Loving Leadership, Joyful Submission:
The Dismantling of Female Ordination in the Southern Baptist Denomination

Morgan Hundley

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Religious Studies for Honors

Duke University

Durham, North Carolina

2021
Abstract

In this paper, I explore how members of the Southern Baptist (SB) denomination developed their arguments, tactics, and rhetoric to stall integration during the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) and how these SBs later refined their strategies during the Women’s Liberation Movement (WLM) to successfully overturn female ordination. As the SBC’s annual reports, SBC’s resolutions passed at their yearly convention meetings, Christianity Today, and Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism demonstrate, many SBs understood themselves as culturally estranged and on the “wrong” side of history once the CRM concluded. In order to overcome this sense of failure, regain a prior status, and ensure future success, these Baptists utilized the tactics and rhetoric first employed to oppose the CRM as a paradigm for how to combat the WLM. Certain SB leaders sought to expose what they interpreted as the unbiblical implications of the WLM, prevent the movement’s advancement, and reobtain their perceived loss of influence in the South. These leaders emphasized individual choice in the denomination’s publications, promoted Biblical arguments about traditional gender roles, outlined their definition of God’s social hierarchy, and endorsed practices that embodied what they portrayed as proper SB representations of men’s divine masculinity and women’s sacred femininity. These tactics enabled SB leaders to overturn female ordination, contribute to the creation of the Moral Majority in 1979, and influence the creation of legislation that aligned with their claims.
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Introduction

Certain SBs became committed to the view, based on purported inerrancy of the Bible, that God developed an unchanging social hierarchy during creation.¹ For these SB leaders, this divinely allotted construct defined whom God gave the authority to interpret scripture.² SB leaders argued that God designed distinct spheres where certain bodies belonged.³ These mostly white men negotiated the boundaries of those spheres using their interpretations of the Bible. During the CRM, the “natural status” of white men as the apex of this purportedly divinely given structure was largely accepted by many in the denomination. After the CRM and the political defeat of their segregationist stances, some SBs developed a feeling of cultural estrangement because the racial hierarchy they defended was widely condemned.⁴ In response to this appearance of cultural alienation, during the WLM, SB leaders shifted their attention from

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³As Sara Ahmed points out, this process, systematically determining where certain bodies operated, is a product of fear, particularly one’s fear about losing power or control. For the SB denomination, male leaders viewed women being ordained as a threat to their power. Since they experienced fear about losing their authority, these men attempted to control where women’s bodies resided. See Sara Ahmed, The Cultural Politics of Emotion (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 63, 65.

⁴As Seth Dowland argues, many SBs developed a feeling of alienation after the CRM because their interpretation of the Bible, specifically their claims about God’s divine hierarchy, was rejected in the secular realm. As a result, many SBs perceived themselves as having lost the ability to influence cultural, social, and legal developments with their moral values. See, Seth Dowland, “Defending Manhood: Gender, Social Order and the Rise of the Christian Right in the South, 1965--1995” (PhD diss., Duke University, 2007), 192.
racializing to sexing the “natural” order of creation. In doing so, SB leaders promoted male dominance and excluded women from leadership positions in the denomination.

In the process of describing which bodies belonged in which spaces, many SBs employed various written mediums to explain and justify their interpretations of God’s word. Several publications were produced during the CRM that condoned white, male hegemony. These SB publications detailed how each person should investigate scripture discussing moral issues, righteously enter the political sector, and peaceably prevent integration. For example in the *Alabama Baptist*, editor Leon Macon consistently argued that integration was immoral because it would lead to violence and chaos. He writes, “Let us say in the beginning that there was no evidence of rancor or unChristian feeling toward any race...The Convention further felt that social instability and turmoil would result should the races be integrated.” During the WLM, leaders still utilized written publications to convince other SB members that their interpretation of the Bible was correct. However, the content of these writings evolved to promote a SB definition of divinely ordained masculinity and femininity. In addition, they instituted dress codes that aligned with those interpretations of gender. For example in *Christianity Today*,

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8 David Morgan’s observations about belief as sedimented practice shed light on how these Southern Baptists were able to convince their members that a divine social hierarchy was necessary to maintain. He argues that a belief is cemented when practices, which emphasize a particular ideology, are carried out repetitively over a long period of
George W. Knight III claimed that women and men, although they carried out separate functions, were equal. He wrote, “that the woman submits as woman does not mean therefore she is inferior or that her humanity as an image-bearer is in doubt or threatened.” Although these recommendations were painted as morally necessary in both social movements, the mere dissemination of these ideas, as many SBs argued, was not effective enough for bringing about a SB interpretation of God’s vision.

Those seeking change within the denomination encountered a major obstacle, the organizational structure, when trying to propagate their message about God’s divine social hierarchy. Several SBs strongly believed that leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the advisory body towards the entire denomination, could not make absolute declarations about what each individual church and SB could do. Instead, these SBs could only make recommendations about how churches and individual congregants should exhibit Christian behavior in the secular world. In addition, many SBs consistently promoted the separation of church from state and called the SBC to uphold an apolitical attitude. These historic positions did not prevent the convention from making formal recommendations about social and political situations. Particularly, during the CRM, when trying to propagate their segregationist message
about God’s hierarchy, SBs appealed to every person’s sense of “soul liberty” by putting forward numerous propositions at the annual convention meetings about how to respond to social movements. These leaders begged their parishioners to consider all viable solutions, including the SBC’s official recommendations to integration, before discerning the correct moral response. Appeals to “soul liberty,” however, worked to manufacture consensus, not to undermine it. Many members still chose to abide by the convention’s propositions during the CRM and this, subsequently, stalled integration in the South. Later, this tactic was employed to overturn female ordination during the WLM.

Many SBs responded to the WLM by utilizing the same, albeit refined, strategies employed when reacting to the CRM. These individuals, similar to their predecessors, emphasized soul liberty when encouraging SBs to enter the secular sphere. In the process, SB leaders became ever more committed to their perception of God’s vision and delineated appropriate practices which embodied that interpretation. In doing so, SBC leaders redefined the role they played in the denomination. From this point forward, these individuals no longer hesitated when making statements at SBC meetings that were politically charged. This process

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13 I use the term “soul liberty” to denote the process of individual spiritual study which SB leaders regularly advocated. SB leaders regularly claimed that they had undergone serious, spiritual reflection and textual study when determining the “correct” moral response to social movements such as the CRM and the WLM. They called all other SBs to carry out the same contemplation when discerning whether to abide by the recommendations accepted at the annual SBC meetings. This expectation of lay SBs was heavily informed by the denomination’s acceptance and protection of individual autonomy. See, Nancy Tatam Ammerman, Baptist Battles: Social Change and Religious Conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 212; Eighmy, Churches in Cultural Captivity, 74; Carolyn DeArmond Blevins, “Women and the Baptist Experience,” in Religious Institutions and Women’s Leadership (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 160.


15 Eighmy, Churches in Cultural Captivity, 74.


simultaneously shifted the functions that individual SBs carried out in the secular realm. After female ordination was successfully overturned in 1984, many SBs became more politically active in propagating this version of Christianity. Several SBs defended gender difference as a lived and embodied aspect of the human experience through developing specific practices which mitigated the implications of the WLM. These actions largely entailed women remaining outwardly subordinate to all men through dressing modestly, working alongside their husbands to carry out God’s commands, and maintaining emotional “dispositions” that displayed support for their husband’s undertakings.

After these strategies were employed, the theological argument for white, male dominance went away and a refined version of a Biblical outcry for a divine, social hierarchy, particularly one promoting female subordination, emerged. The language promoting God’s social hierarchy shifted, but the goals were the same: maintaining control and establishing a sense of belonging in the world. SB leaders utilized several tactics to justify and impose their viewpoint, that God established a divine hierarchy at creation which designated men as authoritative and women as submissive. These SBs subverted the ideological and organizational structure of the

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18 Ibid.
19 Although SBs advocating for traditional roles would have viewed the perceived differences between genders as real, natural, and entirely good divergences. However, Joan Scott and Judith Butler have shown that gender difference is a social rather scientific construct. See, Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” 1069; Butler, Gender Trouble, 35.
21 Morgan argues that belief is sedimented in religious communities through repeated practices. In the case of SBs, one of the many ways that they cemented traditional gender roles into their ideology was through repeatedly publishing scripturally-based arguments in easily understandable and convincing language. See, Morgan, Images at Work, 25; Durkheim and Fields claim that one of the primary motivations for participating in a religious community is to obtain a sense of belonging and purpose; See, Durkheim and Fields, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 41.
denomination, modeled their strategies after the successes of the CRM, orchestrated the Fundamentalist Takeover, developed a scriptural foundation for their claims, employed a rhetoric of care and fear-driven language in both their convention writings and external texts, and established practices which embodied the “correct” representations of masculinity and femininity. These strategies contributed to the political ascendancy of the SB denomination, as evidenced by SB support for the creation of the Moral Majority in 1979. Furthermore, the ideas propagated by these SBs encouraged men and women outside of the denomination to abide by this SB version of Christianity, as seen in their promotion of the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996.22

1. Entering the Fray

1.1 Structural Tools

The ideological and organizational foundations of the SB denomination provided the framework in which leaders operated. This structural organization was originally designed to protect members from an overarching ecclesiastical institution. However, the make-up of this tradition and its core beliefs were employed during these social movements by those seeking to maintain white, male hegemony during the CRM and male dominance during the WLM. The SB denomination is a multi-tiered organization consisting of several interconnected levels of power. The first tier contains individual members (Figure 1, Box 1).23 Those working within the SB denomination’s structure to respond to social movements directed their strategies towards the

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interests and concerns of congregants because this tradition highly valued individual autonomy.\textsuperscript{24} The second aspect of this organization is made up of separate churches (Figure 1, Box 2).\textsuperscript{25} The members and autonomous churches combined to form the third tier, the SBC.\textsuperscript{26} The convention acted as an institution and an annual gathering of believers (Figure 1, Box 3).\textsuperscript{27} These three components of the SB denomination were implemented during the CRM and the WLM by those attempting to make their interpretation of God’s vision for humanity a reality.

Although individuals played an important role in determining strategies for reacting to social movements, the SBC was also integral in this process. As an institution, the convention is made up of elected officers including a President, Vice President, and Secretary. In addition, the SBC housed several committees working to answer the “big” questions facing SBs in the secular world. The advisory board representatives were elected by SBs present at the annual gathering.\textsuperscript{28} Although the officers and committee members only served one year terms, they worked throughout the entire year to develop various recommendations, called “resolutions” in denominational writings, addressing local and national issues.\textsuperscript{29} The SBC also functioned as an annual gathering where the officers, committees, and “messengers,” the official title for laypeople and church representatives in attendance, discussed the resolutions proposed by the officers and advisory boards (Figure 1, Box 3).\textsuperscript{30} After the propositions made by the committees were thoroughly evaluated, they would be voted on by those present at the meeting. If the resolutions passed (Figure 1, Box 4), messengers would take the recommendations to their congregations where each church would decide either to accept (Figure 1, Box 5a) or reject the

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\textsuperscript{24}Ammerman, \textit{Baptist Battles}, 212.
\textsuperscript{25}Flynt, “Southern Baptists in Alabama,” 4.
\textsuperscript{26}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., 4-5.
\textsuperscript{28}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{29}Robison B. James, Gary H. Leazer, and James Shoopman, \textit{The Fundamentalist Takeover in the Southern Baptist Convention: a Brief History} (Timisoara, Romania: Impact Media, 1999), 76.
\end{flushright}
proposals (Figure 1, Box 5b). If churches affirmed the recommendations, then individual members would consider also instituting the propositions in their own lives (Figure 1, Box 6). If congregants did implement the recommendations, SBC leaders expected these SBs to also spread the denomination’s ideology in the mission field and cultivate a larger following for Jesus’s “good news” (Figure 1, Box 7).

For SBs trying to develop a sense of belonging, define their purpose in the world, and propagate the correct interpretation of God’s word to non-members, the mission field was an especially effective arena in which to spread their messages. SBs were committed to the view that God called Christians to take the “good news” of Jesus to all people. For many, this “good news” entailed God establishing a specific, unchanging social hierarchy at creation, which, during the CRM, determined that white men inherently held the authority and capabilities to interpret scripture. Later, during the WLM, this construct evolved to include men of all races in the pastorate with women remaining in the laity. Some SB leaders wanting to maintain this interpretation of God’s hierarchy made numerous recommendations to all SBs about moral issues while simultaneously appealing to each individual’s sense of autonomy. These leaders expected all SBs to determine, on their own, whether they would adhere to the SBC’s propositions. This “bottom-up-out” approach was more effective than a “top-down” strategy because this placed the responsibility on the individual for deciding the correct moral response to social issues. The mechanisms recommended by the SBC to uphold God’s divine construct were repeated in

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31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
35 Carl Kell argued that although a top-down strategy is effective for some social groups invoking change, for this denomination, the bottom-up-out approach was far more effective because of its emphasis on individual autonomy. See, Carl L. Kell, In the Name of the Father: the Rhetoric of the New Southern Baptist Convention (Knoxville, TN: Univ Of Tennessee Press, 2010), 27.
36 Leon Macon, editorial, Alabama Baptist, August 13, 1959.
individual homes and churches until this ideology reverberated throughout the denomination, the South, and the country.

**Figure 1**

The multi-tiered organization of this tradition upheld the beliefs in a loose and democratic structure, local church autonomy, a priesthood of believers, and the separation of church from state, characteristics which contributed to the success of certain SBs when stalling integration and undoing female ordination. In other words, this flexible and democratic organization was designed to protect members from swift and progressive change, but these attributes were

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employed during the CRM to prevent integration. The strategies utilized to overcome these structural barriers were also refined to combat the WLM. The loose structure determined that resolutions passed at the annual convention would be optional rather than mandatory. The democratic process implemented at the yearly meeting pushed participants to vote for who was best suited for leadership positions. These characteristics were designed and upheld in order to protect individual autonomy.

Although the loose structure and democratic process seem protective, Paul Pressler and Paige Patterson invoked both of these operational modes in their campaign for Adrian Rogers during the Fundamentalist Takeover of 1979. These men traveled to various churches and pushed for the conservative candidate’s election and afterwards, they systematically voted out progressive members of the convention’s committees. By 1986 every advisory board of the SBC held a Fundamentalist majority. These actions exhibited the ability of SBs in leadership positions to employ the structure built to protect members of the denomination for political aims. Pressler and Patterson argued that the SB denomination was losing influence in the South because progressive members of the SBC were denying the absolute inerrancy of the Bible. The only way to rectify this, according to them, was to elect conservative officers who would lead SBs back to the “true” beliefs of the denomination. Even in calling for strict consensus, Pressler and Patterson consistently advocated for an individual’s right and responsibility to choose the best, moral path which, paradoxically, only added to their speedy success in taking over the SBC.

41 Ammerman, Baptist Battles, 212.
43 Ibid., 41.
SBs fighting against the WLM also determined that local church autonomy, a priesthood of believers, and the separation of church from state were all characteristics that aided in maintaining God’s divine gendered hierarchy, as they interpreted it. Local church autonomy afforded churches the ability to decide which aspects of the SBC’s annual meetings they would implement on the provincial level. This characteristic emphasized that the convention could not institute binding terms on churches affiliated with the denomination. In addition, the SB tradition’s belief in a priesthood of believers further underlined the importance of individual autonomy for this community. This ideology expressed that each person was directly responsible for reading the Bible and responding to God’s call for their lives. The priesthood of believers became a crucial aspect of segregationists’ arguments because several leaders in the denomination declared that after interpreting God’s word on their own, they viewed preventing integration as morally necessary. SB leaders asked individuals, after carrying out intentional moral contemplation, to either implement the SBC’s recommendations or follow their own moral path. Although the belief in a priesthood of believers remained at the forefront during the debates surrounding the CRM, congregants did place more authority with pastors prior to the WLM. This transition bore fruit when Biblical interpretation was applied to resist this social movement. As a result, members of the denomination more readily accepted leaders’ claims about gender roles.

The belief in a separation of religious life from politics presented a sizable obstacle for SBs wanting to preserve segregation, and later, male dominance. Prior to and during the CRM,

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45 Eighmy, Churches in Cultural Captivity, 74; Blevins, “Women and the Baptist Experience,” 160.
48 Harvey, Freedom’s Coming, 235; Ammerman, Baptist Battles, 87.
49 Flynt, Southern Baptists in the Heart of Dixie, 450.
leaders consistently argued that the government should not be involved in the religious life of its constituents. \(^{50}\) These individuals also believed that the SBC, when acting as an advisory board towards other SBs, should remain impartial and not make explicit claims about how to respond to political situations. \(^{51}\) Their role was simply to advise on how best to approach non-Christians in the secular world. \(^{52}\) Although this attitude towards the mingling of church and politics appears as if it would have prevented SBs from making progress towards their largely political goals, the commitment to the separation of church from state inspired a focus on the individual that ultimately allowed SB leaders to align their theological, social, and political commitments.

Instead of declaring within denominational writings that certain social movements were wrong, leaders in the SBC focused their attention on discussing the Biblical principles being broken by the people participating in those campaigns. \(^{53}\) These SBs continually placed the responsibility for determining the best approach to these “problems” entirely on the individual. This strategy encouraged many SBs to enter the secular realm and disseminate the correct moral responses to social crises. In the process of encouraging members to explore the SBC’s resolutions individually, certain SBs accomplished what the convention itself could not: widespread promotion, in the secular sphere, of specific SB claims about God’s hierarchy. \(^{54}\)

Local church autonomy, soul liberty, and the separation of church from state initially presented

\(^{50}\) Ibid.


\(^{52}\) Ammerman, *Baptist Battles*, 215.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., 212; Southern Baptist Convention, Annual Report 1956, 72.

\(^{54}\) In “The Forms of Capital,” Pierre Bourdieu claims that individuals invoking collective agency use their social capital to emphasize a particular network. Bourdieu’s description of social capital provides a useful framework for explaining the process by which SB men were able to produce and reproduce the mechanisms of their own power in the SB denomination. For example, in the SB denomination, men utilized their social and cultural capital to emphasize a certain dynamic between the sexes. In the process, men gained a higher social status as leaders within the denomination whereas women had less social and cultural capital because their status was submissive. Men then utilized their increased social capital to promulgate this interpretation of the Bible in the secular world, emphasizing God’s divine hierarchy as they defined it. See Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), 21.
themselves as hindrances to the SBC’s political involvement. However, these characteristics would be overcome, the approaches to these “problems” would be instituted, and the tactics utilized to accomplish these two goals would be perfected in order to marginalize a new group, women. SB leaders drew their inspiration for how to combat these issues from the SB response to the CRM.

1.2 Godly Practice: The Civil Rights Movement

The CRM provided the framework necessary for many SBs to perfect their political strategies when approaching social issues that threatened their control. The CRM also demonstrated for SB leaders that their interpretation of God’s vision might not be compatible with contemporary society. Many SBs attempted to preserve segregation by misusing the organizational structure designed to protect members. Leaders in the SBC utilized the denomination’s beliefs in the separation of church from state, local church autonomy, the priesthood of believers, and the absolute authority of scripture to argue that God called Christians to maintain his vision on earth, which these SBs interpreted as a separation of the races. These strategies cultivated an audience who consented to the claim, made by many SB leaders, that God designed humans as either innately authoritative or submissive. Once these SBs’ argument was solidified and a receptive audience was developed, many leaders experimented with different approaches that would hopefully overcome integration.

Many SBs desired to be actively involved in preventing the spread of integration in the South, but the widely accepted belief in the separation of religion from politics and the denomination’s structure proved hindrances towards preserving segregation. In order to

righteously supersede this ideological and structural organization, SB leaders instituted a “bottom-up-out” approach. The multi-tiered structure of this denomination determined that the resolutions passed at the annual convention meeting were optional rather than mandatory. Members were encouraged to individually evaluate each proposition accepted at the SBC’s annual gatherings before implementing them on the local level. Knowing this ideology was strongly held by most SBs, leaders responding to the CRM utilized rhetoric when interpreting the Bible that emphasized individual autonomy. These men also condemned other overarching institutions, such as the Supreme Court, for forcibly inserting their own ideas into Southern culture. In doing so, SBC leaders presented themselves as protecting all SBs from coercion and the sin instigated by outside forces.

SB leaders’ recommendations at the annual gatherings of the convention became a safe haven for many other SBs desiring to escape secular institutions inciting immoral behavior. For example, in response to the Supreme Court’s ruling on Brown II the SBC wrote, “The far-reaching implication of [Brown II] has become the most disturbing issue… [and] ...we will find the solution for this question on the local level.” This rhetoric of care and protection made clear that although leaders could expel dissenters from the tradition and force their moral ideas on congregations, they are choosing to not engage in that behavior unlike judicial bodies such as the Supreme Court. This language, which emphasized individual autonomy, was designed to

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56 Kell argued that although a top-down strategy is effective for some social groups invoking change, for this denomination, the bottom-up-out approach was far more effective because of its emphasis on individual autonomy. See, Kell, In the Name of the Father, 27.
59 Southern Baptist Convention, Annual Report 1958, 79; 391; Southern Baptist Convention, Annual Report 1965, 88-92; 139-140; 159; 245-247.
60 Southern Baptist Convention, Annual Report 1956, 72.
highlight SB leaders’ desire to protect rather than control the members of this tradition. This rhetoric made many SBs receptive to a more permeable separation of religion from politics because secular institutions were painted as the instigators of sin. Although the denomination’s pre-existing structure determined what kind of strategies were useful for SBs trying to enter the political realm, these same leaders still centered their arguments about the immorality of segregation on scripture.

SB denominational leaders developed claims against integration, based on the absolute authority of scripture, which highlighted Christians’ higher calling to abide by God’s hierarchical design, established at creation, to prevent rampant immorality. The widely accepted SB belief in a priesthood of believers informed leaders’ push to promote individual moral contemplation on passages concerning segregation. However, if an individual was unable to understand the text, these same leaders claimed it was then acceptable to seek the guidance of pastors.62 The most common pericopes employed to emphasize when parishioners should seek pastoral guidance about the morality of segregation were Genesis 6.5-13, detailing that the Great Flood was caused by a “mixing of the races,” and Acts 17.26, where God declares each people-group must have “separate habitations.”63 Although these passages appeared to be ambiguous on racial equality,

62 Flynt, Alabama Baptists, 459-465; Southern Baptist Convention, Annual Report 1956, 72; Leon Macon, editorial, Alabama Baptist, May 27, 1954. Similar to the development of the SB denomination’s structure, this tradition’s belief in the priesthood of believers can be illuminated by Bourdieu’s observations about social capital and relationships of power. As Bourdieu suggests, individuals with more social and cultural capital, in this scenario white men with some sort of ministerial training, invoke their capital to create more power for themselves or their institution. In the SB denomination, white male leaders, individuals with a higher social status, are calling on their congregations to investigate the moral claims they are making. However, these same men are also encouraging their congregants to seek out help from those with more knowledge, or cultural capital, to guide parishioners undergoing this process. SB leaders, in turn, created more power for themselves because the SBC became a space where individual SBs, people with less social capital, could trust that their leaders, people with more social and cultural capital, were not taking advantage of their higher status within the denomination. See, Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” 21; 40.

many leaders ultimately claimed, after serious spiritual reflection, that God’s vision for humanity and human flourishing could only be accomplished through segregation. However, these men still argued that every other SB needed to embark on the same spiritual journey to determine the correct moral response to integration. Although some individuals may have undergone intentional moral contemplation when approaching this topic, many SBs still abided by the claims that segregation was a critical part of God’s vision.

In addition to utilizing scripture as the basis of their arguments, SB leaders also employed “fear tactics” in their rhetoric to rally more Christians to their cause. This language largely entailed claiming that God would enact his destruction unless Christians fulfilled their higher calling: upholding the racialized and gendered construct God established at creation. SBs consistently utilized the violence that ensued during initially peaceful protests against segregation as evidence that sin occurs when God’s commands are not upheld. SB leaders also argued that Christians were expected to exhibit brotherly love, or “agape,” towards one another. According to these SBs, agape during the CRM entailed keeping the races separate because violence was ensuing. For example, Leon Macon writes in response to the Supreme Court’s decision to undo the Plessy v. Ferguson ruling that “nothing has faced the South more seriously since reconstruction days. Our part certainly must be one of careful procedure and Christian understanding on the part of both races. Caution must be exercised lest racial animosities create clashes and bloodshed...Revolutionary changes do not always come to pass without some opposition” (Refer to Figure 2).

65 Ibid.
67 Leon Macon, editorial, Alabama Baptist, June 25, 1953.
SBs were open to this rhetoric because this language did not take away their ability to determine what they thought was a morally sound response to the CRM. This response demonstrated that SB leaders were trying to protect Christians from immorality. In addition, it showed many SBs that the SBC was not trying to force its ideology on congregations like the Supreme Court was doing to the South.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ In this example, SB leaders are utilizing their social and cultural capital to influence the decisions of those with less capital. Although SBs would have recognized this process as simply abiding by God’s vision, Bourdieu’s observations demonstrate that individuals do invoke their capital to gain more influence for a collective group. See, Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” 21; 40.
Since the tactics developed during the CRM allowed for the ideas of segregationists to be made known in the secular world, many other SBs refined these methods in the decades following the CRM so they would be more successful in combating the WLM. These SBs still utilized the bottom-up-out approach discussed earlier. However, they expanded their rhetorical strategy to include publications that were not exclusively SB in nature. They campaigned for capable individuals such as Adrian Rogers to serve in leadership positions. During the CRM, leaders in the denomination first focused on convincing other SBs to abide by their recommendations and then they directed their attention towards outsiders. During the WLM, SB leaders broadened the target of their approaches to immediately include non-members while simultaneously convincing other SBs of their argument. Finally, SB leaders promoted certain embodied practices that exhibited God’s divinely ordained gender roles for men and women. SBs endorsed these actions by delineating several tangible applications of ancient Biblical principles rather than simply advertising their definition of a Christian attitude towards social movements.

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72 Robison, Leazer, and Shoopman, The Fundamentalist Takeover, 23.

Although these strategies were developed over several decades, they were put into full effect after the Fundamentalist Takeover in 1979.

2. Women’s Necessary Subordination

2.1 “A Return to Glory”: The Fundamentalist Takeover of 1979

The Fundamentalist Takeover of 1979 provided the platform necessary for SB men to propagate their message about female ordination on a wider scale and refine the tactics necessary to overcome threatening social movements. Paul Pressler and Paige Patterson utilized their social status to campaign for the election of conservative officers such as Adrian Rogers, vote out progressive committee members, and pass resolutions that affirmed their interpretation of God’s vision for humanity. Their argument justifying a “conservative resurgence” within the denomination was centered around the inerrancy of the Bible. Fundamentalists believed that the Bible was inerrant and authoritative, the Virgin birth and the divine nature of Christ were historically accurate, Jesus’s substitutionary atonement provided the way for salvation, Christ’s atonement occurred after his physical resurrection, and Jesus would establish his millennial reign after his imminent second coming. For these SBs, any Christian supporting the WLM inherently denied the inerrancy of the Bible because the practical implications of women’s liberation undermined God’s divine hierarchy. While some SBs did view the Bible as inerrant prior to the conservative resurgence, Fundamentalist ideology was still a minority viewpoint.

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74 Robison, Leazer, and Shoopman, The Fundamentalist Takeover, 27.
76 Ibid.
until 1979. After Adrian Rogers was elected, Fundamentalists utilized the same tactics employed in response to the CRM to become a majority faction within the SBC and overturn female ordination.

Paul Pressler and Paige Patterson, prior to the 1979 convention meeting, campaigned in fifteen states trying to convince other SBs that Adrian Rogers was the most capable leader to carry out God’s call for Christians. In the process, these men employed two aspects of the denomination’s structure, its loose organization and democratic process, to disseminate their message. One of the issues that pushed Pressler and Patterson to spark the Fundamentalist Takeover was that some SBs were rejecting the inerrancy of the Bible. Pressler and Patterson employed their standing within the denomination and the tradition’s strong stance on individual choice to convince other SBs that the denomination had indeed strayed from its “true” belief system. After Rogers’s election, these men continued to campaign for candidates whose stances aligned with their own belief system, and, by 1986, Fundamentalists had obtained a majority vote on every committee. Pressler and Patterson were so successful in their endeavors because, as Seth Dowland explains it, “Southern Baptist conservatives drew on the Christian right’s sense of cultural estrangement in order to cultivate a sense of crisis in America.” This feeling of alienation directed the approach of men like Pressler and Patterson. They affirmed on individual choice because the denomination highly valued autonomy. They emphasized the potential for immorality to spread as a result of the WLM, because, according to them, this clearly violated their interpretation of God’s vision for humanity. In permeating their rhetoric with these

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79 Ibid.
80 Ibid., 27-28.
81 Ibid., 35.
82 Ibid.
83 Ammerman, *Baptist Battles*, 212.
concepts, Pressler and Patterson successfully reached an audience feeling culturally isolated and hoping that their interpretation of God’s word was not contradictory to contemporary viewpoints.

The Fundamentalist Takeover paved the way for white men to restore the secular world to God’s original design, which just so happened to allot them the most power. Their strategy was derived from the successes of the CRM. According to Pressler and Patterson, leaders during the CRM exhibited too much “cautious acquiescence,” meaning they were not vigilant enough in protecting their viewpoint. In order to prevent this from occurring again, SB leaders argued that the denomination must act quickly and ardently. SBC leaders became more opposed to furthering women’s rights within the denomination than they were prior to the Fundamentalist Takeover. This shift can be most aptly seen when these leaders thoroughly explained their scripturally-based interpretations of God’s vision in denominational writings and refined their perspectives on traditional gender roles in publications designed for both members and non-members. Later, these same SBs consolidated their arguments about female ordination and outlined practices which properly embodied their interpretation of God’s vision in exegetical works designed for pastors.

2.1.2 Field of Power: Male Authority and Female Submission

Beginning in the CRM, many SBs argued that God established a divine hierarchy at creation, which determined only white men had the inherent ability to interpret scripture. However, this theological justification evolved during the WLM to include men of color in leadership positions while still excluding women. The ways SBs implemented traditional gender roles in their theology can be illuminated by Joan Scott’s observations about gender and power

relationships. Scott argues that “gender is a primary field within which or by means of which power is articulated.” According to Scott, diverging biological features between genders have become evidence for creating and upholding perceived differences in social roles. For example, women’s ability to bear children has been correlated with their social responsibility to be caring. In the SB denomination, leaders claimed that God designed men as inherently capable of leading a congregation because their biological features are male. Women, on the other hand, were created, or so these men argued, as naturally unable to be pastors because they have the ability to birth children. After describing why gender determined who had authority, SB leaders implemented a rhetorical strategy that encouraged various performative actions, based on scripture, to maintain and uphold the gendered norms they defended.

In response to the implications of the WLM, these SBs developed a two-fold rhetorical strategy to revamp support for distinct gender roles. They first thoroughly established a scriptural basis for their claims by examining texts such as Genesis 1-3, 1 Corinthians 11, and 1 Timothy 2. For example, Thomas Schreiner when discussing 1 Corinthians 11, argued that “The distinctions between male and female are part of the created order, and Paul apparently did not think redemption in Christ negated creation.” Schreiner is arguing that the social hierarchy established at creation was necessary to uphold in contemporary society. Schreiner, like so

86 Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” 1069.
87 Ibid., 1063.
88 Ibid., 1056.
89 Knight, “Husbands and Wives,” 170.
90 Although SBs would not recognize that their conceptions of gender relations worked to articulate male power, they did develop rhetoric to ensure that men retained their control and leadership within the denomination. Scott’s observations shed light on this process because she argues that biological, external features have been regularly employed as evidence for assigning “appropriate” social roles to men and women. In the SB denomination, leaders argued that women’s biological features rendered them incapable of interpreting scripture. In this example, men and women’s biology has determined who has the power to lead congregations. See, Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” 1063.
92 Ibid.
many other SBs, employed these pericopes to justify their arguments against female ordination.\textsuperscript{93} SB leaders, after examining the Bible, then utilized rhetoric that emphasized the moral consequences of the WLM to scare members into submitting to their claims. In both internal and external writings, SB leaders argued that maintaining God’s divinely ordained hierarchy was necessary to carry out his vision on earth.\textsuperscript{94} Once they painted the cessation of the WLM as moral and necessary, SB leaders endorsed practices which emphasized, externally, that women were less capable at leading than men.\textsuperscript{95} These practices included women publicly deferring to men’s wishes, maintaining the home as a show of support to one’s husband, and accepting their husband’s final declarations on all matters.\textsuperscript{96} Alongside creating their rhetoric and defining the embodied practices which exhibited the Biblical distinctiveness of gender, SB leaders did extensive exegetical work to clearly outline their definitions of masculinity and femininity and develop an argument against female ordination.

\textbf{2.1.3 The “Inerrant” Canon}

Fundamentalist SBs utilized the Bible as the foundation for all of their claims about social and political issues because they believed that the canon was inerrant, divinely inspired, and authoritative on all matters.\textsuperscript{97} However, there was a caveat, The Bible was viewed as


\textsuperscript{95} Knight, “Husbands and Wives,” 170.


\textsuperscript{97} Robison, Leazer, and Shoopman, The Fundamentalist Takeover, 23.
absolutely accurate regarding science and history, but not every single word of these texts was to be read literally. Harold Lindsell writes “Those who advocate inerrancy take the Bible in its plain and obvious sense...all that is meant by saying one takes the Bible literally is that one believes what it purports to say. This means that figures of speech are regarded as figures of speech.”

Many SB leaders outlined, based on this way of reading the text, numerous unchanging, timeless Biblical principles necessary for Christians to maintain in contemporary society. However, the practical applications of these permanent principles were ephemeral, culturally determined, and delineated by men. Many SBs with ministerial training approached exegesis intending to determine the unchanging standards that God desired Christians to follow by implementing a “populist” reading.

The populist approach was essential for SBs developing a Biblically-based argument against second wave feminism because it allowed leaders to appear supportive of the denomination’s strongly held beliefs concerning scripture without actually adhering to them. Seth Dowland defines the populist approach as conservatives “privileg[ing] the simplest, most direct interpretation of scripture. Conservatives allowed little room for gray areas, preferring an unflinching confrontation with God’s revealed word.” This method involved SB leaders determining the ancient principles still relevant for Christians while also delineating practices, based on simpler verses, that demonstrated these unchanging beliefs. Many SBs disregarded other texts that contradicted their arguments. In this way, they were not practicing “true” inerrancy, but, rather, reading the Bible in ways that affirmed their ideology while also inserting

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99 Knight, “The Ordination of Women: No,” 5.
100 Ibid.
102 Ibid.
103 Dowland, *Family Values*, 134.
a SB belief system into these texts. For example, defenders of inerrantist exegesis fixated on verses, such 1 Timothy 2.12-15, which determined that men should have authority over women. At the same time, however, these men disregarded texts such as Romans 16 which implied women might have had leadership positions during the first century.\textsuperscript{104} In doing this, SB arguments against female ordination appeared cohesive because leaders only used texts that supported their claims. In regards to passages which contradicted their arguments, SB leaders declared that they were metaphorical renderings of the literal passages they had already discussed.\textsuperscript{105} The inerrant, populist approach created a Bible that was amenable to the changing needs, determined by social movements, of the SB denomination. Leaders presented individual churches and other SBs with a convincing, Biblically based argument to weigh against ever-changing societal trends.

2.1.4 Misogyny: A Biblical Degree

Although SB leaders utilized several texts throughout the entire canon to justify their claims, Genesis 1.26-27, Genesis 2-3, 1 Corinthians 11.2-16, 1 Timothy 2.12-15, and Galatians 3.28 were the most frequently cited passages in internal and external writings to define the ancient principles necessary for Christians to follow in contemporary society. These pericopes were also utilized to outline the modern practices which, according to SB leaders, most accurately embodied God’s inerrant commands.\textsuperscript{106} These unchanging Biblical principles included


\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.

affirming the equal worth of men and women; declaring that God’s image, as reflected in
humanity, could not be complete without men and women exhibiting their distinct roles; and
expressing that men and women should dress in ways that distinguished their respective genders.
SB leaders, after explaining these principles, incorporated them into their rhetoric catered
towards the denomination’s deeply-held beliefs in individual choice and local church autonomy
so they could convince others of their claims.

Genesis 1.26-27 and 2-3 were utilized to further many SBs’ claims about gender because
each outlined that God’s vision for humanity, according to one SB interpretation, involved a
loving, male leadership and joyful, female submission paradigm.107 Genesis 1 states, “God
created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created
them.” Although this text does not appear to promote male headship, certain SBs argued that this
pericope emphasized the equal worth of men and women. In 1980 and again in 1995, the SBC
declared this passage affirmed that “men and women share in the dignity of creation” and are “of
equal and immeasurable worth.”108 Many SBs claimed that Genesis 2-3 was simply an expansion
on Genesis 1.26-27. Genesis 2-3 further demonstrated how God expected men and women to
employ their equality on a daily basis.

Knight, “Husbands and Wives,” 353; Knight, “The Ordination of Women: No,” 3; Lindsell, “Egalitarianism and
www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfmcomparison.asp; Schreiner, “Head Coverings, Prophecies, and the Trinity,” 119;
Dowland, Family Values, 194; Stephen D. Kovach, “Egalitarians Revamp Doctrine of the Trinity,” Council on
Male Leadership in the Family Requires Male Leadership in the Church,” in Recovering Biblical Manhood and
Womanhood: a Response to Evangelical Feminism, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem, (Wheaton, IL:
Crossway, 1991)), 241; S. Lewis Johnson Jr., “Role Distinctions in the Church: Galatians 3:28,” in Recovering
Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: a Response to Evangelical Feminism, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem,
(Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991)), 156; Randy Petersen, “What About Paul?” Christianity Today, January 1, 1988,


1995.
Genesis 2-3, according to George W. Knight III, details the consequences of not abiding by the hierarchy established in this writing.\textsuperscript{109} Genesis states,

And the Lord God fashioned the rib that He had taken from the man into a woman; and He brought her to the man...This one shall be called Woman, for from man she was taken...To the Woman... 'I will make the most severe your pangs in childbearing; in pain shall you bear children. Yet your urge shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you’...To Adam... ‘By toil shall you eat of it all the days of your life.’

According to Knight, this passage explains that God established this loving leadership, joyful submission paradigm at creation in order to exemplify the necessity of distinct roles for men and women.\textsuperscript{110} Since Eve was made from Adam, women were expected to submit to men as Eve did to Adam. God also called Eve, and subsequently women, to bear children while Adam, and men, are expected to provide for their wives and children. Not abiding by this model, for Knight, would inevitably result in an immorality similar to what occurred in this passage.\textsuperscript{111} Genesis 1.26-27 and 2-3 were so formative in the SB argument against female ordination because the principle established here, that men and women are equal yet have distinct roles, was also emphasized in the New Testament.

SBs employed Paul’s entreaty in 1 Corinthians 11.2-16 to exhibit another fixed principle: men and women should adorn themselves in ways that distinguish their respective genders.\textsuperscript{112} Paul writes,

For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God. Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head unveiled? Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering.

\textsuperscript{109} Knight, “Husbands and Wives,” 353.
\textsuperscript{111} Knight, “The Ordination of Women: No,” 3.
\textsuperscript{112} Schreiner, “Head Coverings, Prophecies, and the Trinity,” 129.
Since Paul is referencing the unchanging principle established at creation, that men and women are equal but distinct, several writers, such as Thomas Schreiner and Paul Stevens, argued that this command remained intact under the new covenant.\textsuperscript{113} This denomination strongly believed that when Jesus died and was resurrected, he established a new covenant with his people which negated certain aspects of the Old Testament. However, the ideas, beliefs, and customs that were mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments were considered a part of the new covenant and necessary to uphold in contemporary society.\textsuperscript{114} Therefore, Paul’s mention of this idea solidified its presence, for many SBs, in contemporary theology and practice.

1 Corinthians 11 also reflected one of the ways women could demonstrate their divinely distributed submissive nature. Many SBs typically invoked a populist approach for exegesis, focusing on the simplest and most literal interpretations of texts.\textsuperscript{115} In doing so, these SBs argued that not all applications of Biblical principles were necessary but some actions embodying God’s commands were still needed in contemporary society.\textsuperscript{116} In this example, although women are not expected to wear a veil, it is clear in this text, for SB leaders who utilized a populist approach, that women are obligated to “adorn themselves in a certain way.”\textsuperscript{117} Thomas Schreiner, a prominent SB writer, argued that this is accomplished when women externally reflect their God-given internal character and abilities. According to Schreiner, women can do this by dressing modestly because feminine clothing externally exhibits their internal submissiveness.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{114} Bilezikian, Beyond Sex Roles, 59.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Dowland, “A New Kind of Patriarchy,” 252-253.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Knight, “The Ordination of Women: No,” 5.
\item \textsuperscript{117} Schreiner, “Head Coverings, Prophecies, and the Trinity,” 119.
\end{itemize}
and obedience to God’s commands.\textsuperscript{118} Schreiner outlines the ancient principle and modern application of this text when he writes, “The fundamental principle is that the sexes, although equal, are also different. God has ordained that men have the responsibility to lead, while women have a complementary and supportive role. More specifically, if women pray and prophesy in church, they should do so under the authority of male headship.”\textsuperscript{119} Schreiner has outlined the relevant principles and determined the necessary actions to exhibit obedience to those commands. This practice, which many SBs continually carried out, subverted their own call for inerrancy while simultaneously appearing protective of the denomination’s strongly held belief that the Bible is and always has been literally true.

1 Timothy 2.12-15, similar to 1 Corinthians 11.2-16, exhibits that the distinct roles of men and women are still necessary for Christians living under the new covenant to maintain. The text states,

\begin{quote}
Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.
\end{quote}

Similar to Paul’s declaration in 1 Corinthians, this text reaffirms the creation order and the necessity for a loving leadership, joyful submission paradigm. However, this passage, unlike the other ones employed by SBs, commands women to remain in the laity rather than participate in the pastorate. Steven Kovach, a writer for the \textit{Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood}, claimed that, “The original readers would have understood Paul, then, to defend such role differences, and he does so on the basis of the created order. In other words, Paul thinks such

\textsuperscript{118} Judith Butler regularly argued that social groups establishing gendered boundaries believed that one’s external appearance reflected an individual’s internal character and abilities. See, \textit{Gender Trouble}, 170; 173.

\textsuperscript{119} Schreiner, “Head Coverings, Prophecies, and the Trinity,” 129.
differences are good and proper and not the result of sin or the fall." This author argues that women’s glory and role in God’s plans are emphasized in pews rather than pulpits. To abandon this construct would undo the distinctions of men and women, disharmonize the relationship between men and women established at creation, and attempt to make male and female roles interchangeable.

Galatians 3.28 was the final verse frequently employed to define the principles necessary to maintain God’s vision. Similar to 1 Corinthians, Paul is imploring one of his churches to abide by the commands Jesus gave Christians during his lifetime. The text states, “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” Again, this verse reaffirmed the absolute equality of men and women. However, S. Lewis Johnson Jr. claims that this text also “refers to the mystical and universal, the representative and covenantal union of all believers in the Lord. In the context of Galatians, the apostle simply affirms that every believer in Christ inherits fully the Abrahamic promises by grace apart from legal works.” Johnson is arguing that this text determines men and women will have equal status in Heaven. Proponents of this view declared that women desiring equality with men on earth were ungrateful towards Jesus’s sacrifice because they were not exhibiting obedience towards God’s commands. The use of this pericope in Johnson’s argument demonstrates that women were expected to follow the paradigm laid out by SB leaders, which was seemingly supported by the Bible. However, women were also obligated to do this while

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122 Johnson, “Role Distinctions in the Church: Galatians 3:28,” 156.
123 Ibid.
joyfully acknowledging the honor God has given them through submission without asking for different roles, such as desiring ordination.  

Analyzing the populist interpretations of these texts demonstrates that many SBs believed several ancient principles were necessary for maintaining God’s vision: men and women are equal in worth; God’s image reflected in humanity is not complete without men and women carrying out their distinct roles; the gender roles divinely instituted in Genesis 2-3 were reaffirmed in the New Testament; women are to adorn themselves in ways that externally exhibit their subordination to men; women should participate fully in the church, but under the authority of male headship; and finally, men and women will have equal functions in Heaven.  

After SB leaders and writers outlined a scriptural basis for their arguments against female ordination, they sought to further explain and embed these principles in their denominational documents before using external writings to outline the practices that best exemplified obedience to God’s commands.

2.1.5 Coded Language: The Men Who Cried Wolf

Many SBs developed a “coded language” that masked their true intentions, achieving political ascendancy. This rhetoric simultaneously appeared protective of SBs’ interests in individual autonomy and the separation of church from state. Pierre Bourdieu’s observations about language and symbolic power shed light on this process. He argues that “Religion and politics achieve their most successful ideological effects by exploiting the possibilities contained in the polysemy inherent in the social ubiquity of the legitimate language.”

Bourdieu is

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125 Johnson, “Role Distinctions in the Church: Galatians 3:28,” 156.
claiming that individuals in positions of power are able to convince members of their community that their viewpoint is correct by utilizing the varied meanings of a language already accepted by that community. For example, SB leaders employed the already accepted “legitimate language” of the denomination by emphasizing individual autonomy in their writings. In doing so, these SBs were actually utilizing the varied meanings of individual autonomy to instruct other SBs on how to righteously enter the political realm. To accomplish this, SB leaders adopted several tactics such as implementing a rhetoric of care and fear-based language in their writings.128

SB leaders employed a “rhetoric of care” in their writings that showed an supposed concern for the well-being of their parishioners. However, at the same time, these men still made their social and political views readily apparent.129 For example, in response to the Supreme Court’s ruling on Brown II the SBC wrote, “The far-reaching implication of [Brown II] has become the most disturbing issue… [and] ...we will find the solution for this question on the local level.”130 In discussing the necessity for local autonomy, this SBC writing demonstrates, for SBs adhering to the claims made in the yearly reports, that SB leaders’ only desire was to protect their congregants from the violence occurring during Civil Rights protests. However, it is equally as evident that these same leaders are calling their parishioners to disregard the Supreme Court’s demand to implement integration. In doing this, prominent SBs portrayed themselves as attentive towards their members first and politics second.

In addition to instituting a rhetoric of care, several SBs also employed fear-driven language in order to seem protective of society’s morality. In actuality, SB leaders were scaring

129 Ibid.
130 Southern Baptist Convention, Annual Report 1956, 72.
their congregants into submission. For example, Leon Macon, editor of the widely read newspaper the *Alabama Baptist*, writes in 1959, “Generally speaking, we find a growing respect for all races of mankind but this is not the heart of the problem involved in efforts to integrate our people in the South...morally the races are not prepared to be integrated.” Macon is implying that if integration occurred, immorality would increase which was inherently contrary to God’s vision for humanity. Therefore, for Macon, integration must be prevented. In using this tactic in their writings, SB leaders painted themselves as protecting society from immorality while also making clear declarations about what righteous political actions entailed. Prominent SB leaders appeared to uphold the SB denomination’s structure because they did not overtly call their members to carry out specific actions. At the same time, their political messages, which were implicitly incorporated into the denomination’s writings, were carried out in the secular realm by SBs who understood the coded language being employed.

SBs writing for the SBC had special obstacles, such as individual autonomy and separation of church from state to overcome when discussing largely social and political movements. Therefore, internal documents such as SBC resolutions and annuals talking about the WLM were primarily focused on scriptural authority, the morality of society, missionary work, and the importance of family. SBs writers did not prescribe remedies for social and political situations such as instructing congregants on voting practices, but, instead, focused their efforts on describing how Christians should interact with non-Christians and discussing what issues prevalent in society required the attention of Christians. Although internal dialogues

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about the WLM did not recommend how to approach this “problem,” external writings such as *Christianity Today* and *Recovering Biblical Manhood Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* did make overt claims about what Christians should do in the secular world. These types of documents did not encounter the same obstacles and restrictions that writers in the SBC faced. The authors of these works typically implemented the same tools as those leaders inside the convention, such as employing a rhetoric of care and fear-based threats to convince their readers that this particular SB interpretation of God’s vision was correct. However, these writers did make unequivocal calls to action about social and political issues. An analysis of both types of writings reveals that many SBs desired so desperately to prohibit female ordination, thereby protecting their sacred vision for the world.

### 2.1.6 Convention Writings: The SBC’s Moral Outcry to Save the Family

SBs inserted coded language into the resolutions passed at the yearly convention meetings to make their viewpoints about gender roles, feminism, family structures, and the WLM clear. SB leaders in convention writings largely focused on the themes they believed were relevant to the WLM such as scriptural authority, gender roles, the family unit, society’s morality, and missionary work instead of condemning the movement as a whole. These concepts publicly affirmed the stance of SBs who claimed that God established a gendered hierarchy at creation in which men and women had distinct goals. To thoroughly emphasize this belief, writers for the SBC instituted a rhetoric of care that expressed their opinions on the WLM while also maintaining the appearance of an apolitical attitude.

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SB leaders were persistent in their belief that scriptural authority and the submission of women were inextricably linked. SBs affirmed in their 1984 “Resolution on Women,” that “we remind ourselves of the dearly bought Baptist principle of the final authority of scripture in matters of faith and conduct; and that we encourage the service of women in all aspects of church life and work other than pastoral functions and leadership roles entailing ordination.” Leaders declared that their stance on female ordination was directly supported by their inerrantist view of scripture, an unwavering and non-negotiable SB principle. This is a concept also affirmed by the “Resolution on Doctrinal Integrity” in 1980 and by W.A. Criswell in his 1988 sermon delivered at the Pastors Conference, an event held right before the SBC’s annual gathering. In all of these writings, SBs re-established their beliefs in the absolute authority of scripture and the inerrancy of the Bible. Since these characteristics were widely accepted within the denomination after the Fundamentalist Takeover in 1979, SB leaders making claims based entirely on scriptural interpretations would have resonated with many congregants.

SBs also published resolute convictions in their annual reports about the distinct roles of men and women, particularly emphasizing the expectation that women should submit to men. In the 1974 annual report, women’s submissive status was painted as a high honor that God only afforded women,

Just as it is sinful for men to discriminate against women, so it is sinful for women to refuse to accept the dignity God has bestowed on them...Encouraging women to achieve their God-intended potential need not be detrimental to the stability of the family and the

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spiritual health of the church. The home and the church have crucial responsibilities for teaching the equal worth as well as the distinctive roles of males and females.\textsuperscript{141} SB leaders employed fear or threat-driven language to scare their readers into accepting their claims. According to these SBs, women submitting to men is not only an honor, but an absolute necessity to maintain the sanctity and stability of the family. For many SBs not upholding this construct would inevitably lead to the disintegration of the family unit and cause the downfall of society.\textsuperscript{142} This passage also illuminated that, for many SBs, there was equal worth in the distinct roles that men and women carried out. For example, this text states that “the home and church have crucial responsibilities for teaching the equal worth as well as the distinctive roles of males and females” implying that securing the morality of society can only be accomplished when women teach their daughters how to be submissive while men instruct their sons on how to be leaders.\textsuperscript{143} Each task, for SB leaders, cannot be accomplished without the other function also being carried out. Later on, SBs furthered this point by expressing how women should exude their inherently submissive nature.

SB writers for the convention provided concrete and tangible actions that women should enact in order to fully embody their divine calling. In 1981, the SBC called Christians to fight against the detrimental effects of the Equal Rights Amendment, a proposed addendum to the United States Constitution formally prohibiting discrimination in the workplace based on sex.\textsuperscript{144} The convention writes,

Women have made immeasurable contributions to the home, society, and the Kingdom of God, and WHEREAS, Many women today are answering God’s call for service within the home, in the church, and in the work-a-day world...we call on Christian women to

\textsuperscript{141} Southern Baptist Convention, Annual Report 1974, 208.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.
follow the pattern of Jesus and the teaching of the Scripture in determining priorities and responsibilities...this Convention...does not endorse the Equal Rights Amendment.  

The SBC’s reaction to the Equal Rights Amendment demonstrates that SBs did not diminish Christian women who needed to work. They recognized that, for some families, a one income household is an impossibility. However, these leaders did emphasize the necessity of working women to abide by “Scripture in determining priorities and responsibilities.” However, based on their previous statements, women were probably expected to still care for the home while working. According to SB leaders, the Equal Rights Amendment’s call for equality in the workplace would also dissolve the distinct roles God designed for men and women. From their perspective, God thoroughly established that a distinctiveness between the sexes was necessary for carrying out his vision. As a result, many SBs still expected women to work with the mindset that they were submissive to men and obligated to care for children.

SB leaders not only called women to exhibit a submissive disposition in the workplace and maintain the home, but many SBs also specifically prohibited female ordination, a stance still intact today. The SBC published the following statement about female ordination in 1984,

Women are held in high honor for their unique and significant contribution to the advancement of Christ’s kingdom, and the building of godly homes should be esteemed for its vital contribution to developing personal Christian character and Christlike concern for others...we encourage the service of women in all aspects of church life and work other than pastoral functions and leadership roles entailing ordination.

SB leaders affirmed in this passage that God made men and women equal in worth at creation by providing them with distinct roles. Men should be leaders in the home and the church. Women,

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146 Ibid.
147 Southern Baptist Convention, Annual Report 1974, 208.
148 Ibid.
on the other hand, should uphold the home, have children, and participate fully in church affairs. According to these SBs, if women did not maintain the home, raise children, and support their husband’s endeavors, then the family unit would fall apart and God’s call for Christians would not be furthered.\textsuperscript{150} This ideology was emphasized in later discussions on the “correct” definition of family.

SBs also wanted to prove that their interpretation of a Biblical definition of family was not only true but vital for preventing immorality. W.A. Criswell at his address to the 1979 Pastors Conference, clearly links the family to society’s morality. He references feminism as the cause for the breakdown of the family unit. He writes,

The feminist forces in our country today have launched an all-out attack upon the biblical concepts of submission and discipline in the home. The real question is not who has rights, but what is right and what is best for the home...This nation has as its foundation the home, and, when the home is destroyed, it is the sure sign of our downfall.\textsuperscript{151}

Criswell, like his contemporaries, was attempting to scare SBs into accepting his claims. He argues that if women do not remain submissive, then the home will be destroyed which will inevitably lead to the downfall of society. These fear tactics were especially effective because many other SBs, like Criswell, regularly painted the implications of the WLM as “unnatural.”\textsuperscript{152} The line between natural and unnatural was clearly drawn for several SBs during the creation story. God called Adam to lead while he ordered Eve to submit. When Adam and Eve did not do this, God punished both of them. From the perspective of many SBs, these same events were bound to happen if Christians did not heed the directions of prominent leaders such as W.A. Criswell.\textsuperscript{153}

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{152} Kell, In the Name of the Father, 18; Ammerman, Baptist Battles, 5.
SBs furthered the “correct” definition of the family when responding in 1980 and 1981 to the White House’s Conference on the Family. These writers claimed that “The family has been clearly defined in God’s Word and accepted by the Jewish and Christian society of America for over two hundred years...Therefore, be it RESOLVED, That the biblical definition of the family be affirmed as the only adequate definition of the family.” For many SBs, “the biblical definition of the family” inherently entailed a father leading his wife and his children. Without this, American society would crumble further separating man from God. SB leaders condemning the White House’s discussion of the family demonstrates a marked difference in the response to the WLM in comparison with the CRM. Previously, during the CRM, leaders recommended that SBs follow the law while also maintaining their stance on morality, a process referred to as “cautious acquiescence.” In this example, SB writers are countering claims made by government institutions exhibiting that the line between religion and politics had become blurred. Once these SBs had thoroughly defined their ideal expressions of the family unit, leaders then focused their efforts not on scaring their congregants, but emphasizing the good that can occur by following their recommendations.

When discussing missionary work, SB writers employed a rhetoric of care rather than fear in order to demonstrate the positive outcomes for those abiding by their claims. Missions were heavily emphasized because these endeavors reached non-Christians, the ultimate goal of this denomination (Figure 1, Box 7). In 1983, the SBC passed a resolution discussing the role

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156 Flynt, Alabama Baptists, 459; Macon, editorial, Alabama Baptist, May 27, 1954..
157 Dowland, Family Values, 134.
of women in the church. “[w]e express gratitude to God for the contributions made by Southern Baptist women in service to home, society, the missions enterprise, and the cause of Christ in general.” According to this text, women should first concern themselves with matters of the home and then exude the same submissive nature, dispositions, and responsibilities in society. For many leaders, this entailed exemplifying a “gentler sensibility” showing deference towards those in authoritative positions, occupied by primarily male figures. Women were also obligated to exhibit a submissive and humble disposition in the mission field when approaching members and non-members of the denomination. Women’s responsibilities to the home, society, and then the mission field were consistently emphasized in the SBC’s writings on female ordination, women’s roles, and missionary work. SB leaders expected women to first care for the home and then exhibit similar dispositions in society and the mission field. Abiding by this paradigm, for SB leaders, would only further God’s call for humanity.

By 1995 prominent SB leaders had thoroughly established their belief that women’s primary responsibility was maintaining the home. However, many SBs also emphasized the success Christians could achieve when abiding by this loving leadership, joyful submission paradigm. SB leaders claimed that by being submissive and working on “special missions projects” women only furthered the “correct” interpretation of Jesus’s good news. For this denomination, female involvement in missionary enterprises primarily entailed teaching and supporting others doing missions. These tasks all fell into spheres that were extensions of the

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home, roles that God had originally designed women to carry out. In addition to increasing society’s morality, for SBs, missions were crucial for achieving a sense of belonging and purpose in the world. Missionary work also tempered the fears of many SBs about losing cultural influence because this group was gaining followers through conversion. SB writers convinced other members that rectifying this perceived loss of capital could only be accomplished if women conducted missionary work in ways that cohered with God’s original vision for humanity. SBs in the WLM who employed a rhetoric of care and fear-driven language in their convention writings were revamping the same strategies employed by segregationists during the CRM. These strategies were also inserted into articles written for the popular magazine, Christianity Today.

2.1.7 Christianity Today

SBs advocating for traditional gender roles made significant progress in propagating their interpretation of God’s divine hierarchy through their denominational publications. However, contrary to their ideal vision, these SBs could not overturn secular gender conceptions by only operating in the religious realm. In order to remedy this “problem,” SB leaders wanted to produce in the political world what they were creating in church buildings: women joyfully submitting to men. Although this was a task that writers for the SBC could not accomplish on their own, the ecumenical platform, Christianity Today (CT), provided one possible solution. 

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164 Ibid.
165 Durkheim argued that people seek religious communities because this can provide a sense of belonging and purpose. See, Durkheim and Fields, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 41.
166 Ahmed claims that social groups who feel they are losing influence diminish those fears by gaining control. See, Ahmed, The Cultural Politics of Emotion, 65.
167 Douglas Moo, “What Does it Mean Not to Teach or Have Authority Over Men? 1 Timothy 2.11-15,” in Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: a Response to Evangelical Feminism, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 182.
Authors for *Christianity Today* consistently argued that God’s hierarchy entailed some form of subordination for everyone: men, women, and Jesus. Therefore, every person had a moral obligation to willfully submit to whomever God placed at the “head”: Jesus to God, Christians to Jesus, women to husbands, and children to parents. Numerous SBs expanded on this interpretation of divinely given subordination by describing in detail the practical applications of female submission and male leadership. By making these kinds of arguments, individual SBs employed *CT* as a mechanism for entering the political realm and propagating this interpretation of the Bible to a much broader audience than writers within the SBC could reach on their own. This ecumenical publication allowed this SB message to reach beyond the walls of their churches in ways that did not subvert the denomination’s strongly-held conviction that the SBC must remain apolitical.

Harold Lindsell developed the first part of the decades-long argument against female ordination in his article, “Egalitarianism and Scriptural Infallibility” by explaining that the Biblical mandates seen in the New Testament are not culturally determined. He writes, “It is clear that Paul was not the first to tell women to submit to men...What is new is how they are to submit: as to the Lord...In other words, Christians are expected to operate within the parameters placed around them by society.” Lindsell is arguing that Biblical subordination, above all other constructs and hierarchies, involves humans submitting to God’s will. However, he expands on this by claiming that God’s vision is best expressed when women submit to men. The “parameters placed around [women] by society” during the first century justifies Lindsell’s claim that women are inherently incapable of pastoring a congregation in the contemporary world. Lindsell’s explanation of literal Biblicism became the basis for all other declarations made in *CT*

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169 Ibid; Knight, “Male and Female Related He to Them,” 4.
about female ordination because this was a strongly-held value of the SB writers trying to reach non-members through this platform.

Several authors, similar to the SBC’s documents, maintained that God established specific gender roles at creation, that, if perverted, would lead to rampant immorality. Since *CT* was not geared towards a solely SB audience, these articles went into detail about the beauty of this construct by explaining what “true” subordination entailed. For SBs, “true” submission was a divinely given status rather than a solely gendered term. Men were expected to demonstrate submission as well. George W. Knight III, a prominent evangelical writer and theologian argued that feminists, such as Paul K. Jewett and Letha Dawson Scanzoni, had distorted the true meaning of subordination.  

Knight sought to correct their definition when writing,

> The analogous ontological relationship to masculinity and femininity, man and woman, cited by Paul is that of God and Christ. That Christ submits as Son and as incarnate...does not mean therefore that he is inferior to God...Likewise, that the woman submits as woman does not mean therefore she is inferior or that her humanity as an image-bearer is in doubt or threatened.

Knight, like several of his contemporaries, combats the common misconception that subordination inherently entails inferiority by referencing the creation account. He is arguing that the distinct roles established at creation can only reflect God’s complete image when both genders work together. Men and women obtain their innate dignity when each individual recognizes their status and function on earth. Knight, unlike arguments made in the SBC’s writings, argues that Christ’s relationship with God and his role on earth epitomizes the necessity for distinct gender roles. For Knight, Jesus came to earth already submissive to God’s will in order to provide a path for salvation. Therefore, individuals, such as Paul Jewett and Letha

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171 Knight, “Male and Female Related He to Them,” 4.
172 Ibid., 5-6.
Scanzoni, equivocating submission with inferiority are making claims inherently heretical in nature because these arguments imply that Jesus was inferior.

In 1981, George W. Knight III defined subordination as a divine rather than gendered status in his article, “The Ordination of Women: No.”

He writes, “In marriage and in the church they are, as equals, to submit to the headship of men. The example? Christ has submitted to God as his head! This removes once and for all the charge that submission means inferiority and denies equality.”

Knight is affirming that Jesus is the perfect example for men and women in subordinate positions to follow. Jesus willfully and joyfully undertook his role as submissive to God’s plan so he could become the savior for humanity. For SB men, such as Knight, this affords women a special form of dignity and honor. Their status in life is a reflection of Christ’s role before God, a function only women can fulfill. Therefore, Knight concluded, women should willingly accept their position and not seek other roles such as ordination.

Later, Knight even argued that the marriage construct discussed in the Pastoral Epistles serves as an example for how the church should operate in contemporary society. He writes,

Furthermore, according to a principle of biblical interpretation, we should understand practical examples in light of broad teaching, not pit them against such teaching...the denial of the leadership roles does not deny her equality as a human being or as a joint heir in the body of Christ. Nor does it deny her full involvement in all aspects of ministry to which Scripture welcomes the whole priesthood of believers. Nor are women excluded from teaching per se, for they are encouraged to teach women (Tit. 2:3–5).

Knight is expressing a key practical implication for Christians wishing to abide by the leadership-submission paradigm outlined by SB convention writers and confirmed in CT: women are incapable of preaching men and women, but they can hold leadership positions above other women.

Knight is not denying women’s ability to read and study scripture. He wishes and

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174 Ibid.
175 Ibid., 6-7.
expects women to be fully and actively involved in the church, as much as God allows. Knight is confirming that women teaching any adult male was contradictory to God’s plan for humanity. This subsequently provided a practical application of this paradigm for all Christians wishing to abide by this SB conception of God’s construct.

Steven Tracy later expands on the call for women to not preach by discussing Jesus’ emotional disposition when approaching his subordination.\footnote{Steven Tracy, “Headship with a Heart: How Biblical Patriarchy Actually Prevents Abuse,” *Christianity Today*, February 1, 2003, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/february/5.50.html.} He writes “The Father’s headship over the Son is thus expressed in unbroken intimacy in which the Father continually loves and delights in the Son, and reveals his will to the Son he delights in...submission is not a matter of mere duty, but a delightful response from a woman who is loved, partnered with, and trusted as an equal.”\footnote{Ibid.} Just as Jesus was “delightful” in his response to God’s call, women should also be joyful when submitting to their husbands’ will. Tracy is emphasizing an aspect of divine femininity that was not referenced in the convention writings. A key attribute of feminine obedience to God’s commands involved maintaining one’s emotions. Women were expected to abide by these men’s demands because Jesus did the same before God. However, following these recommendations was not enough, women were called to do so happily and joyfully. Not doing this, according to Tracy, would reduce the role of submission that Jesus exhibited on earth.\footnote{Ibid; Elisabeth Elliot, “Why I Oppose the Ordination of Women,” *Christianity Today*, June 6, 1975, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1975/june-6/why-i-oppose-ordination-of-women.html.}

In addition to claiming that God established subordination as a divine rather than gendered status, writers in *CT* accused women seeking female ordination, and men supporting that endeavor, of not honoring the roles God had designated for men and women. In 1975, Elisabeth Elliot in her article, “Why I Oppose Female Ordination,” argued that Jesus providing salvation should afford women infinite satisfaction. She wrote,
Jesus’ treatment of women in the New Testament invested them with a radically new dignity. He associated with them in a way unheard of in Judaism prior to his time. To attempt to apply democratic ideals to the kingdom of God, which is clearly hierarchical, can result only in a loss of power and ultimately in destruction. Christ himself, the Servant and Son, accepted limitation and restriction. He subjected himself. He learned obedience.¹⁸⁰

Elliot is arguing that women in contemporary society already have enough freedom because Paul’s proclamations calling women to submit increased women’s status in the first century. From the perspective of SBs, God-fearing women in modern day have reached the pinnacle of divine femininity because Paul supported a hierarchy that made women subordinate.

Elliot also emphasizes, by comparing the kingdom of God to democracy, that this divine hierarchy is not culturally determined. God’s call, therefore, must be upheld against changing cultural trends, such as the WLM.¹⁸¹ Unlike other articles in this study, Elliot espouses that disregarding God’s construct cheapened Christ’s sacrifice because women seeking female ordination were desiring a different role than Christ himself exhibited while on earth. Elliot, like many of her contemporaries, exhibits another motivation for those consenting to this argument, fear. She claims that contradicting God’s vision for humanity would “result only in a loss of power and ultimately destruction” expressing that there was a lot more at stake in the fight against feminism, including protecting society’s morality.¹⁸²

Kenneth S. Kantzer, editor of CT in 1981, discussed the spiritual consequences of the WLM.¹⁸³ He writes, “Yet along with the influence of the women’s liberation movement and the general desire to promote complete social and economic equality of men and women, our families have suffered, some of our children have been deprived, and family life in general has

¹⁸³ Knight, “The Ordination of Women: No,” 1.
deteriorated. These matters are not unrelated.” According to these SBS, the inevitable result of women seeking ordination was the deterioration of the family unit. A key component for maintaining society’s morality and God’s vision for humanity according to this interpretation of the Bible was protecting the traditional family unit. This piece, like so many others, employs fear tactics by implying that women attaining leadership positions would surely result in the destruction of society. Kantzer is showing his readers that there was far more at stake during the WLM than changing gender norms. In order to prevent widespread chaos, many SBs believed it was absolutely necessary to protect God’s divine hierarchy in the secular realm.

In 1999, John G. Stackhouse Jr. utilizes threat-driven language when arguing that the WLM poses much greater problems for society than its political implications. He writes, “Sin is vile and vigorous, and no mere political scheme will compensate for resistance to God’s law. Such a lesson does not show the Bible to be misogynistic but quite the opposite.” He is expressing that women desiring more than God has designated for them presents a much larger problem than reshaping the political landscape. Women seeking equal function with men was viewed as an attempt to change God’s kingdom in ways that were contrary to his vision. For Stackhouse, and the other authors examined in this study, the focus of the SB denomination should not be on the political world, but on the spiritual and moral implications of changing the boundaries between the male and female roles that God established at creation. Stackhouse’s piece, in addition to Elliot and Kantzer’s, show that many SBs utilized CT to promote the idea that God elevated women’s status in contemporary society by bestowing previously unavailable

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184 Ibid.
187 Ibid.
dignity onto women in the first century. These authors also argued that although women were made equally in the image of God, they still must perform functions distinct from men.

*CT* was an ideal platform for certain SBs to propagate their ideas about submission, gender roles, female ordination, and morality because this medium was designed for any layperson, regardless of denomination. *CT* articles were designed to be read in homes rather than in churches, emphasizing the SB belief in individual autonomy. Although these authors were making recommendations about the practical implications of the principles discussed at the SBC’s annual gatherings, they still wanted lay people to evaluate their claims individually. Utilizing *CT* as a tool to make political statements with a spiritual and scriptural basis was especially effective in manufacturing consent because these ideas were presented as a choice rather than an obligation. In order to consolidate the arguments made in SBC writings and *CT* against female ordination from the 1970s-1990s, SBs utilized *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: a Response to Evangelical Feminism* to demonstrate how pastors should instruct their congregations on the best practical applications of the Bible’s unchanging principles.188

3. Consolidation

3.1 *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*

Although *CT* and the SBC’s writings were primarily focused on explaining to lay people the importance of this interpretation of God’s vision, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: a Response to Evangelical Feminism* is a book whose audience was primarily

pastors trained in exegesis. This text makes claims, based on extensive scriptural studies, that advocate for the principles outlined in convention writings and *CT*. This piece, similar to both *CT* and the SBC’s documents, does utilize a rhetoric of care and fear-driven language in order to demonstrate how pastors should instruct congregations on maintaining a loving male leadership, joyful female submission paradigm. This book consolidated arguments seen in the SBC’s writings and *CT* about gender roles by promoting the equal worth of men and women, advocating for maintaining New Testament declarations about Christian behavior, and expressing that men and women should act in ways which distinguish their respective genders.

Thomas Schreiner argued that the creation story was crucial in determining the “correct” expression of gender. Schreiner, in particular, focuses his exegesis on New Testament texts that also discuss Genesis 1-3.\(^{189}\) Schreiner claims that “The distinctions between male and female are part of the created order, and Paul apparently did not think redemption in Christ negated creation...Nevertheless, Paul obviously interpreted Genesis 2 as revealing a distinction in roles between men and women. This is clear not only in 1 Corinthians 11, but also in 1 Timothy 2:8-15.”\(^{190}\) Schreiner reaffirms a strongly-held belief of many SBs that God established a divinely ordained hierarchy at creation that must be maintained in the present day. For Schreiner, this is true because the same social construct seen in Genesis is also heavily discussed in New Testament texts such as 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Timothy 2. Similar to Schreiner, several other authors in this anthology utilized the creation account as a way for understanding various New Testament texts and the implications these passages had for Christians in contemporary society.

Stephen D. Kovach in his article, “Egalitarians Revamp Doctrine of the Trinity” for the journal, *Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, argues that emphatic and economic

\(^{189}\) Schreiner, “Head Coverings, Prophecies, and the Trinity,” 125.

\(^{190}\) Ibid.
subordination implicate very different applications for Christians. Kovach defines emphatic subordination as a difference in essence or nature and economic subordination as a divergence in mission or status. For Christians this means that “Jesus [was] subordinate to the Father from eternity in role, yet equal to the Father in essence and worth, then women [are] seen legitimately as taking a different role without loss of equality in their worth or dignity.” Kovach’s article demonstrates that many SBs advocated for the economic subordination of women in their writings because this submission mirrored Christ’s before God. SB men required that women do this happily because they held the same honorable status bestowed upon Jesus. This was not an unfamiliar concept to Christians reading this book. George W. Knight III, one of the authors in this compilation, championed the same idea in *CT*, “That Christ submits as Son and as incarnate...does not mean therefore that he is inferior to God...Likewise, that the woman submits as woman does not mean therefore she is inferior.” In both of these instances, SB leaders are exhibiting a rhetoric of care for their female parishioners. By pushing women to submit and men to lead, SBs are protecting women’s innate dignity that is being threatened by the WLM. It was believed by many SBs that if women were encouraged to adhere to the demands of second wave feminism, then they would lose the honor that God so graciously gave them.

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192 Ibid.
194 Knight, “Male and Female Related He to Them,” 5-6.
Sheridan Poythress declares that the roles in marriage, established during creation, are not interchangeable. He claims that gender should function in a similar manner within church buildings.\textsuperscript{195} He writes,

The leadership within a family is vested in the husband and father (Ephesians 5:22-6:4)...Women, by contrast, are not to be placed in authority in the church, because such a role would not harmonize with the general relations between men and women in marriage, as established at creation (1 Timothy 2:11-14)...qualified men are to be appointed as overseers, that is, fathers of the church. A woman, however capable and gifted she may be, can never become a father of a family...The life of the church never overthrows but rather enhances the life of the family, based on God’s design from creation.\textsuperscript{196}

Poythress, like several other SB writers, affirms that the distinctiveness of male and female was established at creation.\textsuperscript{197} He demonstrates that since women are incapable of fathering children, they do not possess the skills required to preach. Poythress’s claims align with a widely-held belief of many SBs that external attributes, such as biology, are a reflection of internal character.\textsuperscript{198} In this case, women’s internal inability to lead a congregation is determined by their external features. Poythress also employs fear-based language by claiming that “The life of the church never overthrows but rather enhances the life of the family, based on God’s design from creation.”\textsuperscript{199} For him, not abiding by this version of God’s call would lead to the breakdown of

\textsuperscript{196} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{199} Poythress, “The Church as Family,” 242.
the family unit.\textsuperscript{200} If women achieved equality of function with men, or the cessation of economic submission occurred, then the entire family structure would be undone leading to rampant immorality throughout society.\textsuperscript{201} Therefore, Poythress calling women to be subordinate not only protected their innate dignity, but it also maintained society’s morality. This strategy, scaring congregants into submission, was regularly implemented by SB writers.\textsuperscript{202}

The arguments presented in \textit{Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: a Response to Evangelical Feminism} synthesized previous pleas about gender roles in convention writings and \textit{CT}. This piece guided pastors on how to explain the unchanging ancient principles present in the New Testament to their congregations. This work clarified for several SBs that creation explained the necessity of a social hierarchy and demonstrated the mechanism for achieving God’s vision: a submission, leadership paradigm. Kovach’s discussion emphasized the difference between emphatic and economic subordination and illustrated that many SBs were calling for economic over emphatic submission.\textsuperscript{203} Finally, Poythress’s discussion of the family unit demonstrated the potential consequences, chaos and destruction, of adhering to the demands of the WLM.\textsuperscript{204}

Once these arguments had been thoroughly established inside and outside of the SB

\textsuperscript{200} \textit{Christianity Today}, May 25, 1979, \url{https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1979/may-25/}.
\textsuperscript{202} “Resolution On Ordination And The Role Of Women In Ministry,” 1984, 1-2; Dowland, \textit{Family Values}, 135; Ahmed argues that fear determines the relationships between bodies, in this case, male and female bodies, because people draw historical associations between different groups. The observations individuals make about the relationships between people, according to Ahmed, point towards what is approaching rather than what is here. For example, Poythress interprets the Bible through a lens of inerrancy and, as a result, views the gender relations established at creation as absolute, unchanging truths. God designated men as leaders and women as followers at creation and not adhering to this construct would lead to immorality. Poythress calling men and women to uphold this social construct secures the relationship between male and female bodies. Men, if this ideology is accepted, will retain their ability to control where female bodies reside inside and outside of church buildings. Poythress’s argument also looks forward because he wants SBs and all Christians to follow his interpretation of Ephesians and Timothy in order to avoid the future implications of the WLM, chaos and destruction. See, Ahmed, \textit{The Cultural Politics of Emotion}, 65.
\textsuperscript{203} Kovach, “Egalitarians Revamp Doctrine of the Trinity,” 13.
\textsuperscript{204} Poythress, “The Church as Family,” 242.
denomination’s writings, this piece outlined the accepted definitions of divine masculinity and femininity.

### 3.2 Divine Masculinity and Femininity

John Piper presented definitions, accepted by many SBs, for Biblical masculinity and femininity which determined what actions pastors should convey to men and women upholding God’s vision. Piper writes,

> At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man’s differing relationships. At the heart of mature femininity is a freeing disposition to affirm, receive and nurture strength and leadership from worthy men in ways appropriate to a woman’s differing relationships.\(^\text{205}\)

According to this definition, men should lead, protect, and provide while women should affirm and receive these actions. Women were expected to support men exhibiting Biblical leadership. Men were called to show women how to be ancillary in this endeavor. This definition demonstrates that, for many SBs, a man’s role in a relationship with a woman is largely expressed through tangible actions while a woman exhibits her roles through emotions. Men’s naturally pre-determined ability and obligation to lead and women’s inherent pre-ordained obligation to respond had very different implications for the day to day lives of Christians abiding by this claim. Writers in this text endorsed practices that allowed men and women to clearly express the distinctiveness of their respective genders in ways that cohered with these definitions of masculinity and femininity.

Many SBs defined the actions appropriate for expressing mature masculinity and femininity by determining what actions were considered shameful for men to do before God. This, in turn, limited truly feminine actions to what SBs believed pure, Biblical masculinity was

incapable of being. This rigid shame-honor system guided how men were expected to behave and how women were obligated to respond to men’s actions. David Moon, author of “Southern Baptists and Southern Men: Evangelical Perceptions of Manhood in Nineteenth-Century Georgia,” writes that in the SB denomination,

The leaders of these religious structures, as with men in the secular world, hoped to vanquish the specter of unmanliness and exorcise the demons of dishonor and disgrace...Leaders of Baptist institutions thus attempted to script young men’s behavior so as to promote a robust manliness fixed in Christian ideals like piety and hard work.206

Moon’s observations demonstrate that, for many SBs, manliness involved avoiding shame. This included men maintaining control of the spheres that God relegated women to reside in.207 God determined in Genesis 3 that Adam, and therefore all men, would “through painful toil” work in the field. As argued by Moon, these SBs understood this to mean that men should be providers for their wives and children through manual labor. To disturb this balance would, for SBs, be shameful.

This ideology is also clearly seen in John Piper’s definition of mature masculinity, which calls men to “to lead, provide for and protect women.”208 Not desiring, or being incapable of carrying out these behaviors would strip men of their masculinity according to these SBs. Likewise, a woman not wishing or being unable to support her husband’s endeavors was considered shameful. Women seeking ordination posed the biggest threat to men’s sense of purpose in the world because women were trying to place their bodies in spheres that had historically been exclusive to men.209 These women, and the men who supported them, were

207 Dowland, “A New Kind of Patriarchy,” 247. Scott and Butler have both argued that gender is a field in which individuals can articulate power. See, Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” 1069; Butler, Gender Trouble, 35.
209 Durkheim has argued that religion allows people to develop a sense of belonging and purpose. See, Durkheim and Fields, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 41.
upsetting the balance God had intentionally designed and several SBs were delicately maintaining. If these women were successful, men in the denomination would have their divine masculinity stripped away by women who had freely given up their Biblical femininity. In response to the WLM, many SBs utilized *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: a Response to Evangelical Feminism* as a platform to endorse several practices which expressed acceptable representations of divine masculinity and femininity.

### 3.3 Embodied Practices

Many SBs implemented their viewpoint over several decades that God created a distinct hierarchy at creation which placed men in positions of authority over women. They accomplished this by utilizing several tactics including undoing the SB denomination’s previously established ideological and physical structure, developing a scriptural foundation for their claims, and employing a rhetoric of care and fear-driven language in both their convention writings and external texts. In addition to these tools, SB leaders wrote various pieces outside of the SBC that delineated which embodied practices best exemplified divine masculinity and femininity. Prominent members outlined practices that largely addressed women’s external appearance and internal emotional state when approaching men in positions of authority, particularly their husbands.

Thomas Schreiner, a prominent theologian during this time period, demonstrates a practical application for individuals to follow in his discussion of 1 Corinthians 11.2-16, namely that, women should dress modestly to exhibit their submissiveness. Schreiner writes, “The major

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211 Schreiner, “Head Coverings, Prophecies, and the Trinity,” 119; 122-123.
point of the text is clear: women are to adorn themselves in a certain way... Paul wants women to wear head coverings while praying and prophesying because to do otherwise would be to confuse the sexes and give the [shameful] impression that women are behaving like men.”

Schreiner is discussing one of the most complex declarations made by Paul, women should cover their heads while praying in church because man is the head of woman as Christ is the head of man. Schreiner characterizes women who do not “adorn themselves” in ways that exude their inherently submissive nature as “shameful.” For Schreiner, women who do not dress modestly and immediately appear feminine are dishonorably trying to be men. Externally exhibiting anything other than traditional femininity was a shameful act because God designed women to have different abilities from men. Schreiner later expands on how men and women can continue demonstrating their true gender in church.

Schreiner in this same piece explores the ways that women can honorably participate in church activities. He states “The principle still stands that women should pray and prophesy in a manner that makes it clear that they submit to male leadership. Clearly the attitude and the demeanor with which a woman prays and prophesies will be one indication of whether she is humble and submissive.” For Schreiner, the ways in which women interact with, around, and towards men inherently demonstrate obedience or disobedience. In this example, women must pray in public under the guidance of men because this action exhibited their deference to whom God has placed as the “head” in their life. Praying publicly at a man’s discretion also externally

212 Ibid.
213 Ibid.
David Moon’s observations about the shame/honor culture present in the SB denomination illuminate Schreiner’s discussion of 1 Corinthians 11. According to Moon, SBs first employed a shame/honor system during the Civil War to clearly outline how men and women should behave. Under this code of behavior, men were expected to demonstrate their masculinity through physical labor while women should exhibit their femininity through piety. See, Moon, “Southern Baptists and Southern Men,” 13, 42.
215 Schreiner, “Head Coverings, Prophecies, and the Trinity,” 129.
demonstrated a woman’s understanding of the limitations of her internal capabilities. Judith Butler’s notions about gender roles shed light on how these practices, women showing their emotional and mental capabilities through their appearances or actions, articulate male power. She claims in *Gender Trouble* that external “acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this on the surface of the body.”\(^\text{216}\) For many SBs, external characteristics, such as physical appearance, reveals one’s internal capabilities. Women were expected to dress modestly and only speak before the church under the guidance of a male leader so others can immediately know, by viewing their external characteristics, that they are women and, thus, subordinate to men.

Although Schreiner initially discusses that women should dress modestly, he does not expand on what *true* feminine attire is until later in his argument. Adorning oneself in ways that were distinctively feminine or masculine was very important to these SBs because gender was considered a fixed rather than malleable category.\(^\text{217}\) Thomas Schreiner argues that,

> Both men and women today should dress so that they do not look like the opposite sex. Confusion of the sexes is contrary to the God-given sense that the sexes are distinct. For example, it would be wrong for a twentieth-century American male to wear a dress in public. It would violate his masculinity. Everything within a man would cry out against doing this because it would violate his appropriate sense of what it means to be a man.\(^\text{218}\)

For Schreiner, and many other SBs, how one dressed was a direct reflection of their masculinity or femininity.\(^\text{219}\) Blurring the lines between genders was considered unacceptable because it was contrary to God’s vision for humanity. This external practice, for SB leaders, affirmed the internal capabilities of their congregants. Women were expected to adorn themselves in a “feminine” manner so those around them would immediately know, without any confusion, that

\(^{216}\) Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 173.  
\(^{218}\) Schreiner, “Head Coverings, Prophecies, and the Trinity,” 129.  
they were being submissive to men. Men were supposed to dress in a “masculine” way in order to make clear that their Godly manhood was intact.\textsuperscript{220} However, if men wore dresses it would be considered shameful and contrary to God’s vision. These recommendations made by Schreiner were very public actions, but several authors also advocated for many practices to be carried out in the home, a more private sphere.

Many writers discussing the behaviors necessary to demonstrate one’s divine gendered dignity recommended practices that were conducted in private settings such as individual homes. John Piper argued that men were expected to “not presume superiority, but mobilize the strengths of others,” listen and respond, feel “the responsibility to provide a general pattern of initiative,” accept “the burden of the final say in disagreements,” express “leadership in romantic sexual relations by communicating an aura of strong and tender pursuit.”\textsuperscript{221} Piper is expressing clear commands that men should follow when interacting with their wives and children. Men initiating certain aspects of homelife, decision-making, sex, and disciplining children, was necessary because God gave them the ability to lead. Women, according to Piper, were expected to be responsive, compassionate, receptive, considerate, quiet, faithful, and pure.\textsuperscript{222} He states that “the heart of femininity includes three words to describe the response of a woman to the strength and leadership of worthy men: affirm, receive, and nurture.”\textsuperscript{223} In this scenario, “affirm” means mature women advocate for masculine-feminine complementarity, “receive” entails accepting “the strength and leadership of worthy men,” and “nurture” involves strengthening the resources of masculinity by managing the home.\textsuperscript{224} These responses by women in the home upholds the


\textsuperscript{221} Piper, “A Vision of Biblical Complementarity,” 31-33.

\textsuperscript{222} Piper, “A Vision of Biblical Complementarity,” 38.

\textsuperscript{223} Ibid., 40.

\textsuperscript{224} Ibid.
belief that women must react to men’s initiations in a nurturing way so they can uphold the Biblical view of marriage.

Sheridan Poythress demonstrates several tangible practices that exhibit male leadership and female submission when conducting a close reading of the Pastoral Epistles. In doing so, Poythress invokes an overt Biblicism that legitimates his argument and inserts SB ideology into scriptural texts. He writes, “She may indeed become a ‘mother’ in God’s household, and exercise the roles indicated in 1 Timothy 5:2; 3:11; 5:9-10, 14; Titus 2:3-5; 2 Timothy 1:5. The life of the church never overthrows but rather enhances the life of the family, based on God’s design from creation.” Poythress has cited texts that all agree on what women’s roles in the home, society, and church should entail. These verses call women to conduct the following specific, external actions in order to reveal their internal character and relationship with God.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence:</th>
<th>Text: External Practice</th>
<th>Reflection: Internal Capabilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Timothy 5.1-2</td>
<td>“not speak harshly to an older man, but speak to him as to a father, to younger men as brothers, to older women as mothers, to younger women as sisters—with absolute purity”</td>
<td>This recommendation by Poythress implies that women when externally interacting with men, should exhibit deference through language. This largely entailed allowing men to have the final say on all matters. This statement also shows that women should teach other women in ways that exude their internal, pure intentions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Timothy 3.11</td>
<td>“be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things”</td>
<td>Once again, Poythress’s citation reveals that the external exhibition of internal character is centered on language that will reveal each woman’s controlled emotions and faith in God.</td>
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<td>1 Timothy 5.10</td>
<td>“be well attested for her good works, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the saints’ feet, helped the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way”</td>
<td>Poythress, by citing this verse, demonstrates that the ways women work hard differ vastly from men (Refer to Figures 3 and 4 below). According to him, women exude a good work ethic by raising children and instructing younger women on how to exhibit their faith before God.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Titus 2.3-5</td>
<td>“encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be self-controlled, chaste, good managers of the household, kind, being submissive to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be discredited”</td>
<td>This verse shows the specific ways God calls women to work hard: love their husbands, care for their children, be chaste and good stewards. All of these actions will reveal, according to Poythress, a woman’s personal relationship with God.</td>
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Figure 3:

This cover demonstrates an accepted representation of the “changing role” of women. This image is an ode to *Whistler’s Mother*, seen in the background of this cover. The subject of this painting, Anne McNeill Whistler, has been labeled as “a decent and morally impeccable Victorian woman who gave her best to be a good mother and housewife…[and be] an embodiment of morality and motherhood.”

same manner as Anne Whistler, however, she is performing some form of clerical work. She is
doing so while still depicting her feminine nature through modest dress and following the
example set by Whistler. SBs writing in Christianity Today are demonstrating that although it is
acceptable for women to work, they must do so in manners that still exhibit their divinely given
roles, wife and motherhood.

Figure 4:
The cover of this issue reveals the ways in which women can honorably work and serve God. This woman is not only working, but she is also caring for her child. Her attention is focused on her child before her job, implying that this should be a woman’s top priority. In addition, women should only work if they “must.” This issue shows women how they are able to work and uphold God’s call for their lives, raising a family. In these examples from Poythress and Christianity Today, Biblical femininity entails speaking with absolute purity, acting temperately, being devoted to every task, and encouraging other women to do the same. The goal of all these actions, according to Poythress, is that “the word of God may not be discredited.”

Poythress implies, by citing Titus 2.5, that following his recommendations will further SB missionary aims because women demonstrate their faith before God when conducting these practices. These actions signified that men were leaders and women were followers, a concept which SBs consented to by repeating these practices in their homes. SBs developed arguments against female ordination, outlined a scriptural basis for their claims, delineated practices which emphasized traditional gender roles, and consolidated their efforts into Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: a Response to Evangelical Feminism. In the process of carrying out these practices, individual SBs became more active in the political and secular realms.

4 Political Ascendancy: The Successes of the SB Denomination

Many SBs’ tools, such as employing their ideological and physical structure, implementing a rhetoric of care and threat-driven language in internal and external writings, and delineating necessary practices that embodied each gender’s inherent dignity, were effective in spreading their message about gender roles. In addition to these strategies, several members of

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this tradition ascertained political power and influenced outsiders to abide by these claims.\textsuperscript{230} The SBC annual reports, SBC resolutions, \textit{CT}, and \textit{Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: a Response to Evangelical Feminism} all demonstrate the strategies employed by SB leaders combating the WLM. The political ascendancy of prominent SBs, a potential indicator of these members’ success in implementing their ideas on a wide scale, can be seen through the denomination’s help in preventing the passage of the ERA, their contribution to the creation of the Moral Majority, and their promotion of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).\textsuperscript{231} These events proved for many SBs that the methods for securing their ideology in the secular realm worked. In addition, several SBs believed their interpretation of God’s divine hierarchy was correct since they triumphantly prohibited increased immorality.

Individual SB involvement in political affairs during the WLM was precipitated by the campaign for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in 1973. The ERA, if it had passed, would have formally stated in the United States Constitution that discrimination in the workplace based on sex was illegal, a proposition which several SBs were vehemently opposed to because of their conceptions about gender. The ERA stated, “Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not


be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex. Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.”

For many SBs, this initiated their political response to the WLM because this amendment contradicted their belief that men and women had divinely ordained and distinct roles in society. The SBC responded to campaigns for the ERA by writing,

...for women who need or want to work outside the home we urge employers to seek fairness for women in compensation, advancement, and opportunities for improvement...this Convention, reaffirming the biblical role which stresses the equal worth but not always the sameness of function of women, does not endorse the Equal Rights Amendment.

According to these SBs, if this amendment passed, it would imply that men and women had equal functions in society, an impossibility according to this ideology. Therefore, many SBs regularly spoke against this proposition to protect their interpretation of God’s vision for humanity. As a result of this, and several other campaigns, the ERA was not codified as law.

For many SBs, the prevention of the ERA’s passage was entirely good because it demonstrated for individuals who did not accept SB views about gender, that the demand for gender sameness was contrary to God’s call. Many SBs viewed their actions in this process as protecting America from increased immorality.

The failure of the ERA to be ratified was the first major event leading to prominent leaders’ widespread success in gaining political power. This was compounded in 1979 with the creation of Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority. Falwell established the Moral Majority to restore America’s decaying morality, as he perceived it. The SBC’s success was amplified after

Adrian Rogers was elected as president of this organization and he embarked on a campaign to increase the Fundamentalist voice in American politics. The SBC, under Rogers’s leadership, partnered with the Baptist Joint Committee (BJC) because this group regularly promoted religious freedom, something many SBs consistently championed in their own writings. This allowed Fundamentalists to appear moderate, partisan, and a champion of individual rights. By 1988, the SBC funded about sixty percent of the BJC’s budget. Fundamentalists employed this financial motivator to use the BJC “as a mouthpiece on issues such as abortion, school prayer, federal aid to parochial schools, and other issues on the agenda of the religious right.” When the BJC did not comply with these demands, the SBC defunded this committee and created the Southern Baptist Public Affairs Committee. This exhibited that SBs were not solely concerned about society’s morality, but they also wanted to create any possible medium through which they could propagate their message. This cooperation along with the rise of the Moral Majority led to more active involvement by several SB members in the secular realm. SBs increased their political comments concerning pressing social debates such as abortion in their convention writings. These tactics encouraged non-members to abide by the demands and ideas of these SBs because this ideology was becoming more prevalent in society.

Finally, in 1996, the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was passed, a measure that SBs adamantly supported and widely promoted. DOMA “specifically defined marriage as the union of one man and one woman which allowed individual states to not recognize same-sex marriages

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238 Ibid.
239 Ibid.
240 Ibid.
that were performed and recognized under other states’ laws.”

The passage of this act provided many SBs with a sense of belonging in the world because society was becoming more compatible with their belief system. However, after this act was passed, many people were challenging its constitutionality. The SBC, after spending the last twenty-five years becoming more politically active, responded to these claims at their 2004 annual gathering by stating,

WHEREAS, The union of one man and one woman is the only form of marriage prescribed in the Bible as God’s perfect design for the family (Genesis 2:24; Hebrews 13:4); and WHEREAS, This traditional family is the fabric of all social order and the foundational institution that builds and maintains strong societies...WHEREAS, The institution of marriage is now in crisis...RESOLVED, That we challenge pastors and leaders within the Body of Christ to support and faithfully promote a Federal Marriage Amendment.

This statement, similar to the prevention of the ERA and creation of the Moral Majority, simply confirmed that these SB leaders had garnered significant power in the political and secular spheres twenty-five years after the Fundamentalist Takeover. SBs had successfully overcome their own institutional barriers to political involvement and promoted their ideology in the secular world.

Conclusion

During the CRM, SB leaders became committed to upholding a version of God’s divine that placed white men at its apex. Many SBs delayed the implementation of integration by abusing the organizational structure which was developed to protect the members of this denomination; taking advantage of the beliefs in the separation of church and state, local church

243 Durkheim has argued that religion allows people to develop a sense of belonging and purpose. See, Durkheim and Fields, The Elementary Principles of Religious Life, 41.
autonomy, and a priesthood of all believers; and developing numerous arguments claiming that there was a Christian responsibility to maintain God’s vision on earth, which entailed a separation of the races. All of this combined, created an audience who consented to the belief that God only gave select individuals the ability to define God’s plan. Although SBs were not successful in preventing integration and preserving this divinely ordained concept of power, these leaders did perfect these tactics and arguments during the WLM in order to victorious and permanently overturn female ordination.

Exemplifying God’s vision on earth as the most important and righteous call for Christians was key to SB leaders’ later success in undoing female ordination. From 1964-1984, women could be ordained but not hired in the SB denomination. However, after the Fundamentalist Takeover of 1979, leaders in the SBC made a moral outcry, similar to Leon Macon’s arguments against integration, that female ordination would cause a breakdown of God’s ideal Christian community and subsequently lead to widespread immorality. For SBs, this “ideal Christian community” entailed women being submissive to men inside and outside of the church. To accomplish this goal, SB leaders first employed the physical and ideological structure of the SB denomination to appeal to their congregations. Beginning in 1979,

246 Ibid.
247 James, Leazer, and Shoopman, The Fundamentalist Takeover, 44.
249 Ibid.
Fundamentalists, such as Paige Patterson and Paul Pressler, who wanted to stop the WLM, actively campaigned for conservative leaders such as Adrian Rogers and systematically voted out progressive members of various SBC committees. By 1986, Fundamentalists held a majority on every committee in the SBC.\(^{250}\) SB leaders invoked the strongly held principles of the denomination such as individual autonomy, upholding the priesthood of all believers, and maintaining the separation of church from state, in the resolutions they crafted to convince other SBs that this conservative resurgence was necessary. These propositions later instructed many SBs on the correct moral response to “issues” such as the WLM.

SB leaders also conducted populist and inerrantist readings of the Bible to establish a “sound” scriptural argument that seemingly justified their belief system. By drawing on texts such as Genesis 1-3, 1 Corinthians 11, and Galatians 3, SB leadership developed a thorough Biblical argument against female ordination while also appearing to protect one of the most strongly-held values of the SB denomination, scriptural authority.\(^{251}\) Certain SBs also implemented coded language, most aptly seen through their rhetoric of care and fear-driven language, in denominational publications, such as the SBC resolutions and annuals, and in external writings, including *CT* and *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: a Response to Evangelical Feminism*, to convince their congregations that a leadership, submission paradigm was necessary. In doing so, leaders utilized their interpretations of scripture as evidence that their claims were correct while also invoking each individual’s right to choose the best moral path. Finally, SBs leaders delineated the embodied practices necessary to exemplify their belief that men should lead and women should follow.\(^{252}\) For many SBs, this largely involved women...
externally exhibiting their internal nature through dressing in traditionally feminine manners and exhibiting “gentler sensibilities” when abiding by men’s wishes.253 Each of these tactics employed by SB leaders systematically overcame the obstacles set in place to prevent the SBC’s political involvement.

After utilizing these tools to establish their belief system inside the denomination, SB leaders entered the political realm to propagate their claims in the secular world. Several SBs viewed political ascendancy as the inevitable next step of their missionary work because the CRM invoked the fear that the SB belief system was incompatible with contemporary society.254 In addition to wanting to rectify their social standing, many SBs feared that anything less than vigilantly implementing their interpretation of the Bible would result in widespread immorality, further separating man from God’s vision.255 Certain SBs aided in preventing the passage of the ERA, participated in the Moral Majority, and promoted DOMA.256 As a result of these events, several SBs believed that their methods for securing God’s vision on earth worked and that their interpretation of God’s divine hierarchy was correct. The consequences of these actions are prominent in the present day. Female ordination is still prohibited and traditional gender roles are actively promoted.257 Even though this textual analysis has exhibited the tactics utilized by the

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254 As Sara Ahmed points out, this process, systematically determining where certain bodies operated, is a product of fear, particularly a group’s fear about losing power or control. See, Ahmed, The Cultural Politics of Emotion, 63-65; Durkheim has asserted that religion allows people to develop a sense of belonging and purpose. See, Durkheim and Fields, The Elementary Principles of Religious Life, 41.
SB denomination to marginalize “other” groups, a material evaluation would reveal how successful these SBs truly were at instituting their beliefs in individual homes not just concerning women’s rights, but also other prominent social issues such as LGBTQ+ rights, racial injustice, and abortion.\textsuperscript{258}


\textsuperscript{258} Ibid.
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