

FAITH AND FEMINISM:

EVANGELICALISM, FEMINISM,
AND THE CULTURE WARS IN THE USA,
1970S TO THE PRESENT

BY HILDE LØVDAL

A Thesis Presented to
The Department of Literature, Area Studies,
and European Languages
The University of Oslo
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the MA degree
Spring Term 2006

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Associate Professor Deborah Kitchen-Døderlein for her enthusiasm for my project from the very beginning, and invaluable critique and feedback as I progressed in my research and writing.

Also, I need to thank Professor Anne Stensvold at IKS for helping me shaping up my definitions of religious traditions and Tone Stangeland Kaufman at Menighetsfakultetet for helping me sort out the theological nuances in evangelical feminism.

Thanks to Reta Finger and Nancy Hardesty for enthusiastically answering my questions. It has been an honor to exchange thoughts with you and hear your thoughts on the role of evangelical feminism. Also, thanks to Anthony Campolo for your insight on the bigger picture of evangelicalism.

Thanks to Students for Biblical Equality at Wheaton College for sharing your thoughts and experiences with me.

Thanks a lot to the EAS program for providing funds for my research trip to Wheaton College. Likewise, thanks to my parents for equal financial support for my trip.

The staff Billy Graham Center Archives and Library and the Buswell Memorial Library at Wheaton College, Illinois, was very helpful in my search for primary sources during two hectic weeks in October 2005.

Thanks to fellow students for long coffee breaks, and for sharing frustrations and anxieties, and especially to Øyvind Thormodsæther for proof reading.

I grew up in a family with passionate relationship to our encyclopedia, and diligently looked up words and terms that puzzled them. In spite of my ridicule of the encyclopedic craze, it actually has taught me to search for answers and the satisfaction there is when you finally discover whatever you are looking for. Without that, writing this thesis would have been impossible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

CHAPTER 1:

EVANGELICALISM AND FEMINISM IN THE AMERICAN CULTURE WARS 1

CRITIQUE OF HUNTER’S THESIS	5
CULTURE WARS THESIS REVISITED AND REVISED	11
CHAPTER OUTLINE	17
VOICES IN THE EVANGELICAL GENDER DEBATE	18
SOURCES	19
EVANGELICAL FEMINISM IN RELATION TO OTHER VERSIONS OF RELIGIOUS FEMINISM	20
DEFINING EVANGELICALISM	22
BIASES	25

CHAPTER 2: EVANGELICAL FEMINISM: CONTEXT AND MAIN VOICES 27

IDEOLOGICAL CONTEXT	28
ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT	30
FOUR INFLUENTIAL VOICES OF 1970S’ EVANGELICAL FEMINISM	34
SUMMARY AND CHAPTER CONCLUSION	38

CHAPTER 3: EVANGELICAL FEMINISM AND THE BIBLE 39

THE DILEMMA	40
PATTERNS IN EVANGELICAL GENDER THEOLOGY MID-20TH CENTURY	42
EVANGELICAL FEMINIST HERMENEUTICS	45
THE BIBLE, GOD, AND GENDER	52
CHAPTER CONCLUSION	56

CHAPTER 4: DAUGHTERS OF SARAH:

BETWEEN FAITH AND FEMINISM 57

THE STARTING POINT: RE-READING SARAH	59
CLAIMING A TRADITION: <i>DAUGHTERS OF SARAH</i> AND EVANGELICAL “HERSTORY”	61
DISCOVERING SISTERS IN OTHER TRADITIONS: WIDENING RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION	64
SHIFTING THE FOCUS: SISTERHOOD AND SYSTEM OF OPPRESSION	67
<i>DAUGHTERS OF SARAH</i> AND HOMOSEXUALITY	72
SUMMARY AND CHAPTER CONCLUSION	77

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION 78

EVANGELICAL FEMINISM AND THE EVANGELICAL ESTABLISHMENT IN THE 1990S-2000S	81
EVANGELICAL FEMINISM AND LIBERAL THEOLOGY	84
AUDIENCE, RELATIVE DEPRIVATION, AND DIFFERENT TYPES OF WOMEN	87
NETWORKS AND COALITIONS	91
CULTURE WARS AND THE MEDIA	93

EVANGELICAL FEMINISM AND “HERSTORY”	96
THE EVANGELICAL CULTURE WAR CONTINUES	98

WORKS CONSULTED

PRIMARY SOURCES	100
SECONDARY SOURCES	108

APPENDICES

DAUGHTERS OF SARAH	114
EVANGELICAL AND ECUMENICAL WOMEN’S CAUCUS	115
CHRISTIANS FOR BIBLICAL EQUALITY	116
COUNCIL ON BIBLICAL MANHOOD AND WOMANHOOD	117
THE CHICAGO DECLARATION OF EVANGELICAL SOCIAL CONCERN	120
CENTRAL BIBLE PASSAGES ON GENDER ROLES	121
SARAH IN THE BIBLE	123

CHAPTER 1: EVANGELICALISM AND FEMINISM IN THE AMERICAN CULTURE WARS

When President George W. Bush recently nominated Samuel Alito for the Supreme Court, Dr. James Dobson came out as a strong supporter of the nomination. Dr. Dobson is the founder and leader of Focus on the Family, a para-church organization that champions traditional family values on the behalf of an evangelical audience. Receiving support from Dr. Dobson gave Alito a stamp of approval from a leading spokesperson for the evangelical segment of the American population.¹ This is a symptom of how evangelicalism has grown to be considered one of the most vital and influential movements in American society since the mid-20th century, in spite of expectations that society would become more secularized as it became urbanized, industrialized and educated. When evangelicalism turned political in the 1970s, it gained public attention as a major force in the everyday lives of millions of Americans. The evangelical mass movements and major organizations that have shaped evangelical America over the past decades have tended to stress so-called family values and traditional gender roles as fundamental in a Christian lifestyle, and can be seen as a response to larger societal changes.

The increase of evangelical influence on American politics came after the second wave of feminist activism that questioned how Americans should live their lives and define their families. Consequently, feminism and evangelicalism have appeared as striking opponents in the discussion of the direction of American society. The women's liberation movement challenge the so-called traditional family values championed by conservative

¹ See the Focus on the Family website: <www.family.org> E.g. James Dobson "The Battles Ahead." January 6 2006. April 11 2006. <<http://www.focusaction.org/Articles/A000000165.cfm>>, CitizenLink Staff. "Supreme Court Resource Center." January 5, 2006. April 11, 2006. <<http://www.family.org/cforum/feature/a0037317.cfm>>, and Pete Winn. "Liberals Attack, Conservatives Defend Alito." January 6, 2006. April 11, 2006. *CitizenLink* <http://www.family.org/cforum/news/a0039112.cfm>>

evangelicals. Feminists often point to evangelicalism as a major force in the backlash against the feminist movement. On the other side, organizations such as Dr. Dobson's Focus on the Family and Beverly LaHaye's Concerned Women of America have rallied conservative Christians to fight against feminism and to defend what they see as the traditional family.

In 1991, sociologist James Davison Hunter put the dispute between feminists and evangelicals in a larger perspective. His book, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*, places the tension between feminism and evangelical Christianity at the heart of a culture war that structured American policy and public debates. The evangelical and the feminist movements have been two of the most vital forces in the conflict between what he calls the "inclination toward orthodoxy" and the "inclination toward progressivism." Whereas orthodoxy points to an eternal and absolute moral authority, progressivism reinterprets historical symbols in accordance with contemporary experiences. In other words, the orthodox worldview is based on the idea that truth is constant and objective, while the progressive worldview is based on the idea that truth is a process, which reveals aspects of truth in different contexts and times. According to Hunter, evangelicalism and feminism are concrete expressions of these underlying philosophical differences. In evangelical and feminist thinking, orthodox and progressive ideas of authority and truth are applied on definitions of gender and family. Evangelicals make their case based on their belief in a God-given definition of gender and family, while feminists base their arguments on their conviction that they are social constructs that reflect the larger society.²

About the same time as Hunter introduced his thesis, other researchers presented historical precedence for the dichotomy between feminism and evangelicalism. Betty A. DeBerg and Margaret Lamberts Bendroth have searched for the historical roots of the gender debate in the late 1900s and argue that contemporary evangelical anti-feminist activism has to

² James Davison Hunter. *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books. 1991) 42-48, 108-113.

be understood in light of the history of conservative Protestantism. Even though the term “culture war” is a new concept, conservative Protestants have previously been involved in ideological conflicts over definitions of family, gender, and morality. DeBerg and Bendroth stress that contemporary evangelicalism is a post-fundamentalist movement that has defined itself in opposition to fundamentalism, but has inherited basic ideas of gender from its historical forefathers and –mothers.³ In 1990, DeBerg’s groundbreaking work *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of Fundamentalism* challenged how historians define the basis of fundamentalist theology. The conventional story of fundamentalism deals with evolution, biblical inerrancy, and skepticism to modernity, but DeBerg argues that the heart of fundamentalism was the defense of late Victorian gender roles and concludes that the evangelicals of the late 20th century are heirs of the fundamentalist gender ideology.⁴

Bendroth and DeBerg describe how fundamentalist Christianity grew at a time when women’s role in society at large went through massive changes. The 19th Amendment gave all women the right to vote, flappers contested the Victorian gender ideology and codes of sexual conduct, and women continued to heavily outnumber men in church. In contrast to liberal Protestants, fundamentalists did not trust human institutions to solve any of society’s ills and believed Christ would return after a period of social disorder and moral decay. Consequently, fundamentalists saw feminist claims as part of the moral decay and interpreted the changing women’s role as a clear sign that the world was coming to an ending. In contrast to the glorification of women’s spirituality and morality during the Second Great Awakening in the mid-1800s, the fundamentalist movement saw men as the primary protectors of orthodox Christian faith. Adhering to feminist ideas and promoting women’s rights was as equal to denying the authority of the Bible. What fundamentalists perceived as a “feminized

³ Betty A. DeBerg, *Ungodly Women: Gender and First Wave American Fundamentalism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990) Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender, 1975 to the Present* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1993).

⁴ DeBerg, 153.

church” had to be reclaimed for men and traditional gender roles preserved in order to protect the orthodox faith.⁵

Bendroth sees contemporary evangelical anti-feminist activism as a repetition of the fundamentalist-feminist conflict in the early 20th century, but argues that the evangelical focus on family values also needs to be seen in light of the development in mainline (or liberal) churches. In *Growing Up Protestant: Parents, Children, and Mainline Churches*, Bendroth points out that mainline denominations experienced a drastic decline in church attendance and membership at the same time as the evangelical movement grew in numbers and influence. According to Bendroth, part of the reason why this has happened is linked to the family and gender debate. Evangelical churches have taken over the role of defining “the Christian family” that the mainline denominations had in the mid-1900s. In contrast to mainline Protestantism that has come to be concerned that being *too* family oriented may lead to a church that is irrelevant to society at large, evangelicals see family issues as an incentive for engaging in the public debate. Not only did the pro-family movement give evangelicals a chance to define themselves in the heart of American society, it also served as a unifier of a theologically and denominationally diverse movement. As Hunter points out, evangelical para-church organizations are the main sources of religious identification in USA today, and several of the largest movements are especially involved in defending the traditional family.⁶ A third element in the role of family symbolism was the chance to define evangelicalism as a clear alternative to liberal theology. At a time when liberal seminaries started educating women clergy, mainline churches were perceived as going hand in hand with the women’s liberation movement and following liberal and feminist interpretations of the Bible. Consequently, conservatively minded Protestants were drawn to evangelicalism as a haven

⁵ Ibid, 99-117, 119-127. Bendroth 1993, 51-53, 54-72.

⁶ Hunter 1991. 88.

safe from feminist and liberal theology.⁷ Family symbolism and evangelicalism became so intertwined that Hunter concludes in his 1987 study *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation*,

It is difficult... to exaggerate the significance of the 'traditional family' to Evangelicals. It is viewed as the bedrock of the American way of life – its social, cultural, and political institutions. Perceived as being weakened by post-World War II social and political developments, its defense has become an Evangelical passion. It is its cause célèbre.⁸

Critique of Hunter's Thesis

Hunter's thesis has received criticism by scholars who look into how average American evangelicals live their lives. These writers seek to modify the picture of American society as caught in the middle of a culture war, and argue that although the vast majority of evangelicals agrees with traditional concepts of masculinity and femininity, most of them actually practice more egalitarian gender roles. Hence, they question how much anti-feminist ideology shapes the lives of ordinary evangelicals. Already one year before Hunter's *Culture Wars* was published, *Christianity Today*, a leading evangelical magazine, surveyed its readers' attitudes to gender roles. The survey showed that evangelicals had accepted core feminist ideas as equal pay, shared housework, and women's employment outside the home, but at the same time upheld the idea of gender hierarchy. Compared to non-evangelicals, *Christianity Today* readers were more conservative in every moral and social issue, but the editors comment, the evangelical culture seemed to adopt mainstream practice of gender relations.⁹

This tendency is also clear in various scholarly sociological and ethnological studies.

Judith Stacey's ethnological study from the Silicon Valley of the late 1980s describes secular

⁷ Margaret Lamberts Bendroth. *Growing Up Protestant. Parents, Children, and Mainline Churches* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press. 2002) 119-143.

⁸ James Davison Hunter, *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. 1987) 77.

⁹ Jack and Judith Balswick, "Adam and Eve in America," *Christianity Today*, March 15, 2002. January 31, 2005 <<http://www.christianitytoday.com/global/printer/html?/ct/2002/109/51.0.html>>

as well as evangelical men and women as post-feminist. Stacey stresses that feminism, anti-feminism, and post-feminism coexist in the lives of the average Americans. The vast majority find themselves embracing feminist ideas at the same time as they rejected feminist activism and politics. Her evangelical informants do not stand out as much different from the other groups she studied. Evangelicals juggle between feminist, anti-feminist, and post-feminist ideas and live happily with their ideological contradictions.¹⁰

Sociologist Dale McConkey calls for a reinterpretation of the culture war thesis and stresses that there has been a major generational shift since Hunter presented his thesis. McConkey analyzes attitudes to core issues that have defined American politics and compared results from 1988 and 1998, and his findings indicate that evangelical Christians have become more liberal in their attitudes to women's role. McConkey points out that the generational shift was foreshadowed in Hunter's earlier work.¹¹ In *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation*, Hunter analyzed values and beliefs among students attending evangelical colleges across the USA and found that young evangelicals were more willing to embrace feminist values. Ideas of gender roles were so flexible that he chose to call their attitudes as bordering on being androgynous.¹² This, McConkey argues, is an indication that evangelicals are less different from the mainstream American culture than they seem at first.

International studies support the tendency to see evangelical as more similar to mainstream society. Lori G. Beaman's *Shared Beliefs, Different Lives: Women's Identities in Evangelical Context* reveals that most of her Canadian informants do not differ much from conventional ideas of family and gender.¹³ Beaman operates with three main categories of

¹⁰ Judith Stacey *Brave New Families. Stories of Domestic Upheaval in late twentieth century America* (New York: BasicBooks. 1991) 113-146.

¹¹ Dale McConkey "Whither Hunter's Culture War? Shifts in Evangelical Morality, 1988-1998 – Statistical Data Included" *Sociology of Religion*. Summer 2001. December 8, 2005.
<http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0SOR/is_2_62/ai_76759006/print>

¹² Hunter, 1987. "Ch. 4: Family: Toward Androgyny."

¹³ Lori G. Beaman. *Shared Beliefs, Different Lives: Women's Identities in Evangelical Context* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press. 1999) The study is based on interviews of Canadian women. Although the study is based on

strategies: “traditionalist,” “moderate,” and “feminist.”¹⁴ The traditionalist women (10%) adhere to a literal reading of biblical teaching of women’s roles and support the idea of male headship in family and society. The feminist group (10%) sees marriage as a partnership “with not need for lip service to those evangelical doctrines that can be interpreted to diminish women’s equality.” The vast majority (80%) is moderate and supports classic liberal feminist ideas as equal legal status for men and women, but on the other hand, they find themselves at odds with the more left-leaning and radical strands of feminism. Concerning the idea of submission of women in marriage, they agree on the principle, but are quick to qualify the idea and allow individual interpretations of the concept.¹⁵

Studies also show that evangelical men have altered the way they define themselves. When examining men’s roles in evangelicalism, researchers find that there is a tension between the anti-feminist evangelical worldview and the practical approaches to gender relations. Sociologist Bradley Wilcox, a Catholic, points to how evangelical men have incorporated ideas that at first seem to collide with their ideas of masculinity and that evangelical fathers have embraced progressive ideas of fatherhood. Although they theoretically adhere to “traditional” fatherhood, evangelical men have bought into contemporary ideas of parenting as a team effort. Wilcox argues that the evangelical focus on encouraging husbands to take on responsibilities at home results in giving them a valid excuse to embrace “feminine” attitudes and behavior, and concludes that religion in practice “domesticates men.”¹⁶

Even the Promise Keepers movement comes out as less patriarchal than first perceived to be. The Promise Keepers is a Christian men’s movement that calls husbands to take charge

information outside the USA, it reflects the evangelical culture. Since evangelicalism is an international movement and the ties between American and Canadian evangelicals are close, I have chosen to include Beaman’s study.

¹⁴ Beaman, 23-36.

¹⁵ Ibid, 138.

¹⁶ Douglas LeBlanc, “Affectionate Patriarchs” *Christianity Today*. August 2004: 44-46.

in their families and reclaim their position as leaders of the home. Initiated by former football coach Bill McCartney, the movement uses sports analogies and traditional masculine imagery to communicate their ideas to their audience and resembles fundamentalist ideas of masculine Christianity.¹⁷ Mary Stewart van Leeuwen, an active evangelical feminist, questions the assumption that the Promise Keepers movement is inherently anti-feminist. In her analysis of Promise Keepers literature, she finds it surprisingly similar to liberal feminist ideas of gender, and even calls them “closet liberal feminist.”¹⁸ William H. Lockhart confirms and expands Van Leeuwen’s analysis. In Lockhart’s opinion, there are four gender ideologies, ranging from feminist to hierarchal, coexisting in the Promise Keepers, and concludes that even a supposedly patriarchal organization can include feminist ideology.¹⁹

The culture wars dichotomy is criticized also because it does not recognize the power and agency women may have in conservative Protestantism. Brenda Brasher and R. Marie Griffith describe women who choose to follow the hierarchal gender system and how they rationalize their positions. Brasher has studied power negotiations in a fundamentalist church, while Griffith has done ethnological research among Pentecostal/charismatic women. Both conclude that conservative Protestantism offer women a great degree of freedom within their own spheres, as long as they do not challenge the established order. Brasher and Griffith argue that submission in practice is a source of female power, and, as Wilcox, they argue that accepting traditional gender roles is an alternative route to involving their husbands in family

¹⁷ See: <www.promisekeepers.org>

¹⁸ Mary Stewart Van Leewuven, “The Direction of Promise Keepers: A Response to Papers on Religion, Sports and Manhood”. Christians for Biblical Equality. First published in *Priscilla Papers*, Vol. 11, No. 2. Spring 1997. Oct. 4, 2004. <http://www.cbeinternational.org/new/free_articles/msvanlee.shtml>.

¹⁹ William H. Lockhart: “‘We Are One Life,’ But Not of One Gender Ideology: Unity, Ambiguity, and the Promise Keepers,” in Rhys H. Williams (ed.) *Promise Keepers and the New Masculinity: Private Lives and Public Morality* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, ad Oxford: Lexington Books. 2001).

life. Consequently, feminism is an unnecessary alternative because they have other sources of empowerment.²⁰

Janet Stocks also concludes that women demonstrate power in conservative churches in spite of gender hierarchy. Her anthropological study of evangelicals in a Midwestern congregation deals with how feminists work locally to challenge gender restrictions outside formal power structures. Stock found that the church had turned increasingly conservative from the mid-1900s and that the main change was in the relationship between theory and practice. Prior to the conservative turn, women had been involved in ministries, though not ordained. Now, women's institutional power was significantly smaller because of the heightened focus on gendered authority. However, Stock finds that women in this congregation are far from powerless, and that they manage to negotiate power from the margins. In spite of being formally denied power, these women are able to and allowed to exercise authority through informal channels.²¹

Christel Manning's study, *God Gave Us the Right*, looks into how religiously conservative women approach feminism, and she argues that even though most evangelical women agree that the husband should have the final say in the home, few of them are willing to fully submit to their husband's authority.²² Manning stresses how evangelical theology and its focus on the individual's relationship to the divine can empower women to go beyond their prescribed roles. To illustrate this, she writes, "if both the male pastor and her husband oppose a woman's intent to attend a class at the local community college, but Jesus tells her to go

²⁰ Brenda Brasher, *Godly Women: Fundamentalism and Female Power* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998). R. Marie Griffith *God's Daughters Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1997).

²¹ Janet Stocks "Evangelical Feminist Negotiation in the Public Debate of a Small Denomination in the United States," in Judy Brink and Joan Mencher, *Mixed Blessings. Gender and Religious Fundamentalism Cross Culturally*. (New York and London: Routledge, 1997).

²² Christel Manning. *God Gave Us The Right: Conservative Catholic, Evangelical Protestant, and Orthodox Jewish Women Grapple With Feminism* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 1999) 150.

ahead, she has a very strong case for taking the course.”²³ In other words, Manning argues that evangelicals, in spite of their anti-feminist notions, have the tools to negotiate flexible gender roles.

Manning proposes four models for understanding the relationship between anti-feminist ideology and egalitarian behavior. First, she points to cognitive dissonance theory, which claims that people may modify or ignore their own beliefs if they (consciously or unconsciously) act against them. When evangelical women find that they cannot and will not ignore their gifts and talents in order to let their husbands lead, they may alter the idea of submission into the egalitarian term of “mutual submission.” Second, Manning draws on bargaining theory. This approach explains inconsistency on the premise that people are willing to sacrifice parts of their belief system if the sacrifice brings desirable results. Third, she presents the idea of a “Protean Self.” Manning explains that inconsistency is a result of the different roles each person plays on an everyday basis. Even though feminism and traditionalism may collide in one context, they may work well together in a different setting. Fourth, Manning points out how gender roles and rules of conduct may serve as a way of identifying membership in a group, and not primarily as a way of governing people’s lives.²⁴

In sum, these studies reveal that conservative Protestants are not as anti-feminist as they may appear from a culture war perspective. They manage to negotiate power and roles while continuing to be part in a culture that is often presented as sexist and restrictive for women. American evangelicals are not as anti-feminist as leading evangelical cultural warriors. Women, as well as men, practice gender roles in flexible and pragmatic terms, and have embraced core feminist ideas such as equal pay and power negotiation in marriage. Based on this, it is tempting to agree with sociologist Alan Wolfe who calls off the culture war. Instead of stressing diverse world views, he focuses on how average Americans in

²³ Ibid, 31.

²⁴Ibid, 150-164.

general share a common worldview and moral ground.²⁵ The nature of evangelical culture itself leads evangelicals closer to secular America, he argues. Since evangelicals, in contrast to fundamentalists, seek to involve with the mainstream culture, Wolfe believes evangelicals cannot help becoming similar to their secular neighbors in how they think and act.²⁶

Culture Wars Thesis Revisited and Revised

The question, then, is whether Hunter's critics really undermine the culture war thesis. I believe they do not. The culture war is an ideological conflict over ideas and cultural symbols, not about practical applications in the everyday lives of Americans. Hunter's point is that American society is influenced by the debate between what he calls "knowledge workers." Knowledge workers are people who work in para-church ministries, political organizations, and interest groups who speak out on social and political issues.²⁷ The debate is among the elites, not the masses. The polarization between progressivism and orthodoxy is an ideological dichotomy of the public debate, which in turn steers where people position themselves in moral question. It presents the ideological alternatives available to the average American, and it is necessary to understand the foundation of their ideas to understand what reference points the average American have. As Hunter notes, most Americans place themselves in a middle position, but the definition of "the middle" depends on the ideological extremes.²⁸ When critics of Hunter want to call off the culture wars and refer to how most Americans live, they overlook this fundamental point about Hunter's thesis.

²⁵ Alan Wolfe *One Nation, After All: What Middle Class Americans Really Think About: God, Country, Family, Racism, Welfare, Immigration, Homosexuality, Work, the Right, the Left, and Each Other* (New York: Viking, 1998).

²⁶ "Part Three: Evangelicals and Culture" Narrator Jeff Sheler. *America's Evangelicals*, Episode no. 735. Public Broadcasting Service, <www.pbs.org> April 30, 2004.

<<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week735/special.html>> Transcript.

²⁷ Hunter, 1991, 60.

²⁸ Hunter, 1991, 42-42, 59-61, 159.

The usefulness of the culture war thesis is apparent in the reality that the vast majority of American evangelicals continues to see their evangelical faith and feminist ideology as opposites that cannot be reconciled. The larger ideological conflicts are reflected in how evangelicals identify themselves with the orthodox side in spite of their egalitarian lifestyle. In *Evangelical Identity and Gendered Family Life*, sociologist Sally K. Gallagher explores the symbolic meaning the traditional family pattern has to contemporary American evangelicals. In contrast to Wolfe's assertion that evangelicals are increasingly and inevitably adopting mainstream values, Gallagher defines evangelicalism as a subculture that strives to delimit itself from mainstream American values and morality. The study is based on Christian Smith's theory of subcultural strength, which argues that subcultures thrive when they are embattled. Attacks from "the others" give meaning and strength to the traits that distinguish the group from the rest. Gallagher analyses interviews of self-identified lay evangelicals, men and women, across the USA, and her findings show that so-called traditional gender roles play a vital part in how contemporary evangelicals try to live up to the New Testament teaching of living "in the world, but not of the world." Evangelicals today seek to be part of mainstream American life at the same time as they want to live in accordance with their faith. Whereas their fundamentalist forefathers and -mothers believed in isolating and separating themselves from "the world," evangelical Christians believe in taking part in the secular world so they can transform and evangelize it. The question then becomes how one delimits oneself from "the world" if an evangelical can see the movies, listen to the music, dance, and participate in other activities which the avoidance of used to define a godly lifestyle. According to Gallagher, this is where the gender roles come into the picture, because upholding traditional gender roles becomes a way of expressing their obedience to God and commitment to their faith.²⁹

²⁹ Sally K. Gallagher, *Evangelical Identity and Gendered Family Life* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, and

While Christel Manning's *God Gave Us the Right* presents a flexible gender role system among her evangelical informants, her study also reveals the symbolic meaning anti-feminism has to them. Manning finds that conservative Jewish, Catholic, and evangelical women share a profound skepticism against feminism as "a symbol of excesses of liberalism,"³⁰ and see it as incompatible with their conservative faiths. In spite of their initial agreement, the three groups of women disagree on a deeper level. Evangelical women are more vocally anti-feminist than Jewish women, and Catholic women link their anti-feminism to abortion. Manning finds three main objections against feminism among the evangelical women.³¹ First, evangelical women believe feminism hurt women because it emasculates men when women gain power, which in turn leaves more work and responsibilities to women. Second, they feel feminists devalue their roles as mothers and homemakers. This, they argue, also hurts career women as feminism discourages women from marrying and childbirth at all. Third, even though they acknowledge many of the causes feminists have fought for, evangelical women see feminism today as extreme and out of touch with the everyday lives of most American women. Importantly, rather than being a solution, evangelical women see feminism as a symptom of what is wrong with society, and they believe that only a turn to Christian faith will solve the problem of sexism in society. Feminism, as they see it, is an expression of irresponsible individualism and materialism, which neglects to see the real needs of the poor and the oppressed.³²

However, Hunter's critics deserve some credit when they claim that the culture wars thesis produces a stereotyped image of evangelicalism as a coherently anti-feminist movement. Christian Smith's *Christian America? What Evangelicals Really Want* challenges the idea that evangelicalism is a united movement of conservative believers and reveals a

London: Rutgers University Press. 2003).

³⁰ Manning, 26.

³¹ *Ibid*, 195.

³² *Ibid*, 169-175.

wide range of ideological alternatives present in American evangelicalism.³³ Sociologist John P. Bartkowski agrees to some extent with Hunter, but claims that the culture war thesis needs to be qualified. In *Remaking the Godly Marriage*, Bartkowski explores the ideological and practical battles over gender definitions in an evangelical congregation and sees how they are influenced by evangelical family literature. Based on that, he concludes that, “If there is a culture war over the family in the United States at large, it coexists with a civil war being waged within conservative Protestantism by leading evangelical family commentators.”³⁴ He poses evangelical feminists against traditional evangelicals in the battle to define evangelical faith and family culture in a “civil war” that has marked American evangelicalism since the 1970s.

Like Bartkowski, Julie Ingersoll argues that the culture war is just as much within traditions as between them. She observes that gender continues to be “a central organizing principle and a core symbolic system” in evangelicalism and argues that the gender debate is an expression of a culture war. Ingersoll is highly critical of Griffith’s and Brasher’s insistence that women in conservative Protestantism exhibit power, and she openly accuses them of ignoring the conflicts over gender roles that go on in conservative Protestantism. A feminist and former evangelical, Ingersoll has looked at women who have sought to enter the ideological and theological debate. She specifically looks at Christians for Biblical Equality, women in theological seminaries, and women pastors, and concludes that these women are far from empowered in their role as women. Rather, they are casualties in gender battles in evangelical institutions across the country where conservative forces have taken over core

³³ Christian Smith, *Christian America? What Evangelicals Really Want* (Berkeley : University of California Press. 2000).

³⁴ John P. Bartkowski. *Remaking the Godly Marriage: Gender Negotiation in Evangelical Families* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. 2001) 164.

evangelical institutions and denied women access to important positions.³⁵ Ingersoll sees these stories as symptoms of a larger conflict, and argues that, “the combatants are actually fighting over the power to define the whole subculture.”³⁶ Whereas the national culture war is a conflict over how to define America, the evangelical culture war is about how to define evangelical Christianity.

Given the influence of the evangelical population on American society and politics, it is vital to look into the forces that have shaped the evangelical movement in order to enriching our understanding of contemporary America. Susanne Scholtz’s article “The Christian Right’s Discourse on Gender and the Bible” shows the close connection between biblical hermeneutics and political activism by conservative Protestants, and stresses the importance of understanding the evangelical gender debate in order to grasp the appeal of the Christian Right.³⁷ Whereas Scholtz looks into the conservative side, I take the evangelical feminist movement as my approach to understanding evangelicalism and its focus on traditional family values. The number of outspoken feminist evangelicals is miniscule in contrast to the mass appeal of the Christian Right, but in spite of their failure to win over the evangelical mainstream, they are crucial in order to portray a full picture of the history of American evangelicalism in the 20th century. Richard Quebedeaux, an evangelical, sees evangelical feminists as participants in the debate over defining the boundaries of American evangelicalism. In Quebedeaux’ words, evangelical feminists represent a vocal minority of “symbolic manipulators” who fight for their interpretation of evangelical cultural symbols.³⁸

³⁵ Julie Ingersoll, *Evangelical Christian Women: War Stories in the Gender Battles* (New York: New York University Press. 2003).

³⁶ Ingersoll, 145.

³⁷ Susanne Scholtz, “The Christian Right’s Discourse on Gender and the Bible,” *Journal of Feminist Study of Religion*, Vol. 21, no 1. (Spring 2005): 81-100. Although she mistakenly lumpstogether the National Association of Evangelicals with charismatics and fundamentalists, her article shows how the CBMW contributes to the political strength of the conservative evangelical politics.

³⁸ Richard Quebedeaux “We’re On Our Way Lord!: The Rise of ‘Evangelical Feminism’ in Modern American Christianity,” in Ursula King, *Women in the World’s Religions, Past and Present* (New York: Paragon House. 1987).

Similarly, Pamela D. H. Cochran's recent monograph *Evangelical Feminism: A History* places evangelical feminism at the heart of the theological and cultural development the evangelical movement at large has gone through since the mid-1900s, and argues that it has played a vital role in how the evangelical movement has positioned itself ideologically.³⁹

This thesis seeks to explore evangelical feminist activism and thinking in light of the culture war. It argues that the culture war is real and that it has affected religious expression and identities in conservative Protestantism. Evangelical feminists represent the progressive side of evangelicalism in a culture where traditional gender roles continue to provide symbolic meaning and identity to the majority of American evangelicals. The reality of the culture war is on a symbolic and cultural level where feminism and evangelicalism represent opposing positions of progressivism and orthodoxy. Evangelical feminists represent a group of women (and men) who seek to bridge the gap between the two worldviews at a time when evangelicalism at large came to stress traditional family life as a way to distinguish themselves from mainstream American life. The thesis looks into how evangelical feminism wanted to affirm the evangelical Christian faith *and* test the traditional evangelical approach to the Bible, theology, and social concerns.

Insight into evangelical feminism may help us understand how and why conservative Protestant gender ideology continues to shape the lives of millions of Americans. Evangelical feminist activism reveals aspects of the evangelical community from the dissenters' point of view, and as Ruth Rosen writes, "Dissident movements provide a microcosmic view of the dominant culture's values, assumptions, and social structure."⁴⁰ By looking at how evangelical feminists argue they case and how they relate to issues evangelicals are concerned

³⁹ Pamela D. H. Cochran, *Evangelical Feminism: A History* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2005) Interestingly, the book is a revision of her doctoral dissertation in religious studies at the University of Virginia, where James Davison Hunter was her advisor. "Acknowledgements," vii.

⁴⁰ Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000) xiv.

with, we may learn something about why Dr. Dobson appeals to such a large section of the evangelical audience. Evangelical feminists represent a minority group within the larger feminist movement as well. In “A Religious Feminist - Who Can Find Her? Historiographical Challenges from the National Organization for Women,” Ann Braude points out that religious feminists are seldom mentioned in feminist history, apart from when they break with established religious institutions.⁴¹ Hence, recognizing evangelical feminist activism may add to our understanding of the impact of second wave feminism on American life.⁴²

Chapter Outline

Chapter two gives a brief introduction to the historical and social context of evangelical feminism and the main organizations and people that shaped it. The chapter maps out the network that made it possible to develop an evangelical feminist movement, and shows the relationship central evangelical feminists had to the larger evangelical movement. The focus is on how evangelical feminists were part of an effort by young evangelicals to redefine evangelicalism.

In chapter three, I use three books to illustrate how evangelical feminists sought to redefine evangelical gender theology from what they saw as an unbiblical and sexist stand to a feminist vision of gender equality. I will outline the hermeneutical principles that lay the foundation for evangelical feminism, mapping out the theological stance by four of the most influential thinkers at the beginning of evangelical feminism. These authors entered a mine field of theological debate over how to understand the Bible as revelation. The meaning of evangelical feminist hermeneutics cannot be comprehended without referring to the opposite side of the debate and the theological tradition evangelical feminists related to. Consequently,

⁴¹ Ann Braude “A Religious Feminist - Who Can Find Her? Historiographical Challenges from the National Organization for Women,” in *The Journal of Religion*. Vol. 84:4. (October 2004): 555-572.

⁴² Ingersoll, 2003, 16.

parts of the chapter will address the clash between feminist and anti-feminist voices in American evangelicalism. In chapter four, I take the evangelical feminist newsletter *Daughters of Sarah* as an example of how the clash between feminism and evangelicalism shaped evangelical feminist ideas and identities. It illustrates the tension within evangelical feminism, and the development of the evangelical feminist movement. Whereas the previous chapter deals with how evangelical feminists approached the Bible, this chapter looks into how they struggled to find a common feminist platform. The focus is on how evangelical feminists struggled to understand feminism in light of their faith, and vice versa. I will look into how the mechanics of the culture war impacted evangelical feminism and show how the polarized public debate tested the identity and focus of evangelical feminism. Some references to the larger evangelical movement will be made. The last chapter focuses on the larger organizational and social development. I seek to understand what happened with the larger evangelical community and why evangelical feminism remains a minority.

This only constitutes a small portion of possible themes that lie in the history of evangelicalism and feminism, and I am painfully aware of how much I have been forced to leave out in order to conform to the boundaries of a master's thesis. On the other hand, had I gone deeper into the theological discussion on gender in evangelicalism, I would have stepped into a debate in which I would not be qualified to partake. The main focus of this thesis is to understand American evangelicalism and feminism in light of the culture war, and consequently, I will concentrate on issues that illustrate the tension evangelical feminists navigated within, theologically and ideologically.

Voices in the Evangelical Gender Debate

The evangelical feminist movement was formed in the early 1970s with the Evangelical Women's Caucus (EWC) and newsletter *Daughters of Sarah* as the driving forces of the

debate. Nancy Hardesty, Letha Scanzoni, Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, and Paul K. Jewett represent the evangelical feminist side, whereas Larry Christenson and James Dobson are some of the most vocal proponents for conservative gender roles. The EWC split in 1986 when a more conservative wing of the organization left and formed Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE) due to disagreement over how to relate to homosexuality. The CBE represents evangelical feminists who do not accept that homosexuality can be a biblical alternative. Since the late 1980s, CBE has been the most prominent evangelical feminist organization. As a response to the work by EWC and CBE, conservative evangelicals formed the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW), which promotes an anti-feminist perspective on gender roles.

I will use the term “evangelical feminist” or “egalitarian” to refer to *Daughters of Sarah*, Evangelical Women’s Caucus, and Christian for Biblical Equality. When necessary to distinguish between them, I will use “progressive evangelical feminism” for EWC and *Daughters of Sarah*, while “traditionalist evangelical feminism” will refer to CBE. For the opposing part, I will use “traditionalist” and “conservative” interchangeably, but when referring to Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, I will use “complementarian.” CBMW insists on being referred to as complementarian because they believe they present a reformed version of traditional gender roles. As CBMW sees it, complementarianism provides a model for marriage and family based on a recognition of God-given hierarchal gender differences, without dominance and abuse of power.⁴³

Sources

In chapter three, I will look at three groundbreaking evangelical feminist books: Nancy Hardesty and Letha Dawson Scanzoni’s *All We’re Meant to Be*, Paul K. Jewett’s *MAN as*

⁴³ John Piper and Wayne Grudem, editors, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books. 1991) xiv.

Male and Female, and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott's *Women, Men, and the Bible*. Chapter four is based on articles and editorials from *Daughters of Sarah*, which circulated over a period of twenty-two years (1974-1996). I will use material from evangelical magazines *Christianity Today*, *Eternity*, *The Other Side*, and *Post-American/Sojourners* in order to put evangelical feminism in a larger context. Some references to the Evangelical Women's Caucus (EWC) will be made, based on their newsletter and clippings from the magazines above, their website <www.eewc.com>, as well as archival material on the Evangelical Women's Caucus found in the Evangelicals for Social Action Collection in the Billy Graham Center Archives at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois.⁴⁴ I will refer to Larry Christenson's *The Christian Family* (1970) which was a major best seller in evangelical family literature as evangelical feminism emerged. The recent complementarian articles are from the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood website <www.cbmw.com>, as well as Focus on the Family website <www.family.org>. When referring to Bible passages, I will use the Zondervan Publishing's New *International Version* (NIV) from <www.biblegateway.com>.

Evangelical Feminism in Relation to Other Versions of Religious Feminism

Evangelical feminism is only one version of feminism connected to Christian faith. Mary Daly represents perhaps the most radical feminist critique of religion. She came out of the Catholic tradition, and her books *Beyond God the Father* and *The Church and the Second Sex* argue that the Judeo-Christian tradition is so embedded in patriarchal thinking that there is no room for feminism in the established church. Calling herself post-Christian, Mary Daly claims, that "...a woman asking for equality in the church would be comparable to a black

⁴⁴ EWC has had different names over the years. For a short period, they added International to their name; EWCI. In the early 1990s, they added Ecumenical in their name, calling themselves the Evangelical and Ecumenical Women's Caucus, EEWC. I choose to use EWC and EEWC.

person's demanding equality in the Ku Klux Klan."⁴⁵ In contrast to Daly, who left the Catholic Church because she saw it as inherently anti-woman, evangelical feminists believed it was possible to reform the church's position. Rather than leaving the church, they wanted to stay and fight the sexism they found in their faith tradition. The Evangelical Women's Caucus believed they had to reform the evangelical tradition before they could offer a relevant message to women outside church. They write:

As Christian women concerned with the needs of society we find ourselves compelled first to liberate ourselves and our sisters in the body of Christ before we can begin to have Good News to offer those in the world. [We] will be concerned with cleaning up our own houses – a most fitting task for women, some would say, and one for which we have the example of our Lord. (Matt. 21:12-13)⁴⁶

Evangelical feminism also needs to be differentiated from other types of Christian feminism when it comes to how they find the authority for feminist claims within Christianity.

Feminists in mainline churches were heavily influenced by South American liberationist theology, which places authority in the experiences of the poor and oppressed. Feminist theology inspired by liberation theology stresses women's experiences as the source of theological reflection. Liberationist feminists as Rosemary Radford Ruether emphasize that women have to realize their own oppression and find power in unmasking power structures.⁴⁷

In contrast to this approach to feminism and religion, evangelical feminists insist on respecting the authority of the Bible as a source of women's empowerment.

⁴⁵ Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex: With a New Feminist Postchristian Introduction by the Author* (New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, London: Harper and Row Publishers. 1975 Second edition. First edition 1968) 6.

⁴⁶ Evangelicals for Social Action. Action Proposals "II Women's Caucus," Thanksgiving Workshop 1974. Folder 15, Box. 2, Collection 37, Records of Evangelicals for Social Action, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

Matt. 21:12-13: Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is written," he said to them, "My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'"

⁴⁷ Reta Finger, "Which Color of the Rainbow? A Spectrum of Feminist Theologies," *Daughters of Sarah*, July/August 1984: 4-6. Cochran, 23.

Defining Evangelicalism

Discussing evangelicalism is problematic because there is no single definition on which scholars (or evangelicals themselves) agree. Literature that deals with evangelicalism may refer to different groups. Some, e.g. R. Marie Griffith, focus on charismatic/Pentecostal Christians. Christian Smith and Sally K. Gallagher, on the other hand, see evangelicalism and charismatic/Pentecostal Christianity as contemporary, but different movements. Smith uses the term “conservative Protestants” as an umbrella term that covers three distinct, yet overlapping, versions of conservative Protestantism: fundamentalism, evangelicalism, and the Pentecostal/charismatic churches.⁴⁸ Others again, do not differentiate between fundamentalist and evangelical churches. A further complicating factor is that groups that theologically are evangelicals, for instance a large sector of the African American church, are not comfortable with that label because of historical and cultural differences.⁴⁹ History, as well, complicates the definition of evangelicalism. As Ray S. Anderson points out, evangelicalism has been central to Christianity from the early church and is rooted in New Testament texts.⁵⁰ He argues that evangelicalism is best described as a “theological ethos” that crosses denominational boundaries.⁵¹ Since the Reformation, the term “evangelical” has come to refer to Protestant churches that stress personal conversion and salvation by faith alone.⁵² Theologically, all versions of evangelicalism share an emphasis on personal conversion, evangelistic activism, crucicentrism (reconciliation with God because of Christ’s death on the

⁴⁸ Gallagher, 2003, 7. Smith, 2000. “Ch 1: The Big Evangelical Question.”

⁴⁹ George Marsden, “Changing Face of Evangelicalism,” *The Changing Face of American Evangelicalism*, The Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, Oct. 13, 2005.

⁵⁰ Ray S. Anderson, “Evangelical Theology” in *The Modern Theologians. An introduction to Christian theology in the twentieth century*, ed. David F. Ford (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers. 1998) 480-495. 480.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 483.

⁵² *Ibid*, 483.

cross), and high regard for the Bible as the revelation of God's will.⁵³ Since the Reformation, the term "evangelical" has referred to Protestants who stress personal conversion and salvation by faith alone.⁵⁴

American evangelicalism, as it is known today, refers to a movement sought to reform fundamentalism and challenge the position of liberal Protestantism. Historically, the more accurate term is "neo-evangelicalism" since the evangelical movement in North America goes back to 18th century revivals. This was a revivalist movement that emphasized that humankind as totally deprived and in need of divine grace by God. In contrast to this, the second evangelical movement from the 1820s and onward focused on Jesus as a close friend and held an optimistic view on human potential to *choose* to receive salvation. It stressed the moral agency of each individual and combined orthodox theology with social concern. Revivalism found its way into mainstream American society and was an important factor in several of the reform movements of that era. The theologically conservative, the fundamentalists, were skeptical to the liberal influence on theology and the focus on the social gospel over evangelization and conversion. Fundamentalism meant a turn from the optimistic view on history as a progress toward perfection, to a more pessimistic view on the possibility of human kind to create a better future.⁵⁵

During and the years after the Second World War, a group of moderate fundamentalist Christians tempted to reform conservative Protestantism. In 1942, they established the National Association of Evangelicals, which was to form a united front of evangelicals against liberal theology and secularization of American society. They believed fundamentalism had become too isolationist and separatist, rigidly legalistic and anti-

⁵³ This definition is based on David Bebbington's definition which is regarded as almost canonical. See e.g. Mark A. Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. 2001) 13. This definition is also used by George Marsden in the lecture "Changing Face of Evangelicalism."

⁵⁴ Anderson, 483.

⁵⁵ Ray S. Anderson, 480-483.

intellectual, and alienated from mainstream American culture. In their opinion, fundamentalism failed to answer the calling to be salt and light in the world.⁵⁶ This group came to be known as “neo-evangelicals,” and is the movement most often referred to when the term “evangelical” is used today. In this thesis, evangelical refers to the neo-evangelical movement. Since theological categories are not fixed and static and evangelicals relate to other conservative and liberal Protestants, I will sometimes use conservative Protestant as a wider term to cover not only evangelicals.

Mark A. Noll describes (neo-) evangelicalism as a post-fundamentalist movement geographically placed in New England, the Upper Midwest, and California, linked together by the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), and trained theologically by evangelical publishing houses, para-church organizations, and theological seminaries.⁵⁷ Julie Ingersoll notes that evangelical material culture also is a way of distinguishing evangelicalism from mainstream USA. Evangelical Christians are easily identified by the kind of music they listen to, the books they read, and the magazines they subscribe to.⁵⁸ Evangelicals are also identified in relation to central institutions such as Fuller Theological Seminary and Wheaton College. Para-church organizations as Campus Crusade for Christ, InterVarsity represent evangelicals from different churches. Influential evangelists and theologians include Billy Graham and Carl F. Henry. Zondervan, Word, and Eerdmans are examples of important publishing houses. Evangelical magazines, e.g. *Christianity Today* and *Eternity*, have functioned as channels for evangelical thinking and debate.

Evangelicalism also needs to be defined in relation liberal theology. Eric J. Sharpe defines evangelical and liberal theology by how they relate social concern and religion. Sharpe operates with four modes of religion, “existential,” “intellectual,” “institutional,” and

⁵⁶ National Association of Evangelicals. “History of the NAE.” www.nae.net Accessed April 21, 2005. Anderson, 1998. Gallagher 2003.

⁵⁷ Noll, 2001, 9-26.

⁵⁸ Ingersoll. 2003, 13-14, 118-123.

“ethical.” Each religion emphasizes different aspects in this scheme and may shift focus depending on time and place. According to Sharpe, liberal Protestantism is marked by “ethical concern supported by intellectual arguments,” while evangelicalism, combines the existential and the ethical modes, as in “personal faith leading to ethical seriousness.”⁵⁹ Consequently, evangelicals believe social activism needs to come from an authentic religious conviction, and are skeptical to liberal Christian ethics based on their different understanding of moral and spiritual authority.

Biases

Nobody enters a study field such as feminism and evangelicalism without preconceived ideas and values. My academic interest in the relationship between the two is shaped by personal experiences growing up in a family of evangelical Christians. My situation means that I approach the topic in a middle position. I am an “outsider” in the sense that I am not American, and I did not take part in the evangelical feminist movement. However, since I belong to the Norwegian evangelical culture, which is heavily influenced by the American evangelical culture, I am to some extent an “insider.” The debates I look at are relevant to my own life, as Den Evangelisk Lutherske Frikirke, the denomination I grew up in and still belong to, has recently opened up for ordaining women and has gone through years of dispute and conflicts. The argumentation used by the proponents as well as opponents resembles the debate in American evangelicalism, and in looking into the American debate, I soon discovered strong links between groups within my own church and two of the American organizations that today dominate the evangelical gender debate. Christians for Biblical Equality and Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood have Norwegian branches in

⁵⁹ Eric J. Sharpe. *Understanding Religion* (London: Duckworth. 1983. 1994) “Chapter 7 Four ‘Modes’ of Religion,” especially 106-107.

Norway, and gaining knowledge of the background for the gender debate in the USA help me understand my own experiences in the Norwegian gender wars.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ See Skapt til mann og kvinne: <www.mannogkvinne.info> and Kristne for bibelsk likeverd: <www.bibelsklikeverd.no>

CHAPTER 2: EVANGELICAL FEMINISM: CONTEXT AND MAIN VOICES

On the emergence of the second wave of feminism, Jo Freeman notes that "...there appear to be four essential elements contributing to the emergence of the women's liberation in the mid-1960s: (1) the growth of a preexisting communications network which was (2) cooptable to the ideas of the new movement; (3) a series of crises that galvanized into action people involved in this network; and/or (4) subsequent organizing effort to weld the spontaneous groups together into a movement."¹ Freeman's observation can also be applied to the history of evangelical feminism. Just as the secular women's movement developed out of the New Left, the evangelical feminist movement was founded by women involved in progressive, leftist evangelicalism.

Evangelical feminism occurred at a time of social and theological upheaval as the progressive evangelical milieu challenged the values and mores of mainstream evangelicalism. The first generation of evangelicals wanted to leave fundamentalism because of its separatist, legalistic, and anti-intellectual tendencies, but the second generation of evangelicals wanted to shift the focus to social justice and created new networks to promote progressive ideas within American evangelicalism. They embraced their theological heritage, but challenged the lifestyle evangelical Christians developed, as they became part of mainstream American culture. These progressive evangelicals provided the ideological and organizational network that gave the evangelical feminist movement a jump start in the evangelical world.² In connection with the evangelical feminist newsletter *Daughters of Sarah*'s fifth anniversary, editor Lucile Sider Dayton recalls how she met Nancy Hardesty and

¹ Jo Freeman, "Ch. 2. The Origins of the Women's Movement" *The Politics of Women's Liberation. A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and Its Relation to the Policy Process* (New York: Longman, 1975) 62.

² See e.g. Cochran, 2005.

discovered that they had one thing in common. They realized that their address books were “...full of names of isolated women across the country who were struggling with feminist issues...And they were women who were avidly studying the scriptures and finding them to be surprisingly liberating.”³ Evangelical women were aware of the women’s liberation movement, but those who sympathized with it did not have a theological foundation or a network to discuss their ideas about gender equality. However, progressive evangelicalism provided women such as Hardesty and Dayton the ideological background and organizational network needed to launch the evangelical feminist movement.

Ideological Context

The evangelical movement had established institutions for higher education and encouraged young evangelicals to enter colleges and universities. When evangelicals received higher education, it eventually altered their view on how to interpret the Bible. Douglas Jacobsen’s article “From Truth to Authority to Responsibility: The Shifting Focus of Evangelical Hermeneutics, 1915-1986”⁴ identifies three paradigms of evangelical theology in the 20th century. (These occurred at different times and in different historical contexts, but coexist and continue to shape evangelical theology today.) The earliest paradigm – fundamentalism - found absolute Truth in the Bible. The Classic Evangelicals were willing to agree that the Bible included factual mistakes, but insisted on keeping the Bible as the authority and only source for Christian ethics. (Others call this paradigm “neo-evangelical.”) The third paradigm, the Post-Classic Evangelical, was a reaction to the intellectual approach to reading the Bible. This generation accused evangelicalism of being too concerned with dogma, on the expense

³ Sider, Lucille Dayton. “On Our Fifth Anniversary.” Editorial. *Daughters of Sarah*, Jan/Feb. 1980: 9.

⁴ Douglas Jacobsen, “From Truth to Authority to Responsibility: The Shifting Focus of Evangelical Hermeneutics, 1915-1986,” “From Truth to Authority to Responsibility: The Shifting Focus of Evangelical Hermeneutics, 1915-1986, Part II” in ed. Martin E. Marty *Modern American Protestantism and Its World. 4: Theological Themes in the American Protestant World* (Munich, London, New York, Paris: K. G. Saur. 1992).

Christian activism in the world, and Jacobsen notes a tendency within the youngest generation of evangelical to stress ethical living over doctrine. He explains their thinking in this way: “The truth of the Bible is not an abstract academic truth about the world, but truth about human relations – both with each other and with God.”⁵

In 1974, Richard Quebedeaux coined the term “the young evangelicals” in his description of his fellow members in this progressive strand of evangelicalism. His book *The Young Evangelicals: Revolution in Orthodoxy* tells the story of the socially conscious and theologically conservative generation that was uneasy with the constrictions within evangelicalism as well as the liberal theology of mainline churches. The young evangelicals sought to change the church from within, using the lingo and stories they were accustomed to, and established new periodicals for expressing their ideas, for instance *The Other Side* and *The Post-American* (later *Sojourners*). Jim Wallis, editor of *The Post-American*, and Ron Sider grew to be to of the most vocal progressive evangelicals, calling Christians to embrace simpler lifestyles, fight racism, and engage in other social justice causes.⁶ According to Douglas Jacobsen, these two, along with Donald W. Dayton, were the main proponents of Post-Classical Evangelicalism.⁷

The 1972 book, *The Cross and the Flag* illustrates the young evangelicals’ frustration with traditional evangelical thinking of social action. The editors see the link between conservative theology and conservative politics as a major threat to the spirit of Christianity, and believe supporting conservative politics makes evangelicals guilty of maintaining a system of social injustice. They accuse evangelicalism of offering escapist and simplistic answers to complex social and political questions. Continuing to stress the importance of conversion to Christ, these evangelicals stress that a religious rebirth has to be followed by a

⁵ Ibid, 398.

⁶ Quebedeaux, 1974.

⁷ Jacobsen, 398.

concern for the world. A third problem they point to, is the tendency to overemphasize individual solution to social problems. In order create a just society they call for political action that creates systems to embattle social ills. The book includes an article by Nancy Hardesty where she argues for gender equality in church and family, claiming that the traditional teaching of the church about women's role is far from any kind of "Good News" for women.⁸

Organizational Context

Two progressive evangelical institutions were especially important in the formation of the evangelical feminist movement: the People's Christian Coalition and Evangelicals for Social Action. The People's Christian Coalition initially helped publish the evangelical feminist newsletter *Daughters of Sarah* in 1974. Anti-war activists at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois organized the People's Christian Coalition in 1970 as a forum for discussing how to combine their radical Christian faith with social action. They were also the group behind *The Post-American*, where they argued for greater evangelical involvement in the fight against racism, poverty, and aggressive militarism.⁹ Evangelical feminists distributed information about their organization and newsletter through progressive magazines and organizations. For instance, *Daughters of Sarah* used subscription lists from *The Post-American/Sojourners* to contact possible subscribers.¹⁰

In 1973, progressive evangelicals from across the USA and from a wide range of evangelical organizations and institutions met in Chicago to form Evangelicals for Social Action. The conference resulted in The Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern,

⁸ Richard G. Clouse et. al. *The Cross and the Flag* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Creation House. 1972.) 14-15 and Nancy Hardesty "Women and Evangelical Christianity."

⁹ "Sojourners Collection." Informative leaflet from Archives and Special Collection, Buswell Memorial Library, Wheaton, Illinois.

¹⁰ Reta Finger, "Beginnings, Endings, and Middles," *Daughters of Sarah*, Fall 1994: 4-5.

that called evangelicals to question power structures and to fight for social justice.¹¹ Although the participants may have been more aware of the problem of sexism within church, the predominantly male movement seemed unaware of how to approach the problem. In various proposals for the Chicago Declaration, some of them openly admit that the American church, and society at large, discriminates against women based on their sex. They define it as a problem in the same category as racism, poverty, and militarism, but when it comes to ways of solving the ills, sexism was not included.¹² Hence, Nancy Hardesty, one of the few women invited to participate in the first Thanksgiving workshop, lobbied to include a concrete passage in the declaration that addressed gender equality. When signing the Chicago Declaration, the participants agreed that, “We acknowledge that we have encouraged men to prideful domination and women to irresponsible passivity. So we call both men and women to mutual submission and active discipleship.”¹³ Before the conference, she had drafted three extensive proposals on women’s rights, pornography, and abortion, but they were not part of the final declaration.¹⁴ In 1974, the Evangelicals for Social Action established the Evangelical Women’s Caucus as one of its six task forces. The Evangelical Women’s Caucus chose an organizational structure similar to the National Organization of Women, with in local chapters across the country. Their first national conference was held during the Thanksgiving Weekend of 1975, “Women in Transition: A Biblical Approach to Feminism.”¹⁵

Daughters of Sarah grew out of a Chicago based Bible study group that focused on women’s role in church. Originally, all of the women were students at North Park Seminary,

¹¹ See appendix: The Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern.

¹² Proposed drafts of the Chicago Declaration. July-October 1973. Folder 8, Box 2, Collection 37, Records of Evangelicals for Social Action, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois. See also: Cochran, 2005. Gallagher, 2003. Bartkowski, 2001.

¹³ The Chicago Declaration. Folder 10, Box. 3, Collection 37, Records of Evangelicals for Social Action, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

¹⁴ Letter from Nancy Hardesty to Ronald Sider. August 29, 1973. Folder 11, Box. 1, Collection 37, Records of Evangelicals for Social Action, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

¹⁵ Evangelical Women’s Caucus 1975 Conference Program, Folder 14, Box 4, Collection 37, Records of Evangelicals for Social Action, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

affiliated with the Evangelical Covenant Church. ¹⁶After one year of discussing among themselves, *Daughters of Sarah* materialized in November 1974 as a bi-monthly newsletter that explored the Bible and Christian faith from a feminist perspective. ¹⁷ Over the years, the newsletter developed into a full-fledged periodical, even though the initial plan was simply to distribute evangelical feminist discussion. Due to financial problems, *Daughters of Sarah* had to cease distributing the magazine in 1996.

Lucile Sider Dayton and Nancy Hardesty were two of the “founding mothers” of *Daughters of Sarah*, and came to be central in the development of the evangelical feminist movement. These two illustrate the close connection between the progressive evangelical movement and evangelical feminism. Hardesty was one of the few female participants of the first gathering of Evangelicals for Social Action and took part in presenting progressive evangelicalism in *The Cross and the Flag*. Dayton, on the other hand, had close familial relationships with two of the most well-known progressive evangelicals. She is the sister of Ron Sider, who became the leader of Evangelicals for Social Action, and is married to Donald Dayton who provided much of the theological backbone of the social justice movement in evangelicalism. ¹⁸

The evangelical feminist movement represented a well-educated and urban segment of the American population. As such, they reflect the progressive evangelical generation age wise and in educational level. In January 1976, *Daughters of Sarah* conducted a survey to profile their audience. The survey revealed that 90% of the subscribers were women, but also indicated that the male readership in reality was larger than the 10% male subscriber group. Age wise, the vast majority of the readers (83%) were in the age group 23-34. The

¹⁶ Reta Finger, “A Joyful Collective: The Making of a Christian Feminist Magazine” in *The Wisdom of Daughters: Two Decades of the Voice of Christian Feminism*. Reta Halteman Finger and Kari Sanhaas (Philadelphia: Innisfree Press, 2001).

¹⁷ “Herstory,” *Daughters of Sarah*, January/February 1978: 1.

¹⁸ Cochran, 2005. 15-16.

educational level was higher than average; as much as 63% of the respondents had done post-graduate work. Carol Lepper comments that this is a consequence of the fact that the founders of the newsletter were connected to higher educational institutions and had spread it to their friends and acquaintances.¹⁹ Two years later, another survey revealed that evangelical feminism was an urban phenomenon, as a majority of two thirds of the readers reported to live in a city or a suburb outside a large city.²⁰

Daughters of Sarah and the Evangelical Women's Caucus were formally distinctive institutions, but the connections between the two were strong on a practical and ideological level. In the beginning of the EWC, they used *Daughters of Sarah's* network to publish their material and to serve as a "national clearinghouse" to distribute non-sexist material to churches across the USA.²¹ Many of the same people who shaped the EWC were active in producing and distributing the newsletter. Central EWC names such as Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, Nancy Hardesty, and Letha Scanzoni occurred often in the early editions of *Daughters of Sarah*, and *Daughters of Sarah* kept its readers informed about important events and developments in the caucus. Due to philosophical disagreements and financial problems, the two institutions did not retain close formal connections,²² but the continuing strong link between the two is illustrated by the fact that EWC considered merging with *Daughters of Sarah* when the EWC split in the late 1980s. The *Daughters of Sarah* helped EWC out of its financial and organizational crisis, but stayed independent from it.²³ As mentioned above, *Daughters of Sarah* ceased publishing in 1996, but the EWC continues to advocate feminist ideas from a Christian perspective.

¹⁹ Carol Lepper. "Readers' Profile." *Daughters of Sarah*, May/June 1976: 6-7.

²⁰ "Survey Results," *Daughters of Sarah*, July/August, 1978: 15.

²¹ Proposals from the Women's Caucus. Thanksgiving Workshop 1974. Folder 15, Box. 4, Collection 37, Records of Evangelicals for Social Action, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

²² S. Sue Horner, "Trying to Be God in the World: The Story of the Evangelical Women's Caucus and the Crisis over Homosexuality," in ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gender, Ethnicity and Religion: Views from the Other Side* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press. 2002) 100.

²³ Cochran, 171.

Four Influential Voices of 1970s' Evangelical Feminism

Prior to the growth of evangelical feminism, there was little evidence of literature that presented a positive attitude to feminism from an evangelical perspective. However, after the advent of *Daughters of Sarah* and the Evangelical Women's Caucus, evidence of evangelical feminist ideas appeared in evangelical bookstores. As the evangelical feminist movement materialized, evangelical feminist literature became more visible in mainstream as well as progressive evangelical periodicals. The publicity evangelical feminists received and the organizational effort they put down created and revealed a market for evangelical feminist literature. Only few years earlier, the evangelical publishing industry did not believe Christian women were interested in feminist issues from a Christian feminist perspective, but some publishing companies decided to publish evangelical feminist literature in the mid-1970s.²⁴ Three books stand out as especially influential for evangelical feminism: *All We're Meant to Be* (1974) by Nancy Hardesty and Letha Scanzoni, *MAN as Male and Female* (1975) by Paul K. Jewett, and *Women, Men, and the Bible* (1977) by Virginia Ramey Mollenkott.

These writers had close connections to core neo-evangelical institutions. Hardesty received her bachelor's degree from Wheaton College, Illinois, and worked in various Christian magazines before she left journalism for a teaching position at Trinity Evangelical Seminary. Scanzoni had written several pieces about family and gender roles published in evangelical magazines,²⁵ and worked for InterVarsity, an evangelical student organization. Jewett taught at Fuller Theological Seminary, an institution that was vital to the success of the evangelical project. The only one who was slightly on the side of evangelicalism was Mollenkott. Cochran points out that even though she grew up in a revivalist, fundamentalist

²⁴ Ibid, 11.

²⁵ She sometimes worked together with her husband, John Scanzoni, a college professor in sociology. See e.g. John and Letha Scanzoni, "Elevate Marriage to Partnership" *Eternity*, July 1968: 11-14. Later, they co-wrote a college textbook in sociology, *Men, Women, and Change: A Sociology of Marriage and Family* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1976).

culture, she has been linked with mainline churches as an adult.²⁶ In spite of this, her interaction with evangelical feminism was so significant that she cannot be left out in a discussion of evangelical feminist thinking.

Hardesty and Scanzoni co-authored what can be called the evangelical feminist manifesto of the 1970s: *All We're Meant to Be: A Biblical Approach to Women's Liberation*.²⁷ Hardesty and Scanzoni came to know each other in the late 1960s through *Eternity* magazine, where Hardesty worked as an assistant editor and Scanzoni published some of the first evangelical feminist texts to appear in evangelical magazines. As early as 1966, Scanzoni wrote an explicitly feminist text where she questioned evangelical practices in gender issues, calling them inconsistent and illogical.²⁸ In 1969, Scanzoni contacted Hardesty and proposed working together on a feminist book from an evangelical perspective, resulting in *All We're Meant to Be*.²⁹

Hardesty and Scanzoni were experienced writers with long experience with addressing a larger audience, and their writing is clearly targeted at average evangelicals and the book is divided into fifteen chapters covering a wide range of topics, from hermeneutics to singleness, in a straightforward language and style. *All We're Meant to Be* combines theory and practical solutions to gender issues, relating everyday dilemmas to a larger theology. The book also reflects the academic backgrounds of Hardesty and Scanzoni, merging social science and history with feminist exegesis. *All We're Meant to Be* was the first book to systematically approach gender relations from an evangelical feminist perspective, and the response from the audience indicates that they managed to articulate their ideas in a way that appealed to lay people, for instance readers of *Eternity* voted it to be the most important book of 1974. *All*

²⁶ Cochran, 73.

²⁷ Nancy Hardesty and Letha Scanzoni: *All We're Meant to Be: A Biblical Approach to Women's Liberation*, (Waco, Texas: Word Books. 1974/ 1978).

²⁸ Letha Scanzoni, "Woman's Place: Silence or Service?" *Eternity*, February 1966: 14-16, 18.

²⁹ Nancy Hardesty "Preface," *Your Daughters Shall Prophesy* (Brooklyn, New York: Carlson Publishing Inc. 1991.) Hardesty and Scanzoni 1974/1978 "Preface."

We're Meant to Be went through several printings before new and updated editions were published in 1986 and 1992.³⁰

In 1975, Paul Jewett's book, *MAN as male and female; a Study in Sexual Relationships from a Theological Point of View*, entered the gender debate.³¹ In contrast to the popular appeal of *All We're Meant to Be*, Jewett's book was targeted on a more academic audience, reflecting Jewett's position as professor of systematic theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. He specifically looks into Paul's teaching of women's role, analyzing classic interpretations by Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, and John Calvin, as well as the more contemporary theology of Karl Barth, to trace the history of hierarchal interpretations of the Bible.

Jewett played a vital role in the development of evangelical feminist theology not because of a mass appeal, but because of the symbolic meaning, the book had due to his background. Fuller Seminary is the largest interdenominational evangelical seminary in the United States, and it has played a vital role in shaping the evangelical movement intellectually. Having a scholar at a major evangelical seminary defending gender equality helped evangelical feminists legitimize their agenda and gave them the intellectual credibility they needed to be considered relevant to the evangelical movement.³² At the time Jewett's book came out, Fuller was on the conservative side on the gender conflict, and found itself in the midst of controversy after Jewett's book appeared in evangelical circles. After a period of conflict in which Jewett almost lost his job, Fuller eventually stated that the seminary supported gender equality and women's ordination.³³ In 1980, he followed up *MAN as male and female* by publishing *The Ordination of Women*, which gave further weight to evangelical

³⁰ Gallagher, 2003, 44-49.

³¹ Paul K. Jewett, *MAN as Male and Female* (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1975).

³² Quebedeax, 1987. 140. Ingersoll, 24.

³³ Ingersoll, 22. Cochran, 24-25.

feminist claims for gender equality in church.³⁴ When Fuller Seminary changed its position to support women's equality in church, it gave egalitarian gender ideals a foothold in elite evangelicalism. Fuller Seminary even co-sponsored the 1978 EWC conference.³⁵ Jewett's contribution to evangelical feminism becomes even more evident when Cochran writes that Hardesty and Scanzoni used material from Jewett's classes in systematic theology at Fuller to develop their arguments.³⁶

Virginia Mollenkott's *Women, Men, and the Bible* was published in 1977. Mollenkott incorporated her academic training in literature into her exegesis. She earned a PhD degree in English literature specializing on John Milton and the Apocrypha, a collection of Jewish texts written between the Old Testament and the New Testament.³⁷ Mollenkott was introduced to feminism after a long period of personal struggles and first hand experience with how gender roles could limit a woman's life. She started to read secular feminist literature, but it was not until she met Hardesty, Jewett, and Scanzoni that she became convinced she could combine her faith and feminist consciousness.³⁸ Mollenkott's close relationship to Jewett is also evident from the foreword she wrote in Jewett's *MAN as Male and Female*.³⁹ Mollenkott soon became a vocal and controversial spokesperson for evangelical feminism and dared to challenge conventional ideas of gender categories. Together with Scanzoni, she wrote one of the first evangelical books that defended homosexual relationships, *Is the Homosexual my Neighbor?* published in 1978.⁴⁰

³⁴ Paul K. Jewett, *The Ordination of Women* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1980).

³⁵ Horner, 108.

³⁶ Cochran, 26.

³⁷ Virginia Ramey Mollenkott. "Chapter 13: Virginia Ramey Mollenkott" in Virginia Hearn, ed. *Our Struggle to Serve: Stories of 15 Evangelical Women* (Waco, Texas: Word Books. 1979) "A Conversation with Virginia Ramey Mollenkott" *The Other Side* May-June 1976: 21-30.

³⁸ Mollenkott in Hearn 1979, 160.

³⁹ Mollenkott "Foreword," in Jewett, 1975.

⁴⁰ Cochran, 78.

Summary and Chapter Conclusion

Evangelical feminism grew out of a generation of socially aware and academically trained evangelicals who provided a cooptable network that provided a base for evangelical feminism to develop. Progressive forces in evangelicalism wanted to reclaim social justice activism for evangelicalism, and evangelical feminism was a continuation of the social justice agenda of their generation, but with a special focus on sexism in church. In contrast to post-Christian and liberationist feminists, evangelical feminists wanted to reclaim the church and insisted that the Christian faith and feminism are compatible forces. Evangelical feminists had close connections with central evangelical institutions as Fuller Theological Seminary, InterVarsity, Wheaton College, and *Eternity*, and continued to seek close connections with those institutions. They initiated the Evangelical Women's Caucus and *Daughters of Sarah*, and evangelical publishing companies started distributing evangelical feminist literature.

Traditionalist views on gender roles received wide attention in literature and the evangelical mainstream listened suspiciously to feminist claims for gender equality. Evangelicals who believed in gender equality experienced an evangelical movement that was hostile to feminist ideas and a feminist movement that was equally hostile to established religion. Evangelical feminists needed to establish an evangelical feminist platform that could be an alternative to evangelical critique of feminism and vice versa. Consequently, they entered the theological debate.

CHAPTER 3: EVANGELICAL FEMINISM AND THE BIBLE

Given the mandate to maintain both cultural relevance and theological orthodoxy, both evangelical gender essentialists and evangelical biblical feminists were concerned that their arguments be grounded in the authority of Scripture and not the vagaries of secular culture. It is not surprising, then, that debates over gender rapidly spilled over into debates about the inspiration and interpretation of the Bible.¹

Evangelical feminism indicates a “civil war” in the evangelical movement, but it reveals that Hunter’s dichotomy of orthodoxy versus progressivism also is relevant for understanding the development of American evangelicalism in the last few decades. Evangelical feminists may adhere to progressive ideas, but they base their opinions on a firm belief in an authority beyond time and space. Feminists and traditionalists in evangelical circles argue over moral issues on the basis that the Bible expresses morality and values that are valid in modern America, but they disagree on what the Bible actually teaches. Hunter’s culture war thesis argues that the conflict is fought over the interpretation of cultural symbols that define the USA.² Whereas American identity is based on interpretations of e.g. family, education, and the legal system, evangelical identity is rooted in a high regard for Scripture as authority and in seeking to be a counter movement to the secularization of modern society.

As part of a generation of educated and progressive evangelicals, evangelical feminists turned to the new evangelical hermeneutics to challenge evangelical gender definitions and family ideals. The evangelical movement at large was highly conscious of biblical scholarship, with a special focus on developing theological seminaries that could compete with the liberal divinity schools. During the evangelical reform of conservative Protestantism, the theological focus moved from a discussion of biblical inerrancy to the authority of

¹ Gallagher 2003, 50.

² Hunter 1991, 173.

Scripture. Rather than rejecting higher criticism per se, the new approach stressed the need to read the Bible in light of its historical context while at the same time upholding its special status.³ However, there was a limit to how long evangelicals could stretch their ideas of gender before it was seen as an assault on basic tenets of their faith and ideas of the Bible as the Word of God. To illustrate how conservative experienced the urgency of maintaining a distance between evangelicalism and feminism on the grounds of biblical authority, Sally K. Gallagher refers to Harold Lindsell, editor of *Christianity Today*. In a 1976 editorial, Lindsell argues that:

At stake here is not the matter of women's liberation. What is the issue for the evangelical is the fact that some of the most ardent advocates of egalitarianism in marriage over against (sic) hierarchy reach their conclusion by directly and deliberately denying that the Bible is the infallible rule of faith and practice. Once they do this, they have ceased to be evangelical: Scripture no longer is normative. And if it is not normative in this matter, why should it be normative for matters having to do with salvation?⁴

The Dilemma

In a 1973 issue of *The Other Side* magazine, Kathryn Lindskoog comments on Paul's teaching on women and expresses the fundamental challenge evangelical feminists faced as they read their Bibles. She writes: "Sometimes Paul's written teaching on women seems like a good news-bad news joke."⁵ For the good news, Lindskoog refers to Galatians 3:28 where Paul states, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."⁶ To Lindskoog, this is the prime example that the Bible establishes egalitarian relationships that transcend nationality, social status, and gender as the Christian norm.

³ Paula D. H. Cochran, *Evangelical Feminism: A History*. New York: New York University Press, 2005. p. 18-20. Richard Quebedeaux, p. 28-29.

⁴ Harold Lindsell, "Egalitarianism and scriptural infallibility," *Christianity Today*, 1976. 45-46. (Also quoted in Sally K. Gallagher, "The Marginalization of Evangelical Feminism," *Sociology of Religion*. Fall 2004. August 12, 2005. <http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0SOR/is_3_65/ai_n8693738/print> page 7/22).

⁵ Kathryn Lindskoog "Paul's Bad News for Women," *The Other Side*, July-August 1973: 9.

⁶ Galatians 3:28. NIV <www.biblegateway.com>

However, they also had to deal with Paul's "bad news," the passages that the church traditionally has interpreted as an expression of women's submission. The possibility of gender equality seems dim when turning the page to verses where Paul describes the relationship between man and woman in hierarchal terms. In Corinthians 11:3, he writes:

Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.⁷

Ephesians 5:22-23 elaborates on the analogy of marriage and God's relationship to the church:

Wives, submit to your husband as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is head of the church... Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself...However, each of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.⁸

Paul returns to this analogy in his letter to the Colossians, chapter 3, verses 18-19:

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.
Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.⁹

In 1st Timothy 2:11-15, he draws on narratives in Genesis to support his arguments for women's submission to men:

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through

⁷ 1 Corinthians 11: 3. <www.biblegateway.com>

⁸ Ephesians 5:22-33. <www.biblegateway.com>

⁹ Colossians 3:18-19 NIV <www.biblegateway.com>

childbearing – if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.¹⁰

These verses are central to evangelical arguments in support of conservative gender roles in family and church, and function as the theological foundation for evangelical scepticism toward feminism together with the creation narratives in Genesis.

Patterns in Evangelical Gender Theology Mid-20th Century

American evangelicalism is influenced by two interpretations of the creation narratives. The dispensationalist tradition teaches gender equality prior to the fall and that women are subjected to their husbands due to Eve’s rebellion against God. Women are to live in submission to men until the Second Coming of Christ, and any attempt to fight that pattern is doomed to failure. The Calvinist tradition, on the other hand, teaches that gender roles were established by God prior to the fall. Women are not to submit to their husbands because of sin, but because it is an order of creation. Men and women are essentially different, and their roles are in a hierarchal order set by God in the beginning of time.¹¹

Despite their different approach to gender roles, dispensationalists and Calvinists alike view feminist claims for gender equality futile and against biblical teachings, and evangelicalism is often blend these two traditions in their arguments against feminism. Commenting on an upcoming strike in connection with the 50th anniversary of the 19th amendment, the editors of *Christianity Today* write, “In the beginning, Eve bit into forbidden fruit and fell into subjection to Adam. Her descendants face a lesser temptation – equality with man instead of with God – but they are biting no less eagerly into their forbidden fruit... havoc would surely begin to fall from modern Eve’s bite into the established order.”¹² Here, they indicate a dispensationalist stance on women’s subordination, whereas the 1969 editorial

¹⁰ 1. Timothy 2, 11-15. NIV <www.biblegateway.com>

¹¹ Gallagher, 2003, 45. Bendroth, 1993, 8 and 124.

¹² “Eve’s Second Apple,” *Christianity Today*, August 1970: 29.

“Liberating Women” warned that, “Blurring the God-given distinctions between male and female will ultimately add to the despair of both.”¹³ Here, the editors lean on a more Calvinist theology, assuming that God created women and men for certain roles from the very beginning, referring to biological differences as proof of the different spheres men and women are meant to inhabit.

Larry Christenson’s best seller *The Christian Family* is an excellent example of evangelical traditionalist thinking about gender roles. Gallagher describes this book as the traditionalist version of *All We’re Meant to Be* because of its popularity and influence on the evangelical culture. The book was a major success, selling more than a million copies, and translated to a number of languages, and Christenson spelled out the ideas that have diffused the traditionalist stance in the evangelical culture war.¹⁴ The basic tenet of his book is that God has created an order of authority and responsibilities where each member of the family should enter his/her proper role, and that these ideas are grounded in the Old and the New Testament. Paul’s teaching on gender is seen as a confirmation of the idea that gender roles are God-given.¹⁵

A Christian family according to this vision is organized in a chain of command where the husband leads the wife, and she receives authority from him to raise the children. Christenson draws heavily on the verses above as he explains the rationale for a hierarchal model of marriage and family life. “God has ordered the family according to the principle of ‘headship.’ Each member of the family lives under the authority of the ‘head’ whom God has appointed.” When a man functions as a woman’s ‘head,’ Christenson argues, woman submits herself to his authority in return for protection from physical, emotional, and spiritual attacks. Furthermore, he writes, wifely submission guarantees social balance and stability. On top of

¹³ “Liberating Women,” *Christianity Today*, February 1969: 27.

¹⁴ Gallagher 2003. 46-48.

¹⁵ Gallagher 2003. 44-49. Christenson 1970. 19- 31, 39.

that, he claims that woman receives power through submission because she puts her own wishes aside so she can fully focus on God's calling.¹⁶

Julie Ingersoll argues that the evangelical movement has been under heavy Calvinist influence since the mid-1900s, and that this has helped maintaining the idea that God created male and female as different. Furthermore, she argues that the focus on gender differences is a result of the tendency among evangelical Christians to look at the world in dualistic terms. The Creator and the creation are the basic opposites, and “good and evil, lightness and darkness, saved and lost” are manifestations of that. Consequently, gender roles have received transcendental meaning where masculinity and femininity reflect the nature of God. The gender debate is essentially a conflict about the interpretation and control of how to relate to God.¹⁷ Consequently, in contrast to their contemporary secular feminists who argued that gender was a social construct, traditionalist evangelicals believed gender was a spiritual reality expressed in the different sexes. Amy DeRogatis has analyzed evangelical sex manuals published over the last five decades. Comparing secular and evangelical sex manuals by influential evangelicals as James Dobson and Tim and Beverly LaHaye, she finds that

[w]hat distinguishes the evangelical sex manuals from their secular counterparts is the insistence on what are natural sexual desires and how those desires are related to a larger theological framework that teaches individuals the meaning of masculinity and femininity. Put bluntly, God created men and women with natural sexual desires, and those desires are related to male and female characteristics and how men and women should behave toward each other in the household, church, and society.¹⁸

According to traditionalist evangelicals, masculinity and femininity are spiritual categories manifested in biological sex differences, and the hierarchal marriage is an expression the essential differences between the sexes. Out of this context, where evangelical literature

¹⁶ Christenson, 32-54.

¹⁷ Ingersoll, 144-145.

¹⁸ Amy DeRogatis, “What Would Jesus Do? Sexuality and Salvation in Protestant Evangelical Sex Manuals, 1950s to the Present,” in *Church History. Studies in Christianity and Culture*, Vol. 74, No. 1 (March 2005): 113.

taught gender essentialism, spiritualized sexual differences, and traditional family life as testimonies of faith, evangelical feminism came to argue another vision of gender relations.

Evangelical Feminist Hermeneutics

Given the high regard for Scriptural authority and the prevalence of hierarchal readings of Pauline passages, evangelical feminists needed a method to read the Bible that did not break with central ideas in evangelical circles. How should evangelical feminists understand these passages about wifely submission without doing “an incredible cut-and-paste job on the Bible?”¹⁹ Here, the theological transition from inerrancy to authority plays a vital role in understanding how evangelical feminists interpret what the Bible says about women and men. Without the shift in theological thinking in the evangelical movement at large, evangelical feminists would not have had the necessary tools to develop evangelical feminist alternatives to understanding the Bible.²⁰

Feminism, secular or religious, is not a fixed ideological system, but includes varieties of feminist consciousness. According to Cochran, evangelical feminism has, from the very beginning, developed in a tension between progressive and conservative forces. Evangelical Women’s Caucus and *Daughters of Sarah* represent the progressive side, whereas Christians for Biblical Equality came to unite the traditionalist evangelical feminists when it materialized in 1988. The underlying differences between them are connected to principles of hermeneutics. The conservative wing insists that Paul’s writings, if properly interpreted offer gender equality in church. The Pauline letters are not sexist per se, but the church has distorted the message and taught for generations that Christianity means patriarchy. The progressive wing, on the other hand, sees Paul himself as sexist. Nancy Hardesty, Paul Jewett, Virginia Mollenkott, and Letha Scanzoni belong the progressive side of evangelical feminism

¹⁹ Judy Alexander, “Servanthood and Submission,” *The Other Side*, July-August 1973: 41.

²⁰ Cochran, 65.

and offer the most radical versions of hermeneutical tools to understand biblical teaching on gender relations.²¹

Jewett makes it clear that Paul cannot be interpreted in an egalitarian way, but that he clearly thinks women should have a subordinate role in family and church. His analysis of Paul's epistles argues that looking at Paul's writing as only *superficially* contradictory is an incorrect reading of the New Testament. As he sees it, the teaching in Galatians 3 cannot be reconciled with the other passages that speak of woman's submission.²² Hardesty and Scanzoni criticize the insistence that the Bible gives a consistent picture of gender relations throughout all the texts. In contrast to the more conservative evangelical feminists and writers as Christenson, they argue that the confusion of what the Bible says about male-female bonds is rooted in the mixed messages in the Bible. They point out that ideas of segregation of sexes, complementarian roles, transcendence of sex differences, and the synthesis of male and female are all present in Scripture.²³ Mollenkott addresses the more conservative evangelical feminists when she writes: "Although there are some feminists who think that all of Paul's words and attitudes can be explained in a completely harmonious egalitarian fashion once we achieve a full understanding of the cultural conditions and the Greek usage involved, to date I have not found their interpretations convincing."²⁴ In spite of acknowledging the mixed messages in the Bible, Hardesty, Jewett, Mollenkott, and Scanzoni argue that there is one way of relating that is according to God's will. In order to argue for gender equality, evangelical feminists needed to differentiate the human and supernatural aspects of Scripture.

All We're Meant to Be includes a chapter that directly addresses the hermeneutical challenges which come with a feminist approach to the Bible. Addressing those who fear feminist reading of the Bible undermines its message, Hardesty and Scanzoni point out that,

²¹ Ibid, 41-64.

²² Jewett, 50-61.

²³ Hardesty and Scanzoni, 1974/ 1978, 13-16.

²⁴ Mollenkott 1977, 95.

theologians have always ranked passages as of different value. Since the Bible consists of a wide range of different genres, not all texts can be read the same way, they argue. The guiding principle of proper theology is to see the unclear and specific in light of central dogmatic passages. Moreover, they place themselves at the heart of Protestantism, arguing that the Bible has always been re-interpreted by Christians. Quoting the Dutch theologian G. C. Berkouwer, they point out that unless the sixteenth century Reformers had dared to challenge Catholic theology, there would not have been any Reformation.²⁵ Berkouwer's influence on evangelical feminist thinking is also evident from his attitude to inconsistencies in the Bible. His basic stand on the authority of Scripture is that recognizing its human aspects and cultural context does not deny its message. In his opinion, the Bible represents truth because the Holy Spirit speaks through the text, not because the text itself is a perfect expression of God.²⁶

Acknowledging that the Bible is simultaneously the word of man and the Word of God, makes it possible to argue that parts of Paul's teaching are not in accordance with the will of God. Since Paul was a flawed human being who used his background to understand the Gospel, evangelical feminists could treat Paul's writing as a theological discussion of Jesus' teachings. Consequently, Paul's letters are part of a theological discourse open for criticism. This attitude shines through as Jewett discusses Paul's epistles and puts them in line with what Aquinas, Calvin, and Luther write about women. Even though these thinkers have provided central concepts in Christian thinking, no evangelical theologian would regard their writing as perfect interpretations of the Bible. Consequently, Paul should not be left undisputed, but challenged on the premises he bases his teaching on women.²⁷

Evangelical feminists argue that Paul's confusion about women's role comes from his background as a trained rabbi. Paul's contemporary society was inherently hostile to women

²⁵ Hardesty and Scanzoni, 1974, 1978, Chapter 2: "Understanding the Bible," 17-22.

²⁶ Anderson, 485-487.

²⁷ Jewett, 61-86, 111-149.

as a result of centuries of misogynist reading of the Old Testament. Jewett shows how women in the Old Testament world were systematically treated as men's property and were denied personal autonomy. Religious rites mirrored the sexist system as devotions were segregated occasions because women were seen as unfit for religious contemplation and, being the weaker sex, likely to be superstitious.²⁸ Mollenkott argues that it is not sufficient to read the Bible alone to understand the early Christian teaching on women because the biblical texts do not portray the ideological background of the rabbinical training Paul received. Based on her research on the Apocrypha, she maintains that the Jewish culture had grown increasingly anti-women in the period between the Old Testament and New Testament texts. According to Mollenkott, the Apocryphal literature is full of open contempt for women and represents the most anti-women period in Jewish history.²⁹

Hardesty and Scanzoni point out that "the Bible world" which the rabbinic tradition sprung out of was a not consistent system because the texts were written and compiled over a long period, and because the people who wrote the different books were influenced by surrounding cultures. Hence, Old Testament as well as New Testament texts must be read light of the surrounding cultures. As a starting point, they take Simone deBeauvoir's claim that women's power or lack of power is connected to their right to own property, and the notion that women's status is reflected in a culture's attitude to goddess worship. Ancient Judaism denied women right to own property. Rather, women themselves were considered the property of their fathers and/or husbands.³⁰

As examples of Paul's rabbinic training, Jewett points to verses such as "For a man did not come from woman, but a woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but

²⁸ Ibid, 86-94.

²⁹ Mollenkott, 10-14.

³⁰ Hardesty and Scanzoni, 1974/ 1978, 38-53.

woman for man”³¹ and “For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.”³² Jewett argues that this is not a correct reading of the second narrative where God makes Eve from Adam’s rib.³³ When Paul writes this, he makes the same logical mistake as the rabbinic tradition that believed woman was under the man because she came after the man. Thus, Jewett concludes that the Pauline text is rather a reflection of a long, male-centered and patriarchal tradition. The point of the creation narrative in Genesis 2, he argues, is to show the close relationship between the sexes and to confirm Eve’s humanness in contrast to the animals.³⁴ After maintaining that Paul’s message contains rabbinic and Christian ideas, evangelical feminists needed to prove that the Christian message was egalitarian. The key, they argue, lies in Genesis 1:27, Galatians 3:28, and in how Jesus related to women.

Genesis 1:27 as a Model

The essential part of Jewett’s argumentation is that the key to understanding Genesis’ message is not the second creation narrative, as Paul did, but rather the first creation narrative. As the title of his book indicates, Jewett insists that a Christian understanding of man-woman relation must be seen in light of Genesis 1:27, which states that, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Before exploring his position on gender relations, Jewett portrays two other theological options for understanding sexual differences. The first, the androgynous ideal proposes that sexual differences are not essential to understanding the human condition and should be overlooked in theological arguments. Jewett criticizes this position for neglecting to see masculinity and femininity as aspects of humanness when it assumes that categories of man and woman do not

³¹ 1 Cor. 11:8-9.

³² 1 Tim. 2:13-14.

³³ Genesis 2:22 “God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.”

³⁴ Jewett, 120-128.

matter before God. The second alternative mirrors the ideas presented by Christenson where the meaning of gender is found in marriage, and Jewett finds this tradition too focused on sexual differences as made for procreation. To Jewett, the problem with the two is that they acknowledge that man and woman are created in the image of God, but they fail to see the true meaning of the gender duality. The meaning, he argues, lies in the relationship between males and females, not just in marriage and not in denying the differences. Jewett writes, “the distinction between man and woman itself is a manifestation of the *imago Dei*. According to this view, Genesis 1:27b (‘male and female he made them’) is an exposition of 1:27a (‘in the image of God he created them’).”³⁵ In doing so, he confirms that there are essential differences between men and women, but refutes the idea that differences mean hierarchy. Furthermore, he dismisses the claim that subordination is different from having an inferior status and Jewett explicitly challenges Barth, who insisted that all women are subordinate to all men and yet not inferior.³⁶

Galatians 3:28 as a Model

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female,
for you are all one in Christ Jesus.³⁷

Acknowledging the contradictions in Scripture, evangelical feminism still insists that one model offers the solution to end the conflict between the sexes. Hardesty and Scanzoni write: “Galatians 3:28... holds the key to bringing harmony and removing the dissonant clash that is bound to exist as long as one sex is looked upon as superior and the other as being inferior and the source of evil.”³⁸ Rather than seeing patriarchy as an expression of the will of God,

³⁵ Jewett, 33.

³⁶ Jewett, “A Contemporary Statement: Carl Barth,” 69-82, “An Evaluation,” 82-86. Susan Hill Lindley, *You Have Stepped Out of Your Place. A History of Women and Religion in America* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press. 1996) 349.

³⁷ Galatians 3:26 NIV <www.biblegateway.com>

³⁸ *Ibid*, 15.

evangelical feminists see gender hierarchy as a result of sin. The original harmony between the sexes was distorted as Adam and Eve first sinned against God, explained in Genesis 3:16 which states “Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”³⁹ In contrast to dispensationalist ideas that gender equality is not possible until after Christ has established a heavenly kingdom, evangelical feminists believe it is possible to gain gender equality in the present world. Consequently, Galatians 3:28 is interpreted as a sign that Jesus reestablished the God-intended social order expressed in the first creation narrative.

Jesus as a Role Model

After establishing the Jewish tradition as anti-women, evangelical feminists needed to contrast Jesus with the rabbinic tradition. The problem is that, in contrast to Paul, Jesus did not say much about women’s role. There is little evidence in the gospels that Jesus had any explicit teaching on women, Jewett admits, but he argues the gospels have a consistent message of gender relations. Rather than focusing on what Jesus said or did not say about women, Jewett argues that the message lies in the way Jesus treated the women he met. Since Christians believe Jesus was more than an ordinary Jew, that he was the incarnation of God, his actions are central to understand Christian ethics.⁴⁰

In contrast to the misogynist rabbinic culture, evangelical feminists point out the radical nature of Jesus’ actions and attitude to women. Hardesty and Scanzoni use British writer Dorothy L. Sayers writing as a model to understand Jesus. Sawyer’s essay “Are Women Human” argues that Jesus treated women as human beings, without vilifying them or glorifying them, and Hardesty and Scanzoni continue by describing women in the Gospels. They especially point out how Jesus encouraged women to transcend expected gender roles, for instance when he criticized Martha for being too occupied being a perfect hostess and

³⁹ Genesis 3:16b.

⁴⁰ Jewett, 95. Footnote 57.

showed appreciation of her sister Mary who sat down and listened to Jesus teach.⁴¹

Consequently, evangelical feminists argue that this proves that Jesus regarded women as worthy of participating in theological education in a culture where women were barred from rabbinic training.⁴²

The Bible, God, and Gender

Although they see Jesus as “woman’s best friend,”⁴³ evangelical feminists cannot escape the fact that Jesus was a man. Throughout history, theologians have interpreted Jesus as evidence that the biblical God is male, and evangelical feminists appeared at a time when American evangelical churches were extensively influenced by these thoughts. One of the most significant voices in this tradition is British writer C. S. Lewis presented popular theology through his apologetic books, e.g. *Mere Christianity*, *Till We Have Faces*, and *The Screwtape Letters*, and novels, e.g. *Chronicles of Narnia*, *That Hideous Strength*. He reached a wide audience of evangelicals and has become an intellectual role model for evangelicals who seek to present Christian faith as a rational and relevant alternative to secular thinking.⁴⁴ Because of his central role in distributing these ideas among American evangelicals, he became a target for evangelical feminist critique, and by attacking Lewis, evangelical feminists, questioned a central evangelical symbol.

⁴¹ Luke 10: 38-42.

⁴² Hardesty and Scanzoni, 1974/ 1978, 54. Gallagher points out that Sayer’s essay “Are Women Human?” was available in American bookstores and widely read by evangelicals five years before de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* was available to the American audience. Sayers has been a cherished author in evangelical circles because of her fiction, especially among the educated elite, and is often seen as a female C. S. Lewis, who again promoted essentialist ideas of gender. Gallagher 2003, 40-44. Bob Smietana, “C.S. Lewis Superstar,” *Christianity Today*, December 2005. <www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/012/p.28.html>

⁴³ Hardesty and Scanzoni, 1974/1978 Chapter 5: “Woman’s Best Friend: Jesus.”

⁴⁴ For instance, The Marion E. Wade Center at Wheaton College has a major archival collection of Lewis’ writing, private and public, and *Christianity Today* compares his status in and impact on American evangelicalism with how Elvis’ has influences American society at large. See: The Marion E. Wade Center: <<http://www.wheaton.edu/learners/wade/>>. Bob Smietana, “C.S. Lewis Superstar,” *Christianity Today*, December 2005. <www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/012/p.28.html>

Biological sex, as Lewis sees it, is a reflection of a spiritual reality of masculinity and femininity. When Jesus was born as a male, it is a physical expression of a masculine God.⁴⁵ Mollenkott and Jewett openly attack C. S. Lewis' writing on gender differences. Mollenkott writes: "If C. S. Lewis were right that God is masculine, then only the human male would be in the image of God; but such is not the case."⁴⁶ To argue their case, they return to the first creation narrative in Genesis 1:27 "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."⁴⁷ Since the man and the woman are reflections of God's nature, it is impossible to argue that God is male.

Moreover, Mollenkott refutes the claim that God is solely described in masculine terms. Some of the confusion over gender in the Bible is rooted in sexist aspects of the English language, for instance how "man" can refer to males as well as the whole human race, but Mollenkott also points out that the Bible has numerous references to feminine sides of God that have been ignored by the church. The Old Testament as well as the New Testament has images of God that portray feminine aspects of the deity, she contends. One of her many examples is the word "Wisdom," which is used in Proverbs and is interpreted to be an expression of God. When the New Testament writers describe Jesus as Logos, the Word of God, or the Wisdom of God, Christians see this as an expression of how Jesus is the incarnation of the Old Testament God. Mollenkott understands this as an evidence of the androgynous nature of God, and writes, "Jesus, the Word of God, thus identifies himself with the Old Testament concept of Wisdom. And, remember, Wisdom is invariably personified as a female!"⁴⁸ As an English professor, Mollenkott also uses her knowledge of literary genres and stylistic techniques to argue her case. She points out the importance of understanding the difference between a description of a person and the actual nature of that person, and argues

⁴⁵ Gallagher, 40-44.

⁴⁶ Mollenkott 1977, 56.

⁴⁷ Genesis 1:27 NIV <www.biblegateway.com>

⁴⁸ Ibid, 63.

God is not male because the Bible uses masculine terms to describe the Deity. Mollenkott writes:

The problem arises when we ignore... *feminine* imagery concerning God, so that gradually we forget that God-as-Father is a metaphor, a figure of speech, an implied comparison intended to help us relate to God in a personal and intimate way. We begin to think of God as literally masculine!⁴⁹

To solve the problem with relating to the idea that God chose to be born as a *man*, Hardesty and Scanzoni return to the original text and find that Jesus is not referred to specifically as a man, but as a human being. As Mollenkott, they argue, that the root of the problem is sexism in the English language, and that this has influenced Bible translations to seem more male-oriented than it originally was intended to be. In English, the word “man” may refer to the human race as well as a male person, and this obscures the meaning of the original text. They write: “Jesus was a man, but he was also Man. English obscures the distinction, but New Testament writers are careful to distinguish between *anér* (male) and *anthropos* (human). When speaking of the Incarnation, they invariably choose *anthropos*.”⁵⁰ The logic behind this reasoning is possibly connected to how Christianity teaches that Jesus was simultaneously fully human and fully divine. Jesus as a male in the biological sense is just an expression of the human side of him, but since Jesus is believed to be God as well, his divine nature is referred to as simply *human*. The reasons why God chose to be born as a man, they argue, were pragmatic, not an expression of a masculine deity. As they see it, God had two alternatives, male or female, and chose the most useful alternative. Since he was born into a patriarchal society, it would have been much more difficult to minister if he were a woman. Women had less freedom to travel and were barred from theological training. Moreover, all

⁴⁹ Ibid, 52.

⁵⁰ Hardesty and Scanzoni, 1974/ 1978, 56.

the symbolic references to the Messiah in the Old Testament were masculine. If God had become a woman, it would not answer the anticipations of the Jewish people.⁵¹

Mollenkott admits her initial hesitation about radical feminist claims of “if God is male, then male is God,” but after examining anti-feminist theology and popular literature, she had to re-examine her ideas of the connection between the idea of God as male and oppression of women. First, Mollenkott sees a severe danger of idolatry in the traditionalist gender ideology. Books such as Marabel Morgan *The Total Woman* and Judith M. Miles *The Feminine Principle: A Woman’s Discovery of the Key to Total Fulfillment* receive heavy criticism for the glorification of men. The consequence of wifely submission, in Mollenkott’s opinion, is that “In the process the husband is lifted to the level of an absolute norm, as if he were God, while the wife is reduced into the worst kind of self-sacrificing idolatry.”⁵² She argues that the language and imagery used to explain how women ought to submit to their husbands is laden with religious sentiments, which take women’s focus away from God. To illustrate this, she quotes Morgan’s *Total Woman*, which states: “It is only when a woman surrenders her life to her husband, reveres and worships him, and is willing to serve him, that she becomes really beautiful to him.”⁵³ Moreover, Mollenkott’s accuses the chain of command model of breaking with fundamental Protestant ideas. Mollenkott argues that this ideology gives men unchallenged power, as married women are to see their husbands as a link between themselves and God. She writes: “Repeatedly, married women are told that they do not relate to God directly but rather through the authority of their husbands and that the wife’s personal development is properly secondary to the husband’s.”⁵⁴ This breaks with a fundamental idea in revivalist Protestantism that each believer is guaranteed unmediated

⁵¹ Ibid, 55.

⁵² Mollenkott 1977, 40.

⁵³ Ibid, 41.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 48.

access to the Deity.⁵⁵ Denying women access to God, Mollenkott claims, is to deny them their status as human beings and as Christians.

Chapter Conclusion

Evangelical feminist literature is clearly influenced by the turn from inerrancy to authority that shaped the evangelical project. As part of the younger generation of evangelicals, they focus on how truth is not just about doctrine, but also about healthy relationships, to God and each other. Evangelical feminism argues that the order of creation is not hierarchal, but egalitarian, contending interpretations prevalent in evangelical theology and popular literature on family life and marriage. The best expression of Christian ethics concerning gender relations is found in the first creation narrative, which is confirmed in Galatians 3:28 and the way Jesus related to women. Paul's epistles must be read as a theological discourse influenced by his rabbinic training, and not as an inerrant guide to life and theology. Furthermore, they also rejected the notion of gender as a spiritual reality expressed in biological sex, opening for a more androgynous and inclusive understanding of God. Rather than rejecting Christian faith for being androcentric, they sought to unearth feminine aspects of the biblical God in order to fight against sexism in church. Hardesty, Jewett, Mollenkott, and Scanzoni express their desire to be part of the evangelical movement with their references to evangelical popular literature as well as church history. They operate within the evangelical milieu and use cultural codes to mitigate their concerns. As such, they represent the progressive voice in the evangelical culture war.

⁵⁵ See e.g. Noll, 1991.

CHAPTER 4: *DAUGHTERS OF SARAH:* **BETWEEN FAITH AND FEMINISM**

We are Christians; we are also feminists. Some say we cannot be both, but Christianity and feminism for us are inseparable.

DAUGHTERS OF SARAH is our attempt to share our discoveries, our struggles and our growth as Christian women. We are committed to Scripture and we seek to find in it meaning for our lives. We are rooted in a historical tradition of women who have served God in innumerable ways and we seek guidance from their example. We are convinced that Christianity is relevant to all areas of women's lives today. We seek ways to act out our faith...¹

In his essay *Between Faith and Criticism*, evangelical church historian Mark Noll describes how evangelical theologians negotiate between the evangelical ideal of a “childlike faith” and the academic ideal of “intellectual neutrality.” They belong to two communities and try to go beyond the hostility that developed between conservative Protestantism and the academic world after the modernist-fundamentalist controversy.² Just as evangelical biblical scholars find themselves negotiating between faith and criticism, evangelical feminists find themselves trying to overcome the hostility between faith and feminism. The *Daughters of Sarah* insist that the dichotomy of faith versus feminism is a false dichotomy, but they cannot escape the underlying philosophical differences between them and the polarization that exists between mainstream evangelicalism and the feminist movement.

In spite of their dissimilar starting points, evangelicalism and feminism promise a universal brother-/sisterhood where people of different backgrounds have equal status. When

¹ “We are Christians; we are also feminists...” *Daughters of Sarah*, November 1974: 1. Evangelicals for Social Action Papers, Billy Graham Center Archives. Collection 37, box 3, file 8. Wheaton, Illinois.

² Mark A Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible*. 3rd ed. (Leicester, England: Apollos.) 1991. 7-8.

evangelical feminists negotiate between faith and feminism, they deal with two traditions that offer visions of unity and equality on different premises. Evangelicalism promotes an egalitarian religious culture centered in lay people and equal access to the Bible, where all men and women are equal before God, as sinners meeting a holy God.³ The feminist position is that men and women are equal regardless of being different sexes and that both should be valued as fully human. This provided a broad range of tools to argue their feminist agenda at the same time as they experienced difficulties holding up their vision of unity. At times, their evangelical heritage failed to provide the tools to solve problems, while it was useful in other contexts. Likewise, their feminist conviction at times created problems understanding their lives and identities.

There are ideological differences between traditionalist and progressive evangelical feminists when it comes to hermeneutical methods and how to understand the Pauline epistles, but the theological differences point to a deeper difference between them. The traditionalist stand holds on to a narrow definition of feminism and mainly focuses on women's role in church and marriage. The progressive stand, however, takes their feminist world view as a starting point to fight all types of oppression and power abuse.⁴ *Daughters of Sarah* defined themselves on the progressive side of evangelical feminism and sought a wider feminist consciousness and agenda. *Daughters of Sarah* blended their theological and feminist background to find models to understand different aspects of power and oppression.

The *Daughters of Sarah* was a newsletter/periodical that provided freedom to explore different aspects of their faith and their feminist conviction. The intention behind the newsletter was to “share our discoveries, our struggles and our growth as Christian women,” and open dialogue was encouraged. *Daughters of Sarah* did not require a unison choir of

³ Traditionalist and complementarian evangelicals believe men and women are equal in relation to the Deity in spite of gender hierarchy.

⁴ Ingersoll, 45.

feminists, but encouraged their audience to embrace diverse opinions while continuing to hold up unity among women (and men) as an ideal. The editorial guideline was that no topic was off limits as long as it was a reflection over feminism and Christianity. Even though the founding mothers were evangelicals, they did not seek to exclude women of other denominational and theological affiliations.⁵ Hence, the editorials and articles printed do not represent evangelical feminism as a whole, but they do serve to illustrate the strands of thought that influenced the development of the movement.

The Starting Point: Re-Reading Sarah

The name of the newsletter reflects a conscious attempt to define themselves within the evangelical tradition at the same time as they promoted progressive and feminist values. *Daughters of Sarah* is a reference to the term “sons of Abraham,” or men of faith, in the Jewish and Christian, as well as Muslim, traditions. Jews, Christians, and Muslims look at Abraham as their forefather and being a son of Abraham means you belong to one of those faith traditions. Calling their newsletter *Daughters of Sarah*, indicates that evangelical feminists wanted to define themselves in the Judeo-Christian tradition as women of faith, rather than subordinates or marginalized members of the church.⁶ In their 1975 article “Why Sarah?” Nancy Hardesty and Letha Scanzoni address doubts about having Sarah as a role model. They argue that Abraham has received too much credit in traditional interpretations and that Sarah’s role in history needs to be recognized. They point out that Abraham had several wives, but that it was crucial that he had a son with *Sarah* in order to make the covenant with God. Even though Abraham had a son with Hagar, their son Ishmael did not receive the special status Sarah’s son Isaac did. From that perspective, Hardesty and Scanzoni

⁵ See e.g. Finger “A Joyful Collective: The Making of a Christian Feminist Magazine,” in *The Wisdom of Daughters*.

⁶ “Herstory” *Daughters of Sarah* January/February 1978: 1-2.

state that it is more correct that, “All Jews, and spiritually all Christians, are not simply the children of Abraham, but specifically the children of Sarah.”⁷

Daughters of Sarah also focuses on redefining Sarah and Abraham’s relationship to argue against hierarchal gender roles and offer an alternative interpretation of Sarah’s role in order to find a place in church. In light of traditional understanding of Sarah, choosing Sarah as a role model may seem as an odd choice for a group of feminists. In 1 Peter 3:5-6, the apostle Peter describes Sarah as ideal wife who “obeyed Abraham, calling him lord” and urges women to follow her example. In their exegesis of Sarah’s role, Hardesty and Scanzoni enter a theological minefield as they reflect the theological ethos of their generation of evangelicals. They recognize that the church has used Sarah to argue women’s subordination to their husbands, and that Sarah’s subordination is confirmed in the New Testament. However, on Peter’s statement that Sarah called Abraham lord, they question Peter’s credibility as a scholar, when they claim, “From what we know of Sarah in the Old Testament, it is difficult to say where the writer got this idea.”

Hardesty and Scanzoni suggest that Peter used Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, and imply that later translations of the Bible have made it more androcentric than it originally was. They point out that the Old Testament narrative does not say that she called him lord, but rather that she was thinking of him, and argue that the word Sarah uses to refer to Abraham simply means husband and that the story of Sarah and Abraham is of an egalitarian marriage.⁸ Sarah is portrayed as far from a timid, submitted wife, but as a woman who negotiated with her husband. Reading the narrative as a whole, they “...often find Sarah, rather than Abraham, calling the shots in their relationship.” For instance, it was *Sarah* who urged Abraham to have a child with Hagar and who commanded Abraham to send Hagar off when the relationship between Sarah and Hagar turned sour. They

⁷ Nancy and Hardesty, “Why Sarah?” *Daughters of Sarah* May 1975: 3.

⁸ *Ibid*, 1.

also point out that God ordered Abraham to follow Sarah's commands when he resisted her instructions to send Hagar away.⁹

Having the story of Sarah as a paradigm for their feminist claims was the foundation of *Daughters of Sarah's* feminist agenda. By acknowledging Sarah's role in the narrative, long time editor Reta Finger pictures Sarah as a role model for how women can take part in the church's mission to spread the gospel: "God used this very human woman to bless the nations. Hopefully, God can use us as her daughters to spread the good news about women (and men) to our world today."¹⁰ However, *Daughters of Sarah* seems aware of the need of stronger arguments in their effort to reform evangelical gender ideology.

Claiming a Tradition: *Daughters of Sarah* and Evangelical "Herstory"

A major concern of evangelical feminism was to underline their evangelical conviction and delimit themselves from liberal Protestantism. As Sharpe points out, evangelicalism and liberal Protestantism differ in how they base their ethics. While evangelicals stress "personal faith leading to ethical seriousness," liberal Protestants stress "ethical concern supported by intellectual arguments."¹¹ Reading Sarah's story from a feminist perspective argued that a woman was an equal partner in a story that has laid the foundation of Christian faith and that evangelical feminism is not a liberal influence on evangelicalism. The *Daughters of Sarah* needed evidence that faith could ignite feminist activism to refute the claim that their feminist agenda was solely mimicking secular feminism. They searched for women who have managed to serve and lead in the church throughout history in order to establish themselves within the evangelical tradition.

⁹ Ibid, 2.

¹⁰ Reta Finger "Why Sarah" *Daughters of Sarah*, September/October 1979: 3.

¹¹ Sharpe, 1983. 1994. 106-107.

Daughters of Sarah unearthed stories of women in their evangelical heritage.

Catherine Booth, leader of the Salvation Army, is described as an ardent feminist who defied the expected norms of women's behavior and lived in an egalitarian marriage.¹² Another role model presented is the 19th century Norwegian missionary and evangelist Catherine Juell. She had close connections with American evangelicalism and translated evangelistic literature into Norwegian.¹³ In light of the evangelical project of re-establishing evangelicalism to the status it had in the 19th century, it is not surprising that evangelical feminists focused on women who had had leading roles in the church during the time when the evangelical movement was at its height of social influence.¹⁴ In contrast to those who see feminism as a threat to conservative Protestantism, *Daughters of Sarah* portrayed women's involvement in the churches as vital to the success evangelicalism enjoyed previously. It logically follows that in order to become relevant and influential in the American society at large, evangelical feminists believed women have to be allowed in leadership and ministries as they did during the 1800s.

Bonnie R. Borgeson maps out the close connection between 19th century evangelicalism and the first wave feminist movement in the story of Anna Howard Shaw. Shaw was the first woman ordained in the Methodist Protestant Church, and had experienced fierce discrimination as she pursued higher education in theology as the second woman to ever graduate from Boston University School of Theology. She became a feminist after working as a minister in the Boston slums, meeting prostitutes and observing consequences of discriminatory legislation. After leaving her ministry in Boston, she became an active

¹² Lucille Sider Dayton, "Our Foremothers: Catherine Booth" *Daughters of Sarah*, November 1974: 2. Evangelicals for Social Action Papers, Billy Graham Center Archives. Collection 37, box 3, file 8. Wheaton, Illinois.

¹³ Della E. Olson "A Prophesying Daughter," *Daughters of Sarah*, July 1976: 9-10.

¹⁴ Evangelical feminists have also explored women's role in 19th century evangelicalism and written extensively about the link between feminism and evangelical faith. See: Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, London: Harper and Row Publishers. 1976) Nancy Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness: Evangelical Feminism in the 19th Century* (Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1984) and *Your Daughters Shall Prophesy*, (Brooklyn, New York: Carlson Publishing Inc. 1991) Janette Hassey, *No Time for Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry Around the Turn of the Century* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Academic Books. 1986).

suffragist and worked closely with Susan B. Anthony. Eventually, she took over the leadership of National Women's Suffrage Association after Anthony. Borgeson's text not only seeks to claim feminist role models in church history, but also seeks to claim evangelical role models in the story of American feminism, and Borgeson points out the need to understand Shaw's religious conviction as the backdrop of her feminist activism. She argues that Shaw's suffragist activism is only one aspect of her stand on women's position in society, because Shaw was a feminist in the church *before* she was involved with secular feminism.¹⁵ Consequently, in the story of Shaw, the *Daughters of Sarah* find a historical precedence of the claim that their "faith and feminism are inseparable" and that faith can ignite feminist activism.

George L. Ford deals with a more recent case when he describes Ina Ellis, the second woman to be ordained as elder in the Free Methodist Church. Ellis was ordained in 1974 at the age of eighty-one, and Ford portrays her as a woman who experienced a special calling, and became a woman preacher in spite of her hostility toward women's leadership in church. Ellis was finally ordained after spending a lifetime serving as an evangelist and assistant pastor for decades.¹⁶ Ellis was ordained at the time when evangelical churches started opening up for women's ordination and accepting more women in seminaries, and when evangelical feminist thinking circulated among conservative Protestants in the USA. Her story illustrates the ambivalent view evangelical churches have had to women in ministry; women could in practice teach and minister, but would not get any formal recognition of their work.¹⁷

Together, these stories stressed a historical unity between evangelical women who had a calling to serve in churches and who defied gender expectations to live in accordance with what they believed. Being a "daughter of Sarah" meant living in a historical continuity with

¹⁵ Bonnie R. Borgeson, "Our Foremothers: Anna Howard Shaw," *Daughters of Sarah* May 1975: 4-5.

¹⁶ George L. Ford, "Our Foremothers: Ina Ellis," *Daughters of Sarah* March/April 1975: 6, 10.

¹⁷ Evangelical feminism focused this inconsistency from the very beginning, as seen in Letha Scanzoni's 1966 article "Woman's Place: Silence or Service?" *Eternity Magazine*, February 1966.

feminist role models as the incentive to believe in women's importance in their faith tradition. Just as "sons of Abraham" points to a larger union among different faiths, "daughters of Sarah" came to provide a broader vision of sisterhood.

Discovering Sisters in Other Traditions: Widening Religious Affiliation

Initially, Sarah's story served to establish a sense of unity among evangelical feminists, but the narrative came to serve as link between evangelical feminists and other Christian feminists as the audience and writing gained a more ecumenical profile. From the beginning, *Daughters of Sarah* had chosen an inclusive profile and invited people of various backgrounds into their discussion. This eventually influenced their theological identity, and *Daughters of Sarah* went through a theological shift from being explicitly evangelical to being more ecumenical in its approach to understanding women in light of the Bible. In 1984, Finger takes up the problem of defining *Daughters of Sarah* in relation to varieties of feminist theology. Placing the origin of *Daughters of Sarah* in the evangelical tradition, she points out that the audience is no longer solely evangelical, but reaches across different theological traditions and cultures.¹⁸

The shifting theological ethos in *Daughters of Sarah* can be illustrated by the religious affiliation of the editors. Lucile Sider Dayton served as editor from the beginning of *Daughters of Sarah* in 1974 up to 1979. She belonged to the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition, which was highly influential during the Second Great Revival and in the success of evangelicalism in the 19th century, and placed solidly in the evangelical mainstream.¹⁹ Reta Finger was the editor from 1979 to 1994, and has roots in the Mennonite Church, which belongs to the margins of what is considered as evangelical.²⁰ The woman who became the last editor of *Daughters of Sarah* illustrates how far from the evangelical mainstream the

¹⁸ Reta Finger, "Which Color of the Rainbow? A Spectrum of Feminist Theologies," *Daughters of Sarah*, July/August 1984: 4-6.

¹⁹ Cochran, 44-45.

²⁰ Reta Finger. "Re: Daughters of Sarah." E-mail to author. March 2, 2006.

periodical moved. Liz Anderson was an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church and represents mainline and liberal version of American Protestantism.²¹ The theological shift in evangelical feminism is similarly reflected in the Evangelical Women's Caucus. The EWC added an extra E to its name in 1990, changing its name to the Evangelical and Ecumenical Women's Caucus.

Evangelical feminists also developed a feminist fellowship with other faith traditions based on their identity as daughters of Sarah. In March/April 1990, Finger calls for feminist solidarity across religions, not just among different Christian denominations. Finger points out that, in spite of disagreement over dogmatic issues and interpretations of revelation, "daughters of Sarah" serves as a link between Judaism and Christianity. As the Jewish and Christian traditions recognize the common historical and theological roots of the three faith traditions in their identities as sons of Abraham, evangelical feminists came to recognize their relationship with Jewish women based on their identities as daughters of Sarah. Finger recognizes that Jewish feminists can help evangelical feminists gain a better understanding of the Bible as a Jewish perspective on the Bible can help them uncover the logic and historical background of the patriarchal structures in the Bible.²² The Evangelical and Ecumenical Women's Caucus experienced a similar development. Looking back on the history of the EEWC, Nancy Hardesty comments on how evangelical feminists had to reconsider their former view on Jewish history when meeting with Jewish feminists. As shown in the previous chapter, a central argument against the Pauline epistles is that they reflect Paul's Jewish background and rabbinic training. Jewish feminists pointed out that at the birth of the Christian tradition, several Jewish movements encouraged women to step outside

²¹ Liz Anderson "Meet the New Kid on the Block," *Daughters of Sarah*, Winter 1995: 7.

²² Reta Finger, "Getting to Know the Other Daughters of Sarah," *Daughters of Sarah* March/April 1990: 2-3.

conventional gender roles.²³ Consequently, evangelical feminists had to face the idea that Christianity was not the only religion that offered women liberty, and that sisterhood could be defined across faith traditions, not just denominational boundaries.

From a wider perspective, the ideological shift from being evangelical to ecumenical can be interpreted as consequence of the culture war. Hunter observes that the culture war produced new coalitions across historical and social boundaries. The culture war downplayed dividing lines and created alliances across faith traditions based on a common agenda. Hunter writes:

Because of common points of vision and concern, the orthodox wings of Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism are forming associations with each other, as are the progressive wings of each faith community – and each set of alliance takes form in opposition to the influence the other seeks to exert in public culture.²⁴

The history of *Daughters of Sarah* reveals how this realignment on the orthodox and progressive sides of the culture wars affected evangelical feminism to challenge their ideas of religious identity and sisterhood. In 1984, Reta Finger questions whether they can call themselves evangelical anymore because the term has taken on so many layers of meaning that she does not really know what the term means any longer.²⁵ At this point, the culture war between orthodox and progressive forces had galvanized into a strong coalition of conservative evangelicals and the Republican Party. In 1980, evangelical voters turned out to be a major force in the outcome of the presidential election, and the Religious Right appeared as a vocal proponent for conservative politics and traditional family values.²⁶ Although Finger

²³ Nancy Hardesty, "Blessed Be the Waters That Rise and Fall to Rise Again," *EEWC Update*, Summer 2004. August 24, 2005. <<http://www.eewc.com/Update/Summer2004Blessed1.htm>.>

²⁴ Hunter, 1991, 47.

²⁵ Reta Finger, "Which Color of the Rainbow? A Spectrum of Feminist Theologies," *Daughters of Sarah*, July/August 1984: 4-6.

²⁶ D. G. Hart, *That Old Time Religion in Modern America: Evangelical Protestantism in the Twentieth Century*. (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee. 2002) 144.

does not explicitly mention the Religious Right, it is likely that the Daughters' sense of alienation from the evangelical mainstream is influenced by the politicization of evangelicalism to the right. Given the historical roots of *Daughters of Sarah* in progressive, left-leaning Christianity, it is easy to understand their hostility to the term evangelical in the political milieu of the 1980s.²⁷ In a recent interview by Ann Braude, Virginia Mollenkott also reflects on the religio-political background of the increasingly inclusive vision of evangelical feminism, which clearly reflects the mechanisms of the culture wars as Hunter portrays it above. After describing the gulf between evangelical feminism and the Religious Right, she explains that: "evangelicals on the left may feel more comfortable with progressive Mainline Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Wiccans or secular humanists than we do with right-wing evangelicals."²⁸

Whereas their open dialogue changed their theological affiliation, their social justice activism led them into other areas where they struggled to combine their evangelical starting point and the reality they faced women in less privileged positions. As secular feminists struggled with definitions of sisterhood across cultural and economic gaps, *Daughters of Sarah* struggled to define themselves in relation to women in less privileged positions. The idea of being "daughters of Sarah" may have served as a link between other faith expressions, but evangelical feminists found their evangelical heritage did not necessarily provide them with proper tools to understand their relationships to poor women.

Shifting the Focus: Sisterhood and System of Oppression

Daughters of Sarah's links to progressive evangelicalism meant a focus on a wider vision of justice, and early on, voices in *Daughters of Sarah* argued for an inclusive vision of women's

²⁷ Later articles on family issues reveal explicit attacks on the Religious Rights. See e.g. Cathi Falsani, "Why Dan Quayle Was Almost Right," *Daughters of Sarah*, Winter 1994 p. 4.

²⁸ Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, interviewed by Ann Braude, October 1, 1005. January 4, 2006
<www.virginarameymollenkott.blogs.com/virginia_ramey_mollenkott/2005/10/feminism_and_ev.html>

liberation. Elaine M. Anderson's 1978 article "The Tie that Binds" is a strong argument against seeing racial minorities, the poor, and women as separate groups that need to work for their own rights. Anderson sees all oppression as part of a singular system of power abuse, and argues that the most efficient tool to maintain an unjust social order is to pit the oppressed against each other.²⁹ She also acknowledges how her evangelical background had not taught her about the biblical teaching of "the nature of oppression and the call to justice,"³⁰ and several Daughters express the difficulty of negotiating their evangelical faith and the reality they faced as feminists. In 1980, Lucile Dayton Sider reflects on how evangelical feminist came to discuss social differences in light of their feminist identities. She writes, "...in the last two years we have tried to reach beyond ourselves as well. Do we have anything to learn from minority women, from poor women, from Third World women? We have tried to understand the grinding oppression of social structures that make (sic) their problems far greater than ours."³¹

Hearing the stories of women in other social groups and Third World countries challenged evangelical feminists' ideas of what the Bible says about liberation, but it also tested their identity as the *Daughters of Sarah* eventually had to recognize the complex systems of oppression. In 1989, Finger reflects on the layered system of oppression and writes the best expression of the ambivalence the Daughters had toward their identities as feminists:

Again the story of Sarah becomes a paradigm for our lives as Christian feminists. The first reflections told the tale from Sarah's point of view rather than Abraham's. That was a refreshing change. But where was the third actor on the stage? Where was Hagar?³²

²⁹ Elaine M. Anderson, "The Tie That Binds," *Daughters of Sarah*, November/December 1978: 1, 3-4.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 1, 3-4.

³¹ Lucile Dayton Sider, "On Our Fifth Anniversary," *Daughters of Sarah*, January/February 1980: 9-10.

³² Reta Finger, "A Time for Remembering," *Daughters of Sarah*, November/December 1989: 2-3.

Reta Finger writes this in connection with the fifteenth anniversary of the periodical, and looks back on the development of evangelical feminist thinking and sees how the paradigm of Sarah changed meaning as they faced women of other nationalities and social standings. Here, the story of Sarah turns from being a source for fighting oppression of women in a patriarchal society to an illustration of how evangelical women themselves oppress other women.

The *Daughters of Sarah* had previously pointed out Sarah's decision making regarding Hagar's fate as a source for feminist empowerment, but now they saw the story in a different light. Genesis 16:1-15 tells how Sarah made Abraham have a child with her slave Hagar when Sarah did not conceive the baby God had promised her. However, during Hagar's pregnancy, Sarah became intensively jealous, and Hagar ran away into the desert to avoid Sarah's jealousy. While in the desert, God promised to care for Hagar and her son and urged her to return to Sarah.³³ When Sarah eventually had a son herself, Sarah forced Abraham to send Hagar and her son Ishmael away.³⁴ The recognition that Sarah mistreated Hagar made the *Daughters of Sarah* recognize that "Most of us simply *are* Sarah's daughters – often oppressed as she was because we are women in a male-dominated society, but often also unwitting thoughtless oppressors because we belong to the dominant race and class."³⁵ As Sarah overlooked Hagar's needs in order to meet her own desires, evangelical feminists had to acknowledge they had "simply overlooked the Hagar's in our midst."³⁶ Finger mentions how African American feminists have claimed Hagar as their role model, as Hagar represents women who have been silenced and ignored in women's history. White women held African American women in slavery in the same manner as Sarah held Hagar enslaved.³⁷

³³ See appendix, Genesis 16:1-15. This is before God tells Sarah and Abraham to change their names from Sarai and Abram, but I choose to write Sarah and Abraham to avoid confusion for readers who do not know the story.

³⁴ See appendix, Genesis 21: 1-20.

³⁵ Reta Finger, "A Time for Remembering," *Daughters of Sarah*, November/December 1989: 3.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 3.

³⁷ Interestingly, Muslim feminists look to Hagar for a role model. When Hagar and Ishmael were forced to leave Abraham, the story says that God cared for Hagar. Muslim feminists see this as a sign God looks after women's

To the *Daughters of Sarah*, Hagar's fate is a reminder of how difficult it is to create a feminist agenda that encompasses all women, but in spite of the awareness of boundaries of class, ethnicity, and nationality, but *Daughters of Sarah* continued arguing for solidarity and sisterhood. The March/April 1990 issue dealt with racial and ethnic differences and the search for a common understanding of feminist thinking across those boundaries. Sue Horner writes that in spite of the different ethnic varieties of feminist identities, "The vision of the *Daughters of Sarah* encompasses a hope for global sisterhood. We 'dream of a common language for all women.'"³⁸ Recognizing the problem of finding a common denominator to define a universal feminist agenda and identity, she calls for a new way of thinking unity between different feminists. Horner's solution to the problem is to see the whole feminist project as a puzzle in which each feminist identity contributes to the larger picture. Without acknowledging diverse understandings of what feminism is, the puzzle will never be complete. In spite of the differences, the fights women of different background fight are essentially the same, Horner argues, because all forms of "discrimination are threads from the same fabric – the fabric of dehumanization"³⁹

Given *Daughters of Sarah's* background in a social justice movement and their increasing contact with other Christian feminists, it did not take long before *Daughters of Sarah* feminist liberationist theology increasingly influenced the *Daughters'* approach to feminist analysis. Representing the progressive side of the evangelical culture wars, evangelical feminists came to see morality and justice from different perspectives than the traditional evangelical angle. As mentioned above, evangelical thinking focuses on the individual's salvation, and their view on moral issues tend to be focused on individuals rather than institutions. The evangelical concept of sin is an individual issue, not institutional, but

needs relates to them as individuals and equal before God. Thanks to Ingunn Aadland for pointing this out for me.

³⁸ S. Sue Horner "Pieces of a Common Puzzle," *Daughters of Sarah*, March/April 1989: 2-3.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

evangelical feminists argued that sexism is structural and sinful, and that it breaks with God's intentions for men and women. The challenge for evangelical feminists was finding a model that combined their progressive leaning to looking at structures and their evangelical concept of egalitarianism based on the ideas of individual sin

As part of the progressive wing of American evangelicalism, the *Daughters of Sarah* questioned the fairness of the way American evangelicalism interpreted equality. Progressive evangelicals criticized establishment evangelicalism for being too focused on righteous living and the salvation of souls while neglecting the material and social needs of people in this world. Progressive evangelicalism challenged the church to look at institutional and systematic sin that oppresses people, maintains power structures, and creates poverty.⁴⁰ As feminists, *Daughters of Sarah* argued that some social structures are sinful, but as Christians, they also believed in the importance of individual responsibility. In 1990, Finger elaborates the *Daughters'* dilemma of understanding the relationship between their evangelical belief in individual sin and their insight in how social structures form lives and provide different choices for people in different contexts. She writes:

Many of the *Daughters* have roots in evangelical Protestantism, where sin has been viewed individualistically as pride and rebellion against God, and in legal terms as transgression against God's commandments. But feminist theology, springing from a liberationist approach, has noted how societal structures – such as those organized by wealth, status, gender, or race – can shape the nature of the sin people are prone to commit.⁴¹

Yet, Finger cannot leave her evangelical heritage behind. To see only structural patterns breaks with the basic idea that people are equal because they have equal responsibilities for their sins before God. Finger writes, "...to place so much guilt on structures that individuals

⁴⁰ See e.g. Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals*. Clouse, *The Cross and the Flag*.

⁴¹ Reta Finger, "No More Marigolds," *Daughters of Sarah*, January/February 1990: 2.

are seen only as innocent victims is to rob them of their humanity as responsible persons with some power of choice.”⁴²

Others chose another approach to the tension between individual and institutional sin, and believed the two approaches to understanding sin provided the Daughters sufficient tools to analyze social structures while maintaining an egalitarian ideology. The clearest expression of this is in Jan Lugibihl’s 1990 editorial “I’m Not That Kind of Woman.” Lugibihl recalls the time worked as a missionary in Olongapo in the Philippines where a large American Naval Base contributed to maintaining a blossoming sex industry, and challenges the way she used to put herself above prostitutes. Rather than just judging the prostitutes for selling their bodies, she focuses on the racist structure of prostitution and how the economic situation leaves them with no choice but selling their bodies. Still holding on to that the prostitutes as well as their clients are sinners who need to be redeemed from their lifestyle, she focuses on how she can understand the reason why they act as they do by looking at structures. Focusing on the similarities between her own life and the lives of the prostitutes, she claims that we all sell pieces of ourselves to survive in a commercial world. While the prostitutes sell their bodies, others sell their souls or their time. More importantly, she argues for an understanding of the connection between *Daughters of Sarah* and the others. She writes, “Perhaps, in the end, the greatest sin is to pretend we are different from these women and men, to deny the truth that their liberation and ours are intertwined.”⁴³

Daughters of Sarah and Homosexuality

Whereas class and ethnicity tested the Daughters’ vision of sisterhood without undermining the claim that faith and feminism encompassed all women, the issue of homosexuality shook the foundation of evangelical feminism like no other issue. The secular feminist movement

⁴² Ibid , 2.

⁴³ Jan Lugibihl “I’m Not That Kind of Woman,” *Daughters of Sarah*, Winter 1993: 2-3.

struggled with understanding feminism and heterosexism and founding a common feminist agenda for straight and gay feminists, and the evangelical feminist movement was equally challenged by how to relate to the lesbian minority in evangelical feminism. Evangelical feminism avoided major conflicts until the mid-1980s, a decade after the lesbian split in the secular feminist movement, but illustrates a different set of problems in understanding feminism in relation to other groups of people.⁴⁴ Belonging to a faith tradition that has condemned homosexuality, the *Daughters of Sarah* had to tread gently in discussing the issue and soon found the topic was one of the most hotly debated issues they ever dealt with. After arguing for issues such as women's ordination and equality in marriage, the Daughters now faced women and men who challenged their ideas of sexism and tested their relationship to the Bible. The lesbian minority in evangelical feminism revealed a different source of oppression in the church that confronted their ideas of sexism.

The first piece that directly addressed homosexuality was printed in 1977 and was an interview of a heterosexual woman who worked together with lesbian women in a women's crisis shelter. This interview reflects substantial uncertainty about how to tackle the issue. Both the reporter and the informant are anonymous due to fear of negative responses from the audience.⁴⁵ The same year, Scanzoni and Mollenkott presented material from their upcoming book *Is the Homosexual My Neighbor?* Their views were balanced by a conservative stand on the issue. The editorial board stated that neither stand reflected any official position on homosexuality, but stressed that "In presenting them, we are seeking to promote open and

⁴⁴ See e.g. Rosen, 172- 175. Baxandall, Rosalyn and Gordon, Linda: *Dear Sisters: Dispatches from the Women's Liberation Movement* (New York: Basic Books. 2000). Baxandall and Gordon, 107-111.

⁴⁵ Anonymous, "Dilemma: or What's a Straight Woman Like You Doing in a Place Like This?" *Daughters of Sarah*, July 1977: 4-6.

compassionate inquiry on the subject.”⁴⁶ Without coming to any conclusion, the *Daughters of Sarah* continued elaborating on their ambivalent feelings and unanswered questions.

In the late 1980s, the *Daughters* again printed texts that opened up for accepting homosexuality in church, and received massive response, negative and positive, from their audience. In the May/June 1988 issue, Finger compares *Daughters of Sarah*'s debate on homosexuality with Sarah and Abraham's journey from Ur to Canaan.⁴⁷ As she believes Sarah and Abraham were called by God to leave their home and travel on a road they did not know where would end, Finger expresses a belief that God wanted evangelical feminists to embark on a journey of discussion they did not would end. As Sarah and Abraham entered a foreign land and had to learn a new language and culture, evangelical feminists enter a field where they acknowledged they did not know how to debate. Finger argues for a thorough conversation, aiming at understanding the other perspective, and warns about rushing for clear answers of right and wrong. She writes,

A foreign country, after all, may be worth exploring along many small roads and lanes rather than taking the expressway at top speed and then assuming we know all about it. Those who live in this country have much to teach those who are outsiders.⁴⁸

Judging from what Sharon Baker-Johnson writes in the other editorial piece in this issue, the majority of the *Daughters*' collective supported the idea that the Bible does not condemn homosexuality as practiced in a contemporary context. She observes that also most of the articles the editorial committee received for the edition were “affirming an equal standard for homo- and heterosexual practice.”⁴⁹ However, she wonders if that really reflects

⁴⁶ Mollenkott and Scanzoni, John Oswalt, “Homosexuality: 2 Perspectives” *Daughters of Sarah*, November/December 1977: 3-7.

⁴⁷ Genesis 12:1-8. See appendix.

⁴⁸ Reta Finger, “Signposts in a Foreign Land” *Daughters of Sarah*. May/June 1988: 4. The *Daughters* do not conclude on the issue, but follow it up in the November/December 1977 edition where both sides of the argument present their views.

⁴⁹ Sharon Baker-Johnson, “Walking the Tightrope,” *Daughters of Sara*, May/June 1988: 4-5.

the position of the readers. Knowing that homosexuality is such a divisive issue, she proposes that people find it difficult to hold up their conservative view on same-sex relationships.⁵⁰ Whether she was right or not, the issue caused more people to respond to the articles than any other issue up to then. According to Finger, no other topic had ever caused so many to raise their voices.⁵¹

Taking a look at the Evangelical Women's Caucus gives an idea of how potentially damaging a conflict concerning homosexuality could be. The Evangelical Women's Caucus experienced turbulence over the issue during the 1986 bi-annual conference in Fresno where the EWC decided to support a statement "in recognition of the lesbian minority" and "in favor of civil rights protection for homosexual persons."⁵² Consequently, the conservative faction of the EWC left and established Christians for Biblical Equality.⁵³ Several members left because they felt their position as feminists was difficult enough to defend in their churches, and being associated with an organization that supported homosexuality would make it even harder to be accepted by the evangelical establishment and obstruct the work for gender equality in church.⁵⁴ CBE's statement of faith clearly reflects the controversy over homosexuality, as it says, "We believe in the family, celibate singleness, and heterosexual marriage as the patterns God designed for us."⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Ibid, 4-5.

⁵¹ Reta Finger, "The Spirit Has the Last Word," *Daughters of Sarah* September/October 1988: 4-5.

⁵² Quoted in Ingersoll, 37.

⁵³ The issue first came up during the 1978 EWC convention in Pasadena. Scanzoni and Mollenkott were to present their book *Is the Homosexual My Neighbor?*, which challenged evangelicals to revise their attitude toward gay Christians. The other side of the debate was also to be represented by Don Williams and a presentation of his book *The Bond that Breaks: Will Homosexuality Split the Church?* However, the EWC cancelled the debate because of the controversial nature of the issue. CBE's statement of faith clearly reflects the controversy over homosexuality, as it says, "We believe in the family, celibate singleness, and heterosexual marriage as the patterns God designed for us." See: S. Sue Horner, 2002. "Trying to Be God in the World: The Story of the Evangelical Women's Caucus and the Crisis over Homosexuality," in *Gender, Ethnicity and Religion: Views from the Other Side*, and Cochran, 2005, chapter 4: "Is the Homosexual My Neighbor?"

⁵⁴ Cochran, 97.

⁵⁵ See appendix: Christians for Biblical Equality.

Addressing the stir after the issue on homosexuality and evangelical feminism, Finger comments on the challenge they face when dealing with homosexuality. Finger explains that, “Similar interpretive principles can be used for biblical understandings of both feminism and homosexuality.” Feminist and queer interpretations of the Bible argue that the Bible must be read in light of historical and social context. Furthermore, they both argue that the Bible supports the oppressed, and that women and homosexuals have been victimized by discriminatory theology from the church. However, Finger points out that there is a fundamental difference in the two cases. The Bible portrays women as leaders in the Old as well as the New Testament, making it possible to claim a feminist position in an evangelical context. Homosexuality, on the other hand, is consistently condemned throughout the Bible, but Finger points out that homosexuality in a modern context may not mean the same thing as when the Bible texts were written. She asks if heterosexism may be an expression of the power structure patriarchy represents. Given the history of patriarchal thinking throughout history, she proposes that their understanding of homosexuality may be a result of male-oriented theology.⁵⁶

In a wider context, the conflict over how to deal with homosexuality illustrates the different visions of the purpose of evangelical feminism and the tension between the evangelical feminist and liberationist feminist influences on *Daughters of Sarah*, as well as in the Evangelical and Ecumenical Women’s Caucus.⁵⁷ The former focuses on reshaping evangelicalism and maintaining close connections to the evangelical faith, while the latter focuses on solidarity with the oppressed and a wider vision of the feminist cause. The progressive evangelical feminist openness to discussing homosexuality in solidarity with

⁵⁶ Reta Finger, “The Spirit Has the Last Word,” *Daughters of Sarah* September/October 1988: 4-5.

⁵⁷ Cochran explores the tension within evangelical feminism in chapter 4. CBE’s statement of faith clearly reflects the controversy over homosexuality, as it says, “We believe in the family, celibate singleness, and heterosexual marriage as the patterns God designed for us.”

those who experience discrimination in churches due to their sexual orientation indicates a bent toward liberationist feminist theology and a move from the evangelical tradition.

Summary and Chapter Conclusion

The *Daughter of Sarah*'s journey resembles what Judith Stacey writes on how evangelical feminists negotiate their evangelical and feminist identity: "Evangelical feminists are serious about both their evangelicalism and their feminism, and each belief system modifies the other."⁵⁸ By including other perspectives into the discussion, *Daughters of Sarah*'s evangelical identity was strongly modified by what they learned from other feminists.

Daughters of Sarah unearthed varieties of women's roles throughout history to re-symbolize femininity in the evangelical tradition from passive to active at the same time as they claimed adherence to God-given principles beyond time and space. As Christians, *Daughters of Sarah* believe in an eternal authority outside themselves and can be grouped with the orthodox side of the culture wars. However, as feminists, they also took part in the progressive project of re-symbolizing their faith tradition. Eventually, *Daughters of Sarah* became less evangelical in theology and social focus. The wide range of theological and ideological influences gave them insight into different approaches to the world, and the Daughters sought alliances with feminists of other theological traditions. This happened simultaneously with a more polarized public debate as the culture war developed. As the culture war moved on, the *Daughters of Sarah* illustrates the mechanism of the conflict in their discussion, forging new alignments based on their progressive agenda.

⁵⁸ Stacey, 141.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Today in many circles, feminism is viewed either as passé or as a dirty word. Yet many gains have been made, and the very fact that women's roles are debated in conservative contexts testifies to the impact of feminism thorough the culture and the church at large.¹

Long time editor Finger writes this in the introduction to a 2001 anthology of articles from the *Daughters of Sarah*, and sums up the complex relationship between faith and feminism in contemporary American Protestantism. The history of evangelical feminism reveals that the movement needed a cooptable network to support their activism, that evangelical feminists participated in the battle over evangelical reading of the Bible, and that they embraced feminist ideas from other faith traditions than the strictly evangelical. What seemed to be a good strategy failed to make them part of mainstream evangelical thinking and practice, and the evangelical right continues to provide the ideological framework to which most evangelicals adhere.

Traditional gender roles remain the preferred ideology because it provides them a useful way to separate themselves from mainstream values at the same time as they have the same lifestyle as most Americans. George Marsden observes that since evangelicals take part in the mainstream American culture, the only thing left that distinguishes them from the rest of the American society is the way evangelicals relate to issues related to sexuality, gender, and family values. Consequently, conservative attitudes to these issues symbolize a subculture and faithfulness to the Biblical authority, and continue to serve as a way of delimiting evangelicals from mainstream culture as well as fundamentalism and mainline churches.² Giallagher's article "The Marginalization of Evangelical Feminism," argues that evangelical feminism has failed to provide the average evangelical with adequate cultural codes and ideas

¹ Finger, "Introduction," *The Wisdom of Daughters*, xii.

² Marsden, "The Changing Face of American Evangelicalism."

that come out as clear evangelical alternatives to the secular gender and family debate. Because most evangelicals do not have in-depth knowledge of evangelical feminist thinking, feminism remains a threat to orthodox evangelicalism to the vast majority of contemporary American evangelicals.³ According to Gallagher's "Symbolic Traditionalism & Pragmatic Egalitarianism: Contemporary Evangelicals, Families and Gender," most evangelicals support the traditional gender system and blame feminism for what they believe is a crisis in family matters. Among her interviewees, as much as 90.4 % of lay, self-identified evangelicals support traditional gender roles that collide with feminist ideas of gender equality.⁴

However, in the same survey, 87.4 % agreed with egalitarian ideas of marriage. Most of the couples she interviewed made important decisions together, and she also found that evangelical women work outside their homes at almost the same rate as other American women. To most of them, the idea of "male headship" meant that men are responsible for the tougher workloads and of the spiritual and emotional well-being of their families. The husbands were expected to get involved in the family's daily life, not to be an authoritarian leader. In other words, the majority of the respondents agrees with two contrasting the views on how to define men's and women's roles within marriage.⁵ This ambiguity is also reflected in Gallagher's "Where are the Antifeminist Evangelicals? Evangelical Identity, Subcultural Location, and Attitudes toward Feminism." She found that 65 % of the self-identified evangelicals she interviewed see feminism as hostile to their moral and spiritual values. However, when questioned more specifically about feminist issues, two thirds said they

³ Gallagher 2004, page 14/22.

⁴ Sally K. Gallagher. "Symbolic Traditionalism & Pragmatic Egalitarianism: Contemporary Evangelicals, Families and Gender." Hartford Institute for Religion Research. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of Association for the Sociology of Religion. New York. August 1996. September 13, 2004.

<http://hirr.hartsem.edu/research/family_evangelicalroles_report.html>

⁵ Gallagher, 1996.

appreciated the results of liberal feminist activism in the 1970s as gains in women's rights and opportunities.⁶

Although it is difficult to evaluate the causality in the evangelical drift toward egalitarian gender roles, evangelical feminists deserve some credit for this development. In Stacey's study, evangelical Christians do not stand out as exceptionally antifeminist, and she writes, "Although only a minority of evangelicals is feminist, the impact of evangelical discourse has been profound and diffuse." Gallagher argues that, even though evangelicals continue to use the ideological tools that define evangelical gender roles as hierarchal, evangelical feminists have provided some egalitarian tools to approach gender.⁷ Likewise, Smith argues that the impact of evangelical feminism has been substantial, although he also points to how larger societal changes have influenced evangelical gender roles. Smith describes evangelical gender debate as a process where evangelicals "negotiate their lives with cultural tool kits containing a mix of tools."⁸ Evangelical feminist activism has pointed out other tools in the evangelical tool box that help them deal with gender roles from a different perspective. While continuing to be a minority, evangelical feminists have widened the range of options for evangelical Christians to understand and practice gender. One of the indicators of evangelical feminist influence on the evangelical community is the evangelical feminist term "mutual submission," coined by Nancy Hardesty in the early 1970s.⁹ Stacey points to the evangelical feminist term "mutual submission" as an example of how people who do not define themselves as feminist find tools to negotiate gender roles in the evangelical feminist tradition. Similarly, Manning finds that her evangelical informants often

⁶ Sally K. Gallagher. "Where are all the Antifeminist Evangelicals? Evangelical Identity, Subcultural Location, and Attitudes toward Feminism," *Gender & Society*. Vol. 18, No. 4 (August 2004): 451-472.

⁷ Gallagher 2003, 61- 62, 175- 180.

⁸ Smith, 2000, 188- 191.

⁹ Hardesty, Nancy. "Re: Norwegian graduate student," E-mail to author. September 8, 2005.

Hardesty, Nancy. "Re: Norwegian graduate student," E-mail to author. September 9, 2005. See appendix: the Chicago Declaration.

reinterpret “submission” into “mutual submission.”¹⁰ It is impossible to give a full explanation of why the evangelical community adhere to traditional ideology when they practice egalitarian gender roles, but a few observations may serve to provide some clarification of what caused evangelical feminism to remain a minority voice in American evangelicalism.

Evangelical Feminism and the Evangelical Establishment in the 1990s-2000s

Daughters of Sarah ceased publishing in 1996, and the evangelical feminist movement today consists of Evangelical and Ecumenical Women’s Caucus and Christians for Biblical Equality. The EEWC has moved away from the evangelical mainstream while CBE has remained close to mainstream evangelical Christianity. Christians for Biblical Equality has maintained their evangelical profile and identity. When they joined the National Association of Evangelicals in 1989, CBE defined itself at the center of neo-evangelical Christianity.¹¹ The EEWC promotes the same inclusive stance as *Daughters of Sarah*.¹² The progressive side of evangelical feminism has moved closer to other progressive forces in the public debate while the conservative side has continued to maintain close affiliations with core evangelical institutions that represent orthodoxy in the culture war. The EEWC continues to explore feminism and Christian faith, but recognizes that it is outside the mainstream evangelical movement. Anne Eggebroten reflects on progressive feminism’s role in the American religious landscape, she describes their role as prophetic - ignored by their contemporaries, but recognized by future generations. She writes:

We are comfortable being outside of mainstream
evangelicalism. Prophets are never mainstream -- they are way
out there ahead, calling the church to change and sometimes

¹⁰ Stacey 1991, 143. Manning 151.

¹¹ Ingersoll, 37.

¹² See appendix “Evangelical and Ecumenical Women’s Caucus”

getting stoned or burned for their efforts. Was Martin Luther widely approved by the church of his day? Not exactly.¹³

Their marginalized position in American evangelicalism is illustrated by what happened in 2004 when the Evangelical and Ecumenical Women's Caucus printed an advertisement in *Christianity Today* to inform about their upcoming conference and their upcoming 30th anniversary. *Christianity Today* received massive critique for printing it, and later claimed the ad was printed as a result of a "breakdown" in their routines. One of the main arguments against progressive feminism is its supportive attitude to Christian gays and lesbians. Reporting on the incidence, the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood especially points out Virginia Mollenkott, who came out as a lesbian in the 1980s along with Hardesty,¹⁴ a danger to orthodox Christian faith.¹⁵ The CBMW sees Christians for Biblical Equality as their main opponent in the evangelical gender debate and considers them to be evangelical even though they disagree with their position on women. As CBE, CBMW is part of the National Association of Evangelicals and places itself within the evangelical mainstream.¹⁶

When *Daughters of Sarah* ceased circulating, it was only a symptom of a larger problem. Finger blames the organizational pattern that followed the professionalized production. *Daughters of Sarah* started out as a collective and volunteer based project where women gathered to give voice to their fellow believers, distribute their ideas, and create an evangelical feminist network across the country. The *Daughters of Sarah*, paradoxically enough, based its organization on traditional gender roles. The editorial collective consisted of women who either were homemakers or worked part-time, and as time progressed, fewer Christian feminists were available to volunteer at the same basis. Finger highlights that the

¹³ Anne Eggebroten, "On Being Evangelical and Ecumenical," *EEWC Update* Summer 2003. September 13, 2005. <<http://eewc.com/Update/Summer2003OnBeing.htm>.>

¹⁴ Cochran, 103-106. Nancy Hardesty, "Blessed Be the Waters That Rise and Fall to Rise Again, (Part 2)" *EEWC Update*, Fall 2004. August 24, 2005. <<http://www.eewc.com/Update/Fall2004Blessed1.htm>

¹⁵ Jeffrey Robinson, "Christianity Today VP calls feminist ad in March issue a mistake," *Gender-News.com* March 28, 2004. August 28, 2005. <<http://www.gender-news.com/article.php?id=2>.>

¹⁶ Cochran, 161.

new generation that took over the leading positions did not have the same passion, or the need, for the feminist cause that the original Daughters group had. The new generation of feminists lived up to what *Daughters of Sarah* had preached about fulfilling each women's potential, but that turned out to be a high price to pay. The periodical did not survive the financial burden of paying a younger staff of professional women.¹⁷ Interestingly, Finger sees the closing of *Daughters of Sarah* as a sign of success. If their effort had not been somewhat successful, the younger Daughters would have been more passionate about the project than they did.

Evangelical feminists constitute a small minority of the evangelical movement and traditional family values have become fundamental to the evangelical cultural identity. Nevertheless, several studies have uncovered pragmatism and creative blending of egalitarian and complementarian gender ideologies among evangelicals, and in spite of the massive support to Dr. Dobson, few evangelicals are involved in anti-feminist activism. Gallagher shows that the evangelical anti-feminist attitudes do not result in efforts to influence the larger society. When asked specific questions about their attitudes to feminism, most evangelicals modified their stand against it. Only a small minority of 15 percent was engaged in antifeminist activism. Several said they believed in gender equality, but they had problems calling their views "feminist." All in all, most evangelicals agreed with liberal feminist claims, but were hostile towards what they perceived as excessive focus on individualism, sexuality, abortion, and gender definitions.¹⁸

The egalitarian gender practice among evangelicals has not passed the complementarian side of the gender debate. In spite of the massive traditionalist impulse through the Family Values movement, the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

¹⁷ Reta Finger. E-mail to author. Mar 1, 2006 "Re- *Daughters of Sarah*." Reta Halterman Finger. "Introduction," *The Wisdom of Daughters: Two Decades of the Voice of Christian Feminism*. Ed. Reta Halterman Finger and Kari Sandhaas. Philadelphia: Innisfree Press, Inc. 2001. xi-xii.

¹⁸ Gallagher, 2004.

sees itself as the marginalized voice in American evangelicalism. The CBMW was established as a response to the evangelical feminist movement because conservative evangelicals believed evangelical feminists succeeded in changing evangelical gender attitudes.¹⁹ They look at sociological data presented by sociologists such as Gallagher and Wilcox who argue evangelicals are more similar to mainstream Americans, and take their conclusions as evidence that complementarians need to revitalize their arguments and continue fighting for a hierarchal reading of the Bible. Russell Moore writes, “Egalitarians are winning the debate, not because their arguments are stronger, but because, in some sense, we’re all egalitarians now.”²⁰ Still, the evangelical segment of the USA remains ideologically hostile to feminist claims. Part of the reason why evangelicals maintain their conservative profile may be rooted in their opposition to liberal theology.

Evangelical Feminism and Liberal Theology

Evangelicalism has defined itself in opposition to liberalism, secularism, and fundamentalism, and it is an exclusive faith that proposes an either-or attitude to values and dogmatic issues. Part of the mistrust in liberal theology is expressed in evangelical skepticism toward feminism; especially since the progressive evangelical feminist discussion has aligned itself with mainline and liberal Christian feminist, embraced liberal politics, and stretched hermeneutics toward liberal methods of reading the Bible. As discussed in chapter four, the *Daughters of Sarah* sought allies in liberal Protestantism and Judaism at the same time as the orthodox voices aligned on the other side. The Evangelical and Ecumenical Women’s Movement also sought allies outside conservative Protestant churches and included mainline

¹⁹ Jeff Robinson, “Many evangelicals unwittingly live according to dictates of feminism, Moore tells ETS audience,” November 28, 2005. January 31, 2006. Gender-News.com (via <www.cbmw.com>) <<http://gender-news.com/article.php?id=102>>

²⁰ Russell Moore, “After Patriarchy, What? Why Egalitarians Are Winning the Evangelical Gender Debate” Accessed January 31, 2006 <<http://henryinstitute.org/documents/2005ETS.pdf>> via Jeff Robinson “Many Evangelicals Unwittingly Live in According to Dictates of Feminism.”

as well as evangelical women. Cochran stresses subcultural identity as a factor to explain why evangelical feminists remain a small minority in evangelical churches. She looks especially into the fate of progressive evangelical feminism and argues that “Since progressive feminists are identified by their inclusivity, this fact fails to set them apart from the rest of contemporary culture, and their faith provides fewer reasons for its adherents to remain bound to it.”²¹ Evangelical feminism developed into something too far from what most evangelicals are comfortable with, theologically and ideologically. This has happened simultaneously with an increasing awareness of theological skirmishes among average American Christians, and evangelical feminism has taken a very different turn than the general evangelical audience.

Sociologist Robert Wuthnow’s analysis of the contemporary religious landscape in the USA reveals that the evangelical skepticism to liberal theology and ethics continues to be real among conservative Protestants. Using other terms than Hunter, Wuthnow shows that the culture war has trickled down into popular ideas of religion where liberals and conservatives are pitted against each other. Different denominational traditions and the schisms within liberal as well as conservative religion undermine the claim of formal alignments, but he points out that the dichotomy is real “in the popular mind.”²² Referring to a national survey of religious identity, he explains that there is an almost even distribution of people in the liberal and conservative camps, and that evangelicals were overall more likely to define themselves as conservative. The survey also found that, “The more each side came in to contact with the other, and the more knowledge it gained about the other, the less it liked the other.”²³ In contrast to Alan Wolfe, Wuthnow sees the culture conflict in American religion as increasing when opposing ideologies exchange ideas. Hence, in spite the claim that evangelical feminist

²¹ Cochran, 185.

²² Robert Wuthnow, “Old Fissures and New Fractions in American Religious Life”, in ed. David G. Hackett *Religion and American Culture. A Reader* (Second Edition. New York and London: Routledge. 2003) 361.

²³ *Ibid*, 362.

ideas have trickled down to lay evangelicalism, the traditionalist ideology continues to appeal to the average American evangelical.

The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood sees evangelical feminism as a sign of liberal influence on Protestantism and worries that increasingly egalitarian practice will turn evangelicalism away from their conservative theology. The fear is elaborately explored in Wayne Grudem's "Is Evangelical Feminism the New Path to Liberalism? Some Disturbing Warning Signs," where he traces what he sees as the moral downfall of Protestantism back to feminist influence in the church. Using slippery slope argumentation, he foreshadows the corruption of evangelicalism, and points to how mainline churches have topped their feminist agenda by allowing homosexuals to be ordained.²⁴ In a context where most evangelicals see liberal theology as a threat to their faith, CBMW's argumentation may resonate with parts of how evangelicals oppose feminism.

Another important reason why American evangelicalism continues to adhere to conservative Bible interpretation is rooted in the nature of evangelical theological tradition. Noll contrasts mainline Protestant, Catholic, and evangelical attitudes about who has the authority to interpret Scripture. Whereas the Catholic Church stresses "religious authority" and Protestantism "technical expertise," the evangelical movement has always relied on "popular approval" to give authority to interpretations.²⁵ The evangelical egalitarian ideal promotes lay interpretation because it is believed to secure equal access to Scripture and the Deity. In Noll's words, "...this propensity toward democracy is one of the factors nurturing the strong traditionalism among evangelicals...in matter of doctrine... the authority of the people has been a conservative force."²⁶

²⁴ Wayne Grudem. "Is Evangelical Feminism the New Path to Liberalism? Some Disturbing Warning Signs," *Journal of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Spring 2004): 35-84. <www.cbmw.org/journal/editions/9-1.pdf>

²⁵ Wuthnow, 150-151.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 153.

Audience, Relative Deprivation, and Different Types of Women

Noll observes that even though American evangelicalism has debated women's role regularly since the mid-nineteenth century, the gender debate that grew out of the 1970s was different because of its technical and theological discussion.²⁷ This may explain why evangelical feminism, traditionalist and progressive, have had remained a minority group within evangelicalism. Being a movement of highly educated women (and men), the style and content of evangelical feminist writing is too technical, theoretical, and theological to be relevant to the everyday lives of people across the USA. Evangelical feminism challenges the very definition of evangelical Christianity as it questions the traditional evangelical idea of the Bible as a revelation of God's message to human beings. Distinguishing between human and spiritual aspects of the Bible is at the heart of evangelical feminism, but it is a task that requires knowledge of history and language most people do not have. Consequently, they have failed to communicate their message to lay evangelicalism, and CBE and EEWC continue to be affiliated with the educated elite of evangelicalism.

Progressive evangelical feminism has had problems reaching a new generation of evangelical feminists. Looking at the demographics of *Daughters of Sarah*, Cochran finds an aging readership and argues that *Daughters of Sarah* failed to attract the new generation of women, and evangelical feminism attracted mainly women in the same age category as the founding mothers.²⁸ This seems also to be the case with the Evangelical and Ecumenical Women's Caucus. Judging from the articles in *EEWC Update* and their conference programs, the same women who initiated the organization continue to be the spokeswomen for progressive evangelical feminism. For instance, Letha Scanzoni edits their newsletter *EEWC*

²⁷ Noll, 1991, 206-208.

²⁸ Cochran, 33-34.

Update, and Virginia Mollenkott and Reta Finger will teach during the 2006 conference.²⁹

The only evidence of a younger member of the EEWC is Alena Amato Ruggerio, but she represents the white and well-educated strata of American Christianity, as do the older evangelical feminists.³⁰

Tone Stangeland Kaufman has analyzed how women in Indremisjonsforbundet, a Norwegian conservative domestic mission organization.³¹ Her article is a reminder of the importance of remembering the different starting points women have when the address feminist issues. Kaufman found six types of women who reacted differently to the gender system: “the Loyal,” “the Privileged,” “the Creative,” “the Invisible,” “the Skeptical/Career Oriented,” and “the Theologians.” The first three types of women are people who have adapted to the gender culture and manage to find meaning in the positions they have. The Invisible type often does not find a place in the established roles, and leaves the organization for other contexts without making much out of it. The two last types, however, are the ones who make themselves heard, fight, and often have to leave the organization because they openly challenge the organizational structure and find there is no room for them.³²

Evangelical feminists mainly fit into the two latter categories. Although Kaufman does not use the term, what she describes is highly similar to Freeman’s concept of relative deprivation.³³ When evangelical feminists initiated their activism, they represented a well educated segment of the evangelical movement who compared their lives and situations with other groups than the average evangelical wife and mother does. Evangelical feminists aspired

²⁹ EEWC Conference 2006 <www.eewc.com/conf2005Home.htm>

³⁰ Alena Amato Ruggerio “God’s Grrrl – Biblical Feminism and the Secular Third Wave” *EEWC Update* Winter 2001-2002. March 2006. <www.eewc.com/Update/winter_2001Grrrl.htm>

³¹ Although she analyzes a Norwegian organization, the cultural and theological climate of Norwegian evangelicalism is similar to the American context that it reflects some of the basic challenges in American evangelicalism. In 2001, Indremisjonen and Santalmisjonen merged and established Normisjon. See: <www.normisjon.no>

³² Tone Stangeland Kaufman, *Should I Stay or Should I Go? Er Indremisjonen et blivende sted for kvinner som ønsker seg en lederstilling?* No date of publication given. Accessed March 6, 2006 <<http://bibelsklikeverd.no>>.

³³ Freeman, 15-17.

to enter seminaries and leadership roles in churches and had other goals in life. They also had more contact with other feminists and saw what they achieved. At the dawn of evangelical feminism, secular and mainline Protestant feminists gained ground in society and enjoyed success in their attempts to change the existing order, and evangelical feminists saw the potential for change in their own situation as they observed the gains and progress of other women. Three decades later, evangelical feminism continues to represent mainly women with ambitions to go beyond traditional gender roles.

This corresponds with Ingersoll's observations of the gender war within evangelical institutions. She acknowledges that some women can find meaning in conservative gender roles, but points out that "for women who do not feel empowered by submission, the tension created between their own desires and expectations and the limits placed on them by those in authority can have devastating results."³⁴ Brasher, Griffith, and Manning portray women who belong to groups that do not challenge the existing social structure and who find their gender identity in the concept of wifely submission to husbands. They point out that women in conservative Protestant churches may exhibit power to achieve what they want and need. The lives and expectations of college professors and professional women differ from those who are content with lives that are more traditional. Evangelical feminists represent women who are not comfortable with the traditional ideology. They are concerned with other issues than the conservative women who find meaning and agency in their roles as traditional wives and mothers. The way conservative women find empowerment in submission, may explain why women who are more traditional their arguments do not embrace evangelical feminist ideology. These women are probably also the audience that listens to Dr. Dobson, LaHaye, and other conservative evangelical forces.

³⁴ Ingersoll, 136.

Evangelical feminists tend to stress ideology and theology, and do not appeal to other types of women who may exercise power and agency without calling themselves feminist or calling on feminist ideologies to argue their case. Gallagher's analysis of popular evangelical literature on gender roles shows that evangelical gender ideology became more pragmatic in the 1980s.³⁵ The egalitarian family and marriage literature that appeared in the 1980s and 1990s focused on practical solutions to everyday problems couples meet. As seen in *Daughters of Sarah's* development, progressive evangelical feminism has been concerned with philosophical and ideological questions. Some exceptions aside, such as Letha and John Scanzoni's column in *the Other Side*, "In the Realms of the Sexes," evangelical feminists continued to think in principles and theory. *The Other Side* also mainly attracted well-educated, white, middle class Christians whose main interest was social justice, not gender equality and feminism.³⁶ Consequently, progressive evangelical feminist became discordant with the rest of the family literature, egalitarian and complementarian.

The importance of giving practical advice that works is evident from Colleen McDannell's analysis of Focus on the Family and its audience. She argues that few of them are interested in the underlying philosophy of Dr. Dobson's message. McDannell argues that the organization is primarily about maintaining a religious identity in a consumerist world. The fact that Dobson has become a spokesperson for Right-wing politics does not seem to be an important factor to explain the popularity of Focus on the Family. In McDannell's view, the reason why the mainly female audience is attracted to the organization is that it presents "a religion that is unified, connected, practical, and relational." The success comes from Dobson's ability to provide models for "how to be faithful and still enjoy the benefits of

³⁵ Gallagher 2003, 56-61.

³⁶ "The Truth About You," *The Other Side*, April 1978: 6-7.

modern life.”³⁷ In contrast to progressive evangelical feminists, who openly discuss divisive issues such as different views on homosexuality and individual sin, Focus on the Family shuns dealing with controversial issues where the audience may disagree with them. McDannell argues that Focus on the Family’s main concern is to retain core evangelical identity markers such as the pro-life stance, and that they play down denominational boundaries and potentially disruptive issues because of their goal to confirm the evangelical culture. However, Dr. Dobson’s popularity points to a larger challenge that evangelical feminists face in the gender debate – the role of organizations in the culture war.

Networks and Coalitions

Hunter argues that the chief sources of ideas and terminology in the culture wars are knowledge workers and special agenda organizations that fall into either the progressive or the orthodox camp.³⁸ The evangelical right fits into the orthodox side of the culture war, and it has been clever at organizing an efficient network and creating ways of communicating that appeal to a wider range of people. The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood is affiliated with academic as well as popular institutions, and combines academic argumentation and mass appeal to attract a wider audience than CBE and EEWC manage to do. CBMW’s position is channelled through organizations such as Focus on the Family, which reaches millions of lay evangelicals with their insistence that feminist ideas pollute the Bible. One indication of the link between CBMW and Focus on the Family is that when asked about what Bible translation Focus on the Family recommends, the organization refers to the

³⁷ Colleen McDonnell, “Beyond Dr. Dobson: Women, Girls, and Focus on the Family,” in eds. Margareth Lamberts Bendroth, and Virginia Lieson Brerenton, *Women and Twentieth-Century Protestantism* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 2002). 128.

³⁸ Hunter, 199, 86-106.

CBMW guidelines.³⁹ Other people and organizations the CBMW collaborates with include Beverly LaHaye, Jerry Falwell, and Robert Lewis (Men's Fraternity), who are all part of the CBMW Board of Reference.⁴⁰

The evangelical left has not been able to match the Religious Right's organizational success. The progressive wing has gone through splits and setbacks that have made it harder to maintain a relevant and accessible alternative to most evangelicals. In spite of their support from the evangelical left, the early years of evangelical feminism were marked by a need to defend their existence. The evangelical left may have provided the theological basis and organizational network from which evangelical feminism could develop, but as a whole, progressive evangelicals did not see the need of evangelical feminism. To a generation concerned with anti-war activism and social justice, evangelical feminist women did not seem to be an oppressed group compared to other oppressed people as it represents a well-educated group of women, predominantly white and middle class, who lived in the most powerful nation on earth. In *Daughters of Sarah*, May 1975, Gwen E. Bagaas article testifies of evangelical feminists need to defend their agenda, and confronts people who disagree with the need of a Christian women's movement. In Bagaas opinion, feminism is their way of working for justice and a natural starting point because they are women in a sexist culture.⁴¹

Another indication of how their network did not provide sufficient support is that due to disagreement over the Equal Rights Amendment, the EWC separated from Evangelicals for Social Action and became an independent organization in 1975.⁴² Nancy Hardesty clearly expresses a feeling of betrayal by the evangelical left. Discussing the relationship between the

³⁹ "What Bible translations are recommended by Focus on the Family?" <www.family.org> Path: FAQ; TNIV. James Dobson, "Today's New International Version' (TNIV) of the Bible." www.family.org. February 2, 2002. April 11, 2006. <<http://www.family.org/welcome/press/a0019505.cfm>>

⁴⁰ "CBMW Board of Reference" <www.cbmw.org/about/board.php>. See: <www.mensfraternity.com> <www.cwfa.org>. <www.falwell.com>

⁴¹ Gwen E. Bagaas, "Apologia," *Daughters of Sarah*, May/June 1975: 7.

⁴² Gallagher, 2003, 45.

EEWC and the evangelical movement, she writes, “EWC never left evangelicalism, but even as we began, evangelicalism was leaving us. Leaders of ESA and other ‘evangelical’ organizations began to deny women authority over their own bodies.”⁴³ Prominent leaders of the evangelical left broke with progressive evangelical feminism, but continued to support Christians for Biblical Equality. People such as Anthony Campolo, Ronald Sider (ESA), and Jim Wallis (Sojourners) endorse the CBE, and the two latter serve on the CBE Board of Reference.⁴⁴ However, the main obstacle that makes it harder for evangelical feminism is the increasing role mass media plays in the public debate.

Culture Wars and the Media

Since the secular media and academia discovered evangelicalism in the 1970s, the battle over the definition of evangelicalism has not been solely fought in churches, but in the mass media. In a polarized public debate, people hear the extreme voices that thrive on conflict, and in that polarized media world, conservative Christians have grown to be a major force in the American political landscape. Conservative evangelicals such as Dr. Dobson and Focus on the Family draw attention from the secular media where they openly criticize feminism for what they saw as social ills and moral decay in American culture. The middle position is just not very interesting in a mass media culture that lives on controversy and a polarized public debate. In the culture war, the middle position is “eclipsed,” as Hunter describes it.⁴⁵

Hardesty laments the meaning “evangelical” has received in the media, and argues that “‘evangelicalism’ as the term is commonly understood today, is largely a media-created mishmash of organizations that have historically had quite distinct and conflicting

⁴³ Hardesty “Response from Nancy Hardesty” *EEWC Update* Summer 2003. September 13, 2005.

<<http://www.eewc.com/Update/Summer2003Response.htm>.>

⁴⁴ See CBE website: <<http://www.cbeinternational.org/new/about/Endorsers.shtml>.>

<http://www.cbeinternational.org/new/about/who_we_are.shtml.>

⁴⁵ Hunter, 1991, 160-161.

viewpoints.”⁴⁶ Noll points out that the Religious Right was not formed by typical evangelicals. Neither Dobson, Jerry Falwell, nor Beverly LaHaye falls into the evangelical camp, he argues. Falwell, for instance, is a self-proclaimed fundamentalist. In contrast to the politicized right wing evangelical-fundamentalist stance, Noll describes Billy Graham and his fellow evangelicals as “apolitical, or if politically engaged, relatively unobtrusive.”⁴⁷ In other words, conservative evangelicalism has moved closer to fundamentalist segments of American Protestantism. The evangelical left, then, is alienated from the larger evangelical community.

Simultaneously, evangelical popular religion has become a modern media based culture. Erling Jorstad looks at evangelicalism as a popular religious movement and argues that evangelicalism grew in the 1970s-1980s because of mass media, para-church ministries, and new technology. These channels provided means of communications that helped revive the evangelical cultural heritage. Radio stations, TV channels, and magazines gave evangelical alternatives to the secular media and mediated evangelical norms and ideas to masses of Americans across the USA.⁴⁸ Access to the evangelical segment of the USA is gained through these media, and the Religious Right has been especially diligent in building systems for mass communication. Anthony Campolo is one of the major figures of the progressive branch of evangelicalism and a member of Christians for Biblical Equality. He expresses the difficulties evangelical feminists face within the evangelical in a media culture dominated by the Religious Right. In *Speaking My Mind*, Campolo writes:

Unfortunately, the religious right controls the microphone. They own almost all of the thousands of religious radio stations across the country and put on most of the religious television shows.

⁴⁶ Hardesty “Response from Nancy Hardesty,” *EEWC Update* Summer 2003. September 13, 2005.

<<http://www.eewc.com/Update/Summer 2003Response.htm>>

⁴⁷ Noll, 2001, 23.

⁴⁸ Erling Jorstad, *Popular Religion in America: The Evangelical Voice*, Contribution to the Study of Religion, Number 57 (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press. 1993) 34-44.

Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson are the celebrities of evangelical broadcasting; hence, they are primary definers to the rest of the world of what it means to be evangelical.⁴⁹

Because anti-feminists are in control of the religious media, lay evangelicals are not familiar with the more egalitarian vision of gender relationships that Campolo calls for. From his experience, it is difficult for evangelical feminists to gain access to the major religious channels to present evangelicalism and feminism as compatible. Campolo argues that the way evangelicalism and feminism are presented as two opposing forces by the religious media makes the average believer think the only Christian way to relate to feminism is to reject it.⁵⁰ With the traditionalist evangelical segment in control of evangelical mass media, few evangelicals get information about alternative interpretations of gender roles. Evangelical feminists do not have access to the evangelical mass media, and they have been overlooked by the secular media. The way proponents of so-called traditional family values and gender roles present their ideas in the religious media, may cause the secular/mainstream media to feel even more alienated from evangelicalism per se.

The polarized media debate could also contribute to alienating evangelical women from feminism even further. Beaman's study *Shared Beliefs, Different Lives* uncovers not only the false image of evangelical women as a monolithic group of conservative anti-feminists, but it also shows that their hostility to feminism is rooted in lack of understanding the breadth of feminist ideologies. In contrast to Stacey, Smith, and Gallagher, Beaman argues that evangelical feminists have had little impact on how evangelical women define feminism. Beaman found that church leaders seem to be a secondary source of information about feminist ideas.⁵¹ She writes, "The impact of the media on evangelical women's perceptions of

⁴⁹ Tony Campolo, *Speaking my Mind: The Radical Evangelical Prophet Tackles the Tough Issues Christians are Afraid to Face* (Nashville: W. Publishing Group, 2004) 26.

⁵⁰ Anthony Campolo, conversation/personal interview, the Betel Church, Oslo. July 23, 2005. Permission to quote received from Campolo by e-mail, April 6, 2006.

⁵¹ Beaman, 87- 109, 139-140.

feminism is profound. It is quite clear that much of what women perceive as constituting feminism has been gleaned from what they hear and see from the media.”⁵² In other words, the way feminist activism and ideology is presented by the media is to blame for the hostile response to feminist claims among Beaman’s informants. In blaming the media for feminism’s bad reputation, she is on the same track as Rosen’s claims in *The World Split Open*. Rosen describes how the consumerist and therapeutic feminism presented by commercial media undermines the social and political aspect of feminism, which in turn makes feminism seem alien to the average American woman.⁵³

This could explain why Beaman found that not all she categorized as “feminist” would label themselves feminist. *Shared Beliefs, Different Lives* points out the paradox that evangelical women and feminists sometimes refer to each other in the same manner. Beaman comments that: “It is ironic that the same language – such as ‘extremism’ and ‘fundamentalism’ – that feminists sometimes use to describe evangelicals is reflected in [an evangelical] woman’s description of feminism.”⁵⁴ To Beaman, then secular feminist activist may have contributed to the distrust in feminism which she finds among evangelical women.

Evangelical Feminism and “Herstory”

Just as the media neglects the middle position in the gender discussion, so is the academia also a major obstacle for evangelical feminists. Women’s history courses may have contributed to alienating feminism and religion. Feminist scholars are part of the culture war and it should not be surprising that they see conservative evangelicalism as alien to their agenda, but the tendency to portray conservative Protestantism as inherently anti-feminist has perhaps fuelled the culture war and made the evangelical community more hostile to feminist

⁵² Ibid, 104.

⁵³ Rosen, 295-330.

⁵⁴ Beaman, 105.

claims. Just as the Religious Right has portrayed feminists as extreme and immoral, many feminist scholars have focused solely on the backlash produced by conservative evangelicals and not recognized the work of evangelical feminists. Often, conventional narratives of second wave feminism do not present the possibility of combining faith and feminism, apart from the Goddess movement and a radical feminist critique of religion that breaks with organized religion.

Ann Braude, director of the Women's Studies in Religion Program at Harvard Divinity School, has made this observation in her research on narratives of second wave feminism. Her historiographic analysis of history of second wave feminism and Christianity shows a marked tendency to treat them as two opposing forces, and she blames feminist historians for contributing to the split between feminism and religion. Braude finds that feminist as well as anti-feminist accounts presume that faith and feminism cannot be reconciled, and that both point to Mary Daly to support their claims. Both parties overlook debates among theologians where the two are not considered as oppositional and where feminist critique of religion is welcomed as valuable impulses in the theological debate.⁵⁵

Another point is that feminist historians have unmasked a close relationship between religion and first wave feminism, but have ignored the religious aspects of the second wave feminist movement. Braude looks especially into the National Organization for Women (NOW), and finds a wide range of religious activists involved in the formation of NOW who have been ignored in the narratives of second wave feminist activism. In spite of a few accounts of religious feminism, Braude found that Christian feminists are left out of most conventional narratives. If treated at all, they are treated as a version of cultural feminism that

⁵⁵ Braude, 556-559.

came about as the feminist movement retreated in the mid-1970s, and hence not considered authentically feminist.⁵⁶

The Evangelical Culture War Continues

American evangelicals take part in the national culture war, while they also experience cultural conflict in their own faith tradition. Even though sociologists and historians see evangelicals moving closer to mainstream American society, evangelical feminists and complementarians continue to see the evangelical movement from a culture wars perspective. Both parties define themselves as a marginalized group and believe that the other controls the way lay evangelicals approach gender identity. In reality, most evangelicals find themselves in a middle position and juggle feminist and anti-feminist ideas depending on what works in different contexts. The vast majority of evangelicals finds themselves somewhere between the feminist and traditional stands, but the progressive and orthodox sides of American evangelicalism continue to provide the reference points evangelicals have in their own culture war. Hunter's culture war thesis persists to be a helpful model for understanding American evangelicalism.

Today, there is an ongoing debate among American evangelicals whether or not to accept *Today's New International Version* (TNIV). The TNIV is an updated version of the *New International Version*, which is a widely used Bible translation in American evangelicalism today. It is distributed by Zondervan Publishing, one of the largest evangelical publishing houses. At heart of the debate is the importance of gender differences to the Christian faith and how to understand the Bible as the revealed Word of God. Although other Bible translations have used a similar gender neutral language, those translations have not caused the same stir in American evangelicalism as the TNIV since it represents core

⁵⁶ Ibid, 570.

evangelical institutions.⁵⁷ Christians for Biblical Equality and the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood vigorously take part in the debate on how to word the Word. Whereas CBE argues that the TNIV is “gender accurate,” CBMW insists that the new translation presents a “gender neutral” and that it removes the meaning of gender differences. Egalitarians argue that the new translation is closer to the original meaning and has reduced sexist influence on the wording of the Bible. Complementarians believe that e.g. using “human beings” instead of “man” waters down God’s message of how human beings are to relate as male and female.⁵⁸

The conflict between egalitarian and complementarians over how to understand the Bible and the role of gender in Christian faith shows that the battle over evangelical symbols continues today. It is impossible to say what kind of impact evangelical feminism has had on this development, but the TNIV undoubtedly answers some of the questions raised by evangelical feminists in the 1970s. Parts of the evangelical establishment have come to acknowledge that the Bible has been infused by sexist language and thinking, and that there is a need to reshape the biblical language in order to avoid an unnecessarily sexist theology. The TNIV controversy illustrates how ideas evangelical feminists promoted about gender biased religious language have been incorporated in mainstream evangelical Bible translations, and that the ideas which evangelical feminists presented in the 1970s continue to fuel controversy in evangelical America.

⁵⁷ Cochran, 144-147. “Why the TNIV Draws Ire.” Editorial. *Christianity Today*. March 19, 2002. February 21, 2005. <<http://www.christianitytoday.com/global/printer.html?ct/2002/004/19.36.html>> Vern S. Polytress, and Mark Strauss, “Debate: Is this new translation faithful in its treatment of gender?” *Christianity Today*. October 7, 2002: 37-45.

⁵⁸ Winn, Pete. “When Brothers Disagree,” *CitizenLink*, February 21, 2002. April 4, 2006. <<http://www.family.org/cforum/feature/a0019737>>

Works Consulted

Primary Sources

Books

Campolo, Anthony. *Speaking My Mind: The Radical Evangelical Prophet Tackles the Tough Issues Christians are Afraid to Face*. Nashville: W. Publishing Group, 2004.

Christenson, Larry. *The Christian Family*. Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship Inc., 1970. 37th printing.

Clouse, Richard G. et. al. *The Cross and the Flag*. Carol Stream, Ill.: Creation House, 1972.

Daly, Mary. *The Church and the Second Sex: With a New Feminist Postchristian Introduction by the Author*. 2nd ed. New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, London: Harper and Row Publishers, 1975.

Grudem, Wayne and John Piper. Eds. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1991.

Hardesty, Nancy and Letha Dawson Scanzoni. *All We're Meant to Be: A Biblical Approach To Women's Liberation*. Waco, Texas: Word, 1974/1978.

Hardesty, Nancy. *Your Daughters Shall Prophesy*. Brooklyn, New York: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1991.

Hearn, Virginia. Ed. *Our Struggle to Serve: Stories of 15 Evangelical Women*. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1977.

Jewett, Paul K. *MAN as Male and Female*. Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975.

Mollenkott, Virginia Ramey. *Women, Men, and the Bible*. Waco, Texas: Word, 1977.

Magazines

The magazines are listed alphabetically, and the articles are sorted by date.

Christianity Today, 1969-2006.

“Liberating Women.” *Christianity Today*, February 1969. 27.

“Eve’s Second Apple.” *Christianity Today*, August 1970. 29.

Lindsell, Harold “Egalitarianism and scriptural infallibility.” *Christianity Today*, 1976. 45-46.

Tennant, Agnieszka. “Nuptial Agreements.” *Christianity Today*, March 11, 2002. 58-65.

Polytress, Vern S. and Mark Strauss. “Debate: Is this new translation faithful in its treatment of gender?” *Christianity Today*. October 7, 2002. 37-45.

LeBlanc, Douglas, “Affectionate Patriarchs,” *Christianity Today*. August 2004. 44-46.

Daughters of Sarah, 1974-1996.

“We are Christians; we are also feminists...” *Daughters of Sarah*, November 1974. 1. (In Evangelicals for Social Action Papers, Billy Graham Center Archives. Collection 37, box 3, file 8. Wheaton, Illinois.)

Dayton, Lucile Sider. “Our Foremothers: Catherine Booth.” *Daughters of Sarah*, November 1974. 2. (In Evangelicals for Social Action Papers, Billy Graham Center Archives. Collection 37, box 3, file 8. Wheaton, Illinois.)

Borgeson, Bonnie R. “Our Foremothers: Anna Howard Shaw.” *Daughters of Sarah* January 1975. 4-5.

Ford, George L. “Our Foremothers: Ina Ellis.” *Daughters of Sarah* March 1975. 6, 10.

Hardesty, Nancy and Letha Scanzoni. “Why Sarah?” *Daughters of Sarah* May 1975. 3.

Bagaas, Gwen E. “Apologia.” *Daughters of Sarah*, May 1975. 7.

Lepper, Carol. “Readers’ Profile.” *Daughters of Sarah*, May 1976. 6-7.

Olson, Della E. “A Prophesying Daughter.” *Daughters of Sarah*, July 1976. 9-10.

- Anonymous, "Dilemma: or What's a Straight Woman Like You Doing in a Place Like This?" *Daughters of Sarah*, July 1977. 4-6.
- Mollenkott, Virginia, Letha Scanzoni, and John Oswalt. "Homosexuality: 2 Perspectives." *Daughters of Sarah*, November/December 1977. 4.
- "Herstory." *Daughters of Sarah* January/February 1978. 1-2.
- "Survey Results." *Daughters of Sarah*, July/August 1978. 15.
- "Herstory." *Daughters of Sarah*, July/August 1978. 1-2.
- M. Anderson, Elaine "The Tie That Binds." *Daughters of Sarah*, November/December 1978. 1, 3-4.
- Finger, Reta. "Why Sarah." *Daughters of Sarah*, September/October 1979. 3.
- Dayton, Lucile Sider. "On Our Fifth Anniversary." *Daughters of Sarah*, January/February 1980. 9-10.
- Finger, Reta. Editorial. "Which Color of the Rainbow? A Spectrum of Feminist Theologies." *Daughters of Sarah*, July/August 1984. 4-6.
- Finger, Reta. Editorial. "Signposts in a Foreign Land." *Daughters of Sarah*. May/June 1988. 4.
- Baker-Johnson, Sharon. Editorial. "Walking the Tightrope." *Daughters of Sarah*. May/June 1988. 4-5.
- Finger, Reta. Editorial. "The Spirit Has the Last Word." *Daughters of Sarah* September/October 1988. 4-5.
- Horner, S. Sue. Editorial. "Pieces of a Common Puzzle." *Daughters of Sarah*, March/April 1989. 2-3.
- Finger, Reta. Editorial. "A Time for Remembering." *Daughters of Sarah*, November/December 1989. 2-3.
- Finger, Reta. Editorial. "No More Marigolds." *Daughters of Sarah*, January/February 1990. 2.
- Finger, Reta. Editorial. "Getting to Know the Other Daughters of Sarah." *Daughters of Sarah*, March/April 1990. 2-3.
- Lugibihl, Jan. Editorial. "I'm Not That Kind of Woman." *Daughters of Sarah*, Winter 1993. 2-3.
- Finger, Reta. Editorial. "Beginnings, Endings, and Middles." *Daughters of Sarah*, Fall 1994. 4-5.

Anderson, Liz. Editorial. "Meet the New Kid on the Block." *Daughters of Sarah*, Winter 1995. 7.

Eternity, 1964-1977.

Scanzoni, Letha. "Woman's Place: Silence or Service?" *Eternity*, February 1966. 14-16, 18.

Scanzoni, John and Letha Scanzoni. "Elevate Marriage to Partnership." *Eternity*, July 1968. 11-14.

The Other Side, 1973-1990.

Lindskoog, Kathryn. "Paul's Bad News for Women." *The Other Side*, July-August 1973. 8-11, 39.

Alexander, Judy. "Servanthood and Submission." *The Other Side*. July-August 1973. 2, 40-43.

Alexander, John. "A Conversation with Virginia Ramey Mollenkott." *The Other Side* May-June 1976. 21-30.

"The Truth About You." *The Other Side*, April 1978. 6-7.

Post-American/Sojourners, 1973-1982.

Michaelson, Karin Granberg. "Moving into the Mainstream. Report on the evangelical women's conference at Fuller." *Sojourners*, August 1978. 7.

Priscilla Papers, 1990-2001.

Kroeger, Catherine Clark. "Does Belief in Women's Equality Lead to an Acceptance of Homosexuality?" *Priscilla Papers*, Spring 2004. 18:2. 3-10.

Archival Material:

Archives of the Billy Graham Center. Wheaton, Illinois. Collection 37, Evangelicals for Social Action Records.

Library of the Billy Graham Center. Wheaton, Illinois. Vertical Files. Evangelical Women's Caucus File.

Correspondence:

Finger, Reta. "Re: Daughters of Sarah." E-mail to author. March 2, 2006.

Finger, Reta. "Re: Daughters of Sarah." E-mail to author. March 1, 2006.

Hardesty, Nancy. "Re: Norwegian graduate student." E-mail to author. September 8, 2005.

Hardesty, Nancy. "Re: Norwegian graduate student." E-mail to author. September 9, 2005.

Internet Sources:

Christianity Today <www.christianitytoday.com>

"Why the TNIV Draws Ire." Editorial. *Christianity Today*. March 19, 2002. February 21, 2005. <<http://www.christianitytoday.com/global/printer.html?/ct/2002/004/19.36.html>>

Balswick, Jack and Judith Balswick. "Adam and Eve in America." *Christianity Today*, March 15, 2002. January 31, 2005 <<http://www.christianitytoday.com/global/printer/html?/ct/2002/109/51.0.html>>

Smietana, Bob. "C.S. Lewis Superstar." *Christianity Today*, December 2005. <www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/012/p.28.html>

Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, <www.cbmw.org>

"CBMW Board of Reference," <www.cbmw.org/about/board.php>

Grudem, Wayne. "Is Evangelical Feminism the New Path to Liberalism? Some Disturbing Warning Signs." *Journal of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Spring 2004): 35-84. <www.cbmw.org/journal/editions/9-1.pdf>

Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, <www.Gender-News.com>

Robinson, Jeffrey. "Christianity Today VP calls feminist ad in March issue a mistake." Gender-News.com March 28, 2004. August 28, 2005. <<http://www.gender-news.com/article.php?id=2>>

Moore, Russell. "After Patriarchy, What? Why Egalitarians Are Winning the Evangelical Gender Debate." Accessed January 31, 2006 via <www.Gender-News.com>, <<http://henryinstitute.org/documents/2005ETS.pdf>>

Robinson, Jeff. "Many evangelicals unwittingly live according to dictates of feminism, Moore tells ETS audience." November 28, 2005. January 31, 2006. <[Gender-News.com](http://www.Gender-News.com)> (via <www.cbmw.com>) <<http://gender-news.com/article.php?id=102>>

***EEWC Update* <www.eewc.com/Update>**

Ruggerio, Alena Amato. "God's Grrrl – Biblical Feminism and the Secular Third Wave." *EEWC Update*, Winter 2001-2002. March 2006. <www.eewc.com/Update/winter2001Grrrl.htm>

Eggebroten, Anne. "On Being Evangelical and Ecumenical." *EEWC Update*, Summer 2003. September 13, 2005. <<http://www.eewc.com/Update/Summer2003OnBeing.htm>>

Hardesty, Nancy. "Response from Nancy Hardesty." *EEWC Update*, Summer 2003. September 13, 2005. <<http://www.eewc.com/Update/Summer2003Response.htm>>

Hardesty, Nancy. "Blessed Be the Waters That Rise and Fall to Rise Again." *EEWC Update*, Summer 2004. August 24, 2005. <<http://www.eewc.com/Update/Summer2004Blessed1.htm>>

Hardesty, Nancy. "Blessed Be the Waters That Rise and Fall to Rise Again." *EEWC Update*, Fall 2004. August 24, 2005. <<http://www.eewc.com/Update/Fall2004Blessed1.htm>>

"EEWC Conference 2006." <www.eewc.com/conf2005Home.htm>

Evangelicals for Social Action, <<http://esa-online.org>>

"The Chicago Declaration Evangelical Social Concern" <<http://esa-online.org/conferences/chicago/chicago.html>>

Focus on the Family <www.family.org>

CitizenLink Staff. "Supreme Court Resource Center." January 5, 2006. April 11, 2006.
CitizenLink <<http://www.family.org/cforum/feature/a0037317.cfm> >

Dobson, James. "'Today's New International Version' (TNIV) of the Bible." February 2, 2002. April 11, 2006. <<http://www.family.org/welcome/press/a0019505.cfm>>

Dobson, James. "The Battles Ahead." January 2006. April 11, 2006.
<<http://www.focusaction.org/Articles/A000000165.cfm>>

"What Bible translations are recommended by Focus on the Family?" <www.family.org>
Path: FAQ; TNIV.

Winn, Pete. "Liberals Attack, Conservatives Defend Alito." January 6, 2006. April 11, 2006.
CitizenLink <<http://www.family.org/cforum/news/a0039112.cfm>>

Winn, Pete. "When Brothers Disagree." *CitizenLink*, February 21, 2002. April 4, 2006.
<<http://www.family.org/cforum/feature/a0019737>>

Virginia Ramey Mollenkott's Personal Weblog:

Mollenkott, Virginia Ramey. Interview with Ann Braude. October 1, 1005. January 4, 2006.
<www.virginarameymollenkott.blogs.com/virginia_ramey_mollenkott/2005/10/feminism_and_ev.html>

National Association of Evangelicals: <www.nae.net>

"History of the NAE." Accessed April 21, 2005.
<<http://www.nae.net/index.cfm?FUSEACTION=nae.history>>

Websites Consulted:

Concerned Women for America: <www.cwfa.org>

Jerry Falwell Ministries: <www.falwell.com>

Kristne for Bibelsk Likeverd: <www.bibelsklikeverd.no>

The Marion E. Wade Center: <<http://www.wheaton.edu/learneres/wade/>>

Men's Fraternity: <www.mensfraternity.com>
Normisjon: <www.normisjon.no>
Promise Keepers: <www.promisekeepers.org>
Skapt til mann og kvinne: <www.mannogkvinne.info>

Interviews:

Campolo, Anthony. Conversation/Personal interview, the Betel Church, Oslo. July 23, 2005.
Permission to quote received from Campolo by e-mail, April 6, 2006.

Students for Biblical Equality. Conversation/Informal Personal Interview, Wheaton College,
October 24, 2005.

Secondary Sources

Articles:

- Anderson, Ray S. "Evangelical Theology." Ed. David F. Ford, *The Modern Theologians. An introduction to Christian theology in the twentieth century*. 2nd ed. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1998. 480-495.
- Bartkowski, John P. "What ever happened to the Promise Keepers?" Excerpted from Bartkowski, *The Promise Keepers: Servants, Soldiers, and Godly Men*. Rutgers University Press, 2003. Harford Institute for Religion Research. Accessed September 13, 2004. <http://hrr.hartsem.edu/research/research_religion_family-pksummary.html>
- Braude, Ann. "A Religious Feminist - Who Can Find Her? Historiographical Challenges from the National Organization for Women." *The Journal of Religion*. Vol. 84:4. (October 2004): 555-572.
- DeRogatis, Amy. "What Would Jesus Do? Sexuality and Salvation in Protestant Evangelical Sex Manuals, 1950s to the Present." *Church History. Studies in Christianity and Culture* Vol. 74, No. 1 (March 2005): 97-137.
- Eskridge, Larry. "Defining Evangelicalism." Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois. 1995. April 2005. <http://www.wheaton.edu/isae/defining_evangelicalism.html>
- Gallagher, Sally K. "Symbolic Traditionalism & Pragmatic Egalitarianism Contemporary Evangelicals, Families and Gender." Hartford Institute for Religion Research. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of Association for the Sociology of Religion. New York. August 1996. Accessed September 13, 2004. <http://hrr.hartsem.edu/research/family_evangelicalroles_report.html>
- Gallagher, Sally K. "Where Are the Antifeminist Evangelicals? Evangelical Identity, Subcultural Identity, and Attitudes Toward Feminism." *Gender & Society*. Vol. 18 No 4. (August 2004): 451-472.
- Gallagher, Sally K. "The Marginalization of Evangelical Feminism." *Sociology of Religion*. Fall 2004. August 12, 2005. <http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0SOR/is_3_65/ai_n8693738/print>
- Hardesty, Nancy A. "Evangelical Women." Ed. Rosemary Skinner Keller and Rosemary Radford Ruether, *In Our Own Voices. Four Centuries of American Women's Religious Writing*. Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995. 207-235.
- Hewitt, Nancy A. "Beyond the Search for Sisterhood: American Women's History in the 1990s." Ed. Vicky L. Ruiz and Ellen Carol DuBois. *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History*. Third edition. New York London: Routledge, 2000. 1-19.

- Horner, S. Sue. "Trying to Be God in the World: The Story of the Evangelical Women's Caucus and the Crisis over Homosexuality." Ed. Rosemary Radford Reuther. *Gender, Ethnicity and Religion: Views from the Other Side*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2002. 99-124.
- Jacobsen, Douglas. "From Truth to Authority to Responsibility: The Shifting Focus of Evangelical Hermeneutics, 1915-1986." Ed. Martin E. Marty *Modern American Protestantism and Its World. 4: Theological Themes in the American Protestant World*. Munich, London, New York, Paris: K. G. Saur, 1992. 369-389.
- Jacobsen, Douglas. "From Truth to Authority to Responsibility: The Shifting Focus of Evangelical Hermeneutics, 1915-1986. Part II." Ed. Martin E. Marty *Modern American Protestantism and Its World. 4: Theological Themes in the American Protestant World*. Munich, London, New York, Paris: K. G. Saur, 1992. 390-402.
- Kaufman, Tone Stangeland. "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Er Indremisjonen et blivende sted for kvinner som ønsker seg en lederstilling?" No date of publication. Accessed March 6, 2006. <<http://bibelsklikeverd.no>>
- Lockhart, William H. "'We Are One Life,' But Not of One Gender Ideology: Unity, Ambiguity, and the Promise Keepers." Ed. Rhys H. Williams. *Promise Keepers and the New Masculinity: Private Lives and Public Morality*. Lanham, Boulder, New York, and Oxford: Lexington Books. 2001. 73-92
- McConkey, Dale. "Whither Hunter's Culture War? Shifts in Evangelical Morality, 1988-1998 – Statistical Data Included." *Sociology of Religion*. Summer 2001. <http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0SOR/is_2_62/ai_76759006/print>
- McDonnell, Colleen. "Beyond Dr. Dobson: Women, Girls, and Focus on the Family." Ed. in Margareth Lamberts Bendroth and Virginia Lieson Brerenton. *Women and Twentieth-Century Protestantism*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 2002. 113-135.
- Noll, Mark A. "Understanding American Evangelicals." Ethics and Public Policy Center. Posted: Dec. 22, 2003 Publication Date: Dec. 8, 2003 Accessed April 26, 2005. <http://www.eppc.org/publications/pubid.1943/pub_detail.asp>
- Quebedeaux, Richard. "We're On Our Way Lord!: The Rise of 'Evangelical Feminism' in Modern American Christianity." Ed. Ursula King. *Women in the World's Religions, Past and Present*. New York: Paragon House, 1987. 129-144.
- Scholtz, Susanne. "The Christian Right's Discourse on Gender and the Bible." *Journal of Feminist Study of Religion*. Vol. 21, no1. (Spring 2005): 81-100.
- Stocks, Janet. "Evangelical Feminist Negotiation in the Public Debate of a Small Denomination in the United States." in Judy Brink and Joan Mencher, *Mixed Blessings. Gender and Religious Fundamentalism Cross Culturally*. New York and London: Routledge. 1997. 59-71.

Van Leewuven, Mary Stewart. "The Direction of Promise Keepers: A Response to Papers on Religion, Sports and Manhood." Christians for Biblical Equality. First published in Priscilla Papers, Vol. 11, No. 2. Spring 1997. Oct. 4, 2004.

<http://www.cbeinternational.org/new/free_articles/msvanlee.shtml>

Wuthnow, Robert. "Old Fissures and New Fractions in American Religious Life." Ed. David G. Hackett. *Religion and American Culture. A Reader*. Second Edition. New York and London: Routledge. 2003. 357-371.

Books:

Balmer, Randall. *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory. A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Bartkowski, John P. *Remaking the Godly Marriage: Gender Negotiation in Evangelical Families*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2001.

Baxandall, Rosalyn and Linda Gordon. Eds. *Dear Sisters: Dispatches from the Women's Liberation Movement*. New York: Basic Books, 2000.

Beaman, Lori. G. *Shared Beliefs, Different Lives. Women's Identities in Evangelical Context*. St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 1999.

Bendroth, Margareth Lamberts, *Fundamentalism & Gender, 1875 to the Present*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993.

Bendroth, Margareth Lamberts, *Growing Up Protestant. Parents, Children, and Mainline Churches*. New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2002.

Bendroth, Margareth Lamberts and Virginia Lieson Brerenton. Eds. *Women and Twentieth-Century Protestantism*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002.

Brasher, Brenda. *Godly Women: Fundamentalism and Female Power*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998.

Cochran, Pamela D. H., *Evangelical Feminism. A History*, New York and London: New York University Press, 2005.

DeBerg, Betty A. *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.

DuPlessis, Rachel Blau and Anne Snitow. Eds. *The Feminist Memoir Project. Voices from Women's Liberation*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1998.

- Finger, Reta Halterman and Kari Sandhaas. Eds. *The Wisdom of Daughters: Two Decades of the Voice of Christian Feminism*. Philadelphia: Innisfree Press, Inc., 2001.
- Freeman, Jo. *The Politics of Women's Liberation. A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and Its Relation to the Policy Process*. New York: Longman, 1975. Printed in compendium for "NORAM 4506: History of American Women's Movements," University of Oslo, fall 2005.
- Gallagher, Sally K., *Evangelical Identity & Gendered Family Life*. New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2003.
- Griffith, Ruth Marie. *God's Daughters. Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1997.
- Hart, D. G. *That Old Time Religion in Modern America: Evangelical Protestantism in the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: Ivan R, Dee, 2002.
- Hunter, James Davison *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Hunter, James Davison. *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*. New York: Basic Books, 1991.
- Ingersoll, Julie. *Evangelical Christian Women: War Stories in the Gender Battles*. New York and London: New York University Press, 2003.
- Jorstad, Erling. *Popular Religion in America: The Evangelical Voice*. Contribution to the Study of Religion, Number 57. Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1993.
- Lindley, Susan Hill. *You Have Stepped Out of Your Place. A History of Women and Religion in America*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.
- Manning, Christel. *God Gave Us The Right: Conservative Catholic, Evangelical Protestant, and Orthodox Jewish Women Grapple With Feminism*. New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 1999.
- Morris, Brian. *Anthropological Studies of Religion: An Introductory Text*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Noll, Mark A. *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible*. 3rd ed. Leicester, England: Apollos, 1991.
- Noll, Mark A. *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.
- Rosen, Ruth. *The World Split Open: How the Modern Woman's Movement Changed America*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000.

Sharpe, Eric J. *Understanding Religion*. London: Duckworth, 1983/1994.

Smith, Christian. *Christian America? What Evangelicals Really Want*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

Stacey, Judith. *Brave New Families. Stories of Domestic Upheaval in Late Twentieth Century America*. New York: BasicBooks, 1991.

Quebedeaux, Richard. *The Young Evangelicals: Revolution in Orthodoxy*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.

Wolfe, Alan. *One Nation, After All: What Middle Class Americans Really Think About: God, Country, Family, racism, welfare, immigration, homosexuality, work, the Right, the Left, and Each Other*. New York: Viking, 1998.

Leaflet:

“Sojourners Collection.” Leaflet from Archives and Special Collection, Buswell Memorial Library, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois.

Lecture:

Marsden, George. “Changing Face of Evangelicalism, Wheaton 2005.” The Changing Face of American Evangelicalism, The Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, Oct. 13, 2005.

Transcript:

“Part Three: Evangelicals and Culture.” Narrator Jeff Sheler. *America’s Evangelicals*, Episode no. 735. Public Broadcasting Service, <www.pbs.org> April 30, 2004. <<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week735/special.html>> Transcript.

Reference:

Crowther, Jonathan. Ed. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. 5th edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Sixth Edition. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2003.

Google <<http://www.google.no/>>

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. 2005. Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. <http://www.m-w.com>

Skårdal, Dorothy Burton. *Rules for Writing English. A Practical Handbook for Students and Teachers of English in Norway*. Oslo: Unipub Kompendier. 1992.

Strunk, William and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4th ed. New York: Longman, 2000.

Appendices:

Daughters of Sarah

THE PURPOSE OF Daughters of Sarah is to educate and sustain Christians to change and transform church and society on issues of mutuality, justice, and equality through publication of a provocative and personal Christian feminist magazine. Given that Christian feminists hold a wide range of viewpoints, we find it necessary to agree to disagree that we may create a true forum on faith and feminism. We invite you to enter this conversation, both as reader and as writer or artist, that the diversity of all our voices may be heard.

Who we are

We are Christians; we are also feminists. Some say we cannot be both, but Christianity and feminism for us are inseparable.

DAUGHTERS OF SARAH is our attempt to share our discoveries, our struggles and our growth as Christian women. We are committed to Scripture and we seek to find in it meaning for our lives. We are rooted in a historical tradition of women who have served God in innumerable ways and we seek guidance from their example. We are convinced that Christianity is relevant to all areas of women's lives today. We seek ways to act out our faith.

Why Sarah?

Sarah was a strong woman, equally called by God to a new land of promise.

We are Daughters of Sarah, not of the flesh, but of the promise as Scripture says, co-heirs of God's grace and life.

Finger, Reta Halterman and Kari Sandhaas. (ed.) *The Wisdom of Daughters: Two Decades of the Voice of Christian Feminism*. Philadelphia: Innisfree Press, Inc. 2001, xviii.

Evangelical and Ecumenical Women's Caucus

Our Mission

We support, educate, and celebrate Christian feminists from many traditions.

Our Purpose

to encourage and advocate the use of women's gifts in all forms of Christian vocation.

to provide educational opportunities for Christian feminists to grow in their belief and understanding.

to promote networking and mutual encouragement within the Christian community.

Our Statement of Faith

We believe God is the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of all.

We believe God created all people, female and male, in the divine image for relationship with God and one another.

We further believe our relationship with God was shattered by sin with a consequent disruption of all other relationships.

We believe God in love has made possible a new beginning through the incarnation in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who was and is truly divine and truly human.

We believe the Bible is the Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and is a central guide and authority for Christian faith and life.

We believe the church is the community of women and men who have been divinely called to do God's will, exercising their gifts responsibly in church, home, and society, and looking forward to God's new creation.

We Are Christian Feminists

EEWC affirms that the Bible supports the equality of the sexes.

We believe that our society and churches have irresponsibly encouraged men to domination and women to passivity.

We proclaim God's redemptive word on mutuality and active discipleship.

We value inclusive images and language for God.

We advocate ordination of women and full expression of women's leadership and spiritual gifts.

From the Evangelical and Ecumenical Women's Caucus Website, www.eewc.com> see www.eewc.com/About.htm>

Christians for Biblical Equality

CBE Statement of Faith

We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God, is reliable, and is the final authority for faith and practice.

We believe in the unity and trinity of God, eternally existing as three equal persons.

We believe in the full deity and the full humanity of Jesus Christ

We believe in the sinfulness of all persons. One result of sin is shattered relationships with God, self, and others.

We believe that eternal salvation and restored relationships are possible through faith in Jesus Christ who died for us, rose from the dead, and is coming again. This salvation is offered to all people.

We believe in the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation, and in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

We believe in the equality and essential dignity of men and women of all races, ages, classes, recognizing that all are made in the image of God and are to reflect that Image in the community of believers, the home, and society.

We believe that men and women are to diligently develop and use their God-given gifts for the good of the home, church, and society.

We believe in the family, celibate singleness, and heterosexual marriage as the patterns God designed for us.

From the CBE International website <www.cbeinternational.org>

Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

The Danvers Statement

Rationale:

We have been moved in our purpose by the following contemporary developments which we observe with deep concern:

The widespread uncertainty and confusion in our culture regarding the complementary differences between masculinity and femininity;

the tragic effects of this confusion in unraveling the fabric of marriage woven by God out of the beautiful and diverse strands of manhood and womanhood;

the increasing promotion given to feminist egalitarianism with accompanying distortions or neglect of the glad harmony portrayed in Scripture between the loving, humble leadership of redeemed husbands and the intelligent, willing support of that leadership by redeemed wives;

the widespread ambivalence regarding the values of motherhood, vocational homemaking, and the many ministries historically performed by women;

the growing claims of legitimacy for sexual relationships which have Biblically and historically been considered illicit or perverse, and the increase in pornographic portrayal of human sexuality;

the upsurge of physical and emotional abuse in the family;

the emergence of roles for men and women in church leadership that do not conform to Biblical teaching but backfire in the crippling of Biblically faithful witness;

the increasing prevalence and acceptance of hermeneutical oddities devised to reinterpret apparently plain meanings of Biblical texts;

the consequent threat to Biblical authority as the clarity of Scripture is jeopardized and the accessibility of its meaning to ordinary people is withdrawn into the restricted realm of technical ingenuity;

and behind all this the apparent accommodation of some within the church to the spirit of the age at the expense of winsome, radical Biblical authenticity which in the power of the Holy Spirit may reform rather than reflect our ailing culture.

Purposes:

Recognizing our own abiding sinfulness and fallibility, and acknowledging the genuine evangelical standing of many who do not agree with all of our convictions, nevertheless, moved by the preceding observations and by the hope that the noble Biblical vision of sexual complementarity may yet win the mind and heart of Christ's church, we engage to pursue the following purposes:

To study and set forth the Biblical view of the relationship between men and women, especially in the home and in the church.

To promote the publication of scholarly and popular materials representing this view.

To encourage the confidence of lay people to study and understand for themselves the teaching of Scripture, especially on the issue of relationships between men and women.

To encourage the considered and sensitive application of this Biblical view in the appropriate spheres of life.

And thereby

to bring healing to persons and relationships injured by an inadequate grasp of God's will concerning manhood and womanhood,

to help both men and women realize their full ministry potential through a true understanding and practice of their God-given roles,

and to promote the spread of the gospel among all peoples by fostering a Biblical wholeness in relationships that will attract a fractured world.

Affirmations:

Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18).

Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart (Gen 2:18, 21-24; 1 Cor 11:7-9; 1 Tim 2:12-14).

Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin (Gen 2:16-18, 21-24, 3:1-13; 1 Cor 11:7-9).

The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women (Gen 3:1-7, 12, 16).

In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.

In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.

The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18; Gal 3:28). Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community (Gen 2:18; Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; 1 Tim 2:11-15).

Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.

In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership (Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; Tit 2:3-5; 1 Pet 3:1-7).

In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 11:2-16; 1 Tim 2:11-15).

In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission-domestic, religious, or civil-ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin (Dan 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29; 1 Pet 3:1-2).

In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries (1 Tim 2:11-15, 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9). Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.

With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world (1 Cor 12:7-21).

We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive

consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.

From the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood website, <www.cbmw.com>, see:
<<http://www.cbmw.org/about/danvers.php>>

The Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern

As evangelical Christians committed to the Lord Jesus Christ and the full authority of the Word of God, we affirm that God lays total claim upon the lives of his people. We cannot, therefore, separate our lives from the situation in which God has placed us in the United States and the world.

We confess that we have not acknowledged the complete claim of God on our lives.

We acknowledge that God requires love. But we have not demonstrated the love of God to those suffering social abuses.

We acknowledge that God requires justice. But we have not proclaimed or demonstrated his justice to an unjust American society. Although the Lord calls us to defend the social and economic rights of the poor and oppressed, we have mostly remained silent. We deplore the historic involvement of the church in America with racism and the conspicuous responsibility of the evangelical community for perpetuating the personal attitudes and institutional structures that have divided the body of Christ along color lines. Further, we have failed to condemn the exploitation of racism at home and abroad by our economic system.

We affirm that God abounds in mercy and that he forgives all who repent and turn from their sins. So we call our fellow evangelical Christians to demonstrate repentance in a Christian discipleship that confronts the social and political injustice of our nation.

We must attack the materialism of our culture and the maldistribution of the nation's wealth and services. We recognize that as a nation we play a crucial role in the imbalance and injustice of international trade and development. Before God and a billion hungry neighbors, we must rethink our values regarding our present standard of living and promote a more just acquisition and distribution of the world's resources.

We acknowledge our Christian responsibilities of citizenship. Therefore, we must challenge the misplaced trust of the nation in economic and military might - a proud trust that promotes a national pathology of war and violence which victimizes our neighbors at home and abroad. We must resist the temptation to make the nation and its institutions objects of near-religious loyalty.

We acknowledge that we have encouraged men to prideful domination and women to irresponsible passivity. So we call both men and women to mutual submission and active discipleship.

We proclaim no new gospel, but the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ who, through the power of the Holy Spirit, frees people from sin so that they might praise God through works of righteousness.

By this declaration, we endorse no political ideology or party, but call our nation's leaders and people to that righteousness which exalts a nation.

We make this declaration in the biblical hope that Christ is coming to consummate the Kingdom and we accept his claim on our total discipleship until he comes.

November 25, 1973, Chicago, Illinois

From Evangelicals for Social Action website <<http://esa-online.org>>, see <<http://esa-online.org/conferences/chicago/chicago.html>>

Central Bible Passages on Gender Roles

Genesis 1:26-31

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, [b] and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

27 So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Genesis 2:4-25

4 This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens- 5 and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth [b] and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth [c] and there was no man to work the ground, 6 but streams [d] came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground- 7 the LORD God formed the man [e] from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

8 Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. 9 And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10 A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters.

11 The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold.

12 (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin [f] and onyx are also there.) 13 The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. [g] 14 The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

19 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

But for Adam [h] no suitable helper was found. 21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs [i] and closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib [j] he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

23 The man said,
"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;

she shall be called 'woman, [k] '
for she was taken out of man."

24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

25 The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Genesis 3:1-7

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "

4 "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

1 Corinthians 11:1-16

Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head – it is just as though her head were shaved. If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For a man did not come from woman, but a woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head. In the Lord, however, woman is not independent from man, nor is a man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head covered? Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice – not do the churches of God.

Galatians 3:28

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 5:21

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Ephesians 5:22-33

Wives, submit to your husband as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is head of the church... Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself...However, each of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Colossians 3:18-19

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

Sarah in the Bible

Genesis 12

The Call of Abram

1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.

2 "I will make you into a great nation
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."

4 So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. 5 He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

6 Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. 7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring [a] I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

8 From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. 9 Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev.

Genesis 16

Hagar and Ishmael

1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar; 2 so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her."

Abram agreed to what Sarai said. 3 So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian maidservant Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. 4 He slept with Hagar, and she conceived.

When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. 5 Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my servant in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me."

6 "Your servant is in your hands," Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

7 The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. 8 And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?"

"I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered.

9 Then the angel of the LORD told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her." 10 The angel added, "I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count."

11 The angel of the LORD also said to her:

"You are now with child
and you will have a son.
You shall name him Ishmael, [a]
for the LORD has heard of your misery.

12 He will be a wild donkey of a man;
his hand will be against everyone
and everyone's hand against him,
and he will live in hostility
toward [b] all his brothers."

13 She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen [c] the One who sees me." 14 That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi [d] ; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.

15 So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. 16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

Genesis 21:1-20

The Birth of Isaac

1 Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. 2 Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. 3 Abraham gave the name Isaac [a] to the son Sarah bore him. 4 When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. 5 Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

6 Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." 7 And she added, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away

8 The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast. 9 But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, 10 and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac."

11 The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. 12 But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring [b] will be reckoned. 13 I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring."

14 Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the desert of Beersheba.

15 When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. 16 Then she went off and sat down nearby, about a bowshot away, for she thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." And as she sat there nearby, she [c] began to sob.

17 God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. 18 Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation."

19 Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.

20 God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer. 21 While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt.