FAITH, POLITICS, AND THE MISGUIDED MISSION OF THE

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

A Dissertation

by

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Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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May 2013

Major Subject: Communication

ABSTRACT

The Southern Baptist Convention has experienced both tremendous growth and intense turmoil in its relatively short history. After experiencing increasing internal conflicts throughout the late twentieth-century, a decade-long battle over the direction of the denomination resulted in a permanent schism within the Convention. The Shift, as I name it, forever altered the landscape of the Southern Baptist Convention. Notably, The Shift witnessed an apparent replacement of traditional Southern Baptist church-state separationism in favor of overt involvement in partisan politics.

In this dissertation, I provide a historical sketch of the Southern Baptist Convention and explore the denomination's evolving positions on church and state by analyzing the Southern Baptist political rhetoric at the individual, agency, and Convention levels after The Shift. Considering the work of H. Richard Niebuhr, I argue that Southern Baptist participation in politics can be understood as an attempt to transform culture to a biblical worldview. However, drawing from the work of Richard Hofstadter and Kenneth Burke, I argue that the Convention struggles to achieve its goal because its political rhetoric is characteristic of the paranoid style and employs scapegoating to blame others for society's ills.

This dissertation reveals that the Southern Baptist Convention suffers from a rhetorical problem of audience. I argue that while the denomination's political rhetoric galvanizes its conservative base, it alienates non-religious individuals, members of other religious faiths, and even some within the Southern Baptist Convention. I conclude that

in order to be a transformative agent in society, the Southern Baptist Convention's

political rhetoric must undergo a shift in *topoi* that has more universal appeal. Namely, I

argue that the denomination needs to return to its "Old Rhetoric" and, in doing so, appeal

to choice, freedom, religious liberty, free exercise, and free expression.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to Dr. James Arnt Aune.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would have been impossible without the care of many special individuals. I would like to thank my committee chair and mentor, Dr. James Arnt Aune, for his wisdom and guidance throughout this project. You provided a great example of what it means to be a teacher, scholar, and life-long learner. I would also like to thank my dissertation committee members, Dr. Jennifer Jones Barbour, Dr. Charles Conrad, Dr. Leroy Dorsey, and Dr. Craig Kallendorf, for their thoughtful insight and close reading. I am especially grateful for Dr. Jones Barbour's role in helping me see this project to its end. I would also like to thank my colleagues and the faculty and staff of the Department of Communication at Texas A&M University. Thank you for fostering a positive environment for my growth as a scholar. Thanks, also, to my students. The classroom was always a welcomed respite from reading and writing.

I would also like to thank my family and friends. Each of you has played an important role in shaping who I am. Thanks to my brother, Shane, for your encouragement; your imagination is inspiring. Thanks to my parents, Stephen and Stephanie; you challenged me to pursue my dreams. You were my first teachers, and I am forever grateful for what you taught—and continue to teach—me. Finally, thank you to my wife, Heather. Thank you for partnering with me on this journey. Thank you for your many sacrifices along the way. Thank you for your patience and understanding. I could not have completed this dissertation without your love and support.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On June 19-20, 2012, members of the Southern Baptist Convention convened in

New Orleans, Louisiana for the denomination's 167th annual meeting. The meeting

would prove historic on two accounts. In 1845, the Southern Baptist Convention was

founded, in large part, over the issue of slavery. Southern Baptists, unlike Baptists in the

North, defended the right for their church members to own slaves. More than 150 years

later at its annual meeting in 2012, the Convention elected its first African American

president, Pastor Fred Luter of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans. Luter

ran unopposed and his election was well received by those attending the Convention.[1]

For Southern Baptists, Luter's election served as a humbling reminder of the

Convention's racist past while providing a hope for the future of race relations within the

denomination.[2]

In stark contrast to the peaceful election of Fred Luter, the 167th annual meeting

would also prove momentous over a fiercely contested decision. Leading up to the

Convention some Southern Baptists had expressed concern over image problems

associated with the denomination and the naming complications for "Southern" Baptist

churches not located in the Southern United States. Citing these perceived problems,

they recommended a denominational name change of sorts. Voting on the proposed

name change—a descriptor "Great Commission Baptists"—was placed on the agenda

for the 2012 Convention. If passed, Southern Baptist churches and agencies would have

the option of adopting the "Great Commission Baptists" descriptor. The tone of the debates at the Convention, however, seemed to imply that an approval of the motion would mean a mandatory name change for all affiliates of the denomination. Arguments against the motion primarily centered on the historical use of the name "Southern Baptist Convention," but some vehemently rejected the proposal on other grounds. For example, Richard Tribble of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Decatur, Illinois declared the name change motion to be "divisive in nature and character."[3] After nearly an hour of debate on the Convention floor, a vote was taken and the motion for the name adoption passed, earning 53 percent of the vote.[4]

The tensions over the noncompulsory name descriptor at the 2012 Convention is emblematic of the denomination's history of internal disputes. The Southern Baptist Convention has been rife with controversy since its founding. Not a few of these controversies have resulted in outsiders viewing the Convention as a backwards denomination. Never more did the Southern Baptist Convention come under scrutiny than in the 1980's following plans that were put into motion at another historic meeting in New Orleans. While it is yet to be seen if the adoption of the descriptor "Great Commission Baptists" will mark a turning point for the Southern Baptist Convention, it is clear that the now infamous meeting between Southern Baptists in New Orleans in 1976 precipitated events which forever altered the direction of the denomination. The present study explores how said changes have influenced the Southern Baptist Convention's political rhetoric and participation.

The Study of Religious Communication

Religion has played an influential role in the United States since the nation's founding.[5] However, the level of religion's influence and whether or not it has been for good or ill is a point contention. Take, for instance, debates about the religion of America's founders. David Barton, self-proclaimed historian and influential founder of Wall Builders, argues that the founders of the United States were deeply religious individuals whose Christian faiths influenced America's founding documents.[6] Historians Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore offer an alternative interpretation of the role religion played in America's founding. They argue that the architects of America's political system envisioned a "godless Constitution and a godless politics" and, consequently, "crafted a constitutional order that intended to make a person's religious convictions, or his lack of religious convictions, irrelevant in judging the value of his political opinion or in assessing his qualifications for political office."[7]

The conflicting narratives offered by Barton and Kramnick and Moore are symptomatic of a larger debate about the proper relationship between church and state, a topic that is addressed in the First Amendment.[8] The religion clauses of the First Amendment read, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."[9] In part because of their awkward wording, the religion clauses have done little to silence debates about the relationship between church and state.[10] Questions of establishment and free exercise have frequently been debated in the courts and have typically been decided by slim margins. While the United States boasts no official religion, religion has remained a part of the nation's political

vocabulary. Sociologist Robert Bellah describes this relationship as America's "civil religion".[11]

According to Bellah, America's civil religion is defined by a collection of symbols, rituals, and traditions pertaining to a collective understanding of religious values.[12] So-called civil religious rhetoric, in the political sphere, is characterized by ambiguous, non-sectarian references to religion. Evidence of civil religion can be found from, among other sites, presidential rhetoric to our national currency. Bellah described America's civil religion as representing a covenant, or contract, of sorts between religion and the state; so long as political religious rhetoric remains non-sectarian, it is civil. In recent years, however, scholars have noted that the covenant has been broken.[13]

Bellah's concept of America's civil religion contract is helpful in understanding customs for political religious rhetoric, but it does not outline expectations for religious political rhetoric. What is civil religious political rhetoric? Is there a covenant for religious political rhetoric? Is there a place for political religious rhetoric at all? These are just a few of the questions that have inspired the present study. These types of questions and ongoing debates about the role and influence religion has on society provide motivation for religious communication scholarship like the current study.

Ronald Arnett borrowed Robert Bellah's covenant language when describing the work of religious communication scholars. He describes the religious communication scholar's charge as one of building and reconstructing covenants:

> Our task in the doing of the scholarship of communication and religion is
> to stand firm, meet life on its own terms, look for hope in the

acknowledgment of broken covenants, and stand in the soil of faith-

centered meaning and direction—going nowhere correctly.[14]

Arnett explains that the broken covenant metaphor "suggests that there is no technique

that can keep a covenant functioning in accordance with its highest aspirations when

human beings are the implementers of and carers for at least one end of an existential

promise."[15] Through religious communication scholarship, Arnett claims, we are to

examine the brokenness of our own traditions while acknowledging our own limitations.

In November 2010, the Religious Communication Association (RCA) released a

special issue of *The Journal of Communication and Religion* that reviewed the state of

religious communication scholarship and offered projections for the future directions of

the field. In her introduction to the RCA special volume, Janie Harden Fritz explains

that scholars of religious communication have approached questions of religious rhetoric

through a variety of angles, from "initial rhetorical focus on sermons and religious

discourse to quantitative investigations of the effects of religiosity on communication to

the role of mediated messages in religious life to the importance of articulating a faith

perspective in a postmodern moment of uncertainty [. . .]."[16] Most recently, scholars

have explored religious communities online.[17]

Paul Soukup's article "Scholarship and the State of the Religious

Communication Association" notes that religious communication scholarship has been

dominated by rhetorical analysis of religious texts. An analysis of scholarship in *The

Journal of Communication* during the first decade in the twenty-first century revealed

that 40% of published articles were analyses of religious texts, 16% of articles examined

the history of religious rhetoric/communication; and 15% explored theoretical approaches to religious communication.[18] From its first issue in September of 1978 to as recent as March 2009, *The Journal of Communication and Religion* has been dominated by research on the Christian tradition.[19] Quentin Schultze's article follows by offering perspective on two approaches to religious communication scholarship.

Schultze explains that there are at least two (non-exclusive) approaches to studying the intersection of religion and communication: religion-through-the-eyes-of-communication and communication-through-the-eyes-of-religion. If a scholar studies religion-through-the-eyes-of-communication, he or she will "use theories and methods of the field of communication studies to understand religion as a dimension of human culture."[20] This approach is most commonly inter-disciplinary. The communication-through-the-eyes-of-religion approach is characterized by "scholarship that emerge[s] at least partly from communication scholars' own religious interests, convictions, backgrounds, and practices."[21] Schultze explains, "These scholars seek to know when, how, where, why, and with what implications human beings employ religious symbols, particularly in their own personal religious traditions."[22] Scholars using this approach often draw on their own religious experiences which can provide special insight into their scholarship.

The RCA special issue paints a hopeful picture for the future of religious communication scholarship. While not a defined "field," as Schultze notes, religious communication remains a ripe area for scholarship: "The variety of religious phenomena worth studying through the lens of communication studies is staggering."[23] Drawing on

the discussions in the RCA special issue, the present study can be explained as follows.

While this project is motivated, in part, by my own convictions—I mention in passing

that I am a person of faith who finds the intermingling of religion and politics, at best,

disconcerting—it is best described as an interdisciplinary project that combines history,

sociology, legal studies, and religious communication taking the religion-through-the-

eyes-of-communication approach. This study seeks to continue scholarship on broken

covenants by analyzing the Southern Baptist Convention's divorce from its legacy of

church-state separationism. In doing so, this study builds on previous scholarship on the

Southern Baptist Convention.

The Southern Baptist Convention in Scholarship

Although it is the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, the

Southern Baptist Convention has received surprisingly little attention from

communication scholars.[24] The most extensive communication scholarship on the

Convention has been the work of Carl Kell. Kell has focused primarily on the moderate

reaction to an intense, decade-long intra-denominational struggle in the 1980's over the

direction of the Convention. The naming of the two parties represented in the intra-

denominational struggle remains a point of contention. One group has been labeled the

"Conservatives" or "Fundamentalists." Its opposing group has been called the

"Loyalist," "Moderates," or "Liberals." While all of the aforementioned labels carry a

certain amount of baggage, I will use the terms conservatives and moderates when

talking about the two opposing positions.[25] Kell's three books on the struggle are *In the*

Name of the Father: The Rhetoric of the New Southern Baptist Convention (1999), an

7

award-winning co-authored piece with L. Raymond Camp that analyzes Southern

Baptist rhetoric during the conflict; *Exiled: Voices of the Southern Baptist Convention*

Holy War (2007), an edited volume of personal narratives of Southern Baptists removed

from positions of power during the struggle; and *Against the Wind: The Moderate Voice*

in Baptist Life (2009), an analysis of moderate Southern Baptist rhetoric.[26] *In the Name*

of the Father has the most relevance to the present study.

In *In the Name of the Father*, Kell and Camp describe intra-denominational

conflict as an essentially rhetorical event. Recognizing the centrality of the sermon in

Baptist life and the Baptist belief that pastors are vehicles of the Divine, Kell and Camp

identify the pulpit as the primary site for the struggle within the denomination. They

explain, "The battle for the loyalty of the Baptist believer has historically been waged

from the pulpit, with words as the principle tool for persuasion."[27] Kell and Camp claim

that "the turnaround in the Southern Baptist Convention was enacted in the pulpits of

convention cities and local churches by and through the art of rhetoric."[28] Their analysis

of the changes within the denomination takes into account addresses and sermons at

annual meetings of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1979 – 1994. The leaders of

the denomination, they suggest, wielded support from members with three types of

rhetoric: the rhetoric of fundamentalism; the rhetoric of inerrancy; and the rhetoric of

exclusion.

Kell and Camp frame the rhetoric of fundamentalism as rhetoric centered on

three principles: Jesus as the (only) Son of God; every Christian has direct access to

God—that is, Christians do not need a priest to communicate with God; and the Bible is

the literal word of God written and organized by humans through the inspiration of the

Holy Spirit. While each of the aforementioned rhetorics represents historical Baptist

doctrine, Kell and Camp argue that during conflict conservatives "supercharged such

rhetoric with a harsh Leviticus-like edge, seeming to disallow individual believers a

diversity of conscience."[29] According to Kell and Camp, the rhetoric of inerrancy is also

rooted in three basic principles:

> the inerrant Word is absolutely true, inerrant, and pure in all of its claims
>
> regarding all matters of faith, history, culture, and science; inerrancy is
>
> presentational because it emanates from the dynamics of the sermonizer
>
> in the pulpit; and inerrancy is centered on the argument from genus.[30]

Lastly, Kell and Camp describe the rhetoric of exclusion as being evidenced by official

Southern Baptist communications after 1979 that made use of "attack, exposition, and

expulsion; fear and comfort; and abominational language, which has typically focused

on the themes of blame and accusation."[31] They argue that the rhetoric of exclusion

primarily targeted "liberals," women, homosexuals, and Masons.

Central to Kell and Camp's analysis is the victimage rhetoric that they argue

conservatives used to "justify the expulsion of women as objectionable believers."[32]

Kell and Camp describe victimage language as "a justificatory form of language often

used by rhetors in closed communication systems to legitimize their authorial decisions."

Victimage language, they explain, "casts aspersions, denigrates abilities, or uses name

calling."[33] Kell and Camp argue that women were scapegoated through conservative

rhetoric which culminated in the 1984 Resolution on Ordination and the Role of Women

in the Ministry that prohibited women from being pulpit ministers in the denomination. Kell and Camp argue that the text of the Resolution

> provides scriptural justification for the claim women are appropriately and eternally marked for subservience in two ways. First of all, female adult adherents have historically served in submissive roles. . . . Second, [conservatives] have acknowledged their gratitude to the apostle Paul for outlining the delegated order of authority, namely, of male hierarchy.[34]

While not binding on members, official Resolutions carry significant weight as they have the ability to influence members' opinions.[35] Kell and Camp conclude, "Whether right or wrong, Southern Baptist today seem to have problems with others different from themselves."[36] Although the Southern Baptist Convention has received little attention from communication scholars, the denomination has drawn substantial consideration from scholars in other fields. Two specific studies hold relevance for the present study: Oran Smith's *The Rise of Baptist Republicanism* and Barry Hankin's *Trouble in Babylon: Southern Baptist Conservatives in American Culture*.

In his book *The Rise of Baptist Republicanism*, Oran Smith argues that the concept of "Southernness" is central to Southern Baptist identity and, consequently, the changes that took place in the denomination during the 1980's. The notion of "Southernness," he explains, includes "poverty, defeat, guilt, historical consciousness or 'connectedness,' white supremacy, passive acceptance, independence, homogeneity, and religiosity."[37] Another aspect of "Southernness" that is inherent to Southern Baptists is the so-called "Lost Cause Myth." Citing Charles Wilson, Smith explains that the Lost

Cause Myth has been historically used "to warn Southerners of their decline from past virtue, to promote moral reform, to encourage conversion to Christianity, and to educate the young in Southern traditions."[38] Smith concludes that the intra-denominational turmoil in the 1980's was primarily a reaction to church-state changes (i.e. disestablishment), political changes (i.e. the New Right's "Culture War" hysteria and the rise of the Republican Party in the South), cultural changes, and Convention changes (expansion and loss of cultural dominance). He argues, "This reactionism was produced by unique historical baggage and loss of considerable cultural monopoly, and has been fueled by militant conservative rhetoric."[39] In addition to the influence of the Lost Cause Myth on Southern Baptist life, Smith notes several elements of Southern Bapticity that are significant to his analysis of Baptist involvement in politics—specifically, he highlights the autonomy of the Baptist tradition and the mixture of biblical conservatism and revivalism that is key to the denomination.

History and church-state professor Barry Hankins focuses on the Lost Cause Myth and how Southern Baptists became "evangelical culture warriors" in his book *Trouble in Babylon: Southern Baptist Conservatives in American Culture*.[40] Hankins argues that intra-denominational conflict was a response from conservative leaders who believed the South was in a cultural crisis. He explains that the conservative reaction to this crisis moved through three steps:

> The first step in the process was engaging the popular culture was to
> reestablish a theological foundation for resistance. The second step was
> to win control of the denominational machinery that would be put into the

service of the cultural warfare. The third step was to fight and win that

cultural war . . . ."[41]

Hankins examines the aforementioned steps by considering how the conservatives

gained power in seminaries and negotiated cultural issues including race, abortion, and

women's roles in society. Hankins book will be of particular use to this study as it

reviews previous church-state positions within the Southern Baptist Convention and

offers observations about the role of religious liberty and the Culture War amidst the

intra-denominational strife in the 1980's.

Focus, Rationale, and Limitations

The present study seeks to contribute to previous conversations by analyzing how

the intra-denominational conflict in the 1980's has impacted the Southern Baptist

Convention's political rhetoric and participation. The name of the controversy itself also

remains a point of contention. Moderates refer to the controversy as the "Conservative

Takeover," implying that the events were a coup by the conservatives to control the

denomination. Conservatives prefer to describe the events as the "Conservative

Resurgence," suggesting that the controversy represented reclaiming of truth so-to-speak

or recovery of beliefs that were integral for Southern Baptists. So as to avoid privileging

either side, I will henceforth call the controversy "The Shift."

I am interested in building on the work of Kell and Camp by considering

alternative interpretations of The Shift that are not rooted in the rhetoric of inerrancy and

exclusion. I will also be concerned with exploring the implications The Shift has held for

the denomination's political rhetoric. Moreover, I will consider the communicative

implications of Smith and Hankin's observations about the Southern Baptist Convention's participation in the so-called Culture War.[42] While previous studies of the Southern Baptist Convention have offered important insight into the denomination, I believe there are still significant lingering questions.

In the present study, I am interested in exploring answers to the following questions: What motivates the Southern Baptist Convention's participation in politics? How and why did the Southern Baptist Convention replace its tradition of church-state separationism and mission to protect religious liberties with involvement in partisan politics? In what ways did The Shift influence the Southern Baptist Convention's participation in politics? Who or what are the major voices for Southern Baptist political communication and what characterizes their political rhetoric? In what ways has The Shift enabled and/or constrained Southern Baptist political rhetoric?

As discussed above, religion remains a significant piece of the fabric of American society. The present study will offer new insights into the largest Protestant denomination in the United States by examining a turning point within the Southern Baptist Convention and its lasting effects. Moreover, the Southern Baptist Convention is one of—if not the—most influential religious body in American society. In recent years, the Southern Baptist Convention, along with other Evangelical churches, has come to represent one of the most important voting blocs in American politics. Therefore, studying the Convention's political rhetoric and participation will prove beneficial not just for religious communication scholarship but also will hold important values for the study of politics and sociology.

As with any project, the proposed study has its limitations. For one, a project of this scale will have to abbreviate some elements of the historical narrative of Baptists/Southern Baptists. After all, entire books have been used to recount Baptist history.[43] While providing an adequate historical analysis will be important, the impetus for this study is investigating the political rhetoric of the Convention and how and why the denomination transitioned from its tradition of church-state separationism to overt involvement in politics post-1979. Second, this study is limited, in part, by the autonomous nature of the Southern Baptist denomination. Due to the autonomy of the denomination, it cannot be assumed that all Southern Baptist churches and members identify with the official political stances taken by the denomination. Nonetheless, studying official communications and public communications of the Southern Baptist Convention promises to be a fruitful endeavor because they arguably have the greatest influence on public perception of the denomination. Moreover, official communications from the Convention represent the mission of the denomination.

Preview of Chapters

The proceeding analysis will unfold in the following manner. Chapter Two provides the historical and sociological grounding for the present study by offering a four-part narrative of Baptist history. I begin with a general overview of Baptist origins and early Baptist life in America. After providing said overview, I offer a narrative of the events surrounding the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845. I then discuss key controversies within the Southern Baptist Convention leading up to The

Shift. In what makes up the bulk of the Chapter Two, I recount the history of The Shift from 1979 - 1990.

Chapter Three begins with a description of the Convention's evolving positions on separation of church and state, highlighting the change within the denomination that coincided with The Shift. After providing the aforementioned narrative of events, I turn to a discussion of H. Richard Niebuhr's paradigms for explaining various Christian interpretations of the proper relationship between Christ and culture. I then discuss the implications Niebuhr's paradigms hold for Christian political participation and argue that each paradigm represents a distinct "Christ and Culture Rhetoric" with important inventional implications. Through this discussion, I identify the paradigms and rhetorics which best describe the Southern Baptist Convention's political rhetoric and motivation for participating in politics. I then analyze the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, which I argue is representative of Southern Baptist political rhetoric and participation after The Shift.

Chapter Four provides additional analysis of Southern Baptist political rhetoric post-The Shift. I begin with a review of Richard Hofstadter's paranoid style and Kenneth Burke's concept of victimage. I then analyze Southern Baptist political rhetoric on the individual and Convention levels. At the individual level, I consider the rhetoric of Dr. R. Albert Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. For the Convention level analysis, I consider Resolutions, or official statements of belief, issued by the denomination. Through his analysis, I consider themes in Southern Baptist political rhetoric on the issues of abortion and homosexuality post-The Shift.

In Chapter Five, I discuss current trends in evangelicalism and discuss areas of concern within the Southern Baptist Convention. I then offer a reflection on the legacy of The Shift through considering ways in which The Shift has enabled and constrained the denomination in the last twenty years. I conclude by offering thoughts on areas for future scholarship on the Southern Baptist Convention, specifically, and, more generally, religious communication.

CHAPTER II

GROWTH AND DIVISION

The religious history of the United States is anything but simple and debates still rage over the over the role religion played in America's founding and whether or not the founders subscribed to anything akin to an orthodox faith. Regardless of the founders' faith or non-faith, religion has been a significant component of American culture. There are currently an estimated 300 different religions and denominations in the United States. The Southern Baptist Convention is the largest Protestant denomination in the United States.[44] The Convention has a complex and controversial history that has witnessed numerous internal and external conflicts.

In this chapter, I provide a narrative of key moments in the Southern Baptist Convention's history as a means of foregrounding my analysis of the denomination's participation in politics. I begin with an overview of the origins of Baptist life in the United States. I then describe the events that led to the foundation of the Southern Baptist Convention and discuss significant controversies within the denomination leading up to 1979. Later, in what makes up the bulk of this chapter, I detail The Shift that occurred within the Southern Baptist Convention from 1979 – 1990.

Baptist Beginnings: An Overview

Baptist churches are prone to diversity in theology and ecclesiology given the denomination's emphasis on autonomy of the local church; however, all modern-day Baptists in the United States share their roots in early seventeenth-century England. The

story of Baptist beginnings is complex with varying explanations for how and why the denomination was formed. There is general consensus among historians that Baptists emerged out of reform movements shaped by Puritanism and Separatism, with some suggesting Baptists were also influenced by Anabaptism.[45] Early Baptists belonged to one of two traditions: General or Particular Baptists. General Baptists believed in a general atonement, whereas Particular Baptists believed in particular election and limited atonement.[46] Members from both traditions supported the view of "believer's baptism"—meaning baptism applies to Christian converts, not infants—and baptism by immersion. Like other nonconformists to the Church of England, Baptist suffered persecution. Eventually Baptists immigrated to England's American colonies.[47]

On March 16, 1639, Roger Williams along with several others founded the first Baptist church in America in Providence, Rhode Island. Although an important figure in Baptist history, Roger Williams was only a Baptist for a matter of months. [48] Nonetheless, he had a lasting impact on the denomination. The most influential legacy he left on Baptist life was his thoughts on religious liberty and separation of church and state. Williams believed there was a fundamental difference between church and state: the state dealt with civil concerns, while the church focused on the spiritual.[49] Baptists in early America also drew upon their English heritage when formulating strategies to advocate for religious freedom.[50] Strong views of religious liberty and separationism came to the forefront of Baptist life in the mid-seventeenth-century when the denomination came under attack.

In 1648 early settlers in America established the Congregational Church as the official church of New England. Citizens were taxed to support the church and the government restricted other forms of religion.[51] Baptists were deemed dissenters and, consequently, faced varying degrees of harassment and persecution, from whippings and imprisonment to having property confiscated and being required to pay fines.[52] In addition to opposition from those outside the denomination, Baptists were plagued by internal controversy ranging from matters of doctrine to ecclesiology. Four of the most divisive issues among early Baptists were the following: 1.) the doctrine of predestination—that is, whether God's sovereignty meant that God determined salvation apart from human choice or if individuals determined their own eternal destiny; 2.) the practice of laying on of hands upon new converts—drawing from the six points found in Hebrews 6:1-2, this practice led to divisions between General, or "Six-Principle Baptists," who favored the laying on of hands and Particular, or "Five-Principle Baptists," who rejected the practice; 3.) the role of singing in worship; and 4.) what day of the week the church should meet—Sunday, the first day of the week, or Saturday, the traditional Sabbath.[53] Despite the aforementioned conflicts, Baptist support for religious liberty and separation of church and state remained consistent.

While some religious groups in the colonies sought freedom *from* religion—that is, freedom from religious influence on the government—Baptists were motivated by the notion of freedom *for* religion—or, freedom to preach, worship, and practice their own faith without fear of persecution. In 1727 several New England states passed "Exemption Laws," which allowed then-mandatory church taxes to be refunded

assuming certain conditions were met. In order to qualify for these exemptions, individuals had to prove regular attendance and support of a local church and obtain certificates from at least three other churches confirming that the church was in good standing in its denomination.[54] Baptists often found difficulties in obtaining exemptions because Baptists churches were scattered, not local as stipulated by the Exemption Laws, and the ongoing tensions between Baptist churches made it challenging to get certifications of support. Exemption Laws ultimately favored the state and Baptists were still denied complete religious freedom.

Roger Williams and John Clarke were two of the earliest advocates for religious liberty in the Baptist tradition in America; however, it was not until 1769 that Baptists had an organized voice and concerted action in their struggle for religious freedom. In 1769 the Warren Association—a Baptist association—formed its Grievance Committee to direct their efforts toward religious liberty. Isaac Backus became the head of the committee in 1772. His influence on the struggle for religious freedom was profound, leading many to consider him "the greatest Baptist spokesman for religious liberty in America."[55]

In 1773 Baptists adopted a policy of civil disobedience by refusing to pay church taxes and ceasing to apply for exemption certificates. The policy produced progress in the struggle for religious freedom in part due to the America's increasingly strained relationship with England.

> The growing spirit of revolt against England in the 1770s helped Baptists
> in a number of ways. First, American leaders wanted to head off any plan

of Baptists to send agents to London to argue against the Colonial

governments. Second, patriot complaints against English oppression were

precisely the same as those of Baptists against state church oppression, as

many came to realize. Third, Baptists had become so numerous that their

support was essential if war came.[56]

Faced with the aforementioned pressures, Colonial legislatures made some concessions

to Baptists. The Constitution adopted in 1789, and, later, the ratification of the Bill of

Rights in 1791—namely, the religion clauses of the First Amendment—represented

important legal bases for religious freedom for Baptists.[57] Baptists would secure another

victory in 1833 when Massachusetts became the last state to eliminate a state-sponsored

church.

Baptist historian Leon McBeth explains that Baptists had entered the eighteenth

century "with a handful of churches, divided in doctrine, dispirited by persecution, and

despised by outsiders."[58] Baptists were still considered a new, cult religion with a lack

of resources and little organization. Most of the churches were small, few had their own

building for worship, and many went years without a pastor. [59] Church growth had been

slow because the majority of congregations were comprised of poor, agrarian migrants.[60]

Baptists were opposed to full-time, educated ministers, preferring instead preachers who

could move with their migrating flocks.[61] Baptist worship services tended to be informal

and emotional, lacking the liturgy of established denominations in America.[62]

Moreover, Baptists shared skepticism toward centralizing the denominational order.

Nonetheless, the eighteenth century had marked a turning point for Baptists in America.

In 1700 there were 24 Baptist churches, 839 members, and no denominational associations. By 1800 there were 979 Baptist churches, 67,490 members, and at least 42 denominational associations.[63] The first Baptist association, the Philadelphia Association, originated in 1707, the Baptist confession of faith was adopted in 1742, and the first Baptist college was founded in 1764. The First Great Awakening (1730 - 1770) is often credited as sparking rapid growth within the denomination across New England, the middle colonies, and, eventually, the southern colonies.[64] Religious historian Sydney Ahlstrom explains, "Baptists grew because they sprang from the most numerous class of Americans—the common people of the country and small towns—and they spoke to these people with simplicity and power, without pretense or condescension."[65]

H. Richard Niebuhr suggests Baptists were heirs to the Separatist movement of the 1740's, which resulted from a conflict between the poor, frontier religious people and the established religious communities. Niebuhr explains, "The Separatist churches met the fate of most other conventicles of the poor, for the allied Puritan hierocracy and state subjected them to persecutions which, coupled with internal dissension, soon brought their decline."[66] As heirs to the Separatist movement, Baptists were champions of religion of the frontier and among the poor in New England. They became the established church for tradespeople and agriculturalists of the frontier.[67]

McBeth summarizes the rapid changes in Baptist life in the eighteenth century:

> The eighteenth century transformed Baptists in America. They entered that century with a handful of churches divided in doctrine, dispirited by persecution, and despised by most observers. [. . . .] By 1800 they were a

different people with a different spirit. Their *outward* transformation to

become the largest denomination in America seems less significant than

their *inward* transformation into a confident, aggressive, evangelistic

people. The scattered churches had become a denomination. They had

discovered purpose in evangelism, missions, and education and had

organized to pursue those objectives.[68]

In the 1700's, Baptists grew from what was still considered a cult religion to a

significant piece of the fabric of religious life in America. The steady growth continued

in the 1800's. In fact, from 1790 to 1860, Baptists grew 1.9 times faster than the

national population.[69] McBeth notes that the denomination's "greatest achievement"

during this time of dramatic growth remained its struggles for religious liberty.[70]

The Birth of a Denomination

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, religious groups including the

Quakers, Mennonites, and Congregationalists had publicly denounced slavery. Baptists,

on the other hand, were too absorbed in their own efforts for religious liberty to be

invested in the issue and maintained "a policy of noninterference in civil affairs which

precluded preoccupation with what many regarded as a nonreligious issue."[71] However,

at the close of the American Revolution, Baptists began questioning the morality of

slavery.

After reconsidering the ethics of slavery, Baptists in Northern states began

supporting the abolition of slavery. Baptist churches in the South also took steps

towards equality by introducing admittance of African Americans into church

membership; however, African Americans were often deprived of full membership rights such as voting. Moreover, many white members of Baptists churches in the South remained slaveholders. Despite the efforts made by some congregations, most Baptists remained cautious about the slavery issue because of their "preference for unity [among Baptists] wherever possible; their hesitancy to violate the principle of noninterference of the church in civil affairs; [and] the presence of slave-holding members in their churches."[72] Nonetheless, the slavery issue became increasingly divisive among Baptists.

Support for abolition accelerated amongst Baptists in the North as a result of controversies over the status of territories (slave or free) that might be admitted into the Union. In response, Baptists in Southern states grew irritated by the Northern Baptists' involvement in what they considered a civil affair and "shifted from their earlier willingness to forsake slavery to a readiness to defend the institution."[73] By 1813, the majority of Baptists in the South supported slavery.[74] Baptists throughout the South began defending slavery in religious journals and at religious gatherings where they discussed the "fanaticism of abolitionism, the scriptural support for slavery, and the need for humane treatment and religious instruction of slaves."[75] Slavery was framed as an institution that could rescue Africans from heathenism.[76] Baptists in the North responded by distributing publications and formed organizations calling for immediate emancipation. Although tensions between Northern and Southern Baptists were mounting, during the 1820's and 1830's, Baptists leaders generally sought "to keep peace by pursuing a policy of moderation."[77]

The slavery issue remained suppressed until the 1840's. In 1840, a group of

Baptists formed the Baptist Antislavery Convention.[78] At their first meeting, the

abolitionist group drafted a statement to all Baptists that demanded for the exclusion of

any slaveholding Baptists from the denomination's national mission societies.[79]

However, in 1841 the Baptist General Convention and the American Baptist Home

Mission Society—the two national Baptist mission societies—acknowledged that

slavery was not a matter of their jurisdiction and declared neutrality on the issue.[80]

Despite an increasing number of abolitionists that belonged to each association, the

organizations maintained a noncommittal stance toward slavery when they met in 1844.

Nonetheless, Southerners became suspicious over whether or not the Home Mission

Society would appoint a slaveholding missionary following Benjamin Hill's—the

association's secretary—statement that none of the Society's missionary appointees

owned slaves. The Georgia Baptist Convention decided to test their concerns by

recommending James E. Reeves, a slaveholder, for appointment from the Home Mission

Society. Reeves was denied support.

Just a few weeks after Reeves was denied support from the Home Mission

Society, the General Convention was faced with a similar case. The Alabama State

Convention sent a letter to the Board of Managers of the General Convention asking for

a "distinct, and explicit avowal" that slaveholding Baptists would be qualified for

mission appointments.[81] The Board replied, "One thing is certain, we can never be a

party to any arrangement which would imply approbation of slavery."[82] The Board's

statement, which represented an apparent contradiction of the Convention's professed

neutral stance towards slavery, infuriated Baptists throughout the South and amplified division within the denomination.

Despite continued efforts at appeasement, the tension within the denomination reached a breaking point in 1845. The long-threatened schism came after the American Baptist Home Mission Society decided at a meeting in April 1845 "that it would be more expedient if its members would thereafter carry on their work in separate organizations in the South and in the North."[83]   On May 8, approximately 325 delegates from churches across the South met in Augusta, Georgia to discuss their principal complaint that the missionary agencies and the Northern Baptists wanted the Southern Baptists' money, but not their personnel.[84]   The meeting resulted in the foundation of the Southern Baptist Convention.

On May 12, 1845, William B. Johnson, the appointed president of the newly formed Southern Baptist Convention, delivered an address explaining the reasoning for the formation of the new organization, wherein he stressed, "Northern and Southern Baptists are still brethren. They differ in no article of faith."[85] Johnson argued that the Convention was formed over the question of who could be a missionary and asserted that Baptists in the North and the existing missionary organizations were "forbidding [Southern Baptists] to speak unto the Gentiles."[86] Since the foundation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845, when the number of Northern Baptists and Southern Baptists was approximately equal, Southern Baptists have grown seven times faster than Northern Baptists.[87]

Brewing Controversies

Historically, there have been several standards that characterize the Southern

Baptist denomination: biblical authority, believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper as the

two ordinances of the church, the priesthood of all believers and the autonomy of the

local church, and religious liberty and separation of church and state.[88] Southern

Baptists are an amalgamation of at least four traditions, two of which predate the official

founding of the denomination: the Charleston tradition and Sandy Creek tradition . The

Charleston tradition—named for its roots in Charleston, South Carolina—represented

the center of the Regular Baptist tradition in the South. The Charleston tradition

emphasized Calvinism and ministerial order. Oliver Hart and Richard Furman,

prominent ministers in Charleston, were two of the tradition's principal founders.

The Sandy Creek tradition was a product of the First Great Awakening. Founded

in North Carolina, the Sandy Creek tradition was characterized by pietism, revivalism,

and emotionalism.[89] Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall, transplants from New

England, are considered responsible for bringing this tradition to the South. Baptists

from the Sandy Creek tradition are often called Separate Baptists, as they held different

beliefs than the so-called Regular Baptists.[90] The major difference between Regular and

Separate Baptists pertained to preferences in preaching style.[91] Separate Baptists

favored an emotional style of preaching and evangelism, while Regular Baptists

preferred a reserved and less emotional approach to matters of worship.

Following the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention, two new traditions

emerged and had a lasting impact on Southern Baptist life. The first of these traditions,

the Georgia tradition, was founded by William B. Johnson, the denomination's first president. The Georgia tradition emphasized a unified denominational approach to stateside and foreign missionary efforts while downplaying the significance of theological uniformity within the denomination. Landmarkism, the fourth tradition, began in Tennessee and led to one of the first significant controversies within the denomination.

Landmarkism, the most divisive of the four traditions, was founded by James R. Graves. Graves and his supporters believed in church successionism. According to Landmarkers, only churches that could trace their lineage to the first-century Christian church could be considered "true" churches. Graves argued that Landmarkers could trace their unbroken lineage from the original Christian church in Jerusalem to the present day. Landmarkers believed that authentic baptism could only be performed by Baptists and that non-Baptists and Baptists not belonging to "true" Baptist churches should be denied the pulpit and communion. While many Baptists, even those who were generally open to diversity within the denomination, rejected Landmarkism, the controversy lingered within the denomination from the 1850's to the turn of the century.[92]

Soon after the Landmarkism issue subsided, the Southern Baptist Convention encountered the fundamentalist-modernist controversy of the early 1920's.[93] The fundamentalist- modernist controversy centered on two key issues: biological evolution and the inspiration of scripture. Fundamentalists vehemently rejected Darwin's theory of evolution—leading to efforts at preventing the theory from being taught in public

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schools—and adamantly supported the belief that the scriptures were infallible and verbally inspired by God—that is, that God spoke the words of scripture to the writers of the Hebrew Bible and Christian New Testament.[94] Modernists, in contrast, were more open to evolutionary theology and remained unconvinced that scriptures were inerrant and verbally inspired. The divergent opinions led to a short, albeit intense, controversy with both sides launching attacks on their opposition. The controversy was largely diffused by the publication of The Baptist Faith and Message of 1925, a statement of faith of sorts that emphasized autonomy of local churches on matters including those pertaining to the controversy.[95] However, controversy regarding the inspiration of scripture would resurface later in the twentieth-century.

The 1960's began and ended with renewed controversies over biblical interpretation. Ralph H. Elliot's *The Message of Genesis* in 1961 resulted in a bitter debate over the interpretation of Genesis. Elliot's book offered a reading of Genesis that proved problematic for fundamentalists within the denomination. K. Owen White, pastor of First Baptist Church of Houston, was one of Elliot's harshest critiques. Soon after Elliot's book was published, White countered with an article titled "Death in the Pot." White's article, which was published in a number of Baptist papers, condemned Elliot's interpretation of Genesis as "poison."[96] The controversy lingered for some time but eventually resulted in the Sunday School Board denying the publication of a second edition of the book and Elliot being forced to resign from his post at Midwestern Theological Seminary.

Another controversy arose following the publication of *The Broadman Bible Commentary* in 1969. G. Henton Davies' commentary on Genesis garnered the most attention. In his commentary, Davies questioned whether or not God actually commanded Abraham to kill his son, Isaac (i.e. Genesis 22). The commentary became a point of bitter contention at the 1970 and 1971 annual conventions. Southern Baptist Messengers[97] attending the 1970 convention in Denver voted in favor of having the Sunday School Board recall the volume containing the Genesis commentary and require that it be written with a more conservative interpretation. Davies was asked to rewrite his work, but declined to do so. The Genesis commentary was later rewritten by Clyde Francisco, a scholar at Southern Seminary, and published in 1973. The remainder of the 1970's witnessed growing tensions within the denomination.

The Shift: A Struggle for the Denomination

The Southern Baptist Convention was certainly not immune to internal conflict prior to 1979. However, 1979 would come to represent a breaking point for the denomination that would eventually lead to a denominational split. Morgan notes that the controversy beginning in 1979 can be considered a continuation of previous intradenominational conflicts:

> Both the Landmarkers in the nineteenth century and the fundamentalists of the 1920's [and 1960's] created disturbances in the SBC, but neither prevailed in their efforts to turn the Convention in the direction they were convinced it should go. Even so, their influence never went away entirely, and in the case of the fundamentalists they remained in the

denomination, waiting for the chance to make their views heard and, if possible, to change the direction of the Convention.[98]

That "chance" came in 1979. This most recent manifestation of the controversy is particularly significant to the present study as it represented a sea change within the denomination that forever altered Southern Baptists' involvement in politics. The controversy that surfaced in 1979 has previously been framed, by communication scholars, as a power grab centered on the rhetoric of exclusion and, by Baptist historians, as a dispute rooted primarily in the inerrancy of scripture.[99] I will later argue that while the preceding arguments were perhaps contributing factors to the controversy, another factor was the motivating force behind the struggle for the denomination.

By 1979 the Southern Baptist Convention had grown to become the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, with more than 35,000 churches and over 13,000,000 members.[100] The 122nd annual meeting of the Convention held in Houston, Texas marked the start of what would become more than a decade long struggle for the denomination. The conservatives had used the year leading up to the meeting to formulate a strategic plan for influencing the future of the Convention. Paige Patterson, a minister from Dallas, and Paul Pressler, a judge from Houston, are considered the leaders of the conservatives' cause. Patterson, a doctoral student at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary at the time, and Pressler first became acquainted in the late 1960's. Each shared similar concerns about the direction the denomination was moving. In 1967, the two had a now-infamous meeting at Café du Monde, where they discussed the future direction of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In 1976, nearly ten years after their meeting at Café du Monde, Patterson, then president of Criswell College in Dallas, and Pressler met again in New Orleans and allegedly discussed a political strategy to shift the denomination in a conservative direction through controlling elections for the denomination's president.[101] Patterson and Pressler were concerned that the elites within the denomination were leading the denomination in a "liberal" direction that did not represent the majority of Southern Baptists' thinking and theology. [102] It is significant to note that at the start of The Shift in 1979 each of the major denominational seminaries—Southern (Duke McCall), Southeastern (Randall Lolley), and Southwestern (Russell Dilday)—were led by presidents who would later be identified with the moderate movement. Wills explains, "Moderates controlled what was taught in the college and seminary classrooms and in Sunday school. They wrote the books that told Baptists their history, their doctrine, and their identity. They taught Baptists how to function as churches, association, and conventions."[103] This social milieu, while not the sole source of the denominational conflict, holds significance considering that Baptists had historically struggled to gain respect from elite and/or majority groups (i.e. Church of England, Congregational Church in America, and mainline Protestants, including the Presbyterians). Moreover, it bears mentioning that Baptists had a history of skepticism toward individuals who were educated—as mentioned previously, early Baptist congregations preferred uneducated preachers over educated ministers. Even in the late twentieth century, most Southern Baptists were of lower socio-economic status and hailed from rural towns.[104]

Bill Leonard suggests,

From the beginning, the unity of the SBC was built on cultural loyalty

and security. Initially the denomination was founded around geographic

unity. From its establishment in 1845 until well into the twentieth

century, to be a Southern Baptists meant that one was a resident of the

American South.[105]

Leonard argues that the SBC was united around certain Southern beliefs, including

political, religious, economic, and social attitudes.[106] He continues, "Throughout much

of its history Southern Baptist Biblicism helped reinforce the southern cultural status quo

while elements of southern culture helped reinforce Southern Baptist biblicism and

social solidarity."[107] Nancy Ammerman concludes that The Shift was a reaction to a loss

of cultural dominance. She suggests, "only when conservatives lost their cultural

dominance was it necessary for people to organize and identify themselves specifically

as holders of those beliefs."[108] Moderates had adopted cultural changes. Conservatives,

in contrast, sought to restore the traditional order.

If Patterson and Pressler were correct and the majority of Southern Baptists felt

the elites, particularly seminary presidents and professors, were misrepresenting the

denomination, then the conservatives could use the democratic nature of the Convention

to their advantage and shape the future of the denomination.[109] Leonard suggests that

Patterson and Pressler were able to capitalize on the populist tradition within the

denomination while mounting their opposition. He explains that populism has always

influenced theology within the Southern Baptist Convention. Leonard elucidates,

"Populist theology was reductionist theology, a way of simplifying more complex,

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laborious doctrines in order to communicate them more effectively and immediately from the pulpit."[110] By 1979, professors at Southern Baptist seminaries had begun pushing back on the aforementioned preaching and theology.[111] In light of these complications, Leonard describes Patterson as a populist crusader for making statements about returning the Convention back to "the pastors and laity" and out of the hands of the bureaucrats.[112] The rhetoric of The Shift, as a result, had clear socioeconomic implications.

Pressler and Patterson's aim to control the presidency was a tactical plan designed by Bill Powell.[113] Considering the autonomous nature of the denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention president has relatively limited authority. Nonetheless, the president does hold important appointive power to the Committee on Committees. The Committee on Committees chooses who is on The Committee on Boards which, in turn, appoints trustees. All Southern Baptist agencies—notably, the seminaries—are governed by trustees. Therefore, whoever controlled the presidency had indirect, but still significant, power to influence the leadership and teaching at the seminaries. The seminaries were viewed as key sites for controlling the direction of the Convention because of their influence on the future pastors and leaders of the denomination. The aforementioned plan would have to be a long-term plan, but the conservatives believed that within ten years they could accomplish their objective of changing the tide of the denomination.

Sutton traces the groundwork for the conservatives' plan to a letter written by Paul Pressler to Bill Powell of the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship dated

September 6, 1977. Believing that the denomination was drifting in a less-than-ideal

direction, Pressler wrote, "I do not believe in fighting a battle unless there is a good

chance of winning. If we fight and lose, we lose credibility. Therefore, I think it is

imperative that we plan, organize, and effectively promote what we are trying to do

before we attempt any strong action."[114] Pressler did not think enough could be

accomplished prior to the 1978 annual meeting in Atlanta. He wrote: "I believe,

therefore, that our real planning and direction should be towards Houston in 1979."[115]

Pressler went on to detail a specific plan:

> In this regard, I would like to see a Committee of two thousand
>
> committed to bringing ten people other than themselves to the
>
> Convention created. If we had twenty-two thousand of our messengers
>
> show up, we should be successful. I believe we should organize now
>
> with a set of leaders for each state, each one having a goal of a certain
>
> number of individuals whom they would recruit, who would then recruit
>
> ten others with a goal of a certain number of people who would come
>
> from each state.[116]

With the preceding plan in place, Patterson and Pressler began rallying support for the

conservative cause.

In the Fall of 1978, Patterson and Pressler organized a meeting with a group of

conservative pastors and laypeople from across the South. Patterson described the

outcome of the meeting in the following:

[The] conservatives, it was agreed, had a choice. Either they could stand

by and watch a 14 million member, 38,000 church denomination be held

captive by a coterie of slick religio-political "denomicrats" or else

conservatives could take their concerns to the people in the pew and see if

the programs and structures of the denomination could not be reclaimed

for orthodoxy and evangelism. Most believed that if they did not act

immediately, all hope to rescue the denomination from its slow and

seemingly inevitable drift to the left would be lost. [. . . .] The

participants in the airport meeting were to begin efforts to inform Baptists

in their states concerning the state of affairs in the denomination,

particularly in its seminaries. They would also attempt to secure

commitments to attend the 1979 Convention in Houston with a view of

electing a conservative president.[117]

In May and early June before the 1979 annual meeting, Patterson and Pressler followed

up on the proposed plan by sending out letters to those who agreed to support the

conservative cause. The letters reminded the conservative supporters of what needed to

happen and how they would be able to participate in the convention.[118] Some of the

letters also identified three presidential candidates who shared the same goals as the

conservatives: Adrian Rogers, Jerry Vines, and Bailey Smith.[119]

Patterson and Pressler would later target the Pastors' Conference as a forum to

encourage The Shift. Sutton describes the role the Pastors' Conference had in The Shift:

From 1979 on, the Pastors' Conference was used as a platform to inform

and motivate conservatives as to how to vote and how to assess the merit

of issues that would come before the Southern Baptist Convention. Often

the conservative nominee of president of the Convention would be one of

the keynote speakers at the Pastors' Conference on the Monday evening

before the vote for the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention on

Tuesday.[120]

The desire to move the denomination in a conservative direction was made apparent at

the 1979 Pastors' Conference. Adrian Rogers delivered the Conference's opening

address wherein he scorned the "liberalism" he believed was taking over the

denomination. Evangelist James Robinson, another speaker during at the Pastors'

Conference, delivered an even more divisive message.[121] Robinson declared, "I believe

that we need to elect a president who is totally committed to the removal from the

denomination of any teacher or any educator who does not believe the Bible is the

inerrant, infallible Word of the living God."[122] The speakers at the Pastors' Conference

set the tone for what became the most significant presidential election the denomination

had ever witnessed.

The conservatives won the 1979 presidency with the election of Adrian

Rogers.[123] Rogers earned 51 percent of the vote. Following his election, Rogers held a

brief impromptu press conference where he stated that he was committed to set a "tone

of positivism, love, missions, and evangelism and give 100 percent to our Bold Mission

Thrust."[124] The following day, in his first official press conference as president, Rogers

explained that he did not "favor a 'witch hunt' investigation of 'liberalism' in Southern Baptist Convention seminaries, but would support such investigation if it were carried out by a committee that was 'fair and balanced.''[125] He went on to say, "Any 'liberalism' is too much if it means that Baptist seminaries, agencies, or institutions have employees who doubt the Bible is the authentic infallible Word of God."[126] In a subsequent interview with the *Houston Chronicle*, Rogers commented, "I hope to set in motion forces that will ultimately choose trustees (of the Convention, seminaries, and agencies) who are warmhearted, evangelistic, and conservative."[127] While the conservatives won the 1979 presidency, the moderates gained the first vice presidency with the election of Abner McCall, president of Baylor University—perhaps a sign that the struggle over the denomination was far from over.[128] The election of McCall was significant because the Convention's bylaws stipulated that the president must consult the vice president prior to making appointments to committees.[129] Although the conservatives experienced a setback with the election of McCall, they won another victory with the passing of a resolution that affirmed the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message's section on Scripture, a decision that conservatives believed to support their view of inerrancy.[130]

"Inerrancy" was the buzzword of the 1979 convention and it would remain one of the focal points of the conservative-moderate controversy in the years to follow. Interestingly, the term "inerrancy" was new to most Southern Baptists at the time.[131] Morgan explains,

In some ways the debate over inerrancy was remarkable, for the word

inerrancy itself was relatively new in theological circles. It could not be

found in the Bible itself, nor in any Baptist confession of faith from the

earliest Anabaptist to contemporary Southern Baptist statements of

faith—not even the Baptist Faith and Message Statement of 1963.[132]

While the term "inerrancy" was fairly new for most Southern Baptists, conservatives

argued that the concept of inerrancy was as old as scripture itself. Furthermore,

conservatives claimed that inerrancy was the historical Baptist belief. Moderates, in

contrast, noted that the term was absent from any historical Baptist text.

The controversy over inerrancy was essentially a debate over language.

Theologian Wayne Grudem writes, "It is important to realize at the outset of this

discussion that the focus of this controversy is on the question of truthfulness in

speech."[133] Grudem defines inerrancy as follows: "The inerrancy of Scripture means

that Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to

fact."[134] He goes on to say,

This definition focuses on the question of truthfulness and falsehood in

the language of Scripture. The definition in simple terms just means that

the Bible always tells the truth, and that it always tells the truth

concerning everything it talks about.

Grudem qualifies that "Inerrancy has to do with truthfulness, not with the degree of

precision with which events are reported."[135] Grudem's definition and explanation of

inerrancy reveals the complexities of language inherit to the controversy.[136] Adding to

these complications is the term "infallible," which had historically been used interchangeably with "inerrancy." However, beginning in the 1960's, Grudem notes, "the word *infallible* has been used in a weaker sense to mean that the Bible will not lead us astray in matters of faith and practice."[137] Those adhering to the more recent meaning of infallibility believed scripture was true in matters of faith and practice, but allowed room for errors in other areas, such as historical details and scientific facts found in scripture. Moderates accused conservatives who wished to expand the understanding of biblical truth beyond faith and practice of bibliolatry.[138]

Even amongst conservatives there were inconsistencies in defining "inerrancy." Both Patterson and Pressler supported the belief that the "autographs"—or original texts—of scripture were without error, but other conservatives went further and argued that even the current copies of the scriptures remained error-free.[139] Morgan notes that conservatives would often waver on their standpoint on the question of inerrancy.

> It was common for learned inerrantists to deny publicly that there were errors of any kind in the Bible and then turn around in private and admit to "minor errors," "statistical errors," and contradictions between one historical fact and another when pressed by knowledgeable interrogators.[140]

Despite disagreements over the definition of the term, the belief in inerrancy had gained national respectability by Baptists and others in the year prior to the initial conservative-moderate showdown in Houston.[141]

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The months following the 1979 annual meeting were a tumultuous time for the Convention as tensions between the conservatives and moderates began to play out publicly. Moderates expressed concerns about the apparent political maneuvering that resulted in the election of Rogers. Conservatives responded by downplaying the notion that a specific strategy was in place to assure Rogers' victory. Moderates accused conservatives of being creedalists and, therefore, breaking from the Southern Baptist tradition of being a confessional, not creedal, denomination. Robison James of the University of Richmond called the conservatives heretics because of their "creedal belief in inerrancy."[142] Paige Patterson and the conservatives later fired back by releasing "A Reply of Concern" on April 20, 1980. In "A Reply of Concern," Patterson identified seven individuals whose teachings he considered outside the acceptability of Southern Baptist theology. Patterson's publication did little to assuage tensions between the opposing parties. By the 1980 annual meeting, it was obvious that the denomination had been splintered.

Adrian Rogers declined to run for reelection at the 1980 convention in St. Louis, Missouri. Nonetheless, the conservatives maintained control of the presidency with the election of Bailey Smith. Smith, not unlike Rogers, won in a closely contested race, earning 51.67 percent of the vote. The conservatives gained additional ground at the meeting when the Convention adopted Resolution No. 16 on "Doctrinal Integrity." The resolution stated:

> we exhort the trustees of seminaries and other institutions affiliated with
>
> or supported by the Southern Baptist Convention to faithfully discharge

their responsibility to carefully preserve the doctrinal integrity of our

institutions and to assure that seminaries and other institutions receiving

our support only employ, and continue the employment, of faculty

members and professional staff who believe in the divine inspiration of

the whole Bible, infallibility of the original manuscripts, and that the

Bible is truth without any error.[143]

Smith's presidency was not without controversy. Barely two months into his presidency

on August 20, 1980, he famously declared, "God Almighty does not hear the prayer of a

Jew."[144] Smith's comment drew national criticism and moderates quickly condemned

him for being intolerant. With no sign of cohesion in the near future, the moderates

became further entrenched in their opposition to the conservatives. Prior to the 1980

convention, there was no organized opposition to the conservatives. Afterward, the

moderate cause gained direction through the efforts of Cecil Sherman, a pastor from

North Carolina.

Sherman organized a meeting to be held with sixteen other pastors on September

25-26, 1980 in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Sherman later recounted what transpired at the

meeting:

It was agreed at Gatlinburg that we would return to our home states and

begin putting together a network. This network would become a politic

to counter Fundamentalism in Southern Baptist life. We would meet

again in February 1981. We would find others to join us. We would find

a presidential candidate to carry our banner at the next meeting of the

SBC in Los Angeles1981. If asked about our meeting, we would

truthfully answer; if not asked, we would remain silent. And so we left

Gatlinburg.[145]

Sherman and his supporters called themselves the "Denominational Loyalists."[146] Only

time would tell if the moderates, with a new, focused approach, would be successful.

On the other side, the conservatives showed no signs of letting up. Shortly

before the Sherman's meeting in Gatlinburg, Pressler spoke at Old Forest Road Baptist

Church in Lynchburg, Virginia. In his speech he declared, "We are going for the

jugular," and, furthermore,

We are going for having knowledgeable Bible-centered, Christ-honoring

trustees of all our institutions, who are not going to sit there like a bunch

of dummies and rubberstamp everything that's presented to them, but

who are going to inquire why this is being done, what is being taught,

what is the finished product of our young people who come out of our

institutions going to be."[147]

Pressler also commented on his plans for various committees.

I am going to be in Los Angeles to vote for the nominees of the

Committee on Boards as a result of Adrian Rogers' Committee on

Committees, because that's gonna make the difference. And I'm going

to be in New Orleans and I'm going to Pittsburgh to vote for the

nominees that come out of the Committee on Committees and the

Committee on Boards because that's going to make the difference.

By the time those three committees have gotten their trustees

elected—and they will be—then we've got 60 percent good, reliable

trustees on our institutions. [. . . .] The life flow of the Southern Baptist

Convention is the trustees.[148]

Pressler's "going for the jugular" comment and explicit references to controlling the

trustees drew significant criticism after resurfacing in numerous denominational

publications.[149]

Despite the fallout following Pressler's remarks, the moderates' plan for the 1981

annual meeting proved unsuccessful when Bailey Smith was reelected president, soundly

defeating Abner McCall, the moderate candidate and former Convention vice

president.[150] The conservatives did, however, face challenges from the Executive

Committee.[151] Within the Executive Committee, a subcommittee chaired by John

McCall, son of Southern Seminary president and moderate empathizer Duke McCall,

proposed a bylaw change that would limit the president's power in appointing the

Committee on Committees. According to the proposed bylaw, the president and the two

vice presidents would make up a committee that would select the Committee on

Committees. The proposed bylaw was later defeated, but the moderates earned a minor

victory when Larry McSwain, a moderate from Louisville, Kentucky, and Ken Chafin, a

moderate leader and pastor in Houston, Texas, made challenges to the Committee on

Boards' report; those challenges were approved. Nonetheless, the moderates' victories

remained minimal and the 1981 convention represented yet another triumph for the

conservatives.

Moving forward, the moderates received little support from key stalwarts within the denomination. Among those who embraced the moderates' efforts was Grady Cothen, president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, Duke McCall, president of Southern Seminary, and Foy Valentine, director of the Christian Life Commission.[152] Throughout the next few years the moderates would see some successes—such as the establishment of their own journal, *SBC Today* in 1982, and Forum, their own incarnation of the Pastors' Conference—however, the moderate movement failed to secure the necessary funding and support to ensure long-term, denomination-wide victories.[153]

Conservatives secured the presidency again at the annual meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1982 when James Draper, pastor at First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas convincingly defeated Duke McCall.[154] The blow to the moderate cause was particularly crushing as McCall represented perhaps the best chance the moderates would have to defeat the conservatives. McCall had been the director of the Executive Committee from 1946-1952, was the president of Southern Seminary from 1951-1981, and, at the time of the 1982 convention, was the president of the Baptist World Alliance. Draper made efforts to encourage dialogue between conservatives and moderates, yet little was done to heal the damage done to the denomination. Draper organized a meeting for conservatives and moderates in Irving, Texas, but it proved to be unsuccessful.[155] After the meeting, Ken Chafin expressed that he intended to withdraw from the moderates' efforts to counter The Shift. He said, "There is absolutely nothing I, or anyone else, can do to help them [conservatives].[156] The moderate cause as a whole

was seemingly waning by the 1983 Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where James Draper ran unopposed for reelection.

The 1984 in Kansas City, Missouri convention was a site of renewed contestation for the denomination as the moderates challenged the conservatives on every point.[157] Moreover, the 1984 convention was the sight of the first Forum meeting for moderates. Among the speakers at the inaugural Forum was Russell Dilday, president of Southwestern Seminary. Despite the moderates' revived efforts, the conservatives left the convention unscathed: Charles Stanley, conservative pastor from Atlanta, Georgia became the next Convention president, Zig Ziglar a conservative motivational speaker was elected first vice president, and Paul Pressler was elected to the Executive Committee. Additionally, several conservative resolutions, including an anti-abortion resolution, were adopted by the Convention. Sutton notes that the election of Stanley represented a turning point for the denomination:

> Prior to this time most denominational executives thought that [The Shift] was a brief interruption to business as usual. [. . . .] During the first five years of [The Shift], it was almost as if the conservatives were trying to establish their position as having a right to be a player in the Convention proper. With the election of Charles Stanley, however, conservatives began to contend for the present.[158]

Tensions between conservatives and moderates quickly intensified following the convention.

Shortly after the annual meeting in Kansas City, Roy Honeycutt, president of Southern Seminary, Randall Lolley, president of Southeastern Seminary, and Keith Parks, president of the Foreign Mission Board, joined Russell Dilday in opposition to The Shift. Honeycutt spoke openly about mounting a "Holy War" against the conservatives who he believed were destroying the denomination and condemned the election of Charles Stanley who he and other moderates criticized for lacking a history of support for the Convention.[159] Patterson responded by challenging Honeycutt to a public debate. Honeycutt declined. With several significant members of the denomination now supporting their cause, the moderates were confident they might be able to win control of the denomination at the 1985 Convention in Dallas, Texas.

The 1985 meeting in Dallas would be a defining moment in the life of the Southern Baptist Convention. A record number of 45,000 messengers registered for the 1985 convention. At least 20,000 messengers were present at the Pastors' Conference and over 4,000 attended the Forum.[160] The meeting in Dallas, the site of the annual State Fair of Texas, was not unlike a circus. Allegations spread of voting irregularities, including accusations that at least a hundred children six years old or younger were attending the meeting as messengers and were given ballots.[161] Adding to the spectacle were more than 600 media members in attendance to report on the convention. Morgan notes that the 1985 convention "became an enormous media event."[162]

The conservatives gained momentum shortly before the presidential vote when news spread that evangelist Billy Graham had endorsed Stanley. Graham's endorsement, in addition to the support Stanley already received from W. A. Criswell—

Dallas pastor, former Convention president, founder of Criswell College, and the so-called patriarch of The Shift—helped secure the reelection of Stanley over moderate challenger Winfred Moore.[163] After his reelection, Stanley made efforts to reconcile the denomination by encouraging Moore to run for election to first vice-president. Moore obliged and defeated the incumbent Zig Ziglar. The moderates won the second vice presidency as well with the election of Henry Huff, a moderate layperson from Louisville, Kentucky. However, any progress that had been made in restoring the denomination quickly dissipated before the conclusion of the convention. Moderate leader James Slatton challenged the Committee on Committees nominations for the Committee on Boards. Slatton argued that the nominees for the Committee on Boards should include state convention presidents and state presidents of the Woman's Missionary Union. Stanley opposed Slatton's proposal, but the motion was later put to an official vote that ruled in Slatton's favor. Stanley overruled the motion, which produced yet another controversy which eventually led to a lawsuit against the Convention.[164] In an attempt to assuage growing tensions within the denomination, a twenty-two member Peace Committee was created to conceive a plan for reestablishing unity within the Convention.[165] The Peace Committee did little to improve relations within the denomination as conservatives and moderates continued their efforts to control the denomination.

Conservative Adrian Rogers ran against moderate Winfred Moore in the presidential election at the 1986 convention in Atlanta, Georgia.[166] Rogers won the presidency, earning 54.22 percent of the vote to Moore's 45.78 percent,[167] and

conservatives took both vice presidency posts. In addition to winning the presidency and vice presidencies, two Convention Bylaws (16 and 31) were amended in favor of the conservatives.[168] Moderates left the annual meeting in despair and fewer and fewer moderates would attend subsequent conventions. Robert W. Bailey, moderate pastor from Birmingham, Alabama, said, "A lot of us feel like we've been to a funeral. We're waiting and watching to see what they will do. This marks eight of the ten years they said it would take to gain control."[169] Conservative successes continued later that year when the Home Mission Board announced that it would not fund any church with a woman as its pastor. Moderates soon became divided in their efforts to counter The Shift. Within the next two years, two separate moderate groups formed: the Southern Baptist Alliance—later renamed the Alliance of Baptists—and the Baptist Committed to the Southern Baptist Convention.[170]

Rogers was reelected over Richard Jackson, a pastor from Arizona, at the 1987 convention in St. Louis, Missouri.[171] The 1987 meeting was headlined by the approval of the Peace Committee report. The report identified that controversy within the denomination was primarily "theological" and urged the Convention to move past its difference through the absolution of all "all organized political activity."[172] The Peace Committee's report elicited mixed reactions. Conservatives were generally pleased, but moderates felt the report was yet another sign that the conservatives were getting their way. Rather than create peace within the denomination, the committee's report intensified the already strained tensions between the opposing factions.

The weeks leading up to the 1988 convention in San Antonio, Texas witnessed campaigning from conservatives and moderates alike. Notably, Winfred Moore mass mailed Southern Baptists in an effort to discredit Pressler, Patterson, and the conservatives. Moore included a ten-minute tape recording and a brochure from the Baptist Committed to the Southern Baptist Convention along with a return card. The content of the mailing accused Pressler and Patterson of dividing Southern Baptist and having ties to a cult known as the Reconstructionist Movement. Moore's plan ultimately backfired. Jerry Vines, conservative pastor from Florida, was elected president, defeating Richard Jackson in what would be the narrowest margin of victory for the conservatives during The Shift.[173] The adoption of Resolution No. 5 would prove to be the most significant source of controversy at the 1988 convention. The resolution emphasized pastoral authority while repudiating the historical Baptist principle of the priesthood of all believers. Conservatives supported the resolution because they believed it would help to control heresies within the church. Moderates, in contrast, argued that the resolution itself was heretical. R. G. Puckett, editor of the *Biblical Recorder*, called the resolution "nothing short of heresy to a genuine Baptist."[174] The adoption of Resolution No. 8 on the sanctity of human life represented another victory for the conservatives at the 1988 convention. In the aftermath of the meeting, rumors swirled that moderates would leave the Convention altogether and create their own denomination, but no such action occurred. Instead, the moderates formed a new group, Baptists Committed to the Southern Baptist Convention, to continue efforts to defeat the conservatives.

Baptists Committed to the Southern Baptist Convention was formed in December

1988 under the leadership of Winfred Moore. Moore's plan was to create a "centrist

coalition" united around four historical principles of Southern Baptists: 1) the priesthood

of the believer; 2) the autonomy of the local church; 3) separation of church and state

and; 4) cooperative missions.[175] The new organization received support from key

Southern Baptists including Richard Jackson, Dan Vestal, and James Slatton. David

Currie was hired as a field director to create a long-term plan to win the Convention

presidency and return the denomination to its pre-1979 state. The efforts of the Baptists

Committed would prove futile. Morgan explains,

> The Creation of the Baptists Committed set off two years of
>
> unprecedented political fireworks, and when it was over the
>
> [conservatives] were more firmly entrenched in power than ever. In fact,
>
> they had won their crusade; they seized the SBC holy land. There were
>
> still pockets of resistance in various state conventions, but at the national
>
> level they had total control.[176]

Incumbent Jerry Vines easily defeated Dan Vestal at the 1989 convention in Las Vegas,

Nevada.[177]

The 1990 convention in New Orleans, Louisiana was a site of several victories

for conservatives. Morris Chapman soundly defeated Dan Vestal for the presidency, and

the conservatives won both the first and second vice-president posts.[178] Moreover, the

Convention elected to defund the moderate-controlled Baptist Joint Committee on Public

Affairs.[179] The vote to defund the Baptist Joint Committee made the now-conservative-

oriented Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission—formerly called the Christian Life

Commission—led by Dr. Richard Land the new denominational voice on matters of

religious liberty and separation of church and state. At the conclusion of the 1990

meeting it was apparent that conservatives had won the decade-long struggle for the

denomination. Three hundred conservatives celebrated their victory at the Café Du

Monde where Patterson and Pressler first discussed the future of the denomination.[180]

Conclusion

As detailed in this chapter, the Southern Baptist Convention, a denomination

born out of controversy, has long experienced internal conflict. The 1990 annual

meeting witnessed the conclusion of a decade long struggle over the Southern Baptist

Convention. The Shift had drastically altered the direction of the denomination. The

Shift's legacy, which will be given further attention in subsequent chapters, has

continued to influence the largest Protestant denomination in the United States. Walter

Shurden summarizes the definitive outcomes of The Shift in the following:

> The results have been: (1) a clear win for the [Conservatives], with solid
>
> control over all SBC agencies; (2) the exclusion of Moderates from all
>
> SBC boards and, eventually, elimination from SBC agencies; (3) the
>
> establishment by Moderates of new entities such as the Alliance of
>
> Baptists in 1987 and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in 1990, the
>
> latter organization containing all the signs of an emerging denomination;
>
> (4) the development by Moderates of new theological seminaries, a
>
> publishing agency, a national newspaper, an ethics agency, and other non-

SBC enterprises; (5) the removal of the conflict from the SBC to the state convention level; and (6) signs of significant denominational realignment within the SBC.[181]

Looking back at The Shift, questions about "how" and "why" the conservatives succeeded bear asking. The 1979 and 1980 Convention presidential elections were narrowly won by the conservatives. Yet the moderates could not secure the presidency then or in the years to follow. As previously stated, the moderates suffered in large part due to a lack of organization and insufficient support from prominent figures within the denomination. However, when reflecting on The Shift, Cecil Sherman, the early leader of the moderate cause, cites a lack of passion as the leading reason for the moderates failure to control the future of the denomination. Sherman explained,

> Moderates did not have enough moral energy to win. We could not bring ourselves to use moral language to describe our cause. Truth was butchered. We said nothing. Good people were defamed. We were silent. Baptist principles were mangled and Baptist history was replaced, rewritten. All the while, teachers who could have written about the problems in calling the Bible inerrant, did not. And preachers who could have called us to arms said nothing. The want of moral energy was the undoing of the Moderate movement.[182]

Regardless of who would have won The Shift, the future of the denomination was, in part, predictable: the Southern Baptist Convention would never be the same. A splintering of the denomination was inevitable. Walter Shurden aptly states,

When a Christian believes he or she has a monopoly on the gospel and others err because they do not agree with a certain interpretation, trust is out the window, reconciliation [. . .] is impossible, and Christians with a different point of view are labeled dangerous and heretical.[183]

The two parties could not coexist. The next chapter will consider the role of The Shift in the evolution of Southern Baptists' thoughts on church-state matters and how the conservatives have influenced the denomination's involvement in politics.

CHAPTER III

EVOLVING AND TRANSFORMING

As detailed in the previous chapter, the Southern Baptist Convention underwent a significant transformation by the conclusion of the twentieth century. Not unlike the slavery controversy between Baptists in the nineteenth century that resulted in a permanent division between Northern and Southern Baptists and, consequently, the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention, The Shift witnessed a bitter controversy between two factions within the Convention that led to a permanent schism between conservatives and moderates. By the conclusion of The Shift, conservatives won complete control of the denomination. More than twenty years have passed since The Shift and the conservatives have yet to relinquish their power. One of the most drastic changes resulting from The Shift was the Southern Baptist Convention's involvement in the realm of politics.

In this chapter, I discuss the Southern Baptist Convention's evolving positions on matters of church and state and describe inventional frameworks for understanding Southern Baptist political rhetoric. I begin with a narrative of the Convention's evolving views on church and state, highlighting the change that resulted from The Shift. I then discuss H. Richard Niebuhr's scholarship on interpretations of the relationship between "Christ" and "Culture". In his book *Christ and Culture*, Niebuhr details a five-part paradigm for the ways Christians interpret the relationship between Christ and culture. In this chapter, I consider the inventional implications of Niebuhr's five-part

paradigm for analyzing the Southern Baptist Convention's involvement in politics and, more specifically, the denomination's political rhetoric. Through an analysis of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission's Legislative Agendas, I argue that the Southern Baptist Convention aims to transform culture through its political rhetoric.

Evolving Positions on Separation of Church and State

Strict separation of church and state was once a hallmark of the Baptist tradition. Renowned church-state historian Anson Phillips Stokes suggested, "No denomination has its roots more firmly planted in the soil of religious freedom and Church-State separation than the Baptists."[184] Stan L. Hastey, former associate director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, noted that "Baptists played an essential role in securing separation of church and state in the nation's formative years precisely because of the freedom they believed God had given them and all others." He continued, "This conviction was based on the theme of human liberty found throughout Scripture."[185] Historian Rufus Spain provides a helpful summary of the historical Baptist position on politics in the following:

> Christians were citizens of two countries—the earthly and the heavenly—but this imposed no conflict. Citizenship in the heavenly kingdom should, in fact, make a person a better citizen of his earthly state. In keeping with their belief in the separation of church and state, however, Baptists believed that Christians should exercise their political rights and privileges as *individuals* not collectively as denominations. Thus they held that churches remain silent on strictly political matters. Individual

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Christians, on the contrary, had an obligation to engage in partisan politics.[186]

As previously noted, Roger Williams, Isaac Backus, and John Leland were three key Baptist figures in securing religious liberty for Baptists in United States. Following the elimination of the last state-sponsored church in 1833, Baptists became less vocal about church-state matters—perhaps because of preoccupations related to the slavery controversy between Northern and Southern Baptists. However, Baptists experienced renewed interests in this question in the latter part of the nineteenth century, following advancements made by the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1936, the Southern Baptist Convention formed the Committee on Public Relations.[187] Under Rufus W. Weaver's direction, the committee represented the Convention's dealings with the federal government and served as a watchdog for policies affecting church and state relations. The committee was renamed the Joint Committee on Public Relations in 1939 following its merger with a likeminded committee formed by the Northern Baptist Convention. That same year Northern and Southern Baptists adopted "The American Baptist Bill of Rights: A Pronouncement Upon Religious Liberty," which reviewed Baptist history on church-state matters, declared "absolute religious liberty" for all, and declared that religious liberty was an "inalienable human right" that is "indispensable to human welfare."[188] Prior to Weaver's retirement in 1941, the Committee opposed federal funding to parochial schools and denounced President Roosevelt's appointment of Myron C. Taylor as his ambassador to the Vatican. E. Hilton Jackson, a lawyer with experience on church-state

questions and Southern Baptist layperson, replaced Weaver as chairman following his retirement.[189] Weaver was succeeded by Joseph Martin Dawson in 1946 at which time the Joint Committee began operating as a full-time agency with headquarters in Washington D.C. Dawson served as the Joint Committee's director until 1953.[190]

In 1949, the Joint Committee adopted a constitution that outlined its responsibilities. The constitution stated:

> The [Baptist Joint Committee] shall be empowered to enunciate, defend, and extend the historic, traditional Baptist principle of religious freedom with particular application to the separation of church and state as embodied in the Constitution of the United States.[191]

The Joint Committee gained national attention following Dawson's publication "The Ambassador to the Vatican: The Battle for America", an article declaring Baptist opposition to President Truman's appointment of Mark Clark as a permanent ambassador to the Vatican in 1951. In the years that followed, the Joint Committee focused much of its attention on matters involving public aid to religious institutions.

C. Emmanuel Carlson became director of the Joint Committee in 1957. Under Carlson's direction, the Joint Committee took a less anti-Catholic direction and a less strict approach to church-state separation.[192] Carlson's preference for more church-state cooperation drew sharp criticism from Glen Archer of the Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State and those who felt Carlson was wavering on the historical Baptist principle of strict separationism. During the 1960's, Southern Baptists became increasingly divided on church-state questions related

to federal aid to Convention-controlled educational institutions. However, most Southern Baptists held to a strict separation-of-church-and-state stance and maintained that public funding should not be provided for private institutions. In 1962 and 1963 the Joint Committee opposed Court rulings that supported "released time," compulsory prayer, and Bible reading in public schools.[193]

Southern Baptists adopted a decidedly softened view on church-state relations during The Shift. Notably, the Convention began adopting resolutions with obvious political implications. Between 1980 and 1990, the Convention adopted five resolutions against abortion (1980, 1982, 1984, 1987, and 1989) and one resolution in support of prayer in public schools (1982).[194] Despite passing resolutions that seemed intertwined with politics throughout the 1980's, in 1983 and 1986 the Convention adopted resolutions affirming the denominational support for religious liberty. Ironically, the 1983 resolution charged Southern Baptists to "oppose efforts to use governmental institutions and processes to promote the particular interests of a religious constituency or by favoring those who believe in no religion over those who have a faith commitment."[195]

The Shift also witnessed changes in the Southern Baptist Convention's official representation in Washington D.C. The Joint Committee had been the Southern Baptist voice in Washington D.C. since its inception in 1936.[196] However, conservatives had grown weary of the agency's moderate leanings.[197] In 1988, Dr. Richard Land was elected to direct the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. Land's appointment represented the first time the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission was under the

leadership of a conservative director of the Commission, a position he has held ever

since ever since. His appointment proved detrimental for the Joint Committee. In 1988,

the Southern Baptist Convention cut funding to the Joint Committee. Three years later

the Convention completely defunded the Joint Committee, and the Ethics and Religious

Liberty Commission became the denomination's new representative for moral, social,

and religious liberty issues.[198] A brief discussion of Land's leadership of the

Commission offers perspective on the shape the organization has taken under

conservative control.

The *New York Times* recently described Land as the Southern Baptist

Convention's "most prominent public face, often speaking out pungently on

conservative causes like opposition to abortion, same-sex marriage and big

government."[199] He has also been named "God's Lobbyist" and "One of the 25 most

influential evangelicals in America" by *TIME*.[200] While praised by conservatives,

Land's tenure has not been short of controversy, beginning with his appointment.[201]

Richard Land succeeded Nathan Larry Baker as director of the Ethics and

Religious Liberty Commission in 1988.[202] Baker's election to director in January of

1987 did not sit well conservative trustees.[203] Prior to the Commission's trustee meeting

on September 15, 1987, conservatives met to discuss the possibility of Baker's

dismissal.[204] Baker knew the conservatives wanted him removed and that the odds were

not in his favor to continue as director of the Commission. He submitted his resignation

on May 15, 1988. In what was viewed as an important victory for conservatives, the

trustees elected Land the next director by a 23 to 2 margin.[205] Richard Land had been a

lifetime friend of conservative figurehead Paige Patterson and was forthcoming in his conservative stances on issues including abortion and homosexuality. Prior to Land's election, the commission was a moderate organization.[206] However, Land would quickly and dramatically change the direction of the Commission.[207] Reflecting on the transition within the commission, Land said, "When I was elected as the executive director, the Christian Life Commission shifted 180 degrees."[208]

While conservatives have been pleased with Land's leadership of the Religious Liberty Commission, moderates have expressed frustration with the direction Land has taken the organization. In particular, Land has been criticized for staffing decisions. Parham explains, "Historically, almost all CLC program staffers held Ph.D. degrees in ethics. Now, the CLC is without a program staff member with a Ph.D. in Christian ethics. Political ideology has replaced educational preparation as the chief qualification for employment."[209] Parham also criticized Land for leading the Commission to focus on too few issues—specifically, abortion, homosexuality, and obscenity—and for mishandling issues of race.

During the 1990's, Land spent considerable energy leading the Southern Baptist campaign against Disney. In 1997, he accused Disney of "pushing a Christian bashing, family bashing, pro-homosexual agenda."[210] Land's anti-Disney campaigns culminated in the "Resolution on Moral Stewardship and the Disney Company," which urged "every Southern Baptist to take the stewardship of their time, money, and resources so seriously that they refrain from patronizing The Disney Company and any of its related entities."[211] In an article on the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission's website,

Land is referred to as "a leading evangelical Christian voice among social conservatives in this country's escalating cultural battles."[212] On July 31, 2012, Land announced that he would be retiring from his position as president of the agency. His retirement will be effective October 23, 2013.[213] The political rhetoric of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission under Land's direction will be revisited below.

Christ and Culture Paradigms

The preceding narrative of the Southern Baptist Convention's evolving positions on church-state matters raises a larger question about the place of religion—in this case, Christianity—in culture. That is, what is or should be the role of Christianity in culture? The work of H. Richard Niebuhr is helpful when considering how to answer this question. In his book *Christ and Culture*, Niebuhr examines the so-called "problem of Christ and culture."[214] In order to understand Niebuhr's examination of this problem, it is important to consider how Niebuhr defines both "Christ" and "culture".

Niebuhr acknowledges that any attempt to define "Christ" is inherently incomplete because definitions of "Christ" are relative to the standpoints of particular churches and historical and cultural contexts. He explains, "Jesus Christ who is the Christian's authority can be described, though every description falls short of completeness and must fail to satisfy others who have encountered him."[215] Considering the plurality of understandings of Christ, Niebuhr settles for a broad definition that takes into account those from the dominant strands of Christianity. However, Niebuhr's definition of Christ is not completely malleable. He notes,

Jesus Christ is a definite person, one and the same whether he appears as

man of flesh and blood or as risen Lord. He can never be confused with a

Socrates, a Plato or an Aristotle, a Gautama, a Confucius, or a

Mohammed, or even with an Amos or Isaiah.[216]

In his examination of Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture,* Carson notes that Niebuhr's

definition of Christ does not include Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons but does pose

complications to "confessional Christianity that explicitly and consciously try to live

under the authority of Scripture."[217]

Niebuhr offers a more specific definition for culture. He explains,

What we have in view when we deal with Christ and culture is that total

process of human activity and that total result of such activity to which

now the name *culture*, now the name *civilization*, is applied in common

speech. Culture is the "artificial, secondary environment" which man

superimposes on the natural. It comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs,

customs, social organization, inherited artifacts, technical processes, and

values. This "social heritage," this "reality sui generis," which the New

Testament writers frequently had in mind when they spoke of "the

world," which is represented in many forms but to which Christians like

other men are inevitably subject, is what we mean when we speak of

culture.[218]

Niebuhr also discusses what he believes are the defining characteristics of culture:

culture is always social; culture is human achievement; culture is a world of values that

are good for humankind; culture is concerned with the "temporal and material realization of values"; and culture is concerned with conserving values.[219]

After defining what he means by "Christ" and "Culture", Niebuhr turns to a discussion of the relationship between the two. Niebuhr argues that amongst Christians there are five distinct perspectives, or paradigms, on said relationship. The first paradigm Niebuhr describes is "Christ Against Culture." Niebuhr explains that this view "uncompromisingly affirms the sole authority of Christ over the Christian and resolutely rejects the culture's claims to loyalty."[220] He suggests that the counterpart of loyalty to Christ is "the rejection of cultural society; a clear line of separation is drawn between the brotherhood of the children of God and the world."[221] Niebuhr cites 1 John 2:15 as evidence one could point to for the justification of this paradigm, which reads, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."[222] According to the "Christ Against Culture" paradigm, the world is in opposition to Christ. Niebuhr argues, "[Culture] appears as a realm under the power of evil; it is the region of darkness, into which the citizens of the kingdom of light must not enter; it is characterized by the prevalence in it of lies, hatred, and murder [. . . .]"[223] Since Christ came to defeat "the world" and usher in a new kingdom, the Christian should have complete loyalty to Christ's new order.

The second paradigm Niebuhr discusses is "The Christ of Culture". According to Niebuhr, individuals holding this position "feel no great tension between church and world, the social laws and the Gospel, the workings and ethics of social conservation or progress."[224] He continues,

On the one hand they interpret culture through Christ, regarding those elements in it as most important which are most accordant with his work and person; on the other hand they understand Christ through culture, selecting from his teaching and action as well as from the Christian doctrine about him such points as seem to agree with what is best in civilization.[225]

Niebuhr explains that this paradigm sees in Christ "not only a revealer of religious truth but a god, the object of religious worship; but not the Lord of all life, and not the son of the Father who is the present Creator and Governor of all things."[226] In this paradigm, Jesus becomes a great exemplar. Niebuhr elaborates, "Jesus stands for the idea of spiritual knowledge; or of logical reason; or of the sense for the infinite; or of the moral law within; or of brotherly love."[227] Those who adopt this paradigm—so-called "Cultural Christians" or "accommodators"—ultimately see Christ as a symbol and replace traditional Christianity with moralism.

The aforementioned paradigms represent two contrasting positions on Christ and Culture. The remaining three paradigms offer varying positions between the two polarizing positions. The final three paradigms, fitting under the umbrella "Christ Above Culture" (or the church of the center), share some important commonalities. Niebuhr explains,

One of the theologically stated convictions with which the church of the center approaches the cultural problem is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Father Almighty who created heaven and earth. With that

formulation it introduces into the discussion about Christ and culture the

conception of nature on which all culture is founded, and which is good

and rightly ordered by the One to whom Jesus Christ is obedient and with

whom he is inseparably united. Where this conviction rules, Christ and

the world cannot be simply opposed to each other. Neither can the

"world" as culture be simply regarded as the realm of godlessness; since

it is at least founded on the "world" as nature, and cannot exist save as it

is upheld by the Creator and Governor of nature.[228]

Working from the preceding agreements, Niebuhr distinguishes the following distinct

paradigms: "Christ Above Culture: Dualist Type"; "Christ Above Culture: Synthesist

Type"; and "Christ Above Culture: Conversionist/Transformationist Type".

The "Dualist Type" (also called the Christ and Culture in Paradox) constitutes

another church of the center paradigm. According to dualists, "the duality and

inescapable authority of both Christ and culture are recognized, but the opposition

between them is also accepted."[229] Dualists experience lives of tension, submitting to

two authorities which do not agree yet both require obedience. Niebuhr explains, "In the

polarity and *tension* of Christ and culture life must be lived precariously and sinfully in

the hope of a justification that lies beyond history."[230]

In contrast to the "Dualist Type", the "Synthesist Type" sees a "both-and"

solution to the problem of Christ and culture. According to the synthesist, "We cannot

say 'Either Christ or culture,' as though there were no great distinction between them;

but we must say, 'Both Christ and culture,' in full awareness of the dual nature of our

law, our end, our situation."[231] Synthesists breach the gap between Christ and culture posited by the "Christ Against Culture" paradigm while maintaining—unlike accomodationists—that Christ is sovereign over culture.

Niebuhr's final paradigm is the "Conversionist Type." Conversionists see Christ as a transformer of humans and culture. Niebuhr elucidates,

> Christ is the transformer of culture . . . in the sense that he redirects, reinvigorates, and regenerates that life of man, expressed in all human works, which in present actuality is the perverted and corrupted exercise of a fundamentally good nature; which, moreover, in its depravity lies under the curse of transiency and death, not because an external punishment has been visited upon it, but because it is intrinsically self-contradictory.[232]

For the five paradigms, Niebuhr discusses theological support and references individuals and/or religious groups that adhere to each respective type. Moreover, for all but the "Conversionist/Transformative Type," Niebuhr also raises concerns and criticisms for each paradigm.

Christ and Culture Rhetorics

Niebuhr's paradigms provide a helpful framework for understanding the Southern Baptist Convention's participation in secular politics. In addition to offering insight into why Southern Baptists would or would not be concerned with secular politics, I argue that each of Niebuhr's paradigms can be understood as distinct "Christ and Culture Rhetorics" that have inventional implications for religio-political rhetoric—

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in this case, Southern Baptist political rhetoric. More specifically, each of Niebuhr's

paradigms creates rhetorical frameworks that influence factors including but not limited

to, sources of authority, audience, and persuasive strategies. In the following, I discuss

what Niebuhr's paradigms mean for Christian political participation and the implications

for each "Christ and Culture Rhetoric". I then turn to an analysis of the Ethics and

Religious Liberty Commission's Legislative Agendas as a means of analyzing the

"Christ and Culture Rhetoric" most exemplary of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Any discussion of political participation in the "Christ Against Culture"

paradigm will be unsurprisingly brief. Put simply, those adopting the "Christ Against

Culture" paradigm would reject involvement in politics because politics are part of a

secular culture to which Christ is opposed.[233] The "Christ Against Culture" paradigm

creates a clear "either – or" distinction. Either you identify with politics, or you identify

with Christ. A "Christ Against Culture Rhetoric" is equally simple. The source of

authority for this rhetoric would be rooted in the Divine and the audience for this

rhetoric would be limited to those "for" Christ because to engage those apart from Christ

would be to participate in culture. Messages in the "Christ Against Culture Rhetoric"

would deride involvement in politics and, perhaps, enumerate the inescapable problems

with politics due to their inherent cultural nature.

Considering that the Southern Baptist Convention has become increasingly

steeped in politics, it seems apparent that the "Christ Against Culture" paradigm does

not offer insight into the Southern Baptist Convention's interpretation of the relationship

between Christ and politics. While Southern Baptist have become more corporately

concerned with politics post-The Shift, support for individual involvement in politics has always been a part of Baptist life. Consequently, the "Christ Against Culture" paradigm fails to represent commonly held Southern Baptist positions past or present. As such, a "Christ Against Culture Rhetoric" does not characterize the denomination's political rhetoric.

The "Christ of Culture" paradigm offers a radically different interpretation of the relationship between Christ and culture than the "Christ Against Culture" paradigm. For those adopting the "Christ of Culture" paradigm, participation in politics is perfectly compatible with Christianity; thus political participation is welcomed. Adherents to the "Christ of Culture" paradigm are bi-partisan in the value they attribute to Christ and politics. In other words, both Christ and politics are considered equally important. Moreover, "Christ of Culture" proponents do not view any one political worldview as better than others because all politics are seen as extensions of the Divine existing for the good of humankind.

A "Christ of Culture Rhetoric" is more nuanced than a "Christ Against Culture Rhetoric". Those holding to the "Christ of Culture" paradigm do not see a distinction between the authority of Christ and the authority of politics. Therefore, the authority of "Christ of Culture Rhetoric" messages is rooted in either. When appealing to the authority of Christ, the proponent of the "Christ of Culture Rhetoric" would equally affirm the authority of politics—and vice versa. Messages from those employing this rhetoric would praise politics for being a conduit of the Divine. In this rhetoric, there would be no critiquing of "good" and "bad" politics or "right" and "wrong" parties,

policies, or figures. If one were to compare the "Christ of Culture Rhetoric" to a religion, the best fit might be Unitarian Universalist.[234]

Although the Southern Baptist Convention has found a home in politics in recent years, Southern Baptists' emphasis on the authority of Christ leads them to reject the "Christ of Culture" paradigm and, consequently, the "Christ of Culture Rhetoric". The Southern Baptist Convention supports engaging in the political sphere; however, the denomination is anything but an accommodator of Christ to culture. In fact, not a few would criticize the Convention for holding fast to archaic views and lacking relevance in modern society due to its positions on issues including—but not limited to—homosexuality, traditional sex/gender roles, and science. From the Southern Baptist perspective, accommodation of Christ to culture is incompatible with Christian doctrine.[235] In terms of political participation, the Southern Baptist Convention's apparent alignment with conservative politics suggests that Southern Baptists do not support a "Christ of Culture" belief that all political parties, policies, and figures are equally praiseworthy. In contrast, the Convention (as will be discussed below) is vocal in its opposition to certain policies and political figures.

Like the "Christ of Culture" paradigm, the "Dualist Type" paradigm encourages Christian participation in politics. However, unlike adherents to the "Christ of Culture" paradigm who see no conflict between Christ and politics, the dualist experiences divided loyalties. Jesus's words "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" offer little help to dualists who see God and Caesar both as having equal claim to all.[236] The "Dualist Type" paradigm lends itself to individuals

who spend their lives torn over trying to please Christ and Caesar (i.e. politics) without being absolutely faithful to either. To borrow an allusion from the book of Revelation in the Christian New Testament, dualists are "neither cold nor hot" but are rather "lukewarm" in their commitments to both Christ and culture.[237]

A "Dualist Type Rhetoric" would share some similarities with the "Christ of Culture Rhetoric". Appeals to authority would be rooted in the Divine as well as politics. However, these appeals would offer competing—not co-equal—alternatives. Messages from this rhetoric would reveal an eternal conflict between Christ and politics.

While some may cite Southern Baptists' involvement in politics to be evidence of divided loyalties within the denomination, the Convention's official doctrine ultimately views Christ, not politics, as supreme authority and the conflicted nature of dualist discourse is absent from Southern Baptist rhetoric. Consequently, the "Dualist Type" and "Dualist Type Rhetoric" fail to characterize Southern Baptist involvement in politics. To revisit the reference from Revelation, Southern Baptists would "spit" the lukewarm dualist position out of their mouths.[238] The remaining paradigms and rhetorics, however, do appear to resonate with Southern Baptist political life.

The "Synthesist Type" paradigm sees Christ and politics both as significant components of culture. However, unlike accomodationists and dualists, synthesists maintain that their ultimate authority is the Divine. In other words, while accomodationists and dualists fail to recognize the first of the Ten Commandments, synthesists believe that devotion to God comes before commitment to politics.[239]

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Synthesist involvement in politics would be encouraged so long as one is able to maintain the perceived proper balance between the two.

A "Synthesist Type Rhetoric" would appeal to the authority of the Divine but would include messages that encouraged political activism. Politics would be described as having important value for society. Potential audiences for synthesist persuasive messages would include individuals who were interested in politics but fail to recognize Christ as their authority. Synthesists would aim to convince these people that politics are good but that one's politics must be submitted to the authority of Christ. Submission of one's politics to the authority of Christ might entail a commitment to certain parties, politicians, and policies depending on the source of "Synthesist Type Rhetoric". One could imagine a scenario where a synthesist maintains that political involvement is valuable but only if one's involvement is with the "right" person or party, those which (according to that synthesist) have submitted to God. Synthesists might argue that commitments to opposing parties, politicians, and policies compromise the relationship of an individual's ultimate commitment to God as authority. Therefore, the source of the "Synthesist Type Rhetoric" becomes important in understanding the Christian's involvement in politics because of how said involvement gets framed.

Southern Baptists have long demonstrated adherence to the "Synthesist Type" paradigm and, consequently, a "Synthesist Type Rhetoric". Southern Baptists have always supported the individual-level participation in politics. And, as chronicled above, in recent years, the Convention has encouraged participation in politics at the agency and Convention levels.[240] Despite involvement (sometimes intense involvement)

in politics, Southern Baptists have always maintained (at least doctrinally) that Christ is their ultimate authority, not politics.

Niebuhr's "Conversionist Type" paradigm seemingly necessitates Christian participation in politics. According to this paradigm, Christ is a transformer of all things, including politics. Conversionists understand politics—which they interpret as inherently corrupt—as a potential instrument of the Divine. From the conversionist perspective, Christians should be actively involved in politics as a means to accomplishing the end of transforming politics to the image of Christ and, to a broader degree, transforming culture to Christ.

A "Conversionist Type Rhetoric" would place authority in the Divine. Messages would encourage political involvement generally and political involvement from a Christian worldview specifically. As with a "Synthesist Type Rhetoric", one would expect varying interpretations of how Christ can transform politics based on the source of each given message. Thus, "Conversionist Type Rhetoric" not surprisingly results in conflict and confrontation. The audience for "Conversionist Type Rhetoric" would be those involved in the political process. Messages aimed at transforming politics could be understood as also holding importance for the rest of culture—which conversionists are hoping to transform.

I argue that more than any other paradigm and "Christ and Culture Rhetoric," the "Conversionist Type" best characterizes the Southern Baptist Convention's participation in secular politics from The Shift to present day. As mentioned above, conversionists believe that Christ is a transformer of culture, a belief that is embraced by the Southern

Baptist Convention. Southern Baptists view the individual and culture as corrupt and in need of redemption—redemption that can come only through Christ. The Southern Baptist Convention's political rhetoric during and post-The Shift suggests that Southern Baptists have adopted the belief that a Christ-transformed politics—that is, politics influenced by a Christian worldview—can be a valuable instrument in Christian participation in the transformation of society.

Niebuhr's "Christ of Above Culture: Conversionist Type" paradigm, I argue, also explains a potential motivation conservatives had for assuming control of the denomination during The Shift. Conservatives within the Convention believed that under perceived liberal leadership, the denomination was losing its significance as an instrument for transforming society. To borrow a metaphor from Jesus' teachings in the New Testament, conservatives believed the Convention which was supposed to represent the "salt of the earth" had lost its "saltiness" and, consequently, was no longer valuable for God's plan to redeem humankind.[241] Thus, conservatives believed they first needed to transform the Convention itself. Following the transformation of the denomination, the "Conversionist Type" perspective has exemplified the Convention's participation in the so-called Culture War. In what follows, I will examine the ways the Convention has attempted to transform culture with the political rhetoric of the Ethic and Religious Liberty Commission.

Transforming Culture through Political Rhetoric

As discussed above, the Southern Baptist Convention witnessed a transition in its political voice in Washington D.C. as a result of The Shift. In the following, I analyze

the political rhetoric of the conservative-led Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. My analysis highlights the Commission's most recent Legislative Agendas, which outline the organization's plans for political engagement for each calendar year. Through this analysis, I argue that the Southern Baptist Convention's political participation through the Commission exemplifies the "Conversionist Type" paradigm and rhetoric.

The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission's website describes the agency as "an entity of the Southern Baptist Convention that is dedicated to addressing social and moral concerns and their implications on public policy issues from City Hall to Congress."[242] The Commission states its philosophy in the following Mission Statement: "To awaken, inform, energize, equip, and mobilize Christians to be the catalysts for the Biblically-based transformation of their families, churches, communities, and the nation."[243] The language of the Mission Statement places the Commission firmly within the "Conversionist Type" paradigm. The agency's goal is to transform all of culture to a biblical worldview, and it aims to encourage Christians to be active participants in this transformational process. Under the conservative leadership of Richard Land, the Commission's mission has often focused on the realm of politics.

The Commission's website is laid out not unlike a political candidate's campaign page. Atop the landing page is a link to "Topics" wherein the Commission explains its stances on social issues including gambling, homosexuality, and human trafficking. Elsewhere on the Commission's homepage is a link titled "Take Action". Upon following this link, one is taken to a page that provides updates on the Commission's

efforts and lists specific calls to action. The page also provides links for finding one's local elected officials and accessing election results. Richard Land's political intentions for the Commission are perhaps made most apparent in the Commission's Legislative Agendas, which are easily accessed via the Commission's website.

The Commission's Legislative Agendas articulate the agency's plan for political involvement for each year. These agendas typically include a brief review of the successes and shortcomings from the previous year before communicating specific beliefs about and plans to address certain politicians and policies. In recent years, Richard Land has co-authored Legislative Agendas with Barrett Duke, Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission Vice President for Public Policy and Research.

For the purposes of my analysis, I will focus on the Legislative Agendas for the last four years, which coincide with the presidency of Barack Obama. In addition to revealing the Commission's transformative goals, the agendas are representative of the Southern Baptist Convention's rejection of church and state separation following The Shift. As discussed above, the Convention has always supported political participation at the individual level. However, the Convention has historically been opposed to political involvement at the church and agency levels. As the official voice for the Convention on church and state matters, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission has done the complete opposite. The Commission's Legislative Agendas reveal the Convention's partisan leanings while also calling other Christians to adopt support for particular politicians and policies.

The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission's Legislative Agenda for 2009—

published January 7, 2009—makes apparent the agency's opposition to the newly

elected President Barack Obama. The opening line of the Agenda expresses concern

over the election of Obama. It reads,

> The election of Barack Obama as the nation's 44th president along with
>
> significant liberal gains in the House and Senate have created substantial
>
> challenges for many of the issues of concern to Southern Baptists and
>
> other social conservatives in the upcoming 111th Congress.[244]

The Agenda's opening statement does little to hide the political leanings of the

Commission. It clearly demarcates two political positions, "liberal" and "social

conservative," and explicitly links Southern Baptists to the latter. The Agenda not-so-

subtly suggests that if you are a Southern Baptist, you are a social conservative.

Following the opening statement, the Legislative Agenda for 2009 moves into a

discussion of what the Commission perceives the election of Obama to office means for

social issues and outlines the Commission's plan to address the new Administration's

plans for and positions on said topics. The topics are organized under the following

headings: Sanctity of Human Life; Human Rights; Terrorism, National Security, and

Building a Just Peace; Creation Care and the Environment; Poverty Reduction; Freedom

of Speech; The Assault on Traditional Marriage; and Our Commitment.[245] The final

paragraph in the Our Commitment section is nearly identical in all Legislative Agendas.

It always includes the following commitment:

We commit to bring the teachings of Scripture and the expressed

convictions of Southern Baptists to bear on every issue in order to assure

that we apply the salt and light of the Christian witness to as many issues

as our Lord directs, Southern Baptists have concerns, and our means

enable.[246]

The aforementioned commitment is followed by an acknowledgment of God as

sovereign and a quote from the Baptist Faith and Message which notes Southern

Baptists' pledge to "to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the

sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love."[247] The inclusion of

the allusion to the biblical call for Christians to be the "salt" and "light" to the world

alongside the quote from the Baptist Faith and Message underscores the Commission's

commitment to the "Conversionist Type" paradigm. Legislative Agendas make apparent

that participation in politics is positive while establishing that Christians should

influence culture, not be influenced by (an inherently corrupt) culture. In the following,

I highlight excerpts from selected sections of the Legislative Agenda for 2009 that

demonstrate the Commission's transformative intentions.

Under the headings Sanctity of Human Life and The Assault on Traditional

Marriage and the Homosexual Agenda, the Commission presents a narrative of contrasts.

The Commission frames an "us" versus "them" dynamic between the

Commission/Southern Baptist Convention/social conservatives and the Obama

Administration. For instance, the Commission criticizes Obama's pledge to sign the

Freedom of Choice Act while praising George W. Bush's "pro-life advances".[248]

Moreover, the Agenda employs personal pronouns to identify the Commission (and implicitly the Southern Baptist reader of the Agenda) with certain political positions. For example, the Agenda notes,

> While we do not foresee liberals . . . winning an effort to overturn [the Defense of Marriage Act], it is likely that they will run at it to see the level of support there is for it. We will need to mobilize a vast network to shut down those efforts.[249]

From the above excerpt, a distinction is made between "we" (the Commission, Convention, and social conservatives) and "liberals"/"they". While addressing each social topic, the Commission essentially tells the story of two enemies competing over the direction of the nation. In other words, the Agenda lays out two competing narratives for how culture will be transformed. The last sentence in the quote above that mentions mobilizing a network reveals the Commission's intended efforts to transform culture and, consequently, prevent the transformation of culture to a direction not in the Commission's liking.

The final section of the Agenda, titled Our Commitment, is telling. It includes the following statement: "More issues will arise as the year progresses, including judicial nominations, religious liberty questions here and abroad, abstinence education, immigration reform, health care, and many others."[250] Interestingly, religious liberty concerns appear as but a mere afterthought. It seems that the original intent of the Commission has instead been supplanted by the aim to transform society through political involvement that is informed by a biblical worldview. The notion of competing

worldviews and the Commission's desire to transform culture in accordance to their likings is reiterated in the following: "While we believe we will spend most of our energy this year resisting liberal advances, we will continue to look for ways to move responsible, God-honoring measures forward."[251]

The Legislative Agenda for 2009 is compelling on several levels. For one, the Commission makes explicit its identification with conservative politics by openly condemning the Obama Administration. The Agenda serves as a rallying cry of sorts for conservatives. It lays out specific bills that Southern Baptists should support and/or reject to assist in the transformation of culture and promises that the Commission will be committed to "resisting liberal advances."[252] Notably, the Commission's original purpose—to serve as a watchdog organization for religious liberty concerns—appears to be relegated to a peripheral concern. The themes found in the 2009 Legislative Agenda are not uncommon to the Agendas for 2010 – 2012.

The Legislative Agenda for 2010—issued February 6, 2010—opens by acknowledging that the primary concerns for the upcoming year are unchanged from 2009. The Agenda applauds Southern Baptists for their response to the Commission's calls to transform culture, noting the following: "Generally, liberals were largely unable to advance many of their principal legislative goals. Southern Baptists were instrumental in stopping many of these."[253] Thus, from the onset of the Agenda, the "us" versus "them" dynamic between Southern Baptists and "liberals" is reified. Despite the perceived victories over "liberals", the Agenda calls Southern Baptists to a steadfast commitment transforming culture through politics. It reads, "As we look at 2010, we

know Southern Baptists must continue their diligent advocacy for biblical values in our nation's public policy."[254] Following this brief introduction, the Agenda moves through a discussion of the Commission's plans for addressing key social issues in the coming year. The 2010 Agenda addresses the same topics as the Agenda from 2009 with the addition of two topics: Health Care Reform and Immigration Reform.

On the issue of abortion, the Agenda explains that while the "pro-life agenda" suffered some blows, the Freedom of Choice Act was not passed by Congress. The Commission pledges efforts "to prevent further loss of pro-life protections."[255] On the topic of homosexuality, the 2010 Agenda reviews the Commission's involvement with Perry v. Schwarzenegger and commits its involvement with the struggle for traditional marriage "all the way to the Supreme Court."[256] Perhaps not surprisingly, the religious liberty of Southern Baptists is not explicitly mentioned once in the entire 2010 Legislative Agenda.

In the Our Commitment section of the Agenda, the Commission describes the ongoing struggle between "liberals" and Southern Baptists over the transformation of culture. The Agenda states:

> Considering the daunting challenges we faced at the beginning of 2009, we believe traditional Judeo-Christian values won out in most cases. It is likely that we will be defending these values from liberal attacks in 2010 as well. However, we will continue to look for ways to move responsible, God-honoring measures forward.[257]

The language from the aforementioned summary statement, namely the last sentence, is exemplary of the Commission's commitment to the "Conversionist Type" paradigm. The Commission makes clear its plans to be involved in the political process with the intentions of promoting a biblical worldview with the hopes of transforming culture. The Commission employs language (e.g. "won") that suggests a struggle over the so-called Culture War. The Commission's implication that there can be but one winner of the Culture War distinguishes its rhetoric from that found in other "Christ and Culture Rhetorics" such as the "Christ of Culture Rhetoric". Unlike the accomodationist perspective—as promoted by the "Christ of Culture" paradigm—that sees all positions as equally valid, the Commission argues that there is only one acceptable worldview, the view promoted by the Commission. This theme of exclusivity continues in the 2011 Legislative Agenda.

The Legislative Agenda for 2011 opens by discussing the new challenges following midterm elections that resulted in a split Congress while noting that the conservative-led House will work in the Commission's favor. The 2011 Agenda re-named and divided its section formerly titled The Assault on Traditional Marriage into two separate sections: Traditional Marriage and The Homosexual Agenda. In addition to the aforementioned change, the 2011 Agenda includes a new section titled Administrative Overreach that raises concerns about the President turning to federal agencies to enact policy preferences that he is unable to advance in the divided Congress.

Not unlike the 2009 and 2010 Agendas, the 2011 Agenda—dated January 24, 2011—describes the Commission's positions on various social issues while outlining the agency's plans for action for the upcoming year. In the Our Commitment section, the Commission reiterates its excitement about working with a conservative House. The Agenda notes,

> We will now be working with a more conservative Congress. We look
> forward to the opportunity to regain lost ground, stop any further erosion,
> and make new advances for biblical values. We will continue to look for
> ways to move responsible, God-honoring measures forward.[258]

Similar to previous Legislative Agendas, the 2011 edition concludes by expressing its mission to transform culture to a biblical worldview. Moreover, the Commission continues to openly align itself with particular politicians and policies.

The Legislative Agenda for 2012 begins by reviewing legislation from 2011. The Agenda praises the conservatives in the House for preventing "further significant erosion of biblical values through legislative action" and condemns "liberals" in the Senate for preventing "the advancement of most of the legislation [the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission] supported that the House passed."[259] The 2012 Agenda does not include any new sections; however, it is worth noting that the section previously named The Homosexual Agenda is renamed The Radical Homosexual Agenda.

For the first time in at least four years, the Commission raises concerns about a specific religious liberty issue in the United States. The Commission states that the

religious liberty of military service members and chaplains was compromised as a result of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" repeal. The Agenda notes, "Chaplains who refuse on conscience grounds to provide the full range of services for openly practicing homosexual members of the military may find themselves passed over for promotions and other benefits."[260] In light of these perceived threats, the Commission makes the following commitment:

> We are determined to continue to work for the reinstatement of Don't Ask, Don't Tell as the minimum standard for military guidance on this issue. We will also do all we can to secure the religious liberty of the chaplains who serve our defenders so sacrificially.[261]

Despite the aforementioned concern over the chaplaincy corps, the Agenda closes with a sense of optimism, noting the following:

> The liberal legislative agenda has been brought to a near stand-still. The challenge this year will be to move good legislation and to reverse the damage of recent liberal advances. In this, we remain encouraged due to the growing involvement and engagement of Southern Baptists. More Southern Baptists are serving in Congress than ever before, and they are clearly committed to advancing biblical values through the legislative process.[262]

The Commission's plan to "reverse the damage of recent liberal advances" is consistent with its mission to be a transformative agent of culture. As evidenced by each of the

most recent Agendas, the Commission sees the legislative process as key to transforming culture to a biblical worldview.

I argue that the preceding analysis of the Legislative Agendas for the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission reveals that the agency has strayed from its original purpose. Rather than serving as a watchdog of sort for religious liberty concerns, the Commission has become a lobbying agency for conservative politics with the intent of transforming culture through the political process. Under Land's leadership, the Commission's concern for religious liberty has become an afterthought—as noted above, only one specific issue has been explicitly articulated as a religious liberty concern in the last four years. Moreover, the agency's partisan rhetoric on policies and politicians represents a clear break from traditional Baptist views on the separation of church and state. The fact that the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, an official entity of the Southern Baptist Convention, has become a partisan voice is a fact that could not be fathomed by the earliest Baptists.

The Commission's Legislative Agendas reveal the Convention's identification with Niebuhr's "Conversionist Type" paradigm. Functioning from this paradigm, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission has become one of the key sources of "Conversionist Type Rhetoric" for the denomination. The Commission makes apparent its goal of transforming culture with a biblical worldview in its mission statement and has focused its efforts on doing so through political participation under the leadership of Richard Land. The Southern Baptist Convention's break from its tradition of separation

of church and state and identification with the "Conversionist Type" is also evident through the denomination's use of Resolutions.

Conclusion

As discussed in this chapter, the Southern Baptist Convention has experienced an evolution in its views on church-state matters in recent history. Under conservative leadership during and after The Shift, a denomination that once prided itself on separation of church and state has become a partisan voice. Moreover, the Southern Baptist Convention has apparently become less concerned with issues of religious liberty—a cause the denomination formerly championed—and more concerned with using politics as an instrument to promote a biblical worldview.

H. Richard Niebuhr's paradigms for the perceptions Christians have about the relationship between Christ and Culture prove useful in offering an explanation for Christian involvement in politics—in this case, Southern Baptists' participation in politics. Moreover, I have argued that Neibuhr's five-part paradigms can be interpreted as distinct "Christ and Culture Rhetorics". The preceding analysis has demonstrated that the paradigm that best characterizes the Southern Baptist Convention's political participation is Niebuhr's "Christ Above Culture: Conversionist Type". According to this paradigm, Christian political participation is informed by the belief that politics, while inherently corrupt, can be transformed to the image of God and, subsequently, used as a Divine instrument for the transformation of culture.

The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission has taken up the mantle for being the Southern Baptist Convention's official agency for the transformation of culture.

Once tasked with the responsibility of protecting the Southern Baptists' religious liberties, the agency has become a lobbying voice for conservative politics which are perceived to align with a biblical worldview. As detailed in the above analysis, the Commission works to inform and mobilize Southern Baptist to use the legislative process to transform culture.

The belief that culture is in need of being transformed implies that something is either inherently wrong with culture or that something has gone wrong with culture. This chapter has considered how the Southern Baptist Convention has attempted to participate in this transformation. However, within the Southern Baptist Convention's political rhetoric, there are additional rhetorical strategies at play. Interestingly, when discussing the need for transformation, Southern Baptists commonly frame cultural problems as intentional attacks on a biblical worldview. This rhetorical framing is given further consideration in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

PARANOIA AND PURIFICATION

The Southern Baptist Convention has been intensely involved in partisan politics ever since The Shift. In the proceeding chapter, I argued that the denomination's participation in politics has been motivated by an attempt to transform culture to a biblical worldview. In an effort to redeem politics as an instrument of the Divine, Southern Baptists have rallied around politicians and policies they perceive to support a biblical worldview. Despite these intentions, the Southern Baptist Convention has been ineffective in transforming culture as a result of its misguided political rhetoric.

In this chapter, I consider the ways in which the Southern Baptist Convention's political rhetoric has compromised its ability to be a transformative agent in society. This chapter begins with a review of Richard Hofstadter's paranoid style and a discussion of Kenneth Burke's concept of victimage. I then proceed with a two-fold analysis of the Convention's political rhetoric after The Shift on the topics of abortion and homosexuality—the two issues which have dominated the denomination's political rhetoric for the last twenty years. The first section of my analysis examines Southern Baptist involvement with politics on the individual level by considering the rhetoric of Dr. R. Albert "Al" Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. In the second part of my analysis, I consider Convention-level political rhetoric through the denomination's use of resolutions. Through my analysis, I

argue that Southern Baptist political rhetoric evidences a combination of the paranoid style and victimage rhetoric, which results in a rhetorical problem for the Convention.

Paranoid Style and Victimage

During and after The Shift, Southern Baptist rhetoric on the individual, agency, and Convention levels exhibits a combination of themes consistent with Hofstadter's paranoid style and the Burkean concept of victimage. Through employing this rhetoric, Southern Baptists simultaneously portray themselves as cultural martyrs while blaming others for society's ills. A brief review of Hofstadter and Burke's concepts will prove useful for my analysis.

Hofstadter describes the paranoid style as "a way of seeing the world and expressing oneself."[263] Like the clinically paranoid, the spokesperson of the paranoid style exhibits exaggerated beliefs and suspicion. The feeling of persecution, which becomes systematized into grandiose theories of conspiracy, is central. However, unlike the clinically paranoid, the paranoid style is a symptom of individuals who are otherwise sane. The key difference between clinical paranoia and the paranoid style hinges on the target of the paranoid's perceived persecution. Hofstadter explains,

> Although they both tend to be overheated, oversuspicious,
> overaggressive, grandiose, and apocalyptic in expression, the clinical
> paranoid sees the hostile and conspiratorial world in which he feels
> himself to be living as directed specifically *against him*; whereas the
> spokesman of the paranoid style finds it directed against a nation, a

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culture, a way of life whose fate affects not himself alone but millions of others.[264]

Because spokespersons of the paranoid style believe their passions to be unselfish, they experience intensified feelings of righteousness. Likewise, moral indignation is heightened. Paranoid rhetoric is commonly elicited by catastrophe or the fear of catastrophe. Hofstadter notes that what distinguishes the paranoid style is not the absence of "verifiable facts, but (though it is occasionally true that in his extravagant passion for facts the paranoid occasionally manufactures them), but rather the curious leap in imagination that is always made at some critical point in the recital of events."[265] He argues that the paranoid individual's fears are overblown and, in some cases, wholly unnecessary. Despite the merits of the individual's arguments, the paranoid style overshadows content.

The paranoid tendency is "aroused by a confrontation of opposed interests which are (or are felt to be) totally irreconcilable, and thus by nature not susceptible to the normal political processes of bargain and compromise."[266] Consequently, individuals who embrace the paranoid style view their perceived opponents as enemies. Hofstadter notes, "Since the enemy is thought of as being totally evil and totally unappeasable, he must be totally eliminated—if not from the world, at least from the theater of operations to which the paranoid directs his attention."[267] Said enemy is considered a "perfect model of malice, a kind of amoral superman: sinister, ubiquitous, powerful, cruel, sensual, luxury-loving. [. . . .] He is a free, active, demonic agent."[268] Hofstadter explains that the paranoid's demand for unqualified victories over his or her enemies

leads to unattainable goals which inevitably result in failures that further escalate the paranoid's frustration.

Rhetorical scholars have identified the paranoid style across a variety of genres including apologia, advertising, conspiracy, presidential rhetoric, and television programming.[269] The paranoid style has also been located in the rhetoric of modern extremist groups and the conservative right.[270] Recently, scholars and commentators have noted evidence of the paranoid style in the rhetoric of the so-called "Birthers" who claim President Barack Obama was not born in the United States of America.[271] In another example, Apple and Messner argue that the paranoid style is evident in the rhetoric of adherents to "Christian Identity" theology, a worldview predicated on anti-Semitism and white superiority.[272] Apple and Messner explain that Christian Identity discourse contains themes of the paranoia style concerning a "centuries-old Jewish plot to create a New World Order."[273]

Considering the above, one might wonder who or what determines when a person's rhetoric is characteristic of the paranoid style. Moreover, some may claim that the paranoid style is, in fact, effective. I argue that not unlike the clinically paranoid, the spokesperson of the paranoid style likely has difficulties recognizes he or she exhibits paranoid rhetoric. The same applies to those that agree with what the spokesperson of the paranoid style is arguing; accusations of paranoia may come as a surprise. Because of this, the person who is best equipped to identify the paranoid style is the "outsider" so-to-speak. The paranoid style has been used with some effectiveness—in politics and elsewhere—for rallying a base that already agrees with the rhetor's message. However,

the characteristics of the paranoid style—for example, overblown suspicions and the proclivity to make a "curious leap" when making arguments—limit the effectiveness messages hold for outsiders.[274] When talking about the paranoid style of the Southern Baptist Convention, then, the audience that perceives Southern Baptist political rhetoric as paranoid may include non-religious individuals, members of other religions and denominations, and, in some cases, those within the Convention.

Recurrent themes in Southern Baptist paranoid style include claims that Christianity, the Southern Baptist Convention, and traditional order (be it traditional values, generally, or the traditional family, specifically) are under attack. Take, for example, the language in recent Legislative Agendas from the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. In 2009, the Commission's Agenda described the Freedom of Choice Act as giving pro-abortionists "arsenal in their war against the unborn."[275] The agenda also framed pro-same-sex marriage measures as "assault[s] on traditional marriage."[276] The 2010 Legislative Agenda described anti-conservative political positions as "liberal attacks".[277] Furthermore, the Legislative Agenda for 2011 described opposing political positions as "efforts to undermine biblical values".[278] Abortion and advancements in homosexual rights are two of the most prominent issues framed as attacks on the Southern Baptist faith and mission. Southern Baptist political rhetoric frames pro-abortion and pro-homosexual positions as irreconcilable to a biblical worldview and supporters of said positions are considered enemies of the Southern Baptist Convention and Christianity. Being that pro-abortion and pro-homosexual viewpoints are described as affronts to Christianity, compromise is not an option.

Therefore, when the government or the majority of society supports said views, Southern Baptists claim that society and/or the government is "out to get them," so-to-speak.

It is unclear whether the modern paranoia of the Southern Baptist Convention is a result of Baptists' past experiences with persecution. As discussed in Chapter Two, there was a time in United States history when Baptists faced real persecution. However, that time has long since passed. Second only to the Catholic Church, the Southern Baptist Convention is one of the largest religious bodies in the United States. Despite its majority status, it seems that however large the Convention becomes, Southern Baptists carry with them a belief that they are a minority. Could this belief be a product of the Convention's past? The Southern Baptist Convention, after all, was founded in opposition to a growing trend in skepticism about the ethics of slavery. Furthermore, as previously discussed, Southern Baptists have long been suspicious of education, which places them at odds with an increasingly educated society. For example, the Convention and its members lag behind in adopting scientific findings that are becoming commonly held by the general public. Perhaps as a result of the emphasis on autonomy and the competition that follows that form of governance, there is also an inherent territorialism that persists within the denomination. Could this territorialism factor into the current state of paranoia? The possible explanations for Southern Baptist paranoia are varied; however, none seems warranted.

In one sense, the Southern Baptist Convention appears to capitalize on its alleged minority status. By framing themselves as a minority that is under attack, Southern Baptists gain a sense of righteousness through identifying with scripture that commends

those who are persecuted for their faith. The Christian New Testament claims that

Christians will be persecuted as Jesus and the prophets were persecuted (Mt 5:12; Jn

15:20; 2 Tim. 3:12), but also promises that those who are persecuted will be blessed (Mt.

5:10; Rm. 8:17; Phil. 1:29; 1 Pt. 3:14, 2:20). 1 Peter 4:12 – 19 provides an exposition on

the New Testament's explanation of suffering as a Christian. The text explains that

Christians should not be surprised when they are persecuted but should instead "rejoice

insofar as [they] share in Christ's suffering".[279] The paranoid style of Southern Baptist

rhetoric suggests that losses in the so-called Culture War are a form of persecution for

Southern Baptists. This persecution provides Southern Baptists with a sense of

affirmation that their work is justified because Jesus also suffered for his ministry.

On one level Southern Baptists accept losses in the Culture War because of the

righteousness that is a product of being persecuted; however, on another level, the

Southern Baptist Convention employs victimage rhetoric. As noted above, Southern

Baptist rhetoric after The Shift argues that pro-abortion and pro-homosexual legislation

leads to negative consequences. An analysis of Southern Baptist rhetoric reveals that the

Convention aims to distance itself from any guilt incurred by perceived negative

consequences resulting from the aforementioned legislation. Kenneth Burke's work on

guilt provides a helpful framework for understanding the Southern Baptist Convention's

victimage rhetoric.

Guilt is a central component of Kenneth Burke's concept of dramatism.[280] Burke

argued that guilt is an inevitable emotion resulting from an individual's rejection of his

or her place in the social hierarchy and suggested that upon experiencing guilt the

individual seeks purification—a process wherein the individual rids oneself of guilt. Purification occurs through one of two ways: mortification or victimage. Mortification is a form of self-sacrifice that involves the individual admitting guilt and accepting blame. In contrast to mortification, victimage involves transferring one's guilt to another. Burke called this process of purification the "scapegoat mechanism."[281] He explained that "the scapegoat is taken to possess intrinsically the qualities we assign to it," and through projecting one's ills onto the scapegoat, one experiences "purification by dissociation."[282]

The concept of scapegoating can also be found in the book of Leviticus as part of the ceremonies for the Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the year in Judaism. The Day of Atonement represented a time for repentance and atonement. According to Leviticus 16, the ceremonies for the Day of Atonement involved two goats: one goat would be slaughtered and another would be sent into the wilderness. The priest would place his hands on the live goat's head and confess the iniquities of Israel. This so-called scapegoat, which was believed to bear the sins of Israel, would then be sent out into the wilderness never to be seen again—symbolically taking with it the transgressions of Israel.

French theorist René Girard developed Burke's concept of the scapegoat mechanism extensively in his theory of religion, culture, and violence.[283] According to Girard, the need for a scapegoat mechanism results from an innate human desire for what another has and/or wants. Girard named this concept 'mimetic desire.' Mimetic desire leads to mimetic rivalry, which results in violence or potential violence.

Scapegoating provides a way of release from said violence or potential violence through "nonconscious convergence upon a victim," who is subsequently treated violently or expelled from the community. [284] Girard notes, "Scapegoat indicates both the innocence of the victims, the collective polarization in opposition to them, and the collective end result of that polarization."[285] He concludes, "Scapegoat effects are more deeply rooted in the human condition than we are willing to admit."[286]

Girard suggests that scapegoats, while at times selected at random, are often identified as vulnerable. Girard explains, "the persecutors always convince themselves that a small number of people, or even a single individual, despite his relative weakness, is extremely harmful to the whole of society."[287] Girard notes that ethnic and religious minorities are inclined to polarize majorities against themselves. Much of Girard's work on scapegoating focuses on Judeo-Christian scriptures—specifically, the Passion narrative in the Gospels.[288]

As Kell and Camp have argued, throughout The Shift conservatives employed victimage rhetoric to scapegoat the moderates for what the conservatives perceived to be the negative state of the denomination.[289] This theme of scapegoating has continued after The Shift. Following The Shift, Southern Baptists have transitioned from blaming moderate Southern Baptists for denominational problems to blaming opponents of Southern Baptist positions on issues such as abortion and homosexuality for problems in society. As Girard noted, religious minorities tend to polarize majorities against themselves. While the Southern Baptist Convention is not a minority faith in the United States, its paranoid tendencies and portrayal of itself as under attack from culture are

consistent with Girard's argument. As will be discussed further below, one of the primary victims of the Convention's scapegoating has been a minority group—homosexuals.   Southern Baptists have have aimed to connect societal ills to homosexuals and pro-abortion and to pro-homosexual legislation as a means of restoring societal order and absolving themselves of any responsibility for problems in society.

As explained by Burke, victimage through scapegoating is a form of purification from one's own guilt. If the Southern Baptist Convention believes itself to be absent of any guilt of society's ills, from what is it purifying itself? One possible explanation is that the Southern Baptist Convention's scapegoating is an effort to rid itself of guilt over its own shortcomings on issues such as divorce and premarital sex. As detailed below, the Convention argues that pro-abortion and pro-homosexuality legislation are detrimental to society as a whole. Specifically, Southern Baptist rhetoric claims that said legislation poses challenges to the traditional values (e.g. traditional family). Considering the data on divorce rates and premarital sex amongst Evangelicals—as will be discussed further in the following chapter—it appears that Southern Baptists are also guilty of not preserving traditional values and failing to uphold the commands of scripture. Consequently, attempts to scapegoat pro-abortion and pro-homosexual supporters can be read as the Convention's efforts to purge its own guilt through shifting blame onto others.[290] The following analysis will consider in more detail the paranoid style and victimage characteristics in Southern Baptist political rhetoric.

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Individual Level Paranoia and Purification

As discussed in Chapter Two, one of the goals for conservatives during The Shift was securing leadership at the Convention's seminaries. A major victory came with the appointment of Dr. R. Albert Mohler as president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, the flagship seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention.[291] Mohler has been widely praised by conservatives for his role in transforming Southern Seminary from a moderate to a conservative institution.

In addition to his duties as president of Southern Seminary, Mohler hosts two radio programs, "The Briefing" and "Thinking in Public," and frequently blogs about moral, cultural, and theological issues. Mohler has been quoted in many leading newspapers, including *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today*, and has also appeared on national news programs such as CNN's "Larry King Live," "Dateline NBC," and Fox's "The O'Reilly Factor."[292] *TIME* has described Mohler as "the reigning evangelical of the evangelical movement in the U.S."[293]

The choice to analyze Mohler is this section of my analysis is two-fold. First, he is a high profile Southern Baptist with significant visibility inside and outside of the denomination. Second, he heads the flagship institution of the denomination. As such, this analysis provides a follow-up to The Shift's impact on one of the most influential figures in education within the Convention. As a means of providing context to my analysis, I will offer a brief review of Mohler's transition to president of Southern Seminary and analyze his political rhetoric.

In the Fall of 1992, Roy Honeycutt announced his plans to retire from his

position as president at Southern Seminary. Throughout his time as president,

Honeycutt had vocally opposed The Shift and worked to preserve what he believed was

the true heritage of Southern; however, by 1992 he recognized that complete

conservative control of the seminary's board of trustees was imminent and that his

efforts would ultimately prove futile.[294] When Honeycutt announced his retirement, it

was apparent that the trustees would look for a conservative successor. There were three

leading candidates: Bob Agee, president of Oklahoma Baptist University; Richard Land,

president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission; and Al Mohler, editor of the

Christian Index, the Georgia Baptist Convention's weekly newspaper.[295]

During his tenure as editor of the *Christian Index*, Mohler became a vocal

proponent of conservative viewpoints on abortion, homosexuality, and issues regarding

women's role in the ministry. Despite his clear conservative leanings, he was seen by

most as the least likely candidate to be elected the next president of Southern Seminary.

At the time Mohler was but thirty three years old, only three years removed from the

completion of his doctoral work at Southern Seminary. Moreover, some remembered

Mohler for his moderate leanings while he was a student at Southern—although by the

end of his studies, he was clearly a supporter of the conservatives. Despite the

aforementioned reservations, the board of trustees elected Mohler the ninth president of

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Although he was viewed as less threatening to moderates than Richard Land,

Mohler's election was still ill-received by the seminary's moderate trustees and faculty

members. Wills explains, "Of the ten or eleven moderate trustees on the board, five voted against him."[296] In response to Mohler's election, some trustees, administrators, deans, and faculty members immediately resigned. The press was also critical of Mohler. Jack Harwell, editor of *Baptists Today*, called Mohler an "unquestioned fundamentalist" with "loyalty to the fundamentalist machine in the Southern Baptist Convention."[297] John Ed Pearce, columnist for the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, accused Mohler of having "Neanderthal beliefs."[298] Mohler's tenure would not be short of controversy.

Prior to his appointment to president, many trustees and faculty were concerned that Mohler would enforce a literal interpretation of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's Abstract of Principles.[299] Their suspicions would prove correct. The Abstract of Principles was originally drafted in 1858 to serve as a theological contract of sorts for Southern's faculty.[300] However, for years the seminary had not imposed a strict adherence to its contents. Upon his election, Mohler informed the trustees that he believed some faculty was violating the Abstract of Principles and that he planned to enforce loyalty to the document's original intent. On June 30, 1994, Molly Marshall became the first faculty member to come under scrutiny for allegedly not adhering to the Abstract of Principles. Wills explains the steps for addressing said situations: "The seminary's official procedure required the president to investigate all charges brought against professors in order to determine whether they possessed sufficient merit to warrant a formal investigation by the board of trustees."[301] Mohler informed Marshall

that the case would be turned over to the trustees. Rather than fight the charges, Marshall chose to resign and accept a monetary settlement.

In March of the following year, the seminary encountered what Wills describes as "the most traumatic crisis of the first fifteen years of Mohler's presidency. It began with the firing of a dean and ended with the closing of an entire school."[302] The events resulted in a dramatic shift from a predominately moderate faculty to one dominated by inerrantists.[303] The controversy arose over a faculty hire. In the spring of 1995, Diana Garland, Dean of the Carver School of Church Social Work, announced a position opening and initiated the formal search process to find a candidate. The search committee recommended David Sherwood for the position, but Mohler refused to support the nomination.[304] Faculty members grew concerned that Mohler's heavy-handedness would ultimately result in the death of the school because no job candidate would ever meet Mohler's hiring standards. Garland accused Mohler of "abuse of power" and of imposing secret hiring criteria.[305] Following a meeting with Mohler, she was asked to resign.[306] The Carver school was later discontinued and transferred to Campbellsville University in 1998.[307] The so-called Garland controversy "became a defining moment in the seminary's life."[308]

Through the Garland controversy, Mohler had made it apparent that he did not intend to hire any job candidate who supported egalitarian views. While Mohler's complementarian beliefs were consistent with the majority of Southern Baptists, they were inconsistent with the views of the majority of Southern faculty at the time—even amongst the conservative faculty members. Faculty favored the vision of a moderate or

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mainstream evangelicalism for the seminary. Mohler, in contrast, wanted an evangelical institution and had no interest in Southern being moderate or mainstream. The trustees stood in support of Mohler.[309] Wills describes the aftermath of the trustees' decision to back Mohler:

> By June 1995, ten professors had accepted the offer of early retirement. Almost as many accepted it later. The early retirement was a mutually agreeable resolution to the alienation of faculty and administration and eased the transition from a moderate to a conservative faculty.[310]

In the years that followed, Mohler recruited and hired faculty committed to inerrancy, the Abstract of Principles, and conservative orthodoxy. In 1998, he established the James P. Boyce College of the Bible—the first four-year college associated with a Southern Baptist seminary—Southern Seminary reversed a thirteen year trend of declining enrollment. Ten years later Southern's enrollment had nearly doubled.[311]

At the individual-level, Mohler's involvement in politics is not inconsistent with the Baptist tradition. As previously noted, Baptists have long been expected to be politically informed and engaged citizens. What complicates Mohler's political rhetoric, however, is his unique position of influence within the Southern Baptist Convention. While Mohler's standing as president of the Convention's flagship institution provides him with no inherent privileges with respect to denominational governance (his votes at annual meetings count the same as any other Southern Baptist member's), his influence on the denomination should not be underestimated. Mohler's personal theology has influenced his presidency at Southern and, consequently, the nature of the institution

itself. Said influences have had a trickle-down effect that have influenced, or at least

had the potential to influence, all Southern seminary students. Because of his position of

power Mohler's commentary on political issues is sometimes considered by outsiders to

be the official opinion of Southern Seminary or, further, the official stance of the

Southern Baptist Convention.

Mohler's two primary mediums for expressing his opinions on religion and

politics are "The Briefing" (his radio program) and his blog at "AlbertMohler.com." Al

Mohler, like other influential religious figures of the twenty-first century (i.e., Rick

Warren, Joel Osteen), has embraced the age of new media. As Campbell rightly notes,

"the internet is seen as a revolutionary tool for spreading Christianity."[312] So-called "E-

vangelism," Campbell explains, "presents the internet as the new mission field of the

twenty-first century."[313] Mohler actively uses Facebook, Twitter, and his blog to share

his thoughts and opinions on a variety of topics and participate in cultural debates. In

doing so, Mohler presents and advocates his understanding of a Christian worldview.

For the purpose of my analysis, I will focus on arguments Mohler has made on his blog.

Mohler began blogging at "AlbertMohler.com" in 2003. He uses his blog to

offer a running commentary on a variety of social issues. Blog posts can be accessed

chronologically or topically through a list of approximately sixty categories. Subjects

covered in the blog cover a wide range of issues including, to name a few, Church

History, Film, and Sports. Topics that would seem to have obvious political

implications are: abortion; court decisions; economy; education; embryos and stem cell;

environment; homosexuality; law and justice; politics; population control; religious

freedom; sex education; United States. As mentioned above, my analysis will focus on

Mohler's—and, later, the Convention's—rhetoric on abortion and homosexuality/same-

sex marriage.

Celeste Condit's work on contemporary American abortion arguments provides

context to the Southern Baptist Convention's arguments about abortion following The

Shift. Condit argues that abortion arguments have evolved through seven stages.[314] The

first stage, the "Professional Argument," surfaced in scholarly forums and focused on

the meaning abortion had for various professions. The "Narrative Form," or second

stage in the argument, marked the beginning of public argument on the topic. This

stage, which begin in the early 1960's, consisted "largely of the retelling of the tell of

illegal abortion."[315] Abortion arguments witnessed a dramatic shift in the late sixties

during the "auxiliary ideographic stage." During this third stage, arguments became

associated with women's rights and discrimination, representing the first significant

challenge to the dominant ideology.

The fourth stage of the argument, the "intrinsic ideographic stage", coincided

with the rise of the feminist movement in the 1970's and centered on a woman's right to

choose. The fifth stage of the debate represented the "normalization struggle." Condit

explains that this stage was characterized by two competing tendencies: (1) attempts to

normalize abortion by working it into the daily understandings of Americans and (2) an

excalation of the opposition to such normalization, focusing on a constitutional

amendment."[316] By 1977, the "stalemate stage" in the argument had begun. During this

sixth stage, "Advocates on both sides attempted to assert a superior claim to their opponents' ideographs, narratives, and characterizations."[317]

The stalemate stage resulted in efforts on both sides to garner support. These attempts led to the "fragmentation stage" in the argument. Condit explains that this seventh stage "signaled a form of public reconciliation."[318] She elaborates,

> In spite of continued vociferous argument from advocates on all sides, the poll data, legislative outcomes, and public characterizations of abortion indicate that the public had begun to accept key values from both sides [. . .] the controversy had reoriented our national understanding of abortion in a manner that more fully recognized both the undesirability and desirability of abortion for its roles in protecting women, fetal life, and social family structures.[319]

Condit argues that 1980 marked a plateau for stages in the abortion argument. The present study, then offers insight into modern abortion arguments from the anti-abortion contingent.

As mentioned above, Mohler became an outspoken opponent of abortion during his time as editor of the *Christian Index*. He has since made the abortion issue a focus in the blog posts on his website. I argue that Mohler's posts on abortion are characteristic of the paranoid style largely due to how Mohler frames the topic of abortion. Rather than address the abortion topic as a social or political issue, Mohler argues that the topic of abortion is a theological issue. By framing abortion as a theological issue, pro-abortion individuals, politicians, and policies are interpreted as directly attacking the

Southern Baptist biblical worldview. This rhetorical framing helps to make sense of Mohler's characterization of abortion as the "Culture of Death", "warfare on the womb", and part of the ongoing Culture War.[320]

Framing the topic of abortion as theological also motivates Mohler to speak on the topic in terms of absolute truths. As noted above, the paranoid tendency is "aroused by a confrontation of opposed interests which are (or are felt to be) totally irreconcilable, and thus by nature not susceptible to the normal political processes of bargain and compromise."[321] Within Mohler's theological framework, many topics are considered black or white, leaving no room for debate. Consequently, abortion—and homosexuality, as will be discussed below—is an act that is either theologically right or theologically wrong. For Mohler, the issue of abortion is fundamentally a competition over truth. Note his language in his 2004 blog post titled "The Culture of Death and Its Logic": "The Culture of Death survives only on a fabric of untruths and false promises. A recovery for the Culture of Life will require that the truth win out–and that its witnesses speak with determined boldness."[322]

Mohler's blog posts on abortion often provide critiques on specific pro-abortion arguments in media and press. For example, in a 2003 post titled "Have Conservatives 'Won' the Abortion War?" Mohler offers a review of and rebuttal to William Saletan's book *In Bearing Right: How Conservatives Won the Abortion War*. Saletan's title is misleading as he actually argues that Conservatives have lost the abortion war and settled for a "conservative pro-choice" position. Mohler argues that Saletan fails to understand the core beliefs of the anti-abortionists in part because he presents the effort

to outlaw partial-birth abortions as "little more than politics."[323] Mohler then explains

his interpretation of the abortion issue. He argues,

> the sanctity of human life is not a principle up for sale, or amenable to
>
> compromise. The pro-life movement is not primarily about politics, after
>
> all. Defenders of human life start with the conviction that human beings
>
> are made in God's image, and thus deserve full protection from
>
> conception until natural death. From this basic conviction there can be no
>
> retreat–and no deals.[324]

Mohler's declaration that the abortion issue is not primarily about politics along with his

claim that compromise is not an option makes apparent a fundamental difference in

addressing the topic. Moreover, both qualifiers evidence the paranoid tendency. By

framing the issue in moral terms, Mohler can describe his stance as that which defends

what is right. He takes on Wills in a similar post in 2007.

Mohler's 2007 post "Is Abortion a Theological Issue? Garry Wills Says No"

provides a response to "Abortion Isn't a Religious Issue," a column from Gary Wills that

appeared in the *LA Times* the previous day. The title to Wills' article is not misleading.

He argues, "There is no theological basis for defending or condemning abortion."[325]

Mohler calls Wills' arguments "intellectual sophistry" and counters:

> Abortion *is* a theological issue because it deals with the questions of
>
> human life, personhood, the image of God, and the sanctity of the gift of
>
> life. There is no way that it can be anything less than theological at its

core, which is why so many Christians take the issue with such seriousness.[326]

As discussed above, Mohler's definition of the abortion issue as theological leads him to interpret stances that are in opposition to his theological beliefs on the topic as threatening to the Southern Baptist Convention and, to a larger degree, a biblical worldview.

Mohler also describes abortion as an attack on the nation's character. In a 2004 post titled "America's Aborted Conscience—The Sin of Moral Indifference," Mohler referred to abortion as a "blight upon the nation's character" and a "graphic symbol of rebellion."[327] Mohler discusses abortion and the "Culture of Death" in another post from the same year titled "The Culture of Death and Its Legacy." He claims, "The Culture of Death represents the ultimate degeneration of the entire civilization, and it represents nothing less than total opposition to God and his authority over the spectrum of life and death–indeed over every dimension of morality."[328] While an attack on a biblical worldview represents the most serious concern for Mohler on the topic of abortion, it is clear that he also believes that abortion signifies an affront to civilization at large

As noted above, the paranoid style often surfaces due to catastrophe or fear of catastrophe. Mohler's anti-abortion rhetoric often suggests that abortion has brought upon, and will continue to bring upon, a great catastrophe to the United States. In the aforementioned post title "The Culture of Death and Its Legacy," Mohler claims:

> We have seen the breakdown of order at every level in such a way that we
>
> now have no control over many of our streets and have no control over

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much of what out children see and hear. We have no control; all in the name of liberation.[329]

These arguments also have victimage implications, as Mohler suggests that those who are anti-biblical worldview are guilty for the alleged negative consequences. Through the use of scapegoating, Mohler relieves himself and the Southern Baptist Convention of any culpability. Similar themes are present in the post "America's Aborted Conscience" wherein Mohler reflects on the years since Roe v. Wade. He laments,

Three decades of routine abortion reveal a downward spiral from abortion to euthanasia, from embryo research to human cloning, from assisted suicide to advocated infanticide. What is left? Only a thin veneer of moral reticence separates us from future horrors of unthinkable magnitude.[330]

Mohler's paranoid vision of America's future is bleak. In a post from 2005 titled "The Cause of Life—Where We Stand No, he claims, "We are living on borrowed time. A nation cannot long prosper in its economy when it has sold its soul for personal choice."[331]

Mohler's arguments against abortion are direct, frequent, and characteristic of the paranoid style. He frames abortion as a theological issue and argues that scripture affirms the humanity of the unborn as life created in the image of God. Consequently, compromise is not an option because supporting abortion is equivalent to attacking a biblical worldview. Mohler also claims that abortion is an attack on the United States that has brought catastrophe upon American society. Thus, Mohler can see himself as righteous in his efforts to oppose abortion.

As mentioned above, Condit's discussion of contemporary American abortion arguments ended with a fragmentation stage that began in 1980. Although Condit argued that the abortion argument had plateaued in 1980, she encouraged continued consideration of how arguments might evolve in the future. The above analysis—along with the analysis of Southern Baptist Convention Resolution's below—seems to suggest that modern Southern Baptist rhetoric, and perhaps anti-abortion rhetoric on a larger scale, is evidence of a possible eighth stage in the contemporary abortion argument. In this eighth stage, abortion arguments from the anti-abortion side focus on a "Narrative of War."

Southern Baptist rhetoric after The Shift frames the topic of abortion as a war between two diametrically opposed parties. In this "Narrative of War" stage, Southern Baptists argue that abortion is a war against a biblical worldview and the United States. Mohler, for instance, makes anti-abortion arguments that reveal his beliefs about right and appropriate citizenship. For Mohler, those who support abortion are anti-American because he views abortion as making war on the nation's character. Mohler's rhetoric is equally divisive in his commentary on the topic of homosexuality and same-sex marriage

Ralph R. Smith and Russel R. Windes articulate the complexity of public arguments on the topic of same-sex relations in the following:

> Disputes about the expression and regulation of same-sex desire take
> many different and overlapping forms. Struggle occurs over use of state
> power, media representation, educational policy, religious belief,

aesthetics, language, and cultural definitions of reality. Opponents

disagree on whether the state should be used either to suppress

homosexuality or to protect lesbian and gay people. They argue over

whether variant sexuality ought to be visible in art and mass media and

whether it should be depicted sympathetically. Religious communities

divide and negotiate about acceptance of homosexuality and gay people.

Symbols expressing fundamental cultural values are invoked by all

sides.[332]

Smith and Windes argue that debates on homosexuality center on interpretation. The

explain, "Contests between progay and antigay advocates can be understood as efforts to

gain support for rival interpretive packages which frame same-sex orientation and

behaviors as either sin, sickness, and crime or as benign indifference and positive

identity."[333] Opposing parties root their arguments in either essentialist or

constructionist interpretation. Smith and Windes elaborate,

In the essentialist account, homosexuality is construed as a real, life-long

trait defining a distinct type of person—the gay man and lesbian. In

contrast, the constructionist interpretation explains homosexuality as

fictive, not real; it is socially constructed through language, not natural or

biological; it involves a degree of choice, not simply discover of an

internal essence.[334]

Smith and Windes note progay and antigay advocates both claim that they are

responding to their opponents' "efforts to destroy society."[335] As will be seen below, the

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strategies common to "antigay" arguments (e.g. constructionist interpretation) are employed by Mohler and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Like Smith and Windes, Marcus O'Donnell claims that public debates on same-sex marriage are often marked by "highly charged symbolic terms."[336] He argues that marriage is commonly presented as "an ideal achieved or an ideal thwarted."[337] O'Donnell notes three recurring myths associated with same-sex marriage arguments: evolution/revolution, the apocalypse, and the surrogate child. The evolution/revolution myth can work in two ways. O'Donnell explains, "It can act as both a stultifying force: be careful, just wait, change will occur as it is meant to. Or it can act as a buttressing device to promote hope and spur further action."[338] O'Donnell notes that the apocalyptic myth is commonly employed by religious authorities and that such rhetoric feeds off of fear and uncertainty. The surrogate child myth has been used by both sides of the same-sex marriage debate. O'Donnell elaborates, "[The image of the child] can be wrapped in nostalgia of particular childhoods, or it can play as a cipher of an undiagnosed future. It represents innocence, playfulness, mischief and fragility."[339] Of the three myths discussed by O'Donnell, the apocalyptic myth surfaces most frequently in Southern Baptist rhetoric on homosexuality and same-sex marriage.[340]

No topic has garnered more attention in Mohler's blog than homosexuality and same-sex marriage. Mohler writes about how same-sex marriage is an attack on religious liberty and traditional marriage and how same-sex marriage will lead to the demise of society. For instance, Mohler suggests the following in the aforementioned post "Is the Culture War For Real?": "Accepting a negotiated form of same-sex marriage

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or civil partnerships is nothing less than a negotiated delay of the eventual destruction of civilization's central institution."[341] In his post "The Culture of Death and Its Legacy," Mohler describes "alternative lifestyles" as "openly intending to reverse centuries of civilization."[342] For Mohler, homosexuality represents a lifestyle that is incompatible with marriage. In a 2004 post titled "The Case Against Homosexual Marriage", he argues, "The words homosexual and marriage are inherently contradictory."[343] By characterizing homosexuality in this manner, Mohler presents same-sex marriage as a threat to the institution of marriage. Mohler describes what he believes to be the appropriate evangelical response to the pro-homosexual movement in the following from a 2006 post titled "The Challenge of Homosexuality—How Important Is It?: "An evangelical perspective must recognize that such a revolution is itself a direct challenge to the foundations of gender, family, sexuality, and morality, which are some of the central issues of a Christian worldview lived out in the world."[344]

Mohler outlines the stakes of the Culture War over homosexuality in a 2003 post titled "The Homosexual Agenda: Religious Liberty Under Fire". In the post, he warned readers that at its root the "Homosexual Agenda" was a threat to religious liberty. Mohler used mutually exclusive language when talking about Christians and pro-homosexual advocates, arguing "Christianity remains the great obstacle to the final success of the homosexual movement. The silencing of the church must be their ultimate priority."[345] In classic paranoid style, Mohler's claimed that the church is under attack. Later in the same post, he argued,

the homosexual agenda directs much of its opposition to the biblical concepts of marriage and family. [. . . .] A complete transformation of the concept of the family, including child rearing, parental authority, and the right of parents to instruct their children in biblical morality are all under threat.[346]

The aforementioned quote makes clear that Mohler interprets homosexuality and pro-homosexual politics as intentional attacks on what he perceives to be a biblical worldview. Moreover, Mohler views his opposition as opposed to the concept of family. Elsewhere in the post, he described how Christians are forced to endure "moral brainwashing" under the guise of diversity training and speaks at length about the "coercive tactics" homosexual advocates have used to gain public support for their cause—alluding to cases where Christian employees have been terminated or denied promotion for their non-support of homosexuality.[347]

Mohler concluded his post by cautioning readers who might be skeptical of the seriousness of the consequences of the "homosexual agenda." He exhorts,

The tragic reality is that the homosexual activists are winning and we are losing. Be forewarned: The homosexual revolution is only a hint of the shape of things to come. If religious liberty means anything, it means the right to teach and practice biblical morality. Once this is forbidden, religious liberty is reduced to ashes. When will America's Christians smell the smoke?

For Mohler, victories for homosexuals represent the beginning of a slippery slope that leads to devastating outcomes for the once-cherished Southern Baptist belief in religious liberty. In subsequent posts Mohler spends additional time framing the debate over homosexuality and same-sex marriage as a theological issue.

In 2005, Mohler posted a four-part series titled "Homosexuality in Theological Perspective." Mohler opens Part-One of the series by commenting, "In every age the Church is confronted with cultural and ethical challenges which test both the conviction and the compassion of the Body of Christ."[348] He then identified abortion and homosexuality as the two key issues facing American Christianity since the Civil War and warns Christians of adopting a "moral relativism." Part-Two of the series delves deeper into the theological implications of homosexuality. He explained,

> Fundamental truths essential to the Christian faith are at stake in this confrontation. These truths range from basic issues of theism to biblical authority, the nature of human beings, God's purpose and prerogatives in creation, sin, salvation, sanctification, and, by extension, the entire body of evangelical divinity.[349]

Mohler claims that the bible's teachings against homosexuality are "exegetically inescapable," and "revisionist" interpretations that suggest otherwise are the beginning of what will result in an outright rejection of biblical authority.[350]

In Part-Three of the series, Mohler takes on his opponents who claim homosexuality is an "orientation." After providing an exposition of Romans 1, Mohler argued that homosexuality is not an orientation, but rather "an assault upon the integrity

of creation and God's intention in creating human beings in two distinct and complementary genders."[351] The paranoid style in Mohler's remarks is not hard to miss. His description of homosexuality as an "assault" against creation and God's purpose is perhaps most exemplary of Mohler's paranoia on the topic. Part-Four, the final installment of the series, offers advice on how Christians should respond to the pro-homosexual movement. Mohler informed that Christians must respond and that response must be rooted in scripture. He encouraged Christians to use the opportunity to preach salvation and repentance to homosexuals and heterosexuals alike. He concludes the series by reminding his readers of the following: "To the homosexual, as to all others, we must speak in love, never in hatred.[352]

In a 2005 post titled "What's the Battle for Gay Marriage Really About?" Mohler argued that Christians should be opposed to same-sex marriage because the battle over gay marriage is more than just an issue over marriage. As noted above, the paranoid tendency is "aroused by a confrontation of opposed interests which are (or are felt to be) totally irreconcilable."[353] In his post, Mohler argued that the debate over same-sex marriage is a "clash of two diametrically opposed worldviews–two absolutely different ways of understanding the world."[354]

Mohler's posts about homosexuality are numerous. Not unlike his arguments against abortion, Mohler frames the topic as a theological one and uses scriptural evidence to support his belief that homosexuality is wrong. He employs passages from the Hebrew Bible and Christian New Testament to offer his readers what he suggests is the appropriate biblical worldview on the topic of homosexuality. In making his case

against homosexuality, Mohler exemplifies the paranoid style. He suggests that homosexuality—more specifically, same-sex marriage—is a threat to God's established order for the family. As he did on the topic of abortion, Mohler implies that those who are pro-homosexual are responsible for imminent negative consequences in society resulting from victories for the pro-homosexual movement. From Mohler's perspective, Southern Baptists are victims of a culture that has grown in support for homosexuality and same-sex marriage.[355] In several posts, Mohler complains that the views his opponents espouse are propagated by the media and press.[356]

As noted by Smith and Windes, arguments about homosexuality and same-sex marriage center on interpretation. Mohler and the Southern Baptist Convention employ highly charged symbolic language when offering their interpretation of homosexuality and same-sex marriage. For instance, Southern Baptist rhetoric interprets same-sex marriage and living a homosexual lifestyle as a "sin." In another example, Mohler argues that "marriage" is incompatible with same-sex marriage and that same-sex marriage is an attack on the concept of "family." By framing homosexuality as a threat to Divine order, Mohler's rhetoric exhibits his—and the Southern Baptist Convention's—constructionist interpretation of the topic.

Mohler's blog posts on the topics of abortion and homosexuality also include criticisms of specific politicians and policies. For example, in a 2010 post titled "'This is *Life* We're Talking About'—Abortion and the Health Care Bill," Mohler criticizes the health care bill because it will force all Americans to subsidize abortions indirectly.   A year later, his post "In His Own Words: A Radical Pro-Abortion President" responded to

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President Obama for his remarks on the 38th anniversary of Roe v. Wade. Mohler described Obama's address as "remarkable, even for presidents who support legalized abortion" because it "included not one word that indicated any recognition that abortion is in any case or in any sense a tragedy."[357] Mohler described Obama's statement as "one of the most revealing—and tragic—statements made by any political figure in our times."[358]

In 2012, Mohler offered further criticism of President Obama. This time Mohler's attention was once again on Obama's health care bill. In his post, "The Pill, The President, and Religious Liberty in Peril," Mohler exhibits the zeal of his Baptist forbearers as he discusses the implications the health care bill has on religious liberty. After reviewing some of the implications for religious institutions and religious liberty, he concludes, "The edict from President Obama to religious institutions is this — violate conscience and bend the knee to the government, or face the consequences."[359]

Mohler also has numerous posts on how Christians should respond to pro-homosexual politicians and legislation. On more than one occasion he criticized Howard Dean for his evolving stance on same-sex marriage.[360] Most recently, he has criticized President Obama for his support of homosexual marriage.[361] Mohler has also condemned decisions in states such as Massachusetts and New York for decisions to legalize same-sex marriages.[362] As noted above, Mohler's participation in politics as an individual is not inconsistent with Southern Baptist heritage. However, his public status within the Southern Baptist Convention undoubtedly makes his commentary on specific politicians and policies a concern for some.

On the topics of abortion and homosexuality, Mohler's rhetoric is exemplary of the paranoid style. He characterizes abortion and homosexuality as attacks on a biblical worldview and traditional society and argues that on topics of such importance there can be no compromise. His beliefs that compromise is not an option on the issues of abortion and homosexuality is perhaps best summarized in his 2004 post titled "Is The Culture War For Real?" Mohler explains, "When it comes to abortion, homosexuality, marriage, and the deep questions of morality, compromise fails as a means of adjudicating disputes and reaching a political resolution."[363] He continues, "we have now reached the point when political debates deal essentially with the most fundamental matters of right and wrong, life and death, true and false, and are therefore incapable of being solved by negotiation and compromise.[364] Unfortunately for Mohler, his paranoid rhetoric overshadows his thoughtful commentary on the issues—namely the concerns he raises over religious liberty. Themes of paranoia and victimage are also evident in political rhetoric at the Convention level.

Convention Level Paranoia and Purification

The Southern Baptist Convention's overt involvement in partisan politics through official resolutions post-The Shift represents the denomination's most radical break from the its rich tradition of separation and church and state. While individual Southern Baptists have long been encouraged and even expected to be involved in politics, Baptists have historically viewed direct church or denominational involvement as problematic. As noted in the Chapter Three, "Baptists believed that Christians should exercise their political rights and privileges as *individuals* not collectively as

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denominations. Thus they held that churches remain silent on strictly political

matters."[365] In the following, I explain the Convention's use of resolutions and the

rhetorical form of resolutions. I then discuss the paranoid style found in the

Convention's resolutions after The Shift that address abortion and homosexuality.

Resolutions have been an important part of the Southern Baptist Convention's

rhetoric since its founding. Since 1845, the Convention has issued a resolution—often

numerous—nearly every year. On their official website, the Convention defines a

resolution as "an expression of opinion or concern."[366] They emphasize that a resolution

is distinct from "a motion, which calls for action."[367] The Convention explains that a

"resolution is not used to direct an entity of the Southern Baptist Convention to specific

action other than to communicate the opinion or concern expressed."[368]

In Section 20 of their official bylaws, the Southern Baptist Convention describes

the requirements for their Committee on Resolutions and the guidelines for proposed

resolutions. According to Section 20,

> At least seventy-five (75) days in advance of the Convention, the
>
> president, in conference with the vice presidents, shall appoint a
>
> Committee on Resolutions to consist of ten (10) members, any two (2) of
>
> whom shall have served as Committee on Resolutions members during
>
> the prior year, and any three (3) of whom shall be members of the
>
> Executive Committee. One of the Committee members shall be
>
> designated as chairperson. Members so named shall be notified by the
>
> president in writing at least 75 days before the annual meeting of the

Convention. The names of the members of the Committee on Resolutions

shall be released by the president to Baptist Press no later than 75 days

prior to the annual meeting of the Convention, and their names shall be

published in the first issue of the Convention *Bulletin*.[369]

With regard to submitted resolutions, Section 20 explains that all proposals must

(1) Be submitted to the Committee for review and consideration as early

as April 15th, but no later than fifteen (15) days prior to the next SBC

annual meeting, (2) Be addressed to the Committee on Resolutions in

care of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention at

its registered or e-mail address (electronic copies are preferred), (3) Be

typewritten, titled, and dated, (4) Be accompanied by a letter from a

church qualified to send a messenger to the annual meeting of the

Southern Baptist Convention certifying that the person submitting the

resolution is a member in good standing, and (5) Include complete

contact information for both the person submitting it, and his or her

church.[370]

In addition to the aforementioned criteria, Section 20 explains that people are limited to

submitting three resolutions per year. Once received, the Committee on Resolutions

reviews submissions and prepares and submits those they approve for adoption by the

Convention. With exception to resolutions received by the Committee that gain a 2/3

vote by the Convention, only resolutions the Committee approves are considered for

adoption by the Convention. Resolutions are voted on and passed at the Convention's annual meetings.

While other communities of faith and religious organizations sometimes issue official statements of belief, none follow the specific format of a Southern Baptist Convention resolution. All resolutions passed by the Convention follow a distinct two-part structure. The first section contains a set of statements, which discuss some current or previous stance or belief toward a particular issue. Each of these statements begins with the term "WHEREAS." The second section includes a list of statements, which express the Convention's opinion or concern about the specified topic. Each of these statements begins with the term "RESOLVED." The rigid "if—then" structuring of Southern Baptist Convention resolutions produces pseudo-legal statements.[371] Resolutions are succinct and direct, expressing in as few words as needed the Southern Baptist Convention's official opinion on a given topic.

The rigid structure of resolutions strikes some as problematic. James Aune, for instance, notes that argumentation in resolutions is deductive, formalistic, and authoritarian.[372] Aune argues that this type of argumentation "is fundamentally fatal to democracy, at least if widely applied, [. . .] because it shuts off debate."[373] He continues, "In a democracy, one cannot assume any issues are permanently settled, and it is unfair to use these kinds of arguments against one's opponent, because it labels one's opponent as not simply mistaken, but as against God."[374] Southern Baptist Convention resolutions, then, can be viewed as attempts by the Convention to make definitive

statements on particular issues. While the process of passing a resolution involves

debate, a resolution itself is evidence that a given debate has been decided.

Since its initial resolutions in 1845, the Southern Baptist Convention has passed

resolutions on more than 150 topics ranging from traditionally uncontroversial topics

such as beauty contests and bookstores to more divisive social issues like war and capital

punishment.[375] Regardless of the societal perception of the issues addressed, any topic

covered by a resolution represents an issue of importance for the Convention. While the

Convention explicitly notes that resolutions are not legislation for action to be taken by

their members, the rhetorical importance of resolutions is significant and warrants

attention for understanding the rhetorical impact of the largest Protestant religious

organization in the United States. An official resolution issued by the Southern Baptist

Convention has the ability to influence the views of over 16 million members in over

40,000 congregations across the United States. [376] Furthermore, since resolutions offer

the official opinions held by the Convention, they have the capacity to shape

nonmembers' perceptions of the denomination. In the years following The Shift (1992-

present), the Convention has passed over 200 resolutions. The two most frequently

addressed topics with political implications have been abortion and homosexuality.

In the last twenty years, the Southern Baptist Convention has passed eight

resolutions that pertain to abortion.[377] The first abortion resolution after The Shift was

the 1993 "Resolution on the Freedom of Choice Act, Hyde Amendment".[378] The first

section of the resolution—the "WHEREAS" section—begins with an affirmation of the

sanctity of human life. The resolution references Genesis 1:27 and 9:6 as evidence of

biblical support for the sanctity of life because said verses mention that humans are created in the image of God. The resolution then makes the argument that American society has rejected the value of human life by referencing the average number of abortions each year and the total number of abortions since Roe v. Wade. The remainder of the first section expresses concerns about the ruling in the 1992 case Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey, the Freedom of Choice Act, and the Clinton administration's handling of the abortion issue.[379]

The second section of the resolution—the "RESOLVED" section—begins by arguing that life begins at conception, citing Psalm 51:5, Psalm 139:14-16, and Jeremiah 1:5 as evidence. The resolution then states, "Be it further RESOLVED, That we affirm the biblical prohibition on the taking of unborn human life except to save the life of the mother."[380] Following the aforementioned premises, the resolution offers a series of statements expressing opposition to abortion generally and pro-abortion policies specifically and calls upon Congress to maintain the Hyde Amendment.[381]

A few elements of rhetorical import stand out in the 1993 resolution. For one, the resolution at times struggles to adequately support its claims with evidence. Perhaps evidence of Aune's concern that the argumentative structure of resolutions "shuts off debate," the 1993 resolution cites scripture with little or no exposition—a common theme in Convention resolutions. The resolution reference style simply involves parenthetical scripture citations. Elsewhere, the resolution makes scriptural claims without providing any reference information. The aforementioned citation style and lack of exposition suggests a single, authoritative interpretation of scripture. Interpretations

rendered in the resolution, therefore, are to be understood as *the* way to understand scripture.

The 1993 resolution is exemplary of the Convention's shift to overt involvement in partisan politics. In addition to denouncing abortion, the resolution also admonishes specific legislation (i.e. The Freedom of Choice Act) and specific politicians (Clinton) for their apparent pro-abortion stances. Similarly, the resolution praises specific anti-abortion legislation (the Hyde Act). Another interesting aspect of the 1993 resolution is the fact that it rebukes an individual Southern Baptist's stance on a political issue. President Clinton, who identifies as a Southern Baptist, is essentially deemed as having views outside the faith. As such, the resolution—and other resolutions for that matter— marks a shift from historical Baptist skepticism of centralized authority and support for soul liberty, or the priesthood of believers. Through the use of resolutions, the Southern Baptist Convention openly engages in partisan politics by stating the only acceptable denominational opinion on political issues.

Political commentary through resolutions such as the 1993 resolution also evidences a paranoid style. While confronting specific pro-abortion politicians and policies, the Convention presents itself as defending the unborn. Also implied in these resolutions, however, is the suggestion that a biblical worldview is under attack. Moreover, since resolutions represent the official opinion of the Convention, positions incongruent with those viewed supported by resolutions are interpreted as affronts to the Convention itself. Thus, disagreeing with a resolution represents an attack on the

Convention. Resolutions then become important rhetorical tools used by the Convention to present and defend the denomination's worldviews.

The themes present in the 1993 resolution are repeated in subsequent abortion-related resolutions. For instance, the 1996 "Resolution on the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban" declares "all abortions, except in those very rare cases where the life of the mother is clearly in danger, are wrong."[382] Note the definitive nature of the aforementioned statement (i.e., "all abortions"). Perhaps ironically, considering the Convention's contentious history with Catholics on the issue of abortion, the Convention uses the 1996 resolution to side with the Catholic position that partial-birth abortions are the equivalent of "infanticide."[383] Moreover, the resolution goes on to explicitly condemn President Clinton's veto of legislation in support of a ban on partial-birth abortions and discredit Clinton's claim that he came to his position after praying about the matter.[384] The 1996 resolution is absent of any scriptural references.[385] The Convention re-visits the issue of partial birth abortion in its 2002 "Resolution on Partial Birth Abortion." In said resolution, the Convention engages in political lobbying once again by requesting President Bush to "make the passage of legislation banning partial-birth abortion a high priority in this administration."[386]

In 2003, the Convention passed "On Thirty Years of Roe v. Wade," its lengthiest resolution on abortion after The Shift.[387] The resolution begins in a similar fashion to the 1993 resolution by opening with a series of anti-abortion declarations with parenthetical scriptural references. Scripture citations repeated in the 1993 and 2003 resolutions include Genesis 1:27; 9:6, referenced to support the argument that all humans

are created in God's image; and Psalm 139:13-16, used as evidence of life beginning at conception. The 2003 resolution adds a parenthetical citation from the Christian New Testament, Luke 1:44, to substantiate the argument for life beginning at conception. Moreover, the resolution includes three scriptural references (Psalm 72:12-14, Psalm 82:3, and James 1:27) to support the claim that the bible commands justice for the fatherless and protection for the innocent. It is implied that the unborn are included in the aforementioned categories.

The 2003 resolution represents the clearest example of the Convention's efforts to frame the topic of abortion as a theological issue. As seen in the analysis of Mohler, framing abortion as a theological issue results in the perception that a topic is not up for the normal democratic process. Aune's argument that resolutions shut off debate appear to be confirmed. The 2003 resolution presents abortion as a topic where compromise is not an option because to disagree with the resolution is to challenge a biblical worldview.

In addition to declaring an anti-abortion stance, the Convention uses "On Thirty Years of Roe v. Wade" to confess its previous pro-abortion position. The Resolution reads, "WHEREAS, Resolutions passed by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1971 and 1974 accepted unbiblical premises of the abortion rights movement, forfeiting the opportunity to advocate the protection of defenseless women and children."[388] The resolution continues, "WHEREAS, During the early years of the post-Roe era, some of those then in leadership positions within the denomination endorsed and furthered the

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'pro-choice' abortion rights agenda outlined in Roe v. Wade."[389] The Convention

describes The Shift as an act of repentance of sorts for the denomination.

> WHEREAS, Southern Baptist churches have effected a renewal of
>
> biblical orthodoxy and confessional integrity in our denomination,
>
> beginning with the Southern Baptist Convention presidential election of
>
> 1979; and
>
> WHEREAS, The Southern Baptist Convention has maintained a robust
>
> commitment to the sanctity of all human life, including that of the
>
> unborn, beginning with a landmark pro-life resolution in 1982[.][390]

The resolution then cites the Baptist Faith and Message's stance that children "from the

moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord" and the Scriptural

mandate to "speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life

from conception to natural death."[391] The second section of the 2003 resolution

criticizes the decision in Roe v. Wade, laments the aftermath said decision, calls

Southern Baptists to "remain vigilant in the protection of human life," applauds

Congress's passing of the Partial Birth-Ban Act of 2003, and commends President Bush

for his pledge to sign the bill into law.[392]

 The Convention's lengthiest resolution on abortion largely stays true to the tone

and structure of previous anti-abortion resolutions. One unique feature of the 2003

resolution is the reference to previous resolutions that stood in support of Roe v. Wade,

resolutions condemned by "On Thirty Years of Roe v. Wade." The 2003 resolution

admits that official opinions of the Convention can change—adding a level of

complication to understanding the alleged definitive nature of resolutions. Anti-abortion

resolutions in subsequent years have condemned Planned Parenthood, support of

Planned Parenthood, and President Obama's support for abortion.

The only social/political issue pursued more zealously than abortion through

Southern Baptist resolutions after The Shift has been homosexuality. In the last twenty

years, there have been fifteen resolutions related to homosexuality, including one

resolution in each of the last five years (2008 – 2012).[393] Resolutions on homosexuality

have addressed the morality of homosexuality, homosexuality in the military, benefits

for homosexuals and same-sex couples, and same-sex marriage.

The 1993 "Resolution on Homosexuality, Military Service and Civil Rights," the

first resolution on homosexuality after The Shift, makes explicit the Convention's stance

on homosexuality. It begins, "WHEREAS, Homosexuality is immoral, contrary to the

Bible (Lev. 18:22; 1 Cor. 6:9-10) and contrary to traditional Judeo-Christian moral

standards, and the open affirmation of homosexuality represents a sign of God's

surrendering a society to its perversions (Rom. 1:18-32)."[394] This first line of the

resolution contains all the classic elements of the paranoid style. In addition to framing

homosexuality as an attack on the Bible, a Judeo-Christian worldview, and a topic where

compromise is not an option, the resolution implies that homosexuality will lead to a

society-wide catastrophe—a catastrophe for which Southern Baptists are not culpable.

The first section of the 1993 resolution aims to show how "homosexuality is

incompatible with the requirements of military service" and criticizes framing

homosexuality, which the resolution terms "learned sexual deviance," as a civil rights

issue.[395] The second section of the resolution encourages homosexuals to repent of their

sins and trust in Jesus (referencing 1 Corinthians 6:11) and explicitly expresses the

Convention's opposition to "government endorsement, sanction, recognition,

acceptance, or civil rights advantage on the basis of homosexuality."[396] Following the

same pattern of argumentation as evidenced in the abortion resolutions, the 1993

resolution seeks to define the issue and shut off the debate.

Starting with the 1996 "Resolution on Homosexual Marriage," the Convention

launched its resolution campaign denouncing same-sex marriage and politicians and

policies that support homosexuals' rights. In this lengthy resolution (twenty-eight

statements total—twenty-three "WHEREAS", five "RESOLVED"), the Convention

continues to make the argument that homosexual attraction is not biological.[397] The

resolution emphasizes homosexual conduct is unnatural and "a gross abomination [. . .]

in all circumstances" (citing Leviticus 18:22, 20:13 and Romans 1:24-27).[398] The

resolution's other key argument against same-sex marriage emphasizes the Convention's

belief that marriage is primarily a divine, not civil, institution designed by God to be a

permanent union between one man and one woman (citing Genesis 1:28, 2:24 and

Matthew 19:4-6). The resolution evokes catastrophe themes by suggesting that

compromising the divine order would result in a trivialization of marriage, would

threaten the heterosexual family unit, and, furthermore, would jeopardize "the favor of

the Almighty" (citing Leviticus 18:24-25, 28, Psalm 2, Amos 1:3,6, 9, 11, 13, and Isaiah

13-21).[399] By citing scripture the resolution essentially presents a case against those who

disagree with the Convention. Those who disagree are not only deemed as opposing the

Convention but also the Scriptures. Thus, as a pseudo-legal document, the resolution

scapegoats those opposing a biblical worldview as guilty of the negative consequences

for society. The resolution goes on to claim, "The future of the United States of

America will be placed at risk because no society can survive that does not recognize,

protect, defend the unique importance of heterosexual marriage to its own health and

stability."[400] The first section concludes with more catastrophe-laden rhetoric,

expressing concerns about the impact same-sex marriages would have on new laws,

education, and the workplace.

In the brief second section of the resolution, the Convention affirms its belief that

homosexual conduct is sin and expresses steadfast opposition to homosexual marriage.

The final statement of the resolution sounds oddly similar to an oath one would take

upon being sworn into office. It reads:

> [. . .] we do most solemnly pledge our decision never to recognize the
>
> moral legitimacy of any such law, policy or regulation, and we affirm
>
> that, whatever the stakes (Dan. 3:17-18), we will never conform to or
>
> obey (Acts 4:19) anything required by any governing body to implement,
>
> impose or act upon any such law. So help us God.[401]

The political undertones of the pseudo-oath-of-office are perplexing. While the

Convention's website states that resolutions are not calls to action "used to direct an

entity of the Southern Baptist Convention to specific," the oath appears to imply the

opposite.[402] The resolution appears to swear into office "true" Southern Baptists.

Southern Baptist members who wish to live in accordance with official Southern Baptist

doctrine are given a specific mission—to stand in opposition to laws, policies, and regulations, that support same-sex marriage. Subsequent resolutions on homosexuality mirror the arguments in 1993 and 1996 resolutions.

In 1998, the Convention passed two resolutions on homosexuality. One denounced President Clinton's executive order on preventing discrimination of federal employees who were homosexual. The other called for a strengthening of the marriage covenant. The "Resolution on Strengthening the Marriage Covenant" adds additional context to resolutions pertaining to homosexuality. The marriage covenant resolution begins with a statement common to previous resolutions on same-sex marriage— "WHEREAS, Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime"—and then addresses at a deeper level the perceived impact homosexual marriages will have on family.[403] It states that the husband and wife two-parent family is "ideal" and that husbands and wives are "ordained by God to perform a unique role in the birth, loving discipline, and nurture of children."[404] The resolution then attempts to link (with no evidence) societal problems to broken families: "WHEREAS, The growing social problems of child poverty, child abuse, juvenile delinquency, violent crimes committed by children, sexual promiscuity and teen pregnancy are often related to broken marriages and fractured families."[405] The remainder of the resolution expresses support for the so-called "Covenant Marriage" legislation.[406]

I argue that the marriage covenant resolution is emblematic of one of the reasons the Convention has forsaken separation of church and state and become increasingly

involved in secular politics. The marriage covenant resolution is exemplary of victimization rhetoric common to Southern Baptist political rhetoric. According to the resolution, "family"—the most basic human institution for preserving and proclaiming Christianity—is under attack, as are Southern Baptists. The response to the attack is to fight back by encouraging actions that are favorable to conservative Southern Baptist life and theology. Resolutions on same-sex marriage in recent years which have expressed opposition to state decisions to legalize homosexual marriages and have voiced support for a federal marriage amendment and the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) have reproduced this rhetorical strategy.

The resolutions considered above exemplify the Southern Baptist Convention's consistent employment of paranoid rhetoric when addressing the topics of abortion and homosexuality. The Convention's post-The Shift resolutions also provide a telling follow-up to the discussion in Chapter Two on the denomination's evolving positions on separation of church and state. As evidenced by the resolutions, the Convention no longer aims to leave political participation for the realm of the individual. Instead, the Convention has made a concerted effort to promote the denomination's official stances on politicians and policies. These stances commonly frame topics that are commonly considered political—abortion rights and same-sex marriage—as theological issues wherein compromise is not an option. To disagree with a Convention resolution, therefore, represents a reproach on the Convention itself. Moreover, supporting stances opposite of the Convention's worldview is suggested to result in catastrophic consequences for society.

Conclusion

As discussed in this chapter, the Southern Baptist Convention's political rhetoric on the individual and convention levels is exemplary of the paranoid style. In addition to presenting the Convention and a biblical worldview as under attack, Southern Baptist rhetoric suggests that society is in grave danger if Southern Baptists' warnings are not heeded. Moreover, Mohler and convention resolutions appear to engage in scapegoating as they place responsibility for alleged forthcoming negative consequences on those not supporting a Southern Baptist worldview. Said scapegoating functions to purify Southern Baptists of their own guilt over not fulfilling the biblical standards they measure others against.

This chapter focused on the anti-abortion and anti-homosexual rhetoric of Dr. R. Albert Mohler and Southern Baptist Convention resolutions. However, the paranoid style of the Convention is not limited to these sources and topics. As noted above, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission also contains characteristics of the paranoid style. Moreover, Southern Baptist Convention paranoid rhetoric is common on topics including, but not limited to, science, Disney (led by Dr. Richard Land of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission), allegations of a war against Christmas, and concerns about education.

I argue that the paranoid style in Southern Baptist rhetoric presents a serious obstacle for the denomination in its attempt to transform culture with its political rhetoric. As noted above, Hofstadter states that the paranoid style overshadows the content of messages. This is realized in Southern Baptist political rhetoric. While some

arguments—namely those raisings concerns about religious liberty—include thoughtful content, they are clouded by themes of conspiracy, suspicion, and exaggeration and, consequently, are discounted. Rather than encouraging participation in the normal intellectual democratic political process, Southern Baptist rhetoric shuts off debate. Consequently, Southern Baptist rhetoric comes off as paternalistic. Moreover, the Convention's employment of scapegoating to blame others for society's ills is also off-putting to outsiders. For a denomination that already struggles with image difficulties, this type of rhetoric is especially problematic. Instead of being a vehicle for transforming culture, Southern Baptist political rhetoric has become yet another source of ongoing image problems associated with the denomination.

This chapter has revealed a fundamental flaw in Southern Baptist political rhetoric. If the Convention wishes to be a transformative agent in culture, a shift in *topoi* will be necessary. In the following chapter, I consider what is next for the denomination. In doing so, I will discuss the legacy of The Shift and the current state of Evangelicalism in the United States and, more specifically, the Southern Baptist Convention.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

As detailed in the preceding chapters, the Southern Baptist Convention has experienced both tremendous growth and intense turmoil in its relatively short history. The Southern Baptist Convention, a denomination born out of controversy, experienced increasing internal conflicts throughout the late twentieth-century. Ultimately, a decade-long battle over the direction of the denomination resulted in a permanent schism within the Convention. The Shift, as I have named it, forever altered the landscape of the Southern Baptist Convention. Notably, The Shift witnessed an apparent replacement of traditional Southern Baptist church-state separationism in favor of overt Convention-level and denominational agency involvement in partisan politics.

In this final chapter, I discuss current trends and areas of concern for the Southern Baptist Convention and Evangelicalism in the United States. Drawing from Dean Kelley's book *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing*, I describe the characteristics of "strong" religions, discuss internal and external factors that lead to the decline of religion and church membership, and diagnose the current state of the Southern Baptist Convention. In doing so, I conclude that the Southern Baptist Convention's lack of success in transforming culture is rooted in a rhetorical problem of audience. This chapter closes with a discussion of potential opportunities for future study on the Southern Baptist Convention and religious communication.

The Legacy of The Shift: A Rhetorical Problem

In his book *The Gathering Storm in the Churches,* sociologist Jeffrey Hadden described what he perceived to be a growing crisis for Protestantism in the United States. Writing in 1969, Hadden argued that "the Protestant churches are involved in a deep and entangling crisis which in the years ahead may seriously disrupt or alter the very nature of the church."[407] Hadden detailed three dimensions of the crisis: "a struggle over the very *purpose* and *meaning* of the church"; a "crisis of *belief*"; and "a struggle over *authority*."[408] In particular, Hadden described the conflict of purpose and meaning in the church as a struggle between clergy and laity. He argued that clergy had developed new meanings for the role of church in society, a vision not supported by laity. These differing understandings of the role of the church in society meant that fewer and fewer people believed traditional doctrines of Christianity, and fewer people attended church. Ultimately, Hadden argued that the disconnect between clergy and laity over the purpose and meaning of the church resulted in a final "crisis of *identity* for the Protestant clergyman."[409] He explained that clergymen had become confused about their role in society.

Hadden's prediction of a crisis in American Protestantism that would alter the landscape of the church was accurate. During the latter half of the 1960's the United States witnessed a first in its history: most of the major Christian denominations—including some Lutherans, Episcopalians, Methodists, and Presbyterian Church USA—ceased growing and started to shrink. Sociologist Dean Kelley notes, "At least ten of the largest Christian denominations in the country, whose membership totaled 77,666,223 in

1967, had fewer members the next year and fewer the year after."[410] Interestingly, at the same time mainline traditions began shrinking, conservative denominations such as the Southern Baptist Convention experienced rapid growth in church membership numbers. In his book *Why Conservative Are Growing: A Study in Sociology of Religion*, Kelley elaborates on the surprising nature of this trend:

> These groups [Conservative denominations] not only give evidence that religion is not obsolete and churches not defunct, but they contradict the contemporary notion of an acceptable religion. They are not 'reasonable,' they are not 'tolerant,' they are not ecumenical, they are not 'relevant.' Quite the contrary! They try to impose uniformity of belief and practice among members by censorship, heresy trials, and the like.[411]

As I previously described, the Southern Baptist Convention would go on to experience exponential growth throughout the remainder of the twentieth-century. Between 1961 and 1998, while memberships in mainline denominations plummeted, membership in Southern Baptist churches rose 59%, from 9,978,000 to 15,851,356.[412]

Kelley argues that mainline churches experienced a decline in membership beginning in the mid-twentieth century because those denominations did not have the characteristics of a "strong" religion. Kelley identifies three sets of internal characteristics that determine the social strength of religion: goals, controls, and communication.[413] According to Kelley, the goals of a "strong" religion are characterized by a "willingness to sacrifice status, possessions, safety, life itself, for the cause or the company of the faithful."[414] This commitment is exemplified by a "total

identification of individual's goals with the group's."[415] Kelley explains that a strong

religion's control is embodied by rigorous discipline. More specifically, this control

involves a "willingness to obey the commands of (charismatic) leadership without

question" and a "willingness to suffer sanctions for infraction rather than leave the

group."[416] Finally, Kelley defines a "strong" religion as one that is typified by

communication that encourages a "missionary zeal."[417] Said missionary zeal is

demonstrated by an external "eagerness to tell the 'good news' of one's experience of

salvation to others" and a "refusal to be silenced."[418] Internal communications within

the religion are "stylized and highly symbolic: a cryptic language."[419]

This dissertation has revealed that the results of The Shift in the Southern Baptist

Convention, at least initially, provide evidence of a "strong" religion. As discussed in

Chapter Two, The Shift represented a resounding victory for conservatives. Under the

charismatic leadership of Patterson, Pressler, and others, conservatives found a voice

within the Southern Baptist Convention and committed to altering the direction of the

denomination. Additionally, as I noted in Chapter Two, the efforts to direct the

denomination's future were accompanied by a missionary zeal. Conservatives sacrificed

time and energy to rally support for their cause by arranging meetings and lobbying for

positions of power within the denomination. By the end of The Shift conservatives

controlled the denomination and forced moderates out of positions of influence. Many

moderates left the denomination they once called home and formed their own

organizations.

The Shift enabled the Southern Baptist Convention to transition from a denomination divided on matters of faith and practice to a religious body with relative unanimity. Of course, because of the denomination's autonomous nature it has never had and will never have complete uniformity among all member congregations. However, The Shift did see a consistency in belief and rhetoric at the official Convention-level as well as in leadership at the denomination's agencies and seminaries. As a result, the Southern Baptist Convention has been able to make concerted efforts to accomplish the conservatives' apparent goal of transforming culture to a biblical worldview.

One of the keys to the conservative's success during The Shift was securing control of the denomination's seminaries. The Shift enabled conservatives to transform what were perceived to be "liberal" seminaries into institutions of higher learning with a conservative curriculum. Controlling the seminaries and the curriculum at these institutions allowed the conservative-led Convention to continue to influence future generations of leaders within the denomination. Conservative-led seminaries—such as The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky—continue to be bastions of conservative education, producing individuals who will presumably continue the legacy of The Shift by training future generations.

The Shift also enabled the Southern Baptist Convention to use denominational agencies, like the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, as conduits for promoting the conservatives' mission. After The Shift, the conservative-led Commission became a key source for promoting the conservative agenda within politics. While The Shift has

enabled the Convention to be unified around a mission to transform culture to a biblical worldview—through seminaries and the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission— recent trends in Southern Baptist membership suggest that the denomination's status as a "strong" religion is tenuous.

Significantly, the Southern Baptist Convention witnessed its first decline of membership in the modern era in 1998.[420] The Convention rebounded the following year, but membership numbers showed signs of leveling off from 2000 – 2006. 2007 marked the start of a new trend in Southern Baptist church membership. In 2007 and again in 2008 the Southern Baptist Convention experienced declines in membership, marking the first time the Convention dropped in membership for two consecutive years in more than fifty years. The steady decline in membership continued through 2011, the most recent year for which statistics are available.[421]

The Southern Baptist Convention was not the only religious body to experience a decline in membership in recent years. In 2011, The Barna Group published a six-part series on the state of the church in the United States that examined trends for fourteen religious factors over the last twenty years.[422] The report found that the most significant change during this time period was the growth in the number of "unchurched" adults.[423] According to the report, the percentage of unchurched grew from 24% in 1991 to 37% in 2011, an increase of more than 50%.[424] The South, the region with the most Southern Baptist Churches, was not immune to this trend. In the last twenty years, the number of unchurched in the South grew from 20% to 31%.[425] The Barna Group report also found that adult church attendance dropped from 49% in

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1991 to 41% in 2011 and weekly bible study attendance for adults declined from 23% to 15%.[426] These numbers seem to suggest an increased number of individuals who believe church is no longer needed and/or that the output of church is outmoded.

Individuals also seem to be more skeptical of traditional Christian doctrines—notably beliefs that distinguish between the "saved" and the "damned". For instance, The Barna Group Study reported that 43% of Americans believe that it does not matter what religious faith a person practices because all religions teach the same lessons. Moreover, 50% of Americans believed that all people will be accepted by God no matter what they do.[427] A 2009 Barna Group survey of 1,871 self-described Christians found that 40% of Christians do not believe in a real Satan.[428]

As I suggested in Chapter Three, the Southern Baptist Convention has responded to the apparent decline of religion in the United States in general and its own membership numbers in particular by seeking to transform culture to a biblical worldview. The Convention has often pursued this goal through political participation. Southern Baptists have aimed to redeem politics as an instrument of the Divine by endorsing perceived pro-biblical worldview politicians and policies and condemning their opponents. My analysis demonstrated that the Convention's partisan rhetoric represents a radical break from its historical separationism and, moreover, remains one of the lasting legacies of The Shift. Whereas Convention and agency-level Southern Baptist political participation had been grounded on responding to perceived threats to Southern Baptists' religious liberties, after The Shift the Convention has predicated political participation on the belief that religion itself is under attack. Consequently, the

Southern Baptist Convention has virtually abandoned religious liberty in its efforts to transform culture to a biblical worldview.

The mission of transforming culture to a biblical worldview may or may not be a noble cause depending on your own worldview, and few would argue that politics can be a promoter of change in American society. Significant moments of change in American history have often involved the political process. I started this project in part to make sense of that while it should not be surprising that a religious body aiming to impact culture would involve itself in politics, the Southern Baptist Convention has been ineffective in accomplishing its political goals. So, why has the Southern Baptist Convention been ineffective in accomplishing its political goals?

This dissertation has illuminated that while the Southern Baptist Convention has understood the problems facing the denomination as rooted in the moral decline of society, the Southern Baptist Convention in fact faces a significant rhetorical problem. I argued in Chapter Four that Southern Baptist political rhetoric is most commonly authoritarian and divisive. It demands that individuals choose one side or another on an issue and eliminates compromise as an option. Yet, if The Barna Group's numbers are any indication, Americans seem wary of adopting hard-line stances. Consequently, it appears that now more than ever, individuals consider traditional Southern Baptist doctrine and concomitant rhetoric unreasonable. Take, for instance, the finding that 50% of Americans will find favor with God regardless of what they do. If Americans have become more accepting of all people when it comes to matters of faith and eternity (topics which, for some, would seem to carry significant weight), one might assume that

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they would be even more unlikely to adopt an exclusive position on temporal matters. Moreover, as more people believe God accepts all people, it seems to eliminate the motivation for taking firm stances—as the Southern Baptist Convention does—on issues of abortion, homosexuality, and same-sex marriage. By attempting to eliminate debate on these and other public/political controversies the Convention forces individuals into making a choice between participation in an organized religious body or spiritual inclusivity.

An additional challenge of the Southern Baptist Convention's political rhetoric is a perceived vein of anti-intellectualism. In his 1994 book *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, Mark Noll argued that "American evangelicals have failed notably in sustaining serious intellectual life."[429] He explains, "They have nourished millions of believers in the simple verities of the gospel but have largely abandoned the universities, the arts, and other realms of 'high culture.'"[430] Noll explains that modern evangelicals' failure to engage in the life of the mind in the cultural, institutional, and theological dimensions represents a stark contrast to the intellectual labor of their forbearers. He notes, "Unlike their spiritual ancestors, modern evangelicals have not pursued comprehensive thinking under God or sought a mind shaped to its furthest reaches by Christian perspectives."[431] "The greatest danger besetting American Evangelical Christianity is the danger of anti-intellectualism."[432]

Noll just might be right. As I described in Chapter 4, the Southern Baptist Convention's official views on topics like science—namely, "Creation Science"—have done little to improve Southern Baptists' standing in intellectual circles.[433] The same

applies to the Convention's handling of issues involving abortion and homosexuality. Rather than encouraging intellectual conversation, Southern Baptist political rhetoric aims to shut down debate. The current strands of anti-intellectualism within the denomination represent yet another problem of audience that is limiting the Southern Baptist Convention's potential to be a transformer of culture.

In Chapter Four I also argued that the Convention's political rhetoric is further complicated by its paranoid style. Southern Baptist political rhetoric often frames the Convention and its worldview as under intentional attack by culture. Furthermore, Southern Baptist political rhetoric rejects traditional democratic debate by framing issues including abortion and same-sex marriage as theological issues that are not open to compromise.

Following The Shift, Southern Baptist Convention political rhetoric has essentially aimed to legislate morality. Trying to legislate morality will fail *every* time. Southern Baptists, perhaps more than most, should know this. After all, their own scriptures condemn efforts to earn God's favor through legalism. The Christian New Testament speaks often about the inability of laws and regulations to bring life. In fact, this is one of the key differences between Christianity and many of the other world religions. According to Christian doctrine, individuals do not earn God's favor by following a set of laws or regulations. Thus, Southern Baptists efforts to transform culture to a biblical worldview by imposing adherence to certain policies seem inconsistent with their theology. These misguided efforts have constrained the denomination from being the transformative agent of culture that it aims to be. Many, if

not most, people dislike being told how to act or think—a trend that translates to the voting booth. The Southern Baptist Convention's authoritarian efforts to impose its own views on others by endorsing policies and politicians have ultimately proved unfruitful.

Additionally, as I discussed at length in Chapter Three, Southern Baptist political participation and political rhetoric are motivated by a desire to transform culture to a biblical worldview. However, current social statistics seem to suggest that those aiming to transform the culture are, in fact, being transformed by culture. It is reasonable to believe that not a few are repelled by Southern Baptist political rhetoric—namely, political rhetoric that attempts to legislate morality—due to the apparent inconsistencies between what Southern Baptists say and what Southern Baptists actually do. In other words, outsiders likely perceive that the Convention's rhetoric is hypocritical.

For example, True Love Waits, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention, is one of the most well-known evangelical pro-abstinence programs. Since 1993, more than 2 million young people have signed a True Love Waits pledge to abstain from sexual intercourse until marriage.[434] In March 2004, a group of researchers from Columbia University and Yale University completed a study of seven years on twelve thousand teenagers who had taken the pledge. They discovered that only 12% of the teenagers had kept the pledge. They also found that the rate of teenagers with sexual transmitted diseases was nearly identical between teenagers who took the pledge and those that did not.[435] The apparent failure of the True Love Waits program is just one example that demonstrates that in order for Southern Baptists to be taken seriously within the realm of politics (and other areas for that matter), they will need to become

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more consistent practicing what they preach.[436] In Chapter Four, I suggested that the

Southern Baptist Convention's desire to purify themselves of guilt for not practicing

what they preach might motivate Southern Baptists to scapegoat other groups for the

decline of traditional values in society. Here, I argue that perceived hypocrisy may also

contribute to the Southern Baptist Convention's problem of audience.

Moreover, the Convention's political rhetoric often makes a "curious leap"

characteristic of the paranoid style when claiming that pro-abortion and pro-homosexual

initiatives will lead to the demise of society.[437] The aforementioned themes in Southern

Baptist rhetoric lead "outsiders" to view the denomination as paranoid, and thus has

constrained its efforts to transform culture. Because of its perceived paranoid

tendencies, Southern Baptist political rhetoric is discredited by those outside the

denomination's conservative base despite the potential merits of its content. While the

paranoid style may galvanize some audiences—namely, likeminded individuals—it fails

to have mass appeal. Ultimately, I suggested that because of this perceived paranoia the

political rhetoric of the Southern Baptist Convention does not resonate with many non-

religious individuals, members of other religions and Protestant denominations, and even

some Southern Baptists.

I believe that in order to be effective in the future, Southern Baptist political

rhetoric must undergo its own transformation, a change that sees the denomination return

to its roots championing religious liberty. Although I view the last twenty years of

political involvement by the Southern Baptist Convention as a failed endeavor, there are

signs within the denomination that a change must occur. Dr. R. Albert Mohler, for

example, has raised concerns about the religious liberty implications of the Patient

Protection and Affordable Care Act as it pertains to the birth control pill; however, at

this point, Mohler's arguments remain overshadowed by his paranoid style.

A recent essay from Rod Dreher of *The American Conservative* offers

suggestions for social conservatives' political involvement moving forward. I believe

Dreher's essay captures what the Southern Baptist Convention must consider if it is

going to find success in political involvement moving forward. Dreher's essay focuses

on the issue of same-sex marriage—a topic of chief concern for the Southern Baptist

Convention over the last twenty years—but holds application for other political debates

as well. Dreher argues that "we are fast reaching a place in which before the law,

churches that adhere to traditional religious teaching on homosexuality in practice will

have the same status under federal civil rights laws as racist churches."[438] Dreher

explains what he believes should be the conservative response in the following:

> Religious and social conservatives cannot abandon what we believe to be
>
> true. What we can do—what we must do—is stop trying to turn back a
>
> tide that started rushing in half a century ago, and instead figure out how
>
> to ride it without being swamped or drowned by it. Our best legal minds
>
> need to figure out the best possible, and best possible, legal protections
>
> for religious liberty in the coming environment. Our most able socially
>
> conservative politicians need to start talking all the time about religious
>
> liberty in relation to same-sex marriage, and not in an alarmist way
>
> ("We've got to stop gay marriage before they destroy our churches!") but

in a sober, realistic way that opens the door to possible political compromise with Democrats of good will.[439]

The last sentence in Dreher's argument represents a significant shift away from current paranoid Southern Baptist political rhetoric in that it recognizes the need for political compromise.

Dreher concludes that if conservatives are to have success it will be necessary for them to frame their arguments around the *topoi* of expanding liberties because the fight to protect traditional marriage is not a winnable argument. Instead, he suggests conservatives should "be putting their money, their strategizing, and their public activism behind building some kind of legal firewall to protect religious liberty once SSM [same-sex marriage] becomes the law of the land."[440] Dreher claims that this change is needed because conservative churches with traditional views on homosexuality and same-sex marriage will soon have "the same status under federal civil rights laws as racist churches."[441] He concludes,

> social conservatives don't have to like SSM, but we are fooling ourselves if we don't recognize that it is inevitable in post-Christian America, and we had better figure out the best possible arrangement to protect ourselves and our institutions while there is still time.[442]

Despite urgency in the tone of Dreher's essay, the arguments are not rooted in the paranoid style. Rather than framing the issue of same-sex marriage as an attack on a biblical worldview or a particular religious denomination that needs to be countered with transformative political rhetoric, Dreher sees the need for an inward focus with an

emphasis on self-protection. Dreher is Eastern Orthodox, but his arguments sound a lot like the traditional Southern Baptist perspective on church-state matters.

My analysis has revealed that the Southern Baptist Convention is facing a fundamental problem of audience. Rather than create converts to a biblical worldview, the political rhetoric of Southern Baptists alienates those it seeks to convert. The recent decline in church membership of Southern Baptists may imply that the rhetoric is not self-sustaining. Currently, the Convention's political rhetoric is rooted in *topoi* of absolutism and exclusion. It seems that if Southern Baptist political rhetoric is to be effective in modern society a shift in *topoi* is necessary. For example, I argue that the Southern Baptist Convention would be better served by appealing to *topoi* such as equality, liberty, freedom, free exercise, and free expression. Through appealing to these *topoi*, which have mass appeal, those outside the denomination's conservative base would be less likely to immediately dismiss the Convention's political rhetoric.

Additionally, I argue that moving forward, the Convention must revisit their arguments on topics such as abortion and same-sex marriage and consider the possible ways these issues could impact Southern Baptists' free speech or free exercise. In other words, the Convention should return to its roots, or "Old Rhetoric." If the Southern Baptist Convention does not re-evaluate its political rhetoric before long, it may soon lose its opportunity to be a transformer of culture. The Convention may be better served to focus on equipping its members to become transformers of culture in ways other than through politics.

Future Scholarship

The Southern Baptist Convention remains one of the more intriguing religious groups in the United States. A number of emerging issues within the Convention may warrant further attention from scholarship. As noted above, the Convention has witnessed a steady decline in membership in recent years. Additional analysis of this trend and whether or not the Convention reverses the trend would provide insight into whether or not the Convention will regain lost ground in its efforts to transform culture. Moreover, a follow-up on the recommendations for Southern Baptist political rhetoric offered in the present study makes sense considering the news that the Supreme Court will hear arguments on same-sex marriage in the Spring of 2013. Will the Convention continue to assert its traditional opposition to same-sex marriage during the Supreme Court hearings, or will the denomination begin to focus more attention on its own religious liberty concerns? The answer to this question remains unclear at this point.

As discussed in Chapter One, the Southern Baptist Convention's 2012 annual meeting proved historic on two accounts. For one, the denomination elected its first African American president. Secondly, the denomination adopted an unofficial name descriptor "Great Commission Baptists". The election of Fred Luter to the presidency is intriguing within the context of the denomination's troubled history on race relations. From a rhetorical perspective, it would be interesting to analyze how Luter in his unique position as the first African American president of a predominately white denomination talks about race concerns within the Southern Baptist Convention. The fallout from the adoption of "Great Commission Baptists" also warrants attention. The acknowledgment

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by some Southern Baptists that the Convention has image problems and that the denomination's name hinders its ability to transform culture is significant. The debates surrounding the name descriptor are largely rhetorical. Further analysis of these debates and the arguments involved would offer important insights into how the Convention sees itself and its mission and how the Convention aims to communicate that mission to others.

The Southern Baptist Convention is not the only denomination to experience an internal schism. By the end of 2009, tensions were growing within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America over the issue of gay clergy. Conservative Lutherans felt the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America was drifting away from traditional Lutheran theology after it declared support for clergy in committed same-sex relationships. In August 2010, a group of unsatisfied conservative Lutherans founded the North American Lutheran Church.[443] An analysis of the communicative dynamics involved in the Lutheran split would be an interesting follow-up to the present study.

A final recommendation for future scholarship stems from recent developments in another church-state controversy. While not considered in the present analysis of the Southern Baptist Convention, an intriguing issue on the topic of political participation by religious institutions involves the Internal Revenue Service's tax code. Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code grants religious organizations tax exemption status so long as they meet certain requirements. Section 501(c)(3) stipulates that in order to qualify for tax exemption status organizations must not "be organized or operated for the benefit of private interests, and no part of a section 501(c)(3)

organization's net earnings may inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual."[444] In addition to the aforementioned requirements, Section 501(c)(3) prohibits tax exemption status for "action organizations".[445] In other words, tax-exempt organizations "may not attempt to influence legislation as a substantial part of its activities and it may not participate in any campaign activity for or against political candidates."[446] This particular stipulation raises questions about the level of political participation of the Southern Baptist Convention and whether or not some Southern Baptist churches and agencies have compromised their tax-exempt status.

Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code seems inherently messy. For one, what defines "substantial" activities? In other words, just how much activity is allowed before an institution must be considered an action organization? Still, there are even larger questions about what Section 501(c)(3) means for free speech, free exercise, and religious liberty. One could imagine a scenario where a religious organization frames its political participation as protected by free speech and free exercise. Would said organization then have a case for maintaining its tax-exempt status? Earlier this year, a group of ministers organized a campaign to challenge the IRS. A group of 1,000 ministers pledged to use their pulpits as a platform to promote particular politicians and policies in an effort to see if their tax-exempt status would be revoked. At the present time, the fallout from the event is still undetermined. Issues such as the recent challenge to the IRS seem to be a fruitful area for legal rhetoric and religious communication scholarship.

For the last twenty years, the Southern Baptist Convention has been deeply invested in political causes that appear to be losing fights. The 2012 presidential election perhaps represents a sign that Southern Baptists (and Evangelicals in general) are losing said battles. The 2012 Republican ticket included a Mormon presidential candidate—Mitt Romney—and a Catholic vice presidential candidate—Paul Ryan—and the Democratic ticket included a Protestant presidential candidate—Barack Obama—and a Catholic vice presidential candidate—Joe Biden. Romney's Mormonism ended up being a non-issue for White Evangelicals. According to a survey by The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, white Evangelicals voted for Romney as much as they did for the Republican candidates in 2004 and 2008 presidential elections.[447] Statistics suggest that Evangelicals were more comfortable with voting for a Mormon, a religion commonly termed a "cult" by Evangelicals, than a fellow self-professing Protestant.[448] One might interpret the aforementioned statistics as an indication that Evangelicals are so invested in partisan politics that they are willing to put political party before personal faith. However, as this dissertation has revealed, this investment has come at a significant cost. Namely, the Convention has compromised its heritage and its potential to be a transformative agent in society.

NOTES

[1] The Southern Baptist Convention uses the term "Convention" as an abbreviation of the denomination's name and as a term to refer to the denomination's annual meeting.

[2] Since its founding, the Southern Baptist Convention has struggled to mend race relations with the African American community. In 1995, the Convention issued its first official apology for its founding stance on slavery through a resolution adopted at the 150th annual meeting. While still a predominately white denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention has grown from being comprised of 5 percent nonwhite churches in 1990 to 19 percent in 2010. Michael Foust, "WRAP-UP: Historic meeting sees messengers elect 1st black president, approve descriptor," Baptist Press website, accessed on November 6, 2012, http://bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=38113.

[3] Erin Roach, "'Great Commission' descriptor gets majority vote," Baptist Press website, accessed on November 6, 2012: http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=38097.

[4] Roach, "'Great Commisison' descriptor."

[5] For a detailed account of the role of religion in United States history, see, Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972) and Martin E. Marty's three-volume *Modern American Religion* series: Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion Volume 1: The Irony of It All 1893-1919* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986); Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion Volume 2: The Noise of Conflict 1919-1941* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991); Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion Volume 3: Under God, Indivisible, 1941-1960* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[6] For an example of Barton's common arguments about religion role in America's founding, see David Barton *America's Godly Heritage* (Aledo, TX: WallBuilder Press, 1993).

[7] Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore. *The Godless Constitution: A Moral Defense of a Secular State* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), 22, 23.

[8] There are six general perspectives on the proper relationship between religion and the state: 1.) Official Atheism—religion should be dismissed altogether and, consequently, should have no influence on state affairs; 2.) Theocracy—the polar opposite of Official Atheism; the belief that the state is (and should be) guided by the Divine; 3.) State Religion—the state recognizes the establishment of an official religion, but is not governed by the tenets of that particular religious faith; 4.) Separationism—the state and religion operate in two different realms; 5.) Non-Preferentialism—religion is honorable and should be encouraged by the government so long as no religious faith is privileged or marginalized in relation to others; 6.) Majority-Rule Accomodationism—the religion of the majority of the population should be privileged and, moreover, should inform the state's affairs.

[9] The White House, "The Constitution," The White House website, accessed on November 6, 2012: http://www.whitehouse.gov/our-government/the-constitution.

[10] The religion clauses of the First Amendment are believed to represent a compromise that disallowed a national government while still permitting the state religions which existed at the time.

[11] Robert Bellah first discussed his concept of civil religion in 1967, see, Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," Journal of the American Academy of the Arts and Scientists, 96, no. 1 (1967): 1-21. He later expanded on the subject, see, Robert Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975).

[12] It should be noted that the use of a general term "America" is used in the limiting sense—that is, I occasionally use the term "America" to talk about the United States specifically.

[13] See, for example, Roderick P. Hart and John L. Pauley II, *The Political Pulpit Revisited* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2005) and Brian Kaylor *Presidential Campaign Rhetoric in an Age of Confessional Politics* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011). Hart and Kaylor both argue the civil religion covenant has been under strain as politicians have increasingly used overt, sectarian religious appeals.

[14] Ronald C. Arnett, "Religious Communication Scholarship Going Nowhere Correctly" *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 33, no. 2 (2010): 242.

[15] Ibid., 230.

[16] Janie Harden Fritz, "Guest Editor's Introduction," *The Journal of Communication and Religion* 33, no. 2 (2010): 176.

[17] See, for example, Heidi Campbell, *Exploring Religious Communities Online* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2005).

[18] Paul A. Soukup Jr., "Scholarship and the State of the Religious communication Association," *The Journal of Communication and Religion* 33, no. 2 (2010): 182-183.

[19] Arnett, notes that in this time span there have been only 12 articles focused on Judaism or Jewish scholars, 3 on Islam, and 2 focusing on Buddhism.   Arnett, "Religious Communication Scholarship," 226.

[20] Quentin J. Schultze, "The Nature and Future of Religious Communication Scholarship," *The Journal of Communication and Religion* 33, no. 2 (2010): 195.

[21] Ibid., 196.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., 195.

[24] According to the Southern Baptist Convention's official website, there are currently more than 16 million members of the SBC and over 45,000 SBC churches in the United States. Southern Baptist Convention, "About Us—Meet Southern Baptists," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on August 9, 2012: http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/.

[25] The Moderates, as I will call them, preferred to be called "Loyalist" as they argue that their beliefs were consistent with historical Baptist traditions. Moderates rejected the label "Liberals" as pejorative. I opt for Conservatives over Fundamentalist as the term Fundamentalist has acquired negative connotations that the Conservatives do not appreciate.

[26] Kell's *In the Name of the Father* was selected Winner of the Religious Communication Association Award.

[27] Carl L. Kell and L. Raymond Camp, *In the Name of the Father: The Rhetoric of the New Southern Baptist Convention* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), 116.

[28] Ibid., 28.

[29] Ibid., 5.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., 64.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 72.

[35] For more on the Southern Baptist Convention's use of resolutions, see Chapter Four.

[36] Kell and Camp, *In the Name of the Father*, 76.

[37] Oran P. Smith, *The Rise of Baptist Republicanism* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 15.

[38] Ibid., 19.

[39] Ibid., 27.

[40] Barry Hankins. *Trouble in Babylon: Southern Baptist Conservatives in American Culture* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 2.

[41] Ibid., 10.

[42] "Culture War" is a term commonly used to refer to the struggle between opposing parties over issues including abortion, homosexuality, and same-sex marriage.

[43] See, for example, H. Leon McBeth *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987).

[44] The Southern Baptist Convention is second only to Catholicism in being the largest religious demographic in the United States. The Southern Baptist Convention has more than twice as many members as the United Methodist Church, the next largest Protestant denomination.

[45] H. Leon McBeth notes that historians have advanced four different accounts of Baptist origins. McBeth explains, "These four views hold that Baptists originated from: 1. The outgrowth of English Separatism. 2. The influence of biblical Anabaptists. 3. The continuation of biblical teachings through the ages. 4. The succession of organized Baptist churches through the ages." H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), 49.

[46] In other words, General Baptists had an Arminian theology, while Particular Baptists were Calvinistic. General Baptists are believed to have originated from a Separationist tradition. Particular Baptists, in contrast, have their roots in Puritan Independency. For a further discussion of the aforementioned distinctions, see Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 172.

[47] Particular Baptists in the American colonies would become known as "Regular" Baptists. While Regular Baptists thrived in the colonies, General Baptists struggled. Following the Great Awakening, a new groups of Baptists, the Separate Baptists, emerged in the 1750s.

[48] Roger Williams reportedly left the Baptist tradition after losing confidence in the authority of his baptism. For more on Williams' departure from the Baptist faith, see McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 130-132.

[49] For more on Roger Williams's views on religious liberty and separation of church and state see McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 132-136.

[50] The 1612 English Baptist confession declared "that the magistrate is not by virtue of his office to meddle with religion, or matters of conscience, to force or compel men to this or that form of religion, or doctrine: but to leave Christian religion free, to every man's conscience, and to handle only civil transgressions." William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1969), 140.

[51] McBeth notes the irony in these events: "Ironically, settlers who had just come from dissenter status in Old England established themselves as the official church in New England and persecuted those who dissented from them." McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 255.

[52] McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 252-253.

[53] McBeth.

[54] Exemptions stated that a person's church must be within five miles of his or her residence.

[55] McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 259.

[56] Ibid., 264.

[57] The role of John Leland, a Baptist who supported absolute separation, in the adoption of the Bill of Rights should not be overlooked. Hastey notes that Leland "helped mold the thought of Thomas Jefferson and John Madison, both of whom played key roles in the victory for religious freedom." Stan L. Hastey "Baptist and Religious Liberty" in *Baptist Heritage Series*, (Nashville: The Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1979), 2.

[58] McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 251.

[59] Ibid., 150.

[60] According to Rufus Spain, Baptists were universally were historically opposed to industrialization: "The universal objection among Baptists to industrialization arose from the fear that industry would lead to

rapid urbanization which in turn would corrupt morals and hinder the spread of Christianity. Rufus B. Spain, *At Ease in Zion: A Social History of Southern Baptists 1865-1900* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2003), 137.

[61] Ahlstrom, *A Religious History*, 432. Spain also notes, "The simple, emotional laden sermons of their poorly educated but fiery preachers found ready acceptance among the back-country folk and the congregational structure of church government facilitated the formation of new churches." Spain, *At Ease in Zion*, 4.

[62] Ahlstrom notes that Baptists were unsuccessful in communities "where people, due to their church traditions or social status, were repelled by unrestrained religious enthusiasm [. . . .]" Ahlstrom, *A Religious History*, 324.

[63] Robert G. Gardner, *Baptists in Early America: A Statistical History, 1639-1790* (Atlanta: Georgia Baptist Historical Society, 1983), 63.

[64] Wills notes, "Baptists churches multiplied during the Great Awakening, growing from sixty ccongregations in 1740 to almost one thousand in 1790." Gregory A. Wills, *Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South 1785-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 7.

[65] Ahlstrom, *A Religious History*, 443.

[66] H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1967), 151.

[67] Ibid., 170.

[68] McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 251.

[69] Wills explains that during this time the number of Baptists grew from 67,000 to 1 million. Gregory A. Wills, *Democratic Religion*, 36.

[70] McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 251.

[71] Robert G. Torbet, *History of Baptists* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1963), 282.

[72] Ibid., 284.

[73] Ibid., 285.

[74] John L. Eighmy, *Churches in Cultural Captivity: A History of the Social Attitudes of Southern Baptists* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1987), 5.

[75] Ibid., 6.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid., 286.

[78] Between 1841 and 1844 the abolitionist association formed its own missionary agency, the Free Mission Society.

[79] This action led many Southerners to fear that the national association would fall to the control of Northern abolitionists. Eighmy notes, "Even though more than half of the nation's 570,000 Baptists resided in the South in 1840, Northerners exerted greater influence in the affairs of the national societies. Northern financial support for both the General Convention and the Home Mission Society was three times greater than Southern support; and since contributions determined membership and voting, Northern churchmen had a decided advantage in general meetings." Eighmy, *Churches in Cultural Captivity*, 12.

[80] The Baptist General Convention, the first nationally oriented Baptist body, was founded in 1814 for the purposes of promoting foreign missions. The membership of the General Convention consisted of churches and mission societies that financed the organization. The American Baptist Home Mission Society was founded in 1832 in an effort to create organized support for mission work in the West. Like the General Convention, the Home Mission Society was a voluntary association.

[81] Eighmy, *Churches in Cultural Captivity*, 15.

[82] In Torbet, *History of Baptists*, 291.

[83] Ibid., 293.

[84] Jerry Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation: The Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 32.

[85] In Sutton, 32.

[86] Ibid., 33.

[87] Samuel Hill argues that the disparity in growth between Northern and Southern Baptists was a result of contrasting approaches taken by each group: "While Northern Baptist leadership embraced liberal social causes and suffered division because of it, Southern Baptists directed their attention to expansive efforts. In the interest of a united evangelical outreach, social issues were neglected as divisive distractions. The simple gospel of personal evangelism found wide appeal precisely because it was unencumbered by the demands of social Christianity." Hill, "Introduction" in Eighmy, *Churches in Cultural Captivity*, xx.

[88] The Baptist distinctives are sometimes outlined using the term "Baptist" as an acronym: **B**iblical authority; **A**utonomy of the local church; **P**riesthood of all believers; **T**wo ordinances—believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper; **I**ndividual soul liberty; **S**eparation of church and state; **T**wo offices of the church—pastor, or elder, and deacon. For additional details on Southern Baptist identity, see Southern Baptist Convention Website "Basic Beliefs," accessed on June 9, 2012: http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/basicbeliefs.asp, or R. Stanton Norman, *The Baptist Way* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005).

[89] David T. Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land: Conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention, 1969-1991* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1996), 2.

[90] Baptists in the Sandy Creek tradition were also called "New Lights", although the term Separate is more common.

[91] Although contrasting views on preaching is considered key distinction between Regular and Separate Baptists, the two groups did hold differing views on the individual's role in salvation. Separate Baptists, while initially moderate Calvinists, eventually adopted a view of salvation that emphasized the individual's ability to choose salvation—marking a break from the doctrine of election supported by Regular Baptists.

[92] In 1905, some Landmarkers founded their own body; however, many Landmarkers remained within the Southern Baptist Convention. Eighmy notes the lasting impact Landmarkers had within the denomination: "The fact that some Southern Baptist churches until contemporary times condemned 'alien immersion' (i.e., baptism administered by non-Baptists) and practiced 'closed communion' (i.e. permitted communion to be given in a church only to that church's members) offered clear evidence that Landmarkism's influenced lingered in the SBC." Eighmy, *Churches in Cultural Captivity*, 3. For more on Landmarkism, see James R. Groves, *Old Landmarkism: What Is It?* (Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2010).

[93] The fundamentalist-modernist controversy was not simply a Southern Baptist issue. Eighmy notes in *Churches in Cultural Captivity* (4) that Northern Baptists and Northern Presbyterians also struggled with the controversy.

[94] For a more comprehensive understanding of the tenets of fundamentalist theological tenets at this time, see Anonymous, *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth* (Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2010).

[95] In 1963, the Convention adopted a revised Faith and Message that affirmed the inerrancy of scripture. The Baptist Faith and Message would be revised again in 2000.

[96] K. Owen White, "Death in the Pot," *Arkansas Baptist*, February 1, 1962, 19.

[97] "Messenger" is the name given to Southern Baptist members who attend the annual meeting. All Baptist churches that are recognized as "cooperating" with the Convention are allowed to send messenger(s) to the annual meeting. Article III of the Southern Baptist Convention's Constitution provides details on what it means to be a cooperating church and how many messengers are allowed to represent each church: "Article III. Membership: The Convention shall consist of messengers who are members of missionary Baptist churches cooperating with the Convention as follows: 1. One (1) messenger from each church which: (1) Is in friendly cooperation with the Convention and sympathetic with its purposes and work. Among churches not in cooperation with the Convention are churches which act to affirm, approve, or endorse homosexual behavior. And, (2) Has been a bona fide contributor to the Convention's work during the fiscal year preceding. 2. One (1) additional messenger from each such church for every two hundred and fifty (250) members; or for each $250.00 paid to the work of the Convention during the fiscal year preceding the annual meeting. 3. The messengers shall be appointed and certified by the churches to the Convention, but no church may appoint more than ten (10). 4. Each messenger shall be a member of the church by which he is appointed." Southern Baptist Convention Website, "Constitution," accessed on June 19, 2012: http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/legal/constitution.asp.

[98] Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land*, 13.

[99] See, for example, Carl L. Kell and L. Raymond Camp, *In the Name of the Father* and Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, respectively.

[100] Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land*, 10.

[101] In *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land* (45) Morgan notes that ". . . Patterson consistently denied moderate charges that he and [Pressler] were out to take over the SBC. In 1980 he pointedly declared that no 'take-over' of the SBC was planned and 'no political party' would emerge among the various groups of concerned Baptists. He claimed that nothing more was happening than an exchange of information and encouragement to participate in Convention life."

[102] Wills provides credence to Patterson and Pressler's beliefs about the majority of Southern Baptists. Wills explains that many Baptists opposed progressive theology at Baptist colleges and seminaries. He continues, "Most Southern Baptist found the situation reprehensible and felt betrayed by denominational leaders who did not act to oppose liberalism except when constituency propelled them." Gregory A. Wills, "Southern Baptist Identity: A Historical Perspective," in *Southern Baptist Identity: An Evangelical Denomination Faces the Future*, ed. David S. Dockery (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2009), 69.

[103] Gregory A. Wills, "Southern Baptist Identity: A Historical Perspective," 84. Elsewhere, Wills notes, "Both parties [conservatives and moderates] saw the conflict as a struggle over the identity of the Southern Baptist Denomination." Gregory A. Wills, *Democratic Religion*, 4.

[104] For statistics on socio-economic trends among Baptists, see Spain, *At Ease in Zion*, 10.

[105] Bill J. Leonard, *God's Last & Only Hope: The Fragmentation of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 17.

[106] Ibid., 18.

[107] Ibid., 23.

[108] Nancy Ammerman, "The New South and the New Baptists," *The Christian Century*, May 14, 1986, 487.

[109] Democratic governance has been an important feature of Baptists life since the beginning of the denomination. Congregational governance provided a mechanism to limit the power of individual leaders within a given congregation, which was important for a denomination that had historically suffered at the hands of those in control. Wills notes that Baptists viewed the church as a "voluntary democracy." Gregory A. Wills, *Democratic Religion*, 5. Smith also comments on the democratic nature of the Baptists in the following: "Though there are myriad Baptist sects, most are extremely republican or democratic in church governance, more so than any other organized denomination. Individual Baptist congregations own property, hire ministers, adopt policies, set church budgets, and receive members. Baptists also have the reputation of allowing—even encouraging—the most minor of decision to be debated by the entire congregation." Oran P. Smith, *The Rise of Baptist Republicanism* , 6.

[110] Leonard, *God's Last & Only Hope*, 119. For more on the relationship between religion and populism, see Rhys Williams and Susan Alexander, "Religious Rhetoric in American Populism: Civil Religion as Movement Ideology" Journal of Scientific Study of Religion, 33, 1994: 1-15. Williams and Alexander explain that populism used religion much like religion used populism. They suggest religious rhetoric was "part and parcel of the movement's explaining itself to itself as well as to potential adherents and

opponents. Religious themes were integral to the attempt to explain Populism's economic and political platforms, and they cannot be ignored if one is to understand Populism as a movement." Williams and Alexander, "Religious Rhetoric in American Populism," 2.

[111] Leonard elaborates, "The history of Southern Baptist theological education is a history of skirmishes between the forces of populism and theological investigation. Given the difficulties in appealing to the diverse factions with the SBC, the amazing feat is that the seminaries maintained that uneasy tension as long as they did without major institutional collapse." Leonard, *God's Last & Only Hope,* 121.

[112] Leonard, *God's Last & Only Hope*, 122.

[113] Spain, *At Ease in Zion*, 12.

[114] Quoted in Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation,* 91.

[115] Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 91.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid., 93.

[118] For the full text of one such letter, see Sutton *The Baptist Reformation*, 93-94.

[119] In a press conference following the 1979 election of Adrian Rogers as president of the Convention, Pressler reportedly denied reports of his involvement in election of Rogers. A Baptist Press release covering Pressler's impromptu press conference stated: "Pressler denied planning, strategizing, or implementing any organized effort to elect Adrian Rogers." Rather, Pressler explained, "Simply the conservatives are communicating with each other for the first time." Quoted in Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 102.

[120] Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 85.

[121] For the full text of Rogers and Robison's sermons, see Walter B. Shurden and Randy Shepley, eds., *Going for the Jugular: A Documentary History of the Holy War* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996).

[122] Quoted in Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 98.

[123] Interestingly, Rogers had not initially planned to run for the presidency. In an interview with Jerry Sutton, author of *The Baptist Reformation*, Rogers explained that while he supported the goal of electing conservative, he had no intentions on running for the presidency as late as the night before the start of the annual meeting. For a transcript of Rogers' explanation of his decision to run for the presidency of the Convention, see Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 101-102.

[124] Quoted in Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 101.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid., 101-102.

[128] According to the Convention's Constitution, "1. The officers of the Convention shall be a president, a first and a second vice president, a recording secretary, a registration secretary, and a treasurer. 2. The officers shall be elected annually and shall hold office until their successors are elected and qualified. The term of office for the president is limited to two (2) years, and a president shall not be eligible for re-election until as much as one (1) year has elapsed from the time a successor is named. The first vice president shall be voted upon and elected after the election of the president has taken place; and the second vice president shall be voted upon and elected after the election of the first vice president has taken place. 3. The president shall be a member of the several boards and of the Executive Committee. 4. The treasurer of the Executive Committee shall be the treasurer of the Convention. 5. In case of death or disability of the president, the vice presidents shall automatically succeed to the office of president in the order of their election." Southern Baptist Convention website, "Constitution" accessed on June 20, 2012: http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/legal/constitution.asp.

[129] An interview Sutton conducted with Rogers, however, raises questions about the openness of conversations Rogers had with McCall over appointments. Rogers recounted conversations about appointees as follows: "I told McCall, 'I will consult with you and if you have anything that you want to bring to this committee, we will consider them, and I promise you I will.' He went on to say, however, 'Do not bring me anyone who does not believe in the inerrancy of Scripture.'" Quoted in Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 110.

[130] Resolutions have been an important part of the Southern Baptist Convention's rhetoric since its founding. Since 1845, the Convention has issued a resolution—often numerous—nearly every year ranging. On their official website, the Convention defines a resolution as "an expression of opinion or concern." Resolutions are not calls to action, but rather exist to communicate an opinion or express a concern. The Southern Baptist Convention has passed resolutions on more than 150 topics ranging from traditionally uncontroversial topics such as beauty contests and bookstores to more divisive social issues like war and capital punishment. For additional information about the process of resolution adoptions see the Southern Baptist Convention's website "SBC Resolutions," accessed on June 19, 2012: http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/default.asp.

[131] Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land*, 281.

[132] Ibid., 43.

[133] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 91.

[134] Ibid., 90.

[135] Ibid., 92.

[136] For additional explanations of the meaning of the term "inerrancy" as well a discussion of common arguments against the inerrancy of scripture and responses to arguments against inerrancy, see Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 90-104.

[137] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 93.

[138] To complicate matters further, *In Against the Wind*, Kell explains eight different definitions for "inerrancy" originally detailed by Texas pastor, James C. Denison. The eight definitions are as follows: "1. 'general' definition of inerrancy—As trustworthy, we can simply trust the Bible in what it teaches and affirms. 2. 'formal' inerrancy claims that the Scripture does not contradict itself, but would not necessarily contrast biblical statements with those of scientific and other biblical materials. 3. 'material' inerrancy states that Scripture does not lie or deceive or err in any assertion it makes. 4. 'soteriological' inerrancy teaches that the Bible speaks without any error when it leads to saving faith, but may or may not contain errors in other areas. 5. 'limited' inerrancy suggests that the Bible may or may not contain errors in other areas such as science, geography, and history. 6. 'indefectibility' inerrancy says that the unified truth presented in the Bible is inerrant, but not necessarily its individual words or statements. 7. 'secondary' inerrancy—the Bible records the quotations ad speeches in its passages inerrantly, but does not guarantee the inerrancy of the contents of these speeches. 8. 'purposive' inerrancy—the Bible does not intend to be a book of science, history, or geography. The Bible speaks inerrantly to its intended purposes, whatever they may be." Carl L. Kell, *Against the Wind: The Moderate Voice in Baptist Life* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2009), 64-65.

[139] For more on this topic see, W. A. Criswell, *These Issues We Face* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1954). Criswell, who was revered by the conservatives, argues at one point that the Bible had been "exactly preserved through the fire and blood of the centuries," but a few lines later admits that the bible in its current form contained "additions, deletions, changes, and glosses." In Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land*, 45.

[140] Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land*, 55.

[141] It should be noted that by the end of The Shift little was resolved concerning the meaning of "inerrancy." In 1987, the six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries sponsored the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy in Ridgecrest, North Carolina. At the conference, Morgan explains, "There were inerrantists who insisted that the autographs of Scripture were perfect and true in every detail [. . .]; inerrantists who insisted that some current translations were inerrant; inerrantists who admitted to scribal errors in translation; and inerrantists who qualified the term with a list of disclaimers." Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land*, 84.

[142] Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land*, 48.

[143] Southern Baptist Convention, *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1980* (Nashville: Executive Committee, 1980), 51.

[144] Quoted in Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land*, 52.

[145] Ibid., 53.

[146] Conservatives pejoratively called them the "Gatlinburg Gang."

[147] Tom Miller, "News Story: Pressler's 'Going for the Jugular' Statement," *The Religious Herald*, September 18, 1980, 8-10.

[148] Ibid.

[149] In *The Baptist Reformation* (119), Sutton explains that the Pressler's "Going for the Jugular" comment became public knowledge because an agency employee of the moderate-led *Baptist Press* was in the audience.

[150] Bailey garnered 60.24 percent of the vote. Notably, the 1981 Convention marked the first time an incumbent Southern Baptist Convention president faced an opponent—historically, presidents running for reelection ran unopposed.

[151] The Executive Committee was established in 1917. According to the Convention's website, the Executive Committee "is comprised of 83 representatives chosen from qualified states and regions, and acts on behalf of the Convention between sessions. Executive Committee officers are elected from these representatives. Although the Executive Committee does not control or direct the activities of Convention agencies, it reviews their financial statements and recommends the Convention annual operating budget. In addition, it receives and distributes the monies Southern Baptists give in support of denominational ministries, acts as the recipient and trust agency for all Convention properties, and provides public relations and news services. The Southern Baptist Convention website "ByLaws," accessed on June 19, 2012: http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/legal/bylaws.asp.

[152] Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land*, 54.

[153] The SBC Today would later be renamed *Baptists Today*. *Baptists Today* now operates as a blog at http://sbctoday.com/. At the time of the foundation of the SBC Today journal, the conservatives had their own journal, the *Southern Baptist Advocate*. Moreover, by the mid-1980's Pastors' Conference, which would prove to be far more influential than Forum, was controlled by the conservatives.

[154] Draper earned 57 percent of the vote to McCall's 43 percent. Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 125.

[155] At the meeting, Patterson put forth a four-point plan for ending the conservative-moderate controversy. In *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land* (60-61), Morgan summarizes the plan: "First, [Patterson] insisted that inerrantists should be given parity with moderates in employment, especially in seminary faculty positions. Secondly, Patterson wanted SBC employees who objected to the term inerrancy to make a straightforward statement publicly as to what they believed about the Bible and other 'essential doctrines.' Thirdly, he contended that moderates should find a way to prevent the ridiculing in Baptist colleges and seminary classrooms of those students who avowed biblical inerrancy. Fourthly, he called for restructuring the Cooperative Program in a way which would permit churches to give only to agencies whose programs they could support in 'good conscience.'"

[156] Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 128.

[157] Ibid., 134.

[158] Ibid., 141.

[159] Quoted in Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 144.

[160] Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land*, 71. The 45,000 messengers represented more than double the number of messengers registered for any previous convention.

[161] Ibid., 71.

[162] Ibid., 71.

[163] Stanley received 55.3 percent of the vote. Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 147.

[164] Southern Baptists Robert Crowder and Henry Cooper among others joined together to sue the Convention for violating Convention bylaws. Their suit and subsequent appeal was dismissed.

[165] The Peace Committee included (6) conservative supporters, Charles Stanley, Adrian Rogers, Jerry Vines, Jodi Chapman, wife of conservative pastor Morris Chapman, and Edwin Young; (3) moderate supporters, Cecil Sherman, Winfred Moore, and William Hull; (3) Jim Henry, Bill Crews, and Ray Roberts who were considered conservative sympathizers; (3) Albert McClellan, Christine Gregory, and Harmon Born who were considered moderate sympathizers; and (7) Charles fuller, Herschel Hobbs, Dan Vestal, John Sullivan, Charles Pickering, Doyle Carlton, Jr., and Robert Cuttino who were considered neutral. The Peace Committee met on numerous occasions over the course next two years and five subcommittees were formed and assigned to visit seminaries and other denominational agencies. Conservatives later alleged that conservative seminary students were denied opportunities to meet with the subcommittees and moderates expressed frustration at being underrepresented on the Peace Committee. Cecil Sherman resigned from the committee on 24 October 1986 following the publication of "The Glorieta Statement", a statement of belief of sorts released by the denomination's six seminary presidents. Upon his resignation, Sherman said, "The statement made by the six seminary presidents sets a course for theological education in the southern Baptist Convention for years to come. What fundamentalist have wanted, the Peace Committee has helped them get." Quoted in Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 167.

[166] Adrian Rogers had previously served as the Convention's president from 1979-1980 but declined running for a second term. Rogers was eligible to run for election in 1986 as the only stipulation concerning the presidency is that no president can run more than two consecutive terms.

[167] Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land*, 79.

[168] Bylaw 16 concerned vacancies on boards and Bylaw 31 dealt with the adoption of reports. For full text of the Bylaws, see Southern Baptist Convention website "ByLaws," accessed on June 21, 2012: http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/legal/bylaws.asp.

[169] Quoted in Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land*, 81.

[170] For additional background on the two moderate groups see Alan Neely's "The History of the Alliance of Baptists" and Jimmy Allen's "The History of the Baptists Committed" in Walter B. Shurden, ed., *The Struggle for the Soul of the SBC: Moderate Responses to the Fundamentalist Movement* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1993).

[171] Rogers received 59.97 percent of the vote. Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land*, 85.

[172] Southern Baptist Convention, *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1987* (Nashville: Executive Committee, 1987), 233, 238.

[173] Jerry Vines earned 50.53 percent of the vote. In *The Baptist Reformation* (187), Sutton suggests that Moore's plan contributed to Jackson's loss: "The swing votes and those in the middle decided not to come to the Southern Baptist Convention, and there was an extreme turnoff because of the nature of the mass mailing by Moore. More than likely, Richard Jackson can than Moore for his loss as president of the Southern Baptist Convention."

[174] Quoted in Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land*, 94.

[175] Morgan, *The New Crusades, The new Holy Land*, 95.

[176] Ibid., 96.

[177] Jerry Vines received 56 percent of the vote. Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy War*, 98.

[178] Morris Chapman received 58 percent of the vote. Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy War*, 103.

[179] A proposal to cut funding to the Joint Committee was previously defeated in 1984.

[180] In *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land* (104), Morgan adds, "[The conservatives] sang 'Victory in Jesus' and presented certificates of appreciation to their political strategist, Pressler, and theological guru, Patterson. Some moderates who happened to be in the café at the time cried out 'Shame, shame, shame.'"

[181] Author's note: "Fundamentalist" in original text, not "Conservaties. In ed. Shurden, *The Struggle for the Soul of the SBC*, xxii.

[182] Quoted in ed. Shurden, *The Struggle for the Soul of the SBC*, 288.

[183] Ibid., 277.

[184] Hastey "Baptist and Religious Liberty" in *Baptist Heritage Series*, 2.

[185] Ibid.

[186] Spain, *At Ease in Zion: A Social History of Southern Baptists 1865-1900*, 42.

[187] The Committee on Public Relations was later renamed the Public Relations Committee.

[188] Quoted in Hastey, "Baptist and Religious Liberty," 3.

[189] Jackson argued against New Jersey in the famous Everson v. Board of Education case of 1947.

[190] During his time as Director of the Joint Committee, Dawson published Religious Liberty Principles and Policies in which he identified the definitions of church-state separation used to guide the committee. The five-part definition is included in full here: "1. Separation of church and state means separation on an official, organizational, legally contractual level. This allows freest interaction on the moral and spiritual

level. In a free society religion is expected to apply to all of life, to public service as well as to other spheres of activity. 2. Separation of church and state means that all churches exist on a purely voluntary basis that they are all equal before the law, and that the Government of the State shall not practice discrimination by singling out one or more churches for special recognition or favor as would be true if it appointed an ambassador to the Vatican. 3. Church-state separation means there shall be no general assessment of taxes for support of any kind of religious institution. This prohibition is emphatically stated in decisions handed down by the United States Supreme Court in the Everson and McCollum cases in both of which this office filed *amicus curiae* briefs in argument for the contention. The court said 'No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions whatever they may be called or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion . . . Neither a State nor the Federal Government can, openly or secretly participate in the affairs of any religious organizations or groups or vice versa in the words of Jefferson the clause against establishment of religion by law was intended to erect a 'wall of separation between church and state.' 4. Church-state separation as construed in the United States, means that no religious instruction shall be given by the churches in the public schools, and no facilities of tax-supported public schools shall be used by the churches for their religious doctrines. This only excludes sectarian uses of such tax-supported public schools and does not preclude these schools from teaching the facts about religion and most certainly does not imply hostility to religion in them nor failure to supply moral and spiritual values. 5. Separation of church and state is best for the church and best for the state. The great experiment of the United States has undoubtedly proved the assertion of the Supreme Court that this is true in America." Joseph M. Dawson, "Waging the Battle for Religious Liberty: Principles and Policies," (Washington D.C.: Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, 1953), 3-4. Baylor Institute for Church-State Studies database, accessed on March 29, 2013: http://contentdm.baylor.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/cs-vert/id/2223/rec/2.

[191] Southern Baptist Convention, *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1949* (Nashville: Executive Committee, 1949), 361.

[192] For instance, Carlson did not support Southern Baptists opposition to John F. Kennedy's 1960 presidential campaign. Baptist state conventions declared that no Roman Catholic should be elected president. Similarly, the Convention adopted a resolution discrediting Catholic presidential candidates. "The Resolution on Christian Citizenship" stated: "1. We hereby reaffirm our faith in the historic principle of the separation of Church and State as expressed in the Bill of Rights and the constitutional guarantee that a man's personal faith shall not be a test of his qualification for public office. 2. We reaffirm our conviction that a man must be free to choose his own church and that his personal religious faith shall not be a test of his qualification for public office. Yet, when a public official is inescapably bound by the dogma and demands of his church he cannot consistently separate himself from these. This is especially true when the church maintains a position in open conflict with our established and constituted American pattern of life as specifically related to religious liberty, separation of Church and State, the freedom of conscience in matters related to marriage and the family, the perpetuation of public schools and the prohibition against use of public monies for sectarian purposes. 3. Therefore, the implications of a candidate's affiliations, including his church, are of concern to the voters in every election. In all cases a public official should be free from sectarian pressures that he may make independent decisions consistent with the rights and privileges of all citizens. 4. We remind every member of every church of this obligation to pray for public officials, to participate in the full democratic process, including the voting, and to seek divine leadership in the selection of those men who guide the destiny of our land in such a

time as this." Southern Baptist Convention, *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1960* (Nashville: Executive Committee, 1960), 71. For more on Carlson's view of religious liberty see C. Emmanuel Carlson, "Meaning of Religious Liberty" (Washington, D.C.: Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, n.d.).

[193] See Engel v. Vitale 370 U.S. 421 (1962); Abington School District v. Schempp, 374 U.S. 203 (1963).

[194] The "1980 Resolution on Abortion" "affirmed the biblical teaching of the sanctity of all human life", expressed opposition to "abortion on demand" and "the use of tax money or public, tax supported medical facilities for selfish, non-therapeutic abortion", and stated "we favor appropriate legislation and/or a constitutional amendment prohibiting abortion except to save the life of the mother." Southern Baptist Convention, "1980 Abortion Resolution," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=19. The 1982 "Resolution on Abortion and Infanticide" reaffirmed and expounded on the 1980 resolution as did the "1984 Resolution on Abortion." Southern Baptist Convention, "1982 Resolution on Abortion and Infanticide," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=20.; Southern Baptist Convention, "1984 Resolution on Abortion," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=21. The "1988 Resolution on Abortion" emphasized ministry related to promoting the sanctity of human life and encouraged Southern Baptist to observe Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. Southern Baptist Convention, "1988 Resolution on Abortion," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=22. The "Resolution on Encouraging Laws Regulating Abortion" of 1989 marked even perhaps the Convention's most overtly political statement on abortion. The resolution urged Congress "to enact legislation to restrict the practice of induced abortion" and encouraged various Southern Baptist agencies to "actively" promote the passage of said legislation. Southern Baptist Convention, "Resolution on Encouraging Laws Regulating Abortion," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=23. It should be noted that the Southern Baptist Convention originally supported Roe v. Wade—in part because of the Convention's anti-Catholicism. In 1971 the Convention adopted a resolution with a decidedly softer stance on abortion. It called upon Southern Baptists "to work for legislation that will allow the possibility of abortion under such conditions as rape, incest, clear evidence of severe fetal deformity, and carefully ascertained evidence of the likelihood of damage to the emotional, mental, and physical health of the mother." See, Southern Baptist Convention, "1971 Resolution on Abortion," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=13. In 1974, the Convention passed a resolution that reaffirmed the 1971 "Resolution on Abortion." See, Southern Baptist Convention, "Resolution on Abortion and the Sanctity of Human Life," Southern Baptist Convention website: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=14.

[195] Southern Baptist Convention, "Resolution on Religious Liberty," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=953.

[196] The agency was originally called the Committee on Public Relations. See previous chapter for a discussion of the agency's name change and contributions to Southern Baptist life.

[197] For example, Patterson and other prominent conservatives frequently accused James Dunn, who had become director of the Joint Committee in 1981, of being a "liberal".

[198] Although it was defunded by the Southern Baptist Convention, the Joint Committee on Public Affairs has continued its support religious liberty and separation of church and state. In 2005, the organization was renamed the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty. The Joint Committee is supported by Baptist agencies including the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Alliance of Baptists.

[199] Erik Eckholm, "Southern Baptists Set for a Notable First," June 17, 2012, New York Times website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/18/us/southern-baptists-set-to-elect-their-first-black-leader.html?_r=2&pagewanted=all.

[200] *TIME, "TIME* Names the Top 25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America" (2005), TIME website, accessed on June 22, 2012: http://www.time.com/time/press_releases/article/0,8599,1022576,00.html.

[201] Most recently, in 2012, Land came under scrutiny for his remarks on the widely publicized Trayvon Martin case. Land controversially accused the Obama administration and civil rights leaders of using the Trayvon Martin case "to gin up the black vote." Erik Eckholm, "Baptists Reprimand Policy Leader For Comments," The New York Times website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/02/us/baptists-rebuke-policy-chief-for-insensitive-comments.html. The controversy was complicated further after Land was accused of plagiarizing his remarks on the Martin case from an article by Jeffrey Kuhner of *The Washington Times*. The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission reprimanded Land by canceling his radio program *Richard Land Live!* which the Commission declared was "not congruent" with the agency's mission. Associated Baptist Press, "Richard Land Signs Off Radio," Associated Baptist Press website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://www.abpnews.com/ministry/organizations/item/7486-richard-land-signs-off-radio-show.

[202] At the time of Land's election, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission was still called the Christian Life Commission.

[203] Sutton explains that while the search committee unanimously recommended Baker, the vote amongst trustees was much closer: 16 in favor, 13 against. In a minority report delivered to the Southern Baptist Convention, those opposed to Baker's election expressed concern over Baker's stances on abortion, capital punishment, and women in the ministry. For more on the arguments in the report, see Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 313.

[204] Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 314.

[205] Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 315.

[206] For example, prior to Land becoming the director the Commission Life Commission was pro-abortion and opposed to capital punishment. For more on the process of the conservatives gaining control of the Christian Life Commission, see Robert Parham "The History of the Baptist Center for Ethics" in ed. Walter B. Shurden, *Struggle for the Soul of the SBC*, 204-216.

[207] In *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land* (117), Morgan notes, "The CLC was a small agency with a relatively tiny budget, but because of its mission to promote SBC social causes, it was considered a prize

worth winning by the [conservatives]. Once in control they set out to use it for the promotion of their own social agenda."

[208] Quoted in Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 316.

[209] In ed. Shurden, *Struggle for the Soul of the SBC*, 208.

[210] Quoted in Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 322.

[211] Southern Baptist Convention, "Resolution on Moral Stewardship and the Disney Company," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on June 22, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=436.

[212] Tom Strode, "ERLC President Richard Land Announces Retirement," Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://erlc.com/article/erlc-president-richard-land-announces-retirement/.

[213] For more on Southern Baptists and the transition from the Christian Life Commission to the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, see, Jerry Sutton, *A Matter of Conviction: A History of Southern Baptist Engagement with the Culture* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008). It should be noted that Sutton writes from a conservative perspective.

[214] H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1951), 2.

[215] Ibid., 14.

[216] Ibid., 13.

[217] D. A. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), 10.

[218] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 32.

[219] Ibid., 32-35.

[220] Ibid., 45.

[221] Ibid., 48.

[222] 1 John 2:15.

[223] Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 48.

[224] Ibid, 83.

[225] Ibid, 83.

[226] Ibid., 88-89.

[227] Ibid., 109.

[228] Ibid., 117-118.

[229] Ibid., 43.

[230] Ibid.

[231] Ibid, 122

[232] Ibid, 209.

[233] In *Christ and Culture* (54), Niebuhr explains that the "Christ Against Culture" paradigm creates an "inner contradiction between the exercise of political power and Christian faith."

[234] Unitarian Universalism is a religion that "celebrates the diversity of belief." For more on the Unitarian Universalism, see, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, "Beliefs and Principles in Unitarian Universalism", Unitarian Universalist website, accessed on December 4, 2012: http://www.uua.org/beliefs/index.shtml.

[235] While the Southern Baptist Convention believes its members should look radically different from the rest of the world—namely, those who are not Christians—social statistics suggest that Southern Baptists in actuality resemble those outside of Christendom. See Chapter Five for further consideration of this topic.

[236] See Matthew 22:21; cf. Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25.

[237] See Revelation 3:15, 16.

[238] Revelation 3:16.

[239] The First Commandment reads: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you ought of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other Gods before me." Exodus 20: 2-3.

[240] A further discussion of this agency and Convention level involvement can be found below.

[241] c.f. Matthew 5:13, Mark 9:50, Luke 14:34.

[242] Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, "About the ERLC," Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission website, accessed on August 9, 2012: http://erlc.com/erlc/about/.

[243] Ibid.

[244] Richard Land and Barrett Duke, "Legislative Agenda for 2009," Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission website, accessed on December 6, 2012: http://erlc.com/article/legislative-agenda-for-2009/.

[245] For the most part, Legislative Agendas address the same topics each year. On occasion, a new topic is introduced.

[246] Land and Duke, "Legislative Agenda for 2009".

[247] The Baptist Faith and Message, Article 15, cited in Land and Duke, "Legislative Agenda for 2009".

[248] Land and Duke, "Legislative Agenda for 2009."

[249] Ibid.

[250] Ibid.

[251] Ibid.

[252] Ibid.

[253] Richard Land and Barrett Duke, "Legislative Agenda for 2010," Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission website, accessed on December 6, 2012: http://erlc.com/article/legislative-agenda-for-2010/.

[254] Ibid.

[255] Ibid.

[256] Ibid. It should be noted that Perry v. Schwarzenegger (the landmark Proposition 8 case in California) is now known as Hollingsworth v. Perry.

[257] Ibid.

[258] Richard Land and Barrett Duke, "Legislative Agenda for 2011," Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission website, accessed on December 6, 2012: http://erlc.com/article/legislative-agenda-for-2011/.

[259] Richard Land and Barrett Duke, "Legislative Agenda for 2012," March 15, 2012, Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission website, http://erlc.com/article/legislative-agenda-for-2012/.

[260] Ibid.

[261] Ibid.

[262] Ibid.

[263] Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 4.

[264] Ibid.

[265] Ibid., 37.

[266] Ibid., 39.

[267] Ibid., 31.

[268] Ibid., 31-32.

[269] For examples of rhetorical scholarship on the paranoid style, see, Alan D. Desantis and Susan E. Morgan, "Civil Liberties, the Constitution, and Cigars: Anti-Smoking Conspiracy Logic in Cigar Aficionado, 1992-2001." *Communication Quarterly*, 55, no. 2 (2004): 319-339; Leroy G. Dorsey, "Re-

reading *The X-Files*: The Trickster in Contemporary Conspiracy Myth. *Western Journal of Communication*, 66, no. 4 (2002): 448-469; G. Thomas Goodnight and John Poulakos,"Conspiracy Rhetoric: From Pragmatism to Fantasy in Public Discourse." *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, 45, no. 4 (1981): 299-316; Alexander G. Nikolaev and Douglas V. Porpora, "President Bush's Pre-War Rhetoric on Iraq: Paranoid Style in Action." *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 3, no. 4 (2006):245-262; Michael W. Pfau, *The Political Style of Conspiracy: Chase, Summer, and Lincoln* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2005); Brant Short, "Comic Book Apologia: The 'Paranoid' Rhetoric of Congressman George Hansen." *Western Journal of Communication*, 51, no. 2 (1987): 189-203; Carl Stempel, Thomas Hargrove, and Guido H. Stempel, "Media Use, Social Structure, and 9/11 Conspiracy Theories." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 84, no. 2 (2007): 353-372.

[270] See, for example, Guillermo G. Caliendo, "Behind the Political Rhetoric of the Colorado Family Values Coalition: The Paranoid and the Apocalyptic Styles." *Journal Of The Northwest Communication Association*, 27, (1999): 53-64; Tom D. Daniels, Richard J. Jensen, and Allen Lichtenstein, "Resolving the Paradox of Politicized Christian Fundamentalism." *Western Journal of Communication*, 49, no. 4 (1985): 248-266; Steven R. Goldzwig, "Theo-Political Conspiracy Rhetoric in *The Wanderer*." *Journal of Communication and Religion*, 14, no. 2 (1991): 15-33.

[271] See, for example, Michael Gerson, "A Primer on Political Reality," *Washington Post*, February 19, 2010, p. A19; Jaclyn Howell, "Not Just Crazy: An Explanation for the Resonance of the Birther Narrative." *Communication Monographs*, 79, no. 4 (December 2012): 428-447; Jon Meacham, "Words Have Consequences." *Newsweek* 154, (2009): 8; Frank Rich, "The Guns of August." *New York Times*, August 4, 2008, p. 8; Tim Rutten, "Behind the Birther Blather." *Los Angeles Times*, February 16, 2011, p. A17.

[272] Angela L. Apple and Beth A. Messner, "Paranoia and Paradox: The Apocalyptic Rhetoric of Christian Identity." *Western Journal of Communication*, 65, no. 2 (2001): 206-227.

[273] Ibid., 215.

[274] Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays*, 37.

[275] Richard Land and Barrett Duke, "Legislative Agenda for 2009."

[276] Ibid.

[277] Richard Land and Barrett Duke, "Legislative Agenda for 2010."

[278] Richard Land and Barrett Duke, "Legislative Agenda for 2011."

[279] 1 Peter 4:13.

[280] Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action* (Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1973).

[281] Kenneth Burke, *The Grammar of Motives* (Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1969), 406.

[282] Burke *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, 202, 46.

[283] For a collection of Girard's writings on religion, culture, and violence, see, René Girard, ed. James G. Williams, *The Girard Reader* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996).

[284] In Girard, *The Girard Reader*, 293.

[285] René Girard, trans. Yvonne Freccero, *The Scapegoat* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 39.

[286] René Girard, trans. Patrick Gregory, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 96.

[287] Girard, *The Scapegoat*, 5.

[288] Girard argues that the Gospel account of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection destroys the scapegoat mechanism concept. For more on Girard's interpretation of the Passion and scapegoating in Judeo-Christian texts, see, Girard *The Scapegoat*.

[289] Kell and Camp, *In the Name of the Father*.

[290] It is worth noting that Southern Baptist scapegoating is further complicated considering Girard's argument that Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection frees humankind from the scapegoating impulse.

[291] The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is considered the flagship institution of the Southern Baptist Convention. There are five other official denominational seminaries: Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary experienced the most controversy in the wake of The Shift. For an account of how the other seminaries were impacted by The Shift, see Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*. It should be noted that Sutton's account is told from a conservative viewpoint.

[292] Biographical information from R. Albert Mohler's website, "About," accessed on June 20, 2012: http://www.albertmohler.com/about/.

[293] Broward Liston, "Interview: Missionary Work in Iraq," April 15, 2003, *TIME*'s website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,443800,00.html.

[294] For more information on Honeycutt's efforts to maintain a moderate influence at Southern Seminary, see Gregory A. Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1859-2009* (New York: Oxford University Press), 437-510.

[295] In *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* (511), Wills notes that Bob Agee withdrew his name from consideration.

[296] Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 512.

[297] Mark McCormick, "Georgian, 33, Picked to Head Seminary," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, February, 23, 1993, 5A.

[298] John Ed Pearce, "Religious Extremism," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, May 10, 1993, 18A.

[299] In *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* (518), Wills notes that "Five moderate trustees voted against him largely because of his pledge to require such strict adherence." For the full text of the Abstract of Principles, see "Abstract of Principles," Southern Baptist Theological Seminary website, accessed on June 19, 2012: http://www.sbts.edu/about/truth/abstract/.

[300] For a discussion of the original drafting of the "Abstract of Principles," see Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 31-40.

[301] Wills also notes that over the years previous presidents Duke McCall and Roy Honeycutt "had reviewed hundreds of such accusations against various professors and found no basis for trustee investigation in any of them—Dale Moody's explicit rejection of the Abstract's statement on perseverance in1962 was the lone exception." Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 519.

[302] Ibid., 521.

[303] Ibid., 522.

[304] In *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* (522), Wills explains that after what Sherwood believed was a successful interview with Mohler, Sherwood was asked "to write his views on the Abstract of Principles and on four issues not addressed in the Abstract: homosexuality, abortion, women's ordination, and the exclusivity of the gospel as the means of salvation." After reviewing Sherwood's responses, or which included support for the ordination of women, Mohler informed Garland he would not support the nomination.

[305] Diana Garland, "When Professional Ethics and Religious Politics Conflict: A Case Study," *Social Work and Christianity*, 26 (1999), 66.

[306] Garland maintained that Mohler fired her. See Mark McCormick, "Dean Says Seminary Fired Her from post," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, March 21, 1995, 1A, 9A.

[307] Addressing the decision to discontinue the Carver School, a *Baptist Press* release stated: "Speaking to the matter of discontinuing the social work program, Mohler said there was a 'basic conflict' between theological education and social work 'world views,' including social work's code of ethics regarding homosexuality." Quoted in Jerry Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 359.

[308] Wills also notes, "The local press and the newspapers of Southern Baptist state conventions excoriated Mohler. Threats against the campus disrupted chapel and classes four times during the week of March 20. The student sit-in Norton Hall [the location of Mohler's office] continued for several weeks." Moreover, Wills explains, "On April 18, 1995, more than 500 students and faculty gathered on the seminary's main lawn for a service of encouragement and grief." Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 538.

[309] In April 1995, the trustees adopted the "Statement on the Resignation of Dean Diana Garland," wherein they commended Mohler's decision and handling of the matter and expressed support for Mohler's authority in evaluating candidates based on the four criteria used in the Sherwood case. Moreover, the trustees adopted a policy of compliance requiring faculty members to support the seminary's policies and administration.

[310] Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 541. For additional details on the retirement package offered to qualified faculty members, see Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* , 541.

[311] For more on enrollment trends at Southern Seminary, see Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 545-546.

[312] Campbell, *Exploring Religious Communities Online*, 61.

[313] Ibid., 67.

[314] For accurate reference, it should be noted that Condit published this article as Celeste Condit Railsback. Celeste Condit Railsback, "The Contemporary American Abortion Controversy: Stages In The Argument," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70, (1984): 410-424.

[315] Ibid., 411.

[316] Ibid., 416.

[317] Ibid., 417.

[318] Ibid., 418.

[319] Ibid., 418.

[320] See, for example, R. Albert Mohler. "The Culture of Death and Its Logic," albertmohler.com (blog), May 10, 2004, http://www.albertmohler.com/2004/05/10/the-culture-of-death-and-its-logic/.

[321] Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays*, 39.

[322] Mohler, "The Culture of Death and Its Logic".

[323] R. Albert Mohler. "Have Conservatives 'Won' the Abortion War?" albertmohler.com (blog), November 13, 2003, http://www.albertmohler.com/2003/11/13/have-conservatives-won-the-abortion-war/.

[324] Ibid.

[325] Elsewhere, Wills argues, "The subject of abortion is not scriptural. For those who make it so central to religion, this seems an odd omission. Abortion is not treated in the Ten Commandments — or anywhere in Jewish Scripture. It is not treated in the Sermon on the Mount — or anywhere in the New Testament. It is not treated in the early creeds. It is not treated in the early ecumenical councils." Gary Wills, "Abortion Isn't A Religious Issue," *Los Angeles Times*, November 4, 2007: http://www.latimes.com/features/religion/la-op-wills4nov04,0,2121538.story.

[326] R. Albert Mohler. "Is Abortion a Theological Issue? Garry Wills Says No," albertmohler.com (blog), November 11, 2005, http://www.albertmohler.com/2007/11/05/is-abortion-a-theological-issue-garry-wills-says-no-2/ (italics mine).

[327] R. Albert Mohler. "America's Aborted Conscience—The Sin of Moral Indifference," albertmohler.com (blog), December 2, 2004, http://www.albertmohler.com/2004/12/02/americas-aborted-conscience-the-sin-of-moral-indifference/.

[328] R. Albert Mohler. "The Culture of Death and Its Legacy," albertmohler.com (blog), May 12, 2004, http://www.albertmohler.com/2004/05/12/the-culture-of-death-and-its-legacy/.

[329] Ibid.

[330] Mohler. "America's Aborted Conscience—The Sin of Moral Indifference."

[331] R. Albert Mohler. "The Cause of Life—Where We Stand Now," albertmohler.com (blog), January 27, 2005, http://www.albertmohler.com/2005/01/27/the-cause-of-life-where-we-now-stand/.

[332] Ralph R. Smith and Russel R. Windes, "The Progay and Antigay Issue Culture: Interpretation, Influence, and Dissent," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83, (1997): 28.

[333] Ibid., 30.

[334] Ibid., 32.

[335] Ibid., 38.

[336] Marcus O'Donnell, "Going to the Chapel: Same Sex Marriage and Competing Narratives of Intimate Citizenship," *Pacific Journalism Review* 10, no. 1 (2004): 13.

[337] Ibid., 14.

[338] Ibid., 19.

[339] Ibid., 21.

[340] For an analysis of one of the ways the Catholic church has addressed the issue of homosexuality, see John Lynch, "Institution and Imprimatur: Institutional Rhetoric and the Failure of the Catholic Church's Pastoral Letter on Homosexuality," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8, no. 3 (2005): 383-404.

[341] R. Albert Mohler, "Is The Culture War For Real?" albertmohler.com (blog), October 10, 2004, http://www.albertmohler.com/2004/10/20/is-the-culture-war-for-real/.

[342] Mohler, "The Culture of Death and Its Legacy."

[343] R. Albert Mohler, "The Case Against Homosexual Marriage," albertmohler.com (blog), January 15, 2004, http://www.albertmohler.com/2004/01/15/the-case-against-homosexual-marriage/.

[344] R. Albert Mohler, "The Challenge of Homosexuality—How Important Is It?" albertmohler.com (blog), January 5, 2006, http://www.albertmohler.com/2006/01/05/the-challenge-of-homosexuality%e2%80%94how-important-is-it/.

[345] R. Albert Mohler, "The Homosexual Agenda: Religious Liberty Under Fire," albertmohler.com (blog), December 4, 2003, http://www.albertmohler.com/2003/12/04/the-homosexual-agenda-religious-liberty-under-fire/.

[346] Ibid.

[347] Ibid.

[348] R. Albert Mohler, "Homosexuality in Theological Perspective: Part One," albertmohler.com (blog), October 3, 2005, http://www.albertmohler.com/2005/10/03/homosexuality-in-theological-perspective-part-one/.

[349] R. Albert Mohler, "Homosexuality in Theological Perspective: Part Two." October 4, 2005, albertmohler.com (blog), http://www.albertmohler.com/2005/10/04/homosexuality-in-theological-perspective-part-two/.

[350] Ibid.

[351] R. Albert Mohler, "Homosexuality in Theological Perspective: Part Three," albertmohler.com (blog), October 5, 2005, http://www.albertmohler.com/2005/10/05/homosexuality-in-theological-perspective-part-three/.

[352] R. Albert Mohler, "Homosexuality in Theological Perspective: Part Four," albertmohler.com (blog), October 6, 2012, http://www.albertmohler.com/2005/10/06/homosexuality-in-theological-perspective-part-four/.

[353] Hofstadter, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays," 39.

[354] R. Albert Mohler, "What's the Battle Over Gay Marriage Really About?" albertmohler.com (blog), June 24, 2005. http://www.albertmohler.com/2005/06/24/whats-the-battle-over-gay-marriage-really-about/.

[355] As noted above, Mohler commonly employs victimization language when discussing what pro-abortion and pro-homosexual stances mean for Southern Baptists. Interestingly, in a 2004 post titled "After The Ball—Why the Homosexual Movement Won", Mohler claims that the pro-homosexual movement was successful largely because it framed homosexuals as victims. R. Albert Mohler, "After The Ball—Why the Homosexual Movement Won," albertmohler.com (blog), June 3, 2004, http://www.albertmohler.com/2004/06/03/after-the-ball-why-the-homosexual-movement-has-won/.

[356] See, for example, R. Albert Mohler, "Homosexuality, The Culture War, and The Summer of '03," August 25, 2003, albertmohler.com (blog), http://www.albertmohler.com/2003/08/25/homosexuality-the-culture-war-and-the-summer-of-03/, and R. Albert Mohler, "Television's Fall Schedule: The Homosexual Agenda Advances," albertmohler.com (blog), September 25, 2003, http://www.albertmohler.com/2003/09/25/televisions-fall-schedule-the-homosexual-agenda-advances/, and R. Albert Mohler, "They're After The Minds of Our Children," albertmohler.com (blog), June 27, 2005, http://www.albertmohler.com/2005/06/27/theyre-after-the-minds-of-our-children/.

[357] R. Albert Mohler, "In His Own Words: A Radical Pro-Abortion President," albertmohler.com (blog), January 24, 2011. http://www.albertmohler.com/2011/01/24/in-his-own-words-a-radical-pro-abortion-president/.

[358] Ibid.

[359] R. Albert Mohler, "The President, the Pill, and Religious Liberty," albertmohler.com(blog), February 2, 2012, http://www.albertmohler.com/2012/02/02/the-president-the-pill-andreligious-liberty-in-peril/.

[360] See, for example, R. Albert Mohler, "Gov. Dean's New Theology of Homosexuality," albertmohler.com (blog), January 12, 2004, http://www.albertmohler.com/2004/01/12/gov-deans-new-theology-of-homosexuality/.

[361] See R. Albert Mohler, "Evolution's End? President Obama Calls For Same-Sex Marriage," albertmohler.com (blog), May 10, 2012, http://www.albertmohler.com/2012/05/10/evolutions-end-president-obama-calls-for-same-sex-marriage/.

[362] See R. Albert Mohler, "One Year of Gay Marriage in Massachusetts," May 18, 2005, albertmohler.com (blog), http://www.albertmohler.com/2005/05/18/one-year-of-gay-marriage-in-massachusetts/, and R. Albert Mohler, "The Empire State's Moral Revolution: New York State Legalizes Same-Sex Marriage," albertmohler.com (blog), June 27, 2011, http://www.albertmohler.com/2011/06/27/the-empire-states-moral-revolution-new-york-state-legalizes-same-sex-marriage/.

[363] R. Albert Mohler, "Is The Culture War For Real?"

[364] Ibid.

[365] Spain, *At Ease in Zion*, 42.

[366] Southern Baptist Convention, "SBC Resolutions," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on August 9, 2012: http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/default.asp.

[367] Ibid.

[368] Ibid.

[369] Southern Baptist Convention, "Bylaws," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on August 9, 2012: http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/legal/bylaws.asp#bylaw20.

[370] Ibid.

[371] Southern Baptist Conventionresolutions are perhaps best compared to presidential pardons which follow the same "Whereas" – "Therefore" pattern. See, "Pardoning Rhetoric" in Karyln Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Presidents Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990).

[372] James Arnt Aune, "Justice and Argument in Judaism: A D'var Torah on Shofetim" *Rhetoric & Public Affairs, 7*, (2004): 449-460.

[373] Ibid.

[374] Ibid.

[375] For a list of SBC resolution topics, see Southern Baptist Convention, "Search SBC Resolutions," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on August 9, 2012: http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/AMResSearch.asp.

[376] Statistics from Southern Baptist Convention, "About Us—Meet Southern Baptists," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on August 9, 2012: http://sbc.net/aboutus/default.asp.

[377] For a list of all resolutions on abortion after The Shift, see Southern Baptist Convention, "Search SBC Resolutions, Search for Abortion," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on March 12, 2013:http://sbc.net/resolutions/AMResSearchAction.asp?SearchBy=Subject&DisplayRows=10&frmData=abortion&Submit=Search.

[378] Southern Baptist Convention, "Resolution on the Freedom of Choice Act, Hyde Amendment," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on November 9, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=24.

[379] Ibid.

[380] Ibid.

[381] The Hyde Amendment prohibited federal funding for the promotion of abortions.

[382] Southern Baptist Convention, "2002 Resolution on the Partial-Birth Ban," Southern Baptist Convention's website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=26.

[383] Ibid.

[384] The resolution states, "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we, the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, in a genuine spirit of love do admonish and encourage President Clinton, himself a Southern Baptist, to reverse his shameful decision to veto this legislation and sign it into law; or in the alternative of such failure to reverse his action, we call upon every member of Congress to vote to override the President's veto." Southern Baptist Convention, "1996 Resolution on the Partial-Birth Ban," Southern Baptist Convention's website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=26.

[385] In 1996, the Convention also issued another anti-abortion resolution asking political parties to consider adopting "pro-life" platforms. Southern Baptist Convention, "Resolution Requesting All Political Parties To Include A Pro-Life Actions Platform," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=874.

[386] Southern Baptist Convention, "2002 Resolution on Partial Birth Abortion," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=1124.

[387] The resolution consists of eleven "WHEREAS" statements and nine "RESOLVED" statements.

[388] Southern Baptist Convention, "On Thirty Years of Roe v. Wade, Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=1130. For full text of the

1971 resolution, see Southern Baptist Convention, "1971 Resolution on Abortion," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=13. For full text of the 1974 resolution, see Southern Baptist Convention, "Resolution on Abortion and Sanctity of Human Life," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=14. Interestingly, the 1971 and 1974 do not show up in the key word/topic search for "Abortion" on Convention's website. Rather, in what might be described as selective amnesia, the 1982 "Resolution on Abortion and Infanticide" is the oldest resolution that appears in the list of resolutions on the "Abortion" topic.

[389] Southern Baptist Convention, "On Thirty Years of Roe v. Wade."

[390] Ibid.

[391] Ibid.

[392] Ibid.

[393] For a list of resolutions on homosexuality after The Shift, see Southern Baptist Convention, "Search SBC Resolutions, Search for Homosexuality," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on March 12, 2013:
http://sbc.net/resolutions/AMResSearchAction.asp?SearchBy=Subject&DisplayRows=10&frmData=homosexual&Submit=Search.

[394] Southern Baptist Convention, "Resolution on Homosexuality, Military Service and Civil Rights," Southern Baptist Convention's website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=613.

[395] Ibid.

[396] Ibid.

[397] For instance, the resolution states, "WHEREAS, There is much scientific evidence showing that homosexual attractions are pathological, abnormal, and mostly if not entirely a matter of external influence, learned behavior, acquired taste and personal choice; and, although there have been speculations, no conclusive scientific evidence has been found to support claims that homosexual attractions are biologically fixed and irreversible. Southern Baptist Convention, "Resolution on Homosexual Marriage," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=614.

[398] Southern Baptist Convention, "Resolution on Homosexual Marriage," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=614.

[399] Ibid.

[400] Ibid.

[401] Ibid.

[402] Southern Baptist Convention, "About Us," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on August 1, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/default.asp.

[403] Southern Baptist Convention, "Resolution on Strengthening the Marriage Covenant," Southern Baptist Convention website, accessed on November 8, 2012: http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=699. In 2001, the Convention passed a similar resolution titled "On Covenant Marriage."

[404] Ibid.

[405] Ibid.

[406] A so-called "Covenant Marriage" is a distinct type of marriage wherein a couple voluntarily agrees to go through pre-marital counseling and consents to limited grounds for divorce. "Covenant Marriage" legislation was first passed in Louisiana, in 1997, and has subsequently passed in Arkansas and Arizona.

[407] Jeffrey K. Hadden, *The Gathering Storm in the Churches* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1969), 5.

[408] Ibid., 5, 6.

[409] Hadden, *The Gathering Storm in the Churches*, 211.

[410] Dean M. Kelley, *Why Conservative Are Growing: A Study in Sociology of Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972), 1. For a more recent analysis of Kelley's thesis, see Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-1990* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992). In their words, sociologists Finke and Stark (17) use "economic concepts such as markets, firms, market penetration, and segmented markets to analyze the success and failure of religious bodies." Finke and Starke (17) explained, "Religious economies are like commercial economies in that they consist of a market made up of a set of current and potential customers and a set of firms seeking to serve that market. The fate of these firms will depend upon (1) aspects of their organizational structures, (2) their sales representatives, (3) their product, and (4) their marketing techniques. Translated into more churchly language, the relative success of religious bodies (especially when confronted with an unregulated economy) will depend upon their polity, their clergy, their religious doctrines, and their evangelization techniques." While they agree that churches require sacrifice thrive, Finke and Stark (246) argued that Kelley's "whole discussion of the sudden decline of the liberal denominations and the sudden 'resurgence' of evangelical groups is based on a distorted historical perspective." In contrast, Finke and Stark (247) claimed, "The speed of conservative growth and liberal decline will no doubt change from time to time, but the general trend has remained consistent for more than two centuries of American history." It should be noted that historian Martin Marty wrote a scathing review of Finke and Stark's book. In his review, Marty (88) described Finke and Stark's book as a work of "reductionism". Marty was especially critical of Finke and Stark's reframing of "growing and declining" denominations to "winning and losing" denominations. Marty argued (88), "Finke and Starke's [*sic*] world contains no God or religion or spirituality, no issue of truth or beauty or goodness, no faith or hope or love, no justice or mercy; only winning and losing in the churching game matters." Martin E. Marty, "Churches as winners, losers" *Christian Century*, January 27, 1993.

[411] Kelley, *Why Conservative Are Growing*, 25-26.

[412] Will Hall, "What do the numbers mean — is the SBC in decline? Part 1 Membership and Baptisms," Baptist Press website, accessed on October 30, 2012: http://bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=30656. Moreover, in *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing* (21) Kelley notes, "Foreign missionary personnel of the Southern Baptist Convention more than doubled, from 1,186 in 1958 to 2,494 in 1971. . . ." During this time, Hall notes, membership amongst Methodists churches dropped from 11,709,629 to 8,500,000; Episcopalian membership declined from 3,500,000 to 2,500,000; and membership in Presbyterian Church USA shrunk from 4,000,000 to 2,600,000.

[413] Kelley, *Why Conservative Are Growing*, 58.

[414] Ibid.

[415] Ibid.

[416] Ibid.

[417] Ibid.

[418] Ibid.

[419] Ibid.

[420] Hall, "What do the numbers mean — is the SBC in decline? Part 1 Membership and Baptisms".

[421] Interestingly, while there was a decline in Southern Baptist church membership in 2011, there was an increase in the total number of Southern Baptist churches. Russ Rankin "SBC baptisms & churches up in 2011, membership declines," Baptist Press website, accessed on October 30, 2012: http://bpnews.net/BPnews.asp?ID=38027.

[422] As stated on The Barna Group website: "Barna Research Group was founded in 1984 by George Barna. As a marketing research firm, it primarily served Christian ministries, non-profit organizations and various media and financial corporations. During its nearly three decades of work, Barna Group has carefully and strategically tracked the role of faith in America, developing one of the nation's most comprehensive database on spiritual indicators." The Barna Group, "About Barna Group", The Barna Group website, accessed on October 30, 2012: http://www.barna.org/about.

[423] The Barna Group defines unchurched as "all adults who have not attended any religious events at a church, other than special ceremonies such as a wedding or funeral, during the prior six month period. The Barna Group, "Barna Examines Trends in 14 Religious Factors." July 26, 2011. The Barna Group website, accessed on October 30, 2012: http://www.barna.org/faith-spirituality/504-barna-examines-trends-in-14-religious-factors-over-20-years-1991-to-2011.

[424] Ibid.

[425] "Regional Shifts in Religious Beliefs and Behavior Since 1991 Revealed in New Barna Report." August 3, 2011. The Barna Group website, accessed on October 30, 2012: http://www.barna.org/faith-

spirituality/512-regional-shifts-in-religious-beliefs-and-behavior-since-1991-revealed-in-new-barna-report.

[426] The Barna Group, "Barna Examines Trends in 14 Religious Factors."

[427] The Barna Group, "Top Trends of 2011: Changing Role of Christianity." The Barna Group website, accessed on October 30, 2012: http://www.barna.org/faith-spirituality/543-top-trends-of-2011-changing-role-of-christianity?q=hell.

[428] "Most American Christians Do Not Believe that Satan or the Holy Spirit Exist." April 10, 2009. The Barna Group website, accessed on October 30, 2012: http://www.barna.org/faith-spirituality/260-most-american-christians-do-not-believe-that-satan-or-the-holy-spirit-exis?q=salvation.

[429] Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 3.

[430] Ibid., 3.

[431] Ibid., 4.

[432] Charles Malik, *The Two Tasks* (Westchester: Cornerstone, 1980), 29.

[433] Creation Science refers to an interpretation of the origin of the universe. So-called Young Earth Creationism is a popular view amongst Southern Baptists. According to this point of view, the Creation Story in Genesis is interpreted as describing a literal seven days of creation. Working from this timeline, Young Earth Creationists argue that the Earth is less than 10,000 years old. Young Earth Creationism represents an attempt to read the Bible as a science book in addition to a religious text. The belief that the Earth is less 10,000 years old seems to directly contradict scientific data that suggests the Earth is millions, or perhaps billions, of years old. The popularization of Young Earth Creationism in the Southern Baptist Convention—and Evangelicalism at large—is one example that leads to charges of anti-intellectualism.

[434] Ronald J. Sider, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience: Why are Christians Living Just Like the Rest of the World?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005).

[435] Lawrence K. Altman, "Study Finds That Teenage Virginity Pledges Are Rarely Kept," New York Times, March 10, 2004, A20.

[436] Another example of the perceived hypocrisy of the Southern Baptist Convention results from recent divorce statistics. In 2001, The Barna Group found that "Born Again Christians" are just as likely to get divorced (33%) as non-born again adults (34%). The study also found that 90% of divorced born again adults divorced after converting to Christianity. "Born Again Adults Less Likely to Co-Habit, Just as Likely to Divorce." August 6, 2001, accessed on October 30, 2012: http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/56-born-again-adults-less-likely-to-co-habit-just-as-likely-to-divorce. In 2003, sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox examined two sets of national data and found that conservative Protestants are more likely to get divorced than the rest of the population. Bradford Wilcox, "Conservative Protestants and the Family," in Michael Cromartie, ed., *A Public Faith: Evangelicals and Civic Engagement,* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003). It should be noted that some contend that divorce comparisons are inaccurate. See, for example, Elesha Coffman, "The Problem with Counting Christians: Pew's new Religious Landscape Survey is helpful, but the maps are fuzzier than you might expect." February 26, 2008, accessed on October 30, 2012:

http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/februaryweb-only/109-23.0.html, and Adelle M. Banks, "RNS: Christians question conventional wisdom on divorce stats." March 14, 2011, Access on October 30, 2012: http://www.pewforum.org/Religion-News/RNS-Christians-question-conventional-wisdom-on-divorce-stats.aspx. For a more information on ways in which members of Evangelical denominations are becoming less distinct from the rest of society , see, Sider, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience: Why are Christians Living Just Like the Rest of the World?* or The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey
Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic February 2008," Pew Forum website, accessed on October 30, 2012: http://religions.pewforum.org/pdf/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf.

[437] Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays*, 37.

[438] Rod Dreher, "SSM, Social Conservatives, & The Future," The American Conservative website, accessed on March 4, 2013: http://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/ssm-social-conservatives-the-future/.

[439] Ibid.

[440] Ibid.

[441] Ibid.

[442] Ibid.

[443] For more on the split within Lutheranism, see, Julia Duin "Lutherans Second Church to Split Over Gays" November 19, 2009, The Washington Times website, accessed on January 2, 2013: http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/nov/19/conservative-lutherans-to-leave-synod/?page=all.

[444] Internal Revenue Service "Exemption Requirements - Section 501(c)(3) Organizations," Internal Revenue Service website, accessed on December 12, 2012: http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations/Exemption-Requirements---Section-501(c)(3)-Organizations. For more on the Internal Revenue Code for religious organizations, see Internal Revenue Service "Tax Guide for Churches and Religious Organizations: Benefits and Responsibilities Under the Federal Tax Law", Internal Revenue Service website, accessed on December 12, 2012: http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p1828.pdf.

[445] Internal Revenue Service "Exemption Requirements - Section 501(c)(3) Organizations."

[446] Ibid.

[447] The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, "Election 2012 Post Mortem: White Evangelicals and Support for Romney," The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life website, accessed on December 11, 2012: http://www.pewforum.org/Politics-and-Elections/Election-2012-Post-Mortem--White-Evangelicals-and-Support-for-Romney.aspx.

[448] One interesting side story concerning Romney's Mormonism and the 2012 election involved famed revivalist Billy Graham. As the election date neared, the two met. Following the meeting, the Billy Graham Evangelical Association removed the term "cult" from the evangelist's website. For more on this story, see Daniel Burke "After Romney Meeting, Billy Graham Site Scrubs Mormon 'Cult' Reference,"

Christianity Today website, accessed on December 11, 2012:
http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/october-web-only/after-romney-meeting-billy-graham-site-scrubs-mormon-cult-r.html.

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