highest percentage per capita of listeners,

and Christian music holds its highest concentration of sales. Not only does the Christian

evangelical marketplace find its cultural center in the South, but also the South has been a

political center for the New Christian Right, seeing its rise and fall from the mid-

seventies until the mid-nineties. The seeds of Evangelicalism and the growth of its

---

[76] In the debate regarding the continuity or discontinuity in Southern history and distinctiveness, Carl N. Degler notes that the land, the agriculture, is of prime importance: "Whether one is interested in the early antebellum South or the modern South, the agricultural character of the region is fundamental" in Deglar, "The Foundations of Southern Distinctiveness," in *Southern Review*, vol. XIII no. 2 (April, 1977).

[77] Truman Capote, in his insightful *In Cold Blood* (New York: Vintage International, 1965), describes "the Bible Belt" as "that gospel-haunted strip of American territory in which a man must, if only for business reasons, take his religion with the straightest of faces…therefore a person's church affiliation is the most important factor influencing his class status," 34.

blooms are in the South, and its pollen is spreading throughout the United States. This confirms a part of Egerton's thesis of the "Southernization of America."

In this chapter, I hope to answer how Southern culture has influenced Evangelicalism and then how that Evangelicalism may have influenced Southern culture. There is an interplay of influences in the South among Southern politics, culture(s), history(s), and religion(s). This interplay, including issues of race, constitutes Southern civil religion(s), representing myth, ritual, and symbols of both Whites and Blacks. These Southern civil religions, in turn, have influenced the American civil religion. This being the case, it is important to understand the "messiness" of this interplay of influences in the South and how specific themes, symbols, myths, and rituals have emerged to shape suburban megachurches not only in the South, but across America, today. That is, is there something particularly Southern about the evangelical megachurch phenomenon?

I will examine the origins of oppositional characteristics of the South from the North *as well as* the oppositional characteristics between Evangelicals and the Anglican tradition. Moreover, I will discuss the questions of Southern distinctiveness, continuity, and regionalism of that which we call "Southern," all the while attending to the complexity of understanding the South as a region.

Using John Boles' definition of the South as a bundle of myth, perceptions, and reality, I explore each to get at a better description of the South. This dovetails with an overview of the symbols, myths, and rituals which constitute the Southern civil religions of Black and White communities of faith. Tracing the development of these Southern civil religions and the tensions therein, namely racial, lays a groundwork for understanding multi-ethnic, suburban, non-denominational megachurches in the South.

Themes from these civil religions directly influence, now, the mores, codes, and beliefs of these megachurches, which influence the beliefs of churches across the nation. By contrast, in a comparative analysis, I will briefly review the communities and beliefs of Jews in the New South to understand the regional influence on Reformed communities and the differences between reformed Jews and Evangelicals today.

By excavating these layers of history, complexity, characteristics, and civil religion, I hope to demonstrate a meaningful trajectory of Evangelicalism in the South and how that religious persuasion has been shaped, much like the famous Southern accent(s),[78] or, better yet, like the many genres of music born and shaped in the Southland.

Understanding Southern Culture: Its Origins, (Dis)continuity, Complexity, Oppositional Structure, and a Note on Regionalism

Origins

Perhaps the first ruminations of differences between Southern life and culture in comparison to those of the North were written in a letter by Thomas Jefferson to the Marquis de Chastellux on September 2, 1785. In that letter, he describes northerners as "cool, sober, laborious, persevering, chicaning, superstitious and hypocritical in their religion" while depicting the Southerners as "fiery, voluptuary, indolent, unsteady, candid, and without attachment or pretensions to any religion but that of the heart."[79] Just

---

[78] Samuel S. Hill, Jr., *Southern Churches in Crisis* (New York: Holt Rinehart, and Winston, 1966), devotes a chapter to "The Southern Accent of Religion." He uses a musical metaphor stating that "Southern religion is best delineated as a medley of revivalistic and fundamentalistic strains."

[79] Thomas Jefferson, *Letter to Chastellux*, September 2, 1785: http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/Avalon/jefflett/let34.htm

prior to this letter, in 1781, the Articles of Confederation begin to outline "the South"

elucidating a kind of regionalism. Yet, this regionalism could better be divided between

the East coast and the western frontier than at the Mason-Dixon line. Though both

documents create blurry images of characteristic differences of region, they are the

budding seeds of opposition and regionalism.

(Dis)continuity vs. Distinctiveness in Southern History

Is the South still the South, or did it change inevitably after the Civil War? On the

question of continuity or discontinuity in Southern history, Carl Vann Woodward, a

preeminent Southern historian, argues for the latter. He contends that because there was a

radical rupture in the continuity of Southern history with the advent of desegregation

during the Civil Rights era, the only central theme of the South has been the status of

African-Americans from slavery to civil rights. Moreover, he dispels the myth of

Southern identity and the Southern way of life by asking the question, "Did Jim Crow

really originate in the South?" [80] in *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1974). Martin

Luther King, Jr. often claimed this book was "the historical bible of the Civil Rights

Movement." In this groundbreaking work, Vann Woodward debunks the myth that the

Jim Crow segregation began during the first reconstruction.[81] He suggests that Jim Crow

laws did not originate during the Reconstruction but actually has a more recent origin

from the North, revealing then that desegregation is possible – what is done could be

undone-- because segregation was simply an arbitrary construction. Thus, desegregation

was a very real possibility for the South and for the United States.

---

[80] C.Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974).
[81] Ibid.

In contrast to this argument, Carl Deglar, a Southern historian, contends that there is continuity to Southern history. The land, or agriculture, despite the historical period, for him, is fundamental. Around this central theme, he describes the distinctiveness of a sub-tropical climate, relatively low level of urbanization, and the role of the plantation in shaping a particular Southern experience from the Old South to the New.[82] The focus of agriculture as the foundation of the Southern way of life was written about and defended vigorously by Southern writers after the Great Depression. In *I'll Take My Stand* (1930), twelve Southern writers collaborate with articles "to support a Southern way of life against what may be called the American or prevailing way; and all as much as agree that the best terms in which to represent the distinction are contained in the phrase, Agrarian *versus* Industrial."[83] Another famous Southern writer, W.J. Cash, in his attempt to get at a kind of a Southern stereotype, also writes of the Southern distinctiveness. He compares the South to an old tree:

> The South, one might say, is a tree with many age rings, with its limbs and trunk bent and twisted by all the winds of the years, but with its tap root in the Old South. […] The mind of the section, that is, is continuous with the past. And its primary form is determined not nearly so much by industry as by the purely agricultural conditions of that past.[84]

The land and the way of life have been seen as distinctive and continuous by many. But, the "many" have been mostly those who owned the land: Whites.

---

[82] Carl Deglar, *Place over Time: The Continuity of Southern Distinctiveness* (Baton Rouge: Lousiana State University Press, 1977).

[83] Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition* (Baton Rouge: Lousiana State University Press, 1930), xxxvii.

[84] W.J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: A. Knopf, 1941), x.

Complexity Portrayed in Southern Literature

Southern literature may capture the *essence* of a Southern construction of distinctiveness better than nonfiction writing. For instance, William Falkner's *Absalom! Absalom!* (1936) unveils the world of the Old South on the eve of the Civil War in rural Mississippi. The story of Thomas Sutpen, plantation owner, and his family unfolds to reveal layers of violence, murder, and incest among intricate relationships of family and slaves. This book, perhaps more than any other, reveals the "real" Old South as a wild-west, lawless frontier. Of course, this directly contradicts the conjured images from Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* (1915) with its hoop-skirted women, ballrooms, and cavalier gentlemen sipping mint juleps.

George Washington Cable might very well have been one of the half dozen liberals actually living in the South during the time of the first Reconstruction. His *The Grandissimes* (1880), set mostly in New Orleans, is about three families, the Fusiliers, the De Grapions, and the Grandissimes, who love and fight across a continuum of a racial caste system, hazy lines of desire, and generations of internecine conflict and competition. With a plot set in Louisiana, a spectrum of color and class illuminate the pages to where, like in Faulkner's novels, the reader is left in confusion about who is related to whom, how, and why. This panoply of pigmentation allows for a denser plot in which color lines are blurred in the art of romance. Like Faulkner, it defies the paradigm of the Southern novel which typically maintains binary racial theme.

Writing on the beginnings and jumpstarts of the New South, many Southern authors are able to subtly capture the nuanced cultural characteristics of the states in which they wrote. For instance, Eudora Welty's *The Golden Apples* set in Mississippi;

Peter Taylor's *A Summons to Memphis* in Tennessee; Walker Percy's *The Last Gentleman* partially set in Alabama; or William Styron's *A Tidewater Morning* set in the tidewater region in Virginia, to name a few, are able to seize the nuances of language, manners, and "accent" particular to towns and states. Across state lines and geographical boundaries, the culture proves quite diverse.[85]

Given the elucidation of the complexity of the South by these award-winning authors, we are reminded to move beyond binary oppositions of characteristics in region, race, class, or gender to better describe the constructions, reflections, subtleties, accents, and perceptions of the South and Southern culture in its history.

On Regionalism

For too long, the South has been called "the Solid South." This metaphor mostly addresses the political solidarity from the 1870s until today, but it has also addressed the Southern evangelical religiosity as well. In Samuel Hill's edited volume, *Religion in the Solid South* (1972), the collection of articles addresses the metaphor of the "solid South" and the omission of the Black culture, yet Hill still contends "that there is a South, a self-conscious and publicly identifiable culture."[86] Though Hill nods at two cultures in the South, there is still a question of sustaining a Southern Way of Life in the midst of change, particularly in the New South.

---

[85] Samuel S. Hill, ed., *Religion in the Southern States: A Historical Study* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1983). In the attempt to study the historicity of religion in Southern states, Samuel S. Hill put together a collection of articles to address the particularities of religion in different states yet to address a common cultural cohesion. Though a good attempt at discerning the diversity of the South, plausibly along state lines, there is a difficulty in addressing the religious history of a state. The diversity of persons across areas in a state include various cultures, flavors, and religious affiliations.

[86] Samuel S. Hill Jr., ed., *Religion and the Solid South* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 17.

Edwin Gaustad, in his article, "Regionalism in American Religion" asks, "Is regionalism a unique phenomenon in the Southern United States?"[87] He answers, in fact, that it is not. He then traces from the colonial period unto today how regionalism correlates with religion and ethnicity from the time of the Puritans. Furthermore, he connects religion and ethnicity closely, for example, between the Irish and Presbyterianism or the Germans or Dutch and Lutheranism, showing that "clannishness is as American as apple pie."[88]

Having established this argument, he suggests that perhaps the greatest religious phenomenon evidenced in a region is Mormonism in the west. Furthermore, he contends that the Midwest is associated with Lutheranism and the Northeast is associated with Catholicism. Finally, the South's region is dominated by Evangelicals, namely Baptists. While he does acknowledge the triumvirate of the Baptist-Presbyterian-Methodist hegemony of Southern Evangelicalism for so long, he talks mostly of the Southern Baptists. He also notes minority religious groups as well. This, of course, leaves a gap in the history of the Black Church and its influence on the region, namely the National Baptist Church.

Along similar lines with a different perspective, Andrew Manis claims that Southern Baptists have desired to maintain a distinction of regionalism to perpetuate their reign of Evangelicalism over the South in the attempt to maintain a White homogenous

---

[87] Edwin S. Gaustad, "Religion in American Religion," in *Religion in the South*, ed. Charles Reagan Wilson (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1984).
[88] Ibid, 163.

46

religious hegemony.[89] There seems a tacit, possibly unconscious, racial prejudice in the writings about and of Southern religion.

John Egerton's *The Americanization of Dixie: The Southernization of America* (1974) might have been the first to address the interplay of influences between the South and greater America. To do so, region is implicitly assumed and described. His work is a cornerstone of work on the Southern region, albeit from a pessimistic point of view: "The South and the nation are not exchanging strengths as much as they are exchanging sins; more often than not, they are sharing and spreading the worst in each other, while the best languishes and withers."[90] Regarding religion, as a part of culture, he finds that religion in the South has been the foundation for maintenance of a "solid South." That is to say, Southern religion, and its widespread Evangelicalism by Billy Graham, is inevitably influencing and changing the greater country, but he cynically suggests this is so because he contends that White Americans, predominantly, are seeking stability in a "status quo." Later research done by Mark A. Shibley shows data that supports Egerton's hypothesis. He claims, "virtually all of the membership growth in evangelical churches between 1971-1980 can be attributed to growth in specifically Southern evangelical churches."[91] Thus, the Southern region could be described as the foundation of a movement whose characteristics have affected the growth of evangelical churches and culture across the United States, especially in the latter part of the twentieth century.

---

[89] Andrew Manis, *Southern Civil Religions in Conflict: Civil Rights and the Culture Wars* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2002).

[90] John Egerton, *The Americanization of Dixie: The Southernization of America* (New York: Harper's Magazine Press, 1974), x.

[91] Mark A. Shibley, "The Southernization of American Religion: Testing a Hypothesis," in *Sociological Analysis* 1991, 52:2, 159.

In the attempt to address the difficult issues of consistency, complexity, and consensus to the question of regionalism: "What and where is the South?," John C. Boles describes the South as a conflation of myths, perceptions, and realities.[92] Using this definition as a guide, I discuss characteristics among these categories that tend to be recognized as "Southern" and "evangelical" and examine their influence upon the growth of Evangelicalism in the South.

Interplay of Southern and Evangelical Themes: Myth, Perception, and Reality

Southern Myth: Structure, Story, and Psycho-Social Implications

Drawing from Ferdinand de Saussure's (1959) concepts of structural linguistics, Claude Levi-Strauss identifies the diachronic and synchronic structures in myths. With this analogy, he finds that myths, like language, are arbitrary. In his *Structural Anthropology* (1963), he notes that "Myth is language, functioning on an especially high level where meaning succeeds practically at 'taking off' from the linguistic ground on which it keeps rolling."[93] Stories are diachronic as they move across time and synchronic as they capture a sense of timelessness, just as *langue* conveys a sense of reversible time while *parole* is nonreversible. According to Levi-Strauss, myths can be dissected into grids which show a multiplicity of common binary pairs along the linear story line. These binary pairs, diachronically, make up *gross constituent units*, like phonemes, morphemes, or sememes in language. Ultimately, this grid of gross constituent units can be distilled into binary pairs which typically unveil the basic conundrum of existence: the problem of

---

[92] John B. Boles, "The Dixie Difference," introduction to *Dixie Dateline* (Houston: Rice University Studies, 1983).

[93] Claude Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 210.

life and death. Thus, at the root of myths is a binary pair, creating an oppositional

structure. Contradiction then is an inherent part of the structure of myth and the realities

of Southerners. For example, while Thomas Jefferson proclaims equality for all men, the

realities of the lives of most Southerners, specifically women and Blacks, politically,

economically, and socially, were ones of systemic inequality.

Equality and Inequality:
In the Political, Social, Economic, and Religious Life of Southerners

In the nascent beginnings of colonial life, the colonists attempted to create

language that would actualize a hierarchical system, differentiating between slaves and

servants, Whites and Blacks. Prior to 1705, the Virginia Statutes distinguished English

indentured servants from slaves with the language of "English servants" and "negroes."

As a substitute for "Englishman" (note the lack of inclusive language, but sexism is

another issue), the word "Christian" was often substituted. Thus, in 1705, in Chap. XLIX,

lawmakers defined slaves as non-Christians:

> That all servants imported and brought into this country, by sea or land, who were
> not Christians in their native country (except Turks and Moors in amity with her
> majesty, and others that can make due proof of their being free in England or any
> other Christian country, before they were shipped, in order to transportation
> hither) shall be accounted and be slaves, and as such be bought and sold
> notwithstanding a conversion to Christianity afterwards.[94]

This passage is a crucial indicator of who slaves *are* in terms of whom they *are not:*

'Christian' White servants. Ironically, those who are not slaves would include any

English persons, Europeans (because all countries would have been Catholic), or Turks or

Moors (even though we can probably assume they would have been Muslim). Though not

---

[94] "Virginia Statues, 1630-1705," in *Major Problems in the History of the American South, Vol 1: The Old South, second edition*, ed. Paul D. Escott et al. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), 37.

stated directly, this leaves Africans, notably West Africans, to identify with the word

'slave.' Defined as such, they received sub-human status as evidenced that 'slaves' could

be bought or sold, stripping them of any agency or volition, including any right to

potentially gain liberty or property. To be a servant, on the other hand, one must be 'born

into' Christianity, as it were.

From *The Interesting Narrative* (1789) of Olaudah Equiano and other journals

from Africans, we know that many converted to Christianity during the seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries upon exposure to the European 'God' and religion. However, for

Virginia lawmakers, the definition of the word 'Christian' was simply a coding for

'White.' Kathleen Brown notes, "Throughout the seventeenth century, the word

"Christian" surfaced in the laws of Virginia when the English wanted a self-referential

term to distinguish their own powers, privileges, and rights from the burdens,

punishments, and legal disabilities of the peoples they hoped to dominate."[95] The

construction of an arbitrary, legal language of well-known words in the English language

to create a dichotomous divide between 'Whites' and 'Blacks' served the purpose of

protecting Anglo-Virginian families in this new colony both economically and socially.

About one hundred years later, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, in the

writings of the *Declaration of Independence*, Thomas Jefferson puts forth, "We hold these

truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their

Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of

Happiness."[96] Representing the South, Thomas Jefferson advanced the American ideal of

---

[95] Kathleen Brown, "Gender and Race in Colonial Virginia," in *Major Problems in the History of the American South, Vol 1: The Old South, second edition*, ed. Paul D. Escott et al. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), 55.
[96] Thomas Jefferson, *The Declaration of Independence*, July 4, 1776: http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/declaration_transcript.html

democracy in perhaps the most important document in American history. In the wake of the American Revolution, Congress believed in a government ruled by the people and for the people. The individual was respected and equality cherished. In fact, these very ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, of a government led by the people, fueled a notion of a 'declaration of independence' with the secession of the South, as it had ignited America to secede from Britain.

Jefferson may be the paragon of contradiction, oppositional thinking, and the "split" planter within Southern history. His writings for equality, opportunity, and liberty for all admittedly excluded both African-Americans and women. Though seemingly progressive in his Enlightenment ideals, he shows signs of cognitively struggling with contradictory notions in thought and practice both as the writer of the Declaration of Independence and as a slave owner. He reveals his sense of guilt and anxiety over the future of America as justice becomes a reality:

> Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: […] an exchange of situation [between Whites and Blacks] is among possible events: that it may become probable by supernatural interference![…]The spirit of the master is abating, that of the slave rising from the dust, his condition mollifying, the way I hope preparing…for a total emancipation, and that his is disposed, in the order of events, to be with the consent of the masters, rather than by their extirpation.[97]

Jefferson prophesies a revolution in the future, yet he guiltily recognizes that freedom for slaves, though just, elicits fear for him and other "masters" for the process of emancipation. At the time, slavery was more predominantly represented in the Southern region but it existed throughout the nation. The South, of course, would be blamed for upholding inequality as it pertains to race.

---

[97] Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia: Query on Manners (1787)" in *The Literature of the American South: A Norton Anthology*, William L. Andrews, et al. eds. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 199), 52-53.

During the mid to late eighteenth century, Evangelicalism advanced among the Baptists. They, alongside the slaves, sought a "felt" religion that was not entwined with political affairs, ruled by the English, or mandated by priests or bishops. In keeping with the basic characteristics defining the Evangelical movement, renewal, revival, and reform, those seeking *more* from their religious establishment, albeit against the grain of the dominant politics and religion of the time, stood for their differing values and experience. Thus was born, in the back country of the South, a more democratic, egalitarian religion by which all were equal in the eyes of God. And that religion dominated the Southerners' worldview: "Southern religion as a gestalt, a whole, a belief system that helped many sorts of men and women make sense of a world" for the Old South.[98]

Not only did the visionary language of egalitarianism and equality pervade politics, but it also represented the rhetoric of Evangelicalism in the South. The ideology being that once one is "saved," one is a child of God; and all are equal in the eyes of God. As Donald Mathew (1977) describes well, the key demarcation of "being saved" in Evangelicalism was testimony to the conversion experience. The church was perhaps the first arena in which Whites and Blacks could hold the ideological beliefs of equality, because everyone, across race and gender, had access to the experience of the regeneration of the Spirit. In fact, Evangelicals felt it was incumbent upon them to take on the responsibility to "save" slaves from sin and damnation in order to experience a conversion.

However, planters did become nervous with this growing religion in the Southland. Though Methodists and Baptists began to promote abolitionism, this was a

---

[98] Donald Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), xi.

very, very brief period. Many of these liberal agendas were quieted in the pulpits by the financial threats from the pews. Thus, whereas the church could have been a leader in fighting for emancipation for slaves, the prophetic voice was suppressed in the White church. When push came to shove, the White Evangelicals would defend slavery and reject political or economic equality for Blacks. To explain this "principle of inequality," they would liken the societal economic structure to that of the "Christian" family. Wherein the Christian home, the male is the head of the household and the wife and children subordinate, in society, slaves are subordinate, like children, to their masters.[99] This principle could also explicate the ideology of paternalism in the South. This is a first example of what many writers mean in describing the "schizophrenic" mentality of Southerners: believing and promoting one ideology while practicing the very opposite.

The South and Social Narcissism: An Honor/Shame Culture

The South has commonly been mislabeled as a "schizophrenic" region. Schizophrenia is a serious biochemical brain disorder by which psychotic patients experience an alternate reality outside of a normal world. Thus, not only is the folk diagnosis of the Southern region as schizophrenic inaccurate, but also it has proven to be a harmful assessment of the people as reflected to regions outside the South. While I find schizophrenia to be an exaggerated assumption, I think a more accurate assessment of Southern culture could include social narcissism.

Christopher Lasch (1978) describes American society as a culture of narcissism. As a subset of this assessment about American culture, I would argue that the polarized dichotomy of grandiosity and shame has strong roots in the "honor/shame culture" of the

---

[99] Ibid., 169.

South. Perhaps the greatest symbol is the replica of the Parthenon in Nashville, the Athens of the South, epitomizing the "honor/shame culture." Like that of the Hellenistic culture, romantic notions of honor including the academy, women, manners, and military affairs shaped the minds in the Southern region. Whites in the South for centuries lived at the pinnacle of the hierarchical pyramid for race and class.

At the top of this pyramid the infamous White male planter ruled. Beneath him, the White wife and the White children lived lives between the father and the slaves. John Crowe Ransom, in his famous essay, "Reconstructed but Unregenerate," differentiates between yeoman farmers and planters and/or politicians in his comment on Southern culture: "It is my thesis that all were committed to a form of leisure, and that their labor itself was leisurely. The only Southerners who went abroad to Washington and elsewhere, and put themselves into the record, were those from the top of the pyramid."[100] When he says "all," however, he means "White men only." One problem with his article (and book) is the omission of Black Southern culture when depicting "Southern culture" or the "Southern way of life." Nonetheless, he proffers a depiction of Southern status as pyramid to which we can expand. This pyramid illustrates the spectrum of the culture from the grandiosity and honor of the planter to the shame of those who were oppressed beneath him. The irony is that the *planter* experiences extreme anxiety given his hierarchical position as well as a sense of shame for his power. This also is evidenced in Southern literature such as Faulkners's *Go Down, Moses* (1940), Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher," or Peter Taylor's "Venus, Cupid, Folly, and Time."

---

[100] John Crowe Ransom, "Reconstructed but Unregenerate," in *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1930), 14.

Evangelicals in the eighteenth century sought a different kind of honor than that sought by the Anglicans of the day. While those seeking status politically and economically found honor worshipping among the Anglican denomination, especially connected to the gentry of Britain, Evangelicals relinquished their pride and sought a different kind of honor in their personal experiences with God. As Christine Leigh Heyrman demonstrates in her *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (1997), it was a long, slow journey for Evangelicals to truly gain the respect of the greater society. For many years, much stigma was attached to marriages, friendships, business, and other engagements with this pious group. Evangelicals struggled for credibility and eventually succeeded through education, their rise in class and status, and the growth of Evangelicalism itself in the South.[101]

Given that myth is based upon a set of binary oppositions, usually revealing the basic puzzle of life and death, the myth of the South – in all its grandeur and in all its shame – rests upon the rudimentary binary oppositions of equality/inequality, White/Black, freedom/oppression, rich/poor, and honor/shame. From these contradictions arise the myths of the South as a construction.

Southern Perception: Oppositional Southern Culture

Historian C. Vann Woodward understands both the first and second reconstructions as defeats for Southern Americans.[102] He presents his own interpretation of Southern cultural myth by contrasting American national characteristics with Southern regional characteristics. In doing so, he sets up a triad of binary oppositions. Where

---

[101] Heyrman, *Southern Cross*, 1997.
[102] C. Vann Woodward, "The Search for Southern Identity," in *The Burden of Southern History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1960).

America has experienced *affluence, victory,* and *innocence*, the South has experienced *poverty, defeat,* and *guilt*. With this structure, he "defines Southern identity in terms of what he called the 'collective historical experiences' of the 'Southern people.'"[103] This structure, however, blindly assumes that both the American and the Southern identity and experience are White.

To briefly deconstruct the myth of America, *affluence* could be challenged by the notable experience of Americans working in factories, mills, and coal mines or even the experience of the Great Depression; *victory* could be challenged by our experience of attack by Pearl Harbor; and our nation's *innocence* was lost in the slaughter and exile of Native Americans who lived upon the land that Americans were determined to own.

Conversely, regarding Black Southern culture, the rise of jazz, the blues, gospel music, and even rock 'n' roll prove a *wealth* of artistic genius in the region; the Emancipation Proclamation was a celebration of freedom among African-Americans as *victory* at the end of centuries of oppression; and Blacks were *innocent* by way of overtly participating in oppression in the Peculiar Institution or persecution in Jim Crow. In spite of this deconstruction, Woodward's writing does capture the White assumptions among the arenas of academics, politics, and economics in this era regarding the Southern regional experience.

Larry Griffin also notes Woodward's oppositional structure of identity for the South in his "Why Was the South a Problem?"[104] He highlights the construction of Southern regional identity by both Southerners and Americans alike in understanding the South as the "mythic opposite" of America. Embellishing upon Woodward's construction

---

[103] Larry Griffin, Lecture notes: The South and American Culture, 3/24/04.
[104] Larry J. Griffin and Don H. Doyle, eds., *The South as an American Problem* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995).

as well as the cultural myth inherent within the Southern civil religion, Griffin widens the

mythic structure across race and class:

> The end of slavery did not mean the demise of the pejorative and unflattering myths constructing, intentionally or otherwise, the South as an American problem. Other such myths rapidly followed: the myths of the poor White trash, "cracker," and the redneck South; the myths of White supremacist and demagogic South; and the myths of the savage and benighted and Gothic Souths. The "American Dream," apparently, neither included nor described the South.[105]

The Southern cultural myth has held great impact upon both White and Black Southern

identity. In this way, the American South came to receive oppositional defining

characteristics and oppositional ideals than that assumed to be reflected by greater

America. This opposition for the South led to a "separate" identity, a seemingly

rebellious one refusing to align with the greater values of American society.

This oppositional construction does bear semblance to the structure of myth,

shrouding the South's complex regional identity with simple, binary characteristics which

allowed the American South to serve as a scapegoat for the nation at large, especially

with issues of race, retarding American ideals. The irony that emerges among the

dichotomous structure of the definition of the American South is that some prominent

Southerners, Black and White, such as Jefferson or DuBois, did lead the nation in the

shaping of the American ideals of equality, progress, and liberty.

On the issue of racism, Southern prophet and writer, the Reverend Will Campbell,

calls all Whites "racist:" "What must be understood is that all Whites, not just rednecks,

are racist because racism is the condition in and structure under which we live and move

and have our being."[106] Simply by being White, one is a racist, because racism is a

---

[105] Ibid., 20.
[106] Will Campbell, "Used and Abused: The Redneck's Lot," in *The Prevailing South: Life and Politics in a Changing Culture*, ed. Dudley Clendinen (Atlanta: Longstreet Press, 1988), 93.

structural problem in the United States. His comment hints at a background in Calvinism,

suggesting that all suffer from what neo-Calvinists call "total depravity." Yet, this leaves

question to those who are born bi-racial, those born as offspring of Cherokee Native

Americans, and those born among the various castes and degrees of color in the Deep

South. How and to what degree are they racist?

Another common perception of the South is that of laziness. William Byrd II, a

Southern "gentleman" who was writing just prior to Thomas Jefferson states, "Surely

there is no place in the World where the Inhabitants live with less Labor than in N

Carolina. It approaches nearer to the Description of Lubberland than any other, by the

great felicity of the Climate, the easiness of raising Provisions, and the Slothfulness of the

People."[107] Roughly a generation later, novelist John Pendleton Kennedy describes his

protagonist, a country gentleman, in *Swallow Barn* (1832) as the following: "Good cheer

and good temper both tell well upon him. The first has given him a comfortable full

figure, and the latter certain easy, contemplative habits, that incline him to be *lazy* and

philosophical" [italics mine].[108] The image and perception of Old South planters was that

of a slow and lazy lifestyle. Arguably, the Southern region continues to fight this

perception in corollary areas of education, political acumen, and religious values in spite

of the industrialization and technological advancement of the New South.

---

[107] William Byrd II, *The History of the Dividing Line* in *The Literature of the American South*, ed. William L. Andrews et al. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998), 33. "Lubberland" was "an imaginary land of plenty without labor."
[108] John Pendleton Kennedy, *Swallow Barn* in *The Literature of the American South*, ed. by William L. Andrews et al. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998), 62.

According to the Census of Agriculture in 1860, however, actually fewer than twenty five percent of households owned slaves.[109] To be considered a "planter," one owned more than twenty slaves. Planters, then, constituted *only three percent* of free households [italics mine].[110] The majority of Whites in the South until the time of the emancipation were simply poor, White yeoman farmers who had little if any slaves in their household. And given that in 1860 only seven percent of Southerners lived in towns or cities, this was the basic lifestyle of White Southerners.

Of course, Black Southerners, until 1865, served as slaves on farmland, giving their lives and their family to working the land and serving their masters. Only a small percentage of African-Americans were given the status of a "free-person," one typically found in cities and the upper South. Therefore, the perception of the lazy White gentleman sipping tea while enjoying the afternoon, generally, is, for our purposes, a false one. The majority of Southerners, White and Black alike, fought to produce cotton, sugar cane, and tobacco needed to sell in order simply to put food on the table. By the time of the crossroad merchant, this was certainly true. Laziness was not an option for most.

Positive images of Southern grits and cuisine, country, gospel, jazz and blues music, and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Civil Rights Movement have been a contribution to America and to the world. Unfortunately, the negative images of slaves, the Aunt Jemima symbol, the symbol of cotton and agriculture, lynching and the violence against Blacks, the death of Emmit Till, and the dire poverty of Whites and Blacks in the Delta, to name

---

[109] Joseph C.G. Kennedy, *Agriculture in the United States in 1860: compiled from the original returns of the eighth census, under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior*, Vol. 17 (New York: Norman Ross Publishers, 1990), 247.
[110] The definition of planter and slaveholder herein comes from James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1982), xvi.

a few, haunt the nation. More recently, images of the rise of the new Christian Right

through Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, and even Franklin Graham as religious leaders of

the South provide a kind of characterization of religion and politics in the region. These

are images that have become metaphors to the nation and to the world. The South, more

negatively portrayed than not, is known for its violence and its racism.

Southern Reality: A Place of Violence, Change, and Waning Identity

In the midst of postmodernity, many scholars have questioned reality as a

collection of individual perceptions. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann contrast

positivism to the interpretive approach.[111] Whereas in positivism, the researcher assumes

a stable environment with neutral observations, the interpretive approach assumes a

complex, changing situation with observations skewed by bias. Instead of assuming there

is one objective, measurable reality, Berger, Luckmann, and others contend that there are

multiple realities: "There is not one reality out there to be measured; objects and events

are understood by different people differently, and those perceptions are the reality—or

realities—that social science should focus on."[112] With this interpretive approach, we can

assume that different cultures and people in the South viewed their experiences

differently. However, in the attempt to move past perception, I want to align the meaning

of reality with that of "fact," empirically, justifiable observations. Thus, in doing so, I

draw from statistics to have a better grasp on these "multiple realities" of the South.

---

[111] Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966).

[112] Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (London: SAGE Publications, 1995), 35.

The fact is that Southern cities continue to be the most violent in the country. For example, in 2003, the "FBI Report of Offenses Known to Law Enforcements" shows that in Atlanta, murder rates were 4.52 times higher than the national average and forcible rape was 1.79 times the national average.[113] Since the years of brutal slavery to the height of lynching from 1882-1930, Blacks have suffered the onslaught of physical violence from Whites across the South.[114] The most prominent symbol of violence in the South is that of the Ku Klux Klan, founded in 1865 in Pulaski, TN by a small fraternity of attorneys resisting Reconstruction. Their gang violence across the region, from the Reconstruction until most notably the deaths of the four little girls in the Sixteenth Avenue Baptist church in Birmingham, has led to the tortuous deaths of many innocent Blacks.

The misidentified schizophrenia which might better be called social narcissism, eliciting anxiety, has held a psychological, sociological, and even physical toll upon all Southerners. The anxiety of change, economically, spiritually, or socially, has been fought at every turn across race and class. Violence has arisen wherever liberty has been sought. For instance, consider the uprising of Whites from the backcountry against the Anglican/British governmental rule in seventeenth century; the few uprisings from slaves against the planters; the secession from the Union and the War between the States; the uprising of Southerners against the occupation of Northern militia in the South for order after the war; the struggle against the land and their owners in sharecropping; and the uprising for civil liberties among Black Southerners to create the Civil Rights Movement.

---

[113] Atlanta Crime Statistics: http://www.cityrating.com/citycrime.asp?city=Atlanta&state=GA
[114] For anecdotal and statistical evidence of lynching in the South, see Jacqueline Jones Royster, ed., *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1997).

There have been much anxiety and much struggle for freedom in the South, and we are still in the mires of that struggle.

Numan Bartley, in his *The New South, 1945-1980: The Story of the South's Modernization* (1995)*,* shows the hope of the South in its technological advancement, rise in business, movement for civil rights, and religious reform. While racism and violence are a part of the South's history and culture, the face of the South is changing—however Janus it may be.[115] Peter Applebome, in the tradition of Egerton, also discusses the increasing influence of the South upon American culture in his *Dixie Rising: How the South is Shaping American Values, Politics, and Culture* (1996).[116] As the two are deeply entwined, he discusses how now the South is "rising again,"so to speak, in religion, politics, economics, and culture.

In *religion*, Applebome describes the nondenominational, interracial mega-churches which dot the Southern landscape, from Houston to Nashville, which serve as models for charismatic, conservative churches across America. In *politics*, he talks about the rise of Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and George Bush, all emerging from Southern states to take the seat of President, highlighting the power of the House of Representatives and Senate with Rep. Tom Delay and Sen. Bill Frist.[117] For a period, the South has had a strong voice of leadership now in the United States government. In *economics*, he notes the rise of industry in the Sunbelt with the concomitant modernization and urbanization of the South since WWII. Some of the leading

---

[115] Numan V. Bartley, *The New South 1945-1980: The Story of the South's Modernization* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995).
[116] Applebome, *Dixie Rising,*1996.
[117] Of course, with the arrest and resignation of Rep. Delay from the House of Representatives, leaders have been shuffled since the writing of this dissertation. Also, Sen. Bill Frist will have stepped down from his position in December 2006.

corporations across a diversity of industries now reign from the South, including Coca-Cola, Delta airlines, automobile plants (i.e. Nissan, Mercedes), and CNN. Finally, regarding *culture*, he shows that the South now may offer better music, better food, and better vacations. Country music, growing by leaps and bounds, is now an international export.[118] Cracker Barrels are being built in the nationwide, and the South now offers new spots for vacations. Northerners flock to Florida: Seaside in Destin and Disneyworld in Orlando. Given these tourist attractions coupled with their sought after cuisine, the South now is a destination for many Americans who once might have considered it a punishment to travel through the region.

Conversely, with the advent of Hurricane Katrina in September 2005, the South has been under the microscope of America once again, revealing the ugliness of economic inequalities, especially pertaining to race. The underbelly of the South's glossy new image was brought to light. Hopefully these horrifying images will demonstrate the need for change as a result of the tragic consequences of racial and class divide. This, of course, calls to question Applebome's thesis. Which South is shaping American culture? And, which South is still existing in the mire of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, and violence?

In Gregory Paul's study on quantifiable societal health in correlation with religiosity and secularism, he unveils the harrowing fact that typically, in a community of faith, the greater the Fundamentalism, the higher the society dysfunction:

> There is evidence that within the U.S. strong disparities in religious belief versus acceptance of evolution are correlated with similarly varying rates of societal dysfunction, the strongly theistic, anti-evolution south and mid-west having

---

[118] Country music accounted for 11.7% of total albums sold; it was the only genre of music reporting an increase in sales for 2004:
http://www.countrymusic.org/media/pdf/marketing/2005_Industry_Overview.pdf

> markedly worse homicide, mortality, STD, youth pregnancy, marital and related problems than the northeast where societal conditions, secularization, and acceptance of evolution approach European norms And both correspond with the societal dysfunctions listed, especially pertaining to sex and sexuality.[119]

Thus there does seem a correlation between the lack of education on sexuality and the rise of pregnancies and STDs, including HIV/AIDS. This study brings to light the shadow side of Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism, and the systemic harm it is causing its regional inhabitants.

Regarding one's *identification* with the South, Southerners do more strongly identify with their region or claim their region or hometown than do Northerners. Larry Griffin and Ashley Thompson, in their article, "Enough about the Disappearing South, what about the Disappearing Southerner," show that there is a growing trend, however slight, that Southerners are no longer identifying with the South, Southern culture, and the Southern region as they once did. "According to the polls, Southern identity has fallen, on average, about 0.7 of a percentage point per year since 1991, from a high percentage in the upper 70s eleven years ago to a (predicted) low hovering at 70 percent in 2001."[120] They attribute this decline to the rise in diversity and the decline in the traditional demographic base of the "imagined community" of a "symbolic Southernness."[121]

Even with the slight decline, the majority still clings to a kind of Southern identification. Characteristics which are traditionally considered Southern may include the following: infatuation with storytelling, 25-43 percent claim to be evangelical

---

[119] Gregory S. Paul, "Cross-National Correlations of Quantifiable Society Health with Popular Religiosity and Secularism in Prosperous Democracies: A First Look," in *Journal of Religion and Society* 7 (2005).
[120] Larry J. Griffin and Ashley B. Thompson, "Enough about the Disappearing South: What About the Disappearing Southerner?" in *Southern Cultures*, Fall 2003: 58.
[121] Ibid., 52.

Protestants,[122] more Southerners stay in the South for college, and of course, the weather offers a much warmer climate. Specifically focusing on the high percentage of evangelical Protestants, the highest percentage per region in the country, I will discuss the rise of civil religions among Evangelicals in the South and their influence upon Southern culture.

Southern Civil Religions

Robert Bellah describes his theory of civil religion in an article written in 1967, suggesting that a "civil religion" exists in the United States as a kind of confluence of symbols in religion and politics. He calls this confluence the "American Way of Life," which "actually exists alongside of and rather clearly differentiated from the churches an elaborate and well-institutionalized civil religion in America."[123] This "umbrella" theory has served as a catalyst for writings on regional civil religions, especially the Southern civil religions, both different from and similar to an American civil religion.

If a civil religion as a kind of "sacred canopy" [124] exists and pervades the United States with symbols giving meaning to history and the future, then a civil religion could exist in the South. For the United States, these symbols may include the flag, swearing on the Bible in court, or saying the pledge of allegiance ("one nation under God") as symbols of patriotism as they also include religious imagery and language. With this foundation, Charles R. Wilson, writes his *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1910* (1980). In this work, Wilson marries history with religion to illustrate

---

[122] *American Religious Data Archive*, Evangelical Denominations, Rates of adherence per 1000 of population (2000): http://www.thearda.com/mapsReports/reports/advanced.asp

[123] Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," in *Daedalus*. 117, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 97.

[124] Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (Boston: Anchor Books, 1990) coined the term "sacred canopy" in writing about the civil religion in America and the impending rise of secularization.

the Southern cultural myth in the aftermath of the Civil War. He suggests that

Southerners blended Southern political symbols and figures with Christian language and

images to create a cultural identity. The myths and rituals surrounding this great crisis of

loss in the region, for him, constituted a Southern civil religion. This religion provided a

sense of meaning amid meaninglessness and a sense of hope amid hopelessness.

Moreover, this civil religion provided an identity for White Southerners who were trying

to understand who they were and where they were going.

At the end of the Civil War, there was some four billion dollars lost in the cotton

industry overnight due to the loss of man-power via the emancipation of slaves, issues of

inflation, etc.[125] Carpetbaggers from the north and scalawags from the south swooped

down upon yeoman and planters alike to buy up land, ravaging the region economically.

The Confederate dollar was worth pennies, and many were left with nothing. Socially, it

was a time of confusion for Whites because slavery had for so long defined and

determined the social relations and structure of the South. Spiritually, Northerners were

traveling south to "convert" Southerners to a better, truer kind of Christianity. And,

politically, the South was occupied with Northern troops with Northern leadership.

Whites suffered defeat at every turn. The "Religion of the Lost Cause" served as a

palliative to these crises. Wilson writes the following:

> To distinguish it from other meanings, one can label the religious interpretation of
> the Lost Cause as the myth of the Crusading Christian Confederates[…] Realizing
> that Confederate defeat jeopardized what they believed to be essentially religious
> and moral values, Southern preachers developed a set of symbols of virtue and an
> overarching myth which embodied the threatened values."[126]

---

[125] Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of Slavery* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co, 1974).
[126] Wilson, *Baptized in Blood,* 37.

66

The religious myth of the Lost Cause had all the elements of a good fairy tale, even beginning "once upon a time." There was a golden age before the war where all the land was peaceful and prosperous in the "Old South." Heroes abounded, from seemingly obscure soldiers to the leaders in battle, and they fought at home and abroad for their beautifully pure damsels in distress. The good Confederates were fighting the evil Union soldiers, and God was on *their* side. After the Civil War, the ministers propagated this grand myth as they alluded to figures serving in the war as examples of moral courage, martyrs for their land. For instance, Robert E. Lee was likened to Christ, and Stonewall Jackson was considered an Old Testament prophet.[127] It is important to note that though the Southern cultural myth held Southern heroes, symbols, and images, the structure and story was not unlike that of the American cultural myth after the American Revolution, save the outcome of war, of course. Thus, White Evangelical churches in the South, due to their nature, were ripe institutions for propagating the "Religion of the Lost Cause" after the Civil War because their worship services were less liturgical, doctrines less rigid, and rhetoric more malleable than that of the Episcopal or Catholic churches. (It should be noted that the Religion of the Lost Cause, however, infiltrated White Southern churches across denomination.) And, as Samuel Hill, the Southern historian, notes, "the doctrine of assurance [was] the touchstone of Southern Evangelicalism."[128]

John B. Boles (1985) describes the importance of Evangelicalism as a civil religion in the Old South:

---

[127] See John R. Thompson's "The Burial of Latane" in *The Southern Amaranth* ed. by Sallie A. Brock (New York: Wilcox and Rockwell, 1969), 483-485 for a good example of the usage of Christian metaphorical imagery: the soldier as the dead Christ, transfiguration, and women's role in mourning.
[128] Hill, *Southern Churches in Crisis*, xiv. Also note that the great Southern hymn "Blessed Assurance" was written by Fanny J. Crosby in 1873, during the first Reconstruction.

> Evangelical religion was an essential component of Southern life and culture for bond and free, male and female. Through the immediate fellowship of the local congregation it provided community to belong to, it mediated tensions between the races and the classes, it made life seem less inexplicable and tragedy more acceptable, and it provided an initial building block for Southern identity and eventual Southern nationalism.[129]

Boles' idealistic picture of Evangelicalism, however, seems to hold seeds of racism and systemic inequality.

The South had lost. Or had it? C. R. Wilson writes about the religion of the Lost Cause from the perspective of the Whites, but what about Blacks? For them, the war was not a lost cause, but in fact, it was a seeming victory. The religion of the Lost Cause may have been (and may still be) pervasive, but only among White churches and White communities. Though placating, this mythic structure was a weak, delusional fantasy by which to mentally compensate for the "raping" of the South after the Civil War: physically, economically, socially, and spiritually. However, it was a necessary illusion for White Southerners to maintain a sense of pride, integrity, and identity amidst the collapse of their pyramid.[130] The cultural myth here, though directed toward the North, had inevitable implications of retribution sought upon Southern Blacks. It seems that the basic mythic structure, as noted above, existed as a Southern civil religion among Whites as a response against the North, but it was the Southern Blacks that served as the scapegoat, who bore the brunt of the practices and rituals that followed the myth. Much work could be done to further illustrate an emerging civil religion among the Black Church in the wake of the Civil War.

---

[129] John B. Boles, "Evangelical Protestantism in the South" in C.R. Wilson, ed., *Religion in the South* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1985), 33.

[130] Weston La Barre, in his *The Ghost Dance: The Origins of Religion*, (New York: A Delta Book, 1970), contends that a "ghost dance" is any and every religious movement which arises out of a period of crisis and stress: "All religions had their origins in a crisis cult," 345. His thesis fits well here with the emergence of Wilson's "Religion of the Lost Cause" or perhaps the southern civil religion of white southerners.

As this predominantly White, Southern civil religion based upon cultural myth began to take shape, White Southerners began to institute practices to dramatize this myth. Because slavery had been abolished, Southerners had to find alternative modes to revitalize their way of life while circumventing federal law. *Economically*, Whites turned to sharecropping by which they could strap African-Americans and poor Whites to land through increased debt. *Legally*, Whites created absurd state laws to position impossible obstacles for African-Americans to overcome in order to vote. These included poll taxes, random dates by which they had to register to vote, literacy tests, grandfather laws, and other forms of trickery. Also, new Jim Crow laws were written by which to separate the races for transportation, business, schools, and leisure. In fact, the Jim Crow laws snowballed to where life in the South, publicly, was utterly separate for Blacks and Whites. Finally, *socially*, a myriad of mores were taught both intuitively and overtly to Whites and Blacks about how to behave around other races. Eye contact, passing on the street, entrance to homes, entrance to businesses, greetings, closings, and gender dialogue are only a few of the different contexts by which very particular kinds of behavior were expected. If these behaviors were not followed, economically, politically, or socially, violence upon Blacks ensued—often in the form of the ritual of lynching.

Andrew Manis provides a critique of C.R. Wilson's *Baptized in Blood* and questions a counter model of Southern civil religion for Blacks after the civil war.[131] Rather than pursuing this line of research, however, he finds it more important to talk about conflicting civil religions in the South, Black and White, during the Civil Rights era. The nexus of this conflict of civil religions, he contends, is desegregation.[132] Upon

---

[131] Manis, *Southern Civil Religions in Conflict*, 2002.
[132] Ibid., 7.

delineating the milieu of the second Reconstruction era, Manis demonstrates two separate

kinds of civil religions: the Black prophetic religion and the White religion of status quo.

More specifically, he focuses upon the National Baptist church and the Southern Baptist

church. Both, he argues, were very "American." As Blacks strategically aligned with the

federal government to subvert the political structure of the South, they also aligned with

the American civil religions, notions including a "Christian nation," "city on a hill," and

"manifest destiny." Moreover, Blacks sought a pluralistic nation where equality could be

attained in the "salad bowl" of American life.

The White church, however, maintained a divide between American civil religion

and Southern civil religion to maintain a sense of regional identity, including the

oppression of Blacks. He argues that Southern White religion sought an Anglo-Saxon

nation of Protestant homogeneity. "The hope and the specter of desegregation thus

became the focal point of the South's conflict of civil religions."[133] Not unlike Flannery

O'Connor's view of the "Christ-haunted South," Andrew Manis also sees the ghosts of

racism in the South arising. These ghosts allure White religion to a moribund past of

slavery, seemingly a Golden Age, while the reality of the possibility of Blacks and

Whites living, learning, working, worshiping, and being together, in full equality, lies

upon the horizon.

During the Civil Rights era, the South was viewed as "the whipping boy," the

region who embarrassed the nation to the rest of the world (especially in the aftermath of

World War II) with its racial violence and strict Jim Crow laws as well as its scenes from

the persecution of Blacks in Birmingham (images of dogs, water hoses, and committing

violence among peaceful demonstrations). While African-Americans needed the federal

---

[133] Ibid., 125.

aid and law enforcement to succeed with justice, African-Americans also, namely Martin Luther King, Jr., were also able to offer fresh meanings and fresh perspectives to American civil religious symbols. Recovering Old Testament symbols and language, they infused a prophetic voice in American religion again for the cause of freedom. This dance between religion and politics culminated for Blacks in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Rituals included the marches on Washington in 1940 and again in 1963 with over 250,000 people, sit-ins at lunch counters—mostly driven by college students, community protests, demonstrations, and campaigns, all directed with the philosophy of non-violence.

David Chappell, in his nuanced *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* (2004), demonstrates how the power of prophetic religion among the Black community, built upon a foundation of Northern liberal theological understandings, was able to fuel Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Black church with belief and power that ultimately defeated White Southern civil religion and its weak underpinnings.[134] He understands the Civil Rights Movement as a liminal period of religious revival by which political and religious leaders danced and clashed until the final ordinances of civil rights and desegregation were implemented. He also shows the subtle interweaving of the socio-political agendas with religious rhetoric and rituals surrounding the juggernaut of desegregation. In the end, the haunting ghosts of slavery and segregation were defeated and the ideals of equality, opportunity, and liberty prevailed. Segregation was defeated within public spaces, schools, and occupations, but even now the most segregated time is still Sunday morning, as Martin Luther King, Jr. once noted. Ironically, however, today it

---

[134] David Chappell, *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

is the charismatic, evangelical nondenominational churches which are leading the way for church desegregation.

Lewis Baldwin, in his article, "To Witness in Dixie," traces the influence of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s influence upon the New South and upon Southern civil religion.[135] Like Manis, he finds much evidence to suggest continued conflict between White Southern religion and Black Southern religion, despite the incredible influence King has held on the politicization of churches in the south, images of faith, and symbols of liberation. For instance, there are continued acts of White-on-Black racial violence, evidenced by the lynching in Mobile, Alabama, of Michael Donald in 1981 and the death of James P. Byrd in Jasper, Texas, dragged to death by a car. There is continued conflict over the abandonment or the upholding of the Confederate flag as a symbol. There is also conflict over where and how "Dixie" can be sung and the meanings that are implied therein. Though the New South has increased in industry and economic development, on the whole, many Blacks have been shut out of this advancement. Residential segregation continues a kind of segregation in public schools. And, politically, as the election in 2004 showed all too well, the White South voted Republican while the Black South voted Democratic.

Baldwin also talks about the "politics of silence" which plays a role in the conflict. By not serving as an advocate for voices who continue to testify to their marginalization and experience of prejudice, one is equally culpable of discrimination as if one were a participant in the act itself. Avoiding or contending against legislation for

---

[135] Lewis V. Baldwin, "To Witness in Dixie: King, The New South, and Southern Civil Religion," in *The Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.: The Boundaries of Law, Politics, and Religion* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002).

affirmative action and using coded language to talk about race plays a role in the conflict against African-Americans as well.

James Davison Hunter, in his *Culture Wars* (1991), explicates two opposing groups in America today across religion and politics: the orthodox and the progressive.[136] The orthodox, he describes as adhering to biblical literalism, absolutism, strict morality, and orthodox beliefs. Their issues include a stand *against* homosexuality, teaching of evolution in schools, sex education, and the pro-choice movement. The progressive, on the other hand, seemingly adheres to liberal beliefs, allows for secularism, welcomes diversity, and holds more relative positions on issues of sexuality. While the language of "wars" may be extreme, Hunter does describe a kind of conflict going on in America today. This conflict continues to evidence itself, such as in the 2004 elections, the possibility of a constitutional amendment against domestic marriages, the role of the government in the death of Terry Shaivo, the issue of cloning, and stem cell research. Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, notes these issues and others in *Imagine! A God-Blessed America* (2005), sharpening his position in the liberal-conservative debates. These conflicts are very much present in the language of sermons and in the life of the church. Thus, Hunter's argument for a culture at "war" in America aligns with Baldwin's language of racial conflict in the South.

---

[136] James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

Jews in the New South: A Comparative Approach to Understanding Regional Influence upon Reformed Jewish Communities

The history of Jews in the South was largely overlooked until the revisiting of Jewish histories in the United States in the aftermath of World War II. As a part of these studies, historians note that Jews did play prominent roles in Southern history. Samuel Proctor et al., served as an editor of a collection of articles celebrating the lives of Jewish poets, officers, plantation owners, urban businessmen and other Jewish leaders in the South: "Southern Jews were an integral part of the history of the region in which they dwelt and which, in general, made them welcome."[137] Since this initial publication, another collection of articles, providing more nuanced materials on the communities of Jews in the South, demonstrates that "Jews contributed substantially to the expansion of the South. Even though they did not always gain full social acceptance, their prosperity and enterprise supported growing communities."[138] The largest of the Jewish communities was in Charleston, South Carolina.

Eli N. Evans has proven to be the preeminent writer on Jews in the South. Through his autobiographical writings, he is able to depict the similarities and differences of the experience of Jews in Southern culture compared to that of the experience of mainstream Southern culture. He writes that Jews and Southerners are both "stepchildren of an anguished history."[139] Yet, there is a distinct consciousness for the Southern Jew, especially compared to American Jews of other regions.

---

[137] Samuel Proctor et al., eds., *Jews of the South* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984), viii.

[138] Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Dale Palsson, eds. *Jews in the South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973).

[139] Eli N. Evans, *The Provincials: A Personal History of Jews in the South* (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1973).

For the most part, it seems, Jews have gotten along amicably with both Blacks and Whites. With Blacks, Jews were some of the few merchants who would provide service or sales for free persons of color during slavery or after during the Jim Crow era. Religiously, there was a shared emphasis in their worship, Scripture readings, and songs on the stories of Moses, Elijah, Daniel, and other Old Testament/Hebrew Bible heroes and heroines, especially those pertaining to liberty. However, this held true with Whites, at times, as well. Rural White Christians sometimes acknowledged Jews as authorities of Scripture, questioning them on their interpretation and understanding of the Old Testament.

Though White in color, however, Jews were considered outsiders since most were from the North and worshipped in an unknown and little understood venue, the synagogue. Though most Jewish communities experienced peaceful, relatively prosperous, lives in the South, some anti-Jewish sentiment did exist in some corners. One horrible instance was the hanging of Leo Frank, the superintendent of a pencil factory in Cobb County, Georgia, for the alleged murder of Mary Phagan. His death was at the hands of an angry mob that broke into his prison and drove him to his death on an oak tree in 1915. Anti-Semitism was a great fear for many communities especially during the Civil Rights era. Largely, however, Jews held a unique experience, different from those of White or Black evangelical Christians in the South. They dealt with their own issues of inter-marriages, education, assimilation, and business. Thus, while they do share a history of the South with Whites and Blacks, their own history in the South offers a particular perspective of Southern history by which to view Southern culture and religion.

Because Southern Jews did not share with other Whites the history of violence and prejudice toward Blacks, did not participate in the Southern civil religious myths, rituals, and symbols in worship or practice, and crossed racial lines, as both planters and businessmen, their history in the South does not seem to bear the same traditions as that of those who now participate in evangelical megachurches. However, their role as Whites in Southern society may have allowed for participation in the honor/shame culture of the South.

Arguably, the evangelical megachurch has held perhaps minor influence over synagogues like Congregation Micah in Nashville, Tennessee. With excellent musicians, Congregation Micah has a worship service akin to a praise & worship service found in an evangelical megachurch. Perhaps also this influence comes from the musical influence of Music City.

This being said, the interplay of influences between Jewish Southern history, culture, and religion, their political, cultural, and educational values (and behavior) do tend to vary distinctly with that of middle to upper-middle class Evangelicals in the megachurch today. For this reason, it would seem that there would be distinct differences also in core beliefs. Yet to discern this in full would require much research on Southern Jews.

Conclusion

For Generation Next, the South is a wealthier, more comfortable place to live than ever before. Moreover, the South holds more power perhaps than ever before. In politics, religion, music, and industry, as Egerton and Applebome note, the South has ascended

and deeply influenced the nation. The South, her themes, her history, and her culture, have affected the growth, trajectory, and beliefs of churches nationwide. The cropping up of evangelical megachurches in the South, finding their roots in the tent revivals, has provided models for church growth across the nation.

This chapter dives into the "messiness" of Southern history and culture to unearth those themes that might deeply resonate with Evangelicalism, providing a kind of symbiotic relationship between the culture and growing religion. Experiences of bifurcation in race, class, and gender, involving an honor/shame culture, married well with implicit Calvinistic theological teachings. Tracing these themes and experiences allows us to see a possible Southern imprint on Evangelicalism today, especially in light of the interplay of myth, ritual, and symbols of Southern civil religions.

With the next chapter, I switch from a historical perspective to a social-scientific one. From a sociological perspective, we examine the evangelical megachurch, especially those in the South, to understand why these churches are increasing across the United States. I propose that one way by which to understand their growing attraction is by considering them as theatres. Furthermore, throughout the second part of this dissertation, because I show here that Southern cultural themes interlaced with religion have uniquely shaped Evangelicalism in the United States, I assume that there is a Southern "accent" inherent within Evangelicalism—across the nation—in the megachurch today.

CHAPTER III

A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE
EVANGELICAL MEGACHURCH AS THEATRE

Introduction

With the advent of a critique of "popular Southern religion" in Samuel Hill's

Southern Churches in Crisis (1966), there came a rise in interest in Southern religion, in

both Black and White churches during the Old South and the New South. Voices from

differing backgrounds, race, and gender have emerged over the past forty years ushering

forth a third generation of research on Southern religious history. Yet, there is a divide

between the genre of Southern religion and the breathing, morphing, vibrant life of

evangelical denominations and churches in the South. This chapter will add to the genre

of Southern religion with participant-observation materials among other writings on the

evangelical church today. Ideally, I'd have a comparative theological study. However,

having listened to hundreds of sermons from protestant mainline churches, which one

would consider orthodox, I do not find a substantial difference.

In this chapter, I ask the questions: Why do moderate Evangelicals and others

attend megachurches? Why are megachurches growing? Who is attending? To answer

these questions, I turn to Max Weber's description of status groups. It seems

Evangelicals, including Southern Evangelicals, find a "sense of place" in society with the

participation or membership in a megachurch, providing an identity for individuals within

a kind of honorific status group. Secondly, I turn to Stark and Bainbridge's typology of

the church to provide a framework for understanding the megachurch and its growth.

Finally, I provide a critique of rational choice theory, turning away from the model of marketplace to revisit a model of the theatre to better understand the attraction, change, and growth of the megachurch and the experience of its congregants. Considering the megachurch as a theatre broadens the framework by which to discuss the liminal space of praise & worship as a "third space" of play, the attraction of electronic music, the inherent changes of dress and roles, and the social construction of legitimation and maintenance for the megachurch. Thus, I hope to capture the trajectory, tone, and essence of the growth of these churches, the players involved, and how they may create a sense of sustainability.

Varieties of Southern Evangelicalism: Examining the Evangelical Megachurch Phenomenon

After spending several years traveling, observing, filming, and experiencing the multitude of branches of Evangelicalisms in the United States, Randall Balmer (1993) compiled a collection of chapters on varieties of evangelical communities to demonstrate the broad spectrum of worship and language of Evangelicals. In this, he travels from a Mississippi Delta Pentecostal church to a fundamentalist church camp in the Adirondack Mountains, among a dozen other groups. With his PBS series, he allows his audience to witness visually a variety of religious experiences from community to community. Below the surface of evangelical differences though, Balmer maintains that there is a foundation for Evangelicalism:

> [Evangelicalism is] an umbrella term to refer broadly to conservative
> Protestants—including Fundamentalists, Evangelicals, Pentecostals, and
> charismatics—who insist on some sort of spiritual rebirth as a criterion for
> entering the kingdom of heaven, who often impose exacting behavioral standards

on the faithful, and whose beliefs, institutions, and folkways comprise the evangelical subculture in America.[140]

This may suggest that there are not only foundational, doctrinal beliefs among Evangelicals, but also perhaps patterns of other beliefs as well.

Prior to Balmer's work, a collection of Southern religion scholars contributed articles from a symposium, *Varieties of Southern Evangelicalism* (1981)*,* to address the issue of differences among Southern Evangelicals in particular.[141] In this, they discuss the trajectory and definition of Southern religion as well as the different denominations, sects, Black Folk religion, and heroic figures such as Billy Graham. This was a start in describing the apparent differences in Southern religion.

From among these various Evangelicalisms, I will focus upon neither the tiny Nazarene communities in the rural south nor the mid-sized Church of Christ churches rippling outward from David Lipscomb University in Nashville, TN. I am not concerned with the snake- handling churches dotting the hills of Sand Mountain in northern Georgia or the small churches among the Appalachian Mountains in West Virginia. I will also shy away from the uprising Emergent churches.

For the sake of specificity and concentration for the work of this dissertation, I will be writing about the suburban mega-church and its members, most of whom best fit in John Green and Steven Waldman's "moderate evangelical" politico-religious category. This means that I will be referring generally to Evangelicals who attend churches with over 2500 members and who engage in the broader evangelical subculture through the Christian bookstores or education. Southern Baptists, Presbyterian Church of America,

---

[140] Randall Balmer, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), xvi.
[141] David Edwin Harrell, ed., *Varieties of Southern Evangelicalism* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1981).

Quasi-denominational churches (Fellowship Bible churches, Calvary churches, satellite churches as spin-offs of larger non-denominational churches, etc.), and Non-denominational churches (though most quietly adhere to their traditional roots as hinted in their worship and language, for example, Church of Christ, Pentecostal, Southern Baptist, etc.) comprise the bulk of churches and megachurches in this category.

Alan Wolfe, a political scientist concerned with the interface of politics and religion, like Balmer, journeyed across the United States to experience and assess broad themes among the American church today. In his *The Transformation of Religion in America* (2003), he comments on the growth of conservative, nondenominational churches across America in his re-visitation of American religion at the turn of the millennium. Just as Peter Applebome describes the influence of what we think of as Southern evangelistic worship upon the greater United States, Wolfe too comments on the convergence of religion, moving toward more conservative, nondenominational institutions across America. Though Wolfe does not depict this convergence as distinctively Southern, he hints at this noting the increasing evangelical flare of worship:

> As all of the religions in the United States begin to resemble each other in practice, they do so by resembling most those of the Evangelicals.[…]Even while fully acknowledging the distinctiveness of each American religious tradition, there is also a sense in which we are all Evangelicals now.[142]

Moreover, he highlights what he calls "narcissism's reach" among these "evangelical-ized" religions as "a product of Protestant individualism."[143] From a spectrum of worship experiences, he notes the similarities in the rhetoric of praise & worship songs, sermons, and writings in Christian publications. He also raises the uniqueness of more casual dress, contemporary music, and enthusiastic atmospheres differentiating them from mainline,

---

[142] Alan Wolfe, *The Transformation of Religion in America* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 36.
[143] Ibid., 24.

traditional forms of worship and styles. He suggests that there has been a turn of focus away from God and toward the self in seeking a sense of comfortableness, intimacy, and the meeting of felt-need in a space of worship. It is along the lines of Wolfe's observation of the similarities in the evangelical church that I assume as a foundation for sociological perspective in this chapter.

A Weberian Approach to Southern Evangelicalism

I first turn to the work of Max Weber to describe the sociology of Evangelicals because unlike many sociologists, Weber attends to the individual. In this way, his work nicely complements psychological perspective as well. Weber wants to understand, or as he calls this: *Verstehen*, individuals—their emotions, significance, values, meaning, and interests. He wants to "step into their shoes" and understand why they believe what they believe or behave the way they behave, exhibiting a kind of empathy for individuals and groups. Weber is an intellectualist and an emotionalist, but he is first and foremost a historical sociologist.

Weber's basic theory of religion and economics in process or as a cycle begins with the individual, rather than at the level of culture. Amongst religiously motivated individuals with a strong acquisitive spirit, an early capitalistic social structure emerges. This structure is a kind of synthesis of religious and economic action. Rising to the level of culture, religion manifests itself as rational, bureaucratic, capitalistic norms. In this structure with these norms, the once religiously motivated individual finds himself/herself in the "iron cage" of bureaucracy. Given a more advanced bureaucratic structure, the once religiously motivated individual finds himself/herself as a "cog in a

wheel" of the economic system, or structure. At this point, the individual experiences a kind of alienation, despair, and/or sense of meaninglessness. There is a great feeling of disconnection between the individual and the original "calling" or sense of vocation given this structure. However, out of this "iron cage" or "cog in the wheel" position, a prophet can arise. The prophet, whether ethical or exemplary in kind, provides a kind of leadership, out of his/her charisma, which draws individuals back to a religious sense of the self and the world. Religion, for Weber, then moves in cycles of rationalization and religious fervor.[144] Because it seems Evangelicalism could also fit this cyclical pattern, Weber's model explains well the process of revival and religious fervor in the worship service of a megachurch.

Beth Barton Schweiger, a historian, studies revivals in the Old South using a Weberian framework "to call attention to theoretical analysis."[145] In her work, she looks at both White and African-American individual selves as well as the rising denominational bureaucratic state of the church in the slave south era. This juxtaposition reveals gaps for critical inquiry. Weberian categories in his cycles of resistance and accommodation do not aptly fit the slave culture. Schweiger notes, "What Weber called 'the pure interest of the bureaucracy in power' ironically left the powerless to put Christianity to their own purposes in the antebellum South."[146] In her introduction, Schweiger points out that while a Weberian approach is helpful during the modern era, his secularization thesis has been put to rest by sociologists and historians who have

---

[144] This understanding of Weber's theory of religion comes from Penny Long Marler's *Sociology of Religion* class notes and handout, Fall 1998, London, England, Samford University.
[145] Beth Barton Schweiger, "Max Weber in Mount Airy, Or, Revivals and Social Theory in the Early South," in *Religion and the South: Protestants and Others in History and Culture,* ed. Donald Mathew (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 35.
[146] Ibid., 56.

demonstrated the reactivity of fervor in traditional religion(s) in the face of modernity.[147]

The growth of Evangelicalism, not only in the South but across America, as noted by

Balmer, Applebome, and Wolfe, is evidence of a revival of traditional religious beliefs as

a reaction against the dominant, secular culture.

However, in practice, moderate Evangelicals have shrewdly mimicked secular,

popular culture and appropriated many of its aspects in order to attract new "seekers" to

their churches or parachurch events or to spice up the "old-time religion" of their

grandparents. Christian culture now has its own celebrities, films, rock music, punk

music, jazz music, and folk music. Bestselling books in the secular market are

"Christianized," re-branded, and sold in the Christian bookstores. Within the evangelical

megachurch phenomenon, there is a kind of assimilation to secular culture occurring

amidst the overarching reactivity of evangelical religion in the secular world. This is also

known as "selectivity."[148] Selectivity is the process of a group to choose that which they

want to embrace of modernity and reject other aspects of the same culture. At what point,

though, is the selectivity and affirmation of secular culture so great that it becomes a kind

of assimilation? As evangelical culture grows and changes and continues to select from

secular culture, the line between the two becomes quite blurred. Evangelicalism is an odd

juxtaposition of revival against a modern culture while at the same time a clear modeling,

---

[147] Schweiger lists a number of scholars who have written on the subject refuting the secularization theory, including Mary Douglas, "The Effects of Modernization on Religious Chance," *Daedalus* III (Winter 1982): 1-19 and William H. Swatos and Kevin J. Christiano, "Secularization theory: The course of a concept," *Sociology of Religion* 60. 3 (1999): 209-228. From my own reading, I would also include the following: Mark Chavez, "Secularization as Declining Religious Authority," *Social Forces* 72,3 (1994): 749-770.
[148] See Gabriel A. Almond, Emmanuel Sivan, and R. Scott Appleby, "Fundamentalism: Genus and Species" in *Fundamentalisms Comprehended,* eds. R. Scott Appleby and Martin E. Marty (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 406.

largely accepting (or usurping?) the dominant popular culture, a kind of secularization process.

Evangelicalism living and thriving within the secular, postmodern society today provides a niche for many, a safe harbor for identity amidst the confusion of a globalizing world. This niche provides a space in society, much like a formalized club (i.e. a fraternity, country club, or secret society) to establish identity socially and economically through status, and politically through a party.

"Class, Status, Party": A Look at the Socio-economic and Honorific Status of Southern Evangelicals

Like Karl Marx, Weber was influenced by Hegel. Also, like Marx, he dealt with questions of economics, and class. Weber, however, provides more complex ways than Marx of talking about social and economic inequality by introducing other categories, status and parties, by which groups or communities might align. While he describes class as a grouping of individuals who share a similar economic or market position (or, those who own or do not own property--the haves versus. the have-nots, if you will), he understands status to better describe a community of people.

Status, unlike class, refers to a "group" of people. The status of a community can describe a group who share a similar lifestyle (by consumption, such as residence, clothing, foods, etc.), leisure activities, marriage, religious beliefs/doctrines, ascribed characteristics (race, gender, age, etc.), or educational levels. Weber notes, "in content, status honor is normally expressed by the fact that above all else a specific *style of life* is

expected from all those who wish to belong to the circle."[149] Scott Thumma, an expert on

the megachurch phenomenon, describes the typical megachurch attendee or member

based upon much research:

> With few exceptions these large churches draw a predominantly "baby boom"
> constituency. These congregations have young memberships, with the median age
> estimated at 38 years or less. Between sixty and seventy percent of attenders are
> women. The majority of megachurches are also populated by Caucasians. Over
> sixty percent of participants are married and have an average of two children.
> Those attracted to megachurches are generally middle class, and highly
> educated.[150]

He, of course, notes that with this average member in mind, there is a breadth of

diversity, racially and ethnically, in megachurches today that simply fall outside the

majority parameters noted above. This description, however, denotes a status group, a

group who shares a particular lifestyle.

Pertaining to status groups and identity, Thumma discusses "church choice" as a

means for creating identity: "Research shows that ascribed identities have been

weakening, especially in a highly mobile society (Hammond 1988; Wuthnow 1988; Roof

& McKinney 1987). As a result, the act of choosing functions to define who persons are,

it provides them with alternative achieved identities."[151] The megachurch provides a

community of identity-seeking believers with a comfortable group and place in society.

Some megachurches hold as many as 30,000 members! This is larger than many

towns in the United States. With affiliation to the megachurch and a lifestyle adherence

to the subsequent evangelical subculture, one could conceivably live and find leisure,

---

[149] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, Vol. 2, eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), 932.

[150] Scott Thumma, "Exploring the Megachurch Phenomenon: their characteristics and cultural context," 2000 from the Hartford Insitute for Religious Research website, on Megachurches: http://hirr.hartsem.edu/bookshelf/thumma_article2.html.

[151] Ibid.

education, and a marriage partner within one church community. Once again, in this way, the church functions as a status group.

Another category for a status group is ethnicity. Weber describes status segregation and caste systems from various cultures, including Jewish communities. Of such groups, he identifies an honorific code:

> Even pariah peoples who are most despised are usually apt to continue cultivating the belief in their own specific 'honor,' a belief that is equally peculiar to ethnic and to status groups. […] The sense of dignity of the negatively privileged strata naturally refers to a future lying beyond the present…that in the beyond 'the last will be first.'[152]

Many Christians believe, like many Jews, that they are a chosen people (I Peter 2:9). The average moderate evangelical member in a megachurch appears quite similar to that of a non-Christian in society today. That is, they are neither living like the Amish, within a rural cult, nor have they accepted a lifestyle which shuns interaction with the secular world. In this way, individuals and families are not "pariah peoples." These are folks who live, work, and generally interact with the capitalistic culture. Yet, they are different because, with an honorific status, as Weber notes, they believe they are special. Their church tells them this; their Scripture tells them this; and they experience this because of the status group's honorific code upon membership of the exclusive community.

Again, turning to the work of Thumma, his research finds that the megachurch phenomenon locates itself in a suburban, Southern setting:

> The national distribution of megachurches reveals a clear pattern. Over 75 percent of these congregations are located in the Sunbelt states, with nearly half of them in the southeast region. […]In addition, megachurches are a suburban reality. Nearly all megachurches are to be found in the suburbs of large cities."[153]

---

[152] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 934.
[153] Thumma, "Exploring Megachurches," 2000.

Sociologists suggest the reason for this predominant growth in the suburban South is simply because the suburban South holds the highest growth rates. In these areas, all churches tend to increase in size.[154] Megachurches brilliantly satisfy those mobile persons, couples, or families seeking to immerse themselves in participation, friendships, and activities within a community of like-minded fellows as well as those who wish simply to remain anonymous within a group yet enjoy the worship, the ritual, and the theatre of the church.

The evangelical megachurch is not a party. Yet, at times, it could be identified as a status group that might join other groups (religious or secular) or another class for advocacy purposes. Weber describes parties as groups who come together for political action. These groups, together, attempt to exercise their power for change. In the late seventies, eighties, and early nineties, the Moral Majority, later the Christian Coalition, did clever work in aligning Evangelicals on issues for voting and for lobbying. And of course, most moderate Evangelicals and evangelical megachurches have aligned with the Republican party. Statistically, John Green shows that 48 percent hold a conservative ideology, and 47 percent are affiliated with the Republican Party.[155] This, of course, means that there is much room for "waffling" on both traditionally conservative, Republican issues as well as in the voting booth. Most moderate Evangelicals like the rest of the population vote from their pocketbooks; they are not Fundamentalists.[156] Yet the evangelical megachurch still provides a space for political dialogue on abortion, sex

---

[154] C. Kirk Hadaway and David Roozen, "The Growth and Decline of Congregations," in *Church & Denominational Growth,* eds. David A. Roozen and C. Kirk Hadaway (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993).
[155] John Green, "Twelve Tribes," beliefnet.com : http://www.beliefnet.com/story/153/story_15355_1.html
[156] Thomas Frank, in his *What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America* (New York: Metropolitan Press, 2004) writes of the "self-defeating phenomenon" of Kansas where conservative blue-collar workers ironically vote for conservative values, or rhetoric, over their own economic gain.

education, domestic marriages, global HIV/AIDS, the environment, capital punishment, and candidates for office. Though they may choose to disguise the language as "religious" rather than "political," it is a fine line. There is power in the voice of the moderate Evangelicals, when united, on an issue. And, the individual members benefit with a kind of self-esteem associated with that power.

A Typology of Southern Evangelicalism: Stark & Bainbridge

Based upon a Weberian model of the sociology of religion, Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge depict a cyclical religious structure which helps to explain the rise of Evangelical churches in the South. They suggest a typology of religious phenomena by which cults or sects may mature into denominations and churches. Once the church is established, some individuals may leave to form new cults or new sects and the cycle continues. "To be a sect, a religious movement must have been founded by persons who left another religious body for the purpose of founding the sect."[157] Southern Evangelicalism could fit this typology as a group of individuals who gathered in resistance to the politico-religious structure of the Church of England. Yet over the years, those evangelical sects have established well respected institutions of faith as substantial denominations in America. Today, the fledgling Methodist and Baptist churches have grown across America to hold millions. Though the United Methodist Church has seen a slight decline of membership since World War II, the Southern Baptist Church has grown annually to reach over 16.4 million members.[158]

---

[157] Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 25.

[158] Eileen W. Linder, *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 2005: Wither Global Mission?* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005).

Megachurches typically start as offshoot sects, a group of discontented members with a particular church within a particular denomination. Thus, the megachurch may have a history in a certain denomination, but it is no longer accountable in any way to that denomination; only traces may still exist. In this sect-like state, the church experiences a liminal state of growth, freedom, and charisma. The autonomy of a church from a particular judicatory eliminates the red tape of bureaucracy, and it can enhance the democratic nature of the church, encouraging all members to take part in the shaping of the trajectory of the community. The Southern Baptist Convention, for example, constitutes a body of churches, all of which are autonomous in nature. Evangelical megachurches, most of which claim a non-denominational status, likewise are autonomous. Maintaining the authority within the individual churches and holding the ability to control the vision, staff, worship, and teachings of a church without being accountable to a higher denomination is one key for continued growth. But, the typology of megachurches cannot follow the pattern or typology of Stark and Bainbridge in full. The uniqueness of their structure allows them to remain autonomous, and sect-like, never fully legitimizing into a denomination. While quasi-denominations inevitably crop up as satellite churches to a mother megachurch (i.e. Willow Creek churches, Calvary churches, Saddleback churches, etc.), a formal denomination with agreed upon doctrine is not necessarily a goal for actualization. The sect-like nature of these churches is a critical component to their success and their attractiveness for a status group.

Remarking on religious regionalism, Stark and Bainbridge comment that their findings do not prove the South to be exceptionally religious. In fact, they note that the phrase, "the religious South", is a mythic construction created out of Northern bias in

oppositional thinking about the South. They did find, however, some tendencies toward

(a White) Southern civil religion: "The reality behind the mythical Bible Belt is to be

found in an unusual tendency to enact sectarian Protestant norms and values into law."[159]

They attribute this sectarian sociocultural environment to the following: lack of religious

diversity, intolerance of religious diversity, and rural domination of state legislatures.

Stark and Bainbridge's typology is helpful in explaining the pattern of the megachurch,

its growth, and the influence of Southern churches on politics.

Spiritual Marketplace or Religious Theatre?: A Critique of Wade Clark Roof's
***Spiritual Marketplace* (1999)**

About a Praise & Worship Service: Participant-Observation

Like many other sprouting young churches, West Side Christian Church[160]

members meet in a school auditorium. They are, of course, in the process of building a

church in a nearby suburban plot. Though WSCC offers three services, people still spill

out of the doors during worship. One is welcomed at the door by greeters with bulletins

for the worship service.

Looking down at the bulletin, I realize one has to read the fine print to know it is

not, in fact, a nondenominational church, but rather a church in the Southern Baptist

denomination. With an invocation and a call to worship, the music begins. The lights dim

low to reveal a stage decorated much like VH1's *Storytellers*. Candles, an oriental rug, a

---

[159] Stark and Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion*, 95.
[160] The name of the church has been kept anonymous. In Summer 2003, the Center for the Study of Religion and Culture offered the author a grant to fulfill the project, "Revisiting Fundamentalism: Toward an Understanding of Core Beliefs." Participant-observation of megachurches for analysis was a part; this church was one church in which I have spent much time.

desk with a book and lamp, and spring grass surrounding an uplifted Celtic cross set the mood for a concert-like atmosphere. Two attractive young women lead the vocals. One plays a keyboard; the other, an electric guitar. In the shadows, in front of a banner reading "Worthy is the Lamb," several men sit playing drums, electric guitar, and bass guitar. This is the Christian version of secular Generation X music.

Standing along with the audience, I look up at the overhead screen to join in the song of "I could sing of your love forever." Upon finishing the final chorus, the female vocalist/electric guitarist recited Psalm 139 in a breathy voice, as if a prayer. Juxtaposed to the reading, two songs served as background: "The Great I Am" and "Above All." In the next song, we sang the lines: "Like a rose trampled on the ground, he took the fall…and thought of me, above all." Listening to the yearning voices of the young women, watching many raise their hands, the atmosphere is much like that of doting lovers, infatuated with the strength and power of their image of God the Son. The final song, an older hymn, "How Deep the Father's Love for Us," captures the fullness of the implied theology: the transcendent father figure whose greatness is exaggerated by the unworthiness of wretched humans. Close to half of the worship is devoted to this period of praise & worship.

Between the singing and the sermon, the following separates the worship: various announcements, a prayer, and a plea for financial support to a local ministry. The announcements include the preparation for a mission trip to Northern Ireland for those interested, as well as particular group meetings held for men and women, separately. Little pink slips inserted into the bulletin invite women to a ministry of hospitality, meals, communications, and a fall retreat.

After this brief interlude, the pastor delivers the sermon in the final hour. This

sermon is the ninth in a series entitled, "Jesus: The Sum of All Fears;" the fear of death is

the topic. He asks the congregation to read Mark 5:21-24, 35-42, carefully ignoring the

pericope of the hemorrhaging woman. The proposition given to coincide with the reading

of the text is that "a dependent faith will yield astonishing results," just as it did for Jairus

and the life of his daughter. The exegesis of the text includes Jesus "driving unbelief from

his presence," "commanding us not to be afraid of things that are beyond our control,"

and "belief as the answer to fear." The pastor claims, "Uncertainty [of afterlife] is

murder." Thus, a dependent belief, or trust, in a God who holds sovereign control, who

has defeated death with the resurrection, is the only way we can overcome the causes of

despair and fear. The pastor concludes the hour with an announcement that Jesus

"destroyed death" with the resurrection, and we stand and sing, "You are my all in all."

This was a worship service of a typical suburban megachurch, even in the South.

A Brief Summary: Rational Choice Theory

One way many scholars have tried to understand the rise of Evangelicalism or

Fundamentalism in the United States is by using rational choice theory. Emerging out of

econometrics, rational choice theory is perhaps the most influential theory today among

sociologists of religion by which to understand the 'spiritual marketplace' for sacred

shopping. Rational choice theory perhaps could be better understood as what Laurence

Iannacconne calls a 'framework' or a 'model' rather than a predictive theory of

religion.[161] As a model, rational choice relies on a series of assumptions about human

---

[161] Laurence R. Iannaccone, "Framework for the Scientific Study of Religion," in *Rational Choice Theory and Religion: Summary and Assessment,* ed. Lawrence A. Young (New York: Routledge Press, 1997).

nature to support its reliability. For instance, "rational choice theorists assume that people approach all actions in the same way, evaluating costs and benefits and acting so as to maximize their net benefits. Hence people choose what religion, if any, they will accept and how extensively they will participate in it."[162] It is assumed that churches, congregations, and denominations are religious firms that are in the business of creating a demand for their products or commodities under the umbrella of supply-side theory.

According to Iannaccone, the price of religious participation includes money and time. Monies invested in the church include travel expense, proper clothing, tithing, costs of retreats, mission trips, and donations. Time investment includes at minimum two hours for the weekly meeting (typically Saturday or Sunday), other potential church meetings throughout the week, and the social engagements with church members and friends. Other constraints include theological positions, behavioral codes, styles of dress, assumed style of life, and an expectation of involvement. In exchange for these constraints, the religious consumer receives compensators including solidarity in friendships, networking capabilities, a foundational structure of beliefs by which to order life, the gift of salvation including an afterlife, relief of guilt, closer connection with the supernatural, and the parental figures of the clergy among others. It is assumed that the level at which the religious individual can afford these kinds of exchanges depends upon socio-economic status.

Simply put, rational choice theorists argue that people choose an action to maximize an objective while being subject to constraints.[163] Though there are numerous arguments against this prevailing theory at present, especially as explicated by Steve

---

[162] Ibid., 26.
[163] Ibid., 27.

Bruce in his *Choice and Religion* (1999), here, I am not concerned with refuting rational choice, but broadening the framework.

Building a Model: Spiritual Marketplace or Theatre?

Wade Clark Roof paints a mural of the religious lives of Baby Boomers over the past fifty years in his *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion* (1999). Upon this mural, he details the "reflexive spirituality" of individuals across the United States who symbolize the typologies of the religious/spiritual clusters of this generation: Born Again Christians, Mainline Christians, Metaphysical Believers/ Spiritual Seekers, Dogmatists, and Secularists. Mixing the metaphors of mapping and marketplace, he definitively argues that "the boundaries of popular religious communities are now being redrawn, encouraged by the quests of the large, post- WWII generations, and facilitated by the rise of an expanded spiritual marketplace."[164]

With the generous support of large grants, Roof has been able to proffer an impeccable methodology to assess the religious/spiritual lives of Baby Boomers in the U.S. As he somewhat stands 'betwixt and between' psychological and sociological approaches himself (as indicated by his past research), he has beautifully juxtaposed the richness of stories and interviews with survey data to paint his mural of individual lives against social trends. The choice of states in which to do the work also allows for a balanced assessment of qualitative and quantitative data. His ability to move back and forth, near and far over the spiritual landscape of America allows for a substantial and unprecedented work regarding the religiosity of the Baby Boomer cohort at large.

---

[164] Wade Clark Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 10.

Permeating his discourse about the spirituality of the Baby Boomer cohort is the language of liminality, transition, and fluidity. While most Baby Boomers were rooted in "communities of memory," they have actively embraced a "quest culture" as a "protean self" that "seeks to be both fluid and grounded."[165] Roof remarks, "how are we to profile this generation religiously? The fact that this question is still unanswered is itself fascinating and a commentary on just how multifaceted, and perhaps blurred, this generation's religious culture has become."[166] Here, he has captured the essence of this generation in the midst of the 'blurriness.' With the rise of the technological-information age alongside a society obsessed with youth, beauty, materialism, and the self, he correctly situates this cohort in the 'centrifugal' spin that has led to transient, nomadic clusters of religiosity. In this way, he is able to reinterpret the movement of individualism (i.e. Bellah 1985) and argue against the secularization thesis (i.e. Berger 1990, Bruce 1999, etc.) to dismiss the predictions for the demise of communal religion and religious participation. He does this by illuminating new forms of community and the transient nature of their context. Baby Boomers are indeed still religious, but many are not religious in the conventional sense. Thus, quantitative data can sometimes be misleading as to what is *really* going on by way of engaging in spiritual activity.

Mapping the terrain of religion or the mind or a group of people is a common metaphor to use when one is attempting to make sense of a seeming insurmountable amount of data. In this tradition, Roof does well to distill a basic four-square typological 'map' by which to understand the spiritual and religious identities (by means of inner-experiential and outer-institutional) of the Baby Boomer cohort. However, in mixing this

---

[165] Ibid., 111.
[166] Ibid., 113.

metaphor with the "marketplace," he obscures his thesis as well as his interpretation of the data.

With the implicit usage of rational choice theory (though he never cites this theory *per se*) in his discourse, Roof talks about the quest culture of the Baby Boomers in terms of 'supply and demand,' 'spiritual entrepreneurs,' and 'choice.' Over against their parents' generation, the choices have indeed expanded from *Protestant-Jew-Catholic* to a panoply of religious/spiritual experiences and contexts. While there is a fresh element of more of a range of choices with this generation, are they 'consuming' religious symbols, metaphors, and language? Who, in fact, are the suppliers or entrepreneurs of whom Roof speaks? What is the rate of exchange?

In the attempt to dispel old hierarchical, hegemonic institutionalized religion, Baby Boomers have 'chosen' new ways of practicing religion, but they have not 'bought' them. The language of the marketplace conjures images of Fifth Avenue, Covent Gardens, or Kroger: secularized and profane, if you will, malls for consumption. People buy things to consume them. How rarely are we moved, emotionally, by a product as a symbol. That is, we do not create 'communities of memory,' a 'transformative experience,' or 'rich narratives' when we shop at Green Hills Mall. Neither the acts of shopping or consumption enhance our lives or broaden our worldview.[167]

Given the data available for the book, I would suggest an alternative model which encompasses the language of economics but limits it: the theatre. People pay to enter a theatre whether it is a movie, independent film, concert, play, or poetry reading. They 'choose' to come, and they 'spend' their time and money. However, rational choice is

---

[167] Here, I am imagining lower-middle to upper-middle class America. This does not include cultures of poverty or those of lower class. One critique of Roof might be that he also seemingly dismisses this grouping's religiosity in the U.S. in his analysis.

limited to the front door. Once inside, there are many different kinds of roles to play. There are actors who change their 'scripts,' a director who creates an environment for creative-restrictive play, and an audience, who engages empathically with the production to be changed by the experience. Roof states that "terms like *expansiveness* and *proteanism* seem particularly fitting as descriptions of the contemporary religious psyche."[168] As participants and observers of the religious plays of America, these Baby Boomers are metamorphosing in different ways in different playhouses. Rather than driving to the marketplace, Baby Boomers are going to the "Spiritual Theatre" to act, to watch, to engage, to participate, to be exposed to new ways of being and thinking about the world.

In his chapter, "Spiritual Marketplace," we can agree that "religion is socially produced, or more accurately, it is constantly being reproduced."[169] Like the script of a play, religion can be edited and constructed with new symbols, metaphors, and practices. Moreover, he claims that the "quest culture can be analyzed in terms of four interrelated components: *the social world, producers, the audience,* and *cultural objects.*"[170] This language does not need altering but simply repositioning for discourse surrounding the theatre. Each of these themes could just as easily be discussed in terms of the context of the film, the producer, the audience, and the 'symbolic themes' that situate a play or movie. Within the realm of the theatre as religion, we *do* create communities of memory, experience the mystical, touch the divine, observe the sacred, worship the holy and treasure the narratives of our very existence. It is here that our spirits dwell, whether we

---

[168] Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace*, 66.
[169] Ibid., 79.
[170] Ibid., 80.

are sitting alone or walking with Chaucer's pilgrims, acting and telling stories among a community of believers.

Within this model of spiritual theatre, the worship leaders, the preacher, elders, and the religious members of the church comprise a "team." Erving Goffman writes about a "performance team" in his *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), as "any set of individuals who co-operate in staging a single routine."[171] The relationship of teams depends on what he calls 'reciprocal dependence' and 'reciprocal familiarity' in which the team holds a reliance or trust alongside a mutual 'knowing' for a successful performance. Sometimes, among these team members, a star is born. Goffman notes, "When we study a routine which requires a team of several performers for its presentation, we sometimes find that one member of the team is made the star, lead, or center of attention."[172] Indicative of most evangelical churches, there is an element of selectivity as to who can participate, especially 'on stage' in order to create the worship setting and atmosphere. Again, Goffman states, "It is apparent that if performers are concerned with maintaining a line they will select as teammates those who can be trusted to perform properly."[173] The goal of the team is to define a space and time according to their 'scripts' and 'direction' for a proper 'production.' Moreover, they cooperate in order to foster a particular spiritual or religious experience for the audience, with each other and with God.

This spiritual or religious experience could be described as a liminal state of ritual. Using the language of Victor Turner (1995), the worship team begins the process of "separating" the audience from their daily, banal existence to "transition" into a

---

[171] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1959), 79.
[172] Ibid., 100.
[173] Ibid., 91.

liminal state. "During the intervening 'liminal' period, the characteristics of the ritual subject…are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state."[174] Different from mainline liberal churches, evangelical worship fosters a more highly emotionally and spiritually charged atmosphere for the participants. It is in this 'betwixt and between' state, class, race, and gender roles are muted as the religious adherents raise their hands, close their eyes, and believe to merge with the divine. With rock 'n' roll rhythms and styles come a more overt level of sexuality. While megachurch members deny that their worship might be sexually provocative, it seems evident in their theological discourse to God. This romantic language of infatuation, desire, and longing, depicted in songs like "You are My All in All," among the participation of the religious adherents is a demonstration of what Turner explains as "flow." In attempting to describe Csikszentmihalyi and MacAloon's notion of "flow," he quotes their "Play and Intrinsic Rewards":

> Flow denotes the holistic sensation present when we act with total involvement…a state in which action follows action according to an internal logic which seems to need no conscious intervention on our part…we experience it as a unified flowing from one moment to the next, in which we feel in control of our actions, and in which there is little distinction between self and environment; between stimulus and response; or between past, present, and future.[175]

Though this description could be interpreted as sexual, at the same time, it could also be interpreted as an experience of worship. Worship at a megachurch stimulates an atmosphere of flow. One in which the religious participants, authority figures, and worship team achieve a state of communitas in their communion with self, others, and the Divine. To conclude his *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors* (1974), Victor Turner states that

---

[174] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1995), 94.
[175] Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1982), 55-56.

"behind specific historical and cultural developments…lies the simple fact that man is both a structural and an anti-structural entity, who *grows* through anti-structure and *conserves* through structure."[176] Perhaps these evangelical Christians in leaving their traditional churches feel liberated because of the 'anti-structure' of worship. They feel like they are "progressive" because, in this liminal atmosphere, it feels as if they are achieving a new level of spirituality.

Praise & Worship Service As Theatre: Why Megachurches Are Growing

How are conservative churches becoming "mega" churches? David Roozen, a sociologist of religion who participated in the *Faith Communities Today* project, finds that indeed the relationship between "electronic music" and the rise of membership is significant:

> The FACT data show that contemporary worship is more strongly associated with membership growth than what Dean Kelly called "strictness," the outward focus of mission-minded congregations, or even shifts in population….The FACT data suggest that after nearly 50 years of struggling to find broadly applicable ways to adapt, with theological integrity, to social/demographic changes, many old-line Protestant churches have found a path to renewal and membership growth.[177]

Across church lines, the changes for a more contemporary worship service spark growth. The article, "Church Unplugged," reports a typical stagnant, traditional evangelical church in Middletown, USA seeking church growth. There, the pastor introduces praise & worship as an alternate mode of worship, yet the members were a bit uncomfortable, especially with the blending of the services. But in the end, the church began to grow:

---

[176] Victor Turner, *Dramas Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 298.
[177] Faith Communities Today Project, Hartford Institute-- website: http://fact.hartsem.edu/topfindings/topicalfindings.htm

> Then it happened, so gradually that nobody really called attention to it: the church gradually filled up. Soon there was hardly a seat left by 10:00. Some of the visitors who had come out of curiosity kept coming. Some of the grown-up children of church members who had sort of drifted away seem to be coming back.[178]

This pattern has been observed in churches across the nation.

Class, Race, and Gender: A Space for Small Change

Having demonstrated that electronic music as CCM has influenced the rise of conservative church growth, in part, creating a liminal space of play, a second question arises: who is coming? Statistics show that the growth is creating a more diverse population, especially among the nondenominational, urban churches. A new audience is forming with new roles, especially pertaining to class, race, and gender.

Regarding class, the new music allows for new costumes. While some still adhere to the more formal raiment, many choose khakis and t-shirts. Some of the younger population might look like they pulled on whatever was lying around. With the new music, the dress codes relax while welcoming a more diverse population. Traditionally, denominations have been tightly linked with socio-economic status. However, without the symbolic cues of dress, class is much less identifiable.

Paul Kingston in his *The Classless Society* (2000), asks, "Are there classes?" In this work, he argues that "for the most part, groups of people having a common economic position do not share distinct, life-defining experiences."[179] The megachurch may be a space for life-defining moments (christening, baptism, marriage, death), but it seems classless in a strict sense, while at the same time it shapes a community of status. Due to

---

[178] David A. Hoekema, "Church Unplugged," *The Christian Century*, 111 no. 21 (1994): 668-672.

[179] Paul Kingston, *The Classless Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 4.

the length and informal style of most megachurch worship services, many wander in late, talk during the service, and hold hands. For them, the space is sacred not because of rules of dress or behavioral codes but because of the communal atmosphere of warmth and the focus on God.

Chery Townsend Gilkes, a sociologist who writes on religion and the Black church, reports, "Although African Americans compose only 12 percent of the U.S. Population, they constituted 25 percent of its megachurch congregations."[180] Like many White 'seekers,' many Black 'seekers' enjoy, as what Eudora Welty's character, Cassie's mother in "June Recital" calls, "music you can *dip* to" within the church.[181] With an ease on the dress code, as overt status symbols, newcomers from a variety of racial and ethnic groups may find a religious home more easily than in a more traditional, mainline church. Though it is not within the scope of this dissertation, I would like to explore the deep roots of African-American religious music that surfaces in the rhythms and styles of CCM. Many African-Americans then might feel like they are "coming home" to a church not unlike the one of their youth. The rise of racial and ethnic diversity creates a new audience for the formerly predominantly White conservative church.

Finally, women are now finding roles in leading worship that many churches previously denied. Many nondenominational churches arise from a background that

---

[180] Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, "Plenty Good Room: Adaptation in a Changing Black Church," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 558 (1998): 102. This may be a statistic using all megachurches, in rural, suburban, and urban settings. Note, this may be less due to the focus on suburban megachurches of moderate Evangelicals.

[181] Eudora Welty, a Southern novelist, talks about music in her "June Recital" in *The Golden Apples* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1947). Her language about "dipping" to music seems apropos in talking about the worship in the Black church or the megachurch in the South. Here is the quote from her book: "A metronome was an infernal machine, Cassie's mother said when Cassie told on Vergie. 'Mercy, you have to keep moving, with that infernal machine. I want a song to *dip*.' 'What do you mean, dip? Could you have played the piano, Mama?' 'Child, I could have *sung*,' and she threw her hand from her, as though all music might as well now go jump off the bridge."

refused a woman to speak, pray, or sing in the group setting. In most of these churches, women, for the most part, still lack the power to attain any high position of leadership. But, this is at least a first step. Leading worship often entails prayer, reading Scripture, and some interpretation. For this reason, it seems that through the space of play in worship, the church may be allowing the authority and roles of women to change slowly in order to hold more powerful positions. For many of these churches, it is perhaps the only formal space for the female voice to emerge to an entire body of believers.

Evangelical Megachurch Phenomenon as Social Construction, as Production

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's seminal work, *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966), asks the questions, "How is it possible that subjective meanings become objective facticities? How is it possible that human activity should produce a world of things?"[182] With a phenomenological analysis, they respond that reality is socially constructed and the sociology of knowledge must analyze the processes in which this occurs and contend itself with the analysis of the social construction of reality.

Berger and Luckmann describe society as both an objective reality and as a subjective reality. As the former, an objective reality, they talk about three dialectical moments—society as a human product, humans as a societal product, and society as an objective reality. Institutionalization, inter-subjective sedimentation, and legitimation of learned signs, symbols, and language substantiating myths create and are created by humans. Humans then create a symbolic universe by which to create meaning, significance, communication, and order in the world.

---

[182] Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 18.

104

Regarding subjective reality, they also explicate three dialectical moments: externalization, internalization, and objectification. One is nurtured or socialized with rules, or *nomos*, and norms by which the individual must abide to live in society. If s/he steps outside of these patterns of *nomos* as reality, then one must undergo either therapy or nihilation, that is, change or exile. In this way, society shapes humans as humans shape society to construct reality.

These categories and descriptions of experiences of realities could easily be transposed into the sphere of the sacred, the church society, or in this case, the evangelical subculture. For example, the church as an objective reality is a social group which creates and produces signs and symbols, even myths, to support a particular worldview for the group. This evangelical language and system of beliefs are then reinforced through particular behavioral codes, or learning the specific roles, in socialization. If one were to attempt to leave this group with this language, one would experience a kind of exile. A biased therapy would be necessary to reenter the group and attempt to maintain the order, or nihilation, or complete exile by the community might ensue.

Berger extends these categories to religion in *The Sacred Canopy* (1990). He talks at length about the internalization and externalization of nomos, as rules or laws (derived from the Greek νομος), for the individual and for society. A group in society constructs the nomos in the attempt to combat the great fears of death, terror, or what Berger calls anomy:

> When the nomos is taken for granted as appertaining to the "nature of things," understood cosmologically or anthropologically, it is endowed with a stability deriving from more powerful sources than the historical efforts of human

beings.[…] Religion is the human enterprise by which a sacred cosmos is established. [183]

Religion then is a set of symbols, or a pattern of nomos, that creates a cosmology, a kind of reality, answering ultimate questions, providing a kind of response to the unanswerable, producing a world that holds meaning and order, staving off the evil of random chaos.

Through legitimization processes, the habit of ritual, the belief that one's world mirrors the greater universe, and the construction of knowledge (providing an explanation in an uncertain world), religion maintains itself within the social group. Another key aspect to maintenance is the necessity of what Berger calls "plausibility structures." These plausibility structures are the leaders of a group designated and trusted to maintain the nomos, the body of knowledge, and thus, the cosmological worldview.

Berger's categories of the social construction, production, and maintenance of religion are helpful in understanding the evangelical megachurch. The evangelical megachurch is a kind of microcosmic society, or enclave group, within which there are a particular set of rules, or doctrines, or dogmas which dictate the accepted system of beliefs for the worldview of the church. The beliefs are statements of faith to which the congregant must declare in order to be a legitimate member of the group. Questioning the basic beliefs could lead to exile. Secondary beliefs (doctrine, interpretation of some Scriptures, etc.) can sometimes be up for debate, depending on the church and the congregation. For the most part, a tacit agreement is expected. Finally, behavioral and organizational rules, though often times implicit and unspoken, are also codes which, like statements of faith, manifest symbols of legitimation and maintenance for the group. The

---

[183] Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 25.

plausibility structures are typically represented by the male leaders (but not always) in power who serve as pastors, elders, or deacons. The group at large also participates in maintenance of the beliefs and behaviors for the continuance of the tradition of their interpretation of Christianity.

Berger's categories and approach serve well to describe the persistence of evangelical Christianity and the actual workings of maintenance within the walls of the church. What his theory lacks, however, is the question of "why"? Why is religion, in this case Evangelicalism, socially constructed and maintained? There is a gap in the origin and the hard work of perpetuating tradition. One response to this is that humankind seeks myth and ritual to placate their anxiety of death, and create a kind of order in an unorganized, chaotic world. Ian Tattersall, anthropologist and curator, writes of the origins of homo sapiens in *Becoming Human* (1998). In this, he points out that religion is a part of the earliest forms of humankind:

> Among the Cro-Magnons we see for the first time evidence of regular and elaborate ritual, with hints of ritual and belief in an afterlife. The most striking example of Cro-Magnon burial comes from the 28-kyr-old site of Sungir, in Russia, where two young individuals and a sixty-year-old male (no previous kind of human had ever survived to such an age) were interred with an astonishing material richness. [...] It is here that we have the most ancient incontrovertible evidence for the existence of religious experience.[184]

Others too have argued for a biological explanation for religion or a deity (i.e. Hamer 2004, Newberg and Waldman 2002). Here, I simply wish to comment that the need for myth and ritual extends far beyond the evangelical subculture in the United States.

---

[184] Ian Tattersall, *Becoming Human* (New York: Harcourt & Brace Co., 1998), 10-11.

Third Space as Liminal for Revivals: Megachurches, Festivals, and Conferences

Whereas Victor Turner talks about a "betwixt and between" state, a liminal space of transition, where temporal and cultural bounds are inverted for ritual, in the same way, some scholars are reexamining geographical, physical, social and mental spatiality to rethink human interaction or even discursive frames. This "betwixt and between" state or space has been called a "third space." Edward Soja writes about third space as a means to move beyond binary oppositions and to open up new alternatives.[185] Similarly, Homi Bhabda uses language of third space to talk about discourse.[186] In the coming together of cultures, the third space is that jumble of signs and symbols in language in process of developing resistance to the dominant culture at times, yet creating something fresh and new.

Third space, in terms of Evangelicals, is a helpful technical term to think about the spatiality in worship. It is in a third space that Evangelicals have been able, historically, to maintain and construct an atmosphere of spiritual fervor, refreshing and revitalizing communities of people in their faith. The third space seems to be that which is between the private sphere and the public sphere, more specifically the religious sphere.[187] The religious sphere, in this case, represents the "church" in America, as it stands within the confines of a denomination, a judicatory, or a greater system of churches (i.e. the Greek Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church, etc.). A tent-meeting

---

[185] See Edward Soja's *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1996) for what he calls a "metaphilosophy," built upon the work of Henri Lefebvre, to argue for "the ontological, epistemological, and theoretical rebalancing of spatiality, historicality, and sociality as all-embracing dimensions of human life"(10).

[186] Homi Bahbda, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[187] See Peter Berger, *Invitation to Sociology* (New York: Anchor Books, 1963), chapter four, "Sociological Perspective—Man in Society," for his 'Theory of Concentric Circles' to describe the interplay of an individual and society. The private and public spheres are delineated here.

revival is a good example of the usage of third space to invoke liminality, a very real, felt experience by the individual and the community.

Megachurches have been able to capture the spirit of a revival between splitting from a denomination or church, maintaining a sect-like atmosphere, and allowing the leadership the freedom to create and produce new ways of experiencing worship in song and sermons. Rigidity found in a formal liturgical service is removed to allow the individual and the leadership the freedom to experience the Divine and express that experience through physical and emotional manifestations. This is much like that experienced by an individual in a rock concert, for instance. Thus, the experiential connection between the theatre and the church is not only for the "performance team" but also for the audience members.

Third space played a crucial role for Evangelicals at the turn of the twentieth century for revivals and Bible conferences. In addition, at the turn of the twenty-first century, the third space of the parachurch has played a vital role in the fecund growth and sustenance of moderate Evangelicals. Christian music festivals, gender-based conferences, Bible studies, available literature and music, and other parachurch experiences supplement the life of the individual and community of Evangelicals offering a space for spiritual renewal.

Creativity or Compliance?: Southern Evangelical Theatre as Space for Playing and Reality

Donald Winnicott, in his *Playing and Reality* (1971), describes a space between the outer and internal worlds in which healthy children and adults have the capacity to play. Winnicott labels this area a transitional space, an "intermediate area…between

primary creativity and objective perception based on reality-testing,"[188] in which the child

can play with illusion(s). The transitional space offers a moment between primary and

secondary process thinking. Moreover, the playing, somewhere between consciousness

and unconsciousness, is transitional phenomena. In this space, Winnicott demonstrates a

spectrum of objects, transitional objects, namely the breast or a soft, cuddly teddy bear, as

those that are believed to be magically created by the child. While transitional space is

described within object-relations theory, namely for children, Winnicott extends this

space describing adult-like spaces for play as well: such as art, theatre, or religion.

For Sigmund Freud, religious doctrines are illusions that border on delusions. In

The Future of an Illusion (1928), he proposes the following:

> If, on the one hand, religion brings with it obsessional restrictions, exactly as an
> individual obsessional neurosis does, on the other hand it comprises a system of
> wishful illusions together with a disavowal of reality, such as we find in an
> isolated for nowhere else but in amentia, in a state of blissful hallucinatory
> confusion.[189]

Religion steeps culture in an illusory neurosis that hinders the developmental progress of

understanding our world and ourselves. Scientific work, for Freud, provides the only

methods by which to test reality. With time, he argues, religion will diminish, as science

will flourish.

In contrast to Freud's view, Winnicott views religion as a necessary space of

illusion in the lives of adults in which we can live creatively. He contends that the

transitional space and transitional phenomena "throughout life is retained in the intense

experiencing that belongs to the arts and to religion and to imaginative living, and to

---

[188] Donald Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (London: Routledge, 1971), 11.

[189] Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion,* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XXI (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-analysis, 1928), 43.

creative scientific work."[190] Furthermore, in an article on "Playing and Culture" (1968), he finds that the transitional phenomena of culture actually consumes most of our time and space in our lives.[191] Thus, Winnicott allows a space for religion and deems it potentially worthy as a component of psychic health.

Using Winnicottian language and theory, I ask, if the worship service in the megachurch is a kind of theatre, is it then a space of play? Further, is creativity a necessary variable in play? Or, is it a space of compliance? Winnicott describes compliance as "a relationship to external reality…[in which] the world and its details being recognized but only as something to be fitted in with or demanding adaptation."[192] He bifurcates these spaces to differentiate spaces of play from spaces of work, or reality. Acts of compliance would fall in the latter category. If the individuals participating in the worship service are able to creatively image their own God, produce their own "scripts" of beliefs, and freely express their worship, then perhaps it is a space of play or creativity. However, in this ritualistic, synchronic space, if one is not free to create her own god, beliefs, or script, and one merely has to behave and believe as directed by the "team" leaders and adapt to the environment, then the worship space could be viewed as a space of compliance.

As discussed above, given the varieties of Evangelicals and the multiplicity of their worship services, megachurch praise & worship might fall within a spectrum between "creativity and compliance." Like the usage of the concept of marketplace or theatre, this dualistic language does not allow for the complexity of the individual

---

[190] Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 14.
[191] Donald Winnicott, "Playing and Culture" in *Psychoanalytic Explorations,* ed. Clare Winnicott et al., (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 205.
[192] Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 65.

experience with the Divine across an hour or more of emotional terrain. As a participant-observer of many different kinds of praise & worship services in megachurches, I have found that it is both a space of creativity and compliance. It is creative in that many individuals might lose themselves in the song, in dance, or even glossolalia. They may enter a "trance-like" state in which they express as they wish their moment of ecstasy amidst the community of faith alongside a Divine image.

An example might be the clapping, hand-raising, and dancing at True Bibleway Church in Mississippi.[193] In this congregation, Randall Balmer captures the experience of an African-American woman freely and creatively expressing herself in worship unto a collapse or fainting. Yet arguably, her images of God, her beliefs, and the bounds of her behavior are confined by the clergy or even the unspoken rules of the community. This example falls somewhere in the middle between creativity and compliance.

The question arises, where is there not some modicum of compliance within any space of play? Unless in a state of pure anarchy, are not there always some rules or laws to which we must adhere, even in a space of play? Given the tension between creativity and compliance within a space of worship, it may not be the optimum, idealistic vision of Winnicott's space of illusion for health, but it does provide a kind of space for play. The megachurch does provide a more creative space for self-expression in song, prayer, and worship, by degree, than a formal, liturgical service where language, song, and bodily expression are definitively bound by direction of the leadership and the surrounding community.

Victor Turner analyzes and describes the process of ritual to theatre, or the anthropology of ritual to the anthropology of performance. Using the foundation theory

---

[193] Randall Balmer, *PBS Series: Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory* (Worcester, PA: Gateway Films, 1992).

of ritual process as delineated by Wilhelm Dilthey, he uses Dilthey's "fifth moment" of

Erlebnis (or unit of experience, distinctive experience, etc.) as the paramount moment of

performance: "an experience is never truly completed until it is 'expressed,' that is, until

it is communicated in terms intelligible to others, linguistic or otherwise."[194] This

moment of expression is that of the artist, poet, or writer, a moment in which meaning is

expressed and new images are created. It seems a moment and space of pure creativity,

paralleling the notion of creativity and play by Winnicott.

　　In his chapter, "Social Dramas and the Stories about Them," Turner discusses

religion as a social drama. He questions whether "religions of the Book" have lost their

sense of liminality in Western culture, due to their focus on the solemnity of the ritual. He

seems to be considering older, denominationally based churches and their formal,

liturgical rituals:

> Religion, like art, *lives* in so far as it is performed, i.e., in so far as its rituals are
> "going concerns." […] For religion is not a cognitive system, a set of dogmas,
> alone, it is a meaningful experience and experienced meaning. In ritual one *lives*
> *through* events, or through the alchemy of its framings and symbolings…or if
> these are absent, myths and sacred epics.[195]

Turner seems to be describing the tension as well between the social drama and

performance of religion within the bounds of its doctrinal and cognitive structures. This

language seems also to describe the complexity of play and reality in the space of

worship.

---

[194] Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*, 14.
[195] Ibid., 86.

Conclusion

In the first part of this dissertation, chapters one and two, I spent much time tracing the themes of Evangelicalism by which to better contextualize the current status of moderate Evangelicals at the turn of the twenty-first century. Also, with a full background of influences, regional, cultural, and historical, upon Evangelicalism in the United States, we can better understand the origins of the evangelical megachurch and better anticipate its trajectory.

With chapter three, I approach the evangelical megachurch from a sociological perspective to research why these churches are growing, who is attending, and how they are creating structures of sustainability. In sum, the theatre provides a good model by which to understand the practices and performances within the sanctuary. "Happy clappy" praise & worship creates a liminal space for play which provides a more relaxed atmosphere for casual dress, jazzy music, and a change in roles for women in evangelical churches. This space is attracting especially middle class Baby Boomers seeking a community in this mobile society that might provide a kind of honorific status, meaning, and purpose in their busy lives. The sect-like nature of the theatrical megachurch meets these needs while at the same time brilliantly reshaping rules and plausibility structures by which to maintain authority, legitimation, and inclusivity for those willing to abide by their codes. Balancing a kind of dissent of formal religion, (refuting some denominational doctrine) while maintaining basic theological premises of Evangelicalism, the evangelical megachurch provides a sustainability and a felt-kinship with the preceding denominational church while at the same time ushering in a creative freshness and newness in song, liturgy, rhetoric, and atmosphere.

CHAPTER IV

A PSYCHOLOGY OF SOUTHERN EVANGELICALISM:
AN OBJECT-RELATIONS APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING
THE NARRATIVES OF SOUTHERN EVANGELICALS

Introduction

Just as William James documented hundreds of religious experiences as case
studies for his classic *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1901), Benjamin Beit-
Hallahmi and Michael Argyle also have recorded dozens of case studies across a
spectrum of religious experiences, from the ecstatic to the mundane, to understand better
the psychology of religion. Whereas James interprets these experiences from a
neurological perspective concomitant with a theory of the divine (i.e. the MORE,
something that is beyond ourselves that is a part of ourselves), Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle
find that religious behavior, belief, and experience is simply a social product.[196]

In chapter three, I too approach the understanding of the experience of
Evangelicals, particularly in the theatre of the sanctuary, as a social product. But which
comes first, the belief or the experience? Is one's understanding of God and the world
shaped by one's socialization or is it something recalled from memory, known innately?
Though I do not intend on pursuing this question within the scope of this paper, I do want
to propose that there is a cycle of belief, experience, and the interpretation of that
experience which in turn validates and affirms one's beliefs in the Divine, the
phenomenon, and the organizational structure (i.e. the church) within which one is a part.

---

[196] Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi and Michael Argyle, *The Psychology of Religious Behavior, Belief, and Experience* (London: Routledge, 1997).

This chapter investigates the interpersonal relationships of Evangelicals and how the experience of those relationships shapes beliefs, myths, and rituals. Thus, I hope to move from the macro-sociological perspective of the experience of Evangelicals of chapter three to the micro-psychological perspective of the evangelical individual.

Object relations theory (ORT) is an important model in the psychoanalytic tradition to use here as we think about the arena of religion and the influence of both the perception and the reality of those relationships on beliefs. How do object relations, whether they are interpersonal or transitional, shape the development of one's beliefs and one's personal myth? I am particularly interested in the experiences and the interpretations of experiences of Evangelicals' relationships with humans and the divine. Using the discourse of ORT, I discuss "splitting" and "projective identification," particularly using examples from the South regarding race, gender, and sexuality. The notion of "splitting" provides a foundation by which to understand the cultural and personal myths, or narratives, of Southern Evangelicals. Among the ORT theorists, psychoanalysts Donald W. Winnicott and Heinz Kohut seem to provide best the language and theory by which to interpret the development of relationships among Evangelicals. Thus, I address religion as transitional phenomenon and religion of the self, delineating the worldview of Evangelicals. Lastly, I depict the personal myth of Southern evangelical Franklin Graham, given his autobiographical writings of external, interpersonal, and intrapsychic conflicts. His story provides an excellent example of relationships, images, and conflicts that are indicative of the Southern evangelical narrative.

Object Relations Theory: Theory and Discourse

From Freud to ORT-- A Recapitulation

Toward the end of Sigmund Freud's work, namely in the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933), a question arises regarding the importance of the pre-oedipal period. Object relations theorists began to explore and obtain new data about this stage of human development. Secondly, they began to question Freud's concept of reductionism dominating his psychoanalytic theory. And thirdly, "Object relations theorists, relying upon the classical theory, tend to elaborate their additions to classical theory by examining and then adopting the manifest content of their patients' experience" (Gay, "Comparisons" handout). With the emergence of new perspectives and information, there was arguably, at least, a "model" shift versus a paradigm shift, from the classic psychoanalytic model to the object relations model.

Thomas Kuhn, in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), explains the shifts of paradigms in normal science. Upon the appearance of anomalies within the dominant paradigm, there arises a crisis: "All crises begin with the blurring of a paradigm and the consequent loosening of the rules for normal research…a crisis may end with the emergence of a new candidate for paradigm and with the ensuing battle over its acceptance."[197] ORT seems to have arisen as the "new candidate for the paradigm" with subsequent battles that continue today. If ORT is indeed a paradigm shift, then it is only within the emic perspective of those who work in the field of psychoanalysis. From the outside, it seems only to be a model shift.

---

[197] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 84.

Encompassing the spectrum of theories inherent within the ORT model,

Greenberg and Mitchell provide this definition for ORT:

> The term 'object-relations theory,' in its broadest sense, refers to attempts within psychoanalysis to answer these questions, that is, to confront the potentially confounding observation that people live simultaneously in an external and an internal world, and that the relationship between the two ranges from the most fluid intermingling to the most rigid separation."[198]

From the advent of Sigmund Freud's drive theory to the development of the

drive/structural model, there was an ebb and flow role in the importance of his

understanding of "object." Greenberg and Mitchell carefully trace the nuances in the

chronological thought in Freud's writings pertaining to the object and object relations.

They ask the following: "What is the object in Freud's theory? Is it simply an internal

representation of the parent or of a series of interactions with him or her? Or, is the object

an externalization of endogenous sensations which have found a convenient 'container'

in the persons of the caretaking figures?"[199] Freud first understands the object to be a

sexual object, another person through whom the subject can achieve the aim of his/her

instinctual drive.[200] Later, the object is understood to be a mental representation, and

finally, perhaps, a theoretical construct.[201]

Within ORT, two models frame the development of the discourse: drive/structure

and relational/structure. The former attempts to preserve the Freudian drive theory, and

"requires the derivation of relations with others as vicissitudes of the drives

---

[198] Jay R. Greenberg and Stephen A. Mitchell, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 12.
[199] Ibid., 38.
[200] Sigmund Freud, "Three Essays on Sexuality," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* Vol. VII (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-analysis, 1905).
[201] Burness E. Moore and Bernard D. Fine. *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts* (New Haven: The American Psychoanalytic Association and Yale University Press, 1990), 129.

themselves."[202] The latter replaces the dominance of drive as the energic force of human behavior with "the creation, or re-creation, of specific modes of relatedness with others."[203] Furthermore, Greenberg and Mitchell follow the tributaries of object relations theories to delineate how each theorist explains motivation and behavior in light of Freud's explanation that humans are driven by desire and how these theorists accept, reject, or modify—with a mixed model—the drive theory.

Within the context of understanding a religious experience, ORT moves past the Freudian, traditional "father religion" with a father motif by which individuals seek to overcome feelings of guilt and fear with atonement and compensation. Conversely, ORT considers the mother motif, or "mother religion," and the immense influence of the mother on one's religious experience. ORT also allows for an examination of the self-motif, infantile self-grandiosity, and narcissism as another kind of religious experience.[204] Because Evangelicalism descends from a strong patriarchal tradition, the God-image as "father," or other male role, dominates the perception of God. However, as unfolds through several evangelical anecdotes, the role of the mother (and the implicit intimacy inherent within that relationship) does seem to correlate with Evangelicals' perception of the Jesus-image. Finally, revisiting the issue of narcissism among evangelical megachurches, I look at the role of self-religion in the development of object relations and its influences on beliefs.

---

[202] Greenberg and Mitchell, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*, 3.
[203] Ibid.
[204] David Wulff, *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Views* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1991), 318-319. Wulff explicates the work of Harald and Kristian Schjelderup and their categories of religion including father religion, mother religion, and self religion in H. and K. Schjelderup, *Uber drei Haupttypen der religiosen Erlebnisformen und ihre psychologische Grundlage* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1932).

On Splitting and Projective Identification: Race, Gender, and Sexuality among Southern Evangelicals

J. S. Grotstein, in his work *Splitting and Projective Identification* (1985), finds that the act of splitting is initially the separating of the object-representation from the self-representation.[205] This act, for him, is both psychologically and biologically universal due to the neurological explanation for this mental and experiential process. Linking Freud's understanding of 'double' or 'dual consciousness' to splitting, he attempts to demonstrate that it was also Freud's "ultimate thesis" that "splitting was not only a feature of psychosis and fetishism but was but was a common feature in the everyday lives of neurotics and is ubiquitous in infancy."[206] Along the same lines, Melanie Klein (1965) correlates Chomsky's theory of universal grammar, using his theory of deep structures inherent in human beings, to her work with infants. She claims the human infant "is incapable of doing anything but attributing meaning to experience on the basis of his inborn codes, the life and death instincts."[207] Again, for her, splitting is an innate instinct.

As the human infant physiologically and psychologically develops and "splits" from her/his caregiver, s/he assumes the identification of other object-representations for a sense of cohesiveness. "Thus, in infancy and childhood, when there is difficulty in establishing a clear-cut, discrete, internal world, the unconscious experience of being split predicates *a high degree of identification with objects* into which the splits are *projected* [italics mine]."[208] Projective identification can extend into adulthood as well when one

---

[205] J.S. Grotstein, *Splitting and Projective Identification* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1985).
[206] Ibid., 28.
[207] T.H. Ogden, *The Matrix of the Mind: Object Relations and the Psychoanalytic Dialogue*. (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1986), 33.
[208] Ibid., 11.

experiences "defensive splitting," assuming or taking on the aspects of one's self that are constructed by the Other. Both splitting and projective identification can serve as the basic blocks of defensive mechanisms, and both run along spectrums ranging from normal to neurotic to psychotic tendencies. Splitting and projective identification are also integral components of narcissism, anxiety, and paranoia.

Though natural in infancy, the escalation of splitting evidenced in bifurcated language, or Black-and-White thinking, can suggest tendencies toward anxiety or depression. As earlier discussed, culturally, the Southern region is sometimes depicted as schizophrenic, pointing to a dualistic way of life among those who participate in the construction of its myth, perception, and reality. The notion of "splitting," then, is a connector between the biological, psychological, and cultural creation of myth. The phenomenon of splitting, creating binary oppositional structures, forms the basic structure of myth, as noted by Claude Levi-Strauss (1963). This structure distills the splitting of binary pairs into the basic conundrum of existence: the problem of life and death. In dealing with this conundrum, Evangelicals, and others, spin tales to fill the gaps of question to cope with anxiety, thereby bridging the experience of the development of personal myths with those of culture. One psychological and cultural byproduct is projective identification.

Southern Blacks have a history of projective identification. Many Whites once held particular beliefs (both unconscious and conscious) about Blacks such as "Black persons carry the mark of Cain." Thusly, many Blacks took on the belief, allowing it to characterize them, struggling with the ensuing shame. This language, linked to Biblical myth, also perpetuated rituals of lynching, violence, and other forms of prejudices by

Whites, building the connection between pigmentation and ignominy. Sunday morning

may not be as segregated as it was decades ago, particularly in evangelical

megachurches, but elements of racism still do remain. Of course, the response to

Hurricane Katrina by various levels of government unveiled that well. As noted by Lewis

Baldwin, there is still far to go in the struggle against the politics of silence.[209]

Projective identification also plays a role in gender. Historically, the South has

been described as an honor/shame culture. Race, class/status, education, sports, religion,

and leisure can all be identified as a part of this culture. Sex and gender, no less, take part

in roles within the honor/shame culture as well. For instance, within a culture that

glorifies football, Southerners ritually attend high school, SEC, and/or NFL games

throughout the fall, cheering the men onto the field, while women grace the sidelines or

join the ranks in the audience as spectators. In fundamentalist or moderate evangelical

churches, women have played important roles within various denominations and in

various churches. Lottie Moon, Amy Grant, Joni-Ericson Tada, and Joyce Meyer are

good examples of powerful voices in the evangelical church. Though allowed to serve as

worship leaders or to speak from the pulpit at times, women are *not* allowed to hold

senior level positions within the church hierarchy. The senior pastor in (almost) all

evangelical churches most certainly is male. While this is a characteristic of

Fundamentalism according to Appleby and Marty, it also could be interpreted as a

manifestation of the honor/shame culture.[210] Women, as the Other, take on shame

projected by men and demonstrate beliefs and behaviors that coincide with that shame

and subordination.

---

[209] Baldwin, *The Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.: The Boundaries of Law, Politics, and Religion*.
[210] Appleby and Marty, eds., *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*.

Homosexuality and homosexuals also are examples of the Other in projective identification. According to Evangelicals, if one is participating in a sexual lifestyle, s/he is living in sin.[211] Some homosexuals, in turn, take on this guilt and shame with attempts to change themselves, their lifestyles, and implement these received beliefs. Fundamentalist groups, like the Family Research Council, attempt to distance themselves, or "split off" from any connection with homosexuals by choosing to rally Americans in a fight against domestic marriages. These are just three examples of splitting and projective identification, but "Others" that Southern Evangelicals might "split off" could include the following: atheists, pro-choice advocates, sex education advocates, scientists who support evolution, nations who do not support democratic governments, and those who support condoms against HIV/AIDS in Africa, to name a few.

Given the undercurrent of splitting and projective identification, psychologically and culturally, in Evangelicalism, how then do Evangelicals develop their understanding of God-image(s) (i.e. including Jesus, Holy Spirit, etc.) as object? In the next two sections, I explore the theories of Winnicott and Kohut in the attempt to better describe the internal worlds of Evangelicals.

---

[211] See Mathew D. Staver, *Same-Sex Marriage: Putting Every Household at Risk* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishing Group, 2004); Alan Sears and Craig Osten, *The Homosexual Agenda: Exposing the Principle Threat to Religious Freedom Today* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishing Group, 2003), and Timothy J. Dailey, *Dark Obsession: The Tragedy and Threat of the Homosexual Lifestyle* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishing Group, 2003) for more on the perspective of the religious right on homosexuality.

Religion as Transitional Phenomenon: The Playing and Reality of Southern Evangelicals

Though D.W. Winnicott claims to have drawn from the work of Freud and Melanie Klein, many critics accuse him of "benign neglect" regarding Freud's drive theory. Many claim that his writings are "cryptic and elusive." He frames his contributions to ORT within the relational/structure model, and the key issue for him is the dealing with environmental provisions and failures of the client. For him, the analytical setting provides the missing parental provision and compensates for parental failures. In this "holding environment," the client is able to play with "transitional objects" to create illusion in order to engage properly with reality. For adults, play and illusion could take place within the space of an artist's studio, theatre, or sanctuary.

Winnicott emphasizes the key role of the mother in the psychic health of the child. What he calls "good enough mothering" is a necessary component for growth and proper development. This mothering includes providing optimal care, mirroring the emotion of an infant, and allowing a space for play and imagination for a child. An integral component to the space of play, as noted above, is the "holding environment," a sacred, safe space for the child to have the capacity to explore, experiment, to try, and to fail. Also this includes providing good transitional objects for the infant or child as that which is "betwixt and between" the mother and the infant. If the breast or bottle is the first transitional object for the infant, the mother allows the child to feel as if it plays a role in the actualizing of the breast or bottle; the child's wish for its appearance bears directly on the presentation of the object. There is a kind of tacit, unspoken agreement

between the child and the mother that other transitional phenomena, or symbols, may be realized also through materialization or experience, such as learning.[212]

This space of play also correlates with fantasy, imagination, and religion, or the evolution of thinking about God, especially as a transitional object. In the footsteps of Winnicott, Ana-Maria Rizzuto, in her *The Birth of the Living God* (1979), researches images of God as transitional object representations in the lives of children unto adulthood. Using Winnicottian language of transitional space and transitional phenomena, she illustrates that in this liminal area, God is born. Likened to the squashy stuffed animal, God "shares the unpredictable life of the small child's teddy bear: when needed he is hurridly pulled from his resting place…and when the storm is over, neglectfully left…quietly offering the silent reassurance of an almost imperceptible presence."[213]

She argues, "no child in the Western world brought up in ordinary circumstances completes the oedipal cycle without forming at least a rudimentary God representation, which he may use for belief or not."[214] Evangelical children may indeed create a "pet god" from their own illusory, transitional space. The image of that pet god may be enhanced within a setting in which the child is the passive recipient of teachings about her God, but as the child matures, the pet god does not change. One's illusory object cannot change if one believes that one's God is immutable. I would argue that the evangelical transitional object resists change after childhood. Yet, Rizzuto claims, "God as a transitional representation *needs to be recreated* in each developmental crisis if it is

---

[212] For more on the discussion of transitional space as a model for religious experience, see James Jones, *Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Religion: Transference and Transcendence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

[213] Ana-Maria Rizzuto, *The Birth of the Living God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 203.

[214] Ibid., 200.

to be found relevant for lasting belief [italics mine]."[215] The transitional object of the evangelical is "the same, yesterday, today, and forever."[216] God remains a protective, powerful parent that evangelical individuals seek to reach, like a mirage in the distance. And God the Son, Jesus Christ, remains a constant mother, friend, or brother-image. For these reasons, God and Jesus Christ may function more as Kohutian relational selfobjects than a transitional object representation.

Ideally, as the child grows, the transitional space offers a non-stressful environment by which the child can slowly mature through reality testing: discerning between that which is fantasy and that which is reality, movement between primary process and secondary process thinking. The transitional space for the evangelical adult is, ideally, the sanctuary, and the transitional objects include images of the Divine. Paul Pruyser develops Winnicott's theory of transitional phenomena, but he describes the illusion as ideals or goals by which a person strives, overcoming his shortcomings.[217] This space of play, then, like a "third space," lies between primary process and secondary process thinking, between fantasy and reality. This "illusionistic world" as Pruyser describes, is a kind of ordered imagination, a space to develop symbols and culture, somewhere between free association and logic.[218]

It is in this kind of "illusionistic world" that the rituals of Evangelicalism occur. However, as noted in the last chapter, evangelical praise & worship finds itself somewhere between what Pruyser would describe as the "illusionistic world" and the "realistic world," or between play and reality. Many Fundamentalists spend much effort

---

[215] Ibid., 208.
[216] Hebrews 13:8 NRSV: "Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever."
[217] Paul Pruyser, *Between Belief and Unbelief* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 201.
[218] Paul Pruyser, *The Play of the Imagination: Toward a Psychoanalytic Culture* (New York: International Universities Press, 1983), 339.

and energy aligning their faith with reality, unearthing hard facts to prove the origins of the world according to Genesis or defining God through metaphors considered literal. At the same time, many moderate Evangelicals also share this effort of reality-testing, but most lack the militancy in pursuing these acts of faith.

In the previous chapter, I discuss at length the space of the sanctuary as a possibility for a space of play for Evangelicals. Furthermore, I question if it truly serves as a space of creativity, or rather if it is more a space of compliance. I suggest it has *both* components of creativity and compliance, a space of play and reality. The theatre of the megachurch worship exists somewhere between ceremony and performance. Can divine images be considered transitional objects between play and reality or between subjectivity and objectivity?

Here, the authenticity of the self is at stake for Evangelicals, between creativity and compliance. Winnicott talks about the self, akin to Freud's ego, as having the capacity for being true and false. The true self is that which has a space to play, for uninhibited imagination and freedom for creativity. The false self is an inhibited self, constrained by a compliance-oriented environment lacking the space and freedom for personal spontaneity. One living under complete compliance with a false self would be in danger of suicide, according to Winnicott. There would be no reason to continue living. When "life is lived through the compliant false self, the result clinically is a *sense of unreality* [italics mine]."[219] From an atheistic viewpoint, much of a Southern Evangelical's life may function in reality, but there is a component of her worldview that does embrace a "sense of unreality" in both cases, her faith and religious praxis that

---

[219] D.W. Winnicott, "Ideas and Definitions (1950)," in *Psychoanalytic Explorations*, ed. Clare Winnicott et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 43.

simply does not coincide with empirical facts, as with most religions. Though Southern Evangelicals do not fit that extremity, it is fair to say that Southern Evangelicalism imposes a strain to the "true self" as it demarcates clear boundaries for the Evangelical in belief, behavior, and practice. Winnicott's categories of the self here help illustrate the internal struggle of moderate evangelicals winding through a transitional space of creativity/compliance, between a true/false self.

Winnicott's theory of transitional phenomena as it relates to religion, and more specifically to Evangelicalism, does provide a language to understand the internal worldview of the evangelical and his/her view of God as object. Yet the bifurcated categories of play/reality, creativity/compliance, true/false limit the nuance or specificity for understanding the various shades of, in this case, Evangelicalism. In the following, I give case examples from evangelical writings detailing their relationship(s) with images of the divine.

God the Son as a Transitional Object Representation

Southern religion, particularly as viewed as civil religions for Southern Baptist and National Baptist denominations, is a patchwork of evangelical strains, denominational doctrines, folk beliefs, and the lasting influence of a host of charismatic figures now emerging in Southern non-denominational, suburban megachurches. Southern Evangelicalism has evolved from the synergy of those in the pews and those from the pulpit, creating and shaping theology through the decades. A distinct feature of Southern Evangelicalism is the assessment of one's personal relationships with Jesus Christ and the sustainability and growth of that relationship, as if he were literally a real

friend or family member in one's life. This kind of literal imaging of Jesus in the flesh

and one's relationship with him is probably born out of fundamentalist thinking akin to a

literal interpretation of scriptures. Jesus then is both an "imaginary friend," but he is

believed very much to be alive and real. Winnicott's theory of transitional phenomenon

and space of play are apropos for considering both worship within a public sanctuary as

well as a private space of worship, prayer, or relationship with Jesus for the evangelical.

Anne Graham Lotz, the eldest daughter of the Rev. Billy Graham, has developed

a career as a public speaker, as has her brother Franklin Graham, yet her language tends

to be more moderate and dedicated to women's issues. She also is an author of several

books. In her latest writing, *I Saw the Lord: A Wake-Up Call for Your Heart* (2006), Lotz

opens with a chapter entitled "A Longing to See Jesus…Again." She complains about her

current hectic schedule, flitting to engagements, and traveling, and she expresses a wish

to simply spend some time with her mother, Ruth Bell Graham:

> I long to see my mother…again. I long to sit beside the fire in her bedroom and see the sparkle in her dancing eyes as she relates some humorous anecdote. I long to see the intelligent expression on her beautiful, character-lined face as she listens to me share something with her.[…]I long to see her, I long to hear her, I long to just be in her presence, because with all my heart, I love my mother.
> And as passionately as I love my mother and long to be with her, I love Jesus even more. I talk with Him from time to time in prayer […]. I love the sound of His voice when He speaks to me through His Word. And I feel torn between where I am—here—and where I want to be—there, with Him.[220]

In these passages, Lotz clearly links her wishing of being together with her mother with

being together with Jesus. Jesus, it seems, serves as a maternal image, a transitional

object representation for Lotz. She goes on to explain that she does not want the tent

---

[220] Anne Graham Lotz, *I Saw the Lord: A Wake-Up Call for Your Heart* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 25-26.

meetings of her father as revival. She wants a "personal revival;" one that entails a

personal relationship with a God the Son, Jesus.

Another example of Jesus as a transitional object is in David Gregory's *Dinner*

with a Perfect Stranger (2005). Gregory writes a fiction based biographical novella about

an actual dinner with Jesus at an Italian restaurant in Chicago. Conversations over dinner

address questions about the reality of God, the universe, philosophy, and science, each

with Jesus responding with a conservative evangelical voice. The dinner is a kind of

space of play that allows for a conversion experience for the non-Christian diner who

literally has a conversation with Jesus Christ. Though the novella lacks a romance quality

which is more openly declared in the writings of women about Jesus, the dinner is a

"date" with Jesus, including four courses, wine, invitation, and fine apparel. Here too the

metaphor depicts a kind of intimacy with a God-image.[221]

Women of Faith speakers and worship leaders also have mastered the art of

positioning Jesus as a transitional object representation both in their public conference

space connected to one's private devotional space. Reviving the relationship with Jesus

for women attending the conference is one goal of the event. Instead of a conference to

revitalize one's marriage, it is to renew one's personal relationship with her Lord and

Savior. This is a good model of worship space that directly influences the worship

experience of the individual. After their conference, *Contagious Joy 2006*, in New York,

an attender, Kristie, writes the following:

> I now realize more fully the love that Jesus has for me. A love so powerful and
> kind that He would take the worst part of me, and put it upon himself. I am so

---

[221] David Gregory, *Dinner with a Perfect Stranger: An Invitation Worth Considering* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2005).

unworthy of that love, and yet He looks at me from up above and He the Lord and Creator of all says worthy, you are worthy. By my wounds you are healed. [222]

The community of women, charisma of the speakers, and experience of song heightens the spirits of the individuals enhancing their own private space with Jesus.

Christian praise & worship music, perhaps more than any other medium, initiates a space of play for worship and an experience with Jesus. Whether this be at a conference, such as Women of Faith, a church, or within a private space as the one Lotz describes, the language creates a space for imag(in)ing the divine. The songs weave metaphorical language about God and Jesus into flesh-and-blood characters, as father, mother, brother, friend, and lover.

Though Winnicott may offer an "alternative model" by which to understand his theory of object-relations in the psychoanalytic tradition, Greenberg and Mitchell suggest Heinz Kohut offers an "implications" model, or a mixed model approach, to synthesize the "uncomfortable fit between the clinical centrality of object relations and the theoretical centrality of drive."[223] Kohut develops his own language for his theory of the self, yet much of the ideas seem to be founded upon or parallel to the object relations theory of Winnicott. Like Winnicott, he argues that empathic parenting (like good enough mothering) proffering the child an idealized and mirroring selfobject coupled with optimal failures produce a healthy psyche. This is indicative in his/her ability to cherish ambition, realize goals (or ideals), or develop the skills needed to accomplish the goals. If there is a chronic failure of empathy, the child suffers from fragmentation, similar to Winnicott's false self. Working mostly with clients suffering from narcissistic personality

---

[222] Women of Faith: Conference Choronicles—Kristie, "Refreshment and Renewal:" http://66.18.106.124/encouragingwords/cc-refreshment.asp
[223] Greenberg and Mitchell, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*, 351.

disorder, Kohut's basic tool for cure is empathy as "vicarious introspection."[224] In this

next section, we will look at Evangelicalism through a Kohutian lens.

Religion of the Self: A Kohutian Interpretation of Southern Evangelicals

In chapter two, we highlighted the "honor/shame culture" as a subset of American

narcissistic culture as described by Lasch (1978). Alan Wolfe (2003) also talks about

"narcissism's reach" in evangelical religion, as mentioned in chapter three. The

psychology of Evangelicals, particularly in the evangelical megachurch and subculture

exemplify this narcissism, undergirding their beliefs, behaviors, and practices.

Psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut focuses on the analytical issues of a narcissistic patient. In

the following, using a Kohutian theory of the self, we will examine the object relations of

Evangelicals.

Tracing the History of Narcissism

Sigmund Freud talks about the "inordinate love of self" in his "On Narcissism:

An Introduction."[225] In this article, he describes primary narcissism, with its origin in the

oedipal phase, as the cathexis of the ego-libido. If the oedipal phase is not overcome by

the superego properly, one experiences a "damming up of object-libido"[226] in which the

energies are directed not toward an object love but rather to the self as introversion for

self-preservation. Freud defines this secondary narcissism as one in which "the libido [is]

---

[224] Heinz Kohut, *The Search for the Self*, Vol. I (Madison: International Universities Press, Inc., 1978), 206.
[225] Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XIV (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1914).
[226] Ibid., 84.

withdrawn from the outer world [and] has been directed on to the ego."[227] As examples of

secondary narcissism, he delineates those suffering from organic disease, hypochondria,

and being in love in accordance with ego instincts. The narcissist is beyond cure

ultimately because s/he is incapable of developing a transference. In terms of splitting,

the narcissist has actively disengaged with the world. The narcissist describes polarized

fantasies of grandiosity coupled with extreme shame, which emerges as a binary pair.

Freud understands narcissism as a development from primary narcissism to

secondary narcissism to object love; Kohut, however, reframes this view of development

from archaic to mature narcissism. Kohut disagrees with Freud's understanding of

narcissism. Where Freud claims, "the highest form of development of which object-libido

is capable is seen in the state of being in love, when the subject seems to yield up his

whole personality in favour of object-cathexis,"[228] Kohut questions this goal of autonomy

in object love. Maturity, for Kohut, does not necessarily mean a decrease of ego-libido

concomitant with an increase of object-libido. For him, both can increase as a love of self

alongside a love for others.

Shifting from a discussion of the ego and drive theory to the self and object

relations theory, Kohut focuses on the core of the personality, or the self, by which to

adapt a more holistic approach to understanding the mental structure of human beings.

Taking on patients suffering from narcissism, Kohut believes that self-psychology is a

"theory of thwarted and remobilized self-development."[229] Through empathy, the analyst

can move toward a deeper understanding of the client while, at the same time, providing

her/himself as an idealized or mirroring selfobject. In this way, the client transforms

---

[227] Ibid., 75.
[228] Ibid., 76.
[229] Heinz Kohut, *How Does Analysis Cure?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 141-142.

through a long process of understanding and explaining. This process involves a series of optimal frustrations, (i.e. non-traumatic failures and conflicts between client and analyst), for transmuting internalizations, (i.e. a process of digesting these optimal failures by forming and reforming self structure for a more cohesive self), through the phenomenon of transference.

Though the client may have initially experienced a state of fragmentation, cohesion of the self coalesces slowly through the acceptance of minor failures of selfobjects, including the analyst, and the work of repair for a healthier self structure. Cohesive individuals exhibit Kohut's poles of ambition, ideals, and the ability to acquire talents and skills to accomplish their goals.

In the Human Realm: Idealized, Mirroring, and Twinning Selfobjects

For many Southern Evangelicals and other Christians, the idealized selfobject could take the form of a pastor, speaker, or leader. The evangelical subculture has allowed for a rising of many leaders, as celebrities, playing roles as artists, authors, pastors, and speakers. Some are even actors. The fan bases among these celebrities treasure their words and message. Though sometimes these "celebrity" idealized selfobjects fail among their constituencies (for example, the scandal of the National Association of Evangelicals and pastor of New Hope Church in Colorado, Ted Haggard, involving a homosexual prostitute and methamphetamine), people in the pews still look to their leaders of authority seeking guidance, calm, and assurance. They turn to these idealized selfobjects as they once looked to their parental figures, or now, to their God-image.

134

The need for "mirroring" selfobjects is also necessary among Southern

Evangelicals and other Christians. Seeking something akin to a "gleam in a parent's eye"

as a sense of proud admiration for his/her "child," evangelicals, as all people, want

leaders who will respond and react to their behavior with kindness and constructive

thought. Superficially, this kind of parent-child, pastor-parishioner "patting on the back"

occurs, a swapping of affirmations and role-playing between the leadership and the

congregants.

Twinning selfobjects, those who look, act, talk, and dress alike, abound among

Southern evangelical communities as they do among any enclave group in American

culture today. In a dominant culture that seeks conformity, unity, and sameness, twinning

is a natural phenomenon even within the church. This conscious affirmation of lifestyles,

leisure, and status are tied up with the class and status of the evangelical megachurch.

Unlike the secular world, however, the church delivers another level of affirmation

among twinning selfobjects: religious beliefs.

Among the Divine: Idealized and Mirroring Selfobjects

Though human idealized and mirroring selfobjects can "fall short" in their ability

to provide a sense of greatness or gleam, the divine appears to proffer the paragon of an

idealized selfobject. Within an intimate setting of worship, the language of Southern

Evangelicals conjures images of God in song and prayer as Father, King, Lord, and

Lover. In the song, "You are my all in all," the chorus reads "You are my strength when I

am weak/ You are the treasure that I seek/ You are my all in all." There is a sense of a

teleology here: they have found the fullness of life in the presence of their God-image. In

worship, many lift their hands, like a child, to the heavens as they smile and sing to the image of this selfobject whom they know to be the essence of love and power. Jesus and God are used synonymously in their songs, but the images depicted are different. The Prince of Peace provides a sense of calm, and the glory of God fills them with greatness. Within the bounds of the evangelical community, their image of God is a perfect idealized selfobject.

Unfortunately, this perfect, omnipotent Father is only able to find pleasure in his children though the 'blood' of Jesus Christ. That is, only when "clothed in his righteousness," when seen through the atonement of Jesus' death as an "expiation for our sin," can God accept humans into his family. God, according to their theology, would not be able to mirror humans without the veil, as it were, of Christ. God loves them solely because they have accepted Jesus 'into their hearts' as Savior and Lord. "He who knew no sin became sin so that we might become the righteousness of God."[230]

Many current strains of evangelical denominations find their roots in a Calvinist tradition, especially discussed in Sunday School teachings, sermons, the lyrics of songs, and doctrine. For instance, the Presbyterian Church of America requires new members to become familiar with the *Westminster Confession of Faith* as a kind of initiation ritual. This historical work remarks on the fall of humans and sin: "from this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions."[231] This Presbyterian theological anthropology denotes that humans exist in a state of total depravity by which only the blood of Christ, shed for those whom God has elected, can save through the

---

[230] II Corinthians 5:21 NRSV
[231] G. I. Williamson, *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1964), 56.

regeneration of the Holy Spirit. The chasm between the ultimate transcendence and omnipotence of God and the lowliness of humans can inhibit an acceptance of a healthy hubris or ambition, especially when this relationship is paralleled to the human relationships between an evangelical leader and the congregant. This perpetuates and enhances the sense of shame in simply being human. Rather than Freud's 'guilty man' or Kohut's 'tragic man,' perhaps Evangelicals struggle as 'shameful (hu)mans.' Though this conjecture cannot be pursued at this time, shame theory might elucidate core pathologies for Christians especially adhering to fundamentalist theologies.

Lacking a divine selfobject who understands their shame, guilt, and anxiety, Evangelicals seem to show symptoms of a *fragmenting self*: "a chronic or recurrent condition of the self, the propensity to which arises in consequence of a lack of integrating responses to the nascent self in its totality from the side of the selfobjects in childhood."[232] This condition, rather than that of the overstimulated, understimulated, or overburdened self, results in a "deep loss of the sense of continuity of his self in time and its cohesiveness in space—a psychic condition that produces profound anxiety."[233] Within evangelical communities, the human and divine selfobjects shape personalities that remain "idealized-hungry" and "mirror-hungry." Only with the aid of a real, empathic selfobject, such as a good parent, partner, friend, or analyst, can the fragmenting self break free from this cycle to begin the process of building a cohesive self-structure.

Because divine images cannot provide adequate optimal frustrations for the process of transmuting internalizations, God and Jesus Christ do not fully serve as

---

[232] Heinz Kohut, *The Search for the Self*, Vol. II (Madison: International Universities Press, Inc., 1978), 418.

[233] Ibid., 419.

idealized selfobjects. God and Jesus are perfect entities; they do not sin, fail, forget, or

fall. While some religious individuals may grow impatient in a prayer request, angry at

the loss of a loved one, or weary of the silence, the overriding theological canopy of a

sovereign God consistently displaces their frustrations back upon themselves. These

feelings are a result of their human frailty in the face of God's omnipotence. Thus, I

would argue that a cohesion of the self, as understood by Kohut, via the religious setting

for Evangelicals, cannot fully occur due to the lack of adequate human selfobjects and the

complications with divine selfobjects.

Signs of a Mature Narcissism?

Because Kohut believes that there are developmental phases in narcissism, there

exists evidences of mature narcissism. In an interview with David Moss, Kohut describes

five "socially valuable qualities" of mature narcissism: creativity, empathy, transience,

humor, and wisdom. If cohesion does not occur and Evangelicals endure the cycles of

fragmentation, do they have the capacity for these mature forms of narcissism? As with

the question of Winnicott's creativity versus compliance, the answers are complex among

Evangelicals. There are manifestations of mature forms of narcissism, psychologically

and sociologically, but each of the qualities is manifested by degree. That is, there are

limitations on each of the mature forms of narcissism.

Creativity exists in the musical performance of the worship but not in the literal

interpretation of scripture. There are elements of creativity in personal devotion as well,

but not in full. There are still rules, doctrines, and codes by which individuals must

comply. *Empathy*, as vicarious introspection, is demonstrated among Evangelicals within

the group, but it is exceedingly difficult for these religious individuals to perceive

another's beliefs or behaviors by any other worldview than their own. Kohut notes in the

interview with David Moss, "We are most empathic with people of our own age, our own

culture and similar backgrounds; less empathic with people of different cultures and so

on. Yet if we want to understand people at all, we must trust the idea that there is some

bridge of similarity."[234] *Transience* is continually discussed in dichotomous language

about 'this world' versus 'heaven,' but for Evangelicals death is a portal. Like Donne's

poem "Death be not proud," they believe that Jesus has destroyed death through his

resurrection. Thus, there is no real dealing with a final end of life. There is only belief

that one will be welcomed into a new life and that all will be joined together at the end of

time. *Humor* is relative, but the jokes tend to remain 'in group' jokes. Moreover, these

jokes tend to relate directly to their doctrine or beliefs and to their congregation. Overall,

due to their literal beliefs, modes of selectivity, and apparent cognitive dissonance,

Evangelicals may not be able achieve a mature, healthy narcissism simply within the

context of their religious community given the criteria of qualities and the degree of

limitation.

To enter the internal world of the individual, psychoanalyst clinicians move from

the manifest, external conflicts to the internal, intrapsychic conflicts, reducing

oppositions from extrapersonal conflicts to interpersonal conflicts to intrapersonal or

intrapsychic conflicts. Reducing the conflicts to binary oppositions presents the structure

by which we can discern the personal myth of individuals. In chapter two, we discussed

the cultural myth(s) of the South. However, to further investigate the psychological myths

---

[234] David Moss, "Narcissism, Empathy, and the Fragmentation of the Self: An Interview with Heinz Kohut." *Pilgrimage* 4, 1 (Summer 1976).

of Evangelicals, namely Southern Evangelicals, it is helpful to examine the individual, personal myth.

Given this, using Volney Gay's "How to Discern the Personal Myth: an object relations perspective," I explore the personal myth of Franklin Graham. In doing so, I bridge Franklin Graham's external conflicts to intrapsychic conflicts in order to enter the arena of his internal world. Franklin Graham does disclose a fair amount of current external conflicts as well as interpersonal conflicts within his writings. From this, I attempt to deduce his intrapsychic conflicts. Among these conflicts lies the personal myth and worldview of perhaps one of the most prominent Evangelicals in the South.

The Personal Myth of Franklin Graham: Conflicts of a Southern Evangelical

Someone once told me that working with the Graham family was like working with the Royal family. Given their celebrity and the rich history of Billy Graham's influence upon Evangelicalism in the South, perhaps they are royal, particularly in this region of America. The Grahams' are Southern, being born and raised in North Carolina and having remained there all these years. Franklin Graham, the eldest son, continues to live in North Carolina, where he serves as President of both the Billy Graham Evangelical Association (BGEA) and Samaritan's Purse. Unlike his evangelical father, Franklin Graham might better be characterized as fundamentalist. Franklin includes a degree of militancy in his writings and sermons that position him to the right of his father. In spite of this, I want to use Franklin Graham, noted by TIME as one of the most influential Evangelicals in America, to delineate the psychology and narrative of a Southern evangelical.

In his latest book *The Name* (2001), Franklin Graham contends that the name of Jesus Christ is above all other names in the history of humankind. To do this, he creates an oppositional structure of *external conflicts* through numerous comparisons of evangelical Christianity with other religions, governments, and cultures. Put broadly, he notes, "the *name* is a lightning rod because the name represents the division of life between good and evil, God and Satan, light and darkness, righteousness and sin, heaven and hell [italics mine]."[235] Franklin then sets the tone of a bifurcated, mythic world where his Jesus-image is the only means to salvation.

Within each chapter of *The Name*, Franklin Graham relays moments of tragedy or crisis in his own life or the life of America. Having the privilege of being invited to serve as the religious leader, often for prayer, during crucial moments of American history, he proudly proclaims his belief in the name of Jesus Christ. Yet, with each instance, he claims to feels threatened by outsiders. For example, he was asked to open the events which followed the shooting at Columbine High School. There, with Michael W. Smith, he offered the prayer for the families and students who suffered from the tragedies. Because he chose to use the name of Jesus, however, religious liberals "felt like [Franklin Graham] was trying to terrorize us into heaven instead of loving us into heaven."[236] Throughout the book, he assumes religious liberals are enemies.

A second example of persecution was the response to his prayer for the inauguration of President George W. Bush. In this prayer, Franklin concluded with the name of Jesus as Lord, Savior, and Redeemer. These words aroused controversy among

---

[235] Franklin Graham, *The Name* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), back copy.
[236] Ibid., 19.

religious and nonreligious groups alike because of its inclusivity, given the political

situation. He notes the following:

> I believe that the response to the inaugural prayers is additional evidence of a
> disturbing trend in American public life: Christians who use the Name of Jesus
> and insist that He is "the one and only way to God" are increasingly viewed by
> many in the liberal media as narrow minded religious bigots who represent a
> threat to the rest of society.[237]

For him, religious liberals are a threat to society by encouraging tolerance, relativity, and

ambiguity. And, the liberal media simply exacts undue persecution of zealous

Evangelicals. For Franklin, if Christians do *not* exhibit uncompromising religious beliefs,

then they are in danger of losing their salvation.

Alongside the acknowledged inter-religious conflicts in America, Franklin

Graham tackles other religions and governments as enemies following the 9/11 crisis. He

links the terrorists to Islam: "Considering our opponents—individuals said to represent

Islam—I knew a war driven by religious passions would not be as quick and direct as the

Gulf War."[238] By identifying the terrorists as Muslims, Franklin Graham was projecting

'evil' upon an entire population dedicated to this religion. Moreover, he connects his

understanding of the terrorists with "wicked governments,"[239] noting that "the twin evils

of Nazism and Communism [have] produced some of the Name's most venomous

foes."[240]

Throughout his writings, Franklin parallels Christianity with American

democratic ideals: "America, at its core, is a symbol of the freedom purchased with the

---

[237] Ibid., 33.
[238] Ibid., 36.
[239] Ibid., 43.
[240] Ibid., 3.

precious blood of the Lord Jesus on the Cross."[241] Anything outside these political and

religious traditions is evil. In fact, he points out that our war on terrorism is only a

metaphor for the greater war between Satan and God: "The battle America is fighting

against terrorism is really just a skirmish in a way that began when Satan turned against

God and made his declaration of independence. God sent His Son to this earth on the

ultimate commando raid."[242]

Continuing with this belligerent rhetoric, Franklin also devotes a chapter to "The

New Plague," HIV/AIDS. In this writing, one might assume that the enemy would be the

virus itself. Yet, he lays the blame for the cause of HIV/AIDS upon the heads of those

assumed to have had sexual relationships outside of monogamous marriage: "It is true

that sinful behavior by homosexuals is a major factor in the spread of this deadly plague.

But it is also true that in Africa…HIV/AIDS is also caused by sinful heterosexual

behavior, which threatens to annihilate men, women, and—sadly—children."[243] He

concludes with a call to battle, "My desire is to see an army of Christian men and women

going out across the globe to wage war against HIV/AIDS." [244]

As he personally relates to these external conflicts, he, of course, assumes himself

on the side of the "good," the side of his God-image. The world of evil is the Other for

Franklin Graham; this includes anyone who is unlike him in belief or ideology. Franklin

pits himself against "evil" with his belligerent rhetoric. Religion, politics, and sexuality,

according to Graham, are found on both sides of good and evil with the name of Jesus

---

[241] Ibid., 45.
[242] Ibid., 43.
[243] Ibid., 171.
[244] Ibid., 180.

Christ as the line of demarcation. And, the issues of conservative Christianity, democracy, and abstinence are the theatres of combat today.

Given the external conflicts, we can now reduce the above oppositions to *interpersonal conflicts*. With the second chapter of his autobiography, we learn that Franklin loves to hunt, shoot guns, and buy guns.[245] He claims this as a part of his Southern heritage. Guns are a central motif in his writings as a symbol of power and protection. They are always associated with his admiration of men. That is, typically, men with knowledge of guns are men he wishes to emulate. This symbol represents basic conflicts Franklin has with other males including Billy Graham (his father), John Rickman (father-figure, handyman), David Hill (his principal), his headmaster, and the president of LeTourneau College. Alongside his immediate family, these men serve as selfobjects for Franklin. With each of the men listed above, a pattern emerges as the following: Franklin consciously rebels against each of their expectations of him. Subsequent to his exertion of autonomy, he edges on exile from various institutions throughout his life, including Stony Brook, Owen High School, and Le Tourneau College. The greatest threat, however, is the potential exile from his family and his home.

Franklin Graham's primary interpersonal conflicts all seem to follow basic oedipal power struggles represented in the ambivalent conflicts between him and his father. That is, all of his mentioned conflicts seem to be with older men, like his father, predicated on his repressed anger for his father's absence and sense of guilt for his inability to fulfill his potential as a religious leader to the world.

In reducing these interpersonal conflicts to intrapsychic conflicts, Franklin appears to be split in his decisions, between a 'right' and 'wrong,' in everything decision,

---

[245] Franklin Graham, *Rebel with A Cause* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995).

from leisure to career. Though he portrays a 'bad' rebel in his youth, he constructs a 'good' rebel in the aftermath of his conversion to Christianity. The sinner who becomes a saint is indicative of the Calvinistic heritage and the Southern evangelical expectation. His self-representation seems to be an ambivalent, split son/hero who finally overcomes evil to embrace the good; there is a seeming struggle between a true and false self. Yet the trajectory of his life, he claims, tends toward the 'good,' as he believes 'good' to be in Christianity, especially in the attempt to model the person and life of Jesus Christ. More succinctly, Franklin's dichotomous intrapsychic conflicts reveal an unconscious guilt to leave the Graham family to initiate a career for himself. As the eldest son, he feels the burden of carrying on the tradition and name of his father in sustaining the hard work of proselytizing throughout the world.

Conclusion

This chapter segues from a sociological perspective to a psychological perspective, juxtaposing the theories to elucidate the experience and worldview of the evangelical. Having likened the evangelical megachurch worship experience to the theatre, I want to explore the internal worlds of the "characters" within this community of faith. Object relations theory in the psychoanalytic tradition provides a discourse by which to discuss the interpersonal relationships and how those relationships and their conflicts play a role in the shaping of the self, beliefs, and personal myth.

The psychological experiences of splitting and projective identification are the bedrocks of myth. Given the history and explanation of each, I show how, particularly in the South, splitting and projective identification have underscored Southern myth-making

in an honor/shame culture. More specifically, I touch on the effect of the Southern myth on the psychology of Blacks, women, and gays in the South. With this piece, I hope to connect the foundations of the Southern cultural myth with the evangelical personal myth.

Two object relations theorists prove quite helpful in understanding the psychology of Southern Evangelicals: Donald Winnicott and Heinz Kohut. Using their theories to explore religion as transitional phenomenon and religion of the self, we are given a fresh lens by which to understand the evangelical theatre of the mind. Winnicott's language, dovetailing on the sociological perspective in thinking about space of play and transitional object representations, describes well how the God-images of Evangelicals develop and relate to paternal or familial images. This is important in constructing the God-image of the evangelical as a part of her interpersonal network as well as a transition to reality, or secondary process thinking. Kohut's self-psychology, on the other hand, clarifies the culture of narcissism of Evangelicals while at the same time provides a language to understand the relationships of Evangelicals, between one another in the megachurch community, as well as with the divine. In thinking about a family of faith, idealistic, mirroring, and twinning selfobjects as means for coping or cure can be loosely paralleled to roles and images in the church. Yet, due to the complexity of those roles, they really are not capable of offering the kind of role necessary for cure. Thus, many Evangelicals show some signs of mature narcissism, but only in part not in full.

Finally, I take the writings and autobiography of Franklin Graham as a case study to study the personal myth of one of the most influential Evangelicals in the United States today. Though he holds a unique life story as the son of perhaps the greatest evangelical

146

in American history, Graham's candid writing marks patterns of external, interpersonal, and intrapersonal conflicts common to Southern Evangelicals sharing his worldview. His personal myth, one such patch on the Southern cultural mythic quilt, evidences splitting, divine images as transitional object representations, and the interplay with selfobjects, human and divine, offering a good portrayal of the psychology of a Southern evangelical.

CHAPTER V

A PSYCHOLOGY OF SOUTHERN EVANGELICALISM:
A PSYCHOANALYTIC DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH
TO AN INVESTIGATION OF BELIEFS

Introduction

Object relations theory and Kohut's theory of the self, or self-psychology, within

the psychoanalytic tradition, frame the preceding chapter analyzing the relationship

between the self and objects and the influence of those developmental relationships.

Different object-relations theorists, namely Donald Winnicott and Heinz Kohut, provide

different categories of language to aid in investigating religious persons. Each proffers a

different lens by which to understand religious experiences and interpretations of those

experiences. With this approach, I explored then the external, interpersonal, and

intrapsychic conflicts which construct the patterns of the personal myth.

This chapter is rooted in the psychoanalytic phase preceding the stage of object-

relations theory, namely ego psychology. David Rapaport delineates four phases of the

psychoanalytic tradition from Freud's early work unto ego psychology, the last stage.[246]

This stage, according to Rapaport, opens with the work of Heinz Hartmann, *Ego

Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation* (1939) as a germinal work sparking new

thinking about psychoanalytic developmental psychology, while attending to Freud's

structural theory. His work encouraged rethinking concepts of adaptation, resistance,

repression, narcissism, self, ego, and defense mechanisms, to name a few. It is from this

---

[246] David Rapaport, "An Historical Survey of Psychoanalysis." Introduction to *Psychological Issues* 1 (1959): 5-17.

foundation from which object-relations theory arises. Debatable is the conclusion of this stage, perhaps in 1959, or even later, 1975, including Hartmann's successors.[247]

With the establishment of the God-image as a selfobject or transitional object representation for Evangelicals in the last chapter, this chapter focuses upon the relationship between the evangelical and his/her God-image as Parent or Provider. If the God-image is understood as a vital character in the personal myth of the evangelical, what are the beliefs undergirding that myth, serving as a catalyst for displays of affect and behavior?

Using the observations and empirical research of psychoanalysts Joseph Weiss and Harold Sampson (1986), I consider the evangelical worldview within the confines of a "familial" experience with the God-image. I suggest that the parent-child metaphorical language correlates with unconscious guilt and unconscious pathogenic beliefs to explain evangelical beliefs and practices. With Volney Gay's work (2001), I explore the interplay of pathogenic beliefs and affects of Southern Evangelicals using accounts of testimony, sermons, biographies, writings, and film. Lastly, I include James Fowler's theory of faith development to diagnose a "stage," in this case, betwixt and between the Mythic-literal and the Synthetic-conventional stages of faith, which fits well in the tradition of developmental theories. The description of these stages of faith affirms the findings of pathogenic beliefs and affect among Evangelicals.

This chapter unveils the foundation of the evangelical personal myth, a script of pathogenic beliefs which serve as rules of rationale for Evangelicals making their way in a chaotic, uncertain world, straddling contradictory God-images and experiences.

---

[247] Rubin and Gertrude Blanck, *Beyond Ego Psychology: Developmental Object Relations Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), ix.

The Psychoanalytic Process: Using the Higher Mental Functioning Hypothesis

In Sigmund Freud's earlier works, such as *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900),

the unconscious instinct, fueled by passions, was a crucial component of the drive theory

for his work. Yet in his later works, Freud included a tripartite model, the id, ego, and

superego, to allow for a structural theory to coalesce with his drive theory. This provides

the foundation for psychoanalytic developmental psychology. Nascent themes and ideas

elucidating the ego and the role of the ego can be found in his *On Narcissism: An

Introduction* (1914), but perhaps the most influential works on rethinking the role of ego

organization included *The Ego and the Id* (1923) and *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*

(1926).[248] While I am not going to do a full treatment of highlighting these phases, it is

important to understand the progression of ego psychological thought which lays the

groundwork for Weiss and Sampson's work in *The Psychoanalytic Process* (1986).

Reubin Fine succinctly describes the tripartite structure of the id, the ego and the

superego, and the difference therein: "The id is the source of all drives, the reservoir of

instincts. […] The ego is that aspect of the psyche that handles reality, […] and the super

ego is the composite of the various commands, prohibitions, and ideals that form the

personality."[249] Whereas the id handles the pleasure principle, the ego handles the reality

principle. The id serves as a catalyst for primary process thinking, and the ego represents

secondary process thinking. As the id comprises the passions, the ego houses reason. The

---

[248] For a thorough tracing of Freud's thought laying the foundation for ego psychology, see Reuben Fine, *The Development of Freud's Thought: From the Beginnings (1886-1900) through Id Psychology (1900-1914) to Ego Psychology (1914-1939)* (New York: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1973). Also, See Chapter one, "Psychoanalytic Developmental Psychology: Historical Roots," in Gertrude and Rubin Blanck, *Ego Psychology: Theory & Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 19-25.
[249] Fine, *The Development of Freud's Thought*, 171.

superego, above them both, could represent the voice of the parents, the laws of government, or the rules of the church.

Weiss and Sampson describe two hypotheses of Freud's writings in their work: the *automatic* functioning hypothesis and the *higher mental* functioning hypothesis. They explain that the former comprises the bulk of Freud's own work as well as the current psychoanalytic literature, while the latter's concepts of unconscious control, belief, thought, plan, or goal are only used occasionally. Automatic functioning attends to impulses, related instincts, and namely the id; higher mental functioning attends to unconscious responses and regulated behavior of the ego, especially associated with ideas of danger and safety. Weiss and Sampson contend that "the higher mental functioning hypothesis has a greater explanatory power than the automatic functioning hypothesis"[250] because the higher mental functioning hypothesis "does not rule out all of, but expects that a significant part of the patient's unconscious mental life is not determined automatically."[251] That is, thought and decision, unconsciously (and consciously), greatly influence and determine manifest behavior over and against instinct. For Weiss, the "psychoanalytic process" is the patient's use of the higher mental functioning to work "unconsciously to solve his problems in accordance with his own plans."[252]

This implies that the process toward healthy living, loving, and working involves planning, purpose, and setting goals. This is akin to Kohut's poles of ambition, skills, and goals necessary for a healthy self. For the purposes of this paper, I am concerned more with the unconscious mental functioning of *unconscious guilt* and *unconscious*

---

[250] Joseph Weiss and Harold Sampson, *The Psychoanalytic Process: Theory, Clinical Observation, and Empirical Research* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1986), 24.
[251] Ibid., 40.
[252] Ibid., 85.

pathogenic beliefs. In the next segment, I discuss unconscious guilt, including separation and survivor guilt, as it pertains to the God-image for Evangelicals. If the God-image parallels the parent-image, then the language of unconscious guilt and pathogenic beliefs may elucidate the worldview of Evangelicals.

Unconscious Guilt

The parent/child model is integral to the language and understanding of God and His followers in the Christian tradition. God is called "Father" by Jesus, apostles, and others in the New Testament writings, and believers are "children of God" or "sons and daughters of God." In the evangelical megachurch, congregants raise their hands during praise & worship, like a child to a parent, in the hopes of connecting with the divine in a moment of ecstasy. They pray to "Father God," and they consider God's seeming responses as that from a parent or provider.

Though splitting is considered a universal, biological and psychological necessity in the development of humans, as noted by both Grotstein (1985) and Klein (1965), at times, there is a development of unconscious guilt that accompanies the splitting between a child and his parents. The unconscious mental functioning of the child motivates the child to retain connection for protection and support, especially in association with feelings of endangerment. Weiss and Sampson note that "in order for [the child] to retain [the love of the parent], he develops a powerful wish to obey his parents, be loyal to them, and be like them. Moreover he condemns in himself whatever, in his opinion, threatens his ties to his parents."[253] The escalation of this unconscious guilt can lead to psychopathology. The unconscious guilt propelling the child to stay with, attend, and

---

[253] Ibid., 46.

emulate a parent describes well many Evangelicals who share a similar experience of a God-image as parent or provider.

Just as a child has much incentive to remain within the protection of his parent, so does the evangelical believer. Loyalty to the faith means eternal life, treasure, and hope. Arguably, however, there seem to be degrees of "splitting" in the evangelical community. Sinning is one kind of "splitting;" consciously experimenting outside of the boundaries of the behavioral codes, rules, and regulations as set by the "plausibility structure(s)." If one were simply to separate or "stray from the fold" temporarily, the parable of the prodigal son offers a good heuristic device of the benefits of return. On the other hand, a complete "split" or separation from the church (and from God), for Evangelicals, can predict a life in the hereafter, of hell. Of course, in leaving the church, the freedom of exile may present a new worldview for the former evangelical. Due to the increase of adherents in the growing evangelical megachurches today, though all acknowledge "sin," most Evangelicals tend *not* to do the work of splitting or separating from his/her God-parent due to unconscious guilt. The evangelical believer may cling to the static image of God as parent and protector throughout the life cycle.

Unconscious Pathogenic Beliefs

The concept of pathogenic belief is integrally tied to the hypothesis of higher mental functioning because it emerges out of the ego, out of one's unconscious mental life and adaptations to life. It does not represent a wish; it represents one's interpretation of reality, and it arises out of repressions. Manifest compulsory or preemptory behavior is indicative of a latent pathogenic belief. Freud connected habitual, compulsive behavior

153

with religious rituals in "Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices."[254] He notes,

"People who carry out obsessive actions or ceremonials belong to the same class as those

who suffer from obsessive thinking, obsessive ideas, or obsessive impulses and the

like."[255] Within Southern evangelical culture, rooted deep in its historical tradition, is the

compulsory, cyclical behavior of sinning (usually interpreted as drinking, swearing,

promiscuous sex, lying, cheating, etc.), repenting, experience of purity, redemption, and

then a "back-sliding" into sin once again. This is one example of a kind of obsessive-

compulsive behavior that seems predicated on pathogenic belief(s).

Typically, Freud delineated a pathogenic belief as castration anxiety. Yet, there

may be other pathogenic beliefs by which to explain psychopathologies and compulsory

behaviors of human beings: "A pathogenic belief is simple and compelling: It tells the

person who adheres to it that if he attempts to gratify a certain impulse or to reach a

certain goal or to maintain a certain attitude he will endanger himself."[256] Planning, the

development of skills, and the achievement of goals are thwarted or repressed due to

pathogenic beliefs.

Weiss and Sampson describe a sequence by which a child may develop a

pathogenic belief: "the child first attempts to gratify a certain important impulse or to

reach a certain important goal and then discovers that by such attempts he threatens his

all-important ties to his parents."[257] In the religious world, a child raised in an evangelical

home may explore questions of theodicy. For example, "why did God allow a hurricane

---

[254] Sigmund Freud, "Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. by James Strachey, Vol. IX (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-analysis, 1959), 115-127.
[255] Ibid., 117.
[256] Ibid., 69.
[257] Weiss and Sampson, *The Psychoanalytic Process*, 71.

to hit the city of New Orleans, instead of protecting thousands of people from that natural phenomenon?" As a response, the child may be admonished for asking such a question and provided an answer involving "Satan's role" in the disaster or God as punisher, along the lines of Sodom and Gomorrah. Within the Evangelical church, there are three sets of parental figures, and thus, three sets of all-important parental ties: to one's parents (those who protect and provide a dwelling for the child), the adults in the community (Sunday school teachers, ministers, choir directors, etc.), and God as parent image(s). By experimenting with the construct of "sin" for that community of faith, the child tests the discipline, punishment, and admonishments by these parental figures in his/her life. The emergence of pathogenic beliefs would serve as a mechanism of protection for the child attempting to interpret experience against the assumed character of his/her God-image.

In the following section, Volney Gay describes seven pathogenic beliefs associated with affects which may correlate well with the worldview of Evangelicals. I list these beliefs, based upon the foundation of Weiss and Sampson's work, and discuss how they may fit within the "schema" of Southern Evangelicals.

The Interplay of Beliefs and Affects: Patterns among Southern Evangelicals

Volney Gay, in his *Joy and the Objects of Psychoanalysis* (2001), develops the thesis that "neurosis occurs when one cannot recollect joy."[258] This work is based upon psychoanalytic development theory and the work of Weiss and Sampson. He sums his thesis in the following:

> Patients are neurotic because they maintain a set of unconscious beliefs that require them to choose a life of suffering and self-harm over a life of

---

[258] Volney Gay, *Joy and the Objects of Psychoanalysis*: *Literature, Belief, and Neurosis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), x.

> joy and self-acceptance. To Weiss's theory, [he] added a corollary: pathogenic beliefs derive from a child's theory of mind that aims to predict another person's behavior.[259]

Exploring public and personal pathogenic beliefs, Gay finds a common denominator: perfectionism. In the psychoanalytic discourse, the word "object" is used to denote the "other" person rather than "self." However, in this case, he uses "object" to describe the focus of analysis: "products of pathogenic beliefs about what the 'mind' is and […] responses to blitzkrieg affect."[260]

Gay describes three "classes" of affect: Darwinian, cultural, and Blitzkrieg. *Darwinian* affects are those biological feelings many species experience: happy, sad, angry, worry. *Cultural* affects are those at a secondary level such as guilt or shame. And *Blitzkrieg* affects are those feelings relived through transferences in the analytical setting that induce extraordinarily strong and deep non-verbal feelings. In this setting, they are experienced from start to finish, reaching an apogee and finally a denouement. It is a kind of entering into Dante's *Inferno* and then returning. Those likely to experience Blitzkrieg affect are those who have repressed feelings, whose affect has been cut short, for years or even decades, out of fear and guilt related to the predicted behavior of one's parent or provider. The goal of the experience of Blitzkrieg affects within a good analytic setting is the verbalization of these emotions.

The cause of the Blitzkrieg affects is the problem of the inverted selfobject for the child. Instead of the care of the parent for the child, the child must attend to the parent and the parent's psychopathology. Because of the erratic behavior, for survival, the child must figure out a way to placate the parent, as much as possible, during these outbursts of

---

[259] Ibid., 95.
[260] Ibid, 162.

anger, seasons of depression, or moments of violence. Because I am concerned here with the role of Evangelicals and their relationship with the divine, I am interested in the experience of Blitzkrieg affects among Southern Evangelicals and their corresponding pathogenic beliefs. The role of the parent during early stages of child development influence the child's characterization and belief in God. But also the teachings about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are crucial to the shaping of an anthropomorphic God-image for the child. An experience of that God-image within a community of faith solidifies that image, as it is agreed upon and reaffirmed by pastors' sermons and Sunday school teachers' lessons.

The evangelical God-image has been described as "a transcendent, personal God who interacts with, and intervenes in, creation."[261] This is a good, brief description of the center of evangelical theology. The juxtaposition of God being transcendent yet immanent is explained through the Trinitarian doctrine of God. The metaphors to describe God the Father may include King, Lord, Almighty, and many other male characterized titles. These metaphors portray a distant, yet idealistic Father-image.

"Metaphors may create realities for us, especially social realities."[262] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) argue that metaphors hold the power to create perception, thought, and action. In the case of Evangelicals, metaphors used to describe the God-image establish the groundwork for a social reality, a way of thinking and believing. These metaphors are important in understanding the psychology of Evangelicals because the metaphor is a reality for them, especially given their loyalty to literalism. The absent, unpredictable Father as metaphor for the God-image of

---

[261] Roger Olson, "Does Evangelical Theology have a Future?" in *Christianity Today*, February 9, 1998.
[262] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 156.

Evangelicals presents the predicament of a felt distance between this transcendent, theistic God and the self. To compensate, the immanent God-image is shaped as God the Son, Jesus Christ. With Jesus, Evangelicals can explain how they might feel close to their God-image as a brother, friend, or lover.

A secondary compensation could be what Freud calls a "prosthetic God" in his *Civilization and Discontents* (1930). In closing the gap between archaic humans' view of God and the modern humans' view of God, Freud explains that with technological advances or "cultural ideals," the wishes of humans have been fulfilled without God. "When he puts on all his auxiliary organs he is truly magnificent; but those organs have not grown on to him and they still give him much trouble at times.[…] We will not forget that present-day man does not feel happy in his Godlike character."[263] Evangelicals seem to fit this analogy well. They have created beautiful, prosthetic pieces which compensate for the dilemma of the absent God and the problem of theodicy. These "prosthetic pieces" are represented by the Christian products of music, books, festivals, education, and conferences of the burgeoning Christian marketplace. These cultural materials, written and produced by Christian "celebrity" images, provide an intermediate experience for the evangelical, desperately seeking a relationship with their God-image.

As "King" or "Lord," the God-image for Evangelicals in the megachurch requires hours of praise & worship, daily personal devotion and prayers, and attention to various, stringent behavioral requirements in order to remain "pure" in His sight. This image finds its heritage in Jonathon Edwards' portrayal of a God-image in "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." This God-image also reflects the father/planter in Southern culture.

---

[263] Sigmund Freud, *Civilizations and Its Discontents,* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XXI (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-analysis., 1961), 92.

Evangelicals are "slaves" or "servants" to God, according to the writings of St. Paul: "Now that you have been freed from sin and become *slaves* to God, the benefit that you have leads to sanctification [italics mine]."[264] Certainly the history and tradition of slavery in the South has influenced the imaging of masters and slaves as it pertains to Christian language. And, in influencing evangelical culture with these historical experiences and understandings, inevitably issues of guilt, shame, and anxiety would accompany the association of the metaphors with the father (planter)/slave "familial" pyramid.

The narcissism of this Father/Lord God-image alongside unexplainable tragedies, public and private, seems to hold many of the same characteristics of a neurotic parent figure of a child. That is, the expectation of a loving, caring God-image juxtaposed to the tragedy of a car accident might induce similar affects and thereby beliefs as might a child by an erratic parent. At Fellowship Bible Church in Brentwood, Tennessee, for example, an online update is offered on a small team who had traveled to Sudan, perhaps as missionaries: "[The team is] tired, but healthy and full of stories of God's faithfulness and work in Sudan."[265] During this season of genocide, of rape, torture, and murder, where exactly is God's faithfulness to the refugees of Darfur? And if God is faithful among those suffering in the Sudan, how do they uphold the contradictory God-images of benevolence and violence?

Gay describes seven different pathogenic beliefs which are helpful tools by which to understand the behavior, beliefs, and affects of Evangelicals, especially in light of the inverted selfobject, the God-image(s) shaping their reality. These beliefs may be the basis

---

[264] Romans 6:22 NRSV
[265] Fellowship Bible Church: www.fellowshipnashville.org

for the scripts of Evangelicals. Their language, beliefs, narrative, and lifestyle are based

upon these beliefs. I will list those beliefs, provide examples of behaviors that expose

those beliefs among Southern Evangelicals, discuss how some beliefs may *not* fit

Evangelicals, and offer a more nuanced version particular to Southern Evangelicals.

- *Everything that happens and that people do is caused by some form of*
  intentionality.

In the case of Evangelicals, particularly those who hold to a reformed theology,

most believe that there is a set pattern to history. While some simply believe that the

trajectory of history is determined, others believe that "everything" is predetermined or

predestined according to a divine plan, an intentionality set by their God-image. The most

overt among Evangelicals of those who believe in predestination are Presbyterians.

Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama, the flagship

megachurch for the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA), is one of the most prominent

of Southern evangelical megachurches because it is the original church of the PCA

denomination, established in 1973. Its beliefs and doctrines are shared across the

denomination. Briarwood proclaims on its website: "We believe that the purest

expressions of scripture doctrine are found in the Calvinistic creeds, particularly in the

Westminster Confession of Faith."[266] The *Westminster Confession of Faith* describes

God's eternal decree as teaching: "that God has predetermined all things that happen,

[…] that there is nothing too large or small to be included or excluded in this

predetermination."[267] The Southern Baptist Convention also describes its belief in God

---

[266] Briarwood Presbyterian Church, What is the PCA?:
www.briarwood.org/templates/System/details.asp?id=23246&PID=70249
[267] G.I. Williamson, *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 30.

160

the Father: "God is all powerful, all knowing, and all wise."[268] This Baptist doctrinal

version discusses explicitly the free-will of humans, unlike the Presbyterian version, but

it too implies an omnipotent force in the world.

Southern Evangelical adherents have accepted and believed these doctrines that

explain away both public and privates suffering: the loss of the Civil War or the loss of a

child; both are considered God's will in the world. There is still room for the action and

decisions of humans, but generally these actions, outside of the will of God, are tainted

with behavior that has "missed the mark." Only actions that are within the boundaries of

godliness are preordained.

The recent film, *Junebug* (2006), directed by Phil Morrison, depicts a North

Carolina, middle-class evangelical family who meets their cosmopolitan, agnostic

daughter-in-law for the first time. The entrée of the New York characters into this

Southern world cuts to the thick of Southern culture, values, and beliefs. The pregnant,

young, evangelical, and uneducated daughter-in-law of the younger brother is perhaps the

most honest of the characters. Upon losing her first child during childbirth, she asks her

brother-in-law: "Why did God allow this? Why did He? I don't understand. All I want is

something good to come from this." Her questioning, yet almost instant resolve,

seemingly echoing the Scripture: "All things work to the good of those who love God,"

describes initial thoughts for reasoning a greater purpose in a greater plan to explain their

tragic loss.[269]

Threading together these examples, the unifying belief among Evangelicals seems

to be that there is a personal force in the world, namely their God-image, who plans,

---

[268] Southern Baptist Convention, The Baptist Faith and Message: www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp#ii
[269] Romans 8:28 NRSV

directs, and coordinates the systemic structure of human relationships. Moreover, at times this God directly intervenes in private lives as answer to prayer. For most Evangelicals, there is some room for the free will of human beings and the intervention of their God-image, to change the course of lives and history. Yet, even with this space for some freedom, most concur that there is a directed trajectory of the world and its history. With much prayer, many Evangelicals are seeking an answer to their role in this great drama.

- *There must be ways to control these intentional, causal agents.*

For Evangelicals, this is the caveat of free-will. Many believe humans do have the power of free will, and they do have the choice to step outside the boundaries pre-ordained by God. More specifically, God cannot preordain sin. This must be a decision of humans. This particular stipulation allows the Evangelical to relieve any connection of "evil" with a part of God's self. Free will then is not a way in which to "control these intentional, causal agents," but it does offer the assumption of a freedom to step outside the tight grid of the evangelical enclave existence, in thought and action, a way to move outside of the intentionality.

Prayer is one method of an attempt to control the God-image as an "intentional, causal agent." Through much petition for health, wellness, success, or happiness, Evangelicals may believe that one can influence the God-image in order to achieve one's wishes or goals. Seeming answers to prayer confirm one's experience of request and answer by God. Bruce Wilkinson, author of bestselling book, *The Prayer of Jabez* (2000), promises that if one were to emulate the life of Jabez, God will answer your personal requests (I Chron. 4:9-10): "In this little book, I want to introduce you to the amazing truths in Jabez's prayer for blessing and prepare you to expect God's astounding

answers to it *as a regular part of your life experience*."[270] He validates this claim with his

own testimony and the anecdotal testimonies of others after thirty years of praying this

prayer. Wilkinson touches upon a wish inherent in human nature: the magic of control in

the world. His God portrayed is a kind of wish-granting genie; when God is called upon,

God will respond with blessing. This God-image dovetails nicely with the current

American consumer culture. It also may explain the sales of over nine million copies to

date.

Another pastor and author, Max Lucado, writes for Christians seeking meaning in

their lives and careers. To those Evangelicals lacking fulfillment in their jobs, Lucado

claims that they are not properly exercising their talents and gifts. He gives direction to

Evangelicals to take control of their lives and their happiness by finding "their sweet

spot": the convergence of one's everyday life, strengths, and God's glory.[271] This is

another way to find a means of control given the worldview of a determined life. That is,

Lucado is encouraging Evangelicals to maximize on their personal skills by helping them

to help themselves to a better way of life. There is a limited sense of freedom for the

evangelical individual, but since the God-image created the individual and has given

unique talents to the individual, finding one's "sweet spot" for meaning is really about

giving back to God the gift once given to the individual! In this way, there is a limitation

of freedom, but ultimately, the God-image blankets the life and personality of the

evangelical individual.

---

[270] Bruce Wilkinson, *The Prayer of Jabez* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2000), 11.
[271] Max Lucado, *The Cure for the Common Life* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 2005), 7.

- *Affects can be controlled by "willpower."*

In the space of an evangelical praise & worship service, the emotional landscape and experience is varied. All are welcomed to exclaim joy, sorrow, weariness, suffering, and anxiety. And all are welcomed to express any or all of the Darwinian emotions. The service is a time to *release* control of one's feelings in the tradition of confession and repentance.

Dealing with guilt and shame, however, is another level of expression. Within confession language, only certain kinds of guilt and shame can be discussed. For instance, a homosexual would be welcomed to discuss his/her sexual orientation if it were understood as sin and accompanied by guilt. Shame, however, would less likely be open for discussion because the resolve necessarily would involve structural change, not personal; a Southern evangelical megachurch would then have to recant on its stand regarding homosexuality, not the individual. Thus, shame as a cultural affect, connected with issues of homosexuality, would be advised to be "controlled" within the evangelical church. Most likely, the homosexual individual would be asked to leave if they were openly gay and refused to admit it a sin. Other examples of dealing with shame might involve the questioning of gender roles for women.

Affects necessary for control by willpower in order *not* to excite a wrathful, angry God include the following: doubt, resentment, and hatred. The Evangelical must inhibit doubt in the existence of God or the Christian myth, repress resentment in God who allows bad things to happen to good people, and withhold hatred for a God-image that so thoroughly controls and determines one's life in spite of one's desires. Allowing such

164

feelings to emerge and be expressed opens the gateway for possible, unknowable

punishment. To control one's affect one must also control one's theological beliefs.

To combat and control doubt, Lee Strobel investigates the evidence for Jesus to

prove the factual basis of Christian stories, dispelling the possibility of mythology. In his

The Case for Christ (1998), Strobel approaches the question of Jesus from a journalistic

perspective, questioning evangelical religious scholars about their thoughts on the

authorship of the gospels and many facets about the historical Jesus. He concludes from

their arguments that Jesus is the Christ, Scripture is inerrant, and thusly, the reader should

consider becoming a follower of Christ. Like C.S. Lewis, Strobel approaches Christianity

as an atheist who finds Jesus Christ to be (the son of) God. This kind of theological

proof-finding is a necessary component for zealous Evangelicals, especially those with

deeper questions about Scripture, historicity, and Christology of Jesus of Nazareth. Books

like Strobel's offer comforting answers for those with religious questions without the

complexity of academic literature. *The Case for Christ* offers answers for a sense of

control over one's belief system and a comprehensive coherency for the self and others,

placating affects of anxiety or doubt.

- ▪ *Perfection is a worthy goal and entails controlling affects in self and others.*

Perfection is a psychological, sociological, and theological construction by which

one imagines a set end or goal as well as the skills necessary by which to attain that goal.

Perfection has long been integral to the idea of the Christian tradition, even since the

writings of the gospel of Matthew. Jesus said, "Be perfect as your heavenly father is

perfect" concluding his Sermon on the Mount.[272] Yet, perfection is an illusion; a different end for different people at different times.

In the neo-Calvinist tradition, "perfection as a worthy goal" is implicit in the "perseverance of the Saints" as taught within the Presbyterian denomination especially. In the theological sense, perfection would be the pursuit of sinlessness. Yet sin is defined by each community, the boundaries of that community, and its interpretation of scripture. Most of Christianity is based upon the premise that all of humankind is sinful in need of a Savior. It is through the doctrines of justification and sanctification that perfection, or the divine, might be pursued. The internal contradiction is that most Evangelicals hold to the mantra: "once saved, always saved." This means that at the point of justification, all is forgiven and salvation cannot be lost. In spite of this, there is a sense to prove one's loyalty and one's salvation through good works. This contradictory behavior might also link to unconscious guilt in dealing with the God the Father image. The Southern characterization for the pursuit of perfection would lay emphasis on the development of honor, virtue, and loyalty since the culture esteems a construction of these virtues.

For evangelical believers, the nuanced difference in this pathogenic belief might include that "perfection is a worthy goal and entails controlling affects *and beliefs* in self and others [italics mine]." As noted above, this couplet, beliefs and affect, need both be necessarily within the control of the born-again Christian. This is truly a matter of (eternal) life and death.

- *Novelty is always bad*.

Evangelical megachurches are selective in their change. While allowances are made for alterations in dress, music, and architecture, the foundational beliefs remain the

---

[272] Matthew 5:48 NRSV

same. While some Evangelicals present a strong defense against superficial newness in a church, others embrace contemporary methods of worship, and they grow. Yet, always in the flux of this change are conservatives who demonize the novelty. New Christian music is Satan's music.[273] New styles of preaching—via dialogue or by sitting—may lead to the overthrow of a pastor. Further, new interpretations of scripture or doctrine certainly render church splits.

Evangelicals are embracing some aspects of contemporary culture, co-opting it for their own ministries and lifestyles. For this reason, whereas a fundamentalist would say "novelty is always bad," the Evangelical might say that "novelty *of beliefs* is always bad." Change is not always malevolent; they know it can be healthy. Their churches are growing as are their coffers. Yet, change at the fundamental level of their doctrinal beliefs regarding God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, the Church, Atonement, Resurrection, and Sin is inadmissible.[274]

- *My suffering makes me special (in ways I would not otherwise be).*

Suffering inevitably involves conflict. Sometimes suffering can be physical, mental, or emotional, and there is a fight by the individual for a resolve: a healing from the disease, a cure for the illness, or a respite from the pain. At other times, suffering involves conflict within external and interpersonal relationships. In either case, suffering as a kind of conflict proves a critical portion of narrative.

The story of the rising South, the brickwork of myth and ritual laid during the Reconstruction period for White Southern civil religion, suggests that in spite of utter

---

[273] See Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Bible Believers: Fundamentalists in the Modern World* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 85.
[274] See *National Association of Evangelicals--Statement of Faith*: http://www.nae.net/index.cfm?FUSEACTION=nae.statement_of_faith for a sample of these beliefs.

defeat in war, the experience of suffering was beneficial. Suffering built character, tested faith, and resurrected a spirit of hope. This suffering is an integral piece of the public, Southern myth, particularly for Southern Whites. Arguably, suffering might be also a critical piece of the public, Southern myth for Southern Blacks in the aftermath of slavery and violence of the South, especially since the Civil Rights Movement. Embedded within the belief that suffering makes one special is that suffering uniquely shapes and molds cultural and personal myths.

Perhaps the evangelical response to suffering is based upon an interpretation of the writings of St. Paul to the Romans: "We also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope doesn't disappoint us."[275] Becoming a Christian involves participating in the suffering of Christ; and this becomes a part of one's personal testimony. Among Evangelicals in the megachurch, anxiety, depression, and fear are addressed in the plethora of self-help sermons, books, and tapes. Because of the culture of social narcissism nurtured in the evangelical megachurch, there is a "special" focus on the suffering of the self. And when suffering is shared or confessed in memoirs, the victim or survivor is upheld as heroic.

Sheila Walsh, artist, author, and speaker, discloses her own experience with guilt and shame in her conferences and her writings. In a chapter entitled, "An Overcoat of Shame," she shares the following:

> Several years ago, I was invited to speak at a large church in Southern California. I spoke about the month I spent in a psychiatric institution, wrestling in the dark pit of clinical depression. I described my time there as a gift from God that finally helped me to see that for so long, I had been living as Wonder Woman. I had existed on the punishing treadmill of trying to be good enough for years, and

---

[275] Romans 5:3-5 NRSV

when I finally fell to earth, it was actually a relief. I discovered that my internal closet was full of shame and anger, of fear and sadness that I had carried around since I was a child.[276]

Sheila's experience provides her with her own special story of suffering. This story seems to be understood, as it is told, within the context of her testimony. Her suffering, then, is a critical piece of her testimony as she attempts to connect with her audiences, perhaps upon this common ground. Ironically, she notes that her clinical experience was a "gift from God" amidst the turmoil.

Stormie Omartian, a bestselling Christian author, also writes a brief account of her childhood and youth until she "found Christ." In her story, she describes a childhood with a schizophrenic mother and atheist father. She claims to have tried drugs, sex, and the occult to ease her empty soul. After two abortions, a failed marriage, and a suicide attempt, she met a pastor who gave her hope. Prayer, the topic of her books, was the answer.[277] Her suffering gave her the special knowledge and experience of "the power of God" by which she can write and encourage other born again seekers of fulfillment. She has sold over seven million copies to date.

Though Christianity seems to promote the advantageousness of suffering, it also provides an "opium for the people," a drug by which they can ease their suffering. Because there is a greater focus on meeting the felt-need or the emotional needs of Christians, Evangelicalism can satisfy its adherents with easy, basic, systemic answers for the development of a holistic, mythological worldview. The communities, leadership, worship, and God-image provide coping tools for suffering.

---

[276] Sheila Walsh, *I'm Not Wonder Woman But God Made Me Wonderful!* (Nashville: Nelson Books, 2006), 21.

[277] Stormie Omartian, *The Prayer that Changes Everything: The Hidden Power of Praising God* (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 2004).

- *My story, my narrative, describes accurately what "must have occurred."*

This component is a necessary one in the cycle of belief, experience, and interpretation. The interpretation of the experience, and thus the belief, must be accurate to keep one's system of beliefs in tact. There simply is not room for an alternate interpretation or questioning of an experience that might describe a miracle, answer to prayer, or gift from God. The evangelical explanation must be contained within the boundaries of the worldview in order to avoid gaps in the tight grid of myth.

Robert Duvall's *The Apostle* (1998) portrays a Southern pastor, Sonny, out of the Holiness tradition who exemplifies well beliefs in Evangelicalism, compulsive behavior, unconscious guilt, and pathogenic beliefs. Though a prominent pastor in small Southern town, Sonny acts out in violence against his wife's lover when he finds out she wants a divorce. To avoid charges, Sonny leaves the town, prays for forgiveness, and baptizes himself as "The Apostle E.F." To do this, he also leaves his ailing mother to die without seeing her son again. Sonny sets out on a journey which unites a community of believers in rural Louisiana. His care and support for the community uplifts their spirits with hope. This is Sonny's redemption.

Through endless prayers, private and public, sermons, ministry, and pastoral counseling to community members, Sonny's pathogenic beliefs and affects manifest themselves. As Sonny seeks to actualize himself as a minister of Jesus Christ, he admits his sin but constantly fights feelings of aggression, lust, anger, and fear to gain control of his thoughts and behavior. Not only does he feel he needs to control his own feelings, giving them over to his God-image, but he also seeks to control the affects in others, including his wife, children, and other personal relationships as he sees fit. This cycle

inevitably ends in violence when he realizes his true lack of control. Concomitant with "controlling affect" is his conscious decision of leaving his ailing mother. This decision, though not discussed in the story, points to the guilt of separation and survival after her death. His story of suffering "as it must have occurred" serves as a catalyst for his journey to redemption as a leader in another church, The Way Road to Heaven, before he is finally arrested.

The pathogenic belief that one's own perspective of "what must have occurred" suggests that there is but one interpretation of a story. This fits well with the "literal" interpretation of Evangelicals in their reading of myth, whether it is Christian or personal. This interpretation is necessary in order to fit neatly the puzzle pieces of religious beliefs, suffering, personal narrative, and the evangelical worldview. If the story could be told from a differing perspective with an alternate interpretation, the complexity of meshing the story with the worldview might force a reinterpretation of the latter. And there is much fear in reshaping the evangelical worldview because it is the necessary currency for community and salvation. In Sonny's case, he was able to find redemption in both the community of faith and his God-image, even though justice ensued in the end. His worldview gave clarity and answers to his suffering, sin, redemption, salvation, and justice.

A Shifting Among Evangelicals?: The Influence of Secular Culture

Though Southern Evangelicals have the capacity for violence, obsessive behavior, racism, sexism, and homophobia in their language and actions, they also have the capacity to do good works locally and globally. Many evangelical church and

171

megachurch members donate monies to nonprofits to sponsor children in developing

nations, bring "meals on wheels" to those unable to leave their homes, or lead clothing

drives for the local poor.[278] Evangelical communities of faith can provide much

assistance by way of their philanthropy. They also have a keen sense of community. The

Christian tradition spans across nations and generations. Being a part of this community

of faith and tradition instills a kind of goodness and reciprocal love among believers.

Today there is a growing divide, predominantly based upon issues of outreach, among

Evangelicals, especially between the religious right and the religious left. While some

Evangelicals may agree with the positions of Jerry Falwell or Dr. James Dobson, most

are turning to new leaders. The faces of leaders since the New Christian Right have

changed from those during to evangelical authors, artists, and pastors with different goals

and agendas for their constituencies. This year, 2006, has been a culminating year for the

divide, ushering forth public arguments on several key issues.

In February 2006, eighty-six evangelical leaders (from the left and moderate

wings) backed an initiative to combat global warming and calling for a reduction in

carbon dioxide emissions. The religious right, represented by Richard Land of the

Southern Baptist Convention, Chuck Colson of Prison Ministries Fellowship, and James

Dobson of Focus on the Family, led an opposing attack on this initiative. In May 2006,

the second source of an evangelical rift was the rise of a campaign, led by James Dobson,

against the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria along with some twenty other

religious right NGO leaders, calling Congress to halt funding. As a response, moderate

and religious left Evangelicals pulled together a sign-on letter in *support* of full funding

---

[278] Belmont Church in Nashville, TN has an "Isaiah 58" ministry that provides short-term and long-term care for those in poverty. It has twelve different outreach services throughout the city: http://www.belmont.org/isaiah58/index.asp

for the Global Fund, especially Senators Santorum and Durbin's amendment of $566

million to "add back" funding for the Global Fund this year. Lastly, this fall, there was a

public conflict between Jim Wallis of Sojourners and Tony Perkins of the Family

Research Council. Wallis' Red Letter Christians are calling for adherence to issues on

poverty, to the widening gap between the "haves" and the "have nots" in America today.

Perkins, on the other hand, maintains the traditional conservative stance of unwavering

loyalty to issues of sexuality: fighting same sex marriage, sex education, and abortion, to

name a few.

Though the old guard of the religious right is holding fast to its mainstay issues,

moderate Evangelicals and the religious left are weary of being "against" so many issues

and are now ready to support the poor, those suffering with HIV/AIDS, and even the

planet. There is a shift in focus away from one's personal suffering to the story of the

suffering Other. For example, Evangelicals are revisiting the fundamentalist belief that

God has allowed the AIDS virus to infect gays or promiscuous couples as a punishment

for sin. Instead, Evangelicals are taking action to fight for anti-retro viral medications,

prevention education (including condoms), and proper nutrition. Yet as noted in chapter

one, BARNA research reports from a survey in 2005 that only fourteen percent of

Evangelicals would support an AIDS orphan in Africa. This is up from only seven

percent in 2002.[279]

If moderate Evangelicals' actions at large are moving away from fundamentalist

positions on sexuality and toward acts of outreach and compassion, then perhaps the

God-image itself is changing within the walls of the church, creating a different dynamic

---

[279] Cathleen Falsani, "Why don't more Evangelicals care about AIDS?," in *The Chicago Sun-Times*, Dec. 3, 2004.

in the relationship between the God-image as parent and the Southern evangelical

believer. Moreover, the listed pathogenic beliefs and affects could be changed as well. If

so, how might religious critics respond to this paradigm shift?

Within the Freudian framework, religion is a mass-delusion.[280] Within

Winnicott's framework, religion is an illusion.[281] In each case, whether one sides on the

belief that religion is harmful or helpful, all might agree that religion provides the tools

for placating suffering or neurosis--even if that suffering is a part of the human condition.

However, usurping psychoanalytic language to understand evangelical notions of healing

or coping does not necessarily do justice to understanding cure in religious terms. The

juxtaposition of psychoanalytic discourse with evangelical discourse presents muddled

parallels and murky alignments. Freud addresses these difficulties in comparing the

analyst to the priest: "In Confession [in the Catholic Church] the sinner tells what he

knows; in analysis the neurotic has to tell more. Nor have we heard that Confession has

ever developed enough power to get rid of actual pathological symptoms."[282] Volney Gay

echoes the denial that religion or the church can offer a real wholeness. He contends that

"the ego creates and takes part in religious dramas which present an illusory world of

wholeness and completion of self." But, "it does so at the cost of sacrificing part of its

hard won sovereignty, its ability to confront the world of sickness, misfortune, need and

death."[283]

---

[280] Freud, *Civilizations and Its Discontents*, 32.
[281] Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 3.
[282] Sigmund Freud, *The Question of Lay Analysis,* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XX (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-analysis, 1927), 189.
[283] Volney Gay, "Against Wholeness: The Ego's Complicity in Religion," in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* XLVII no. 4 (1979): 539, 555.

Setting out to determine the common factors among therapeutic models,

psychologist Bruce Wampold asks, "If …two treatments are equally effective, is it

because of their respective specific ingredients or because both are instances of

contextual model treatments?"[284] A study conducted by Lambert and Bergin of fifteen

meta-analyses show that eighty-two percent of patients experience success with

psychotherapy versus no treatment.[285] With this rate of success, all contextual models

seem to win. Over and against the medical model, he concludes that, in fact, the specific

ingredients of a clinical setting are *not* the factors for success, but rather, they are

examples of contextual model treatments. Jerome D. Frank and Julia B. Frank, from their

work in *Persuasion and Healing* (1991), define the aim of the contextual model as "to

help people feel and function better by encouraging appropriate modifications in their

assumptive worlds, thereby transforming the meaning of their experiences into more

favorable ones."[286] In the end, Wampold, in alignment with Frank and Frank, finds that

the common components for all therapies include the following:

> (a) an *emotionally charged confiding relationship* with a helping person; (b) a
> *healing setting* that involves the client's expectations that the professional helper
> will assist him or her; (c) a *rationale, conceptual scheme, or myth* that provides a
> plausible, although not necessarily true, explanation of the client's symptoms and
> how the client can overcome his or her demoralization; and (d) a *ritual or
> procedure* that requires the active participation of both client and therapist and is
> based on the rationale underlying the therapy.[287]

The basic tenets of a working allegiance, alliance, myth, and ritual are the necessary

components for a therapeutic encounter. In comparing these components to a community

of believers, it would *seem* that worship in a communal setting might offer a context for

---

[284] Bruce E. Wampold, *The Great Psychotherapy Debate: Models, Methods, and Findings* (London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2001), 27.

[285] Ibid., 134.

[286] Ibid., 206.

[287] Ibid.

healing. However, the great difference between a contextual model of psychotherapy and religion is that the former is rooted in the scientific tradition, attempting to move toward constant experimentation, observation, and fact-finding while the latter is rooted in faith, attempting to move toward truth as constructed by communities of believers. Though Kuhn (1962) may connect well the paradigm shifts in science and religion, the former requires an empirical justification; the latter is based in "the assurance of things hoped for, the certainty of things unseen,"[288] that is, an assumption. More specifically, the evangelical church pastors are not trained, professional helpers or therapists. Thus Evangelicalism may provide answers and hope in a world of change, conflict, and uncertainty, but it lacks crucial components of fact and scientific-based therapy to offer a truly "healing" setting.

Sam Harris, in his *The End of Faith* (2004), calls for reason amidst irrationality in a world threatened by terrorism and the violence of religious faith:

> Religious violence is still with us because our religions are *intrinsically* hostile to one another. Where they appear otherwise, it is because secular knowledge and secular interests are restraining the most lethal improprieties of faith. It is time we acknowledged that no real foundation exists within the canons of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, or any of our other faiths for religious tolerance and religious diversity.[289]

The claim that religion is intrinsically hostile could be substantiated more fully given the psychological perspective herein: Evangelicals have the potential to exhibit violent, compulsory behavior due to pathogenic beliefs and corresponding affects. And, in the past, the bombing of abortion clinics, the violence done to homosexuals and those with AIDS, are examples of this fundamentalist hostility in the United States. Moderate Evangelicals lack this militancy in language and action. Moreover, the current shift

---

[288] Hebrews 11:1 NRSV
[289] Sam Harris, *The End of Faith* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2004), 225.

toward the religious left, embracing new leaders, ideas, and issues, arguably is due to the influence of the greater American secular culture upon the evangelical subculture. Even with this shifting, the basic scripts of pathogenic beliefs undergirding the personal myths of Evangelicals will be difficult to overthrow.

Theory of Faith Development: Framing the Psychology of the Southern Evangelical in the Megachurch

Building upon the developmental theorists' work of Freud's psychosexual development, Piaget's cognitive development, Erikson's psycho-social development, and Kohlberg's moral development, James Fowler, psychologist of religion, finds a place for faith development within the framework of developmental psychology. At the intersection of ego, culture, and society, he posits stages of faith throughout the human lifespan. Because Fowler bases his work on that of Kohlberg and Erikson, he too suffers from the criticisms of feminists like Carol Gilligan (1982) who note the omission of data on women in the construction of the theories. Further arguments against Fowler's work include his slim sample size and the lack of diversity in interviewees. Yet, even with these critiques, Fowler does provide a unique framework by which to understand the trajectory of Evangelicals.

Fowler's work explains the movement of Evangelicals in the megachurch away from Fundamentalism practices. Fowler's second stage of faith: Mythic-literal, best correlates with that of a fundamentalist. Although this stage describes that most like a ten-year old, it is characterized by All-or-Nothing thinking, including the literal interpretation of symbols and scripture. God images are anthropomorphic, and there is a strong sense of justice/fairness in responding to culture. By contrast, the next stage of

177

faith, Synthetic-conventional is a more feeling-oriented stage. There is some reflection on literalism and meanings, but this is limited. This stage is correlated with the developmental stage of a teenager. This stage seeks interaction beyond the family to connect with friends, teachers, school, and others in the community. There is a questioning of authority, and a pursuit of "twinning" among peers: "While beliefs and values are deeply felt, they typically are tacitly held—the person 'dwells' in them and in the meaning world they mediate."[290]

Moving away from the rigidity of a heavy degree of literalism, edging toward militancy, Southern Evangelicals in the megachurch attend for the feel-good service of praise & worship. They attend to see the performance of the charismatic pastor who seems both an authoritative figure as well as a good friend. They attend because those who also attend "twin" one another due to similarities in class and status. These communities of faith, though adhering to fundamentalist doctrines, focus on the emotional lives of its members and families nurturing this stage of emotional faith. Thus, it seems Evangelicals fall somewhere "betwixt and between" these stages, still holding onto some uncompromising beliefs but embracing a revival in emotion.

Conclusion

This chapter begins to unravel the public and private myths of Evangelicals, cutting through the plethora of religious doctrinal codes and dogma to uncover the rudimentary, albeit unconscious, guilt and pathogenic beliefs. Using psychoanalytic developmental theory, I juxtapose the discourse to the evangelical worldview in the

---

[290] James Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1981), 173.

178

hopes of better ascertaining clarity in their affect and the "bare bones" of their

psychological belief structure. To do this, I assume that the God-image is like a parent or

provider to the Evangelical. Because of the contradictory nature of that God-image in

real-life experience, the Evangelical, like the child of a psychopathological parent, is

forced to create a theory of beliefs for survival. In order to "force-fit" the puzzle pieces of

his/her rationale, interpretation, and beliefs about the world, certain undergirding

psychological beliefs are necessary. Pathological beliefs help to explain evangelical

beliefs and practices, especially in the megachurch. Moreover, many of these pathogenic

beliefs seem also to fit well as underlying beliefs of the Southern myth, thereby

explaining a stronger resonation between Southern culture and Evangelicalism. These

beliefs, according to the psychoanalytic theory, manifest themselves in affect. Thus, I

also explore the guilt, shame, anger, fear, doubt, resentment, and other emotions that may

or may not be verbalized by Evangelicals. In doing this excavating work, we unveil the

difficulties of the evangelical worldview: the innumerable life experiences Evangelicals

must ignore, repress, or dismiss due to the inherent contradiction between myth and

rationale. Much energy must be expended to juggle the tenets of this faith structure.

To address the question of positive beliefs among Evangelicals, I trace the

growing rift between the religious right and the religious left and their corresponding

arsenal of issues. While the right is maintaining their status quo on issues of sexuality, the

left and moderate Evangelicals are exploring other issues of outreach on behalf of the

Other, especially in politics. However, though actions and behaviors seem to be changing

at present among moderate Evangelicals, it does not necessarily mean that there is a

change at the level of unconscious pathogenic belief. This trending "leftward" may be a result of secular influence not religious influence.

Finally, Fowler's theory of faith development, based upon the work of developmental theory and ego psychology, frames well Evangelicals in the megachurch between two stages of faith: Mythic-literal and Synthetic-Conventional. Using this framework is helpful not only as a psychological response to the growth of megachurches, but it is also helpful in explaining what kind of faith is being valued. This theory may also be able to describe the trajectory of Evangelicals between these stages of faith.

CHAPTER VI

LANGUAGE AND ACTION:
A COGNITIVE APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING
THE CORE BELIEFS OF SOUTHERN EVANGELICALS

Introduction

The previous two chapters on the psychology of Southern Evangelicals have

utilized the psychodynamic personality theories including object-relations theory, self

psychology, and psychoanalytic developmental theory. This chapter, however, takes an

alternative approach: cognitive-behavioral therapy using cognitive theory. Cognitive

theory was initially developed to address issues of anxiety and depression. It addresses

the immediacy of a problem or conflict, analyzing behavior, affect, and language for

diagnosis. This therapy teaches methods to change negative thought patterns,

assumptions, rules, and core beliefs, thereby transforming affect and behavior.

To demonstrate the link between overt behavior and core beliefs, I examine the

interaction among language, affect, and thought. The circular interplay among language-

emotion-thought connects one's beliefs with one's action. Using language from personal

journals, writings, lyrics, autobiographies, interviews, and other sources of Evangelicals,

I will delineate the common categories of automatic thinking in a given situation among

evangelical individuals which tend to elicit anxiety or depression.

Finally, I will juxtapose the common core beliefs of cognitive theory to the

worldview of Evangelicals. I discuss how these core beliefs seem to explain well the

attitudes, rules, and assumptions as well as the religious beliefs of Evangelicals. In so

doing, I show that cognitive theory may be the best theory by which to understand the unconscious core beliefs undergirding religious beliefs and practices for moderate Evangelicals. Thus, I show a link between the behavior and religious ritual of Evangelicals and the foundation of beliefs motivating those approaches to religion, social life, economics, and politics. Understanding Southern Evangelicals through this psychological lens may offer better insight into our selves, our society, and the trajectory of our nation.

Cognitive Therapy

Cognitive therapy has deep roots in B.F. Skinner's social pragmatism (1971). Though Aaron Beck claims to have founded cognitive therapy "in the early 1960s as a structured, short-term present-oriented psychotherapy for depression, directed toward solving current problems and modifying dysfunctional thinking and behavior,"[291] there were direct influences from Albert Ellis' Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT) (1957). Ellis' model was developed in the mid-1950s, deviating from his psychoanalytic training for a more direct, active approach. In this approach, he connected beliefs and behaviors, demonstrating "irrational core beliefs" of the client in therapy. His work is largely considered the foundational personality theory for cognitive-behavioral therapy.[292]

In cognitive therapy, techniques for altering one's behavior are learned and reinforced, time and again, teaching the client to break the link between particular patterns of thinking and their corresponding affects. The assumption is that if one can

---

[291] Judith Beck, *Cognitive Therapy: Basics and Beyond* (New York: Guilford Press, 1995), 1.

[292] See Albert Ellis, *How to Live with a Neurotic* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1957), for the elaboration of his REBT method.

recognize cognitive distortions, then one may gain better self-awareness of one's patterns

of thoughts and emotions, better managing difficult situations for the individual. To

recognize automatic thinking patterns takes much effort, painstakingly making conscious

the preconscious, to analyze one's own thoughts. Herein lies the work. Of course, this

assumes that there is a connection between thoughts and emotion: that one can act one's

self into thinking and think one's self into acting. It is a kind of stoic thinking, controlling

or managing emotion through thought processes. "The cognitive model states that the

interpretation of a situation (rather than the situation itself), often expressed in automatic

thoughts, influences one's subsequent emotion, behavior, and physiological response."[293]

Richard Lazarus, a psychologist, in an article on "how meaning is generated,"

predicates his work on the functional relationship between cognition and emotion as

bidirectional.[294] He argues "that cognition is both a necessary and sufficient condition of

emotion. […] Sufficient means that thoughts are capable of producing emotions;

necessary means that emotions cannot occur without some kind of thought." For the

purposes of this paper, noting that cognition is a *sufficient* condition for emotion, and vice

versa, is important for understanding the interplay of thought and affect.

Beck's work arises to meet the need of clients suffering largely from depression

or anxiety disorders. However, there are tacit associations between anxiety and

narcissism, or anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorders. For example, regarding

anxiety and narcissism, there is an underlying presence of anxiety as Freud discusses the

---

[293] Beck, *Cognitive Therapy*, 75.
[294] Richard S. Lazarus, "Cognition and Motivation in Emotion," in *American Psychologist*, Vol. 46 no. 4 (April 1991).

"narcissism of minor differences.[295]" In his work on group psychology, he states, "We are no longer astonished that greater differences should lead to an almost insuperable repugnance, such as the Gallic people feel for the German, the Aryan for the Semite, and the White races for the coloured."[296] Simply put, the 'in group' directs a feeling of hostility and aggression toward the 'out-group' that does not look or behave like them. These narcissistic groups typically congregate from an anxiety pertaining to a lack of identity or fear of the 'Other' especially pertaining to race, class, or gender, or a combination of the three. In the same way, I wish to convey the relationship of narcissism and anxiety among Southern Evangelicals as an 'in group.'

Behavior: A Way of Life for Southern Evangelicals

The behavior of Evangelicals, namely Southern, and their way of life are described in chapters one and two. In chapter one, I parcel sections of the subculture: publishing, the music industry, radio broadcasting, education, festivals, conferences, and non-governmental organizations to show how, beyond the church or megachurch, Evangelicals can live a kind of enclave existence. Given the private and public spheres, from family and friends to religion and politics, Southern Evangelicals can live, work, leisure, consume, and vote within the constructed (albeit continually reviewed and recreated) worldview and lifestyle for Evangelicals. That is, blanketing their way of life is a religious overlay motivated by religious belief.

---

[295] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents,* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XXI (London: Hogarth Press, 1930), 114.
[296] Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego,* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XVIII (London: Hogarth Press, 1921), 101.

Not only is this a kind of group narcissism, as mentioned above, but there is an obsessive quality about it as well. If every facet of their existence fits within a religious framework, there is a kind of cognitive obsession to "force-fit" beliefs with behavior, however contradictory they may actually be. This is a kind of mental trapeze act, stretching, reaching, falling, and catching aspects of the current capitalistic culture, selecting and unselecting those parts which would best fit for the maintenance of one's lifestyle and status, yet still feel within the bounds of accepted rules of evangelical culture. These beliefs have to be constantly nurtured and reassessed while unconscious contradictions need be placated. It is a continuous and burdensome cycle requiring much mental agility or ignorance.

Language: Rhetoric of Everyday Life

Psychotherapy is a talking cure. To understand, diagnose, and attend to the incumbent problems or disorders of a patient, the patient communicates his thoughts and feelings to the therapist. In the case of Blitzkrieg affect, the goal is to verbalize those deep-seated emotions, which previously may have never been. While with Southern Evangelicals we are *not* offering a diagnosis, we *are* attempting to better understand their thought-life and worldview through a psychological lens and discourse. Thus it is necessary to examine the everyday, namely public, "chatter" or "talk" or "speak" of Evangelicals.

Ron Sun begins his work on "bottom-up approach to cognition" contending that "cognition needs to be studied on the basis of essential existential context—everyday activities of human beings in their everyday world, because cognition has been evolved to

deal with exactly such activities in everyday life."[297] This "surface" language, through interviews, personal writings, public discussions, sermons, or literature, may give a portal into the thought-worlds, and the patterns of those thought-worlds, of Evangelicals.

As in the work of Klein or Grotstein, a good model for attending to deep patterns of structure or thought is Noam Chomsky's model (1972) of transformational-generative grammar. Because Chomsky laces his theory with Kantian philosophy, we can understand the theory of universal grammar in terms of phenomenon. This theory comprises the apparent interconnection between surface structure and deep structure. The surface structure is the "perceivable object" that can be analyzed with basic grammar rules. The deep structure, however, emerges as an abstract system of categories and phrases that can be analyzed with the conditions of transformation. It is a mental representation containing essential meanings of sentences which exists and underlies actual utterances.

Chomsky's work is in direct contradiction to the work of Skinner and the behaviorist camp: "Most people are not taught a language. Thus, language is not learned."[298] Why then is Chomsky's work a good model for understanding the structure and process of cognition? While cognitive therapy relies upon teaching and reinforcement for its practice, Chomsky's theory of universal grammar simply aids in understanding the mental structure and cognition. That is, similar to the relationship between surface structure and deep structure, cognitive theory would suggest that there is

---

[297] Ron Sun, *Duality of the Mind: A Bottom-Up Approach toward Cognition* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri, 2002), 1.

[298] Noam Chomsky, "The Ideas of Chomsky," *BBC Education and Training* (Princeton: Films for the Humanities & Sciences: distributed under license from BBC Worldwide Americas, Inc., 1997).

186

a relationship between core beliefs and language, thought, and affect. Thus, Chomsky's theory of mind is helpful as a model.

Affect: Helplessness and Unloveability

In the previous chapter on psychoanalytic development theory, Darwinian, cultural, and Blitzkrieg affects were described in conjunction with unconscious pathogenic beliefs. At the cultural level, unconscious guilt and shame were discussed within the context of Southern Evangelicals. Yet as Gay suggests, the Blitzkrieg affects more closely align with pathogenic beliefs. There is a plausible juxtaposition between Blitzkrieg affects, those "lightningesque," deep-seated, unconscious emotions that surface during a transference storm in the analytical setting, and the core feelings and beliefs of helplessness and unloveability in cognitive theory. There seem to be many similarities. In both cases, each of these affects correlates with pathogenic beliefs and core beliefs. In the process of uncovering pathogenic beliefs or core beliefs, the upheaval of emotions may include the following: fear, sadness, anxiety, anger, guilt, and shame, to name a few. These emotions are simply reactions to automatic thoughts. Identifying the specific emotion by kind and degree as well as changing the patterns and storms of these emotions may take the work of a therapist.

Among Southern Evangelicals, we reviewed themes of guilt and shame for Whites and Blacks, namely in a Southern racist culture of slavery, Jim Crow and the Civil Rights Movement, unto today. Amidst this culture obsessed with race, Evangelicalism has thrived. In doing so, Southern Evangelicals have demonstrated narcissistic and anxiety tendencies. Thus, cognitive theory is apropos for understanding

the language, affects, and beliefs of Southern Evangelicals. In the next section, I will work though multiple examples and evidences of automatic thinking among Evangelicals which, as noted by Lazarus, twin with affect.

Automatic Thinking: Cognitive Distortions

Automatic thoughts are "the actual words or images that go through a person's mind, are situation specific and may be considered the most superficial level of cognition."[299] According to cognitive theory, the relationship between behavior and automatic thinking includes the following sequence: an event occurs; in interpreting that event, one draws on one's unconscious core beliefs, conditional/intermediate beliefs, and manifests itself in automatic thinking; and what follows is the emotion, action, and sometimes, physiological reaction(s). It is the surfacing of the mental representation of a core belief in conscious thought.

Using David Burns' *Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy* (1980), Beck uncovers twelve standard patterns of common errors in automatic thinking. These mistakes in thinking are the first step to uncovering intermediate and core beliefs. These twelve cognitive distortions might be organized into the following categories: Dichotomous, Excessive Negative Focus, Projection, and Prediction; the latter two seem to be predicated upon the former two. That is, the former seem inherent qualities in all errors of automatic thinking. In the following, I will define each of the cognitive distortions, according to Beck, within these categories, and I will show evidence of this automatic thinking from the language of Evangelicals.[300]

---

[299] Beck, *Cognitive Therapy*, 16.
[300] Ibid., 119.

Dichotomous Thinking

Charles Strozier, in his *Apocalypse: On the Psychology of Fundamentalism in America* (1994), examines the phenomenon of "doubling" in fundamentalist mythology: one is 'reborn' to enter the kingdom of God; there is the 'return' of Jesus, a 'rededication' of a life to Christ, and the 'resurrection' of the saints. The phenomenon of doubling that surfaces in this religious ideology reveals a framework of dualistic thinking among fundamentalist individuals. Common notions of religious dualism include the following: body/soul, heaven/hell, life/death, nonbeliever/believer, salvation/damnation, God/Satan, inerrant/errant. Though these are qualified here as fundamentalist ways of thinking, these same binary oppositions form the basic structure of thinking for Evangelicals, in myth, ritual, and beliefs.

Cognitive therapy categorizes "doubling" as "all-or-nothing thinking." This dichotomous thinking suggests that an individual "views a situation in only two categories instead of on a continuum."[301] This kind of thinking is an indication of distortion and typically reveals emotions of anxiety. As a response to anxiety, Strozier claims that Fundamentalists rely upon a literal interpretation of Scripture. He notes, "Literalism means control over sin and badness and ultimately control over death. Anxiety over those issues requires the literalism."[302] Overcoming this dualistic thinking involves a heightened awareness of patterns of thinking, a reworking of these scripts, and a space for play in which to achieve both.

---

[301] Ibid., 19.

[302] Charles Strozier, *Apocalypse: On the Psychology of Fundamentalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 95.

Excessive Negative Focus

If one struggles with "all-or-nothing thinking," or patterns of dichotomous thinking, then the second step may include the tendencies toward weighing perceptions in the negative, given the opposition. The following cognitive distortions share this characteristic. Many evangelical pastors and authors have recognized this excessive negative thinking and related affect among their constituencies. They address this in their work as a prescription of hope, which is reviewed below.

Beck's descriptions include the following:

- *Overgeneralization*: Making a sweeping negative conclusion that goes far beyond the current situation.

- *Magnification/Minimization*: Evaluating one's self, another person, or a situation, and unreasonably magnifying the negative and/or minimizing the positive.

- *Mental Filtering*: Paying undue attention to one negative detail instead of seeing the whole picture.

- *Tunnel Vision*: Seeing only the negative aspects of a situation.

- *Disqualifying or Discounting the Positive*: Unreasonably telling one's self that positive experiences, deeds, or qualities do not count.

- *Emotional Reasoning*: Thinking something must be true because you "feel" (actually believe) it so strongly, ignoring or discounting evidence to the contrary.

Evangelical doctrinal beliefs about the self, or human nature, as discussed in chapter five, revolve around the belief that human beings are born inherently sinful. That is, humans are born with an "Adamic" nature, as interpreted from Romans 5:14. Thus, humans are in need of a Savior for redemption from this evil nature. Only through the

redemption in Jesus Christ is unconditional love, holiness, or salvation attained in the eyes of God the Father. At the ground level then, there is much negative thinking embedded in the doctrine of "total depravity" of human beings and their nature. As one evangelical speaker from Kentucky, Bob Warren, would say, "God plus nothing equals everything."[303] We, unfortunately, are the "nothing." There is not an amount of good to be done in the world by a human being that can change this nature. It is inherently flawed, and no action of one's own can provide a sense of righteousness, morality, or goodness in simply being human, or being one's self.

Inevitably this foundational thinking about the self and others not only affects self-esteem and confidence, but it also agitates anxiety and depression. In response to these feelings, layered with guilt and shame, many pastors and speakers have written much in the area of what could be considered "self-help" for Evangelicals. Perhaps the most well-known, best-selling book among these kinds of "self-help" books is pastor and author, Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Life* (2002). In this book, he states the question, "What on earth am I here for?" He responds, "It's not about you. The purpose of your life is far greater than your own personal fulfillment, your peace of mind, or even your happiness. […] If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must begin with God. You were born *by* his purpose and for *his* purpose."[304] In one of his opening chapters he responds to assumptions that guilt, resentment, anger, fear, and need for approval serve as drives for people and their behavior. His goal is for God's purpose

---

[303] Bob Warren, formerly a player for the San Antonio Spurs (and Vanderbilt Commodores), is a self-made minister who operates outside of any church structure. He teaches, runs camps, and holds retreats at his farm in Hardin, Kentucky. He would be considered a "Bible-based fundamentalist." This quote was one used frequently in lectures.
[304] Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 17.

to serve as a drive for one's life.[305] Warren offers a kind of esteem immersed in God and

God's will. Humans were planned for the following: God's pleasure, God's family, to

become like Christ, for serving God, and for a mission.

Beth Moore, another best-selling author among Evangelicals, especially for

women and women's Bible studies, writes from her personal life experience with

depression for *Get out of that Pit: Straight Talk about God's Deliverance* (2007). She

writes in her introduction:

> Life is excruciating. Crushing, in fact. The sheer magnitude of our worries can
> press down on our heads until we unknowingly descend into a pit of despair one
> inch at a time. Something so horrible can happen that we conclude we'll never be
> okay again. […] The Bible teaches that there are no lost causes. No permanent
> pit-dwellers except those who refuse to leave. Every person can know the
> complete redemption of Jesus Christ, purpose for life, and fullness of joy.[306]

In her work, like in Warren's, the only way to emerge from depression for "deliverance"

is through what she calls "three steps out of your pit": God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

Salvation, here or in the hereafter, only comes through the aid of God through Jesus

Christ. There is a sense of helplessness assumed by the "pit-dweller."

Joyce Meyer, now a speaker, author, and evangelist, has been noted as one of the

top twenty-five most influential Evangelicals in America (like Rick Warren and Franklin

Graham) by TIME in 2005. Her expansive ministry has opened the gateway for many

best-selling titles. In her initial book, *Battlefield of the Mind: Winning the Battle in Your

Mind* (1995), she deals with the dichotomous forces between God and Satan at war in the

arena of the mind. In one chapter, "Be Positive," she offers a bit of a confession: "Many

years ago, I was extremely negative. […] My whole philosophy was this: 'If you don't

---

[305] Ibid., 27-35.
[306] Beth Moore, *Get out of that Pit: Straight Talk about God's Deliverance* (Nashville: Integrity Publishers, Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2007), 2.

expect anything good to happen, then you won't be disappointed when it doesn't.'"[307]

Basing her positive recommendation to combat this negative thinking, she offers the

verse, "All things work together are for good to and for those who love God," from

Romans 8:28. Her advice for restructuring one's thought-world is the reading of

Scripture, accepting God's will, and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

In one of her most recent books, *Look Great, Feel Great: 12 Keys to Enjoying a*

Healthy Life Now (2006), Meyer directly addresses the issues of self-respect, self-hatred,

self-doubt, and self-esteem, or the lack thereof. Like Moore and others, she opens with a

testimony to her own struggles with self-esteem, her battle with cancer, and her solution

through God's help. And, like Warren, she calls the reader to ask, "What is the work that

God has put [you] on earth to do?"[308] While the catalyst of empowerment is assumed to

come from God, there is a sense with Meyer's work, unlike Moore's, that there is a

responsibility of the individual to "pick one's self up by his/her own bootstraps" to

"decide what amount of attention you should pay to how you look and feel to get that

maximum energy, health, and charisma you need to do [God's] work as successfully as

possible."[309]

In her previous work, however, *Straight Talk: Overcoming Emotional Battles with*

the Power of God's Word (2004), her prescription for depression, discouragement, fear,

insecurity, loneliness, stress, and worry is clearly through peace in Jesus Christ, the

leadership of the Holy Spirit, and God's Word: "Jesus is the Prince of Peace!

Obedience—following the leading of the Holy Spirit—will always lead us to peace and

---

[307] Joyce Meyer, *Battlefield of the Mind: Winning the Battle in Your Mind* (New York: Warner Faith, 1995), 45.
[308] Joyce Meyer, *Look Great, Feel Great: 12 Keys to Enjoying a Healthy Life Now* (New York: Warner Faith, 2006), xxxv.
[309] Ibid.

joy, not to anxiety and frustration."[310] Again, only through Jesus Christ can one overcome one's excessive negative focus causing these struggles.

Projection

Projection is a defensive mechanism "whereby qualities, feelings, wishes, or even 'objects', which the subject refuses to recognize or rejects in himself, are expelled from the self and located in another person or thing."[311] The following cognitive distortions are projections which highlight particular assumptions about one's self and others, who they are, who they should be, and how they should act. Beck describes four different cognitive distortions along these lines:

- *Labeling*: Putting a fixed, global label on yourself or others without considering that the evidence might more reasonably lead to a less disastrous conclusion.

- *Personalization*: Believing others are behaving negatively because of you, without considering more plausible explanations for their behavior.

- *Mind reading*: Believing you know what others are thinking, failing to consider other, more likely possibilities.

- *"Should" and "must" statements*: Having a precise, fixed idea of how you or others should behave and overestimating how bad it is that these expectations are not met.

Projecting assumptions onto the "Other" can be a product of group narcissism, and unfortunately, has persisted through the many generations of Christians, even

---

[310] Joyce Meyer, *Straight Talk: Overcoming Emotional Battles with the Power of God's Word* (New York: Warner Faith, 2004), 5.

[311] J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 1973), 349.

Evangelicals. Likewise, those not Christian have provided "labels" for Christians

deviating from the norm such as "Protestant," "Quietist," "Methodist," or

"Fundamentalist." Hence, the thought-process of labeling has perpetuated much internal

and external conflict among gender, race, sexual orientation, and class as well as

ideological differences. Dealing with that labeling may elicit sadness, anger, and

depression.

Bishop T.D. Jakes, pastor of The Potter's House in Dallas, Texas, responds to

particular issues of women in his *Woman, thou art Loosed!* (1993). The age-old

dichotomous construction of virgin/whore still plagues images of women today, perhaps

especially evangelical women struggling to maintain sexual purity until marriage. Jakes

continues in this tradition in his defining femininity and womanhood, tracing issues of

sinful sexuality back to the myth of Eve with her apple. He states, "There is a special

enmity between femininity and the enemy. There is a special conflict between the woman

and the enemy.[…] If godly women do not learn how to start praying and doing effective

spiritual warfare, they will not discern what is plugging into them."[312] By "what is

plugging into them," he means Satan. His argument for rape, sexual assault, abuse, and

discrimination is that Satan has a special attack on women, and the remedy is the efficacy

of women's response through spiritual warfare. Again, it is the responsibility of women

themselves, through God's strength and hope, to endure the struggle of victimization.

Jakes shows the foundational thinking about gender, sex, and sexuality as it pertains to

women; the origins of labeling one "outside the fold."

Susan Ashton, a Christian music artist, writes and sings about the experience of

being "outside the fold" for a young, unwed, pregnant woman who seeks solace in a

---

[312] Bishop T.D. Jakes, *Woman, Thou Art Loosed*! (Shippensburg, PA: Treasure House, 1993), 101-102.

church. This song defines well the process of "labeling" from the congregation, yet "mind reading" from the young woman. Ashton sings the following in "Started as a Whisper":

> She slipped into church/She sat on the back row/Cause she thought she'd find a little comfort there […] Looking around/She felt an uneasiness/From the eyes of condemnation staring back/Cold *Hellos*/judgemental overtones./ As the hope with her heart began to crack./ Faces draped in doubt, ushering her out […] A blemish in the picture/upsetting the scene in their eyes.[313]

Ashton, an evangelical herself, understands the cold shunning of church members unwilling to embrace or attend to those who have "missed the mark" according to their behavioral codes of sexuality. If a woman finds herself pregnant and unwed, she is typically offered counseling that accords only with their political "pro-life" opinions; that is, she is advised to either keep the child or offer the child for adoption. While much labeling does go on for those who have "sinned and fallen short," some "mind reading," assuming the worst, inevitably occurs distorting the situation as well.

Homosexuality and domestic marriage is one of the most prominent political topics among Evangelicals today. This could be evidenced by the abundance of writings which have been published in efforts to label those individuals pursuing a gay lifestyle as sinful. Bill Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois, recently published a book on how to evangelize. Though the book did not explicitly focus on homosexuality, he did include an anecdote about a personal encounter with strangers, at a Chicago hotel bar who, after some small-talk, revealed to Hybels that they were gay. To this response, Hybels confesses that he prayed, "*911! I screamed in my spirit. I could use some help down here!...I need some direction God, and I need it*

---

[313] Susan Ashton, "Started as a Whisper" in *Angels of Mercy* Album, lyrics by Wayne Kirkpatrick (Nashville: Sparrow Records, 1992).

pronto!"[314] Calling homosexuality a "disobedient and dishonoring sexual pattern,"

Hybels makes certain his reader understands that he does not condone this behavior. Yet

at the same time, he emphasizes the need for a "radically inclusive" grace for those

"others."[315] Those living a gay lifestyle may be accepted within the walls of some

evangelical churches, but they are accepted on the evangelical mantra to "hate the sin,

love the sinner."

The construction of proper behavior and its boundaries are interwoven with

"should" and "must" statements, even if implicitly. This language distinguishes one act

versus another. That is, one "should" do "this" and not "that." These are kinds of

commands found and interpreted in Scripture as well as constructed within the

evangelical tradition and even today, albeit selectively, to deal with emerging issues of

action, leisure, and roles (gender, leadership, etc.). This language provides rules for the

evangelical subculture.

Prediction

Prediction is defined as prophecy in the evangelical subculture. Whereas the

"prophetic voice" in more moderate or liberal Christian circles is understood as a voice

that simply speaks on behalf of the poor, oppressed, or the marginalized in the world, for

Evangelicals, the "prophetic voice" means the ability to predict the future. It is a

revelation of divine will to a prophet. There are elements of prediction among Beck's

cognitive distortion as well:

---

[314] Bill Hybels, *Just Walk across a Room: Simple Steps Pointing People to Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 80.
[315] Ibid., 88.

- *Catastrophizing*: Predicting the future negatively without considering other, more likely outcomes.

The best example of "catastrophizing" among Evangelicals today has been the explosion of the best-selling books by Tim LeHaye and Peter Jenkins, the *Left Behind* series, over the course of the past two decades. In this series, the books delineate fictional accounts of end time events and situations. Given their pre-tribulation rapture doctrinal position, those who are Christians are "raptured" immediately. Christian pilots leave planes to crash, and Christian drivers leave cars to collide. Worldwide catastrophe strikes, book after book, demonstrating the advent of apocalyptic times. Both Tim and his wife, Beverly LeHaye (and her Concerned Women for America Institute), are considered Fundamentalists, a part of the religious right. Yet, LeHaye's and Jenkin's books have been sold widely among the evangelical Christian community. This kind of religious prediction concomitant with their beliefs in a pre-tribulation rapture releases Christians from concern about the planet and its environment. Yet conversely, in the growing shift of Evangelicalism among moderate Evangelicals, there has been a ground-swelling of education and awareness for "Climate Change," in 2006, led by the National Association of Evangelicals, which has been well-received.[316]

Less dramatic than the apocalyptic beliefs is the automatic, negative thinking about one's own personal future. "Prosperity Gospel" preachers offer methods for their congregants about how they might be "blessed," financially, physically, emotionally, or spiritually by God. Bishop T.D. Jakes is a proponent of the prosperity gospel message. Others include Creflo Dollar, Ed Young, Benny Hinn, and Oral Roberts. Joel Osteen, the

---

[316] See National Association of Evangelical's website: Re:Vision—Protecting Creation: http://www.revision.org/content.asp?contentid=482

pastor of Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas, is perhaps the most well-known of the prosperity gospel pastors due to his bestselling, *Your Best Life Now: 7 Steps to Living at Your Full Potential* (2004).

Osteen weaves much "self-help" philosophy of thinking positively, building self-esteem and self-respect, and choosing happiness. Just as Meyer pushes the individual to take action and to claim God's blessing, Osteen echoes language of self-initiation. Again, addressing negative thinking, Osteen claims, "Many people go through life with low self-esteem, focusing on the negative, feeling inferior or inadequate, always dwelling on some reason why they can't be happy."[317] The crux of the prosperity gospel is based upon giving:

> Because we believe that God wants the best for us, that He wants us to prosper, that we have the favor of God, and that He has much more in store, it is easy to slip into the subtle trap of selfishness. […] You will have more joy than you dreamed possible when you *live to give*, which is the sixth step of living at your full potential."[318]

Combating catastrophizing, Osteen pacifies this negative thinking with a simple, albeit magical, formula: if one gives, then one will receive.

These are just a few examples supporting the cognitive distortions described by Beck. They abound in the evangelical subculture, and they abound outside this subculture in the American secular society at-large as well. Given the writings of the most influential leaders in Evangelicalism today and their chosen topics, however, there does seem to be a kind of awareness or assumptions of these cognitive distortions among their readers. Unfortunately, arguably, their responses only provide an "opium," or a kind of coping mechanism by which to cognitively deal with these distortions. Cognitive

---

[317] Joel Osteen, *Your Best Life Now: 7 Steps to Living at Your Full Potential* (New York: Warner Faith, 2004), ix.
[318] Ibid., 221.

distortions in automatic thinking are *not* brought to surface, analyzed, and changed; they are simply appeased with promises of hope through the myth and ritual of evangelical Christianity.

Intermediate/Conditional Beliefs: Attitudes, Rules, and Assumptions

According to cognitive theory, intermediate beliefs have proven more malleable than core beliefs, but they are more resistant than automatic thoughts. These intermediate beliefs comprise attitudes, rules, and assumptions which in turn influence one's thoughts, emotions, and behavior. And, of course, these intermediate beliefs are directly reflective of core beliefs. That is, if one believes something negative about one's self as a basis, such as "I am helpless," then there are corresponding attitudes, rules and assumptions about this feeling and belief of helplessness.

The attitude would be something like, "*It is terrible to be* helpless." This is a general feeling that a state of "helplessness" is not a desirable way of living, way of being, or way of reflecting one's self in the world. The rule, correlating with that attitude, generally would be a maxim of a "should" or "must" statement or thought as a means to deliver one's self from his/her attitude or core belief: "*I must* pull myself up and work hard to overcome my adversities." The assumption then would be, typically, a conditional statement, such as "*If* I pull myself up and work hard, *then* I will be able to overcome my feelings of helplessness."

The conciliatory writings, teachings, and music of Evangelicals doing the work of "self-help" for individuals struggling with a variety of negative thinking patterns may better address intermediate beliefs than automatic thinking. Perhaps religious writing

does this work best because it directly addresses beliefs rather than thought patterns. For instance, an author, like Beth Moore, advises her readers struggling with despair simply to seek out God's help and grace to aid one's self from the negative state of being and affairs. While the attitude of intermediate beliefs of the individual might remain static, such as "It is terrible that I'm unloveable," the rule(s) and the assumption(s) may be changed.

Instead of the secular individual suggesting to one's self, "I must work harder…," an Evangelical might alter the rule to think, "I must allow *God* or *accept God* into my life to relieve me of this pain of unloveability." The action and rule relieves one of the burden of the responsibility of working to change one's core belief. Though allowing God to take responsibility for suffering seems like an abdication of control, it really is an action of taking more control over not only one's self but also one's God or God-image. God is now forced to do the "heavy lifting" on the individual's behalf. Along similar lines, it also seems to align well with Volney Gay's unconscious pathogenic belief: "There *must* be ways to control these causal, intentional agents (if God is an agent—italics mine)." For instance, Liz Curtis Higgs, a Christian author, publishes her women readers' letters who confess, "I don't feel worthy of having God forgive me of my sins and weaknesses. I feel like a failure."[319] Using Scripture and belief, Higgs instructs her readers to "embrace grace": "God will be there for you, however dark the hour, however tenuous your faith."[320]

The assumption, the conditional belief, might be accepted then that "*If* I believe that God is ever present, God's grace will heal, and God's forgiveness extends to me.

---

[319] Liz Curtis Higgs, *Embrace Grace: Welcome to the Forgiven Life* (Colorado Springs: Water Brook Press, 2006), 7.
[320] Ibid., 15.

Then I can begin to feel 'loveable' once again like others." Again, this conditional belief relies on one's belief in the ability of one's God-image to offer grace, love, and forgiveness and then one's willingness to believe that one can accept this from that image to pacify one's own despair. Philip Yancey, author of many bestselling Christian books, in his *What's So Amazing About Grace?* (1997)*,* likens the grace of God to that of "Babette" in "Babette's Feast," a story by Isak Dineson. In that story, Babette spends every dollar of her lottery winnings on a fine dinner for simple guests. He notes, "Isak Dinesen leaves no doubt that she wrote "Babette's Feast" not simply as a story of a fine meal but as a parable of grace: a gift that costs everything for the giver [i.e. Babette] and nothing for the recipient."[321]

Some evangelical writers may not assume the degree of passivity in one's role in healing as several of the writers above. Like Osteen or Meyer, many assume a kind of action role by the individual to take part in the alleviation of negative beliefs. Yet, even in their encouragement for action, it is concomitant with the belief that God will meet the individual where s/he is with the necessary grace, love, and forgiveness. These books do not offer a twelve-step program for their readers; they offer new rules and assumptions about their God, themselves, and their faith.

Because Evangelicals largely assume that the locus of control is external, that their God-image controls the world and their personal life, then there seems to be conditional, intermediate beliefs which may elucidate core beliefs of helplessness and unloveability. These may include the following:

- If I can obtain the covering of an authority figure, then I will have help and access to power.

---

[321] Philip Yancey, *What's So Amazing About Grace?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 25.

- If I can gain protection, then I will have a greater freedom in the world.

- If I can gain an image of perfection through justification, then I can receive salvation and achieve respect and competence.

Each of these conditional beliefs seems to be based upon a wish and perception of a benevolent God-image and the good gifts of that God-image. These beliefs are key components if there is to be a reworking of negative beliefs for the evangelical. Because of the God-image as Parent, the Evangelical relies upon God to overcome negative feelings and beliefs, not the self. Thus, there is an inhibition of the emergence of the executive ego to actually take responsibility for negative thinking patterns, feelings, and beliefs to do the work, in full, alone, perhaps impeding development.

Core Beliefs

The cognitive model suggests that core beliefs are the elemental, "deep structure," beliefs that one has about one's self, others, and one's world that influence intermediate beliefs, automatic thoughts, emotions, and behavior. "Their most central or core beliefs are understandings that are so fundamental and deep that they often do not articulate them, even to themselves. These ideas are regarded by the person as absolute truths, just the way things 'are.'"[322] That is, these beliefs can be both positive and negative, and they tend to be global and overgeneralized. An individual's experience in childhood generally shapes these beliefs as well as the intermediate beliefs.

Beck (1964) finds that people generally maintain relatively positive core beliefs through their lifespan. Though negative core beliefs can be held continuously, he contends that they are most likely held in a time of duress. Specifically dealing with

---

[322] Beck, *Cognitive Therapy,* 15.

negative core beliefs or schemas, he suggests that there are two categories: helplessness and unloveability. *Helplessness* beliefs indicate a kind of loss of control of one's self and one's world. An individual expresses feelings and beliefs of being incapacitated to overcome obstacles or weaknesses. These beliefs are about one's inaction. *Unloveability* beliefs describe an individual's view of one's self and how one is perceived by others. There is an undercurrent of a sense of hatred for the self. These beliefs are about one's being.

The Billy Graham Evangelical Association (BGEA) offers much advice to individuals seeking "spiritual help," particularly for those who wish to "accept Christ as their Lord and Savior."[323] In this important moment in the life of a Christian, an initiation ritual into a belief system, evangelical subculture, and behavioral expectations are the initial steps to being "born again." First and foremost, however, is the admittance of one's "sinful nature." BGEA quotes the letter to the Romans: "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,"[324] implicitly explaining that all humans are imperfect. While the acceptance of this belief seems that it might dispute the pathogenic belief that "perfection is an attainable goal" for Evangelicals, actually perfection is believed *only* attainable through one's Christianity, after one's acceptance of Christ, not before.

The essence of Christianity and an Evangelical's core beliefs are wrapped up in theological positions. In being "born again," there is much language around a "new self," "new man," and "holy priesthood." Images of "putting on Christ" as a garment, covering one's old self to be acceptable in God's presence is a new way of thinking of one's new role as a child of God. To accept these images of salvation through Jesus Christ, there are

---

[323] BGEA, Spiritual Help: http://www.billygraham.com/SH_HowToBecomeAChristian.asp
[324] Romans 3:23 NIV

a series of assumptions that must be believed. First, one must assume that that there is an afterlife, including a heaven and hell. Secondly, one must believe that one will suffer eternal damnation in hell and is "helpless" to experience otherwise unless one accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. As a corollary, one must believe that one is "unloveable" enough that God would not accept them on the basis of themselves, their actions, or their life alone. They are only worthy because of the person and actions of Jesus Christ. Thus, the two core beliefs of Beck need to be assumed even to begin the journey of Evangelicalism.

Evangelicals, like other Christians, believe that through Jesus Christ and his "payment" of death for sins on the cross, as the Son of God, has offered redemption, salvation, and status for Christians as children of God. One becomes "like Christ," and there is an ensuing, albeit sometimes unconscious, pursuit of perfection. One now has control over one's own life as well as a powerful testimony of a remarkable religious experience to share with the world. Given this dichotomy in shift of beliefs, at the foundation of evangelical core beliefs lies a binary opposition: "I am evil, but in Christ, I am good." Whether this belief is ever made conscious, we could predict that it could elicit thoughts and feelings of depression and anxiety, even after admittance into Christendom.

> BGEA concludes their spiritual steps to Christianity with the following:
> When you receive Christ into your heart you become a child of God, and have the privilege of talking to Him in prayer at any time about anything. The Christian life is a personal relationship to God through Jesus Christ. And best of all, it is a relationship that will last for all eternity.[325]

Believing one's self to be a child of God could be interpreted that one believes one's self to be the son or daughter of a king, inheritor of a kingdom or a member of a royal family.

---

[325] BGEA, Spiritual Help: http://www.billygraham.com/SH_HowToBecomeAChristian.asp

This also alludes to the dichotomous nature of Evangelicalism: one is a slave to God, yet one is also a child of God. Prior to one's initiation rites of repenting and accepting salvation through Jesus Christ, one is both helpless and unloveable. But after accepting Jesus Christ, one has access to the God of the universe as a parental figure for eternity in paradise.

With evidence of dichotomous thinking for Evangelicals, we might conclude that positive beliefs need to be addressed as well. Once admitting one is helpless and unloveable outside of the "blood" of Jesus Christ, there are gifts given by God and the Christian community of help, love, success, worthiness, comfort, and care. With these gifts, one has the power to reframe one's beliefs about the self. One is not helpless or hopeless but helpful and hopeful. One is not abandoned; one is a child of God. These positive beliefs, though undergirded by the negative beliefs in one's humanness, offer a new way of thinking, being, and living in the world.

Conclusion

Finally, I address and define the core beliefs of Southern Evangelicals in the megachurch. Cognitive theory's discourse and model may offer the best tools by which to describe the thought, affect, and beliefs of Evangelicals. This theory (and therapy) assumes that core beliefs influence intermediate beliefs, which in turn manifest themselves through reactions, emotions, and behavior as a response to particular patterns in automatic thinking. Since core beliefs are unconscious, however, I work backwards to discern these most fundamental psychological beliefs fueling the thought-worlds, personal myths, and rituals of Evangelicals. First, I suggest that their behavior and

everyday language suggest issues of anxiety and narcissism. Second, feelings of helplessness and unloveability seem to be most prominent affects synergistically correlating with doctrinal beliefs of "total depravity." Third, I list four areas of negative automatic thinking: Dichotomous Thinking, Excessive Negative Thinking, Projection, and Prediction which emerge in much evangelical literature. Fourth, I review the intermediate condition of beliefs, including rules, attitudes, and assumptions which evangelical writers seem to best address for change and repentance, over and against cognitive distortions. Finally, I discern the core beliefs of Evangelicals as those corresponding with affect: helplessness and unloveability. These core beliefs may be the "deep structure" of psychological beliefs which undergird the evangelical worldview. If so, these core beliefs may unify moderate Evangelicals in the megachurch today under the umbrella of the evangelical subculture and lifestyle. Lastly, these core beliefs might contribute to the explanation of the growth of the evangelical megachurch and the burgeoning evangelical subculture of narcissism and anxiety in America today.

Evangelicalism at the turn of the twenty-first century is a powerful force in the marketplace and in politics. This sector of society is growing, as is its subculture. Since Evangelicalism found its origins in America in the South, a "Southernization" of Evangelicalism has occurred, spreading across the continental United States and perhaps the world. The themes of Southern culture and society have shaped Evangelicalism with a particular religious "accent," interlacing its myths and rituals from both Black and White culture with doctrinal beliefs. Yet, even with the morphing shape of Evangelicalism, moderate Evangelicals do share a foundation of core beliefs which serve as a catalyst for language, affect, and behavior: helplessness and unloveability.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and Publications

Almond, Gabriel A., Emmanuel Sivan, and R. Scott Appleby, "Fundamentalism: Genus
and Species" in *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, eds. Martin E. Marty and
Scott Appleby. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995.

Ammerman, Nancy Tatom. *Bible Believers: Fundamentalists in the Modern World*. New
Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987.

Applebome, Peter. *Dixie Rising: How the South is Shaping American Values, Politics,
and Culture*. New York: Times Books, Random House, 1996.

Ashton, Susan. "Started as a Whisper" in *Angels of Mercy* Album, lyrics by Wayne
Kirkpatrick. Nashville: Sparrow Records, 1992. Compact Disc.

Bahbda, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Baldwin, Lewis V. "To Witness in Dixie: King, The New South, and Southern Civil
Religion," in *The Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.: The Boundaries of Law,
Politics, and Religion.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame
Press, 2002.

Balmer, Randall. *PBS Series: Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory*. Worcester, PA: Gateway
Films, 1992.

———. *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical
Subculture in America, expanded edition.* New York: Oxford University Press,
1993.

Barth, Fredrik, ed. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. London: George Allen and Unwin,
1969.

Bartkowski, John P. *The Promise Keepers: Servants, Soldiers and Godly Men*. New
Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004.

Bartley, Numan V. *The New South 1945-1980: The Story of the South's Modernization*.
Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995.

Beck, Judith. *Cognitive Therapy: Basics and Beyond*. New York: Guilford Press, 1995.

Beit-Hallahmi, Benjamin and Michael Argyle. *The Psychology of Religious Behavior,
Belief, and Experience.* London: Routledge, 1997.

Bellah, Robert, et al. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life.* Berkley: University of California Press, 1985.

———. "Civil Religion in America," in *Daedalus* 117, no.3 (Summer 1998): 97-118.

Berger, Peter. *Invitation to Sociology*. New York: Anchor Books, 1963.

———. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion.* Boston: Anchor Books, 1990.

Berger, Peter and Thomas Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge.* New York: Anchor Books, 1966.

Blanck, Rubin and Gertrude Blanck. *Ego Psychology: Theory & Practice.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1974.

———. *Beyond Ego Psychology: Developmental Object Relations Theory*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

Boles, John. *The Great Revival, 1787-1805: The Origins of the Southern Evangelical Mind*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1972.

———. "The Dixie Difference," introduction to *Dixie Dateline*. Houston: Rice University Studies, 1983.

———. "Evangelical Protestantism in the South" in *Religion in the South*, ed. C. R. Wilson. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1985.

Brown, Kathleen. "Gender and Race in Colonial Virginia," in *Major Problems in the History of the American South, Vol 1: The Old South, second edition*, eds. Paul D. Escott et al. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999.

Bruce, Steve. *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

———. *Choice and Religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Burns, David D. *Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy*. New York: William Morrow & Co., 1980.

Butler, Jon. "Enthusiasm Described and Decried: The Great Awakening as Interpretive Fiction." In *Religion in American History: A Reader,* edited by Jon Butler and Harry S Stout. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Byrd, William, II. *The History of the Dividing Line* in *The Literature of the American*

South, eds. William L. Andrews et al. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998.

Cable, George Washington. *The Grandissimes*. Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Co., 2001.

Campbell, Will. "Used and Abused: The Redneck's Lot," in *The Prevailing South: Life and Politics in a Changing Culture*, ed. Dudley Clendinen. Atlanta: Longstreet Press, 1988.

Capote, Truman. *In Cold Blood*. New York: Vintage International, 1965.

Capps, Walter. *The New Religious Right*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990.

Carpenter, Joel A. *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Cash, W. J. *The Mind of the South*. New York: A. Knopf, 1941.

Chappell, David. *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Chavez, Mark. "Secularization as Declining Religious Authority," *Social Forces* 72, 3 (1994): 749-770.

Chomsky, Noam. *Language and Mind*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1972.

———. "The Ideas of Chomsky," *BBC Education and Training* (Princeton: Films for the Humanities & Sciences : distributed under license from BBC Worldwide Americas, Inc., 1997

Cohen, Anthony P. *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. London: Tavistock Publications, 1985.

Dailey, Timothy J. *Dark Obsession: The Tragedy and Threat of the Homosexual Lifestyle*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishing Group, 2003.

Deglar, Carl. "The Foundations of Southern Distinctiveness," *Southern Review* XIII, no. 2 (April, 1977): 225-239.

———. *Place over Time: The Continuity of Southern Distinctiveness*. Baton Rouge: Lousiana State University Press, 1977.

De Saussure, Ferdinand. 1959. *Course in General Linguistics*. Trans. by Wade Baskin. New York: The Philosophical Library, Inc.

Dinnerstein, Leonard and Mary Dale Palsson, eds. *Jews in the South*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973.

Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger*, reprinted. London: Ark Paperbacks, 1984.

———. "The Effects of Modernization on Religious Chance," *Daedalus* III (Winter 1982): 1-19.

Eaton, Jenny and Kate Etue, eds. *The AWAKE Project: Uniting Against the African AIDS Crisis*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002.

Egerton, John. *The Americanization of Dixie: The Southernization of America*. New York: Harper's Magazine Press, 1974.

Ellis, Albert. *How to Live with a Neurotic*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1957.

Escott, Paul D. et al. eds. *Major Problems in the History of the American South, Vol. 1: The Old South, second edition*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999.

Evans, Eli N. *The Provincials: A Personal History of Jews in the South*. New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1973.

Falsani, Cathleen. "Why don't more Evangelicals care about AIDS?," *The Chicago Sun-Times*, Dec. 3, 2004.

Faulkner, William. *Absalom! Absalom!* New York: Vintage International, 1936.

Fine, Reuben. *The Development of Freud's Thought: From the Beginnings (1886-1900) through Id Psychology (1900-1914) to Ego Psychology (1914-1939)*. New York: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1973.

The First Reader of Southern Schools. Raleigh: The North Carolina Christian Advocate Publishing Company, 1864.

Fogel, Robert William and Stanley L. Engerman. *Time on the Cross: The Economics of Slavery*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co, 1974.

Fowler, James. *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1981.

Frank, J.D. and J.B. Frank. *Persuasion and Healing: A Comparative Study of Psychotherapy* (3rd edition). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

Frank, Thomas. *What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America*. New York: Metropolitan Press, 2004.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* Vol. IV and V. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-analysis, 1900.

———. "Three Essays on Sexuality" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* Vol. VII. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-analysis, 1905a.

———. "On Narcissism: An Introduction" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XIV. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-analysis, 1914.

———. *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XVIII. London: Hogarth Press, 1921.

———. *The Ego and the Id* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XIX. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-analysis, 1923.

———. *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XX. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-analysis, 1926.

———. *The Question of Lay Analysis* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XX. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-analysis, 1927.

———. *The Future of an Illusion* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XXI. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-analysis, 1928.

———. *Civilization and its Discontents* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XXI. London: Hogarth Press, 1930.

———.*New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* Vol. XXII. London: The Hogarth Press, 1933.

Gaustad, Edward. "Religion in American Religion," in *Religion in the South*, ed. Charles Reagan Wilson. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1984.

———. *A Religious History of America*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990.

Gay, Volney. "Against Wholeness: The Ego's Complicity in Religion," in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* XLVII/4 (1979): 539-555.

———. *Joy and the Objects of Psychoanalysis*: *Literature, Belief, and Neurosis*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001.

———. Post Freudian Theories: "Comparisons," a handout. Nashville, Vanderbilt University. Spring 2003.

Gilkes, Cheryl Townsend. "Plenty Good Room: Adaptation in a Changing Black Church." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 558 (1998): 101-118.

Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books, 1959.

Graham, Billy. *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*. New York: HarperCollins, 1997.

Graham, Franklin. *Rebel with a Cause: An Autobiography*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, Inc., 1995.

———. *The Name*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, Inc., 2004.

Greenberg, Jay R. and Stephen A. Mitchell. *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983.

Gregory, David. *Dinner with a Perfect Stranger: An Invitation Worth Considering.* Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2005.

Griffin, Larry. The South and American Culture: Class notes, 3/24/04. Nashville, Vanderbilt University.

Griffin, Larry J. and Ashley B. Thompson, "Enough about the Disappearing South: What About the Disappearing Southerner?" in *Southern Cultures* (Fall 2003): 51-65.

Griffin, Larry J. and Don H. Doyle, eds. *The South as an American Problem*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995.

Grotstein, J. S. *Splitting and Projective Identification.* Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1985.

Hadaway, C. Kirk and David Roozen, "The Growth and Decline of Congregations," in *Church & Denominational Growth,* eds. David A. Roozen and C. Kirk Hadaway. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.

Hamburg, Jay. "Racial imbalance returns to schools," *The Tennessean,* 13 July 2003.

Hamer, Dean. *The God Gene: How Faith Is Hardwired into Our Genes*. New York: Anchor Books, 2004.

Hammond, Philip E. "Religion and the Persistence of Identity," *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion* 27, 1 (1988): 1-11.

Hangen, Tona J. *Redeeming the Dial: Radio, Religion, and Popular Culture in America*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

Harrell, David Edwin, ed. *Varieties of Southern Evangelicalism*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1981.

Harris, Sam. *The End of Faith*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2004.

———. *Letter to a Christian Nation*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006.

Hartmann, Heinz. *Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation*. Trans. by David Rapaport (New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1958.

Hendershot, Heather. *Shaking the World for Jesus: Media and Conservative Evangelical Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Heyrman, Christine Leigh. *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997.

Higgs, Liz Curtis. *Embrace Grace: Welcome to the Forgiven Life*. Colorado Springs: Water Brook Press, 2006.

Hill, Samuel S. Jr., *Southern Churches in Crisis*. New York: Holt Rinehart, and Winston, 1966.

———. *Religion and the Solid South*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972.

———. *Religion in the Southern States: A Historical Study*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1983.

Hoekema, David A. "Church Unplugged" in *The Christian Century* 111, 21 (1994): 668-672.

The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Howard, John and John M. Streck. *Apostles of Rock*: *The Splintered World of Contemporary Christian Music*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999.

Hunter, James Davison. *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*. New York: Basic Books, 1991.

Hybels, Bill. *Just Walk across a Room: Simple Steps Pointing People to Faith*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.

Iannaccone, Laurence R. "Framework for the Scientific Study of Religion," in *Rational Choice Theory and Religion: Summary and Assessment,* ed. Lawrence A. Young. New York: Routledge Press, 1997.

Jakes, Bishop T.D. *Woman, Thou Art Loosed*! Shippensburg, PA: Treasure House, 1993.

James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. New York: The Modern Library, 1994.

Jefferson, Thomas. "Notes on the State of Virginia: Query on Manners (1787)" in *The Literature of the American South: A Norton Anthology*, eds. William L. Andrews, et al. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1998.

Jones, James. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Religion: Transference and Transcendence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.

Kennedy, John Pendleton. *Swallow Barn* in *The Literature of the American South*, ed by William L. Andrews et al. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998

Kennedy, Joseph C.G. *Agriculture in the United States in 1860: compiled from the original returns of the eighth census, under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior*, Volume 17. New York: Norman Ross Publishers, 1990.

Kingston, Paul. *The Classless Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.

Klein Melanie. *Contributions to Psycho-analysis, 1921-1945*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1965.

Kohut, Heinz. *The Search for the Self*, Vol. I. Madison: International Universities Press, Inc., 1978.

———. *The Search for the Self*, Vol. II. Madison: International Universities Press, Inc., 1978.

———. *How Does Analysis Cure?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions: third edition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962.

La Barre, Weston. *The Ghost Dance: The Origins of Religions.* New York: A Delta Book, 1970.

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Land, Richard. *Imagine! A God-Blessed America*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2005.

Laplanche, J. and J.-B. Pontalis. *The Language of Psycho-Analysis,* trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 1973.

Lasch, Christopher. *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectation.* New York: Norton, 1978.

Lazarus, Richard S. "Cognition and Motivation in Emotion," in *American Psychologist* 46 (4), April 1991: 352-357.

Lesage, Julia. "Christian Media." In *Media Culture and the Religious Right,* edited by Linda Kintz and Julia Lesage. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. *Structural Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books, 1963.

Liebman, Robert C. and Robert Wuthnow. *The New Christian Right: Mobilization and Legitimation.* New York: Aldine Publishing Co., 1983.

Linder, Eileen W. *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 2005: Wither Global Mission?* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005.

Lotz, Anne Graham. *I Saw the Lord: A Wake-Up Call for Your Heart*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.

Lucado, Max. *The Cure for the Common Life*. Nashville: W. Publishing Group, 2005.

Manis, Andrew. *Southern Civil Religions in Conflict: Civil Rights and the Culture Wars.* Macon: Mercer University Press, 2002.

Marler, Penny Long. Sociology of Religion*,* class notes and handout, Fall 1998, London, England, Samford University

Marsden, George M. *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991.

Martin, William. *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America.* New York: Broadway Books, 1996.

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. *On Religion*. New York: Schocken Books, 1964.

Mathews, Don. *Religion in the Old South*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977.

McDannell, Colleen. *Material Christianity*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

McLoughlin, William G. *The American Evangelicals, 1800-1900: An Anthology*. Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1976.

———. *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1978.

Messner, Michael A. *Politics of Masculinities: Men in Movements*. Walnut Creek: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2000.

Meyer, Joyce. *Battlefield of the Mind: Winning the Battle in Your Mind*. New York: Warner Faith, 1995.

———. *Straight Talk: Overcoming Emotional Battles with the Power of God's Word*. New York: Warner Faith, 2004.

———. *Look Great, Feel Great: 12 Keys to Enjoying a Healthy Life Now*. New York: Warner Faith, 2006.

Mitchell, Margaret. *Gone with the Wind*. New York: Macmillan, 1936.

Moore, Beth. *Get out of that Pit: Straight Talk about God's Deliverance*. Nashville: Integrity Publishers, Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2007

Moore, Burness E. and Bernard D. Fine. *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts*. New Haven: The American Psychoanalytic Association and Yale University Press, 1990.

Moss, David "Narcissism, Empathy, and the Fragmentation of the Self: An Interview with Heinz Kohut." *Pilgrimage* 4, 1 (Summer 1976).

Moore, Sam. *American By Choice: The Remarkable Fulfillment of an Immigrant's Dreams*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998.

Newberg, Andrew and Mark Robert Waldman. *Why We Believe What We Believe*. New York: Free Press, 2006.

Newton, Judith. *From Panthers to Promise Keepers: Rethinking the Men's Movement*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005.

Noll, Mark. *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd, 2001.

———. *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2003

Oakes, James. *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders*. London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1982.

Ogden, T. H. *The Matrix of the Mind: Object Relations and the Psychoanalytic Dialogue*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1986.

Olson, Roger. "Does Evangelical Theology have a Future?" in *Christianity Today* (February 9, 1998).

Omartian, Stormie. *The Prayer that Changes Everything: The Hidden Power of Praising God*. Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 2004.

Osteen, Joel. *Your Best Life Now: 7 Steps to Living at Your Full Potential*. New York: Warner Faith, 2004.

Paul, Gregory S. "Cross-National Correlations of Quantifiable Society Health with Popular Religiosity and Secularism in Prosperous Democracies: A First Look," in *Journal of Religion and Society* 7 (2005).

Peacock, Charlie. *At the Crossroads: An Insider's Look at the Past, Present, and Future of Contemporary Christian Music*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1999.

Percy, Walker. *The Last Gentleman*. New York: Picador USA, 1966.

Phillips, Ulrich B. *Life and Labor in the Old South*. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1929.

Proctor, Samuel et al., eds. *Jews of the South*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984.

Pruyser, Paul. *Between Belief and Unbelief*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.

———. *The Play of the Imagination: Toward a Psychoanalytic Culture*. New York: International Universities Press, 1983.

Ransom, John Crowe. "Reconstructed but Unregenerate," in *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1930.

Rapaport, David. "An Historical Survey of Psychoanalysis." Introduction to *Psychological Issues* 1 (1959): 5-17.

Rizzuto, Ana-Maria. *The Birth of the Living God*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Roof, Wade Clark. *Spiritual Marketplace*: *Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American*

Religion. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Roof, Wade Clark and William McKinney. *American Mainline Religion*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987.

Royster, Jacqueline Jones, ed. *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1997.

Rubin, Herbert J. and Irene S. Rubin. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. London: SAGE Publications, 1995.

Schjelderup, Harald and Kristian Schjelderup. *Uber drei Haupttypen der religiosen Erlebnisformen und ihre psychologische Grundlage*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1932.

Schweiger, Beth Barton. "Max Weber in Mount Airy, Or, Revivals and Social Theory in the Early South," in *Religion and the South: Protestants and Others in History and Culture,* ed. Donald Mathews. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Sears, Alan and Craig Osten. *The Homosexual Agenda: Exposing the Principle Threat to Religious Freedom Today.* Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishing Group, 2003.

Shibley, Mark A. "The Southernization of American Religion: Testing a Hypothesis," in *Sociological Analysis* 52 (1991): 2.

Simonson, Harold P., ed. *Selected Writings of Jonathon Edwards*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1992.

Skinner, B.F. *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. New York: A Bantam/Vintage Book, 1971.

Smith, Christian. *Christian America? What Evangelicals Really Want*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

Soja, Edward. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.

Stark, Rodney and William Sims Bainbridge. *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

Staver, Mathew D. *Same-Sex Marriage: Putting Every Household at Risk*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishing Group, 2004.

Stone, Jon. *On the Boundaries of American Evangelicalism: The Postwar Evangelical Coalition.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

Strobel, Lee. *The Case for Christ*: *A Journalist's Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998.

Strozier, Charles. *Apocalypse: On the Psychology of Fundamentalism in America.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1994.

Styron, William. *A Tidewater Morning*. New York: Vintage International, 1993.

Sun, Ron. *Duality of the Mind: A Bottom-Up Approach toward Cognition.* Columbia, MO: University of Missouri, 2002.

Swatos, William H. and Kevin J. Christiano, "Secularization Theory: The course of A Concept," *Sociology of Religion* 60, 3 (1999): 209-228.

Tattersall, Ian. *Becoming Human*. New York: Harcourt & Brace Co., 1998.

Taylor, Peter. *A Summons to Memphis.* New York: Ballantine Books, 1986.

Thompson, John R. "The Burial of Latane" in *The Southern Amaranth* ed. Sallie A. Brock. New York: Wilcox and Rockwell, 1969.

Turner, Victor. *Dramas Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974.

———. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play.* New York: PAJ Publications, 1982.

———. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1995.

Twelve Southerners. *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition*. Baton Rouge: Lousiana State University Press, 1930.

Van Biema, David, et al. "The Top 25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America," *TIME*, Feb. 7, 2005.

Van Taylor, David, producer. *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the New Religious Right in America*, Vol 1, "The Early Crusades, 1950-1968). PBS Video, 1996.

Walsh, Sheila. *I'm Not Wonder Woman But God Made Me Wonderful!* Nashville: Nelson Books, 2006.

Wampold, Bruce E. *The Great Psychotherapy Debate: Models, Methods, and Findings.* London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2001.

Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Life*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.

Webber, Robert E. *Common Roots: A Call to Evangelical Maturity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978.

Weber, Max. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology,* Vol. 2, eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. New York: Bedwinster Press, 1968.

Weiss, Joseph and Harold Sampson, et al. *The Psychoanalytic Process: Theory, Clinical Observation, and Empirical Research*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1986.

Welty, Eudora. *The Golden Apples*. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1949.

Wilkinson, Bruce. *The Prayer of Jabez*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2000.

Williams, Rhys. "Introduction: Promise Keepers: A Comment on Religion and Social Movements," *Sociology of Religion* 61/1 (2000): 1-10.

Williamson, G. I. *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1964.

Wilson, Charles R. *Baptized in Blood: Religion of the Lost Cause*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980.

Winnicott, Donald. *Playing and Reality*. London: Routledge, 1971.

———. "Ideas and Definitions (1950)," in *Psychoanalytic Explorations*, ed, Clare Winnicott. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.

———. "Playing and Culture (1968)" in *Psychoanalytic Explorations,* ed. Clare Winnicott, et al. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Wolfe, Alan. *The Transformation of Religion in America*. New York: Free Press, 2003.

Woodward, C. Vann. *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974.

———. "The Search for Southern Identity" in *The Burden of Southern History.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1960.

Wulff, David. *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Views.* New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1991.

Wuthnow, Robert. *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.

Yancey, Philip. *What's So Amazing About Grace?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997.

Websites

American Assocation of Publishing, Industry statistics:
http://www.publishers.org/industry/index.cfm.

American Religious Data Archive, Evangelical Denominations, Rates of adherence per 1000 of population (2000): http://www.thearda.com/mapsReports/reports/advanced.asp

Atlanta Crime Statistics:
http://www.cityrating.com/citycrime.asp?city=Atlanta&state=GA

The BARNA Group, *Ltd*., "Half of All Americans Read Christian Books and One-Third Buy Them," January 27, 2003.

———. "More People Use Christian Media Than Attend Church," March 14, 2005, http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=184

Belmont Church, Isaiah 58:
http://www.belmont.org/isaiah58/index.asp

Billy Graham Evangelical Association, Spiritual Help:
http://www.billygraham.com/SH_HowToBecomeAChristian.asp

Briarwood Presbyterian Church, What is the PCA?:
www.briarwood.org/templates/System/details.asp?id=23246&PID=70249

Christian Broadcasting Network, "The 700 Club: Show, history, format, and highlights," http://www.cbn.com/700club/ShowInfo/About/about700club.asp

Council of Christian Colleges and Universities statistics: About the state of Christian higher education,
http://www.cccu.org/about/about_print.asp?contentID=29&ChildContentID=0

Country Music:
http://www.countrymusic.org/media/pdf/marketing/2005_Industry_Overview.pdf

Evangelical Christian Publishing Association, Industry Resources:
http://www.ecpa.org/resources/moreinfo.html.

Faith Communities Today Project, Hartford Institute:
http://fact.hartsem.edu/topfindings/topicalfindings.htm

Fellowship Bible Church:
www.fellowshipnashville.org

Gospel Music Association: GMA Info, About us:
http://www.gospelmusic.org/gmainfo/aboutus.aspx.

———. Press Release, 1/7/04.

Green, John. "The American Religious Landscape: A Baseline for 2004":
http://pewforum.org/publications/surveys/green-full.pdf.

———. "Twelve Tribes," beliefnet.com:
http://www.beliefnet.com/story/153/story_15355_1.html

Jefferson, Thomas. *Letter to Chastellux*, September 2, 1785:
http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/Avalon/jefflett/let34.htm

———. *The Declaration of Independence*, July 4, 1776:
http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-
experience/charters/declaration_transcript.html

National Association of Evangelicals: Message from the President-
http://www.nae.net/index.cfm

———. Statement of Faith:
http://www.nae.net/index.cfm?FUSEACTION=nae.statement_of_faith

———. Re:Vision—Protecting Creation:
http://www.revision.org/content.asp?contentid=482

National Religious Broadcasters: Who are we?
http://www.nrb.org/partner/1,,308766,00.html

"Onward Christian Shoppers," *The Economist*, Dec. 1, 2005: Washington DC:
http://www.economist.com/business/displaystory.cfm?story_id=5259490

Promise Keepers: The History of Promise Keepers,
http://www.promisekeepers.org/genr12

Thumma, Scott. "Exploring the Megachurch Phenomenon: their characteristics and
cultural context," 2000. From the Hartford Institute for Religious Research
website, on Megachurches:
http://hirr.hartsem.edu/bookshelf/thumma_article2.html

Women of Faith: Company Overview, historical overview:
http://www.promisekeepers.org/genr12

———. Conference Chronicles—Kristie, "Refreshment and Renewal":
http://66.18.106.124/encouragingwords/cc-refreshment.asp