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Reclaiming America for Christian Reconstruction: The Rhetorical Constitution of a "People"

Joanna L. Brook
University of Massachusetts Amherst

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**RECLAIMING AMERICA FOR CHRISTIAN RECONSTRUCTION:
THE RHETORICAL CONSTITUTION OF A “PEOPLE”**

A Dissertation Presented

by

JOANNA L. BROOK

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

September 2011

Communication

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by

JOANNA L. BROOK

Approved as to style and content by:

Stephen Olbrys Gencarella, Chair

Emily West, Member

David Fleming, Member

Lisa Henderson, Department Head
Department of Communication

DEDICATION

To my supportive, patient, and loving life partner, Edward J. Scheidelman.

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I would like to thank my advisor, Stephen O. Gencarella, for introducing me to rhetoric and performance, as a whole, and to constitutive rhetorics in particular. Thanks and recognition are due to my second committee member, Emily West, whose presence, advice and support were invaluable and helped me all the way through the dissertation process. Professor West's feedback and advising will continue to provide great guidance to me in further work on this project, I am sure. I am extremely grateful to David Fleming, my outside committee member, for coming on to the committee at such a late date. I so appreciated your close reading, careful comments and generous presence in my defense. And Lisa Henderson, I thank you for your administrative oversight: deliberate and adroit, as always.

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ABSTRACT

RECLAIMING AMERICA FOR CHRISTIAN RECONSTRUCTION: THE RHETORICAL CONSTITUTION OF A “PEOPLE”

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JOANNA L. BROOK, B.A., UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN MADISON

M.A., UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON SEATTLE

Ph.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Stephen Olbrys Gencarella

This dissertation investigates the rhetorical constitution of a religio-political social collective which has come to be understood as Christian Reconstruction (CR). CR is guided by conservative Calvinism (Reformed theology) and upholds the ideas of theonomy, postmillennialism, and presuppositional apologetics. Some of the leaders associated with CR are R. J. Rushdoony, Gary North, Gary DeMar of American Vision and Doug Phillips of Vision Forum. A few of its key practices are homeschooling, the father ‘returning home,’ and having as many children ‘as God will allow,’ (a vision aligned with the Quiverfull movement). It is primarily a national movement within the United States, not limited to a singular geographical location or denomination.

This study provides a comprehensive overview of CR, illustrating how the grammars of CR are animated, embodied, and upheld in peoples’ lives and practices. Through the observation of conferences and events, and the collection and examination of media materials, this analysis takes a constructivist approach to piecing together the discursive fragments that constitute CR. CR grammar is richly embedded in a web of interaction, media, technology, images, bodily adornment, performance, music, games,

and consumer culture. My theoretical framework utilizes the work of critical cultural theorists (Gramsci, 1971; Butler, 1990; Hall, 1976, Laclau, 2005) in combination with theories of constitutive (Burke, 1950; Charland, 1987; McGee, 1975) and visual rhetoric and display (Olson, Finnegan & Hope, 2008; Prelli, 2006; Selzer & Crowley, 1999) to examine the types of social, cultural, and political subjectivities, practices and institutions that are constituted within the CR community. It focuses primarily on the patriarchal identities within CR families as well as the focus on nationalistic teaching about Christian American history as methods for changing the culture of America. I consider the hegemonic machinations of CR grammars in constituting these identities. Finally, this study makes available a methodology and method for the study of dispersed “peoples” and their discursive lives. I demonstrate that multi-sited ethnography, combined with the theories of constitutive and visual rhetorics and critical cultural studies provides a systematic heuristic with which to inquire into a people, its culture, activities, identities, and how they constitute themselves.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In the mid-2000's, many American journalists began to register concern about and document the activities of a seemingly sophisticated and multi-faceted movement that was--and still is--seeking to produce cultural change, following a belief that the United States was once and should once again be a "Christian" nation. Several books in the popular press have addressed this matter, ranging from commentary on activism which aims to change America's cultural and political landscape (Goldberg, 2006; Hedges, 2007; Joyce, 2009; and Phillips, 2006) to an ethnographic report of a college designed to create young Godly warriors for cultural change (Rosin, 2007) to investigative reporting on the international political reach of some of these efforts (Sharlet, 2009). These writers and others aligned with political science, sociology, and public policy, along with progressive political pundits, have raised an alarm about the anti-democratic leanings of this movement, the commitment, enthusiasm and impressive organizational capacity of those within its ranks, and clear evidence of its often stealth influence on major political institutions. Some institutions mentioned include the Republican party in the 1990's and the G.W. Bush presidential administration.

In 2005, *The New Yorker* published Rosin's account entitled "God and Country: A College That Trains Young Christians to be Politicians," describing her visit to Patrick Henry College. Her full-scale ethnography of this school (Rosin, 2007) gives a more detailed account of individual students' experiences of this particular combination of education, theology, and political activism. Rosin's article and book describe the thousands of homeschoolers and private school students who are now being trained with

a very particular Christian curriculum. The goal of this curriculum is to promulgate a conservative and revisionist social, religious, and economic narrative of the United States. This narrative is accompanied with prescribed social practices, which, according to plan, could potentially change the face of America if enough young people were to engage them. This curriculum also provides reasoning for returning the nation to its former, allegedly more pure and orderly, Christian political state. In *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century*, Phillips (2006) describes the religious motivation and actions of the Republican party, for whom he once strategized. He fears this combination of religion and politics will lead to national decline. In the same year, Goldberg's (2006) book entitled *Kingdom Coming: The Rise of Christian Nationalism* depicts her observations of and visits with several key leaders, members, and organizations of this movement that believes it has a mandate to bring Christian dominion over the United States. Goldberg believes that this movement represents a threat to democratic pluralism and explains how the goal of Christian nationalist politics is the restoration of an imagined Christian nation through revisionist history, education, and political activism. She claims its members conflate the cross and the flag, working toward a day when the government will both support and uphold only Christianity. In 2007, Hedges published *American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America*. Hedges registers his concern about a social movement that employs the language of religion to motivate an economically downtrodden sector of the American public. He compares what is happening with this movement (which he identifies as a theocratic, Calvinist Dominionism) to historical trends towards fascism around the globe. His description sounds an alarm that America is

too tolerant of those who are intolerant of others, threatening the very concept and practice of an open society. Sharlet (2008), in *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power*, details his research on an unofficial religio-political network referred to as “The Family” based in the U. S. that was originally created in the 1930’s to work against FDR’s New Deal. Sharlet claims that The Family is now actively lobbying to influence both the American government and severely oppressive international regimes. For example, The Family can be connected to the 2009 Anti-Homosexuality bill in Uganda that mandated the death penalty for those who are HIV positive (Sharlet, 2009). Most recently, Joyce (2009), in *Quiverfull: Inside the Christian Patriarchy Movement*, reveals a little-known movement whose mission is the waging of a cultural war by way of having many babies and following a stringent “biblical patriarchy” within their ranks. Their goal is to ‘return’ to a Christian America by way of sheer numbers: the fashioning of future Christian citizens through the institution of the family.

Although they differ in topics, these writers all contribute general descriptions and judgments of this movement as a whole, especially within the domain of national (and one instance of global) politics. But at this point in time, there is less research available on the more mundane and communicative ways in which the cultural machinations of this group are carried out. Also, these more popular sources make reference to the Calvinist, Dominionist strand in this movement, but do not offer much background about this ideology or its history. This strand of Dominionism (the belief that God and all Christians should have and take dominion over all of the earth) comes from Christian Reconstruction (CR), which has its origins in Dutch Reformed Presbyterianism. Some

academic research has overviewed this perspective in terms of its theology, rhetoric, original leadership, and history,¹ but each academic source covers very different material about CR. For this reason, it is difficult to find a comprehensive treatment of it in one place. Additionally, though CR is investigated in terms of its ideological principles and original leaders, very little academic research has been done to survey and investigate how CR is manifest and is successfully growing in a contemporary social milieu. This study aims to bring the various disconnected threads of commentary on CR together in one place and illustrate the powerful ways in which this movement and its ideology in its current form is taking root and being animated within everyday communicative practices.

Purpose of the Study

There are five main purposes for this study: first, it will provide a comprehensive overview of CR which is currently not available in the academic literature on the topic. Secondly, the study aims to investigate the means and modes that promulgate, circulate and extend the CR discursive community and the constitution of “a people.” Third, it queries what social, cultural, and political subjectivities, practices and institutions are constituted within the CR community as members participate in its discursive activities. Fourth, it considers how the constitution of CR, its “people,” culture and identities is hegemonic in the Gramscian (1971) sense. Fifth, in order to create a methodology and method for examining the activities and constitution of “a people” which is not geographically bound, is highly mediated, and is strongly influenced by nonverbal symbolism and practice, this study will marry multi-sited ethnography and contemporary

¹ This research will be discussed in full in Chapter Two, a literature review of Christian Reconstructionism.

rhetorical and cultural studies theory. I will expand upon these purposes in the following sections.

The first purpose of this study, providing a more comprehensive treatment of CR in its current forms will require the following two moves:² first, the presentation of a more comprehensive academic resource on CR as a movement; secondly, a move from a study of CR solely in terms its literature and historical records (which is the state of the research currently available on CR) to one that pursues how it is effectively being taken up and extended by individuals, families and groups within their everyday lives. This treatment of CR would entail who the current leadership is, how participants are involved in communicating its ideology, and how individuals and families are identifying with CR, taking it up, and enacting it in their daily social practices. This would extend the available research from studies that rely substantially on interpretations of historical records and CR literature to an investigation into how, in peoples' daily practices, CR is symbolized and enacted in vernacular forms and embodied performances. This move will help to illustrate that culture and ideology are not a priori essences that are expressed by people,

² This study began during the G. W. Bush administration when these groups were receiving much watchdog attention. The inference at that time was that the Dominionists were aligned with those in power, thus giving them significant influence. It could be surmised that once the Obama administration came into power, this movement lost its legitimacy and alleged sway. To the contrary, it operates with a long term mission and uses Obama's administration and policies as a foil to gain persuasive influence in their activities and with their members and recruiting pull with potential converts. As Berlet (2008) points out, "They will be left behind to continue ... years of political activism from within the largest organized social movement in the United States today."

their speech and their practices; but are products of embodied and mediated social practices.^{3, 4}

³ My understanding of culture has two main components: the ideas, sentiments, sensibilities, practices and language of a particular discourse (by language, I mean “grammar” in the Wittgensteinian (1953/2001) and Gramscian (1971) sense); and, the actions, symbols, and artifacts that display, communicate, symbolize, struggle over, and constitute those ideas, sentiments, sensibilities and language. There is an approach in communication that identifies itself as “social constructionism,” which holds that humans create their social worlds and identities through the language and actions they choose to engage in (Stewart, personal communication, November 22, 2008). From another perspective, which is more Structuralist, human thought, language, subjectivities and social realities are formed and cultivated through external forms and institutional structures (Levine, 1972). Cultural Studies has focused on how meanings and identities are formed in everyday practices and with the consumption of goods and participation in activities. These goods and activities are disseminated and directed by producers with particular intent and with the power to shape the meanings of these goods and activities. In other words, those who control the means of production control culture. Non-Marxist theorists (Du Gay, 1997) resist the wholly structural theme of that statement, suggesting that consumers and participants have some agency to interpret their experiences in ways that might differ from the intent of the producers. Gramsci (1971) and Hall (1985, 2003) are representative of this perspective.

My understanding of this cultural process can be expressed in the following way (and is resonant with Giddens’ duality of structure, 1984). It is my belief that culture is constituted within a dialectical relationship between human agency and social structures: Structural traditions and institutions influence human thought, language and action; and those elements, if reflected upon, can influence and change structural traditions and institutions. Therefore, culture – the ideas, sentiments and sensibilities I have mentioned – and actions, symbols, and artifacts that communicate, symbolize and constitute it, is cultivated and constrained within that dialectical dynamic between agency and structure. This perspective is aligned with a Gramscian (1971) concept of hegemony, which has been further elaborated by Hall (1985, 2003).

I should also note that I am interested in an emic ethnographic understanding of how members of a particular discourse understand culture. Additionally, if they are setting out to “change culture,” I am interested in how they believe culture can be influenced and changed and the activities that they choose to accomplish this. These emic concepts can be understood in light of formal theories of culture and those theories of culture can also be “tested” through such particular case studies.

⁴ When I use the term “ideology” here, I mean very simply the ideas and sensibilities influencing a discourse. When I begin to move toward analysis, I am more interested in assessing hegemony, according to Gramsci (1971). Gramsci’s hegemony involves a social dynamic of coercion and consent that frames the cultural, political, and ideological

Coverage of CR in the Literature

To date, the coverage of CR has been piecemeal. While numerous scholars have focused on CR in various ways, they have not been successful in providing a comprehensive overview of CR, its characteristics, and how it is being enacted in the world. A variety of scholars have chosen to focus on distinct aspects of CR which leaves us with several differing analyses. A more complete overview of CR would offer researchers sufficient information in one place, rather than having to search multiple sources. For example, journalists and authors in the social sciences have made statements about the significance of the CR movement (Boston, 2001; Clarkson, 1994; Gabbert, 1991; Pottenger, 2007), but each address that question in different ways. Boston (2001) refers to how actors within CR infiltrate the U.S. government to lobby and create change. Clarkson (1994) explains the principles and commitments of dominionism and how they fuel various organizations' efforts to influence public policy. Gabbert (1991) writes about how the ideology of Christian libertarianism catalyzes many citizens to identify with CR. And finally, Pottenger (2007) covers how CR influences institutions, organizations, and educational systems through their grassroots organizing. All of these commentaries shed

social scene in terms of those things that are most right, good, and desired in identity, values, and day to day goals and interactions for a society. It involves a certain kind of power – “the power to frame alternatives and contain opportunities to win and shape consent, so that the granting of legitimacy to the dominant classes appears not only ‘spontaneous’ but natural and normal” (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts, 1976, p. 38). All of this occurs on the terrain of civil society and the state, which was a vital piece of Althusser’s analysis of the ideological state apparatus (Hall, 1985). Hall (2003) describes that the organization of hegemony according to Gramsci was not guaranteed: that social forces did not move naturally, but had to be organized in some way. This organization was most effective, according to Gramsci, when it was organized so that it *appears* to be natural, eliminating resistance or antagonism.

light onto different aspects of CR from different perspectives, yet they do not cite each other. They remain as disconnected parallel reports on CR. Similarly, estimates of the numbers of its followers, its main tenets, and its historical exemplars are all covered separately by differing scholars.

Another case of this fractured coverage of CR is commentary on its strategies for cultural change. This very important mobilizing point for CR is not often commented on explicitly. However, strategies for cultural change are still implicit within CR discourse, and in order to analyze their ideology and prescribed actions, these strategies must be made explicit. An overview of CR would bring together all of this descriptive commentary to make each of its dimensions more apparent and readily accessible. To date, this level of analysis is not available in the aforementioned texts.

Most treatments of CR take for granted its existence as an already-solidified community that then strategically broadcasts and acts on its uniform sentiments, desires and goals. This presumption interferes with an important research goal that has yet to be achieved, which is uncovering and exploring how individuals, groups and families and their social concerns participate in the production and maintenance of this discourse community; activity which in turn also constitutes members themselves in a hegemonic fashion. As much of the research on CR has been conducted by journalists, political scientists, and religious scholars, (and not communication scholars), the communicative ontology of CR has not yet been indicated or examined in the literature. Using theories of constitutive rhetoric as a heuristic with which to make this inquiry is a good starting point for this goal. Charland (1987) popularized this theory, illustrating how to analyze the

constitution of “a people” through the rhetoric found in printed texts.⁵ The Quebecois White Paper he refers to is a foundational document of the Quebecois national identity. Though he did suggest that analysts should also look to music, architecture, and embodied actors, he did not provide case studies as exemplars. Adding to Charland’s analysis visual rhetoric, including the work which has come to be known as “the rhetoric of display” (Prelli, 2006) and “the rhetoric of bodies” (Selzer and Crowley, 1999) expands upon Charland’s case studies of constitutive rhetoric and adds other dimensions besides official documents for its study. These treatments of rhetoric contend that identities are constituted not just by official language recorded in institutional documents, but in the everyday subtle and nonverbal “language” demonstrated through physical attributes of the social world and how humans interact with them. Additionally, adding to this the ideas of Peter Ives (2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2009), who interprets Gramsci as being politically invested in linguistic hegemony, and Ernesto Laclau’s (2005) study of the constitution of populism will help to extend the theory of constitutive rhetoric in order to better comprehend its daily manifestation in social practices such as those of CR. At stake is the question of how much and why do people participate in the production of discourse that, to some, does not seem necessarily in their best interest. For example, does the elimination of critical thinking benefit the course of life of an individual (or his impact on society)? Is it beneficial to one’s offspring to have so many children that it is

⁵ Charland is influenced by Althusser (1970), Burke (1945), McGee (1975), and many other thinkers. Gramsci (1971) and Laclau (2005), with their Marxist emphasis, represent a related tradition underscoring the hegemonic activities of constitutive rhetoric. Also, it can be said that Hall (1985, 2003), Butler (1990, 1993, 1997, 2004) and Anderson (1991) have all developed their own versions of constitutive rhetorics, though they don’t call it that.

not possible (nor desired) to send them to college? Why is it that women would invite their husbands to participate in a discourse that would require that wife's submission (and some would say "oppression")? And is adherence to a so-called "biblical" government or economics going to benefit this "people," or does this (as yet unfulfilled vision) involve their predictable demise?

The second purpose of the study, investigating the means and modes that promulgate, circulate and extend the CR discursive community and the constitution of "a people," begins with recognizing how multi-faceted and creative this discourse is. CR leaders, organizations, and adherents are extremely active in constantly narrating its ideology in numerous different forms. This is evident in the existence and circulation of modes such as literature, catalogs and publishing houses; media, music, games and costumes; blogs, websites, and images; and conversation, performances, and programs such as conferences, workshops and retreats, that are dedicated to sharing and learning about the CR perspective. In order to learn about the active participation of members in the constitution of this discourse and its "people," it is important to look at how these forms are created and engaged with in ways that influence members' daily social practices. My preliminary analysis of this community demonstrated that a study of CR could not be restricted to face to face interaction nor exclusive to media circulation practices nor only focused on written forms of rhetoric. I came to see that the CR discourse community is constituted in a sophisticated and inventive combination, layering, and repetition of all of these aspects of communication together. Examining it only in part would not address the artful way in which these areas of communicative practice masterfully cooperate to constitute this "people," their identities and cultural and

political sensibilities and practices. Albeit this requires a more global “birds-eye” view of the movement and will not provide a micro analysis of the interactions between these connected areas, this approach is both essential to understanding the ontology of a discursive movement and it is largely missing from Communication Studies. This study can be an introduction to the idea of integrating the study of these various aspects of the discipline and is late in coming to Communication (C. Gordon, personal communication, November 16, 2010).

The third purpose of this study is to consider what social, cultural, and political subjectivities, practices and institutions are constituted within the CR community as members participate in its discursive activities. This question has public import, if it is indeed the goal of the CR community to populate the world with its adherents to the extent that it changes culture. CR ideology dictates what proper ways to think about the self and the world are; what it means to be a man or a woman; how parents should raise their children; and how society should be structured in terms of biblical government, economics, and patriarchy. The promulgation of these ideas and the constitution of a people that follow them influences how future individuals and citizens will think, live and consequently impact the public sphere; and how they will coexist with those who do not subscribe to the CR way of life. This question also contributes to the study of constitutive rhetorics, the circulation of media, visual communication, performance, and social interaction and how these areas work together to constitute a distinct people, their ideology, and their practices.

The fourth purpose of this study is to consider the role of hegemony in the constitution of CR discourse, identity and cultural life. It is tempting to disparage the

leadership of a movement for its furtive manipulation of an unsuspecting body of people. In this case, it became evident that the production of CR in its totality is not a top-down creation. Adherents at all levels of participation identify with and activate CR ideas and practices, maintaining and augmenting its substance and capacity in ways that suit them. CR, therefore, is a consummate example of Gramsci's (1971) hegemony; yet it even exceeds his understanding of the process, considering the contemporary means and modes of constitution currently available. This case illustrates that the concept and enactment of hegemony is not just a liberal blueprint for cultural revolution, but that it is being successfully capitalized upon and demonstrated in the conservative realm.

Finally, the fifth purpose of the study is to create a methodology and method for the study of dispersed "peoples" and their discursive lives. To date, traditional ethnography studies a geographically-bound group of people, emphasizing their face to face communication and advocates that it is primarily conversation that constructs culture and the social world (J. Stewart, personal communication, November 22, 2008). Theories of constitutive rhetoric do address the ontology of "peoples," or culture, but are rarely taken to the field to ascertain how they might be applied to contemporary social settings. Theories in cultural studies that take up the constitution of "peoples" (such as Laclau, 2005) also tend to be more theoretical than empirical. Integrating aspects of both ethnography and rhetoric and cultural studies will offer a more practical and stronger heuristic for investigating dispersed movements.

In Chapter Four, my methodology and methods section, I will argue that combining ethnography and rhetorical theory and cultural studies is not only the most appropriate method of data collection and analysis for this study, but it is an approach

that may enhance future studies that, in the past solely utilized either ethnography or rhetoric on their own. Many ethnographic studies seek to study “culture” but lack the perspective of contemporary rhetoric to show how that very culture is constituted. Conversely, many studies of rhetoric consist of good theorizing about the constitution of culture, but do not go out into the field to engage with real cases to see how it is done. This study will bring the two together to not only provide an apt heuristic frame for analysis, but to offer up an option for other studies about the constitution of cultures and peoples in the future.

Significance of the Study

Because of the combination of different theoretical and methodological perspectives in this study, it has significance for a broad reach of scholarship. It offers the most comprehensive treatment of CR to date; it presents data that would facilitate the work in many disciplines that study religion; it extends the theory of the rhetorical constitution of a “people;” and it promotes innovations in its methodological approach.

First and foremost, this study brings new material to those studying or wanting to learn more about Christian Reconstruction. Prior to this work, data on CR has been fragmented and there has been no comprehensive overview of its history, implications, or contemporary status. This study brings together the many pieces of research and commentary that have already been available and adds contemporary data as well as a Communication Studies perspective. This perspective will offer an examination of how CR is taken up and becomes animated by its adherents, wherein identities are fashioned, along with the nature and existence of CR. When I refer to contemporary data, I mean that I have observed, visited with, and had discussions with individuals and groups who

enact and embody CR in their daily lives. These added dimensions contribute significantly to what has been known and documented about CR.

This new data and analysis would be of interest to scholars in a wide variety of disciplines. Scholars within religious studies and the sociology of religion have referred to CR in terms of its relevance to millennialist movements (Cowan, 2003b), for which its relationship to the “end of times” is compared to (and contrasted with) other religious movements. CR is also considered within the study of new religious movements (NRMs) (Cowan, 2003a), where it is grouped among a very diverse listing of practices that have either branched off from more established religions and denominations or that are brand new, especially as both respond to contemporary conditions. CR can also be studied in the context of social movements (sociology) and political science, which observe these groups and their discourses in terms of their relationship to modernity (Christiano, 2007) and to electoral politics (Wald and Calhoun-Brown, 2007).

Those within public sphere studies, the study of publics, counterpublics, and public culture would find CR to be an interesting case in terms of its relationship to democracy and its liberal humanist roots; its understanding of the concepts of public and private; its understanding of what public discourse should consist of; and its understanding of its place in public culture. The scholars of folklore studies, anthropology and performance studies may be interested in similar questions, focusing on how CR enacts these concepts (and more) within their storytelling, social practices, and communicative performances. Some anthropologists (e.g., Hirschkind, 2001, 2006; Larkin 2008; and Mahmood, 2005) have recently established an investigation of religious counterpublics in non-U.S. countries, and CR provides a case for inquiry about how that

type of entity operates in the U.S. Within Communication Studies, this research is relevant for those studying culture, media studies, visual communication and visual rhetoric, contemporary rhetorical studies and public spheres and cultural studies. The study directly discusses how this discourse impacts and seeks to impact culture. The discourse is highly mediated and is circulated, disseminated, and sustained by way of media materials, images, and practices. Engagement with these materials and practices communicates and establishes values while also constituting cultures, identities, and social and political terrains.

The theoretical framework utilized within this study extends the theories of constitutive rhetoric recently advanced by several scholars by providing a case that demonstrates a variety of elements of the constitution of “a people.” Whereas many studies of constitutive rhetoric are purely theoretical or focus on institutional texts, this study illustrates how “the constitutive” does take place among the forms of conversation, social practices, the display of bodies and images, and heightened performances – the visual – in addition to texts. Methodologically, the act of bringing together ethnography and rhetorical and cultural studies is fairly new and in need of development. This study provides an introductory exemplar to be considered and improved upon in the future.

Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter Two introduces and overviews Christian Reconstruction: its history, its relationship to Dominion Theology, and its theological and denominational heritage. I then give an account of CR’s main figureheads: its original thinkers and founders (1930-1980) and its newer (post 1980/1990) writers and icons; current leaders, and prominent organizers. I describe the ways in which CR is prevalent in the mission and curriculum of

educational institutions, such as homeschooling ventures, colleges and law schools, and an independent Christian film production school. I also note how CR influences many producers of media, internet businesses, and publishers. This chapter maps out the significance and impact of the movement to date, socially, culturally and politically. It describes the main tenets of CR and provides some historical examples of Calvinism (which has influenced the practice of CR throughout history). The ways in which CR is committed to a strategy of cultural and social change are made explicit, through analysis of its main writings, leaders, and adherent comments. Finally, the chapter ends with a statement on the appeal and future of the movement as well as extant commentary on and critique of CR itself.

Chapter Three introduces the social and communication theory that can be used and considered in order to approach the study of CR as the constitution of “a people.” Noting briefly how some popular philosophers have accounted for religion, this chapter then considers how religious movements have been addressed by some scholars within the sociology of religion, political science, anthropology, folklore studies, communication/media/rhetorical studies, and the study of the public sphere(s), publics and counterpublics. I argue that these differing perspectives have not been put in conversation regarding their views on religion, and I suggest that the best way to approach the question of the constitution of a people and its cultural and political terrain is to respond to the questions of these literatures by way of first analyzing the rhetorical constitution of “the people” of CR. My proposed theoretical framework for investigating the constitution of CR is laid out and highlights the work of cultural theorists Althusser (1971); Butler (1990, 1993, 1997); Gramsci (1971); Hall (1976, 1985, 2003); Ives

(2004a, 2004b); and Laclau (2005) in combination with theories of constitutive (Burke, 1939, 1950/1969; Charland, 1987; and McGee, 1975, 1980) and visual rhetoric and display (DeLuca, 1999; DeLuca & Peeples, 2002; Hill and Helmers, 2004; Olson, Finnegan & Hope, 2008; Prelli, 2006; Selzer & Crowley, 1999) The chapter ends with the study's research questions.

Chapter Four gives an account of and justification for my choices in method and methodology, and describes how I went about using multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork combined with analysis using contemporary rhetorical theory and cultural studies. I explain how I chose whom to study, which organizations, and which locations. I describe preliminary research that was done before and in preparation for this study. I overview and explain the different data sources and data collection methods I used, as well as offer an explanation of my analytic tools and approach.

Chapter Five and Six lay out an analysis of the most prominent aspects of practice and identity constituted through the CR discourse. In Chapter Five, I delineate how Biblical Patriarchy and family serve as what a CR leader calls "methods" for cultural change as well as being prominently encouraged and practiced aspects of CR identity. I describe the prescribed structure of the family and the great changes required of these families, the whole new pattern of life that they must participate in to match that desired structure. I then depict how history and historical figures are invoked within CR discourse as models and guides for living this way in contemporary times. I include stories of some of those who have decided to make this great change in their and their families' lives. And finally, I explicate some of the main elements of the CR identity and practices, such as the commitment to a multigenerational vision and plan; large families

and the rejection of birth control as a strategy for transforming culture; the father leaving professional life outside of the home to be in the home at all times in the role of patriarch and shepherd; the rejection of public schooling and the embrace of homeschooling; the enculturation of children; a dress code and an online industry predicated upon modesty and a particular style of clothing; and the rejection of peer-segregated activities and youth culture outside of the home in favor of family-focused socialization. This chapter ends with a discussion of how these practices and the CR language and grammars work to rhetorically constitute the CR “people.” It also illuminates how the solidity of CR identity depends upon identifying and articulating an antagonistic Other.

Chapter Six is an explanation of how the nationalistic and patriotic aspect of CR identity is constituted. It begins by defining and explaining the CR concept of liberty and religious freedom, which is at the foundation of this way of understanding the relationship between God and America, between CR and democracy (and government in general), and between its adherents and the public sphere. I then introduce the idea of historical revisionism, as explained from a CR perspective, and the CR mission to re-learn and re-teach the Christian heritage of the U.S. I overview several of the ways utilized to teach history, including speakers, conferences and events, media materials, mundane conversation, images, the display of artifacts, bodies and physical spaces, re-enactments and dramatic performances, narrated tours, music, toys and games, and monuments. I detail the discourse and rhetoric of American heroism and nationalism as it intersects with Christianity within CR language and grammars. The chapter ends with a discussion of how these ideas, grammars and practices constitute this particular aspect of

CR identity. Chapter Seven includes a summary of the study, an interpretation of its main findings, an accounting of the limitations of the study, and avenues for future research.

Besides addressing the five main purposes of this study in my research, I was motivated by several key questions. First, I wanted to investigate the communicative constitution of identity and culture and the political implications of this process. I did not find an approach or method available within Communication Studies that addressed this task in the way that I sought fit: Language and social interaction focused almost exclusively on face-to-face interaction; many scholars within cultural studies seemed to make very broad macro statements about this phenomenon (many without doing empirical observation or close investigation of language and interaction); media studies fixed its attention only on the media involved; and rhetorical studies seemed to focus exclusively on text-based data, leaving out the embodied and performed experience. As noted, any of these approaches on their own would not have been sufficient for my study due to the means, modes, and conditions of the discourse that I chose to analyze. The methodology and contingent method I have crafted responds to the nature of this particular movement (and can be utilized for the study of others like it).

Secondly, I wanted to study how a particular group believes that they can impact culture and how they go about doing that, as I am not only interested in how extant social theories purport to understand the constitution of culture and identity, but find it crucial to learn how everyday theorizers – practical theorizers – see themselves participating in this process.⁶ This is important to me because of my stance that language and how we go

⁶ By “everyday theorizers” or “practical theorizers,” I mean ordinary people living their lives; laymen. See also Gadamer, H. G. (1989). *Truth and method*. New York, NY: Continuum.

about describing the world influences its ontology and constitution. Though it is my belief that this happens whether or not an individual or group explicitly articulates how they are impacting culture, I believe we can learn much about a discourse community in addition to the rhetorical production of culture by explicating their insights into this matter. Asking this question will help to illustrate the contours of the terrain between duality and structure (Giddens, 1984): the relationship between actors' agency and social structures in constituting social realities. This approach honors an emic and etic understanding of culture: a scholarly theorizing of culture in the face of the ways that study participants understand and use the term.

Third, I have wanted to add to the conversation about the place of religion in mainstream American society; that it is so much more than simply theological or spiritual, but crucially influenced by and influencing cultural, political, economic, and social conditions in society and in all of its foundational frameworks, whether government, official, social, and cultural institutions, and everyday presumptions, habits, sentiments, and sensibilities. Fourth, I wanted to address Communication Theory in a particular way. In my early training in language and social interaction and intercultural and cultural communication, I became aware that the body of literature I was exposed to seemed not to consider extant social theory and other prevailing theories of culture and society. I did not want to remain in nor contribute to an insular study of communication theory, which is, in my opinion, far too prevalent within the discipline. It was my hope to take what I had learned from speech communication and integrate it with the larger questions of cultural studies, a divide which I believe must be bridged in order to have a

more complete understanding of human communication, culture, and society. The theory that I turn to and the method I have chosen to deploy represent this goal.

I believe that I addressed all of these questions within the confines of this study. Though the study may create more questions than it provides answers and conclusions, I feel that I have successfully entered my concerns into a conversation about culture, religion and politics from the communicative perspective.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: CHRISTIAN RECONSTRUCTIONISM

For the past several decades, the Christian Reconstructionism (CR) movement has been steadily moving from ideas worked out in books and sermons to enactment in many families' daily lives. Whereas many movements begin at the grassroots level, CR began as more of an intellectual position codified by a handful of men trained in divinity and academic scholarship. The ideas were then disseminated and taken up and worked out in practice by those attracted to its ideals. Because of its theological complexity, CR's ideas are difficult to describe succinctly; due to its diverse and geographically widespread following, its affiliates are a challenge to characterize. At its core, Christian Reconstructionism (CR) is a theological doctrine and way of life that seeks to uphold God's sovereignty in every area of life and society, requiring a reconstruction of Christianity and of American society in order to fulfill and complete the earthly kingdom of God (Misztal and Shupe, 1992; Pottenger, 2007; Shupe, 1997). The ensuing section will delineate a more thorough definition and description of CR, detail some indicators of its growing popularity and support; lay out its main and peripheral figureheads and tenets; assess its strategy and activities toward societal reconstruction; and outline some commentary on its presumptions and actions.

CR is often referred to as equivalent with Dominion Theology by its critics and the popular press. This study will refer to them as distinct while also noting overlaps in some of their goals and adherents. Dominionism is a broader movement seeking to make society and public life more Christian and it is claimed to influence much of the Christian Right (Diamond, 1985, 1995; Clarkson, 1994, 1997). Dominion Theology is "a grouping

of theological systems with the common belief that the law of God - as codified in the Bible - should exclusively govern society, to the exclusion of secular law, a view also known as Theonomy” (Barron, 1995). CR is one manifestation of Dominion Theology. Misztal and Shupe (1992) write explain that “the distinguishing mark of Dominion Theology is a commitment to carrying out an approach to building (or rebuilding) society that is self-consciously defined as Christian rather than based on a broader consensus” (p. 84). Dominion Theology is based upon the Bible's text in Genesis 1:26 (Berlet, 2006), which is:

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” (King James International Version)

Those who follow Dominion Theology believe that Christianity should have authority in all areas of life. This may include the domain of the home, education, church and the state (Abbot, 1990). Sociologist Sara Diamond (1989) has characterized Dominionism as one of two forms: “hard” (desiring to impose Biblical Law) or “soft” or generic Dominionism where not as much global control is sought and adherents hope to extend Christian influence and ethics, but do not seek to impose Biblical Law. Later it will be explained that CR does contain the idea of dominion as one of its tenets, to the extent that it requires that the laws of civil government are guided by Old Testament law.

The overlap between Dominion Theology and CR may cause confusion for those unfamiliar with these views. It is necessary to note, for example, that many conservative Christians believe that the world should be guided by Christian belief (the idea that Christianity has dominion), but they would not necessarily advocate for the institutionalization of Old Testament law. Hence, Misztal and Shupe (1992) have noted

the lack of specificity that might come with painting these distinct orientations with one broad brush. Others such as House and Ice (1988), however, believe the two terms are simply synonyms. Diamond (1989) writes that Dominion Theology has a long history (Diamond, 1989). It originally and was brought to the fore with John Darby's Dispensationalism in the 1840's and 1850's and took a back seat with the rise of Pre-Millennialism in the early to mid-1900's (Dark Christianity, 2007).^{7 8} CR represents one form of Post-Millennialism's reappearance in the United States around the 1970's. It also strongly influenced the political Christian Right in the 1980's (Diamond, 1989).

A movement that can be considered both Dominionist and subscribing to Dominion Theology, Clarkson (1994) has called CR a movement primarily of ideas without a singular home in any one denomination, institution, leader or text. It has been strung together by a few scholars (Rousas John Rushdoony, Gary North, and Greg Bahnsen) who identify with Reformed or Orthodox Presbyterianism.⁹ Those who have

⁷ Dispensationalism is a Protestant evangelical tradition based on an interpretation of the Bible that proposes a series of chronologically successive "dispensations" or periods in history in which God relates to human beings in different ways under different biblical covenants (DeWitt, 2002). As a system, Dispensationalism is rooted in the writings of John Nelson Darby (1800–1882) and the Brethren Movement. The theology of Dispensationalism consists of a distinctive eschatological "end times" perspective, which means that at the end of time, Christians will be taken away or "raptured" to live with God in His kingdom and all non-Christians will remain on earth to perish (Blaising & Bock, 1993).

⁸ Dominion Theology is post-millennial in that it strives for the presence of God's kingdom here on earth; pre-millennialists believe that there will be a rapture where Christians will be taken to be with God in His kingdom somewhere besides earth.

⁹ The Reformed Presbyterian Church is the more conservative wing of Presbyterianism, which follows Calvinistic tenets. Some of its beliefs include the inerrancy of the Bible, the "fundamentals" which led to the term "fundamentalism," and a patriocentric stance which requires that all church elders must be male. Calvinism, named after John Calvin, had its beginnings in the Protestant Reformation in 1534. It found its influence mostly in

taken it up and extended it have also come from Reformed Baptist leanings.¹⁰ Adherents of CR are not ‘located’ in any one particular geographical area; their numbers are located across the United States (and some reside outside of the U.S.). The coherence and stability of CR is constituted by way of a discourse that is presented in large, dense intellectual texts and then taken up and circulated by organizations and individuals in the form of educational workshops and products, discussion, worship and other rituals, internet blog chats, programming in television broadcasts, the production and consumption of media products, and events devoted to CR ideas and training.

Figure Heads

Currently, there are numerous organizations in the United States who educate on and advocate for Christian Reconstruction. The leadership and inception of the movement, however, can be traced to three men who originally provided its intellectual framework: Rousas John Rushdoony (1917-2001), Gary North (1942-), and Greg Bahnsen (1948-1995) (Gabbert, 1991). Each crafted a distinct branch of CR and adherents generally espouse the ideas of at least one or all of these figures (Gabbert, 1991). Gary North is the only one of these leaders alive today, and he still actively contributes to CR literature and activities. A web of other thinkers, writers, and organizers developed around these men, and they continue to do the work of CR. I will

Scotland, the Netherlands, and some of Germany. The North American Puritans were Calvinist. Calvinism upholds the sovereignty of God in all areas of life, the sinful nature of man, and the salvation of any man as pre-determined by God (predestination). Further explanation of Calvinism will be presented later in this chapter.

¹⁰ Reformed Baptists are also Calvinistic in their doctrine. Though they come from a different doctrinal line from the Reformed Presbyterians, they have much in common due to their Calvinist framework.

review the contributions of each of these figures, beginning with Rushdoony, the purported father of Christian Reconstruction.

Rousas John Rushdoony was born in New York City in 1917, the son of recent immigrants from Turkey (Williams, 2006). His parents were originally from Armenia, which was the first nation to adopt Christianity as its state religion (Gabbert, 1991). Rushdoony received a doctorate in educational philosophy and then became an ordained minister in the Presbyterian church of the USA in 1944. For eight years he did missionary work with the Western Shoshone and Paiute Indians in Owyhee, Nevada (Abbott, 1990). He was ordained in the Calvinist tradition, following his ancestors' faith (Williams, 2006). In 1965, Rushdoony moved to Los Angeles and started a newsletter whose mission was to support those who were promoting a "Christian Renaissance," an activity that is considered to mark the beginning of the CR movement (Abbott, 1990). The non-profit Chalcedon Foundation (www.chalcedon.edu) was founded by Rushdoony in 1966. It is now run, in part, by his son, Mark R. Rushdoony. In 1974, Chalcedon began to publish the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, which details Rushdoony's foundational thought. It is no longer published, but is archived and available for sale at Chalcedon's website (www.chalcedon.edu). Currently, the organization publishes the *Chalcedon Report*. Rushdoony was a prolific writer in his lifetime; his major works were *By What Standard* (1959) and *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (1973). Rushdoony He died in 2001.

Rushdoony was ordained in the Presbyterian USA church, but in 1958 he converted to the more conservative Orthodox Presbyterian church, which is committed to the Reformed tradition. One of the main founders of the Orthodox Presbyterian church was Cornelius Van Til (1895-1987). Van Til was not only influential to Rushdoony, but

his epistemology of Presuppositional Apologetics is the basis for CR theology “has provided the methodological basis for Reconstructionism” (Gabbert, 1991).¹¹ Although Cornelius Van Til was said to be opposed to the goals of CR (Abbott, 1990), he provided one of the centerpieces of its theology. His epistemology, or understanding of truth and reality, presumed that the only way man’s knowledge had any validity was if it came from God or the Bible (Abbott, 1990).¹² Another way to state this is that man’s knowledge or pre-supposed understanding of truth must be based upon the triune God of the Bible (Gabbert, 1991).¹³ According to this perspective, “one’s faith in ultimate truth is not subject to historical or scientific investigation. Issues of final importance are determined not by empirical deduction but by the adoption of a presuppositional frame of reference” (Gabbert, 1991, p. 11). This frame of reference includes presuppositions about God, knowledge, reality, and one’s place in the world. “No sense may be made of reality apart from this framework” (Gabbert, 1991, p. 12). According to this view, any person who attempts to interpret the world only from his own perspective, apart from these Godly presuppositions, would be presuming autonomy. This stance is erroneous, because man is not autonomous, but a creation and derivation of God (Rushdoony, 1969). This

¹¹ Presuppositional Apologetics is a method for viewing the world that presumes that one’s world view is based upon one’s presuppositions. To be certain that the worldview will fit Calvinist tenets, one must scrutinize his or her presuppositions about God, truth, and knowledge, and make sure to carry these out. This method also assumes that there is no neutral ground between a believer and non-believer and that discussions about truth are not valuable or worthwhile because the believer has faulty presuppositions and therefore cannot arrive at truth.

¹² The use of “man’s” here to refer to humankind is Rushdoony’s style. For the most part, CR thinkers follow patriarchy, so their writings and statements are male-centered. My writing will reflect that perspective.

¹³ Triune is an adjective to describe a God with a trinity nature.

An attempt to think or live autonomously shows a flaw in logic and is the reason that any non-Christian claims must be challenged and, not accepted (Abbott, 1990). Rushdoony simplified this with his saying “no God, no knowledge”¹⁴ (Abbott, 1990). According to Abbott (1990), Rushdoony moved from this maxim statement to the idea that there are no laws apart from God’s laws (Rushdoony, 1973, 1982). Following this line of logic, the choice is not between Biblical Law and Natural Law, but between law and no law (Rushdoony, 1973, 1982). And “accordingly, every sphere of existence must be brought in subjection to and consistency with the Bible which consists primarily of the Mosaic laws and their implications for daily life in this fallen world” (Gabbert, 1991, p. 12).

If one was to charge that this epistemology is based upon circular reasoning, that would not be denied. Van Til argued that all reasoning was circular – that any person making a claim would be guided by their original assumptions (North, 1988). Christian thought, then, must be circular because all reasoning goes back to God (Abbott, 1990). This epistemology extends to ethics, according to Abbott (1990), such that things are good because God has claimed they are good. And the highest good is seeking the kingdom of God. Abbott explains that the truth can only be known by individuals when God “regenerates” a person a person (Rushdoony, 1973, 1982);¹⁵ otherwise one’s knowledge is invalid. Abbot (1990) asserts that Van Til’s epistemology gives the Reconstructionists the basis to assert that the only acceptable understanding of society, politics, economics and other spheres is one that is from this perspective of Christianity.

¹⁴ Which is an ontological argument for the requirement/existence of God for knowledge: If all knowledge exists because of God, then any statement or concept that does not come from a Godly perspective is faulty/invalid.

¹⁵ Given a new and holy birth; born again.

Pottenger (2007) points to the irony that because this epistemology cannot be disproved, it is very similar to the logic of postmodernism, which the Reconstructionist detests.

Rushdoony believed that beyond dismantling secularism, they adherents of CR needed to “offer a means to positively build society according to biblical principles” (English, 2003). His son Mark describes this goal as reconstruction: “Following God’s giving of dominion over the earth to man and man’s subsequent fall, Scripture tells the history of God working to restore, or reconstruct, the original order of creation” (Rushdoony, 2005b). Gabbert (1991) suggests that Christian Reconstructionists “idealize the Medieval Catholic institution, as it built hospitals, orphanages, universities, libraries, [and] poor houses” (p. 9) toward the goal of taking dominion and shaping society according to its theology.¹⁶

Van Til’s epistemology also informed Rushdoony’s political theology. For Example, Rushdoony explains that presuppositional epistemology is the reason that the Enlightenment and Humanism triumphed over the Reformation. He argues that the humanist philosophers such as René Descartes, George Berkeley, Immanuel Kant, and G. W. F. Hegel were focused so closely on the individual, that the individual became the new God, accompanied by the ideology of individual freedom. Before that time, the Western idea of individual liberty held that it was granted by God and through religion. The enlightenment philosophy with its presuppositions of autonomy displaced godly reasoning and reference to the Bible (Pottenger, 2007). Rushdoony argues that this

¹⁶ Though grounded in a very different tradition, Antonio Gramsci (1971) also recognized the power of the Catholic Church in the Medieval (pre-Reformation) period and saw it as an apt model for Marxism. (Advocates of CR are vehement enemies of Marxism, as they believe that one of its goals is to rid society of religion or belief in God.)

ideology of autonomy is what created the nation state – man became the ruler of man instead of God. He saw the state as man’s attempt to control his destiny and make up his own rules (Rushdoony, 2005a), rather than being obliged to follow God. This, according to Williams (2006), was the source of Rushdoony’s anti-statism. To return to a Godly state would require that civil law be changed to be guided by Biblical Law, covering the areas of civil society, church, the family and every other area of life (Rushdoony, 1973, 1982). Civil law as Biblical Law, according to Rushdoony, should encourage citizens to be Christian and guide society in Christian moral standards (Pottenger, 2007). Though Cornelius Van Til believed that the kingdom of God was an ideal that would never be reached on earth, Rushdoony utilized his epistemology to support this very effort. Rushdoony was a prolific writer in his lifetime. His major works were *By What Standard* (1959) and *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (1973). His ideas and work are carried on through the Chalcedon Foundation and beyond.

Greg Bahnsen was born in 1948 and died in 1995. He met and was inspired by Rushdoony at an Orthodox Presbyterian Church summer camp (Abbott, 1990). He also read and was influenced by Van Til. Bahnsen held an M.A. of divinity and had been taught by Van Til in his Master’s program. He also received a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Southern California (Gabbert, 1991). Bahnsen worked at the Chalcedon Foundation but left in 1976 to teach at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi where he was asked to leave because of his radical theological views (Abbott, 1990). His written work inspires many adherents today, who embrace his careful instruction on theology and apologetics. Some of his seminal books are *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (1977), *House Divided: The Break-up of Dispensational Theology* (with

Kenneth L. Gentry, (1989), and *By This Standard: The Authority Of God's Law Today* (1991). He is known for his teachings on argumentation and debate in order to defend the Christian faith. He participated in many public debates against self-professed atheists. Bahnsen died an early death at the age of 47 due to complications from heart surgery.

Gary North was born in 1942 and is actively involved in CR activities. He worked for Rushdoony at the Chalcedon Foundation in 1963 for a time before going to Westminster Theological Seminary. After one year of study, he returned to the University of California in Riverside and earned his Ph.D. in history in 1972 (Abbott, 1990). He eventually married Rushdoony's daughter Sharon. North worked again for a time with the Chalcedon Foundation before beginning the Institute for Christian Economics and the Geneva Divinity School. According to Abbott (1990), North's Institute focuses more on ecclesiastical issues (how the church should run and be governed) and the Chalcedon group looks more to social issues. He and Rushdoony had a falling out over their differences and did not speak for several years.

North is considered to be the most acerbic of the CR leaders (Gabbert, 1991). He has been known to make the most extreme statements regarding moral law and punishment, calling public schools whorehouses (Gabbert, 1991); declaring that gay men should be executed if caught in the act of sex (Berlet, 1995); and arguing that capital punishment should be meted out for apostasy (abandonment of the faith), heresy, blasphemy, witchcraft, astrology, adultery, or incest, and more (Berlet, 1995). Describing his view of the ideal state, North has stated that Reconstructionists should use the

“doctrine of religious liberty to gain independence for Christian schools until we train up a generation of people who know that there is no religious neutrality, no neutral law, no neutral education, and no neutral civil government. Then they will get busy in constructing a Bible-based

social, political, and religious order which finally denies the religious liberty of the enemies of God” (Jordan, 1982, p. 25).

English (2003) warns that the concept of liberty is a useful tool to the Reconstructionists, but “it is ultimately to be denied to anyone who is not Christian once they are in power” (p. 116).

North is a strong supporter of the free market and is staunchly against any state attempts to provide social welfare, as he believes the church and families should provide for each other. In the years approaching the year 2000 (the anticipation of ‘Y2K’), North predicted the fall of the American economy and stability. He was hoping for upheaval that would pave the way for the Christian reconstruction of society. His website (<http://www.garynorth.com/>) provided and linked to over two thousand articles about how to prepare for the chaos (Lorenz, 2009), including tips on getting out of the stock market, supplies one should stock in their home, and other survivalist strategies. Despite the fact that his predictions for Y2K did not come to fruition, he remains an influential figure for many Reconstructionists (though some do try to distance themselves from him due to his harsh comments about unbelievers and strict punishments). Today, North focuses on political commentary and writing about economics. His many books are sold on countless CR publishing websites, and he regularly appears as a speaker at Reconstructionist conferences.

As Rushdoony, Bahnsen, and North grew older, other writers began to be identified with CR. Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984), who studied under Cornelius Van Til, always rejected the goals of CR. But according to Gary North, Schaeffer’s book *A Christian Manifesto* (1982) was influenced by Rushdoony, (Abbott, 1990) and is frequently mentioned as inspirational by CR adherents because Schaeffer believed that

society must be reconstructed (Pottenger, 2007). David Chilton (1951-1997) worked for the Chalcedon Foundation in 1977 (Abbott,1990) and wrote one of the seminal books for CR, *Paradise Restored: A Biblical Theology of Dominion* (1985, 1994). Kenneth Gentry, along with Greg Bahnsen, wrote *House Divided: The Break-up of Dispensational Theology* (1989), another foundational writing. And finally, Ray Sutton (1987), who was also a pastor, penned *That You May Prosper: Dominion by Covenant* (Abbott, 1990). These writers maintained the Reconstructionist doctrine and attempted to make it more accessible to the layperson.

More contemporary writers taking a CR perspective go even further to attempt to articulate how to apply these theological teachings to everyday living and cultural issues. Jennie Chancey, for example, runs a website called “Ladies Against Feminism” (<http://www.ladiesagainstfeminism.com/>) and co-authored a book with Stacy McDonald entitled *Passionate Housewives Desperate for God*, (Chancey & McDonald, 2007). This book is a response to the cultural message in the television show “*Desperate Housewives*,” that which depicts women as frustrated and dissatisfied with material comfort and the goal of ‘having it all.’ Chancey’s and McDonald’s book is a treatise on the pleasure and satisfaction to be found in living out virtuous womanhood in a patriarchal home where God is sovereign. On the topic of masculinity, Phillip Lancaster, in *Family Man, Family Leader* (2003) offers a program of patriarchal leadership for men to find their rightful godly place in the home. In *Biblical Economics: A Commonsense Guide to Our Daily Bread* (2002), R. C. Sproul, Jr. discusses how the Bible transmits an economics for managing every area of life, including the church, the family, the spouse, the home, and work and social life. He underscores how choices about social and

interpersonal behaviors indicate and demonstrate personal values. In his *Family Driven Faith: Doing What It Takes to Raise Sons and Daughters Who Walk with God* (2007), Voddie Baucham advocates for full-time discipleship through homeschooling and a radically different definition of ‘family.’^{17, 18} Literature like this is abundant, but these are some of the more visible CR authors and spokespeople today.

These writers represent the strong intellectual aspect of Christian Reconstructionism. Beyond the printed word, however, other spokespeople in the movement appear in the areas of advocacy and organizing, publishing, education and training, business, media production, and ministry. D. James Kennedy (1930-2007) has been identified as a leader in ministry who was sympathetic to CR (Boston, 2001). He was a very prominent pastor and organizer until his death in 2007. He did not explicitly label himself a Christian Reconstructionist, but many of his views and associations supported that perspective, such as the belief that America’s laws and policies should be consistent with Christianity (Gross, 2005). He was a televangelist and pastor and the founder of the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, CA. He also founded Knox Theological Seminary and the now defunct conservative political group, The Center for Reclaiming America for Christ. He had a Master’s degree in divinity and a Ph.D. in religious education from New York University. After his death in 2007, contributions to his ministry declined sharply and his syndicated radio address was

¹⁷ Discipleship is how a community supports each other to learn and grow in a deepening relationship with God and the enactment of that in each others’ lives.

¹⁸ Baucham and other Reconstructionists contrast their understanding of family, which is a patriarchal institution designed to create Christians who live every sphere of life in the service of God with a more individualistic (and humanistic) idea of family which raises children to become the individuals they want to be in the world.

canceled from many stations. Before his death, however, he was widely regarded and held many captive audiences from his pulpit and over the airwaves and at his annual Reclaiming America for Christ conferences. He wrote, with Jerry Newcombe, *What if America were a Christian Nation Again?* (2005).

Two of the most visible CR leaders today, in terms of organizing, are Gary DeMar and Doug Phillips. Gary DeMar is a writer, speaker, and president of American Vision, whose vision is to “restore America to its Biblical foundation” (American Vision, 2009). He obtained a Master’s degree in Divinity from Reformed Theological Seminary in 1979 and earned his Ph.D. in Christian Intellectual History from Whitefield Theological Seminary in 2007 (American Vision, 2009). His radio show, “The Gary DeMar Show” airs every Saturday from Atlanta, Georgia (American Vision, 2009); he publishes *The Biblical Worldview* magazine, and he contributes to American Vision’s newsblog at www.Americanvision.org. DeMar has written approximately twenty-five books, which, according to English (2003), is how he positioned himself as a spokesperson for CR. His debut and most well-known work is his three-volume series entitled *God and Government* (1990), which details the specifics of how the Bible gives an accounting of how every area of life should be governed by the Christian God (including civil government). He is also known for *The Debate over Christian Reconstruction* (1988) and *Christian Reconstruction: What It Is, What It Isn’t* (1991), co-authored with Gary North. DeMar has been president of American Vision since 1986. Under his leadership, the organization serves as an educator, publisher and clearinghouse of books and media that support and extend its mission to return America to its biblical foundation. Their materials include the topics of history and government, ethics, culture

and childrearing, apologetics and theology, and economics and education. Since 2007 they have hosted a yearly conference which has served as a meeting-place for like-minded individuals and families, and as inspiration and education for CR adherents or those who are curious about the mission.

Doug Phillips is the president of Vision Forum Inc. and Vision Forum Ministries in San Antonio, TX. Phillips and Vision Forum are largely conspicuously absent from scholarly research on CR. However, their Reconstructionist perspective has been noticed and discussed by journalists such as Clarkson (2008), Joyce (2007) and Sharlet (2005). Phillips is the son of Howard Phillips (born in 1941), who was one of the founders of the U. S. Constitution Party (originally the U.S. Taxpayers party) whose vision is “to restore our government to its Constitutional limits and our law to its Biblical foundations” (Constitution Party, 2009). Howard Phillips ran for president in 1996 as the U.S. Constitution Party representative. Doug Phillips went to the George Mason School of Law after which he practiced law for the Home School Legal Defense Association (which advocates for the rights of homeschooling families). His organization Vision Forum Ministries seeks to “communicate a vision for the restoration of the Christian family and the rebuilding of culture for the glory of God” (Vision Forum, 2009a). The Vision Forum website states that “much of Doug’s time is spent teaching with the hope to spur on Christian manhood and sacrificial fatherhood, and to see dads turn their hearts to their wives and children” (Vision Forum 2009a). He is married to Beall Phillips and they have eight children. He, his wife Beall, and their eight children have been described as

prominent figures in the ‘Quiverfull’ movement,¹⁹ which embraces Biblical Patriarchy and eschews birth control in order to accept as many children as God offers in the service of creating a “biblical army” (Joyce, 2009). Phillips has founded the Witherspoon School of Law and Public Policy (www.visionforumministries.org/events/wslpp/) (a training institute that instructs on the biblical foundations of U.S. law), the National Center for Family-Integrated Churches (www.ncfic.org) (an advocacy group for churches in which where adults and children worship together without age-segregated children’s education), and the Vision Forum Family Books and Media catalog (www.visionforum.com/booksandmedia). The catalog features literature, media, games and toys that reinforce a Calvinist perspective on reformation and revival, family discipleship, entrepreneurship, history, and organizing and cultivating Christian families and youth. The introduction to the catalog honors the Reformers’ message, which “emphasized family discipleship, the blessing of marriage, the importance of children, and the duties of a well-ordered household with fruitful mothers whose children call them blessed, and fathers of patriarchal vision who act as the benevolent heads of their homes” (Vision Forum, 2009b). A similar vision motivates the Phillips’ church, the Boerne Christian Assembly, where Mr. Phillips is an elder, the Boerne Christian Assembly.

Towards their vision of restoring Christian family culture, Vision Forum Ministries (www.visionforumministries.org) organizes activities, retreats, and events that

¹⁹ Quiverfull is a movement to trust God’s sovereignty in the area of fertility (and not utilize birth control). A guiding principle is that God’s army will grow and be more successful if it is highly populated. The movement is guided by the passage from Psalm 127: 3-5, ³Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. ⁴Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one’s youth. ⁵Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate. (King James Version)

communicate particular theological and cultural values and conventions while also providing a chance for registrants to meet and get to know other believers. They host the Father and Daughter Retreat at which this important relationship is honored, where the father's "most sacred duty is [the daughter's] protection and preservation from childhood to virtuous womanhood [and the daughter's] relationship with her father will help to define her view of the worth of a woman, the meaning of fulfillment and contentment" (Vision Forum, 2009c). Their Father and Son Retreat is "designed to build a biblical vision for unity and love between the men of a family" (Vision Forum, 2009d). Vision Forum's Christian filmmaking institute academy (www.saicff.org/academy/about/) promises to train young aspiring filmmakers in Christian storytelling and film production and they host an annual San Antonio Independent Christian Film Festival (www.saicff.org/). In 2009, one of the academy's feature films, "*Fireproof*," grossed more than the movies "*Slumdog Millionaire*" and "*Milk*" and the festival was featured on National Public Radio (Hagerty, 2009).

Celebrating the Christian heritage of the United States, Vision Forum held a Quadricentennial event (www.visionforumministries.org/events/jq/) in Jamestown, VA in 2007 to mark the landing of Christian pilgrims four hundred years prior. They also hosted a Reformation event (www.visionforumministries.org/events/r500/) in Boston, MA on July 4, 2009 to mark the birthday of John Calvin and to commemorate the Reformers' influence on the founding of the country. For these occasions, Vision Forum invites guests to dress in historical costume from the time period covering The Puritans through the Antebellum era as a tradition of remembering the past and teaching it to the next generation (Vision Forum, 2009l). This activity is made even more meaningful by

connecting this time period to the Protestant Reformation, honoring the Reformers and their work to shape the nation and provide it with its godly heritage (Vision Forum, 2009l). In service of the goal of educating on the Christian origins of the nation, Vision Forum's Faith & Freedom Tour (www.visionforumministries.org/events/fft/) in Plymouth, MA educates attendees on the Christian heritage of important sites and landmarks in New England. Other retreats that Vision Forum offers other programs, such as the Entrepreneurial boot camp, which offers providing training in "Biblically-principled entrepreneurship and families working together;" (Vision Forum, 2009e), which will assure that families can be at home together most of the time so that the parents can be continuously discipling and shepherding their children and also make a living for themselves. The History of the World Mega Conference (www.visionforumministries.org/events/hwmc/) interprets (history through a Christian lens.); and The Church and Family Unity Conferences (www.visionforumministries.org/events/ucf/), which offer guidance towards making every day church-like at home, rather than having "church" be a once-a-week event at another location. A way of life, as opposed to a once-weekly event (Vision Forum, 2009m). These events offer families ongoing occasions to stay up to date on Vision Forum's ministry and to stay in touch with other families from around the country. There is ongoing is ongoing commentary by journalists, former Reconstructionists, and watchdog groups on the internet criticizing Doug Phillips and his messages of Biblical Patriarchy and fruitfulness of the womb (www.swordpentrumpet.com; www.ministrywatchman.com; www.jensgems.wordpress.com, www.quiveringdaughters.com), but his popularity with devotees remains strong.

Two other contemporary organizations that have been associated with CR are David Barton's Wallbuilders (www.wallbuilders.com) and Brannon Howse's Worldview Weekend (www.worldviewweekend.com), both dedicated to the advocacy for and education about a very particular Christian identity and perspective. Wallbuilders is "dedicated to presenting America's forgotten history and heroes, with an emphasis on the moral, religious, and constitutional foundation on which America was built—a foundation which, in recent years, has been seriously attacked and undermined" (Wallbuilders, 2009). Reconstructionist thought is present in Barton's presentations and his writing (Williams, 2006). The name Wallbuilders is taken from a Bible story in Chapter four of Nehemiah, where in which the walls of the city were rebuilt to ensure safety and stability from enemies. Wallbuilders believes that Christianity within the United States has been threatened by an upward trend in Secular Humanism and an agenda to rid the public sphere of Christianity in the past 200 years.²⁰ Like the story of Nehemiah rebuilding a wall around the city so that it can never again be brought down, Wallbuilders wants to get involved in rebuilding a Christian nation in the U.S. This would erect a wall of protection around 'America's Christianity,' so that it can never again be threatened as it has been in the past 200 years. Their goal is "to exert a direct and positive influence in government, education, and the family by (1) educating the nation concerning the godly foundation of our country; (2) providing information to federal, state, and local officials to assist them in developing public policies which reflect Biblical values; and (3) encouraging Christians to be involved in the civic arena" (Wallbuilders, 2009). Wallbuilders sells materials that emphasize the Christian heritage of the nation, including books, pamphlets,

²⁰ This narrative is repeated frequently by Doug Phillips of Vision Forum.

posters of key figures, documents, and media. David Barton, the founder, and his colleagues, speak at many conferences and events, including those of D. James Kennedy/Coral Ridge Ministries (www.coralridge.org) and Worldview Weekend. Their materials are vended at other many CR events.

Brannon Howse founded Worldview Weekend (www.worldviewweekend.com) in 1993. It is an organization that espouses Reconstructionist philosophy (Shupe, 1997) and hosts conferences on developing a Biblical Worldview and “how to think and live like a Christian.” (Worldview Weekend, 2009). They hold events in approximately twenty states per year, hosting thirty thousand attendees, and claim to be the largest Christian worldview conference series out of numerous similar groups in the U.S. Their website showcases books and media for sale on the Christian heritage of the nation and the Christian worldview. Howse hosts a radio broadcast and is heard on more than two hundred and twenty- five radio stations every weekend. He participated on a project for the office of Faith Based Ministries during the G. W. Bush administration and his writings have allegedly been endorsed by Tom Delay, former U.S. House Majority Whip and U.S. House Majority leader (Worldview Weekend, 2009). Worldview Weekend conferences consist of speakers who present talks on topics ranging from biblical hermeneutics to what a proper Biblical Worldview is (compared to postmodernism, communism, or other worldviews); warnings about particular church movements (such as the emergent church);²¹ the dangers of meditation, yoga and prosperity gospel;²² the

²¹ A church movement founded by Brian McLaren who espouses a post-modernist Christianity that makes room for faith that it not necessarily based on the Bible, an open and questioning Biblical hermeneutic, and openness to the wisdom from other faiths.

importance of the war on terror and the danger of Muslim terrorists; the fallibility of global warming theories; a typology of cults to watch out for; and the consequences of Humanism and the secular Left..

There are many other ministries, advocacy and education organizations and educational curriculums that are operating on the principles and goals of CR. The following are some of the more active entities aligned with CR. Joseph Morecraft III is a pastor and speaker from Cumming, Georgia. His church, the Chalcedon Presbyterian Church, was the first Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States, a small denomination associated with Reconstructionism (Abbott, 1990). He has called for biblical civil law, stating that democracy is ‘mob rule’ and that there is no such thing as religious pluralism (because that would mean that all religions are equivalent, contrary to CR belief). The purpose of government, according to Morecraft, is to protect the church of Jesus Christ (Clarkson, 1997). Marshall Foster runs The Mayflower Institute, whose vision is “to proclaim the untold story of America's history, to prepare individuals and families, to defend their Judeo-Christian heritage in all spheres of culture, and to inspire a new generation to rise up and restore America to “One Nation Under God” (Mayflower Institute, 2009). Foster has stated that civil government must return to its relationship under God (Williams, 2006). The Mayflower Institute sells literature and media that narrates the Christian heritage of the U.S. and they supply event speakers and run ‘vacations with purpose’ to tour areas related to the “providential origins” of America.

²² A gospel within both Pentecostal and mainstream evangelical churches which professes that if one follows the faith well, they will become financially prosperous. Two of the most well-known pastors of this theology are T. D. Jakes and Joel Osteen.

Paul Jehle is a pastor and the third Executive Director of Plymouth Rock Foundation, which “seeks to preserve, rehearse and propagate the rich Christian heritage of the United States of America, beginning with the Pilgrims” (Plymouth Rock, 2009). Reverend Peter Marshall of Peter Marshall Ministries is “dedicated to helping to restore America to its Bible-based foundations through preaching, teaching, and writing on America's Christian heritage and on Christian discipleship and revival” (Marshall Ministries, 2009). In addition to his speaking and writing, he sells books and media and hosts Christian Heritage tours.²³ Sara Diamond (1989) notes two additional proponents of CR: P. Andrew Sandlin and J. W. Whitehead. Sandlin is an ordained minister and has a church in Santa Cruz, California. He also runs an organization called The Center for Cultural Leadership which offers training in “transformationist” Christian leadership for the effort towards making culture Christian again, “as it was in history” (Center for Cultural Leadership, 2009). Sandlin is a productive prolific writer and many of his essays on Reconstructionism can be found on the internet (www.forerunner.com/puritan/sandlin.html). Greg Bahnsen’s son, David L. Bahnsen, is a senior fellow of economics and finance for Sandlin’s organization. J. W. Whitehead is an author and constitutional attorney who in 1982 founded The Rutherford Institute. The Rutherford Institute is “a civil liberties organization that provides free legal services to people whose constitutional and human rights have been threatened or violated” (The Rutherford Institute, 2009). They assist with cases involving religious rights and free

²³ These tours interpret the Christian historical significance of well-known landmarks and geographical areas. The significance of these sites (such as Jamestown, Plymouth Rock, locations in Boston, etc.), according to the CR perspective, has allegedly become “revised” to have only secular import. Because their Christian heritage has been ‘erased,’ they must be re-interpreted so that people can become re-educated about the Christian history of the nation.

speech and first came into prominence as the group that supported Paula Jones in suing Bill Clinton in 1997 (Barnes, 2008; Conason, 2007).

Some CR leaders have advocated for the need for Christian law schools as a route to influencing public policy. Herb Titus and Joseph Kickasola of Regent University have been central to this goal, dedicated to educating civil servants to reach places of great influence and power where they can uphold Christian values. Herb Titus was one of the founding deans of Regent University's School of Law and currently does public speaking on biblical economics. Joseph Kickasola is a professor of law at Regent and teaches from the Reconstructionist perspective (Gabbert, 1991). Michael Farris has been instrumental in legal advocacy for Christian rights and in the goal of educating youth to become civil servants. He was a pastor and lawyer and founded the Home Schooling Legal Defense Association (www.hslda.org) to support homeschooling families. He also founded Patrick Henry College, whose mission is "to prepare Christian men and women who will lead our nation and shape our culture with timeless biblical values and fidelity to the spirit of the American founding" (Patrick Henry, 2009). The college delivers classical education with a Biblical Worldview. Farris also founded Generation Joshua (www.generationjoshua.org), which is an organization that helps teens "to become a force in the civic and political arenas." Their goal is to ignite a vision in young people "to help America return to her Judeo-Christian foundations" (Generation Joshua, 2009). Another move to position Christian legal advocates in the public sphere led to The Christian Anti-Defamation Commission (www.Christianadc.org). The commission is a counter-group to the ACLU that hires Christian lawyers to defend the expression of Christianity in the public sphere.

Other organizations devoted to education and who often vend or present at CR conferences are Answers in Genesis (www.answersingenesis.org), Ken Ham's Creationism educational group (Ham is the founder of the Creation Museum in Ohio); David Noebel's Summit Ministries (www.summit.org), which instructs people on the Biblical Worldview; Stephen McDowell's The Providence Foundation (www.providencefoundation.com), which also educates on the Christian worldview; and Geoffrey Botkin's Western Conservatory of the Arts and Sciences (<http://westernconservatory.com>), which is dedicated to his idea of Christendom, where "scriptural wisdom can be applied to maturity and leadership in all areas of society, including the gates of business, media, jurisprudence, science, the fine arts, education, and church reform" (Western Conservatory, 2009). He has directed his two daughters, Anna Sophia and Elizabeth, in their production of books and films on Biblical Femininity and the practice of young girls living with their parents and serving their fathers until they get married and go live with and serve their husbands (stay-at-home-daughters).

The final regions arms of the CR web that support and extend its existence are publishers and media organizations. Many conservative Christian publishers, whether they are expressly Reconstructionist or not, carry and sell CR materials. Some of these publishers are Crossway Books, Banners of Truth Trust, Solio de Gloria, Christian Focus, Presbyterian and Reformed, Tolle Loge Press, Dominion Press, and as already mentioned, the publishing houses of American Vision (Gary DeMar), Vision Forum (Doug Phillips), and Gary North's Institute of Biblical Economics. Some organizations devote themselves to the production of only one product, such as *Homeschooling Today* magazine and *World Magazine*. Or, they devote themselves completely to homeschooling

curriculum, such as *A Beka* (www.abeka.com) or *Christian Liberty Press* (<http://ebiz.netopia.com/clpress/>) or *Bob Jones University Press* (www.bjupress.com).

Many of the figures already mentioned host radio shows, publish magazines, or write blogs. Besides these organizations and publishing houses that make their connection with CR's ideology explicit, there are entities that endorse CR in less conspicuous ways.

World Daily.net is an internet news source which describes itself as independent, not mentioning any religious affiliation. Though they do not explicitly or publicly link themselves with CR, they do sponsor Vision Forum events (aligned with CR) and they advertise many Reconstructionist books, figures, and media products on their web site.

These organizations, ministries, speakers, educators, writers and advocates noted above are integral in the makeup of the complex discursive web of the CR community. All of these entities, by way of their collective formation, work together to circulate and extend the goals, activities, and practices which animate and sustain the CR perspective and lifestyle.

Significance of the Movement

CR can be considered a significant movement both because it is backed by persons and organizations of influence and also because it influences more mainstream religious denominations, congregations and political figures and organizations. Gabbert (1991) states that "the first conclusion of anyone who studies Reconstruction should be that the movement is significant and deserves attention. The leaders are not charlatans, but scholars with impressive credentials" (p. 247). Pottenger (2007) writes claims that their CR's influence is steadily increasing as it grows in popularity and political influence. In his documentation on contemporary religious movements, William Martin

(1996) claims that it is difficult to assess the influence of Reconstructionist thought. This likely may be because adherents know of its radical controversial views and reputation and carefully distance themselves from it (Berlet, 2006). There are those, too, who might not even be aware of the influence of Reconstructionist thought on their beliefs. Gary North has claimed that CR ideas have penetrated into more mainstream Protestant circles where they are not even aware of it (Clarkson, 1994). Clarkson (1994) alleges that there are many on the more mainstream Christian Right who are unaware that they hold CR ideas. This would probably come as a shock to them, as most mainstream Christians (even conservative ones) identify CR as controversial and allege not to believe in most of what it upholds. Some of these more mainstream conservative Christians do realize that they agree with some CR ideas, Clarkson explains, but they avoid aligning themselves with CR. Gary North has acknowledged that CR ideas have penetrated into more mainstream Protestant circles where they are not even aware of it (Clarkson, 1994). One way to determine their standing is to consider who endorses Reconstructionist ideas, figures, or products.

CR literature has been endorsed by some of the greatest leaders of the Christian evangelical movement.²⁴ Jerry Falwell, who founded the Moral Majority in 1979, an

²⁴ Evangelicalism is a Christian perspective that involves the commitment to the sharing of the gospel. Fundamentalism began as reaction against modernism and liberalism in interpretations of Christianity in the early 1900's (Marsden, 1982). It was supported by a codification of the fundamentals of Christianity, which were allegedly becoming eroded with the liberal perspective. On a continuum, evangelicalism stands between liberal Christianity and Fundamentalism, the more conservative branch. Evangelicals are sometimes critiqued by fundamentalists for compromising themselves in order to court more mainstream Christians. Adherents of CR do not necessarily believe in Evangelicalism because of the doctrine of predestination (because only God can bring someone to belief through His mercy, it does not make sense for individuals to attempt to bring others to God). They might be more likely to align with Fundamentalism, as they

evangelical lobbying group credited with bringing Ronald Reagan a majority of the white evangelical vote, endorsed four volumes of the *Reconstructionist Biblical Blueprint Series* (Clapp, 1987). English (2003) claims that Falwell has endorsed the CR movement and Rushdoony, for his part, has contributed to Falwell's fundamentalist journal (Abbott, 1990). Televangelist Pat Robertson, founder of the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), the Christian Coalition and the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) denies being a Reconstructionist, but CR ideas echo in his rhetoric, and Rushdoony himself appeared on Robertson's show, *The 700 Club*. Robertson also once told his audience that he reads Gary North's newsletter (Boston, 2001). James Dobson is the founder of the Family Research Council and Focus on the Family and has been identified as the nation's most influential evangelical leader by Time magazine, (Olsen, 2005). His organization's book stores sell the works of George Grant, a writer and leader in the Reconstructionist movement. The figures mentioned above have tremendous influence in the evangelical community, and it is likely that their followers would purchase products endorsed by them or sold on their websites without further investigation.

Beyond the evangelical community, CR thought has strong political influence.

Describing the reach of this influence, Gabbert (1991) writes that

“The Reconstructionist movement, especially as embodied in its three main leaders, is currently exerting an almost unseen influence upon American politics and education. As with any other historical movement, this group deserves the close scrutiny and careful examination of all those for whom personal rights and religious liberty are dear.” (p. 233)

Kevin Phillips (2006), a former Republican strategist, has written about how he observed Reconstructionist influence upon conservative economics and political policy at a very

both share Presbyterian and Baptist beginnings and similar tenets. Therefore, CR can be seen as one manifestation of Fundamentalism.

high level in White House administration. Though the Reconstructionist and evangelical movements are not synonymous, Newsweek labeled the Chalcedon Foundation as the think tank of the Religious Right (Alpern, 1981). Gabbert (1991) likewise asserts that Reconstructionist thought emerges in the “political rhetoric of most evangelical candidates” (p. 10). Watkins (in Boston, 2001) concurs, urging people not to sell Reconstructionists short, because they have laid an intellectual framework to become a formidable political force.

One guiding principle that might may serve to mobilize the conservative Christian community is Rushdoony’s and North’s concept of ‘Christian libertarianism’ (Gabbert, 1991), which holds that government should not control the moral choices of individuals and defends the liberty that Christians have under God’s law. This precept is attractive to many conservative Americans, and has been influential for many politicians. Boston (2001) writes about how the Reconstruction movement has infiltrated even the highest offices and policy within the United States. He describes how George. W. Bush, for example, looked to a Reconstructionist for his underlying philosophy of “compassionate conservatism.” This term and its contingent philosophy was coined by Marvin Olasky. Though Olasky has never admitted he is a Reconstructionist, his views are in line with CR. He believes that churches, not the government, should take care of the poor and has defended slavery using Reconstructionist rhetoric. Bush also considered naming a Reconstructionist, J. Robert Brame, to head up the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) until Brame’s ties to CR came to light (Hanford, 2001) . Brame served on the board of American Vision during his three years on the NLRB (1997-2000) and was

known for sexist, homophobic, and anti-labor views. Bush withdrew Brame's name for consideration after public protest.

During the G.W. Bush administration, the Reconstructionist group, the National Reform Association (www.natreformassn.org) (which has attempted to create an amendment to the constitution making up for its inattention to Christianity), had great access to Congress and the White House. During many visits, National Reform Association members met with several Republican representatives, staffers from the offices of Majority Leader Trent Lott, many senators, the White House's Office of Public Policy and Liaison, and Attorney General John Ashcroft (Boston, 2001). Finally, Reconstructionists have had influence in political races and state politics. Howard Phillips, who once headed the Constitution Party (once the U.S. Taxpayers Party) and is the father of the current leader of Vision Forum's Doug Phillips, worked in the Nixon administration and has run for president several times. Howard F. Ahmanson, a multi-millionaire who was on the board of the Reconstructionist Chalcedon Foundation and who has claimed that it is his goal to integrate Biblical Law into all of our lives (Haas, 1985) has successfully bankrolled and supported up to nineteen conservative political candidates in California (Clarkson, 1994). Steven Hotze, who was on the board of American Vision, has also successfully assisted candidates at state and local levels. Reconstructionists helped Ron Young to the Ohio House of Representatives in 1996. At all of these levels, Reconstructionists have attempted to support those who will create policy favorable to CR philosophy. This account illustrates that not only are CR ideas endorsed by those with great influence, but CR has been actively exerting political influence upon all levels of government.

Within civil society, CR finds itself linked with institutions and organizations that have educational impact or organizing power. Pottenger (2007) reports that CR influences the Southern Baptist Convention, the Assemblies of God, the Promise Keepers, the Christian Broadcasting Network, the Christian Coalition, the Council for National Policy, the Alliance Defense Fund (which is a conservative Christian counterpart to the ACLU), the American Family Association, the Rutherford Institute, and Wallbuilders (which does educational workshops on the Christian Heritage of the United States). The Center for Reclaiming Christ, until recently, was a group with Reconstructionist ties belonging to D. James Kennedy's Coral Ridge Ministries, an organization that combines religion with political strategy. They had an annual conference which has been considered a gathering place for conservative Christians (Pottenger, 2007). The Coalition on Revival, which is a major evangelical organization that seeks to inject Christian values into U.S. policy, (and has access to policy makers) has been supported and influenced both by Rushdoony and North (Berlet, 2006).

Regent University School of Law is geared towards producing policymakers and statesmen and has CR influence (Abbott, 1990). At the level of K-12 education, Reconstructionists have influenced groups that oppose public education and uphold fundamentalist homeschooling criteria (Gabbert, 1991). The recent notion of "Scientific Creationism"²⁵ was launched by a book written by a reformed Presbyterian and published

²⁵ A movement made up primarily of fundamentalist Christians which seeks to uphold Biblical inerrancy and support the idea that the earth was created by God as recorded in the book of Genesis. It generates theory to attempt to disprove any scientific findings that endorse evolutionism and the big bang theory. A catalytic text for this movement was George McCready Price's (1923) *The New Geology*. Price's ideas were revived in 1961 by Whitcomb and Morris's *The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record and its Scientific Implications*.

by a Calvinist press (both elements of CR) (Gabbert, 1991). These linkages are only a sampling. At every CR event or conference, multiple nonprofit organizations create a presence in the form of sponsorships and the vending of products that extend Reconstructionist ideology and practices. CR inserts itself into more mainstream evangelical churches, which is evidenced by the demand for Reconstructionist literature and speakers (Gabbert, 1991). It ‘trickles down’ into more popular discourse through periodicals (Gabbert, 1991) and through the internet. For example, World Net Daily is a news site which describes itself as independent and makes no explicit association with CR, but they publish social and political editorials echoing Reconstructionist sentiment and endorse Reconstructionist books. Additionally, their commentary on popular entertainment re-routes readers to movies made by groups with Reconstructionist leanings. Through these institutions and organizations, the impact of CR occurs at the level of political activism, education, news reporting, and entertainment.

As stated initially, the influence of CR is difficult to quantify. Adherents are spread out, often do not self-identify, and do not create many official organizations that are explicitly tied to the title of Reconstructionism. Misztal and Shupe (1992a) have projected that CR mailing lists and the estimates of movement leaders suggest tens of thousands of regular subscribers and consumers. Much of the CR literature is not confined to CR publishing houses or sellers – they are available in evangelical bookstores and appear in numerous nationally-circulated catalogs of religious literature (Misztal and Shupe, 1992a). Rushdoony estimated twenty million followers before his death and Gary North has estimated 20,000 to 40,000 routine subscribers to materials, newsletters and

discussion groups. Despite uncertainty about sheer numbers of adherents, this review illustrates the stealthy yet active ways in which CR has political, social, and cultural influence within the United States. Gabbert (1991) affirms that though “the Reconstructionist name recognition is minimal, ...the impact of their ideals on the American religious and political scenes has touched inestimable numbers of conservative Christians at the grassroots level of society” (p. 30).

Main Tenets of Christian Reconstruction

Both scholars and figureheads within CR show significant variety in designating its main tenets. The following is a summary of all of the guiding principles mentioned in both academic research and in CR literature. Most scholars and CR adherents agree that the foundational tradition of CR is that of Calvinism (Abbott, 1990; English, 2003; Pottenger, 2007), though Gary DeMar disagrees, claiming that regeneration, the act of God imparting new life to an individual, is the primary belief of CR (English, 2003). Rushdoony named his master work, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (1973, 1982) after Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1960), and cites Calvin copiously. In that work, he cites Calvin 52 times (Abbott, 1990). Calvinism is based upon the ideas of John Calvin, who worked towards the Reformation of institutional Christianity in the 1500’s in France. It was John Luther whose actions in Germany were a catalyst for the Reformation. The reformers were acting against what they conceived of as false doctrines and malpractice in the Catholic Church (McNeill, 1954). Calvinism holds that salvation is given by God’s grace and is not a choice made by man. Its five main essential principles are summarized by the acronym TULIP, referring to total depravity (that without the power of the holy spirit, man is thoroughly unable to know God); unconditional election

(where God, in his own grace, without concern for merit, chooses to grant salvation); limited atonement (that Christ died not for all people, but for chosen Christians); irresistible grace (the fact that when God calls the chosen, they will answer wholeheartedly, despite hardness and sin); and perseverance of the saints (that once chosen, God will keep all in his stead – they will not fall out of grace), (Reformed Calvinism, 2009). Christian Reconstruction is considered a neo-Calvinist tradition, following the ideas of Abraham Kuyper. Kuyper left the Dutch Reformed church in 1886 in the Netherlands to create the Dutch Reformed church (The Christian Reformed Church in America) (Pottenger, 2007). He advocated for limited authority of the state in order to give credence to God's sovereignty in all areas of life (Bratt, 1998), including politics (Pottenger, 2007).

Abbott (1990) notes that the other founding intellectuals of CR besides Rushdoony turn to Calvin as fundamental to their theology and politics. Bahnsen believed that Calvin created an inroad for a Christian conception of the state (Bahnsen, 1984), wherein the nation state must be viewed as part of the kingdom of God. Regarding the laws of the state, Rushdoony found that he disagreed with Calvin: Calvin preferred the common law of nations and Rushdoony upholds the judicial law of Moses. Indeed, he believed that Calvin was wrong and heretical on this point (Abbott, 1990). Gary North similarly references Calvin for his understanding of Christian economics, stating that Calvin's understanding of covenants between God and man justifies a free market and the regulation of private property within the kingdom of God (Abbott, 1990; North, 1975). There is one concept shared by all followers of CR, which originates with Calvin. This shared belief is that believers must uphold a Biblical Worldview, which, according to

Gabbert (1991) is a perspective that integrates every aspect of life, “based upon the abiding validity of the Old Testament law” (Gabbert 1991, p. 1). Van Til’s aforementioned logic of Presuppositional Apologetics, for example, presumed that one’s worldview is either biblical or it is not (Williams, 2006). Many contemporary organizations who find affinity with CR theology have it as their main mission to educate and disseminate knowledge about what is meant by a Christian or biblical worldview.

Presuppositional Apologetics is another universally held tenet of CR. Though it has already been mentioned, I will briefly summarize this epistemological method. This is the overriding approach to truth or knowledge, for the CR perspective; and it insures that one who employs it will have a Biblical Worldview. Presuppositional Apologetics is Cornelius Van Til’s (1946) epistemological method which “argues that the conclusions that human beings draw from all evidence is governed by their operating presuppositions concerning God, man, law, and nature” (North, 1984, p. 275). Therefore, if one is committed to having a Biblical Worldview (one that begins with knowledge that comes from God or the Bible), she must base all understanding of the world, or all presuppositions, on biblical exegesis and application. Misztal and Shupe (1992a) explain that this approach is supported by Romans 1:18-20 and Psalm 19:1-2.²⁶ Following this logic, God’s truth is plainly clear and so “does not require intellectual exposition or

²⁶ Misztal and Shupe (1992a) explain that this approach is supported by Romans 1:18-20 and Psalm 19:1-2: Romans 1: ¹⁸ The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the Godlessness and wickedness of human beings who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. (Today’s New International Version). Psalm 19: ¹ The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. ² Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.

apologetic defense based on reason” (p. 89), dismissing any need for discussion or debate. This stance rejects Natural Law and condemns it to a fallen state, as it is based upon man’s assertion of autonomy and independent reason. It supports the view that the believer and unbeliever do not have anything in common, including any “convictions on which to build a law-order” (Misztal and Shupe, 1992a, p. 90). Any attempt to evaluate theological or biblical truth in terms of secular reasoning is a threat to the belief system and Presuppositional Apologetics leaves no room for error or introspection, and provides straightforward answers for determining “who is right and who is wrong” and for separating “the good from the evil” (Williams, 2006, p. 30).

Two additional tenets of CR are the idea of Dominion and Postmillennialism. These tenets involve the concepts of the kingdom of God and covenant theology, which are also drawn from Calvinist thought. It is broadly understood, from the Calvinist perspective, that man’s purpose is to exercise dominion over the earth, and for many, this means the areas of home, school, church, the state, and the economic market (Abbott, 1990). Reconstructionists use Calvin’s doctrine of the covenants between God and man and man and others within society to claim that there was a covenant (contract or promise) between God and man that supposed that if man took Christian dominion over every area of life, that would bring about the fulfillment of the kingdom of God (Abbott, 1990). Calvin’s doctrine of the covenants between God and man stand as support for covenant theology. This doctrine asserts that at the time of Adam, God created a covenant with man that the fulfillment of the kingdom of God would be brought about once man took Christian dominion over every area of life (Abbott, 1990). Rushdoony refers to a book by Charles D. Proven (*The Church is Israel Now*, 1987) that explicates covenant

theology as a contractual relationship between man and God, where if man adheres to the law, God will provide bounty (Williams, 2006). The CR theology has extended this dominion mandate to every societal institution (Misztal and Shupe, 1992a). Dominion, then, has become “a synonym for cultural renewal” (Abbott, 1990) and for working toward the kingdom of God. Much of the Christian Right can be characterized as supporting Dominion Theology, but they might not reach as far as CR in advocating for Biblical Law and a Christian state. Instead, for many the goal has been to rebuild a society that is as Christian as possible, utilizing the system of government that is already in place. In response, Gary North has admonished the Christian Right for not maintaining biblical purity (Williams, 2006).

Another distinction between many of those in the Christian Right and the Reconstructionists is that of Premillennialism vs. Postmillennialism. The majority of evangelicals are Premillennial, believing that they will enter the kingdom of God after the end of times and the Rapture, where after a great tribulation, Christ will return and begin his reign for a thousand 1,000 years. This perspective was introduced by John Darby in the late 1800’s (Marsden, 1991), and was advanced by the Scofield Reference Bible in the early 1900’s (Scofield, 1909). It has since been popularized by the *Left Behind* series by Timothy Lahaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, (1995-2007). Premillennialism assumes that Christians have no influence on the timing of the return of Christ (Shupe, 1997), although some of its rhetoric does appear to value the hastening Christ’s return. Postmillennialism, which is the CR perspective, and one of its main tenets, holds that Christ already established the kingdom of God in his time on earth and it is the responsibility of Christians to advance that kingdom and to assert dominion over every area of life

(Abbott, 1990). According to this doctrine, when there has been widespread Christian cultural renewal and when individuals, institutions, and nations have been Christianized (Bahnsen and Gentry, 1989; DeMar and Leithart, 1988) for a period of a thousand years, then Christ will return (Goldberg, 2006). This period of a thousand years may be either figurative or literal to different people. Many assume that Christians “must actively prepare the way for Christ’s second coming and may even be able to alter the scheduling of the millennium” (Shupe, 1997). This perspective provides the reasoning for the Postmillennial activist stance towards changing culture. However, many firmly believe that they cannot and should not attempt to impact Christ’s return and that will happen in God’s time.

Reconstructionists have called the Premillennial perspective pessimistic (because it requires believers to live for the afterlife) and claim that their own Postmillennialism is more optimistic (DeMar, 2007) and encourages believers to see God’s kingdom in the here and now. Both DeMar and Bahnsen believe that postmillennialism can be traced back to the optimism of Calvin in terms of what man can do to further the kingdom of God (Abbott, 1990). There is a sense of confidence and optimism because of Calvin’s doctrine of predestination; this presumes that the sanctification of society has already been determined, and therefore it “cannot be resisted by humankind” (Misztal and Shupe, 1992a, p. 88). These different perspectives have led Postmillennialists to critique Premillennialists for withdrawing from society and waiting for the kingdom of God to happen (though the Christian Right has become involved in politics, perhaps in order to shape the world that they experience until they are raptured). Reconstructionists often scold evangelicals for making their messages and practices more palatable to outsiders in

order to recruit new members. Because of this, Reconstructionists look at Premillennialism as a surrender to secularism and as a failure to have faith in the sovereignty of God (Williams, 2006). Postmillennialists believe they are more committed to actively transforming the culture because we now live in God's kingdom (as opposed to the kingdom being somewhere else).

On a different point, Reconstructionists have been criticized for not evangelizing because they do not believe that man has any power to influence salvation (Abbott, 1990). Rushdoony (1981) has stated that evangelizing is too focused on insuring that individuals will be guaranteed to move on to the next world, rather than actively working on the state of the world as it is right now. Focusing on the present world as opposed to yearning for the heaven of the future is a common theme in Reconstructionist discourse (Abbott, 1990). There is, however, remarkably very little written or spoken about what the final kingdom will be like when Christ returns. Abbott (1990) has stated that the stronger emphasis in Reconstructionist writings is to direct criticism against the Premillennial vision, rather than describing their own view of the second coming of Christ. DeMar and Leithart (1988), CR leaders have written that there will be a final judgment and the wicked will be abolished, and that there still will be unbelievers present during the millennium (the thousand year period of Christendom before the return of Christ). Misztal and Shupe (1992a) write that commentary from Chilton, DeMar, and North suggests that they believe that this process may take thousands of years or generations. Fittingly, one workshop and videotape offered by Vision Forum is "The 200 Year Plan:

A Practicum on Multi-Generational Faithfulness.”²⁷ The period of two hundred years is the time it has allegedly taken since the founding of America for the U.S. to move away from Christianity. The conclusion is that if families are actively dedicated to a comparable two hundred year plan to restore Christianity and then renew it in the new generations, it can be maintained for thousands of years.

Putting God at the center and origin of everything indicates God’s sovereignty in all things, another tenet of CR. Taking this very literally is essential (Abbott, 1990). Gary DeMar (1988) explains that part of constituting the kingdom of God is being governed in every area of life by Biblical Law, which is called theonomy. In fact, many Reconstructionists believe that the government will not be a democracy, but a theonomy (English, 2003) in the thousand year millennium, where there is a period of peace and Christendom before the return of Christ. Theonomy is one of the tenets of Christian Reconstruction. It is Biblical Law applied to the civil state (Abbott, 1990). Reconstructionists tend to prefer the term “theonomy” over “theocracy,” distinguishing that theocracy means rule by God and theonomy indicates rule by God’s law (Abbott, 1990).²⁸ Biblical Law refers to the entirety of all of the Bible, including both the Old and New Testaments, and specifically the Mosaic Law.²⁹ According to theonomy, this law

²⁷ See product description at <http://www.visionforum.com/browse/product/?productid=43872&search=200+year+plan&sortby=0>.

²⁸ Ostensibly, this distinction tends to mean that in a theocracy, the government is ruled by religious clerics. In a theonomy, the government and laws would be guided by Biblical Law but society would be ruled by laypeople who have internalized the principles and values of the law.

²⁹ Mosaic Law is contained in the first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy), which includes the Ten Commandments. The

should be the standard for the individual, the family, schooling, the church, the economy, and government (English, 2003).

North has overtly stated that the documents that guide a biblical society would be the Bible, not the Constitution or the Declaration of Independence (English, 2003). The body of laws that seem to be the most important to the Reconstructionists is the Pentateuch (Gabbert, 1991; Misztal and Shupe, 1992a), which consists of the first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). The Jewish term for this selection of books is the Torah. North (1987) has referred to Mosaic Law (or law found in the Old Testament which is documented in the Pentateuch) as a treaty between God and humanity; and Mark Rushdoony has asserted that dismissing the Old Testament is akin to rejecting the Bible's validity entirely (Williams, 2006). The Reconstructionists criticize those Christians who refer to the New Testament as the more significant law, calling them Antinomian, "the scourge of the modern church" (Gabbert, 1991, p. 35).³⁰ The CR position is that Antinomianism supports the autonomy of the individual to weigh what their clergy tell them and make their own decisions, whereas

Jewish term for this selection of books is the Torah. Covenant Theology according to Calvinism (and The Westminster Confession of Faith, 1646) holds that Mosaic Law (is divided into three categories: moral, civil and ceremonial. Only the moral laws apply today. Civil and ceremonial laws are believed only to be addressing the people of Biblical times. The most important laws are in the Pentateuch, or Torah (Gabbert, 1991; Misztal and Shupe, 1992a).

³⁰ Antinomianism supports the autonomy of the individual to weigh what their clergy tell them and make their own decisions, whereas theonomy rejects the autonomy of the individual and that of whole societies. There is a reading of Christianity that suggests that Christ offered a new interpretation of The Law which is indicated in the New Testament. He has been interpreted, along these lines, to have proposed that his followers are to live by the spirit of the law, not the letter of the law, wherein its meaning may be distorted (Bertone, 2005; Jackson, 2008). This reading is not considered to be legitimate by the Reconstructionists.

theonomy rejects the autonomy of the individual and that of whole societies. If a society's laws do not reflect biblical truth, then they are flawed and condemned to failure (Shupe, 1997). This implies, of course, that there should be no separation between religion and the state (Gabbert, 1991). There is a reading of Christianity that suggests that Christ offered a new interpretation of the law which is indicated in the New Testament. He has been interpreted, along these lines, to have proposed that his followers are to live by the spirit of the law, not the letter of the law, wherein its meaning may be distorted (Bertone, 2005; Jackson, 2008). This reading is not considered to be legitimate by the Reconstructionists.

Honoring God's sovereignty through theonomy has implications for government and the organization of society. Theonomy is undergirded by a lack of faith in the knowledge, institutions, and abilities of man to govern according to reason and autonomy. Therefore, a decentralized social order and minimal state is required (English, 2003; Gabbert, 1991), which is another tenet of CR. Democracy, according to Rushdoony (1973, 1982), is heresy, in that it takes power away from God and replaces God with a new God: the state. Democracy "assumes the right to legislate in every sphere of reality" (p. 38) and this is considered the usurping of the sovereignty of God and the denial of self-government under the rule of God (Gabbert, 1991). Reconstructionists see democracy as an "unattainable hoax" and hope to reduce state power by distributing its power to the individual, the family, the church, and other localized institutions (English, 2003). Gabbert's (1991) analysis concludes that the implementation of Reconstructionism involves the repression of dissent (from both non-Christians and disagreeing Christians);

he. He cautions that a liberal democratic ideal of liberty is at stake should the CR vision of political order emerge. (Gabbert, 1991).

The concepts of liberty and freedom are often invoked in relation to how individuals should live within society. D. James Kennedy, leader of Coral Ridge Ministries, has offered commentary on the concepts of liberty and freedom, from the Reconstructionist point of view (Pottenger, 2007). Kennedy claimed that they are derived not from human autonomy and the ability to exercise reason, but from God. In other words, God has given humans liberty and freedom, so that under God one can employ the freedom to do what is right: the freedom to exercise God's law. Kennedy was aggrieved that the definition of liberty had become equivalent with the freedom to individual license. The political vision of theonomy has been described by Rushdoony as a Christian libertarianism (Clapp, 1987), under which pluralism is not an option (Gabbert, 1991). Jordan (1978), a former adherent to who has allegedly left Reconstructionism, once described pluralism as the devil's own lie because it is based upon the false presumption that society can be neutral, neither for nor against God. "In reality," Jordan writes, "no zone of life is neutral, and 'pluralism' is heresy" (p. 18). DeMar similarly believes that the concept of religious pluralism is a fraudulent notion perpetrated by liberal democratic governments in order to eliminate every competing religious system by cultivating moral relativism and leading to the destruction of religion (Pottenger, 2007). Liberty and freedom, after all, can only exist under the CR God.

When attempting to argue that the framers of the Constitution had this Reconstructionist idea of liberty in mind in their attempts to craft a new government, DeMar (1993) has pointed to the separation of powers as evidence that the founders were

cynical about the evil predisposition of man (Pottenger, 2007). He claims that there was no need to include religious law in the Constitution as specific matters were to be decided by the state, when it was assumed by all that most people at the time were Christian and that legal decisions would nod to the precepts of Christianity. The original intent, accordingly, was to decentralize state power and distribute governance to local institutions. The Reconstructionists align themselves with this reading of The Founders (Barton, 2000), as they believe that ultimately no federal government will be necessary if authority is distributed properly. The family, accordingly, should be the primary institution, which will be governed Biblical Law and patriarchal order (Gabbert, 1991), which will serve as a model and mechanism for the maintenance of all of society. The family, along with the church and other Christian organizations, ought to be the primary managers of social order as opposed to any centralized government or welfare system. In the face of a common presumption that people like the Reconstructionists want to ‘take over the government,’ it is important to clarify that they have in mind the replacement of, not the capture of state institutions (Williams, 2006). For example, rather than institutions such as welfare programs (public assistance, social security, or Medicare), the goal is that networks created among churches and families should provide care and protections to individuals.

According to the CR vision, the government should be minimalist, limited to a civil magistrate who is charged with maintaining biblical standards and suppressing evil, violence and fraud (North, 1987), and protecting private property. This magistrate would be bound to Mosaic Law and would represent “the practical union of the church and state with the state subservient to the elders of the church” (Gabbert, 1991, p. 38). This office

would maintain the penal system, whose force is established in the form of exercise of punishments (including capital punishment) and restitution (any punishment in exchange for a crime) (Gabbert, 1991). Gabbert (1991) describes, for example, Bahnsen's adumbration of the crimes worthy of capital punishment, which include murder, rape, the breaking of the Sabbath, and youthful incorrigibility. North (1987) has likewise listed adultery, witchcraft, and idol worship as crimes worthy of execution.

Reconstructionists believe the current system of restitution requires significant change: the current prison system, they argue, leads to higher taxes for all, and should be abolished. Instead, they argue for a streamlined penal system that employs execution and indentured servitude (Gabbert, 1991) and that observes biblical guidelines for various other punishments (Williams, 2006). Gary North has, for example, condoned stoning by righteous locals (Williams, 2006) on the grounds that because the collective and public punishment of wrongdoers would move a society to do what is necessary to police immorality in order to avoid God's judgment.

From this perspective, the penal system exists not just for the maintenance of individuals, but also for that of nations: If a nation as a whole is neglecting Biblical Law, it will receive God's punishment. A caveat does exist, however, for cases in which the civil magistrate is upholding rule that is not biblical rule. As North (1987) explains, disobedience and resistance to the magistrate would be justified when support has been granted through other officials such as lower civil magistrates and elders of the church. Many in CR circles have pointed to Judge Roy Moore, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Alabama, as an example of this case for resistance (Sugg, 20025). Moore demonstrated against the removal of the Ten Commandments from the state courthouse

(in Alabama), and has since been upheld as a godly hero by CR adherents. Through this depiction of justice, the Reconstructionists have created a natural union between their form of Christianity and the American government (Pottenger, 2007).

An optimism about the future and a spirit of activism is demonstrated in the primary Reconstructionist institution, the family. This is an arena where adherents can take seriously their responsibility to change the culture through the ways in which they order their lives, model their values, and raise their children. There is very little academic research on the Reconstructionist family. Clarkson (1997), a journalist, writes that the family is one of the basic units of Reconstructionist government, wherein the husband is the head and the wife and the children are in submission to him. The husband is to submit to God's law and his wife and children are to submit to him. This patriarchal model is mandatory for all of society to follow because it imitates man's relationship to God. Williams (2006) writes that God's assignment of dominion can only be fulfilled if man respects the differences of the sexes. Each has its role, and only in following that plan will dominion come about. DeMar (1990, vol. 1) writes that "the family government follows the biblical model of all governments" (p. 22), enacting a chain of command in which

"The husband represents Christ as head over his wife and children ... [and] the wife represents her husband to the children and the world at large, and the children are accountable to both mother and father." (p. 23)

Family law is to be meted out and parents have jurisdiction to provide sanctions. DeMar writes that "obedience brings life...while disobedience brings death" (p. 24) and children gain a godly inheritance through faithfulness to mother and father and family law. To attack this order is, simply, "to attack God and a godly moral order" (p. 25).

Children, accordingly, are the tools of dominion (Williams, 2006) and the bearing of many children and educating them into Biblical Law and godly practices is part of actively participating in cultural renewal and societal change. This is the basis of the Quiverfull movement,³¹ which is upheld by Reconstructionists. North (1987) refers to Psalm 127 to support the effort to have many children, as they are ‘arrows’ to shoot out into the world and those who have a ‘quiver full’ of arrows are happy. North explains that having many children is how a man can develop leadership skills which translate into other relationships in the world. Educating one’s own children is a biblical obligation, supported by Proverbs 22:6, which directs parents to “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” This passage, according to North (1987) signals that the education of the children is the moral responsibility of the parents. The Reconstructionist understanding of education considers the endeavor to be far more than just formal schooling. Education is complete enculturation of Biblical Law, the ability to apply it and to engage in the world through a biblical lens. It also includes training in the interpretation of Biblical Law in every area of life, such as proper gender department and roles for the taking of dominion.

Gabbert (1991) writes that “the ultimate goal of dominion is furthered by the training of children to continue the struggle” (p. 49). Their instruction, or education, is crucial to working towards the kingdom of God. Gabbert (1991) asserts that education

³¹ Quiverfull is a movement to trust God’s sovereignty in the area of fertility (and not utilize birth control). A guiding principle is that God’s ‘army’ will grow and be more successful if it is highly populated. The movement is guided by the passage from Psalm 127: 3-5, ³Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. ⁴Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one’s youth. ⁵Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

reform has been the area of greatest advance for the Reconstructionists. Because children require an education that interprets the world biblically (and for many, that is managed by the parents), many Reconstructionists support a separatist stance when it comes to public education. It has been argued by Rushdoony and many besides him, that public school curriculum was influenced by John Dewey and other secularists (Williams, 2006) who wanted to cultivate autonomous “individuals” who question conventional knowledge and authority.³² Rushdoony argues that public education has been a secularist state-sponsored system of propaganda (Gabbert, 1991) or moral indoctrination (Williams, 2006) ever since it began to be influenced by Dewey. In his book *The Messianic Character of American Education* (1979), Rushdoony argues that American public education is a direct assault on Christianity. Heis and other Reconstructionists contend that within education systems, there is always a worldview being favored over others, whether it is Christian, secular liberal, Marxist, or socialist. Since the public education system claims that it does not favor any one particular religion, Rushdoony argues that this very stance propagates secularism and demotes Christianity. If it is not Christian, then it is secular liberalism (or Marxism or socialism). Therefore, choosing not to see (or teach) the world in terms of Christianity is, in Rushdoony’s terms, the rejection of Christianity.

Indeed, to the head of the CR Christian Liberty Academy in Arlington Heights, IL, it is blasphemy (Gabbert, 1991). Rushdoony reasons that if education is preparation for life, then it necessitates an overtly religious concern. The CR position is that secular

³² The CR program for homeschooling begins with training children to understand that they are not autonomous but that their thoughts, actions, and accomplishments depend on and are owed to God. The main form of knowledge and authority are God and the Bible and it is disapproved of to question those sources (and all else which is thought to be derived from them).

liberal education, which presumes both the inherent goodness of all students (even as they require knowledge to achieve this goodness), is for the purpose of liberalizing society. This is quite contrary to the Reconstructionist perspective, which assumes the inherent sinfulness of man, and requires stringent discipline and the learning and application of Biblical Law. Whereas some might claim that individuals can both be religious and attend a non-Christian school, this does not fit the holistic educational views of CR, that all thoughts, at all times, in all areas of life, should be captive to God.

Rushdoony (1963) has severely rebuked the criticized educational strategies of secular public schools, alleging that they deliberately downgrade the literacy skills of American youth in order to create citizens who are more amenable to socialism. He and others agree that parents should avoid having their children taught by teachers who are certified at public universities, because they have been trained with anti-Christian values and approaches to education. Along these lines, Humanist textbooks present the same problem – they represent the world through a secular lens, and cannot be used or children will be led down the wrong path. For all these reasons, throughout the 1960's, Rushdoony called for a radical break from the secular school system and the building of a system of education based upon biblical principles (Gabbert, 1991). Towards this goal, the CR contingent needed new textbooks that provided a Christian interpretation of historical facts.

Reconstructionist advocacy for Christian education has had far-reaching influence in CR pedagogical policy. Gabbert (1991), for example, explains that “the Presuppositional basis of Reconstruction denies that there even exists a common set of facts shared by Christians and non-Christians” (p. 49). This challenge led to the

development of “Accelerated Christian Education” (ACE) (www.schooloftomorrow.com) which began in 1970. ACE, intended for homeschooling, follows what they call the God-given commandment and mandate for Christian education by “integrating character-building principles and Scripture memory into the academics, [which] helps children grow to see life from God’s point of view” (ACE Ministries, 2009). Over time, the numbers of similar homeschool curriculum companies have grown. They are accessible on the internet and their materials circulate widely at homeschooling conferences. Some parents are content to focus on their own children’s education. Others are committed to the project of undermining and eventually eliminating the public school system. One strategy is for believers to run for the school board and create policy that aims for the demise of public schools (Gabbert, 1991).

One further area covered by God’s law and biblical government is economics. Gary North, for example, even wrote a textbook for homeschooled students called *An Introduction to Christian Economics* (1974). It is based on the premise that God owns all earthly resources, and therefore economics should be subsumed under God’s law. The biblical principles for economics, according to North (1981), are found in Deuteronomy 8³³ and 28, and assure that conformity to God’s laws by both individuals and the civil government will bring blessings. One of these blessings is the elimination of poverty through the increase of per capita wealth (Gabbert, 1991). The idea of government

³³ Deuteronomy 8 consists of 20 verses. The chapter reminds readers that God was always with the people in the wilderness and led him to bountiful land and prosperous life, so man should never forget God (and therefore put Him at the center of all things). Deuteronomy 28 consists of 68 verses. The chapter proclaims that if man obeys all the commandments and lives out all Biblical ways, then blessings will be heaped upon him. If these ways are not lived out in every area of life as established in Biblical writings, then man will be cursed.

offering assistance to individuals is, from this perspective, not biblical, because that would interfere with God's sovereignty. For that reason, CR would have labor unions, welfare programs (Gabbert, 1991), retirement pensions, minimum-wage laws, social security, inheritance taxes, and gift taxes (Misztal and Shupe, 1992a) eradicated. Following this logic, the entire tax system as we know it is not biblical. Instead, Rushdoony supported the simple tithing of ten percent of one's income. He believed that if this was implemented, government oppression and poverty would cease (Gabbert, 1991). One way to limit government's expansion in CR economics is to return to the gold and silver standard (commanded in Leviticus 19:35-37).³⁴

Any presence of economic suffering should be considered the expected consequence of not following Biblical Law, and any security and wealth can be interpreted as God's blessing for obedient individuals and nations (Abbott, 1990). North has claimed that wealth is legitimate as long as one's heart is right with God (Abbott, 1990) and that a certain amount of prosperity is necessary in order to help the less fortunate (Williams, 2006). The logic is that if used responsibly, prosperity productively expands the kingdom of God. For those who do not behave responsibly, however, the system can require a form of slavery for persons with great debt to make restitution. This restitution has been interpreted, writes Gabbert (1991) as a benevolent arrangement that will promote civic responsibility.

The responsibility of the prosperous is always to use wealth for the expansion of the kingdom. One medium for expansion within this system of economics is the

³⁴ ³⁵Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure. ³⁶Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt. ³⁷Therefore shall ye observe all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: I am the LORD.

accumulation of property. When one has property, it affords the powers, privileges, and means to advance dominion (Abbott, 1990). The Reconstructionist perspective firmly believes that the overall economic well-being of individuals and nations is not the responsibility of the state. Rather, this should be managed through families who must follow ‘the Law’ and work towards the means that can provide for each other and for the kingdom (Williams, 2006).

Historical Examples of Calvinism

This chapter thus far has been an accounting of the main tenets and principles of Christian Reconstruction. These have been codified by the preeminent writers of the movement. But they were not the first to attempt to put these codes into practice. There have been some exemplar groups in history to whom the Reconstructionists look for inspiration and guidance towards the goal of living by Biblical Law. These include the citizens of Geneva in John Calvin's time (where from 1521-1549, Geneva was ruled by Christian law); Oliver Cromwell’s protectorate (when from 1653-1659, England, Scotland and Ireland were ruled by Christian law); and the Massachusetts Bay Puritans (who beginning in 1629, created a biblically-ruled colony in the early United States) (Gabbert, 1991). Reconstructionists also look to the laws of the Founding Fathers of the U.S. as an example of a Reconstructionist conception of government (Gabbert, 1991). They believe in the Christian nature of the Constitution and interpret the Founders as trying to continue the Puritan effort of constructing a society that would prosper if led by God and godly people. Abbott (1990) has claimed that the Massachusetts Bay Puritans upheld the preferred model of governance over Calvin’s Geneva and Cromwell’s Protectorate, noting that “the basic assertion of Rushdoony, Bahnsen, North and other

Reconstructionists is that the Puritans were that group in American history which best developed a society based upon theonomic principles” (p. 31). Puritan leader John Cotton’s laws are printed in the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* and in Bahnsen’s book on Christian ethics; and Gary North produced a thorough analysis of the Puritan system of law and government (Abbot, 1990). Gabbert (1991) has stated that “the Puritan application of the Law to society both fascinates and inspires modern theonomists” (p. 22).

Abbott (1990) describes the CR version of history and stories of the Pilgrims and the Puritans who became inspiration for the Reconstructionists.³⁵ The Pilgrims of the Massachusetts Bay ventured from England to America under the guise of running an arm of an English trading company while living in a new land where they could practice their religion without being governed by England and English church leaders. They started sailing in 1630 with the idea of using the company charter as the basis for a civil government, where officers of the company would be magistrates. Their arrival in the new world meant providence for the Pilgrims, and they took it as confirmation of the righteousness of their mission. Abbott (1990) writes that the leaders of this new world penned laws that were alleged to be based upon the Bible. This was eventually called the Massachusetts code, which was adopted in 1648. Once these laws were in place, it became apparent that it was not completely clear how passages in the Bible were germane to the Puritans’ mundane lives. With great resistance, the leaders penned laws

³⁵ The pilgrims were separatist Christians and emphasized a personal faith without involvement in politics. The Puritans were more zealous about forming a church-state. In CR discourse, both pilgrims and puritans are honored for their dedication to their religious faith, whether that meant making a journey across the ocean to live out their beliefs or a move to codify Biblical Law in the civil arena.

that were alleged to be based upon the Bible. This was eventually called the Massachusetts code, which was adopted in 1648. Church leaders were named as the experts in the Law and when there was a question, clergy would provide the final interpretation. In 1646 the Puritans proclaimed the interdependence of church and state.

Gabbert (1991) contextualizes the magnitude of this colony, compared to other areas of early America. He writes that “in hearkening back to the era of Puritan hegemony, modern Christians are expressing a nostalgic yearning for a better day, a day when believers were committed rather than casual, devoted to Christ rather than preoccupied with the world” (p. 224). However, Gabbert (1991) counters, “aside from the original stockholders in the Massachusetts Bay Trading Company, ... such a reality may never have existed” (p. 224). He casts doubt on the continuity of the Puritan arrangement. For the Reconstructionists, the scale of the community is insignificant compared to the import of their undertaking. North has expressed the Reconstructionist affinity with the Puritans in that they sought what the Reconstructionists seek: a purification of the church, the family, and the heart of the individual and society (Abbott, 1990). Though they may not have achieved flawlessness, the Reconstructionists believe that the Puritans were right in their fundamental assumptions and that their enterprise could be attempted and improved upon. The way to do this, North (1979-1980) believes, is to avoid the mistakes of the Puritans, who became too internalized and did not seek the reshaping of the wider society. Their other mistake, he claims, was that they also surrendered governance to the “non-elect” (non-Christian), which Rushdoony calls pietism, or “heresy of the faithful” (Gabbert, 1991). Despite the Puritans’ mistakes, the Reconstructionists see themselves as

“the true heirs to New England Puritanism...the standard bearers for the reinstatement of the Puritan vision” (Gabbert, 1991).

Critics suggest problems associated with striving to emulate historical models that are so strongly flawed. Gabbert (1991), for example, writes that “the very nature of the religio-political structures of these models leads inevitably to an unworkable and intolerant political system under which no nation has been able to thrive, or even to survive” (p. 1). He states simply that these “revered models” of Reconstructionism “do not succeed” (1991, p. 237). Specifically, Calvin’s Geneva required Christian behavior as a civic duty as opposed to a spiritual choice, and the church became distracted with the task of policing. All of this required the systematic reduction of democratic procedures in government. In England, Cromwell’s biblical government failed due to resistance to rigorous punishments, surveillance, and the loss of individual freedoms. And finally, according to Gabbert (1991), the government of The Massachusetts Bay Colony was a dictatorship. (Gabbert, 1991). Gabbert asserts that after careful examination of their historical models, the vision of the contemporary theonomists inherits critical defects: “an antipathy towards democracy...a separatist mindset...an elitist claim to absolute truth...a desire for public morality accompanied by a fear of religious liberty...[and] a questionable historical methodology” (1991, p. 243). Yet, the Reconstructionist optimism persists.

Strategy for Cultural Change

CR strategies for cultural renewal can be characterized in terms of style and process; locations or sites for renewal; activities that are upheld as vital catalysts for change; and distinctions between what man can do and what God must do. Those who

write about societal reconstruction assure that it will be slow in coming (Bahnsen and Gentry, 1989; DeMar and Leithart, 1988; North, 1987; and Rushdoony, 1970). These authors explain that reconstruction will occur as a progressive establishment (Abbott, 1990) which will be promoted by long term biblical strategies which ensure “little by little conversion” (Ziegler in Boston, 2001) over long periods of time. Gabbert (1991) describes Reconstructionists as patient men who know that time is the key. Their optimistic postmillennial eschatology assures them, prevents despair about apparent setbacks, and fosters patience. Rushdoony envisions gradual takeover, sphere by sphere of society – and it will be gentle, he claims, as nearly everyone, by that time, will already be Reconstructionist. David Chilton, in *Paradise Restored* (1985) makes the claim that their time frame is 36,000 years and prescribes faith and continuance.

Change should take place on certain fronts: in the family, in education, in the church, and at the level of the state. Regarding the purpose of marriage, Sutton (1987) writes that “each new marriage is the formation of a new government that is headed by the husband” (p. 141). This chain of command must be honored as a strategy for cultural renewal, and it will be achieved if this biblical guideline is followed. Homeschooling will produce a generation of Christians that are prepared to establish the kingdom of God (DeMar, 1987; North, 1984; Thoburn, 1986). Since the church has been permeated through with liberalism and secular humanism, worship that does not follow doctrine and pessimistic eschatology, there must be renewal in the church (Jordan, 1985). This, for some, means breaking free from available denominations and churches and creating home worship with one’s family or collectively with other families. Also, to prevent the state from having holding power over the church, there is a move to eliminate ties to the

state through the changing of tax codes and having churches remove their non-profit status (http://hHush mMoney.org/free-church_solution.htm, 2009) so that they are not restricted by the oversight of a secular government. At the level of the state, it is suggested that CR operatives should work towards redistributing power to the family and to the church rather than having a public welfare system. Tolerance for other religions should be eradicated; and ultimately, every action should work toward theonomy. These strategies will require a determined reworking of the definition of religious liberty, of the church/state relationship, and of the first amendment (Abbot, 1990). Though many Reconstructionists are not interested in getting involved in formal politics, others call for infiltrating the local parties (Ziegler in Boston, 2001) and pursuing legislative reform (Clapp, 1987). North (1991) reminds that the final goal is complete reconstruction of all spheres of government, but only after most people agree with and embrace this end.

This slow, gradual renewal will be ‘bottom-up,’ (meaning that believers are to self-govern themselves according to the word of God, which will lead to societal reconstruction), not ‘top-down’ (in the sense of an autocratic or oligarchic Christian government) (English, 2003). It should be a grass-roots change that depends on the dedicated acts of individuals in their mundane tasks and daily lives. Repeatedly, Reconstructionists assure that this change will not involve violent revolution (Gabbert, 1991; Pottenger, 2007); nor coup d’etat (North, 1991), ...nor holy war (North, 1991); that it would never involve imposing God’s law upon an unwilling society. They insist their perspective is anti-apocalyptic (English, 2003) and only involves peaceful, democratic (North, 1987), noncompulsory choices, and voluntary acceptance of Biblical Law

(Sutton, 1990).³⁶ This cultural and societal change will require actions both from man and from God. God will transform hearts, move people to conversion, and regenerate individual souls (North, 1990). These people will be moved to join, by the irresistible grace of God (North, 1991) and will then be guided in their actions by the Holy Spirit (Sutton, 1990). Individuals will undergo a moral and spiritual change (Kickasola in Clapp, 1987); feel obliged through their personal conscience, and voluntarily engage in comprehensive revival (North, 1991), prayer, and organizing. Though programmatically, most Reconstructionists believe that God, and not people, will bring on a kingdom of dominion. In other words, the belief is that only God can bring others to God and grow the kingdom. The role of people is just to live out their faith, share it with others, and serve as good models. However, North has stated his preference to hasten the coming of the kingdom, using discretion and secrecy (Gabbert, 1991). More subtle in his rhetoric, Doug Phillips is willing to work for the long term, advocating for the slower activities of cultural change.

There are two main activities that are continuously endorsed as crucial for cultural renewal: organizing and educating. Reconstructionists often organize in terms of educational or social opportunities that bring people together for solidarity and to learn and sustain Biblical Law. Organizing also takes the form of providing educational materials and access to information and activities that substitute for what is found in secular or mainstream Christian sites and markets. Lobbying about education links Reconstructionists with evangelical fundamentalists and though they disagree on

³⁶ This reference to “democratic” means that they believe everyone should make their own choice to follow God and theonomy and that this will happen in time through God’s providence.

eschatology, this provides a forum for recruitment and collaboration toward similar goals (Abbot, 1990). Similarly, Sugg (2005) describes how Reconstructionists use popular causes like abortion, evolution, gay marriage and school prayer to recruit members. Education is the Reconstructionist version of ‘know thyself.’ Of course, it is not the self that is important, but the constant meditation on and education about God’s laws and God’s will for how people should live their lives. It involves constant study and meditation upon the Bible and other theological and methodological writings that will improve upon an individual’s, group’s or family’s knowledge about God and how to live in this world as God would have it. This manifests in the high value placed upon books, DVD’s, study groups, workshops, and retreats for both adults and children, in order to increase knowledge and wisdom. Following the advising from Deuteronomy 11:1-28 that parents should ‘disciple’ their children in the ways of God from the time of rising until lying down at night,³⁷ many educational formats (like worship and lectures) are designed for both adults and children, so that they may learn together. Age segregation is highly frowned upon and this along with youth culture is purported to be part of the downfall of the Christian family. Therefore, families are encouraged to socialize and learn together at all times. This often results in children learning at a very high level, as

³⁷ This passage from the New International Version begins with: ¹ Love the Lord your God and keep his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always. ² Remember today that your children were not the ones who saw and experienced the discipline of the Lord your God: his majesty, his mighty hand, his outstretched arm. Then in verse 18, it continues: Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ¹⁹ Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ²⁰ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, ²¹ so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the Lord swore to give your forefathers... The passage ends with a promise that if these things are done, prosperity will follow. And if they are not, the reader will be cursed.

the speakers aim their lessons at the adults. Children are expected to listen, take notes, and meet this level of understanding. One central theme in this effort to self-educate is the objective of ‘unschooling’ one’s self from the secular liberal lessons learned in public schools, universities, from the news, or from mainstream books on history, politics and current events. For example, Jean-Marc Berthoud, a Reconstructionist leader in Switzerland, urges followers to deconstruct liberal humanistic historiography altogether (Gabbert, 1991). Worldly facts must be exposed for their liberal worldview and be replaced with what is known from the Biblical Worldview, a continuous undertaking. These are the main strategies for Reconstructionist cultural, social and political change.

Appeal and Future of the Movement

Misztal and Shupe (1992a) give offer six reasons for what they describe as the “growing visibility, vitality, and presence of Christian Reconstruction in America” (p. 91). First, CR endorses what Misztal and Shupe call legitimate social concerns (concern about the liberal naiveté about how to run government, the abandonment of biblical values, and concerns about AIDS, sexual promiscuity, drug use, teenage pregnancy, pornography, abortion, other social problems; finally, they uphold the family as sacred). The second reason for the growing presence of CR in America is the growing Christian homeschool movement (characterized as the fastest growing sector of private education in the U. S.), which fosters a shared view of the government as ungodly enemy. The third reason is CR’s political pragmatism and alliance building (they work with Premillennialists to advance their goals). The fourth reason is their partisan allegiance (Republican, Libertarian or Independent) and their skepticism. The fifth reason is a cultural sense of the entering of a new ‘dark ages.’ People find hope, purity, and

optimism in the outlook and plans of CR. The sixth and final reason Misztal and Shupe (1992a) give for the growing vitality of CR in America is the energetic intellectual labors of major proponents. Those who are avowed Reconstructionists can be looked to as extremely dedicated and committed to their cause and as highly skilled in its presentation and strategy for propagation. Their public demonstration of care for children and close-knit families offers a striking contrast to the violence and callousness portrayed in mainstream news, drama, and public discourse. Their strong intellectualism finds favor with autodidacts and those who value reading and reject the knowledge and commercial manipulation that comes from watching television and other more modern forms of news and entertainment.

For those who crave spiritual knowledge, the move to going back to the Bible for intensive study with reverence might represent longed-for sustenance compared to modern unstructured worship that seems focused on secular concerns and lacking in a biblical foundations. CR's hierarchical structure and resolute epistemological methodology offers order in a postmodern era that, for some, brings with it too much chaos and confusion. And finally, CR's conservative politics and economics and suspicion of government that is favorable to the wealthy appeals to a broad cross-section of believers (Pottenger, 2007) and potential converts. These six aspects of CR make it increasingly appealing to a sector of society that is finding itself drawn to CR theology and practice (Misztal & Shupe, 1992a).

Gary North has stated that he believes it is difficult to determine the future of the Christian Reconstruction movement. He points to the Postmillennial eschatology as enabling followers to be very patient in achieving their goals (Abbott, 1990), meaning

that God's plan for dominion is already in the works. It will just take time to unfold. For most adherents, this means simply committing to living out CR theology in their daily lives and feeling assured about the legitimacy of their actions. Those focused on the political scene are very confident about their plans for local activities that will eventually impact change at a higher level (Ziegler in Boston, 2001). And academic research has shown the viability of an increase in widespread influence in the future for Reconstructionists (Gabbert, 1991).

Criticism and Conclusion

Criticism of the Reconstructionist project is widespread. Heightened critical rhetoric is often displayed in coverage of CR by journalists and liberal policy advocates (Berlet, 1995; Boston 2001; Clarkson, 1997; Goldberg, 2006; Phillips, 2006) who deem it totalitarian and anti-democratic. Referring to the viability of its theology, for example, Gabbert (1991) regards it as unsound at its most basic level. He proposes that the theonomic assumption that Old Testament law can transfer to contemporary experience is flawed logic and explains that it does not clearly define a societal structure as its proponents claim. Gabbert points to considerable dissension within the ranks about how ethical questions can be dealt with or even how practical tasks should be addressed. For example, Bahnsen rejected and Rushdoony practiced kosher dietary guidelines. Clapp (1987) asks if illegitimate children and eunuchs (sometimes interpreted as gay men) should be denied the rights of full citizenship and whether dowries should still be paid to the bride's father, as prescribed in the Bible. He questions CR's use of the term "Christian," as its legalism defies the New Testament spirit.

Christian theologians have also challenged CR's identification with Calvin and the Reformed tradition, arguing that it presents them in a distorted light (Barker and Godfrey, 1990). Gabbert (1991) reminds that attempts to institute CR have been tried in the past, and theonomy has not been successfully established. Pottenger (2007) warns of its threat to civil society, even as Reconstructionists skillfully utilize civil society for their own gain. He describes how CR acquires acceptance from its followers through the liberal democratic presumptions of personal freedom, public toleration and the imperative for dissensus, while employing a strategy that intends to replace liberal democracy with Biblical Law. Shupe (1997) criticizes Reconstructionist rhetoric and argumentation, saying it leaves little opportunity for discussion or deliberation, positioning itself as superior and views opposition with contempt. Addressing the type of culture and people that authoritarian ways of life produce, Miller (1984) has theorized that when parental (or the authority's) rules become bound with a child's (or adherent's) identity and security, following them without question becomes critical for that child or adherent's existence. This training, she proposes, provides willing recruits for totalitarianism. To her, this rigidity and inflexibility is more troublesome than the content of totalitarianism because of the type of person it creates. Lakoff (2002) has argued how morality becomes naturalized so that efforts to disagree or change become viewed as unnatural and immoral. This could make CR impenetrable for those who would like to change or leave it. Bruce Prescott, a mainstream Baptist pastor, further believes that Reconstructionists will be willing to take up arms and wage a civil war if faced with too many barriers to their chosen reforms (Prescott, 2009).

Scholars who have scrutinized CR contend that because of its draw, influence, and increase in membership, more thorough comprehensive and critical analysis is necessary (Abbott, 1990). Clapp (1987) has charged that it has been superficially evaluated, referring to assessments of hermeneutics and eschatology, and notes the absence of historical evaluation. Gabbert (1991) makes a plea for analysis to expose its flaws in the name of the American republican system of government and its protection of individual liberties. English (2003) decries the negative attention to Christian Reconstruction in academia, in general, criticizing its focus on the eccentric and shocking and otherwise dismissing it as a trend of fundamentalism. Appleby (2004) cautions that if fundamentalism is dismissed, we risk neglecting potential data about how various religious groups articulate themselves with its current dilemmas with modernity. In a more critical analysis, we can watch for the ways in which religions, which can be seen as symbolic manifestations of societal values and desires, are actually adaptive, fluid, and internally plural. It is clear that more attention must be paid to CR, in terms of its relationship with modernity and how it engages real people in their daily lives. How, in other words, are CR ideas appealing in the context of contemporary culture, and how are people taking it up and applying it in their personal schedules? These questions have yet to be asked in academic research about CR. The majority of the research detailed here has reviewed CR's main figures and their ideas. The next step should be to investigate how these ideas have been taken to the people, how they have become attractive, and how followers participate in their continuance and augmentation.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW: THEORIES OF CONSTITUTIVE RHETORIC

We're here because we believe God is raising up a remnant. And scripture tells us in Isaiah one and in many other passages, that it's often for the sake of the remnant that God spares a nation.

But the fact that you're here, the fact that God still has a sizeable remnant preserved in this land brings me encouragement that he may yet see fit to restore our nation. Let's do our part and then we'll see what God does.

But he prepared a remnant that he could use... a remnant whose fathers' hearts were turned toward their children. A remnant that took up God's word seriously and turned to the wisdom of the righteous. A people prepared for the Lord, a people God could use, and upon whom he began to build His Kingdom in this world.

Doug Phillips, Vision Forum, at the "Building a Family That Can Stand" Conference, 2009

At a conference on family and culture, Doug Phillips, the president of Vision Forum, spoke to the audience of a "remnant." In fact, he suggested that they – those in the audience – were the remnant that is referred to in the Bible. The remnant is "a people" mentioned in Isaiah and many other books of the Bible which has been used to symbolize Christian believers who, with steadfast faith, have lived through the horrors and iniquity of Babylon (sinful society) and will help God to restore His kingdom on earth (George, 2002). The theme of "the remnant" is repeatedly used by Phillips in his talk at this conference, but it is only one of the ways in which membership in a distinct collective is invoked in CR discourse. It is the goal of CR leaders and adherents to generate and become a "people" who have heard God's voice and who will do their small part to live by his ways. According to CR leaders, this intentional living can change the face of "culture" and prepare the way for Christ to reign on earth.

This chapter will introduce the theoretical framework through which the constitution of this CR “people” can be interpreted. First, I will survey some of the ways that the influence of religion on society has been studied, drawing from sociology, political science, anthropology, folklore and communication studies. These disciplines have considered societal religiosity versus its secularity as well as religion’s (and fundamentalism’s) relationship with modernity, postmodernity, and globalization. Topics within these discussions range from religion and identity to politics, youth, gender, ethnicity, technology, and the characteristics of new religious movements since the twentieth century. I will then present an overview of the area of study referred to as “constitutive rhetoric” and describe the ways in which this literature and that of cultural studies and social theory attends to how a social collective can be borne out of symbolic and material practices. This process is notably influenced by the visual – images, artifacts, objects, physical spaces and places – and is addressed by a growing body of work called visual rhetoric. These literatures describe how narratives create meaning, identity, identification and division, while also producing material and political consequences. They effectively address the constitution of the CR “people” and its meanings.

Various disciplines have studied the influence of religion on society.

Contemporary studies of the sociology of religion have examined the secularization and sacralization (Demerath III, 2007) of modernity (Christiano, 2007).³⁸ Political scientists have taken up this question, especially as it relates to electoral politics. Political science

³⁸ “Modernity” refers to a move from feudalism and agrarianism to capitalism and industrialization, typically associated with rationalism, secularism, and the development of the nation-state.

researchers Wald and Calhoun-Brown (2007) describe the long-standing theory of secularization. It suggests that the more modern and industrialized a society becomes, the more it will grow to be secular. Accordingly, the trend would begin with society emphasizing the importance of beliefs and move in a linear fashion towards reason becoming more significant (Misztal and Shupe, 1992a). Wald and Calhoun-Brown (2007) also overview the classical Marxist view, which they contend supposes that members of society hold onto religion while oppressed, but once they realize their oppression, they will throw it off and revolt. The persistence of religiosity in the United States has proven these theories to be naïve. The ongoing presence of religion in modern and postmodern times led Robertson (1985) to declare the unilinear secularization hypothesis invalid. Wald and Calhoun-Brown (2007) delineate three ways that scholars have understood religion over time. It has been seen as declining, becoming more powerful, and becoming more stable over time. They support the third claim, that religion has become a stable and vital influence in the U.S. over time, and that we cannot claim to understand contemporary society without understanding the role of religion, especially in politics. Its persistence, they explain, is due to its cultural compatibility with the values of U. S. residents; its condition as an essential component of social identity; its voluntary status and political independence; and its diversity across the country.

Rather than conceptualizing the relationship between religion and societal development as a unilinear progression, most scholars now understand it as symbiotic. Simpson (1992) explains that religion became a problem for modernity because modernity encouraged differentiation across states, economies, and civil sectors. Religion encouraged uniformity and that made it difficult for different states and economies to

compete and thrive. Conversely, modernity was a problem for religion because religion resisted this type of differentiation and autonomy and sought conformity from its constituents. In the face of the diversity and autonomy being encouraged across the expanse of the modern nation-state, the nation somehow needed to sustain a sense of collective national identity. Much of the time, this was accomplished by using religious symbolism. Civic duty and obligation became entwined with religious commitment in the symbolic processes of the state, so that citizens interpellated themselves into a collective identity provided for them. Bellah's (1967) "civil religion" is an example of how this operated in the United States. The collective engagement in prayer at the beginning of a political event or a political leader referring to God's support of his plans for war are instances of civil religion.

Misztal and Shupe (1992a) theorize that the moves towards secularization that accompanied modernity worked to catalyze desires to 'resacralize' society. Indeed, they note that in the twentieth century, many religious traditions were invoked to oppose the institutional separations between the sacred and the secular. By their definition, fundamentalism was the endeavor to reclaim sacred authority to reorient society. It acted on public space, culture, and epistemologies as an antidote to accelerated change. Rather than defining fundamentalism as a contrast to modernity, Misztal and Shupe (1992a) characterize them as concomitant.

Simpson (1992) acknowledges the classical understanding of Christian fundamentalism in America as a "reaction against the culture of modernity" (p. 10). However, he and Misztal and Shupe (1992a) contend that there must be a more global understanding of fundamentalism, by which they mean that actions are rendered within a

worldwide system of economics, cultural and political dimensions connecting individuals and nation-states in complex relationships (Miszta and Shupe, 1992a). This dynamic “set[s] in motion spontaneous revivals of conservative religion” (Miszta and Shupe, 1992a, p. 5) as people lose their sense of self-determination and face the prospect that their religious faith is not sovereign. The often disorienting experience of globalization compels religious movements to reassert control over their identities.

Hadden (1989) agrees that there must be a more comprehensive understanding of fundamentalism, and argues that the restoration and maintenance of identity is a key element in religious responses to globalization. In his explanation of the patterned actions of religious movements, Simpson (1992) asserts that fundamentalism cannot be understood solely as reactionary, but also in terms of being motivated by “trends and events in surrounding contexts and environments that provide the movement with new opportunities” (p. 10). Simpson, drawing on Pierre Bourdieu, recounts that these new contexts offer new symbolic capital to draw on that have the potential to affirm boundaries and promote ‘the cause’.³⁹ A movement can gain symbolic capital when something happens to confer a positive value upon the goals or values of that group. It can decrease when an event is interpreted to devalue the same goals and values. Fundamentalist groups can capitalize on this phenomenon by intervening in the interpretive process regarding current events to persuade others of their movement’s symbolic capital (Simpson, 1992). Simpson (1992) concludes that the rise of

³⁹ Simpson (1992) uses Garfinkel’s (1956) conceptualization of symbolic capital, which distinct from social or cultural capital, can be defined as images, reputations, and publicly held notions of worth and value that are created, destroyed or modified when public interpretation gives value to the identities, goals, interests, and ideologies of some social unit.

fundamentalism “must also be attributed to the presence of symbolic resources created by the passage from modernity to postmodernity” (p. 26). Contrary to any expectations of a decrease in religiosity over time, he argues that “fundamentalism is now positioned to use the very trends and events of the postmodern world to its advantage” (p. 27) and they seem to be working in its favor (Simpson, 1992). A high tech culture, the internet, and increasing polarization in the world are some of the postmodern trends that can be capitalized upon. In the case of CR, the rise of “terrorism,” “Islamism,” secularism, the flailing position of America in the world economy, and “the collapse” of the family and modern values all offer the movement symbolic capital for the proliferation of their own message; the internet provides the main medium for their message and their social connections.

Other topics within contemporary sociology’s study of religion include the role of choice vs. economy (Lechner, 2007); the global and local (Beyer, 2007; Freston, 2007); new manifestations of civil religion (Cristi & Dawson, 2007); faith-based initiatives (Fansley II, 2007); the role and use of the internet (Cowan, 2007); religion’s relationship with the state, violence and human rights (Demerath III, 2007); regulation of religion (Beckford & Richardson, 2007); resistance and social movements (Erickson, Nepstad & Williams, 2007); religious political preferences and ideological alignments (Olson, 2007); individual religiosity (Brechon, 2007); ethnicity and religion (Kivisto, 2007); religious socialization of youth (Bartkowski, 2007); religion and identity (Greil and Davidman, 2007); gender differences (Woodhead, 2007); embodiment, emotion and the charismatic (Mellor, 2007); religion and death (Hunt, 2007); and religious issues in particular nations (Blancarte, 2007; Sharot, 2007; Shimazono, 2007; Yang, 2007).

Another line of study within the sociology of religion is dedicated to the appearance of more modern religious movements, or new religious movements (NRMs). Christian Reconstruction, the focus of this study, is considered an NRM (D. E. Cowan, personal communication, December 12, 2008; English, 2003). NRMs, according to J. G. Melton (2004), are defined as

groups of religious bodies/movements which, though they do not share any particular set of attributes, have been assigned to the fringe by, first, the more established and dominant voices in the religious culture and, second, various voices within the secular culture (government officials, watchdog groups, the media, etc.), and thus are basically to be seen as a set of religious groups/movements existing in relatively contested spaces within society as a whole. (p. 75)

This definition includes a great diversity of religious groups, such as Falun Gong, the Vipassana meditation movement, the emerging church movement, the Unification Church, Eckancar, the Universal Life Church, the Rastafari movement, Heaven's Gate, the Nation of Islam, UFO religions and Buddhist movements; yet they all share the experience of having been deemed "unacceptably different" (Melton, 2004, p. 79) either by the local dominant religions or by non-religious cultural gatekeepers. These religions tend to be different in terms of their theology, behavior patterns, sexual ethics (such as arranged marriages, polygamy, etc.), support for certain illegal behaviors (such as polygamy or illicit drug use) espousal of separatism, communal lifestyles, stringent diets, medical restrictions, apocalyptic beliefs, conservative gender roles, perceived foreignness, racial exclusiveness, or authoritarian leadership (Melton, 2004).

Eileen Barker (2004) underscores the novelty and innovation of these groups, in terms of beliefs, practices, organization, and geographical or social location. She suggests some characteristics of NRMs to consider in research. One such characteristic is how new

converts are more enthusiastic and zealous than those who are born into a religion. They are more vulnerable and need protection from outside arguments that might threaten their burgeoning faith. Dissenting ideas and questioning may be discouraged, and the movement's positions tend to be unequivocally delineated. Worldviews are considered to be dichotomous (true/false, right/wrong), and individuals' identities are fully dependent upon their membership. Symbolic and physical lines are drawn so as to manifest the dualism of Us vs. Them, and members are cautioned not to trespass with their soul, community, and future at stake.

Time is also often considered to be partitioned, in the sense of before conversion and after conversion. These groups, according to Barker, usually attract particular types of people, so they may tend to be more homogenous in their makeup. Because they are neophytes, they must expect and be prepared to deal with many new changes. For example, they may experience changes in group demographics; they will have to consider how to enculturate their children who have been born into the movement; they may need to respond to the death of their founders; and they will have to strategize how to communicate with and control the membership as the movement grows. Barker (2004) emphasizes that NRMs "undergo transformations and modifications far more radically and rapidly than the vast majority of older religions" (p. 97) and she urges researchers to consider how these movements respond to changing social circumstances in systematically different ways.

Anthropologists focus on the constructed nature of religion vis-à-vis its prescribed ideas, habits and mundane practices. Larkin (2008), for example, has shown how scholars of religion have moved from conceptualizing religions as seemingly self-evident systems

to recognizing them as constructed ideologies. They have done this by laying out their genealogies between religions, over time, and across geographical regions. Anidjar (2006) argues that religion has emerged as a larger colonial project which imports the colonial epistemology. His project depicts how a colonial takeover comes complete with a new religion, religious leaders, and a new lens for interpreting the moral and cultural landscape. This is exemplified by the spread of Christianity by imperial nations, imposing Protestantism or Catholicism in locales that already had well-established religions. Missionaries have been critiqued for this effect. This is consistent with Smith's (1998) conjecture that religion was not always necessarily a native category, but has been a way to impose order and meaning from the outside.

Asad (1993, 2003) has examined the beliefs of religious adherents who experience religion as immanent to daily, mundane events and practices without much knowledge of theological doctrine. Mahmood (2005) and Hirschkind (2001, 2006) call this daily religious practice "the ethical cultivation of the self." Hirschkind and Mahmood study Islamic renewal movements in Egypt and they focus on the micropractices Muslims in Cairo undertake to learn how to produce and reproduce what it means to be a Muslim. They theorize that religion emerges out of specific situations of practice and is encoded in particular material forms, not something that is an essence (Larkin, 2008). In this way, these authors suggest that religion and religious identities are constituted through performances and communicative practices.

Descriptive studies of religion within Folklore Studies usually conceive it as the communicative performance of values. Folklorists accordingly have written ethnographies of fundamentalist congregations (Ammerman, 1987, 1994); women's

voices in the Pentecostal tradition (Lawless, 1988); women's personal experiences of religion (Lawless, 1993); and the enactment of religio-political activities on the internet (Howard, 2008a, 2008b, 2009). Although varied in topic, all of these studies emphasize a focus on the marked and everyday performances of a group and its members as a way to understand their perspectives.

Scholars in Communication Studies have investigated religion in terms of its effects on health (Long, 2004; Morse, Afifi, Morgan, Stephenson, Reichert, Harrison, and Long, 2009; Robinson, & Nussbaum, 2004); its spiritual value for individuals and groups (Frye, Kisselburgh & Butts, 2007; Harter & Buzzanell, 2007); its rhetorical styles and cultural impacts (Kraus, 2009; Medhurst, 2009; Ofulue, 2004); its relationship with identity formation and intercultural encounters (Martin & Nakayama, 2006); and its relationship with media representations (Bobkowski, 2009; Marmor-Lavie, Stout, & Lee 2009); visual communication (Muller, Ozcan & Seizov, 2009); and visual rhetoric (Graves, 2001). Within communication studies, the Center for Media, Religion and Culture at the University of Colorado has accomplished a large body of work on the relationship between individuals and how they gain access to the sacred in everyday life. They have also examined how religion is portrayed to larger audiences via mass media. (Clark, 2007; Hoover, 2006; Hoover & Clark, 2002; Hoover and Lundby, 1997). These approaches have utilized ethnography to depict in situ religious communities, women's narratives, the internet as religious medium, and ways that religion is depicted and consumed in media programming and products. For the most part, these studies take religious expression at face value and describe how it (as an already formed or totalized phenomenon) is being expressed. Little critical attention has been given to how religious

groups utilize media production, circulation, and consumption; nor has this research addressed how in particular groups, religion articulates with other societal forces to constitute distinct socio-political identities. These issues must be addressed in order to more fully understand the relationship between religion and culture. This overview has delineated the ways in which religion has been addressed in various disciplines, including communication. For the most part, these studies have begun with the presumption that they are examining an already-constituted phenomenon (religion) in order to investigate its expression. In contrast, this study presumes that religion, in whatever form, is a variety of social forces that come together to constitute a cultural form. The heuristic frameworks of constitutive and visual rhetoric can be utilized to consider religion in this way.

Constitutive Rhetoric

The main query in this study is how a people and their language and culture are constituted through rhetorical symbolism and acts. This section will introduce the notion of “constitutive rhetoric” and how it can be used as a heuristic framework for interpreting CR as a constituted “people.” Maurice Charland (1987) first coined the term “constitutive rhetoric,” which refers to the idea that subjects or a collective identity are brought into being through the telling of historical narratives. Charland based this idea upon on Althusser’s (1971) concept of interpellation. As interpreted by Charland, interpellation occurs when a subject is hailed; if that subject “identifies” (to use Kenneth Burke’s term) with the hailing, it draws the subject into particular discourse, political, and social positions.⁴⁰ Burke (1950/1969) believed that humans were essentially isolated and

⁴⁰ This is different from Althusser’s original notion of interpellation: he did not claim that an individual needed to “identify” the hailing. Once hailed, in his view, an individual was made into a subject.

divided due to their biological separateness and the presence of economic and social hierarchies. To counteract this state of separation, Burke held that individuals attempted to identify with others through communication. In the act of identifying with others or with an idea, a rhetor symbolically constitutes “audiences” that associate and disassociate with particular interests. When someone identifies with another, Burke described that person as “substantially one” with the other, or “consubstantial.”⁴¹ This process constructs collectives or peoples, as Charland explains it. Butler (1997) believes that a subject can be interpellated even if that subject does not identify with the hailing. Prevailing discourses, voices of authority, or institutional powers, she believes, will successfully interpellate a subject into a position without his or her participation when those forces have enough sway.

Charland’s (1987) idea of a “people” or collective also draws upon McGee’s (1975) description of “the people.” McGee asserted that this conception of the collective is not based upon an actual group of people that can be counted or brought into one room, but a rhetorical process that represents a movement of ideas, attitudes and conditions. The “people” that is conjured rhetorically remains only as long as it has rhetorical force. This “people” is often supported by what McGee (1980) calls ideographs, terms located in political discourse that demonstrate commitment to a normative goal. These terms are effective because of their openness and lack of clear definition. In fact, they are often invoked with a righteous sense of clarity and precision to give the impression of unity and absolutism. Often ‘buzz words,’ McGee argues that ideographs are used to shape

⁴¹ Burke’s concept of identification transformed rhetorical studies from a focus on the stylistics of speech to a study of how language and rhetorical acts constitute subjectivity and culture.

public decisions and policy because of the way that they link up with audience ideology. Some of the terms he lists as examples are “liberty,” “property,” “freedom of speech,” “religion,” “equality,” and “star.” The ideographs of a “people” support their reason for being, give voice to their goals, and describe their telos.

The particular study that Charland (1987) presents to illustrate the constitution of a “people” is the case of the “people Quebecois.” Charland considers how these political subjects are constituted by their identification with independence narratives in the French speaking Canadian province. He identifies a political myth that is created through these narratives that allows individuals to interpret themselves as part of a collective with a distinct history. Advocacy for Quebec sovereignty was based upon the presumption that a Quebecois subject existed. The Quebecois sovereignty association “proclaimed the existence of an essence uniting social actors in the province” (p. 134) which then propelled the term “Quebecois” into mainstream language. The association’s declaration “is an instance of constitutive rhetoric, for it call[ed] its audience into being.” (p. 134). This subject, interpellated into the position, “always already” had a political position, and that was to support sovereignty. This subject also ‘always already’ believed “that sovereignty was a natural and necessary way of life” (Charland, 1987, p. 137). Charland’s analysis focuses on a white paper authored by the Quebec government which asserted the existence of a “people Quebecois”. The document gives an account of Quebec history in such a way that “renders demands for sovereignty intelligible and reasonable” (p. 137). The document, Charland offers, presents the Quebecois as acting freely in the world. Charland counters that within the narrative that constitutes them (and positions them politically), they are only able to work towards independence. Charland concludes that

the perspective of constitutive rhetoric impels us to understand that “the position that one embodies as a subject is a rhetorical effect” (p. 148).

Delgado (1995) emphasizes the power of this effect for Mexican-Americans as a way to transform the ways in which they understand their own identities. Tate (2005) notes that whereas Charland (1987) and Delgado (1985) present positive rhetorical effects that lead to a successful constitution of “a people,” her own critique of white lesbian feminists and their attempt to redefine feminism illustrates a failed rhetorical effect and constitution. This rhetorical effect and the concept of identification emphasized in Charland, Althusser, Burke, McGee and Butler is central to constitutive rhetoric. It is my contention that through the identification with and the telling of narratives about the Christian history of the United States; of CR leaders’ positions on how Christianity ‘ought’ to be understood and practiced; and how these narratives translate into particular cultural practices; the CR “people” is constituted.

Charland (1987) posits that the constitutive dynamic involves three ideological effects: the creation of a collective subject, the construction of a transhistorical subject, and the illusion of freedom involved in the constitution of this subject. He explains that “to be constituted as a subject in a narrative is to be constituted with a history, motives, and a *telos*” (Charland, 1987, p. 140). The *telos* offers up ways of thinking and acting into the future. He claims that in the struggle to assert a particular identity, numerous individual voices and acts will together become identified as a community, which “masks or negates tensions and differences between members of any society” (1987, p. 140). The narratives that create this effect render the members “consubstantial,” Charland notes, and the interests of the collective become more important than any individual. Ancestry is

invoked to anchor the living generation's mission in that of the dead, as if they are obliged to complete a plan (in turn, upholding the consubstantiality of the living and the ancestors). This effectively creates the second ideological effect, which is the construction of a transhistorical subject. This effect persuades both the "people" and their audiences that their power is not limited to the individuals of the present day, but that they have a legacy in the past which will extend to the future. It "transcends the limitations of individuality at any historical moment" (Charland, 1987, p. 140). This leads to the third ideological effect, which is the illusion of a subject's freedom. Due to the subject's position within this transhistorical legacy and its narratives, he or she is constrained by the narrative and the details of its history. The subject cannot necessarily act outside of this narrative. Charland describes this dynamic as offering a "totalizing interpretation" whereby the "endings of narratives are fixed before the telling" (1987, p. 140). However, it is up to the subjects to complete the narrative in their own idiosyncratic ways. These effects characterize the successful constitution of a "people."

This "people" or collective identity, according to Charland (1987) comes to be when its members agree to live within a prevailing political myth. That myth provides historical, intelligible and reasonable motives and practices and points a way toward a shared future. Chase (2009) similarly describes constitutive rhetoric as a "system builder" through which actors generate fitting and appropriate symbols in line with the rhetoric's orientations. This rhetorical system builder guides individuals to be motivated to act symbolically and materially in ways that reinforce and further constitute the system's

ideology.⁴² A “people,” their myth and their ideology can be responded to and embraced by individuals with differing life stories, actions, and contradictory practices. The ideology (which is brought to life by the myth) creates a transcendent subject which rises above individual differences or interests. Charland (1987) explains that the ways that narratives are told at differing textual sites creates coherent and unified stories and subjects out of seemingly temporally and spatially separate events and tales. This renders a narrative that is experienced with consistency and stability. The collective feels a sense of sameness and solidarity across time and history. This political myth, the defining narrative it provides, and the ways that it provides motives and a lens for thought and action is similar to what Gramsci called common sense. Gramsci (1971), Althusser (1971), and later, Hall (1976, 1985, 2003), Ives (2004a, 2004b) and Laclau (2005) describe how the subjectivity, ways of being, and relations of a people are constituted in a dynamic among social and cultural practices, institutional forces, and language processes.

Gramsci’s (1971) notion of cultural hegemony is informed by Althusser’s (1971) concept of the social formation, which was made up of “complexly structured totalities, with different levels of articulation (the economic, the political, [and] the ideological instances) in different combinations; each combination giving rise to a different configuration of social forces...” (Hall, p. 420, 2003). Hall (1985) describes these complex totalities as always structured in dominance. Gramsci’s hegemony involves a social dynamic of coercion and consent that frames the cultural, political, and ideological

⁴² Materiality, in the case of constitutive rhetoric, refers to how rhetoric has material (concrete, or of the physical world) consequences and creates material conditions; it also speaks to how material conditions create constraints or possibility for what can be constituted through rhetoric and rhetorical action. An example of the latter characteristic is how limits on power, economics, voice, and representation can restrict what is possible for rhetoric to constitute.

social scene in terms of those things that are most right, good, and desired in identity, values, and day to day goals and interactions for a society. If goals and values are effectively framed in a way that is desirable (coercion), then individuals will rise up to embrace and reproduce them (consent). Coercion involves a certain kind of power: “the power to frame alternatives and contain opportunities to win and shape consent, so that the granting of legitimacy to the dominant classes appears not only ‘spontaneous’ but natural and normal” (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts, 1976, p. 38). All of this occurs on the terrain of civil society and the state, which was a vital piece of Althusser’s (1971) analysis of the ideological state apparatus.

Hall (2003) clarifies that Gramsci’s hegemony operates on a number of different levels, compared to Marx’s notion of dominant ideology. First, Marx’s ideology can be seen as more philosophical and abstract than Gramsci’s hegemony. While Marx wrote of the modes and forces of production at a more general level, Gramsci tried to apply analysis to “specific historical conjunctures” (Hall, 2003, p. 414), highlighting political and ideological aspects of social structures, in addition to the forces of production. Secondly, rather than presuming a direct correspondence between class, production, and social consequence, Gramsci complexified power relations and social structures to investigate the many levels and not necessarily correspondent but possible and contingent consequences operating on each other to articulate in social relations. This notion of non-necessary correspondence is traced to Althusser and Laclau (Hall, 1985; Slack, 2003). The underlying difference between Gramsci’s hegemony and the way that Marx’s dominant ideology or revolution operates is that classical Marxism presumes that domination and revolution are natural and necessary (guaranteed). Alternately, Gramsci

proposes that social forces do not move naturally, but have to be organized in some way (not guaranteed). This organization is most effective, according to Gramsci, when it is organized so that it *appears* to be natural, eliminating resistance or antagonism.

This organization involves consent over coercion necessarily: Gramsci did not believe in the classical Marxist notion of false consciousness. Therefore, the participation in relations of force and dominance has to be understood by participants in a way that is compelling for their cultural, moral, and ethical senses of identity in a variety of ways. As Hall (2003) explains, the moment of hegemony is the “process of the coordination of the interests of a dominant group with the general interests of other groups and the life of the state as a whole that constitutes the hegemony of a particular historical block” (p. 424). This occurs in the relations of civil society: within schools, family, churches, cultural organizations, gender, sexual, and ethnic identities – where the definitions and parameters of self and group identity are worked out.

It is this ground of popular thought that Hall (2003) identifies as an important difference of Gramsci over classical Marxism: Rather than predicting how a particular set of ideas will lead to predictable outcomes, Hall supports Gramsci’s move to engage with the thoughts and struggles of real people in material circumstances in order to articulate and re-articulate social realities and relations for the purpose of change. This gets to the difference between Marx’s notion of ideology and Gramsci’s understanding of common sense as ideology. Marx’s ideology is fairly static and uniform: either dominant or oppressed. Gramsci complicates this notion of ideology, highlighting the fact that he believes that popular thought (common sense) is not coherent, but “disjointed and episodic, fragmentary and contradictory” (p. 431, Hall, 2003). There will always be

contradictions, but for any idea to gain in popularity, to seem to be naturally uniform and representative of many, this has to be accomplished through practice and struggle.

Therein, “an old conception of the world is gradually displaced by another mode of thought and is internally reworked and transformed” (p. 434, Hall, 2003). Gramsci believed in evolution over revolution.

Ives (2004a, 2004b) points out that Gramsci’s main question about how people were motivated to consent to an ideology and way of life was driven by his observation of the consequences of political unification. In the face of tensions between the industrialized North and the impoverished South as well as political agitation between Mussolini and the fascists and their political rivals, the government was seeking to combat the fragmentation of the people. They had to combat varying geographic regions, political views, classes, and linguistic dialects. They sought, in a sense, to ‘make Italians’ (or newly fashion what they wanted ‘Italian’ to be) out of these disparate groups of people within a time of crisis. Gramsci’s query was how language could be used to make this happen.

Ives (2004a) asserts that most studies of Gramsci in English have focused on how his ideas can be applied at more macro and institutional levels, but that the basis of his work was fundamentally about language use, a point which has largely been missed.⁴³

⁴³ It is not well-known that Gramsci began his career as an academic linguist. He studied under Matteo Bartoli, a revolutionary linguist who was pushing against both Crocean idealism and neo-grammarians. Gramsci’s cultural hegemony is based on his early studies of linguistic hegemony, how a language can be used to create “a people.” Croce held the position that language was simply a collection of words and linguistic forms and its development was not related to the actual speakers or their cultural context. Bartoli argued that language development is expressly the result of sociocultural struggle, where various forms are in competition and those that are framed as and then taken up as socially, culturally, politically more desirable by the people win out. Gramsci’s

Ives (2004a) claims that for Gramsci, language is crucial for social change or maintenance. He explains that Gramsci understood language, in a broad sense, to be the linguistic mode, culture, and philosophy of a people. In other words, more than simply a system of words and phrases and symbols; a language, to Gramsci, was a way of thinking, being, and living that was both symbolized and constructed by way of verbal words and in behavioral, material and aesthetic forms, and was always influenced and changed by social and cultural struggles. To use Hymes' (1962, 1964, 1974) terms, a community's ways of speaking both reflects and constructs a community's ways of thinking, being and identity. This constitutive mode of conceiving language is in contrast to a representative model of language, where language is only understood to be a tool to reflect what is going on in peoples' heads or social contexts (Stewart, 1995). Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony describes how language, or prevailing ideas, sensibilities, activities, and identities become articulated with individual and collective wills in particular ways, and are then manifested in everyday practices, speech, institutions, and other communicative forms that are made to seem normal and natural. This process occurs in a dialectic of coercion and consent, where this 'language' is participated in and extended by most members of society.

Towards the goal of "creating" a newly unified Italian people, the government was considering introducing a new national language. Gramsci knew that imposing a language (and its contingent philosophy, culture and practices) in a top-down fashion would fail (Ives, 2004a). He called this a passive revolution, where a dictatorial

understanding of linguistic hegemony and his subsequent cultural hegemony retains "the explanatory power of the structural approach and redresses its shortcomings especially in accounting for human agency, by seeing language as fundamentally a human, historical institution" (Ives, 2004a, p. 51).

imposition of someone else's abstracted ideas and words will not be successfully taken up by a people. He believed that the only way to influence or constitute a people and create a hegemonic cultural order was to encourage an environment of participation, involving the organic production of a language and culture that came out of the mundane details of ordinary peoples' lives. He wrote that "language is transformed with the transformation of the whole of civilization" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 482)...it is "in reality a multiplicity of facts more or less organically coherent and co-ordinated" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 349); to which Ives (2004a) adds that it is connected with and grows out of a peoples' everyday activities, desires, and needs. Further, the peoples' "desires, values and actions are connected to the institutional arrangements of society" (Ives, 2004a, p. 83).

Ives explains (2004b) that Gramsci was reacting against the exclusive materialism of Marx because he strongly believed that the production of culture is a dialectic between the linguistic or symbolic and the material – not motivated or initiated by one or the other. Ives calls Gramsci's perspective on this "vernacular materialism." Though what he is referring to is actually linguistic materialism, Ives wants to emphasize the productive character of the vernacular, i.e., that how one speaks about and interacts with his everyday reality constitutes identity and social, cultural and material worlds.

Understood in this way, language can serve as a heuristic for hegemony; or in other words, the hegemonic constitution of a people. Gramsci wanted to provide a method for analyzing how language, its culture, philosophy, ways of living and social organization were not natural but organized in particular ways that seemed to benefit or privilege the vantage point of some and not others. He provided what can now be understood as linguistic concepts for analyzing social formations, such as the subaltern,

spontaneous and normative grammars, civil society, historic bloc, wars of manoeuvre and position, and the national-popular collective will. Previously understood as social relations or strategies, these terms can be seen as linguistic because they help to interpret the ways in which ways of speaking and being configure society in particular ways. These terms create the framework for a method for reading and understanding the organization and operations of a hegemonic language and how it constitutes a people.

To Gramsci, the subaltern is the fundamental component of a hegemonic formation. He borrowed this term from military terminology, which referred to the lower ranks of military personnel who answered to captains (Ives, 2004a).⁴⁴ He then expanded it to refer to non-dominant social groups, which he saw as being dominated in a hegemonic formation because they took on the ideas of others which were not necessarily in their favor. These ideas had, in some way, been articulated with desires of their own and therefore became attractive. The Christian Reconstructionists, one can argue, position themselves as subaltern in relation to the hegemony of secular humanism. They have highly educated and organized leaders who seem to co-opt many of the symbols and modes of mainstream society in order to work towards the consent of their “people” to construct their own hegemony.⁴⁵

Ives (2004a) explains that Gramsci strongly believed that the hegemonic formation was a linguistic process, which occurred in everyday “grammars.” These grammars are ordinary in the Wittgensteinian (1953) sense that they are ‘ways of

⁴⁴ There may be other possible origins for Gramsci’s use of the term “subaltern,” but I have chosen to highlight Ives’ hypothesis here, as it is particularly compelling.

⁴⁵ These educated leaders serve as proxy and guide to less-educated or less-organized adherents.

speaking and being' born out of experience, which are always tethered to history and tradition. Spontaneous grammar, according to Gramsci, is ordinary talk and interaction that people use in their local environments. It appears to be casual and natural, and can have idiosyncrasies, but ultimately it relies on a history of normative grammar.

Spontaneous grammar is what is generally manifest in our daily interactions. It consists of verbal words, nonverbal actions, interactive practices, and the use of symbolic, aesthetic, and material representations to communicate a worldview. Ives (2004a) explains that normative grammar consists of the conscious rules that we follow in order to speak and act according to convention. It consists of the "shoulds" and "oughts" of how one ought to speak, act, and represent a way of life which serves as the normative background for everyday interaction. Though spontaneous grammar may seem to have diversity and idiosyncrasies, it is always guided by our sense of a normative grammar. Gramsci writes that "one is always studying grammar" (1985, p. 187). We monitor our own and each others' correctness and appropriateness by way of reciprocal monitoring, teaching, or censorship and establish norms of correctness and incorrectness in the process (Ives, 2004a). Normative and spontaneous grammars exist in a dialectic, in that the normative guides the spontaneous and the spontaneous grammars provide an appearance of difference, innovation or change. An example of how this translates to CR could be how "modesty" (and how "modesty" is accomplished) is doctrine according to the normative grammar. However, how that concept manifests itself on a day to day basis among individuals and families is an example of spontaneous grammar. Observing these grammars will assist in the recognition of how they are socially organized, how power

differentials have influenced their development, and in the process, space might be created for other possibilities.

Gramsci held that strategies for the linguistic process of social and cultural change operate within civil society. A normative grammar is introduced, taken up, and extended within businesses, business associations, lobby groups, trade unions, charities, community groups, churches, religious groups, and public schools and the justice system; until it is socialized to the point of normalization. Other arenas for the normative grammar to circulate are within entertainment or forms of literature, self-help materials, and popular media. It begins to be expressed through the spontaneous grammars of individuals, families, or organizations. Through this spontaneity, the normative grammar becomes individualized, customized, and extended in creative ways. Gramsci believed that grammars form the basis of a cultural takeover. Returning to military metaphor, he called this approach a 'war of position.' Contrasted to a 'war of manoeuvre,' where military force is used, a 'war of position' involves the "preparations, positioning, [and] working out where, or on what terrain a battle might be staged" (Ives, 2004a, p. 107) and the public relations involved to support the effort. It involves gradually introducing and circulating a normative grammar into the culture so that by the time a war of manoeuvre occurs, the people's grammar, their view of the world, and their practices, would support it. It would effectively be embraced and expected. This idea was inspired by Gramsci's own years of soldiering in the trenches, where he witnessed the effectiveness of careful and deliberate planning that was not "constituted simply by the actual trenches, but by the whole organizational and industrial system of the territory which lies to the rear of the

army in the field” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 234). The supply lines, mobilization of national economies and public morale became fundamental to success (Ives, 2004a).

For the hegemonic formation to be complete, the identities of the people must be altered through the organization of the national-popular-collective will of the people (Ives, 2004a). The collective consciousness or subjectivity of the people must come in line with and absorb the preferred normative grammar. Gramsci explains that this is a key component to bringing a group of very diverse people together. The grammar must, in different ways, articulate with the varied aspects of identity of the people and their particular combinations of religion, race/ethnicity, gender, class, region, etc. This cultural aspect of hegemony is what makes Gramsci’s approach distinct, compared to the traditional Marxist view that class is the main catalyst for revolution, and identity and culture are less significant. When the normative grammar has taken hold and the national identity and collective will have changed to embody and sustain that grammar, a historic bloc has been achieved.⁴⁶

An historic bloc is not stable or necessarily lasting, so in order for it to prevail, it needs constant maintenance towards its reproduction. Contrary to more unitary notions of ideology, a hegemonic movement contains diversity, multiple possible manifestations, and constant negotiation. There are some main actors required for a hegemonic grammar to be constructed. Organic intellectuals work to produce and maintain the grammar necessary for the historic bloc. They ‘organize’ a consistent and unified language out of a chaos of disorganized claims, meanings, and desires. Ives writes that “in order to create a more coherent world view, [the organic intellectual] must work with conflicting

⁴⁶ A historic bloc is an arrangement of various alliances and relations among differing groups united by a common idea (Ives, 2004a).

perspectives and ideas that do not correspond to lived experiences” (2004b, p. 46) and create a language and identity that makes sense. It can be argued that the CR leaders and adherents are creating and weaving a normative grammar, all the while actively imposing a war of position that supports resistance to the secular humanist mainstream.

Ives (2004a, 2004b) presents an innovative view of Gramsci and the linguisticity of his concept of hegemony. Yet Ives’ perspective still provides more of an overview of hegemony and lacks specificity as to how to look for detailed ways in which language or grammar work to construct a unified language and people. Ernesto Laclau (2005) builds on Gramsci’s framework and extends its principles, connecting with rhetorical concepts. Whereas Ives’ investment is in doing a historical analysis of Gramsci, Laclau was interested in putting him to use.⁴⁷ He presents an approach for studying the “nature and logics of the formation of collective identities” (p. ix). His main focus for this particular study is the discourse and collective identity of populism.

Much of contemporary social theory and research focuses on liberal political theory and how it is manifested in current cases. Laclau (2005) states that he believes that more conservative collectives must be studied because they are actually very influential. These conservative collectives, he argues, are considered by many scholars to be irrational and are consequentially condemned, relegated to the sidelines, and thought to be unworthy of study. He asserts that because of this, social and political theory have a void of vital understanding of a whole sector of society. Laclau believes that these collectives are misunderstood as they are presumed to be rationally negotiating their social worlds (and because many academics disagree with their rationality, they just

⁴⁷ Laclau has been working out his application of Gramsci since *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985).

dismiss them). Laclau clarifies that collectives are not an already-totalized core, but a discursive phenomenon, initiated and constituted by social demands that are expressing particular social realities. It is the social demands that constitute the collective or the people and their political terrain, not vice versa. Instead of dismissing them as a faulty attempt to rationally organize, he argues, we need to see them as “performative act[s] endowed with a rationality of [their] own” which [are] “constructing relevant political meanings” (2005, p. 18). Viewed in this way, analysts can learn more about these particular social demands, how they are being articulated and expressed, and what sort of relationship they and their rhetors have to the greater society.

Laclau asserts that this formative process of the constitution of a collective or a “people” is rhetorical. The symbolization and enactment of social demands that creates an “audience” of identification constructs a social, cultural, and material reality, which is in and of itself, a rhetorical accomplishment. How demands are represented and interact with each other in their communicative expression is central to the construction of a social formation. Rhetoric, Laclau declares, its mechanisms and tropological movements that constitute ideology and identities, is the very anatomy of the social and ideological world. He writes that rhetorical devices such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and catachresis “are instruments of expanded social rationality” (p. 12) and are fundamental in the makeup of the social formation. He sees populism or other collective identities as made up of a generalized rhetoric, which he calls hegemony. This generalized rhetoric is similar to Gramsci’s “grammar.”

According to Laclau, there are two main rhetorical accomplishments that must occur for a collective or people to be constituted: the creation of an antagonistic frontier

and the formation of an equivalential chain of demands. In any social space, many individuals find that their social demands or commitments are not necessarily the same, but that they are analogous to each other in their opposition to something else (such as 'the elite,' or in the case of CR, they would unite in their opposition to secular humanism). These individuals metaphorically become like each other in their opposition to something else. Laclau calls this a metaphorical aggregation. That rhetorical division of the political space, which he claims is "inherent in the logics presiding over the constitution and dissolution" (p. 19) of the political, forms an antagonistic frontier, where the political landscape is simplified into dichotomies. "It is through the demonization of a section of the population that a society reaches a sense of its own cohesion" (p. 70). Tate (2005) investigates the competing discourses of feminism that help to constitute identity. She maintains that it is often in the rejection of one identity that another becomes constituted. Similarly, in her treatment of censorship, Butler (1997) illustrates that subjectivity and the concept of "I" depends on the denial of another. Burke (1970) dealt with this notion in his study of logology, proposing that there is a duality in words and concepts, and with every word comes the force of its opposite. For instance, if one introduces the concept of praise, they also point attention to the idea of what is not to be praised. These examples further explicate Laclau's explanation of the antagonistic frontier and the constitution of identity.

Butler (1997) addresses this dualism within the antagonistic frontier as necessary for the possibility of social change. In her terms, censoring the CR crowd would eliminate opportunities for liberal Christians or secular identities to be created. (Likewise, it is the secular humanist mainstream that has assisted in the generation of the CR

movement.) Butler urges that with any kind of language, “a certain social existence becomes possible” (p. 5). If a word or form of speech is eradicated, then its interrelated existences would also become extinct. These personas, whether we like it or not, help to constitute or reinforce competing languages and identities. In terms of hate speech, she argues that if we attempt to censor it, we will pre-emptively eliminate any productive critical counter-comment. Preserving the self also involves making space for and acknowledging one's opposite or enemy. Laclau, Butler & Laddaga (1997) argue that it is this effect which creates the space for social change. It is because of conflict, they contend, that change is possible. If everyone was the same, they recount, no move would be made to assert separate and differing identities. Hall (1996) writes that “identities emerge within the play of specific modalities of power” (p. 4) and they “are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity – an ‘identity’ in its traditional meaning...” (p. 4). Similarly, Butler (1997) suggests that the emergence of a reconstituted and seemingly autonomous identity is rooted in paradox and that becoming a subject is intricately bound up with being subjected to power.

Laclau’s second rhetorical accomplishment (that must occur for the constitution of a collective or people) is the formation of an equivalential articulation of social demands. Laclau’s notion of how disparate social demands come together to form a populist movement is drawn from Gramsci’s idea of articulation. Stated simply, Laclau explains that a diversity of people can come together and believe they are unified despite, or even by way of, a logic that links them across their differences. An assortment of social demands (or commitments) arises among these people which may or may not

necessarily relate to each other. These particularities may become linked together by way of their differential natures (called by Laclau, a logic of difference). At their most undefined stage, this chain of demands makes it possible for a “people” to emerge; they have what Laclau refers to as a “vague solidarity” (2005, p. 74). Laclau draws from Gramsci’s idea of articulation for this effect. In the case of populism, for example, they might involve complaints about the price of bread, a claim of being bilked out of hard-earned money, or a call to get more ‘simple folk’ involved in decision-making. When political mobilization increases, it is possible for these demands to unify “into a stable system of signification” (p. 74). This system or signification can be considered a language, grammar, or a rhetoric.

Laclau details how this rhetoric operates. These various demands are unified by their symbolization, their inscription onto symbols, images, words, music, and any other communicative form; all of which are strongly linked with affect. These images, words, and other forms of symbolization are what Laclau calls empty signifiers: they present an opportunity for a variety of preferred associations and articulations to be made of them by those experiencing them (much like McGee’s (1980) ideographs). They can provide the sense of a unity of meaning or “temporal continuity” (p. 27) across an array of demands that does not inherently cohere. Those demands which come to stand for this equivalential chain become popular demands and they constitute and begin to name a “broader social subjectivity” (p. 74). Out of this, the construction of a popular identity results which is a symbol upon which the social demands can be inscribed. The popular identity is an empty signifier in itself because it cannot be reduced to any single demand, but it is “qualitatively more than the simple summation of the equivalential links” (p. 77).

It stands for and constitutes the aggregation of those social demands, articulates with the desires, affect, and demands of its beholders, and moves them to support and emulate it.

Using Christian Reconstruction to illustrate these components, some CR social demands (or social commitments) might be to live every area of life “biblically”; that God is the ruler of man, not the government, so a man should obey the law but take responsibility for leading his family or household; a commitment to free market capitalism that enacts God-given liberty (and the responsibility man should take for himself, not relying on government for benefits); a commitment to small government which connects with advocacy for Christian-run health insurance companies; peer/church assistance rather than welfare, etc.; a commitment to men ‘returning home,’ finding a way to have a business out of the home in order to demonstrate leadership and disciple the children in all areas of life; and a commitment to women focusing on the home, being a helpmeet to make their husbands successful, and dressing to show modesty and honor to God and husbands. A popular demand or commitment for CR might be a return to ‘patriarchal families,’ and a popular identity might be a family or member of a family who is actively living and modeling that demand/commitment, such as Doug Phillips of Vision Forum and his family.

The popular demands, the heightened symbolization of the equivalential chain of social demands, and the popular identity are strengthened and constituted and acted into through communicative devices and practices at various levels of sociality. Popular demands are named and depicted in popular terms and phrases. They are called forth by way of repetition, representation in images and music, speech, and symbolization in bodily adornment and comportment. Laclau cites Gustave Le Bon, who writes that the

power of words is bound up with the images they evoke, and that ill-defined words have the most influence, a magical power. This is the power of McGee's ideograph and of Burke's (1939) "power of endless repetition." In the repetition of such words and images, social habits are created, relations are shaped, and identity for individuals and a community are acquired. These expressions of the social demands are sedimented in social practices and institutions – not just verbal operations, but in material practices that might acquire "institutional fixity" (p. 104). This discursive venture is often centered around particular individualities or leaders, who can act as empty signifiers for the demands. These leaders can represent individuals' demands even if all of their work is not equally valued. With all of these elements operating together, the construction process unifies and animates these social demands while also giving rise to the constitution of a "people." A priori cultural and political identities do not express themselves in this way; rather they are constituted out of these processes.

Laclau holds that identity is constructed within the tension between the differential and equivalential logics; between the particularity that is symbolized in the chain of demands and the chasm that is created with the 'other.' He explains that if the chain of demands becomes too long or too diversified, it will not be able to hold the sense of unity required for the constitution of a people. However, if too much particularity, too much uniformity exists within the chain of demands, it will not allow for the inevitable difference or heterogeneity that is required to bring together many demands – and the opportunity for "a people" to be constituted will be lost. He underscores that this tension between diversity and unity, what he calls the "double pattern," (p. 75) is required for the

constitution of hegemony. It is the balance between particularity and universality, between social homogeneity and heterogeneity.

This hegemonic force is always a partiality – it is never complete in terms of either its particularity or universality. But the way that it acts upon sociality is that it is experienced as and it represents a mythical totality. The totality is performative: it is not real nor can it be expressed by an accounting of its abstract common features. But it is animated and responded to by way of its performative representations. In order to maintain this performative accomplishment, the language or rhetoric of the hegemony, or social formation, must be closed enough to signify and relate to the existing social demands but open enough to satisfy their diversity. Laclau describes the language of populist discourse as always “imprecise and fluctuating,” (p. 118) as it tries to operate performatively in a heterogeneous environment. He stresses that in spite of the tension required for hegemony, in order to overcome its dissolution or the development of factions, it does need to operate as if the universalism is more prevalent than particularity. This is accomplished by the elaboration of a common language which works to “neutralize centrifugal tendencies toward particularism” (p. 204). Laclau refers to this elaboration of a common language as an equivalential inscription and it is the grammar or constitutive rhetoric that supports Gramsci’s war of position.

In his final commentary on the value of analyzing the mechanisms of the constitution of populism or “a people,” Laclau insists that we must go beyond stereotypes such as ‘the working man’ and formulas such as ‘class struggle’ in order to more precisely understand the logic and workings of collective identities. Rather than locating the animus for their operations in a core group, he writes that the real task at hand is

reconceptualizing and acknowledging the complexity of the autonomy of social demands. Laclau's analysis contributes to constitutive rhetoric, illustrating the ways in which disparate entities identify with particular social demands and in the process, constituting themselves as a people.

Other Conceptions of "Peoples": Imagined Communities and Geographies, Publics and Counterpublics

This description of the constitution of a "people" has similarities with Benedict Anderson's (1983) delineation of "imagined communities." Anderson conceptualized a nation as an imagined community, asserting it is socially constructed by people who perceive themselves to belong to that nation. Because it cannot be based upon face to face interaction, a nation is based on a mental picture its members have in their mind; it is made up of their affinity with that community and with others within it. Anderson claims that "the media" are also responsible for constructing imagined communities through mass marketing campaigns and messages that are shared among audiences and by invoking "the public" by calling on people as citizens. This, he claims, was initiated by "print-capitalism," or the move to make books and any other media accessible to the masses by printing them in vernacular language instead of 'high' languages like Latin. Anderson argues that nation-states were born around the introduction of print-capitalism, thereafter giving rise to mass affiliation and nationalism. Citizens were able to imagine borders and boundaries of their nation even if they did not physically exist, and media audiences were able to conceive of the population in "us vs. them" terms. Anderson argues that within perceived borders, a "simultaneity" exists where events happening in separate places can link those people involved with a type of shared consciousness. The social constructionism inherent in Anderson's work is also seen in the concept of

“imagined geographies” evolved from Edward Said’s (1975) study of “Orientalism.”

Imagined geographies, described by Said, are largely perceptions of ‘the Other’ constructed by way of colonial power and a distant and observing eye. This was based on his study of how the Western world came to understand ‘the Orient’ through its occupation of it, from travel writing, and from anthropological study. Differing from Anderson’s imagined communities (which come into being by way of the agency of those within the community), imagined geographies are constructed by a powerful and distant consumer characterizing the nature and status of a far-off place. This consumer has the power to objectify and subordinate the distant Other.

Another body of literature that describes a social collective is the work on publics and counterpublics. Warner (2002) poetically depicts publics as “queer creatures. You cannot point to them, count them, or look them in the eye. You also cannot easily avoid them. They have become and almost natural features of the social landscape, like pavement” (p. 7). To Asen (2000), publics should be understood as emergent collectives, temporary unifying moments that may consist of, but should not be reduced to, several varying affiliations, persons, places, or topics. Publics do not require consistent action, participation, or membership; neither does your identity necessarily locate you within a particular public: “merely paying attention can be enough to make you a member” (Warner, 2002, p. 71). Human actors participate in multiple publics (Brouwer, 2006) and counterpublics and each of them may be potentially conflicting. Asen (2000) explains that one may associate with others within a public on one particular issue and find themselves conflicting with those same participants on other issues at other times. This effect is similar to Laclau’s description of social demands coming together to articulate in

very distinct ways. Also similar to Laclau's social collective is the effect of a public appearing generally unified despite internal diversity.

Publics have been described as moments of discourse (Asen, 2000; Squires, 2002), rather than equivalent with certain causes, identities, ethnicities, places or people (Asen, 2000; Warner, 2002). This distinction is to underscore that it is not identities, ethnicities, or types of people or places that determine particular modes of communication and related ideologies. Rather, some scholars believe that publics are constituted by and should therefore be understood in terms of their discursive forms and strategies. Robert Asen (2000), for example, writes that he

resists attempts to envision public and counterpublic spheres as entities that sustain themselves beyond particular discursive engagements. Regarding a counterpublic as continually active beyond the discursive engagement of its participants' risks reduces the concept to these nondiscursive activities. As a dispersed ephemeral phenomenon, the public sphere manifests in moments of social dialogue and discursive engagement among and across constructed boundaries of social, cultural, and political affiliation. (p. 441)

Brouwer (2006) calls publics discursive as a conceptual metaphor that casts attention upon the ideas and ways of life that are constructed through texts, speech, cultural forms (Warner, 2002), interaction, visual images, and performances (Pezzullo, 2003). Brouwer (2006) argues that contrary to the original Habermasian public sphere, publics involve communication between people who may meet together in physical spaces, but they may also create "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983, 1991) through dispersed, asynchronous communication. Warner (2002) writes of the discursivity of publics most extensively. He emphasizes the self-organized nature of publics, noting that they are organized by discourse itself. Circularity, Warner claims, is endemic to this discourse, as it is not just based on a message sent by a sender and

received by an addressee, but the circulation of “potentially infinite axes of citation and characterization” (Warner, 2002, p. 91). He tells of a social space, an ongoing space of encounter created by the reflexive circulation of discourse that appears to be participated in and addressed to indefinite others. Warner infers that it is the inertia of discursive activities and processes that animate publics, rather than individual rationality or agency. In other words, the publics motivate and confine individuals, not the other way around. He writes that “the temptation is to think of publics as something we make, through individual heroism and creative inspiration or through common goodwill. Much of the process, however, necessarily remains invisible to consciousness and to reflective agency” (Warner, 2002, p. 14).

Publics have been characterized as having the following principal attributes. They are mediated. Downey & Fenton (2003), McDorman (2001), and Palczewski (2001) focus on publics’ mediation by way of the internet. Others focus on their communicative modes and practices such as public debate and the circulation of personally-produced media (Hirschkind, 2001), public speaking (Larkin, 2008), and public education (Mahmood, 2005). Publics are often described as imaginary or imagined. Asen (2002) writes about the processes through which publics are imagined as a collective and public process where “interlocutors engage in processes of imagining about people they regard as similar to and different from themselves, and the processes and products of the collective imagination are accessible to others” (p. 349). Anderson explains that individuals in imagined communities “will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson, 1983, p. 6). Warner (2002) asserts that this communion of

strangers is an essential characteristic of publics, stating that “the modern social imaginary does not make sense without strangers. A nation or public or market in which everyone could be known personally would be no nation or public or market at all” (p. 76). The imagining required to constitute publics is a process of representation, where actors utilize the symbolic materials of cultures within historical and societal contexts in order to invoke particular social values, beliefs, and interests of the imagined public, thereby creating a shared social world. This process employs linguistic and visual modes of representation to circulate images and ideas that constitute a public. Anderson (1983) contends that these ideas and images can be shared across space and time by way of the mass media. These ideas and images, or the concept of the imagined public and all that it involves, shape subsequent rhetorical situations (Asen, 2002). Publics come into being by virtue of their address and are maintained through our participation (Warner, 2002).

Counterpublics have been positioned in contrast to publics, though it is not realistic to think of them as completely separate entities. If it garners enough support, what is understood to be a counterpublic at one time could be a public a short time later. There are conflicting ideas about the definition and nature of counterpublics. What does seem to be consistently agreed upon is that counterpublics are composed of a public that has been subjugated or that desires to distinguish itself in some way. In her foundational writings on counterpublics, Felski (1989) describes “the experience of discrimination, oppression, and cultural dislocation [that] provides the impetus for the development of a self-consciously oppositional identity” (p. 167). This experience forms and motivates the activities of the counterpublic.

The first manifestation of the term counterpublic was from Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge in 1972. They contrasted Habermas' bourgeois public sphere to the proletarian counterpublic, asserting that the relations of production should be challenged in order to benefit the producers rather than simply creating profit. Since the English translation of Habermas in 1989, Nancy Fraser's (1992) essay on rethinking the public sphere is one of the most frequently cited in order to define and describe counterpublics. She maintains that when public discourse is understood as only a singular and overarching public, subordinated groups have no arena for deliberation about their needs. Under these circumstances, these groups form alternative publics, which she refers to as "subaltern counterpublics," meaning "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (1992, p. 123). Jane Mansbridge (1996) contributed another widely cited conceptualization of the counterpublic. She envisions it as people oscillating between "protected enclaves" to explore ideas within an environment of encouragement and to test ideas against the predominant reality.

Though there are differing theorizations of counterpublics, they have been described in the following ways. Counterpublics seek to expand discursive space and accepted discursive forms and objects of inquiry in the public sphere (Felski, 1989; Fraser, 1992). They offer alternatives. Within the space of their discourse, counterpublics are said to offer "explicitly articulated alternatives to wider publics that exclude the interests of potential participants" (Asen, 2002, p. 427). These articulated alternatives are said to emphasize human experience (Hansen, 1993) and make known oppositional needs

and values (Felski, 1989). Oppositionality is a guiding force for counterpublics (Brouwer 2006; Felski, 1989; Hansen, 1993). They are, “by definition, formed by their conflict with the norms and contexts of their cultural environment” (Warner, 2002, p. 63). Struggle characterizes the oppositional activities of the counterpublic, often involving the appropriation and reappropriation of resources, conflict over symbolic resources, and efforts to control rhetorically salient meanings (Hauser, 2001). Counterpublics also fashion identities. The motivation to produce and advocate for particular identities may be the very *raison de être* of counterpublics. Counterpublics foreground “historical experiences of exclusion and oppression” (Asen and Brouwer, 2001, p. 8) and attempt to create emancipatory identities.

Counterpublics are sometimes referred to as sites for activism (and the focus has been on liberal activism). Asen and Brouwer’s (2001) book *Counterpublics and the State* illustrates the work of activist groups, such as those advocating around issues of HIV (Brouwer), African-American civil and social rights (Squires), political activism in South Africa (Doxtader), the right-to-die movement (McDorman), and actions toward the Indonesian dictator Suharto (Cloud). Pezzullo (2003) refers to activism as “cultural performance,” detailing the demonstrations of a counterpublic interested in alternative manifestations of breast cancer advocacy. The description of counterpublics as sites for activism is not uniform throughout the literature, however. Hauser (2001) describes counterpublics as falling somewhere along a spectrum, from militant to benign. A benign counterpublic, from his perspective, involves people going about their internal business without any overt activism. This is not to say that these ‘benign’ groups do not engage in

advocacy or some form of persuasion. Hauser (2001) comments that even subtle discourse of difference can conjure up ideas or images of alternative realities.

The term “counterpublic” has received disapproval just as much as it has been idealized. Brouwer (2006) asserts that in many instances, it is not a useful conceptual tool. Doxtader (2001) critiques the idealism in counterpublic theory, worrying that being preoccupied with an ideal might obscure research on counterpublic activities and their communicative practices. Much of what has been written about counterpublics assumes that they are essentially progressive and that their participants are interested in dialogue, democracy, and deliberation (Asen and Brouwer, 2001; McDorman, 2001; Wainwright, 2003). Downey and Fenton (2003) attempt to put a check on this assumption that all counterpublics are progressive. They describe several “left wing public spheres,” but are careful to say that “it would be clearly a mistake to ignore the construction of right-wing counter-publics” (p. 197). They call attention to the fact that there are both left and right-leaning radical or alternative groups, and that “the opinions of [both of] these [types of] groups have traditionally been excluded or marginalized in the mass-media public sphere” (p. 198). Recent discussions of religious counterpublics (Hirschkind, 2001, 2006; Larkin, 2008; Mahmood, 2005; Thomas, 1992) have clarified that more attention has been paid to more progressive counterpublics while not addressing the “analytically very similar, but differently normed” conservative ones (M. Lynch, personal communication, November 28, 2008). Counterpublics that are conservative, such as some formed by religious groups are often left off the radar because of this. Regardless of their use, it must be remembered that the terms of public and counterpublic theories should remain as heuristics to learn more about the constitutive aspects and emancipatory and constraining

potentials of human communication. Little value will come out of arguments on whether a phenomenon should be considered a counterpublic or public or a social movement. The study of their particular details, rather, offers useful insight into the constitution of a social collective.

Religious discourses have been described as being instrumental in constructing religious counterpublics. A very small number of theorists have made reference to this point (Calhoun, 2004; Doxtader, 2001; Warner, 2002) or have begun to develop theory on religious counterpublics (Hirschkind, 2001, 2006; Larkin, 2008; Mahmood, 2005; Thomas, 1992). Warner (2002) has stated that religious counterpublics such as Christian fundamentalists and some Islamic groups are excluded from dominant norms and he sees these movements as sites for developing oppositional identities, needs and concerns. Doxtader (2001) makes reference to religious counterpublics that were involved in protesting South African apartheid and unequal rights for blacks in America. Thomas (1992) writes about the liberation, African-American and feminist theologies that have assisted religious counterpublics in resisting oppression by dominant groups. Theory in this area may be fairly undeveloped because it has been unclear whether religious discourses fit the criteria for counterpublics. Do they have social or political relevance to the public? Are they overtly and expressly committed to activism or social change? The theorists involved in this work have begun to voice their opinion that religious discourses do indeed have social and political import, that they are often centrally engaged in altering the public landscape, and that religious discourses, values, and goals are very much bound up with public notions of identity, comportment, reason, and communication.

Theorists who speak of religious counterpublics presume that religion is not just an abstract system (Asad, 1993) of doctrinal, emotional, and spiritual beliefs, but that it is both shaped by and shapes history, political conditions, communicative acts and forms of life, and ideas about reason, action, self, and morality. In his essay on civic virtue and religious reason in an Islamic counterpublic, Hirschkind (2001) describes how Burchell (1995) illustrates that persons and their abilities are social creations, developed over lifetimes of social discipline and saturated with historical and political tradition and meanings. He notes how early modern forms of civility and public life were known to have Christian techniques of ethical discipline at their foundation. These became manifest in education and institutions of social discipline such as policing, schools, and workplaces, and manuals of self-improvement. Burchell (1995) focuses attention on the ways in which ethical disciplines create the nondiscursive templates for the sentiments and habits that are animated in public deliberation and advises scholars to consider the relations among this background, forms of discipline, virtues, and communicative practices.

Many religious counterpublics are movements which develop out of the perception that a particular religious knowledge and practice has become marginalized (Mahmood, 2005). Hirschkind (2001, 2006) and Mahmood (2005) have both studied what they call an Islamic counterpublic in Egypt, which they explain has been borne out of the perspective that secularism and attempts at a western form of democracy have pushed any meaningful relationship with Islam out of citizens' lives. The movements they are studying seek to reintroduce and reinvigorate Islamic intellectual ideas and an Islamic identity. Larkin (2008) examines Ahmed Deedat, an Islamic public figure in

South Africa in the 1970's and 1980's who became immensely popular in his attempts to react against the rise of Christian evangelicalism in his locale. CR may be considered a religious counterpublic as it defines itself against the prominence of secular humanism in United States' government, policy, education and culture. According to CR, even most Christianity as it is practiced today has been secularized and is apostasy. They believe that they and their beliefs continue to be marginalized.

In his investigation of a religious counterpublic in Egypt, Hirschkind (2001) observes the circulation of cassette-taped sermons in Cairo, as a mode that stimulates public discourse and influences modes of comportment, dress, and other virtues and ethics. In the midst of a strong Islamic resurgence in a polity undergirded by a western form of democracy, he listens to people discussing sermons in public (a practice called Da'wa). These individuals, in their discussions, negotiate ethical and religious laws and prescriptions for virtuous comportment with the ideas of modernity. He considers how the prescribed acts make up that counterpublic's preferred version of Islam. In the same locale, Mahmood (2005) investigates a women's mosque movement for two years, observing their "teaching and studying of Islamic scriptures, social practices, and forms of bodily comportment considered germane to the cultivation of the ideal virtuous self" (p. 2). Those she interviewed informed her that they were motivated by the increasing marginalization of religious knowledge under the structures of secular governance. Secularization, according to these women, reduced Islamic knowledge to an abstract system that was not relevant to daily living. Responding to this, the women's mosque movement sought "to educate ordinary Muslims in those virtues, ethical capacities, and forms of reasoning that participants perceive to have become either unavailable or

irrelevant ... this means instructing Muslims not only in the proper performance of religious duties and acts of worship but, more importantly, in how to organize their daily conduct in accord with principles of Islamic piety and virtuous behavior” (Mahmood, 2005, p. 4). The women in this counterpublic provide training on styles of dress and speech, standards for proper entertainment, practices for financial and household management, “the provision of care for the poor, and the terms by which public debate is conducted” (Mahmood, 2005, p. 4).

In his study of South African figure Ahmed Dadeet, Larkin (2008) examines the ways in which Dadeet mimicked the rhetorical styles, pamphlets, and public speaking strategies of popular Christian televangelists to mobilize and reinvigorate Islam. He drew on both the religious and secular styles associated with Christianity to react against the presence of Christian evangelicalism. Larkin’s main point is that religious counterpublic actions do not exclusively define and mobilize themselves in contrast with their counterpart, but in dialogic fashion, often borrowing habits and actions from each other in strategy and style. These theorists all underscore that religion, in its actual form, is not a timeless abstraction, but an activity that is relevant to and can influence other publics. Beyond theological stylistics, religious publics can be viewed in terms of their pragmatics, or communicative acts.

All of these researchers also analyze the ways in which religious discursive forms are circulated through media and other modes, in order to extend and maintain the ideas and habits of religious counterpublics. This analytical move underscores how these forms are articulated, learned, circulated, taken up, and assist in creating an appearance of solidity to a set of beliefs and its discursive enactment and practices. In practices of

mediation, Larkin (2008) writes that “adherents bind themselves to one another and to a higher power” and “religious movements are brought together – realized as movements – through the circulation of discursive forms that address religious subjects, calling them into being, uniting them in common actions of reading, listening, seeing” (p. 101). Larkin concludes that “in the contemporary world, electronic media are central to this process. They are dominant technologies (though by no means the only ones) whereby this circulation takes place and the forms of political and religious identities are forged” (2008, p. 101). In South Africa, Ahmed Dadeet (Larkin, 2008) circulated his message and pragmatics by way of pamphlets and public speeches that were then recorded on videocassettes, CDs, websites, and You Tube. They serve as a model for a mode of public deliberation about religion and offer rhetorical styles and strategies of polemic about religion that have been borrowed both from Christian history as well as practices in the public sphere. Hirschkind (2001, 2006) documents how the circulation of media motivates and bolsters conversations and social changes taking place both in private, interpersonal, and very public spaces. Mahmood’s (2005) study illustrates a similar dynamic, where pamphlets or other articles distributed at women’s training meetings are circulated and animate discussion and social change in both public and private realms.

An important empirical question for Larkin is how we can understand the nature of mediation as crucial to the constitution of religious movements. Warner (2002) has suggested that the secular sphere provides the media ecology for religious movements, whether publics or counterpublics, and that “the defining features of the public sphere – stranger sociability, secular time, the capacity to imagine a horizontally organized and potentially expansible world, reflexive choice between systems, voluntaristic association

– are all elements whereby contemporary evangelical movements (both Christian and Muslim) begin to imagine themselves” (p. 103). Mediated circulation of discourse is essential for counterpublics whose participants are dispersed and rely on their discursivity for coalescence (Larkin, 2008).

It is clear to these theorists that the religious discourses that they study cannot be relegated to a private realm of personal or philosophical spirituality, but that they are intensely public and political. Hirschkind (2001) cites Hannah Arendt’s definition of “political” to support this move. He writes that Arendt explains the political to be where “the activities of ordinary citizens who, through the exercise of their agency in contexts of public interaction, shape the conditions of their collective existence” (Hirschkind, 2001, p. 107). For the contemporary Egyptian Muslims who participate, Hirschkind (2001) claims that “the definition and articulation of Islamic ethical norms and their embodiment as practical aptitudes are critically dependent upon the communicative practices and discursive conventions of this public arena” (p. 107). Both Hirschkind (2001, 2006) and Mahmood (2005) have stated clearly that these oppositional publics cannot be seen as individual, benign, and merely private enterprises. Hirschkind (2006) writes that the arena of Islamic deliberation “should not be understood in terms of an abandonment of politics, but rather, as an attempt to establish the conditions for the practice of a particular kind of politics. Indeed, insomuch as the moral discourse that constitutes this domain is directed at the remaking of the practices and institutions of collective life in Egypt, it is fundamentally political” (p. 5). Mahmood (2005) echoes Hirschkind’s words, writing that “despite its focus on issues of piety, it would be wrong to characterize the women’s mosque movement as an abandonment of politics. On the

contrary, the form of piety the movement seeks to realize is predicated upon, and transformative of, many aspects of social life” (p. 4). As described earlier, the public debate of Ahmed Dadeet in South Africa (Larkin, 2008) also relies strongly on an understanding of the modes of discourse available within the public sphere and seeks change within that space.

Hirschkind (2001, 2006), Larkin (2008) and Mahmood (2005) do not stop at providing descriptions of their counterpublics. They are interested in holding these discourses up to presumptions about conceptions of the public, about secularity, democracy, and philosophical questions about human nature and religious authenticity. Hirschkind (2001, 2006) points out the challenges that his study offers to liberal-democratic theory. He considers the phenomenon he is observing to be a counterpublic – “not in the liberal-democratic sense, but in the sense that they are counter to the liberal-democratic sense of a public” (Hirschkind, 2001, p. 106). Though most liberal democratic theories of publics and counterpublics claim that they are motivated towards the goal of deliberation and empowerment, Hirschkind argues that the activities of publics and counterpublics can and sometimes do engage reasoning for both empowerment and a more conservative notion of ethical discipline.

The Islamic counterpublic, Hirschkind (2001, 2006) purports, “cuts across the modern or liberal democratic distinctions between state and society and between public and private that are central to the public sphere as a normative institution for modern democratic polities” (Hirschkind, 2001, p. 107). The Habermasian public, he suggests, depends on an a priori notion of civic virtue, participation, and reason that presumes the sharing of a secular space for public deliberation. Therefore, its definition must be

confronted in order to account for the understanding of publics and counterpublics who cannot and will not 'leave their religion at home.' This is not only the case for primarily Islamic countries. This reworking of the concept of 'public' to consider the place of religious and ethical sensibilities would be relevant for primarily Christian countries such as the United States, or even primarily secular regions who are inhabited by strongly religious residents, whether immigrants or citizens.

Mahmood (2005) anticipates the feminist critique that these Islamic counterpublics are not important and therefore should not be given time or space in the literature. She suggests that to the contrary, we can learn much about conceptions of the self, ideas of moral agency, and politics that undergird the practices and historical projects that animate this nonliberal movement. More specifically, she shows how the practices of the women's mosque movement serve to question normative liberal assumptions about human nature, such as the desire for freedom and to challenge social norms. That in mind, she warns against imposing a teleology of progressive politics and the assumption that all people have or should have the desire for freedom. Though freedom is normative to feminism and liberalism, she claims that it cannot be the starting point for analyses of those who do not share those values.

At one time, Mahmood explains, viewing Middle Eastern women through the lens of resistance was a good corrective to their portrayal as passive and submissive. It allowed them to be seen as active agents who have rich and complex lives. Subaltern studies, she remarks, did the same thing for peasants in agrarian societies. But, Mahmood counters, there has been a romanticization of resistance in liberal scholarship that threatens to narrow our understanding both of resistance and of agency. Presupposing an

understanding of resistance that requires it to be the equivalent of challenging male domination restricts the definition of agency to be “the capacity to realize one’s own interests against the weight of custom, tradition, transcendental will, or other obstacles...” (Mahmood, 2005, p. 8). Agency may also be manifest in more conservative forms and would be missed or misunderstood if only measured by this definition. Mahmood notes that instead, Abu-Lughod (1990) recommends identifying shifts in relations of power that influence all parties involved. Instead of creating simple binaries of the dominator/resister, this would show more complexity in social relations.

It is generally agreed upon that a simple contrast between publics and counterpublics is not very useful. Asen and Brouwer (2001) critique their bifurcation, noting that it can reify distinctions that are not so clear cut (in terms of people, identities, topics, or spaces). Asen (2002) reemphasizes these points, claiming that fixing these relationships into binaries restricts theory and criticism. Asen and Brouwer (2001) charge that because publics and counterpublics are ephemerally and performatively constituted, the scholarly task is to attend to their contingencies when they are entered into by participants. Doxtader (2001) underscores this point, arguing that publics and counterpublics mutually influence each other, and that it would be helpful to think of counterpublicity as a verb; a rhetorical process. In the act of contrasting publics and counterpublics, Asen and Brouwer (2001) caution against valorizing only certain spaces as necessarily inventive. Pezzullo (2003) takes up Asen’s (2000) call for seeking relations among publics and counterpublics, and urges scholars to highlight the ways in which “power is articulated and rearticulated in specific contexts” (p. 361). Studies can benefit from examining the ways in which these discursive phenomena come together at

particular moments with particular interests and influence. CR has much in common with all of the discursive movements described here. When it is foregrounding a concept similar to the contemporary evangelical church, it could be identified as a public. When it is criticizing that same evangelical church, positioning itself as morally and politically rejecting the mainstream church, and presenting much more alternative preferences, it might fall under the criteria of a counterpublic. These titles, as noted above, can be fluid, transitory, and sometimes distracting. Additionally, they may have much in common with the terms social collective or social movement. Arguments can be made that CR is an imagined community or that it is a counterpublic. For the purpose of this study, I will refer to CR as a rhetorically constituted social collective, or “a people.”

Visual Rhetorics Assist the Constitutive

The sections above overviewing constitutive rhetoric already indicate how language is integral to the constitution of a people. Charland (1987) refers to the ways a constitutive rhetoric is not limited to written language and texts, but that its narratives are told at a variety of textual sites, such as in music, architecture, drama, fashion, and inscribed on bodies, in ways “that elicit new modes of experience and being” (p. 148). Chase (2009) notes how images can act as an element of constitutive rhetoric and Hall (1985, 2003) looks to discourse, movies, and popular culture for the ways in which a constitutive or cultural logic is represented. Displays such as monuments, landscapes, commemorations, public demonstrations, and the human body can function as rhetorical figures, motives or effects, and contribute to the building of a constitutive rhetoric (Benson in Prelli, 2006). Hill and Helmers (2004) describe the visual rhetoric in displays such as in “photographs, in paintings, in embroidery, in film, in advertising, in graphical

displays, in the upscale shopping market, and in the home... [how they] influence our attitudes and feelings, shape and reinforce our beliefs and values, and constrain what we write, say, or otherwise think” (Prelli, 2006, p. 10).⁴⁸

Prelli (2006) claims that “much of what appears or looks to us as reality is constituted rhetorically through the multiple displays that surround us, compete for our attention, and make claims upon us” (p. 1). He explains that displays generate a very particularized image or an understanding that silence certain ideas and foreground and uphold others. Displays can take the form of “sketches, paintings, maps, statistical graphs, photographs, and television and film images...in the homes we inhabit and in the many places we visit – museums and exhibitions, memorials and estuary, parks and cemeteries, casinos and theme parks, neighborhood street corners and stores” (Prelli, 2006, p. 1). They are rhetorically manifest in scientific findings, political grievances, or preferred identities. Olson, Finnegan & Hope (2008) note that visuality, a “totality of practices, performances, and configurations” of the visual, is “not distinct from, but fully integrated in our practices of everyday persuasion” (p. xvi). Visual forms as symbols can aid humans in the project of persuading, inviting cooperation or identification from others.

Display as a form of rhetoric can be traced back to the Greek word “deiktikos,” which meant “exhibit,” “show forth,” or “make known” (Prelli, 2006, p. 2). Though studies of rhetoric have only recently focused on the visual, the nineteenth and twentieth

⁴⁸ These foci of constitutive rhetoric are noteworthy in that a new area of rhetorical studies has emphasized the rhetorical functions of “non-discursive” objects, such as those mentioned. This focus of study is referred to as “visual rhetoric,” “material rhetoric,” “rhetoric of cultural performance,” or “rhetoric of popular culture” (Olson, Finnegan & Hope, 2008).

centuries have been called “ocularcentric” (Jay, 1994) and the Ancients were very focused on sight and seeing (Olson, Finnegan & Hope, 2008). The spectacle in postclassical Europe involved the pageantry, theater, costume, and architecture of the church (Vance, 1979), which bolstered the import of religious doctrine and the power of the church. It also included public punishments as a statement of law and order; ceremonial bodily display of the monarchy (Bleackley & Lofland, 1977) to emphasize their legitimacy; and the display of familial units (Geertz, 1977) of royalty to illustrate continuity between past, present, and future rulers. Invoking Geertz (1973), Olson, Finnegan & Hope (2008) assert that “the visual” does not stand alone, but exists “in a web of signification that includes the symbolic coding of place, time, situation, and multiple communication media” (p. xxiv).

The display helps to constitute a collective and its identities and invites others to join. Ancient rhetoricians believed that it was more transformative to ‘look upon’ or ‘gaze upon’ the display of an idea or circumstance than to engage in cognitive examination (Prelli, 2006, p. 5). This is resonant with the comment of religious devotees that it is more persuasive to live what you preach than to just preach. Simply displaying a way of life can be inviting enough to others for them to want to identify. Burke’s interpretation of displays was that they are “symbolic dramas that exhibit, consciously or unconsciously, attitudes and motivations” (Prelli p. 8) and hierarchical rules. These dramas seek and create public audiences through symbolic identifications situated in specific historical times, places, and contexts (Burke, 1950/1969). Burke’s work implied that human life as symbolic drama meant that all of life consists of “rhetorically enacted performances or displays” (Prelli, 2006, p. 8). These displays, in Burke’s view, motivate

others to take up or support cultural 'shoulds' and 'oughts,' sentiments and sensibilities. As epideictic rhetoric, they can move their viewers to think about certain ideas, move them to insights, shape value commitments, and also challenge conventional beliefs and stances (Walker, 2000). Through their displays, members of a collective are constituting themselves as 'a people', including their ideology, and their array of subject positions. In weaving their own meanings, they manifest agency, which is the ability and competence to act, make decisions, and be recognized by others in one's community (Campbell, 2005).

The performance of self and everyday interaction is another form of display. Olson, Finnegan & Hope (2008) recount that human performances "express, convey, and reproduce" (p. 15) aspects of identity such as gender or sex roles, racial classifications and stereotypes, or economic class. They also set up classifications among people, bringing some together by creating "lines of identification" (p. 9) or creating distinctions and divisions. Prelli (2006) indicates that some aspect of these performances are conscious and deliberate, stating that "our encounters with others enact displays of self and of others that imply who we desire or otherwise take ourselves to be" (p. 9). He notes that individuals' simple choices of words or deeds display preferred ways of being and ideas about selfhood, marking "right" attitudes, feelings, commitments and values. Others, such as Butler (1990, 1993, 1997) discuss the ways in which human performative choices are not fully ours, but are constrained by history, convention and institutions. Morris and Sloop (2006) interpret Butler as claiming that these performances are unreflective because they just 'make sense' within a certain ideology. Stories people tell about the self or the family, or about friends or public and historical figures, can provide

a narrative that carries moral guidance; just as jokes, the presence or absence of laughter, or attitude can indicate one's adherence to particular values and rules. Each word, gesture, physical move, and their emotional valence contribute to the constitution of a people, their identities, and ideology.

Butler (1990), in her theories of performance, draws on Austin (1962) and Searle's (1969) concept of the speech act, where utterances are considered deeds with public consequences. These utterances are called "performatives" where the act of saying something actually "does" (or performs) that thing. A common example of this is the act of saying "I do" at a wedding, which brings a couple together in matrimony. The audience is also performing a deed, which is to hold this couple accountable for their commitment and to show their intent to support them in their marriage. These acts can reinforce ideology by following its rules and conventions, yet some are a breach to ideology, challenging its legitimacy. Morris and Sloop (2006) narrate the power of a public heterosexual kiss and how it metonymically takes for granted and reinforces the legitimacy and expectation of heteronormative identities and behaviors. That expectation is so strong, they point out, that a public kiss between two men is seen as a violation. It can also be, they argue, a political stand for the legitimacy of a queer kiss (and the inclusion of LGBTQ identities and actions in public norms). Public performances socialize as to how bodies should be grouped or paired and how they should spend time together. Berlant & Warner (2000) delineate how "community is imagined through scenes of intimacy, coupling and kinship" (p. 318).

In their book on the rhetorics of bodies, Selzer and Crowley (1999) write about the material effects and consequences of rhetoric, as it impacts bodies and their

conditions. As Dickson (1999) puts it, corporeal bodies are socially produced. The social milieu offers rules, openings, rewards, and sanctions that will compel bodies to move, be present, and be displayed in specific ways. Referring to a lack of attention to the material in rhetorical studies, Condit (1999) writes that we must work on “theorizing the materialistic characteristics of language, and hence rhetoric” (p. 331) and not just privilege the invisible or the linguistic. Language, she insists, shapes objects in particular ways. She describes how Burke saw that bodies learn language and enact it in symbolic and material ways. Charland (1987) explains that ideology is embodied and it is both expressed by bodies and constitutes those bodies as subjects. To further illustrate how an ideology is imprinted upon bodies, Charland recounts how Burke, when describing ideology, used a metaphor of a God that comes down to earth and inhabits a place...it “is like a spirit taking up its abode in a body: it makes that body hop around in certain ways...” (p. 143).

Judith Butler’s (1990) work on gender, for example, argues that bodies are historical and conditioned entities, not natural facts. They learn and then enact performative acts, which are the repetition of stylized body acts in time, over time, that give the appearance of stability, solidity and consistency in gender and other traits of behavior and identity. These acts are not necessarily the “choice” of an individual – they are acting upon an understanding of regulative discourses. Each time those acts are repeated, the individual act further solidifies aspects of a particular prescribed identity, of a people, or of a regulative discourse. Butler’s work resonates with the importance Burke placed upon the power of endless repetition in the constitutive process. Parry-Giles (2000) focuses on how repetition is used in media to reify a particular image or narrative.

Within this repetition, Butler (1993) holds that people are encouraged to reiterate expected social and sexual dynamics, and to steer away from those that are unwelcome or unexpected. If not, they are punished through ostracism or other means.

A constitutive rhetoric can construct and configure the material conditions that are acceptable for bodies and the ways in which they live and comport themselves.

Alternately, the ways that bodies move, how they are displayed, how they deploy language, can also shape, persuade, represent and assist in the constitution of the ideology of a collective and the collective itself. Blair (1999) asks us to consider how rhetoric acts on persons, on the body, on the mind, on that person's place in the community, and how it might require him to position his body. In her essay on dissection, for example, Wells (1999) describes how bodies can demonstrate laws or moral codes; how they can be offered up as "objects of moral instruction" (p. 69). In looking closely at how bodies are used, she suggests that we can see how they assist in the formation of cultural memory and the animation of discourses and persuasive practices. Cultural memories, discourses, and practices can be socially inscribed upon bodies through the practice of educating 'undisciplined' bodies as a way to civilize and influence a collective people (Mortensen, 1999). How bodies are displayed and their performances reinforce particular norms, values, and ideas. In examining bodies and their performances, we can ask what type of subject and practices are being upheld as legitimate and valued? Who is seen by whom and for what reason? What hierarchy is being established? And how is power being distributed (Olson, Finnegan & Hope, 2008)?

Overt displays of a body or multiple bodies can confront institutional and established meanings through their use of images, artifacts, symbols, or performances

(Olson, Finnegan & Hope, 2008). Activists hope to interrupt the flow of typical or prevailing images and in doing so redefine and restructure the available array of accepted ideas, ways of being and ways of speaking. DeLuca (1999) refers to these actions as “image politics,” wherein an event can persuade the public to engage in social change. DeLuca & Peebles (2002) describe the “public screen” that is created by public political performances and their construction of visibility politics, which is the refusal to be invisible. The internet can be used to circulate images of these types of events and significantly expand their impact and bolster calls for action (Olson, Finnegan & Hope, 2008). In his essay on the display of HIV-AIDS status tattoos, Brouwer (1998) defines visibility as “presenting oneself in mediated or unmediated form, in public forums” (p. 118) and visibility politics as providing benefit to a group in terms of gaining greater power and legitimacy. He cites Phelan's (1993) assertion that because identities are visibly marked, we can identify community by looking at and seeing others. The act of “reading” clothing and styles allows us to identify others’ and our own membership in social groupings. Paraphrasing Butler, Reinelt (1994) contends that the public display of bodies and their performances of acts and gestures can “contest boundaries, displace norms, and disrupt regulatory and normalizing practices” (p. 100). I would argue that displays can equally concretize boundaries, firm up norms and solidify regulatory and normalizing practices.

As events and displays of human bodies and interactions can instruct on and constitute rhetorical meanings, so can non-animate structures, such as public memorials, artifacts, and historical spaces. Olson, Finnegan & Hope (2008) remark that remembering is “using symbolic resources to make sense of the past” and memorializing is to utilize

“material products to commemorate people, places, and events” (p. 10). Memory can be manipulated to distort history and to read the present through the past (Olson, Finnegan & Hope, 2008). Materials can create a visual argument for what occurred in the past and what it means for the present and the future. Foss (1986) notes that although meaning is an interactive product between the viewer and the object, an object is always presented in ways that will welcome particular interpretations and discourage others. However, how material is presented garners the faith of audiences that ‘seeing is believing.’ In her essay on the interpretation of photographs from the Civil War, Lancioni (1996) asserts that audiences who believe they are viewing “documentary” data expect that it relates factually accurate events and ideas. An audience’s perspective can be maneuvered, she argues, by how the historical data is framed.

Other studies on images make a case for how they can be exploited for political representation, persuasion, and deliberation. Extending McGee's (1980) concept of the ideograph, Edwards and Winkler (1997) reason that pictures are visual ideographs, rhetorical fragments which cite ideological beliefs and political ideals. These images, they claim, can draw identification and commitments and establish cultural norms. Cloud (2004) extends this thesis, asserting that visual ideographs are more than just recurring images. She argues that they index and concretize verbal ideographic slogans. Her study assesses how photos of the war in Afghanistan concretize the abstraction of the ideology invoked with the phrase the “clash of civilizations.” Hariman & Lucaites (2003) envision the photo as a site where viewers interact with the content and come to their own meanings about a picture. In their (2002) analysis of the Iwo Jima flag-raising photograph, they suggest that the photo embodies “widely available structures of

motivation” (p. 370) which can impel people who have been exposed to cultural conversations about widely shared meanings in public life to interpret the image and respond to it in distinct ways. They agree with Foss (1986) that though images offer up a range of meanings that are possible, those possibilities are bound within the range of known cultural events and prevailing ideology. Despite these constraints, Hariman & Lucaites (2003) believe that photos can encourage public deliberation and create publics. Looking at images can not only communicate ideologies, but can serve as a catalyst that alters subjects. Biesecker (2002) holds that meanings about the past come out of the combination of and repetition within multiple forms. She ‘triangulates’ a movie, a book, and a memorial to illustrate how popular cultural texts can serve as civic lessons and promote cultural transformation and social cohesion around a historical event such as World War II.

Objects and spaces can be employed to physically introduce and fix a particular perspective in individual and collective memory. Blair (1991), for example, describes how a memorial can cause one to look in a particular direction and move in specified ways, creating a bodily memory. They require us to use our mobility to navigate their spatial characteristics and as a destination, they impact us materially by altering our days. Memorials can create communal spaces, connect visitors to the past, create memories, and offer hope or a vision for the future (Blair, 1999; Blair & Michel, 1999; Dickinson, Blair & Ott, 2010). The places we visit or inhabit can also play a part in a constitutive rhetoric. They “embody in their physical structures and material ornaments symbolic inducements that work to dispose our attitudes, emotions, or sentiments” (Prelli, 2006, p. 9). Halloran & Clark (2006) allege that the power of place is in its epideictic rhetoric. It

does not, therefore, present an argument, but a display to a witnessing public.

Impressions are felt rather than arrived at thorough intellectual analysis. Places give viewers an opportunity to behold a common reality and provide a background for a common existence. A place itself can beam with common meaning, so individuals share a common rhetorical experience in their encounter of it. That encounter gives viewers a sense of fellowship with others who have shared the experience. Out of that experience, a desire to return can create a repeated ritual, reminding individuals of a time, of values, and commitments. Interaction with such a place can, according to Burke (in Halloran & Clark, 2006), invite transformation of one's sense of self. Landscapes or destinations can have an impact on and influence the development and maintenance of ideology and work towards constituting a people.

The seemingly immaterial sometimes has vital material impact. Faigley (1999) explicates the import of the materiality of internet technology. Internet technology can participate in the constitution of a rhetoric about a people (and thus constituting that "people") by disseminating idealized images of and narratives about members, and their significant acts, moments and practices. An illustrative case of this constitutive effect is that of the Zapatistas, the Army of National Liberation, based in Chiapas, Mexico. Having declared war upon the government in 1994 in support of the rights of the poor and indigenous people, this group's visibility might have been localized to Chiapas. However, images of its people, their leader, their philosophy, and their actions were circulated on the internet and they ultimately received wide fame and support. Detailing the ontology and character of publics, Warner (2002) expounds upon the ways in which the production, reproduction, and circulation of discourses occurs through mediums such

as the internet. The circulation of this discursive material contributes to a constitutive rhetoric and to the production of “a people.”

The internet and the ideas and images it displays and circulates facilitates processes of commodification and consumption. Commodification involves transforming experience or events into products and consumption is how those products are utilized (Olson, Finnegan & Hope 2008). The main medium for CR discourse is the internet, where its organizations advertise events, publications, curriculum, art, and children's games, dress-up materials and toys. These events and materials are essential for families and individuals, for learning about and enacting CR ideology and practices. These experiences and products not only supply the CR collective with daily practices for life, but they both mark them as and make them feel committed to the CR lifestyle and identity. Olson, Finnegan & Hope (2008) note that rhetorics of commodification symbolically engage the sentiments of social, political and cultural relations and rhetorical acts of consumption symbolically express social status or individual and collective identity. Visual rhetorical appeals, they state, blur consumption practices with the moral goals of a collective. On the part of CR, the organizations require their adherents to be consumers in order for the organizations to remain solvent (and for their employees to forward the goal of men “returning home.”) Additionally, the adherents need the products to learn more and to become part of the collective. In turn, adherents are relied upon and transformed into consumers. Hope (2006) discusses how Kodak and its Colorama in New York’s Grand Central Terminal depicted families as consumers while showcasing the taking of photographs. This image had the effect of persuading families to be consumers. CR's advertising and ideological messages actually depicts

families as *anti*-consumption or as frugal decision-makers, but their participation in the CR discourse requires them to be consumers.

The rhetoric of advertising uses a variety of strategies. For this study, its use of visual arguments and claims and aesthetics are particularly relevant. Advertising, according to Goldman & Papson (1996), is a commercial enterprise intended to create profit through the circulation of representations. CR representations exploit desires to live according to CR doctrine and nostalgia about historical ways of living deemed to be Godly. As Kodak's Colorama displayed images of what a proper family should look like (inducing families to become consumers), CR circulates representations of families that are large in number, dress “modestly,” behave and interact according to the values of patriarchy, and have a connection to the pilgrims of CR's ‘past.’ Though they are made available with the sentiments of help and guidance, these images and the products and events advertised on CR websites ultimately turn adherents into valued customers.

Prelli (2006) offers a number of questions to ask in the analysis of displays. We can ask what is being revealed and what is being concealed? What is remembered and what is not? What is condemned and what is celebrated? Whose interests are present, and whose remain absent? Who has the authority to define, and who challenges? What are considered to be transgressions? Who is accountable? What is deemed worthy of praise? How does the display, he asks, “rhetorically constrain our verbal responses” (Prelli, 2006, p. 13)? Or, what is plausible to think or say about them, and how do they open or restrict possibilities for meaning (Prelli, 2006)? Similarly, Prelli (2006) offers that Weaver (1970) claims that “displays emphasize and diminish, amplify and mute, select and omit, disclose and conceal, and, thus, exhibit perspectives that “embody an order of desire” (p.

15). This order contains assumptions about what is desirable or to be valued. Certainly, Prelli (2006) concludes, it must be considered that those who become an audience to a display bring their own order of desire which may or may not “resonate with the meanings disclosed before them” (p. 16). The criteria, value claims, or actions present in displays activate a constitutive rhetoric.

MacDonald (1998) explores the political consequences of display and warns against thinking that display is above politics. In support of MacDonald’s argument, I would define ‘political’ not only as official and legal efforts to influence policy or government, but as any rhetoric that impacts the conditions of human lives. Burke, for example, takes note of how rhetorics of display utilize both identification and division, constituting ideals for membership and enemies. These rhetorics engage with our senses of belonging, identity, relationships, and history (Prelli, 2006); construct in and out-groups; and create criteria for what type of person is acceptable and what type is not. These aspects of display and constitutive rhetoric certainly hold political implications, for the peoples that are being constituted and for their coexistence.

Heuristic Themes

Within the work of the theorists of constitutive rhetoric, there are five overarching themes that can guide the heuristic framework for this study. First, these theories investigate the mechanisms of the constitution of a people. Charland, for example, observes that this happens through the telling of historical narratives; Burke envisages this occurring through processes of identification and division; McGee describes a process managed by voices that name themselves as “a people” (similar to Anderson’s imagined communities and to the mechanisms of publics and counterpublics); Ives

interprets how Gramsci focuses on how language is used to create a people; and Laclau envisages this happening through the rhetorical expression and articulation of social demands. Finally, the powers of visibility and display assist in the constitution of peoples. Second, these theorists see, in the operations of narrative, language and rhetoric, a unity (albeit not a stable nor permanent one) being created out of a diversity of impulses, symbols and events. This unity creates a sense of cohesion, continuity and sameness among those who participate. The theories I have presented include an awareness of a hegemonic process that occurs to naturalize this solidarity and the sense that it makes. Third, each of these theories point to how a language, narrative, or rhetoric provides the people with a logic through which to see the world and act in it. Charland explains how narratives draw subjects into various discourse, political, and social positions which provide motives, practices and point the way to a sensible future. These positions direct subjects toward particular actions in the world. All of these authors acknowledge that this process proceeds with a dynamic between authority or coercion and participation and consent. Ives notes how Gramsci's sense is made through the construction of grammars. Laclau writes about how through rhetorical processes, social demands are symbolized and inscribed upon linguistic, symbolic, and material elements of daily life which create coherent meaning, identity and subjectivity for participants. This process is illustrated in the strength of visual rhetorics. Fourth, the theories indicate a requirement or tipping point for the constitution of a language, narrative or rhetorical system that creates a "people." Charland specifies that this occurs when enough people agree to live within a political myth. Ives describes how it was central to Gramsci's linguistic vision that a language can only be taken up and embodied successfully when people participate in its

construction organically, integrating real aspects of their ordinary and mundane lives. And Laclau delineates how the vague solidarity felt from the articulation of social demands increases after enough political mobilization to result in “a stable system of signification” (p. 74).

Finally, the fifth aspect shared among these theorists is their sense that in order to function, the constitutive process requires a tension between uniformity and diversity within its members, identities, narratives, languages or demands. Charland comments that an ideology created out of historical narratives creates a transcendent subject which rises above individual differences. Ives details the interplay between normative and spontaneous grammars in a hegemonic language, both of which are required for its success. The normative grammars perpetuate the uniformity of tradition and those that are spontaneous appear to invite or allow openness and particularity. Laclau explicates how too much uniformity will culminate in closure to the equivalential chain of social demands which will not allow for enough different social demands to be included in the sense of unity. Conversely, too much diversity present in the social demands will prevent the appearance of similarity and cohesion. Together, these theorists offer a robust and comprehensive analytic framework through which to investigate the constitution of a people. Inquiring into the language and visuality of CR symbolic and material practices will offer up accounts of how the constitutive process operates at particular sites.

Significance of the Study

To date, research on CR is mostly limited to looking at theological and traditional rhetorical studies or journalistic critiques. This is a significantly more comprehensive study on how CR’s ideas are impacting and constituting culture and personhood. In terms

of theory, this study extends the conceptualization of constitutive rhetoric from purely texts to aspects and modes of display. Most studies that address constitutive and visual rhetoric isolate one or a few forms for analysis. This study brings together many of the symbolic forms that together, through variety and repetition, assist in the constitution of the CR people. Methodologically, this study combines traditional ethnographic methods with the study of rhetoric and multiple discourse sites.⁴⁹ By “sites,” I mean physical locations as well as texts, media, bodies, and forms of display. It is only in the combination of these that we can see the full constitutive process. Focusing only on one will give incomplete analysis.

This literature review suggests the following research questions:

1. Through what symbolic and material mechanisms are the “people” of CR constituted?
2. What types of subjects does this rhetorical process produce?
3. What types of practices are engendered by CR discourse (both transforming individuals and constructing a collective *and* purportedly changing America’s culture)?
4. How can the grammars of CR and its practices be considered to be hegemonic, in Gramscian terms?

⁴⁹ This point will be covered in more detail in the methods section.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Framework of the Study

The main query of this dissertation is the question of how rhetorical and discursive processes are constitutive of a “people,” their logics and their language; and how their discourse constructs meanings during participation in their own hegemony. This question is addressed with ethnographic methods and analysis employing contemporary rhetorical and cultural studies theory. The concept of constitutive rhetoric was made known by the work of Maurice Charland (1987) and many others, as noted in Chapter Three. The constitutive process is assisted by the activities of visual rhetoric, also introduced in Chapter Three. These bodies of literature attest to the interest in how language (broadly understood) and visibility are constitutive of meanings, identities, practices, and institutions. Furthermore, they recognize that configurations of language and material life organize societies in a way that creates advantages for particular interests. This is an acknowledgment of the discursive power struggles involved in constitutive rhetorics. This point and the focus on ordinary social and cultural practices and materials within rhetorical studies have been due to the rising influence of critical cultural studies.

In his essay on the cultural tradition in rhetorical studies, for example, Thomas Rosteck (1999) acknowledges the lack of cultural criticism in classical rhetorical studies, where rhetorical critics have focused analysis “around the immediacies of rhetorical performance without an active sense of the social forces involved in the production of discourse” (p. 227). Culture, within classical rhetoric, has been defined as aesthetic

aspects or performances; social refinement and development; or a community or ‘sensus communis.’ Yet Campbell (1995) argues that despite this perspective, there is to be found within the history of rhetorical criticism an alternative, if understated, view that discourse and rhetoric shape economic, social, political and intellectual history. Rosteck excavates evidence from some key pieces of rhetorical criticism to substantiate this point.

According to Rosteck, Wrage’s (1947) early commentary on public address and history emphasizes the need to engage “the whole ensemble of a culture” (Rosteck, 1999, p. 230), including documents, laws, scientific statements, lectures, sermons, songs, folklore and speeches, “in short,” he writes, “all the artifacts of popular culture” (p. 230). Rosteck points to the similarity of this approach to analysis with the tradition of cultural studies, underscoring its emphasis on the ‘ordinariness’ of culture and the commentary that these artifacts can provide on social life. Rosteck explains that Wrage is not relegating the ideas of culture to an ideal abstraction, but rather acknowledging that “ideas take on substance within concrete acts of performance” (1999, p. 231) and that these acts are the object of rhetorical analysis. Further, Rosteck (1999) points out that Black’s (1978) essay on sentimental style argues that one’s “rhetorical form is the embodiment of his ideology or ideas” (p. 234) and that Farrell and Goodnight (1981) assume that “everyday, ordinary communication practices typically constitute patterns of life within a culture” (p. 272). For Rosteck, these essays represent a sense of culture that is broader than that of traditional classical rhetorical studies. Together, they have a “sense of culture as both the meanings and the practices in a particular social formation” (1999, p. 237) which, Rosteck articulates, matches Hall’s (1980) definition of culture as

Both the meanings and values which arise amongst distinctive social groups and classes, on the basis of their given historical conditions and

relationships, through which they “handle” and respond to the conditions of existence; and the lived traditions and practices through which those “understandings” are expressed and in which they are embodied. (p. 63)

This understanding of the relationship between culture and rhetoric leads Rosteck (1999) to assert that there has been and there is space for a cultural rhetorical studies which “broadens the idea of what counts as culture” (p. 240) and takes for granted that

Creating and managing meanings happens in a variety of texts across a wide field of communicative forms, that texts not marked traditionally as political are often those that are most political, [and shares] the...assumption that “culture” encompasses the whole way of life of a society rather than the “officially sanctioned culture of the “artistic” or the “powerful” (p. 241).

This cultural rhetorical studies examines how rhetorical discourses shape history; how ideology is materialized through discourse; defines the construction of meaning as occurring in an ongoing fashion; and accommodates a much more open conception of agency, as authorship and intentionality is not always (or ever) clear. Rosteck claims that this ‘lost’ tradition eliminates the bifurcation between hermeneutics and materialism that is often at stake in the comparison between rhetorical and cultural studies.

A cultural rhetorical studies would focus upon specific cases in their material context, “seeking to explain the functions of discourse in culture” (Rosteck, 199, p. 245). Cultural rhetorical studies and constitutive rhetoric can inform each other in that cultural rhetorical studies examines how discourse is productive of material, economic, social, and cultural conditions; this can then guide a study of how those conditions influence the rhetorical production of identity and social and cultural practices. This

combinatory framework guides this study of CR discourse and how it constitutes a people and their own understanding of their “culture” and cultural practices.⁵⁰

For this study in particular, I argue for the benefit of the combined use of ethnography and aspects of contemporary rhetorical theory and cultural studies when studying the constitution of a people, or social collective. This approach will provide for a more comprehensive analysis than either just ethnography (and grounded theory) or rhetorical criticism and cultural studies on their own. On the one hand, there is ethnography: Traditional ethnography requires the researcher to stay for long periods of time in a bounded site, focusing only on the explicit verbal and nonverbal interactions between participants. With a dispersed community like CR that is highly mediated, geographically disparate, and that expresses ideas and identities through media, texts, and objects, the traditional ethnographic approach will miss vital data. Acquiring access to any bounded site affiliated with CR for long periods of time is probably very difficult or perhaps not even possible. To tackle these challenges, this study will use multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995, 1998) to access the many different “meeting-places” and discourse of those who participate in CR and to conduct interviews with representative members. Multi-sited ethnography is quite appropriate for this project, as it aims to collect and analyze many different forms of expression, such as media, images, or internet activity, in order to broadly describe and interpret the available forms of

⁵⁰ It is important to note that this conception of culture differs from the CR vernacular use of the term culture, as they hope to ‘impact America’s culture.’ This study must be sensitive to this emic definition of culture as integral to the analysis of CR discourse and its contingent social formation.

communication for any one discourse community. It is not limited to verbal texts or conversation analysis as is a traditional social interaction perspective on ethnography.

One characteristic that is sometimes shared by traditional and multi-sited ethnography is that they both often rely on grounded theory for data-collection and theorizing, leaving aspects in “the field” to be openly described (without being guided by a particular theory). Both approaches to ethnography have the potential to simply delineate what is being witnessed and take its presence in the field of study for granted. From a constitutive perspective, it is important to look into how those taken-for-granted identities, practices, and knowledges are constituted and how they themselves constitute a people and their cultural logics. To address this analytical point, one can turn to rhetorical criticism, which does perform this sort of constitutive analysis. However, current rhetorical studies often resort to textual analysis and rarely go out into the field to see how cultural worlds and identities are constituted in a social scene.⁵¹

Specifically, I am claiming that constitutive and visual rhetorics can effectively direct and analyze what is found in the field of an ethnographic study. Rather than claiming that this is rhetorical criticism, I am simply stating that utilizing this rhetorical and cultural studies theory to guide data collection and analysis will enable a more robust field-based study of the constitution of peoples. Combining multi-sited ethnography with the analytical strength of contemporary rhetorical and cultural studies theory will create a robust framework with which to study a discourse that is dispersed, mediated, and resistant to being observed.

⁵¹ Two exceptions are Pezzullo’s (2003) study of breast cancer activism and Olbrys Gencarella’s (2007) study of Salem, MA and its displays of witch trial history.

Research Design: Multi-Method Multi-Sited Ethnography

As already described, the CR discourse community that makes up this “people” is quite dispersed. Physically, they are located across the United States; economically, they fall along very different points in terms of socioeconomic status; and their modes of expression (speech, images, media, and display) are at different physical, momentary, and technological locales. Within the space of the internet, the ideas, images, and messages of this “people” are continuously repeated, circulated and hyperlinked. Adherents learn about and identify with CR ideology and rhetoric and affiliate, connect with, and express it in their homes, worship groups, and during CR-focused events and conferences; in their political activity; in the ways in which they utilize, share, and circulate media (and the ways in which their lives are influenced by that media); in their use and display of bodies, materials and objects; and in their online activities. For example, one individual might learn about an idea from another’s blog or an organizational website, purchase or find media on the topic, share it with family and friends, extend their knowledge of and participation in that concept through a CR event, and begin to display particular clothes, actions, or practices that uphold that idea. These processes and connections (Appuradai, 1990) not only cross different physical fields but temporally, they are a part of an ongoing process of socialization (Charland, 1987). Warner (2002) points to the similarly mediated and discursively constituted nature of publics and counterpublics, which necessitates mapping out their networks and finding their cultural discourse in a variety of different physical and virtual locations. The disparate nature of the CR discourse community and the ways in which it is constituted cannot adequately be studied by way of a traditional ethnographic model.

Hannerz (2003) describes the celebrated and mystified experience of 'being there,' in a traditional ethnography where a "thorough, formative, exclusive engagement with a single field" (p. 1) is assumed. Taking issue with the sanctity of long-term presence in a singular field espoused within traditional ethnography, he argues that for many areas of study, in order to adequately study the question or object of choice, we must be 'there,' and 'there,' and also 'there.' In other words, because the subject matter is dispersed, analysts must investigate it in many different forms and locales. Media research on reception and audiences has led to the concept of 'dispersed audiences,' which focuses on more fluid and unstable manifestations of cultural production. Radway (1988) writes about "how naturalized the speech situation had become as the model for all social communication" (p. 359) which proved to be difficult for her and all others who wanted to study those who "were nowhere physically assembled" (p. 359). To her point, Grossberg (in Radway, 1988) explains that another approach to ethnography other than studying bounded communities is necessary because "subjects are nomadic," (p. 363) and (quoting Hall) "ideological elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse, and ...do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects" (p. 364). If one is interested in following those moments of articulation, the research and researcher must become mobile and must observe phenomena other than the traditional speech situation. Grossberg describes a way to go about this: "The critic has not only to map out the lines of this mobility [among positions and apparatuses] but also [to] recognize that only by entering into this nomadic relation...can [she or he] map the complex social spaces..." (Grossberg in Radway, 1988,

p. 365). This mapping and subsequent pursuit of the topic is endemic to a multi-sited ethnography.

Marcus (1998) has most prominently developed the concept of the multi-sited ethnography, pointing to several ways in which to study a group, idea, discourse, or object in a way that is sensitive to the notion that studying culture does not necessarily involve a geographically-bounded site. Appuradai's (1990) work on the global cultural economy similarly suggests that culture must be understood as a "complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, which cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models" (p. 27). Marcus (1998) asserts that multi-sited ethnography

moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space. This mode defines for itself an object of study that cannot be accounted for ethnographically by remaining focused on a single site of intensive investigation. (p. 79)

It traces "a cultural formation across and within multiple sites of activity... [its] associations and connections" (Marcus, 1998, p. 80) and "putative relationships" (Marcus, 1998, p. 81). Describing this course, Appadurai (1990) suggests following ethnoscaples; mediascaples; technoscaples; finanscaples; and ideoscaples, which he describes as imagined worlds,⁵² of the flows of ethnicity, media, technology, finance, and ideology. Invoking Appadurai's descriptions of time and space, Marcus (1998) describes the multi-sited ethnography as a "differently configured spatial canvas" (p. 82) which requires a different sort of "exercise in mapping terrain" (p. 83).

The design of the multi-sited ethnography pursues the "chains, paths, threads, conjunctions or juxtapositions of locations...with an explicit, posited logic of association

⁵² Here, Appadurai borrows from Anderson's (1983) imagined communities.

or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of the ethnography” (Marcus, 1998, p. 90). Marcus celebrates this approach as a form of constructivism. The multi-sited ethnography utilizes several different techniques to ‘construct’ a movement or trace a complex cultural phenomenon (Marcus, 1998). Hannerz (2003) claims that in interweaving interviews, media sources, documents, observations, and aspects of popular culture, the “skills of synthesis become more important than ever” (p. 212). The techniques that Marcus (1998) recommends are the acts of ‘following the people,’ ‘following the thing,’ following the metaphor,’ ‘following the plot, story, or allegory,’ ‘following the life or biography,’ and following the conflict.’ By “following,” he means tracking the various elements that go into the makeup of a people, a thing, a metaphor, a life, or a conflict. For example, in understanding the production of sugar (a thing), Marcus would recommend tracking the locations of its production, the owners of the companies, the economic interests involved, the history of the desire for sweeteners, and the sensibilities, desires and traditions of its consumers. Following a collective would involve tracking people, narratives, products, activities, and social and cultural forces that make up that discursive community. In piecing together these aspects of a cultural phenomenon, the ethnographer can make assertions about the ways in which it is making connections, creating meanings, and producing identities and their social terrain. These approaches to multi-sited ethnography not only enforce openness in methodology, but create more productive ways of experiencing and interpreting the human social world as it is, rather than attempting to force it into traditional modes of research.

In order to access CR discourse, for example, it was necessary to visit and review different events, conferences, web sites, and media materials and to consider them as the

multiple sites and modes of this “people.” Because of their disparate nature and the many modes in which CR discourse is represented, circulated, and expressed, this project was not suited for a traditional ethnography with a singular geographically-bounded site. Additionally, it required the collection of a variety of different types of data (observations, interviews, images, audio recordings, books, music, etc.), which is inherent in multi-sited ethnography, in the constructivist fashion. Both the theoretical framework that I am drawing from (the many modes at play in constitutive and visual rhetoric) and the multiple forms of symbolism and expression inherent in CR discourse require a multi-method approach (Aiello, 2008). Constitutive rhetoric creates a perspective that draws together the analytical methods of sociolinguistics, cultural studies, and contemporary rhetoric. This distinct integration will necessitate the collection and analysis of linguistic terms, words and phrases; cultural descriptions, transcripts of speeches and media productions, and descriptions of and images of displays. Multi-method and multi-sited ethnography, based on the work of Marcus (1995), Appadurai (1996), Warner (2002), and Hannerz (2003) is the most appropriate approach for the observation, collection, and analysis of these layered and repeating forms of discourse.

Studying Those Who May Not Want To Be Studied

My impression was that many individuals associated with CR are happy to share their stories. However, there were some who were worried about being misinterpreted or dismissed by those “at the university” or in the mainstream. This is one reason that it is sometimes difficult to gain access to and study religious discourses, which places a limit on how much this sector of society can be understood. The issue of getting access to “peoples” who do not necessarily want to be studied has both methodological and ethical

implications. In terms of method, a multi-sited ethnography offers a variety of entryways into the discourse of “a people” that makes it possible to study that discourse without invitation and without needing to associate with a geographically-bound group of people for a long period of time. By this I mean that one can view discourse, if it is made public, on the internet, through media materials, and by interviewing willing individuals. Doing this type of research is essential for gaining knowledge about discourses which are secretive or suspicious of outsiders. This type of method is far superior to simply accepting that a particular group or discourse community cannot be studied because of lack of access to a “site.”

There is the question of whether it is ethical to study a group that has not invited examination. For this particular study, after being denied access to (or having difficulty with) access to other institutional sites, I made the decision to study from a vantage point that allowed me to view forms that were open to public access, to attend conferences that were open to the public, and to interview individuals who welcomed me into conversation with them. If any one person did not want to be interviewed, I did not pursue information about them or conversation with them. This did not require any clandestine behavior on my part and was consistent with individuals’ desire to share narratives about their faith. This method offers opportunities for researching discourses and its affiliates that might not necessarily welcome one into their homes; it provides avenues for investigating and understanding apprehensive yet societally significant social collectives.

Selection of “Sites”

I chose the initial site visitations based upon the frequency with which particular organizational names appeared in my preliminary research. Originally, I was searching for information using the term “dominionist,” and that led me to descriptive and critical materials produced by journalists and bloggers. Subsequently, I learned that the term “Christian Reconstruction” was a more accurate term to describe this “people,” from the perspective of a limited body of academic work on the topic. Together with journalistic and popular books, these sources described and repeated the names of the organizations that I ultimately studied, including American Vision, Vision Forum, Coral Ridge, Wallbuilders, The Chalcedon Foundation, and Worldview Weekend. (I also attended a regional homeschool conference as there was a seminal CR figure speaking at the event.) It became clear during my fieldwork that the events produced by these organizations were significant to the CR discursive community as I repeatedly began to see many of the same individuals and families at multiple events (both leaders/speakers and adherents). Some leaders and speakers presented at more than one of these conferences. Some of them spoke at one but attended another with their family. I saw some families or individual attendees at more than one of these events (including several that I interviewed), indicating a type of ‘circuit’ of CR conferences to attend. Often, those whom I interviewed claimed to follow the work of many of these organizations and to purchase and consume media from their online stores.

I attended the events of Coral Ridge Ministries (The Reclaiming America for Christ conference, Pompano Beach, Florida, March 2-3, 2007); American Vision (The Take Back America conference, Asheville, North Carolina, May 30-June 2, 2007); The

New England Homeschool Conference in North Granby, Connecticut, June 8-9, 2007); Vision Forum (The Jamestown Quadricentennial, a Celebration of America's Providential History, Jamestown, Virginia, June 13-17, 2007), The Chalcedon Foundation (Christian Worldview conference, Raleigh/Durham, North Carolina, October 12-17, 2007); and Worldview Weekend, (Rockford, Illinois, November 16-17, 2007). I also studied the speakers of Wallbuilders as they presented at both the Coral Ridge conference and the Worldview Weekend.

I participated in the conferences as a "paying customer," as these conferences are open to anyone who registers and attends. The organizers were aware of my attendance, as I called to explain that I was a graduate student doing a study on the performance and display of religious values, and asked if I could attend the event. I was told that I should register like any other attendee and pay for the conference (and in some cases, I was told to get a press pass to wear at the event). I was given press passes at the Coral Ridge Ministries, American Vision, and Vision Forum events. I attended the lectures and events of each, taking notes on the talks and of my observations of the speakers, attendees, and the general activities at the conferences.

As already noted, it is difficult (or impossible) to locate a site for observation that will be inclusive of all the people of this discourse. Yet the site visits offer a chance to learn about the discourse of the organizations and how it is engaged with by the participants. This is significant, because of the central role of organizational media in CR discourse. On the topic of observing events and conferences, Hannerz (2003) states that temporary sites such as these – conferences, courses, or festivals – "are obviously important in much contemporary ethnography" (p. 209) because of the 'nomadic'

character of its participants and their discourse. Dahlén (1997), in his multi-sited study of interculturalists and the making of this new profession, found that international conferences, ritual events, workshops, and exhibits and parties were central to his ethnography because these professionals had to attend such events in order to find gatherings of their “people.” These types of events effectively display the discourse of a “people” in a way that is not possible to ascertain using traditional ethnographic methods.

Though it is not included as a part of this study, my exploratory research indicates other discursive arenas that are being influenced by CR. In my initial study, I sought to observe the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The base became embroiled in controversy after a former cadet accused the program of imposing Christianity upon all cadets. Closer research showed that the leadership implicated in this activity was strongly influenced by CR theology. As the Air Force Academy announced that it was taking steps to change the “culture” of its campus, I intended to study how they were attempting to do that and whether it was effective. Ultimately, there were too many barriers to doing this study. (After long term communications with Air Force officers, they shared an interest in bringing me onto campus to do a study. However, by that time I decided that the cadets might be too restricted to display authentic behavior and opinions in front of me. It also became clear that publishing results would be highly complicated or forbidden.)

My next attempt for a study was at Patrick Henry College, a school in Virginia dedicated to training up future “warriors for Christ” in the arenas of public policy, law, and other influential areas of service. My initial research on the school and a campus visit confirmed that its theology, practices, and leadership are highly influenced by CR. My

plan for this study was to investigate how the programming and the school leaders were attempting to create a “people” out of its enrollees, as it promised to create warriors for Christ. My request to do an intensive ethnography on the campus was denied, however, which brought me to study CR as a discursive movement that influenced many differing areas and people within the United States (my current study). This exploratory research on these sites, coupled with the research I have done for this current study illustrates the significance of CR and the extent of its reach within the United States. This research design and its ability to comprehensively access various sites and modes of discourse suitably provides insight into the processes that constitute the CR “people.”

Data Sources and Data Collection

As already noted, a multi-sited ethnography involves a variety of types of data. The data I am using consists of observations, interviews, media materials, and images. All of these forms of data can be considered as primary data, as it is the collective layering, repetition, and patterning of these forms that serves to constitute this “people.” The observations consist of those I made while attending CR events (and on one occasion, I was able to visit the home of a family that I interviewed.) My interviews were done with attendees of the events, in order to ascertain their experience and representation of the constitutive process. I have changed all of the names of the interviewees for their confidentiality. The media materials and images that I chose were representative of the identities that I observed were being constituted: the CR Christian identity and that of the Christian American patriot. When I began this study, I did not know that I would be using images or photos as data. I did take photos, but because I did not anticipate using them as data, I did not seek permission to use the photos in research.

Once I realized images were integral to CR's meaning-making, I knew I could not use my photos, so I decided to use similar photos that were posted on Doug Phillips' blog (www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/). Because these images are posted publicly, they are acceptable for research use. (They are deemed appropriate under the terms of "Fair Use" as specified in section 107 of the United States Copyright Act of 1976; "Fair Use," December 4, 2006). Some of the images are from online store catalogs such as Amazon.com, VisionForum.com, and Bigfamilyshirts.com. At least one that I used in this study was a personal photograph sent to me with permission for use in my work.

At first I cast a wide net for data in terms of what was significant to the CR identity. I then began to see certain themes repeated over and over again, so I narrowed in on items or images representative of those themes. Some of these were an emphasis on dominion, patriarchy, biblical womanhood, what family means, how to raise or train children, "culture-changing," commentary on the body and how it should be adorned and comported, references to the pilgrims and puritans as role models, and nationalism combined with Christianity. Out of the many observations I made, themes began to develop which eventually gave rise to what seemed to be the most important aspects of CR identity (the "CR Christian" and the "Christian patriot") for my data collection.

Observations

In his descriptions of multi-sited ethnographies, Hannerz (2003) advises that their constraints of time and location impel them to rely more on interviews than on long term and direct observations. I, however, did engage in several hours of observation at each event, which consisted of two to several days of performances, lectures, rituals, and unscheduled social time. For example, I observed individuals and families in the

audiences at the lectures and noted their reactions, behaviors and interaction with each other. I observed practices and conversations during breaks, social time, and meals. During lectures and performances, I recorded observations about both the performance and the audience responses and interactions; and I noted similar behaviors during rituals and unscheduled time such as meals in the cafeteria or socializing outside or in hallways or vendor spaces. These observations were important to this study because of my focus on language, social practices and institutions, and display, whether through objects, images, or bodies.

Interviewing

I introduced myself to attendees, stating that I was doing my dissertation research on how this particular “group” communicated their religious beliefs; and because there was a repeated refrain about wanting to impact and change America’s culture, I mentioned that I was interested in learning how they were going to go about doing that. I did some interviews with individuals while at the conference and the majority of interviews were subsequently conducted over the phone or with email. Following IRB requirements, I asked each interviewee to read my informed consent form and give written permission to use their interview and to record the interview, as applicable. If I did the interview in person, I explained the informed consent form verbally and let them see a copy of it and then asked them to sign it. If I conducted the interview over the phone or through email, I emailed the interviewee an electronic copy of my informed consent form and asked for their verbal approval and/or electronic signature to agree that they were giving their informed consent. After going over informed consent, I asked for their permission to record the interview (if in person or over the phone), and I recorded

the interviewee giving their permission for me to record. I used a digital voice recorder, which had the ability to record phone conversations. For the interview, I used a semi-structured interview schedule to guide discussions or email exchanges (see Appendix C).

I devised these questions to collect the interviewees' demographic details, such as age, race, sex, educational level, household level of income, region of the U.S., and political affiliation. Individuals seemed to be the least comfortable supplying their income level and political affiliation. If there was resistance to income level, I asked if they could generally characterize themselves low, middle or high income. This generally prompted a response. Sometimes individuals elected to not identify their political affiliation. Other questions related to the person's relationship to CR: how the person came to be curious about or involved in CR events;⁵³ how long he or she had been affiliated in any way; how that person self-identifies, in terms of denomination, theology, or practices and beliefs; and why they decided to attend the conference where we met. I attempted to learn what they had learned or reflected upon at a particular conference and what their general experience was during their time there. To some extent, I crafted questions that pursued information about some of the aspects of CR revealed in my literature review. For example, what their interest was in "culture"; what their interest was in changing America's culture/how they thought it should be changed; the person's relationship with patriotism or being American; what the terms liberty or freedom meant to individuals (and CR); if they had children, I queried about how CR ideas would influence them to raise their children; I asked about gender roles and how those played

⁵³ As the term "CR" is not typically used by adherents, my interview questions asked when/how individuals came to learn about and become interested in "these ideas" or something to that effect.

out in their lives. Finally, I asked questions that would probe how CR ideas are produced, shared, and circulated, such as what practices, modes, media did interviewees use, or see others using? I revised the interview questions as I learned more about CR and as my research themes became clarified. Each (spoken) interview was from forty five minutes to a few hours. Written responses ran from a few to several pages.

Overall, I made contact with forty people to request interviews; thirty-two people completed the interview with me (seventeen women and fifteen men). Their ages ranged from eighteen to 58, the average being between thirty and fifty years old. All of the interviewees were Caucasian except for one African-American. Fifty-seven percent of the interviewees had a college degree as their highest level of completed education; twenty-three percent had a graduate degree; and nineteen percent had a high school degree.⁵⁴ Forty percent of the interviewees were from the southeast of the United States; twenty-eight percent were from the Midwest; sixteen percent were from the west coast; twelve percent were from the south; and four percent were from the east coast. Most lived in suburban or rural areas rather than urban locations. Most of the interviewees described themselves as middle to upper class or “surviving fine” or “very comfortable.” Most of the interviewees identified as affiliated with republican or independent voting status. A few did not want to identify their political status. From our conversations, it became clear that most of those I interviewed grew up with a religious background (Mostly protestant and at least one Catholic), but felt that it was not rigorous and disciplined enough. They

⁵⁴ These percentages (and those for region) are rounded off to the nearest whole number.

felt attracted to CR because of its rigor and comprehensive design.⁵⁵ Those who had families shared that it was the birth of their children that prompted them to look for something that had more ‘substance’ and required more commitment. The majority of the interviewees had been involved with or learning about CR for the past few to several years. I got the sense that those whom I interviewed were typical of those following CR activities: some young single people, some with families, some women who accept the role of submission and patriarchy in their family, some men in leadership and patriarchal positions in their home, and a couple older people whose children had grown and gone away. Eighteen of the interviewees attended the American Vision conference, eight attended the Vision Forum event, three attended Chalcedon’s lectures, two were at the homeschooling conference, and one was at the Worldview Weekend event. Some of these interviewees went to two or more of the conferences that I observed. I have used pseudonyms for the interviewees in order to protect their anonymity. Just by looking (and from a poll that American Vision took at their conference), it appears that the majority of attendees at these conferences are families with young children (up to high school), wherein parents are from their late twenties to their forties. Most of the families seem to be steadily growing in their number of children. This demographic gives CR potential for significant growth.

Interviews provided a view into how CR adherents speak about the events, the ideas presented, how they fit into their lives and practices, and what it is that makes them identify with and affiliate with CR theology and lifestyle. This material was then

⁵⁵ Keep in mind that these interviewees did not self-identify as being interested in CR: that description is my own, after having done significant research. They would more likely describe themselves as “Christian” or more specifically “Reformed.”

analyzed in terms of its narratives, stories, and identifications (Charland, 1987); its normative and spontaneous grammars (Gramsci in Ives, 2004a, 2004b); and its rhetorical moves towards creating equivalential chains, antagonistic frontiers, popular demands, and social subjectivities (Laclau, 2005). As I was observing and recording the leaders' speeches and had access to their books and audio recordings of many of their talks, my interviews were focused solely on attendees to ascertain a better sense of how the CR ideas and practices were being related to, taken up, displayed and performed. I also wanted to query about dissent, difference, and idiosyncrasies in attendee interpretations and enactment. Though it is ideal to acquire the same number of interviewees at each event, my ability to do so was constrained by the format of the events (some had more time for interaction), the level of openness and follow-through amongst those at each event, and my comfort level with these different sites. In no way do I claim to have a "representative sample" of those at each event, for it is less important for this method of data collection to attain "aggregate characteristics" (Babbie, 2004) as opposed to a variety of narrative anecdotes from interviewees. It is not my intent to arrive at generalizations from this set of people to another (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995), but to chart out the 'associations, connections and putative relationships' (Marcus, 1995) being made by those I am interviewing.

In order to closely look at the language of the interviewees, I fully transcribed and coded all of the interviews. For this coding (and the coding of all media materials and images), I began by describing the character of the language or form. After some time, these descriptions showed relationships with each other and I was able to create hierarchies of themes, with some becoming the most repeated themes and others falling

into subsets of those themes. The most significant themes within CR discourse ‘arose’ from this interpretive process.

Reflexivity

This project began as a query into the constitution of culture and identities because of my own fascination with that topic. My background is in psychology and psychiatric research, where I had planned on training to be a psychologist. After a bachelor’s degree in psychology, a year of research with monkeys, and three years of “stressful life events research” with humans, I was dissatisfied with one major presumption of psychology and psychiatry. Identity and culture were presumed to be already intact, and human interpretations, actions, practices, and communication were reflective of those ‘conditions.’ (This has since changed, and areas of psychology and psychiatry have begun to embrace more interpretive theories.) I much preferred the constitutive theories of communication and sought out to learn more about them and see them enacted in the field. Part of this question was an interest in how lay people saw culture and identity and whether and how they thought they might change those states. This interest overlaps with my interest in psychology – that of “coping” and how individuals come to terms with, interpret, and cope with their life’s circumstances.

Regarding religion and its relationship with culture, identity and society, it has always been a keen interest of mine. My father was a missionary kid who grew up in West Africa, son of Protestant parents. His parents and siblings were fairly fundamentalist. In my reception of fundamentalism, I always wondered why its followers felt the need to impose their views upon others with what I thought was a significantly negative valence (being judgmental or threatening Supreme judgment). My own

upbringing was Protestant, ranging from Presbyterian to non-denominational to Episcopalian (a more liberal perspective which rejects fundamentalism). I was always surrounded by discussions of how religion impacted identity and culture, and I seemed to develop an interest in issues relating religion and the public sphere. Religion became sort of a hobby for me, especially when I lived in India as a high school student and began to learn about other world religions. I continued this study in my college courses, as well. Therefore, when I undertook this research, I was comfortable (if asked) saying that I had a Christian background, but clarifying that I was not affiliated with CR.

Despite my disagreement with Christian fundamentalism and my distaste of any manifestations of judgment of non-Christians (and uninformed statements about other religions), I am still sincerely interested in why people believe in what they believe in and why (and how) they enact it in particular ways. For this reason, I feel I can not be in alignment with CR (and question it seriously) but still be invested in an ethnographic depiction of its “people.” I do believe criticism is important, but I also believe that change is not possible without understanding. I think that culture wars will always continue, but that violence might decrease if humans allow for the presence of different stories. Of course, that begs the question of whether intolerance should be ‘allowed,’ and that is where I believe that my own as well as the most contemporary theorizing is grounded and even stymied. Dialogue (Stewart & Thomas, 1995) is naïve. Democratic deliberation (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996) is elitist and fairly masculine in its style. Radical democracy (Mouffe, 1993, 2005) risks stoking disconnection and hatred. And theories of “dissensus” (Ziarek, 2001) are too esoteric to find any connection or application in most communities. So my role, in the face of all this, tends to be accepting

conflict (which does, according to Laclau, Butler & Laddaga (1997), create space for social change); and attempting to understand and mediate. As noted earlier, Butler contends that preserving the self also involves making space for and acknowledging one's opposite or enemy. This study is part ethnographic depiction and interpretation and part criticism, both working towards understanding.

Initially in the field, I presented myself as a graduate student and offered my background if asked. If asked what type of church I went to, I shared that I had not found one that I liked yet. I entered the field feeling comfortable with my relationship to this group of people. I did feel some discomfort at times because it became clear that the way that I presented myself did not fit into the realm of 'acceptable' to CR adherents, and that may have altered my presentation. For example, during the first events, I traveled during the summer. It was very hot out and I packed some skirts that fell just above my knee. Once I learned of the focus on "modesty" and wearing longer skirts, I purchased and wore ankle-length skirts in the field. Though this is not ideal, I learned the most about CR theology, practices and beliefs after I did most of my fieldwork (this is because it took a while for me to identify "CR" as the guiding ideology). Had I known what I did after that research when I first went into the field, I would have felt a lot more unease. I would have been self-conscious of the fact that almost everything I said or did belied a humanist or feminist perspective – and that would have made me less comfortable seeking conversation, interviews, and observations. As it was, I think I was seen with some suspicion (as someone who could misrepresent or reveal), but mostly as someone with whom a story could be shared. I was probably seen as someone who was not "chosen,"

on the wrong path, or misguided, spiritually. I think those who chose to speak to me were delighted in telling their story.

I shared genuine enthusiasm with interviewees in their happiness about where they were in their lives. I believe that they wanted to represent themselves to someone (who is doing an 'official study') who would listen and who seemed like she would be fair in her representation. Of course, that is actually a significant expectation, and one that is weighty for those who feel misunderstood. I do feel that each of the people I spoke to were unique individuals and I have had some unease about talking about 'these people' 'in general' when they each have personal and idiosyncratic beliefs and ways of enacting those commitments. I have had three concerns regarding my representation of those committed to CR. First, there is the issue of my use of the term "CR" as a description of this discourse and how people are speaking, acting and living their lives. This is not a term that most of these people would use to label themselves. In fact, I suspect that many of them would disagree with it or resent it and feel violated by my application of it. I used it, despite this concern, because my research bore out the interpretation of the themes that I encountered as endemic to CR. I feel strong empathy for those I met, in terms of them not wanting to be misunderstood and mislabeled and I've had great apprehension about my interpretations and representations will be received. Secondly, I always struggle with how to successfully represent individuality versus general descriptions of a larger discourse. Especially having met many people within the field, I am personally aware that each of them is unique. Anyone would feel slighted if all of their uniquenesses were erased through the efficiency of general description. As much as I strive to maintain a balance between the individual and the general, this study is focused on an overarching

discourse, which will inevitably hide personal idiosyncrasies. Third, I find it a conundrum to figure out how to represent and speak about social collectives or a “people” as collections of “discursive moments” rather than humans or social groups, as recommended in my literature review. This seems to me to be a highly intellectual posture, because in the end, the readers and audience are going to ask questions about “these people” and the scholar (because of tendencies in English grammar) is going to have to resist referring to these discursive moments by saying “they say” or “they do x.” This is significantly challenging, not only as a researcher, but also in terms of attempting to ‘coach’ those with whom you are discussing your research. Regardless of the instruction from rhetorical scholars, it seems that what I write about discourse will still be interpreted as activity generated from a body of individuals or a social group. This feels tantamount to pointing the finger at individual people rather successfully convincing the reader that social collectives are actually social demands manifesting themselves. “These people” are sentient beings who have emotions, egos, humility, and vulnerabilities. I want to handle them with care while also representing my research adequately. These are some of the main concerns I have in writing up and presenting this research.

I did tell my interviewees that I would share my final research product with them. I do plan to do so, but my focus has been on completing the project and then creating a summary of it for interviewees to review. The response is important to me, and I do think it should be integrated into the work. I plan to include responses in any future work on this topic. I have considered writing about CR for both general and academic readership, and with both audiences, I feel strongly that I must be careful about how I represent my interviewees and their CR cohort. Many representations of fundamentalist Christianity do

nothing more than perpetuate stereotype and fuel animosity. I do not want to contribute to that.

I constantly reflected on my own positionality vis-à-vis CR and at times the differences in our positions created a fair amount of distress. What I find most important to convey, regarding my thoughts on this matter, is how incredibly powerful and forceful the CR rhetoric is; how effectively ‘well-educated’ and cogent its “people” are; and how mightily singular the world appears when standing amidst this worldview. Though I am always one to emphasize the power of choice and individual rhetorical practices and actions, this experience, perhaps more than any I’ve encountered, made me keenly aware of how discourse positions individuals for what are deemed to be acceptable options for self-presentation, ideology, and practices. This experience promised that I could not be a cavalier sofa theorist about the ways in which identity includes choices – I am now intensely aware of how constrained some of our choices can be. I believe this sense of respect of the constitutive process is present in my writing. Relating to what I saw in the field, I am so curious about the experience of the young people of CR (which would require a different study, as that involves parental consent, etc.). This is the group that is born into the CR worldview rather than choosing it for themselves, as their parents have done. I would hope that I could learn someday how they will manifest this teaching and identity constitution in their future lives.

Images

As indicated in the literature review, images can strongly influence the constitution of a people and their subjectivities. It was not until I was in the field, attending events, and then later, receiving mailings from these organizations and looking

at their websites, that I realized the extent to which influential images are utilized and circulated within CR discourse. I began to see repeating images (particular figures and subject matters), styles of art (period dress and early American), and patterns (ways of depicting gender, 'godliness,' Americanism, or patriotism). I took note of these images and their patterns and selected a number of them for my analysis. The images included in the analysis fit within the identities that seem to be constituted within CR discourse, such as what it means to be Christian within CR and what it means to be a Christian American patriot. I also collected images from media and events that were popular among the interviewees.

Media Materials

Calhoun (2004) has stated that any account of contemporary public life must deal with a dramatic increase in indirect, mediated relationships. It is partly through the circulation of media that this CR "people" is constituted. Kellner (1995) states that images, sounds, and spectacles help produce the fabric of everyday life, dominating leisure time, shaping political views and social behavior, and providing the materials out of which people forge their very identities. Because this "people" is spread out geographically, the circulation and consumption of media is a large element of their collective existence and creates a coherent yet disconnected body. Speaking of the creation of publics and counterpublics, Warner (2002) writes that media assists in the creation of collectives, which "become, by virtue of their reflexively circulating discourse, a social entity" (p. 11). This entity is made up of dislocated strangers, but through the circulation of media, they become an imagined community (Anderson, 1983). Imagining is a process of representation, where actors utilize the symbolic materials of

cultures within historical and societal contexts in order to invoke particular social values, beliefs, and interests (Asen, 2002), thereby creating a shared social world. This process employs linguistic and visual modes of representation to circulate images and ideas that constitute a collective. Anderson (1983) contends that these ideas and images can be shared across space and time by way of the mass media. Through the circulation of media, a discursive community is constituted (Brouwer, 2006), enabled by texts, speech, cultural forms (Warner, 2002), interaction, visual images, and performances (Pezzullo, 2003). These forms, including the circulation of media, are the building blocks of this constituted “people.”

Circularity is endemic to this discourse, as it is not just based on a message sent by a sender and received by an addressee, but the circulation of “potentially infinite axes of citation and characterization” (Warner, 2002, p. 91). He writes of a social space, an ongoing space of encounter created by the reflexive circulation of discourse that appears to be participated in and addressed to indefinite others. Despite that appearance, this discourse actually “selects participants by criteria of shared social space (though not necessarily territorial space), habitus, topical concerns... and circulating intelligible forms (including idiolects or speech genres)” (Warner, 2002, p. 106). This language elaborates “a particular culture, its embodied way of life, its reading practices, its ethical conventions, its geography, its class and gender dispositions, and its economic organization...” (Warner, 2002 p. 106).

Those studying publics and counterpublics, collectives and social movements have looked at the internet as a mode of interaction, and an effective way to express opinion and to disseminate information (Downey and Fenton, 2003). Computer-mediated

communication, according to McDorman (2001), can aid in the fostering of resistant subjectivities and create situational intimacy and community. Palczewski (2001), in her study of social movements, found that virtual communication assists in identity formation and the ability to self-define. She claims that computer technologies enhance the development of in-group rhetoric, which facilitates the norming of speech, style, and social rules and roles. Hirschkind (2001), Larkin (2008), and Mahmood (2005) research the ways in which discursive forms are circulated in religious publics by way of cassette tapes, speaking events, or social organizing and educational programs. Hirschkind (2001) writes that these mediated forms can be both deliberative and disciplinary. Social dialogue about religious and political ideology drives deliberation about and how and whether it should be represented in public spaces. These conversations and their mediated forms are disciplinary in that strong historical and moral forces guide how openly people feel they can discuss these topics; conversely, conversation about the topics themselves oblige and discipline people in terms of how they are comporting themselves (head coverings for women, the mixing of the sexes, how to invoke the name of God in public matters, etc.).

The circulation of ideas and images through media will have certain ramifications, including the creation of lines of inclusion and exclusion around which interests, values and ways of speaking and being are preferred and how they might shape subsequent rhetorical situations (Asen, 2002). Additionally, circulation of the discourse will produce struggle around the conditions that bring these collectives together (or keeps them apart), and shape and reshape the dimensions of their subjectivities (Warner, 2002). The concept of mediatization (Krotz 2007, Schulz 2004) holds that media increasingly interpenetrates

aspects of cultural life, reshaping symbolic forms of culture, social practices, and its modes of production and circulation. This has been discussed in terms of politics (Kepplinger 2002, Bennett & Entman 2001), law (Sherin 2000; Katsh 1989; Ulbrich 2004), and religion (Hepp 2008). This idea presumes that it is media that is fashioning cultural life. The Christian Reconstructionists I am studying utilize media forms in order to circulate and interpenetrate peoples' lives with theological and ideological ideas and forms of life. Many of them write, design, and produce their own media. Contrary to theories of mediatization, this suggests that the public has some hand in directing the media and its forms, in order to influence culture. Further investigation should look into the directionality of this relationship: how it is not just "media" (as in 'the powers that be') influencing a discursive community, but also members of that community harnessing the powers of media to extend their own identities and discourses.

This description of the mediation of collectives indicates that media are not only highly influential, but constitutive in the makeup of individual and collective identities. Fisherkeller (1997) lays out the ways in which media are integrated into lives, merging with education, family, and the private realms, shaping imagination and identity. Studying the daily lives and talk of these audiences can clarify the media influence in their lives (Bird, 2003) and in the constitution of a "people." Bird (2003) claims that rational analysis has been crowded out by images and drama as a way to enhance the story, increase audience pleasure, and become more convincing. Looking closer at the stories presented in media materials, we can foreground the ways in which daily choices are limited not only by this constrained presentation and individual or family circumstances, but the power of media producers. On a broader scale, the study of media

in multi-sited studies can map the transnational networks that connect people across time and space, and the ideas, values, practices, and institutions that enjoin them.

The media that I collected and used for analysis follows the same criteria that I used for images: I observed these materials circulating repeatedly across all of the events at their vendor tables; they were mentioned as being a favorite of the interviewees; they were noted as bestsellers by the organizations; and they contained ideas and images that seemed to be most popular in leader speeches and in interviews. Consequently, the themes of the media led to the two main analysis chapters of the dissertation, which address CR Christian identity and Christian American Patriot identity. Finally, I tried to include samples of materials across each of the organizations. However it does seem that the final themes may be more supported by Vision Forum and their materials than the other organizations. To be clear, the other organizations support these themes; it may be that they just do not focus on them as much. Also, Doug Phillips of Vision Forum seems to have a very tight, attractive, and effective presentation of these themes whereas the other organizations may only refer to them briefly or perhaps ineffectively. This resulted in having some more material from some of the organizations (Vision Forum, notably) than others in the presentation of the final themes. For instance, a very popular theme intertwined patriarchy, family and culture. Vision Forum happens to cover these topics more than the other organizations. “Biblical Worldview” is covered more exclusively by Worldview Weekend and American Vision.

Analysis

My awareness of and decision to collect these materials and to ask particular questions evolved out of a tacking back and forth (Emerson, Shaw & Fretz 1995;

Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Van Maanen, 1988) between data collection during an event and analysis after each event. After the final event I attended, I continued to look at organizational websites, receive their mailings in postal mail and email, and explore the blogs and websites of those I interviewed or those who claimed some affiliation with CR. This exploration extended and provided context and additional information to fill out what I had recorded during observations and interviews and helped me to answer some of my own questions about the material. After the final event, I transcribed all of the chosen materials (if they included verbal or written expression). I used NVivo qualitative analysis software to code all of the observations, interviews, images, and media, arriving at numerous different themes, as described above. The software enabled me to see the themes that included the most comments, images, and materials, and that is how I chose to focus on CR Christian identity and American nationalist patriot identity for my two analysis chapters. The first chapter covers what it means to be a ‘good Christian’ according to CR principles; the second addresses the nationalism and patriotism which seems to be an inherent part of CR discourse and identity.

I began by coding themes that I saw in the data and that I noticed while in the field. For example, some of my initial codes were “history,” “America,” “liberty,” “manhood,” “modesty,” “economics,” “homeschooling,” “women/girls,” “law,” “sovereignty,” “self-government,” “family government,” “Islam,” “restoring the republic,” “culture,” “dominion,” and “relationships with outsiders.” There were numerous codes during this initial period. Eventually, it became apparent that many of these codes related to each other, so I began to create “tree codes,” which enabled me to create a main theme that subsumed multiple themes within it. Some of the main themes,

contained up to twenty to thirty subthemes. This process helped to organize my collection and interpretations. Following this, my analysis of CR's most prominent social demands (Laclau, 2005) helped me to choose which demands (and thus themes) to focus on. I ascertained the prominence of the social demands with a joint quantitative and qualitative approach. For the quantitative piece, I reviewed the main codes to see which contained the most data (i.e. the highest number of repeated instances of a theme). The two themes I chose (Christian identity and culture change vis-à-vis family and patriarchy and American history and nationalism) were the most predominant in terms of number of instances found in the data by far. Qualitatively, I was able to confirm, in terms of what I observed at conferences, what I heard from individuals and groups, and the displays that I witnessed, the importance of these themes within CR discourse.

As I set out to describe and represent (write up) the data within these themes, I was able to see within each themed code what type of source each instance of the theme was. For example, within the theme of "patriarchy," I was able to see instances of discourse about patriarchy (or patriarchal discourse) from leaders, interviewees, within media materials, songs, or display (bodies, images, performances, activities, etc.). I tended to indicate agreement among the themes unless I saw great differences. When there were differences or conflict or disagreement, I noted those in my writeup. For example, when I realized "Biblical Worldview" was an important concept, I looked for it in talk, conference lectures, and media materials, and I asked about it in interviews. I attempted to ascertain what it was in terms of organizational and personal definitions, how it was instructed upon in lectures or in workshops, and how it was relevant to the greater public.

For the topic of “modesty,” I tried to note its importance as an overriding theme and look for its manifestations in different mediums and modes (such as books about it, ways of dressing and speaking or comportment, images, and explicit comments about modesty). To be sure, there was difference on this topic across individuals and across events. The Coral Ridge conference had an older demographic and seemed to have a more conservative yet more mainstream style (i.e., pants and mainstream styles for clothes, hair and makeup were acceptable). This seemed to be the case at the Worldview Weekend conference and the homeschool conference, with a few exceptions of some women wearing ankle-length skirts, headcovers, and clothing that did not match contemporary style. The Chalcedon conference attendees also matched this description (one family did model a Hasidic Jewish style, with beards, longer hair, and payots – long curly tendrils in front of the ears and tzitzis – strings hanging from their pants to symbolize God is present in all places, all directions. This style is to emphasize the importance of the Old Testament). Those at the American Vision and Vision Forum conferences displayed the most conservative/alternative styles, many men wearing long and full beards, and women wearing no (or light) makeup; long skirts with loose tops that covered most of the upper body; and long hair with very little styling.

Some systematic analytic approaches ask the analyst to determine directionality of discourse (i.e., did the leaders first say “X,” and then images and DVDs were created, and then the adherents began talking about “X”?). This approach is not appropriate nor is it possible with the simultaneity (Anderson, 1983) involved in multi-sited, disparate, and more “global” discourse. “Following the discourse” (Marcus, 1995, 1998) is not so much a linear or chronological activity for this type of field and “site” as much as it is thematic

and conceptual. In terms of determining the importance of a theme, I prioritized sheer instances of a theme and I also looked at whether the theme was present in the discourse of all of the CR organizations, among the majority of the interviewees, or whether it was only indicated once or twice.

I am committed to ‘giving voice’ to what might be considered ‘silent’ or ‘unspoken’ social realities in a field. For the most part, this is easier when the analyst is able to consider data other than that is only spoken or inscribed. However, the absence of something always relies on the analyst’s perspective and interpretation (such as “women were not speakers/only men were speakers). These notations were included as instances in the data. Similarly, in the cases where something was indicated only once or twice, I did not want to discount it simply on a quantitative level. I ‘tested’ those instances by considering whether they were present in CR discourse in ways that I had not yet realized or recorded. This was probably most relevant to my data (or lack of) on race. I did not have many overt discursive instances about race in my findings, but did feel that the Whiteness of the CR demographic was worthy of discussion. In that case, I went back or did new research to assess how or whether race was discussed in organizational materials. I discussed this a bit with some of my later interviewees (and the general response was that everyone was welcome regardless of race, etc.).

The next step of my analysis was reading these themes through the lens of the theories of constitutive rhetoric, cultural studies, and rhetorics of display. Ideally, one would be coding the data and creating themes with these theories in mind. However, I changed theoretical frameworks after coding most of my data. For this reason, I returned to my coding to assess the relevance of these theories to the themes. It turned out that as

coded, the themes were very relevant to the theories and I did not see the need for re-coding. I read through instances and writeups of scenes and descriptions of people in order to interpret my experience of CR discourse by way of the new theoretical framework. I did this somewhat systematically, looking through notes with one theoretical theme at a time. The beginnings of my chapters began with shorter essays where I practiced the application of my interpretations of one or a few theoretical ideas, such as Charland's (1987) three ontological requirements or Lacalu's (2005) antagonistic frontier. I eventually put these side by side to figure out how to weave them all together into a larger narrative, re-looking at my data as I wrote. The final analysis chapters were a culmination of this process.

Ultimately, this study set out to learn about the ways in which a dispersed discourse community is constituted and coheres; the variety of means and modes and social forces through which they are brought into existence as a "people;" and the ideas, values, practices, and institutions that are upheld and enacted amongst this "people." The multi-sited and multi-method ethnography provides a comprehensive heuristic for accommodating those many layers and modalities of a dispersed and discursive collective. Furthermore, constitutive rhetoric, with the aid of visual rhetoric, rigorously deconstructs the CR material to reconstruct it in terms of how the telling of historical narratives constitutes this "people." In his study of the "people Quebecois," Charland (1987), examines documents as his primary data and only theoretically points to the possibility of investigating how multiple modes (language, music, art, architecture, etc.) are involved in the constitution of a people. This study effectively illustrates how multiple modes of communicative practice cohere to constitute a "people," and how

multi-sited ethnography is particularly well-suited to investigate this type of discursive phenomenon.

CHAPTER 5

CR CHRISTIAN IDENTITY - BIBLICAL PATRIARCHY AND FAMILY AS METHOD FOR CULTURAL CHANGE

“The country is on the skids,” announced one Vision Forum speaker, Phil Lancaster (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 6).⁵⁶ The reason this is happening, he says, is not because of secular activists trying to block Christianity from the public – it is because even Christians have thrown off God’s authority and the practice of family worship. Lancaster urges men to take the lead and make this happen in their homes. Phillips asks if we are willing to learn the lessons of history and of Scripture, or risk losing our sons and daughters (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 5). Families must revisit and relearn what is involved in living under God’s authority, because that is the foundation of the biblical model. Phillips calls the family an “incubator to learn authority” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 5) and proffers that if we do not learn how to deal with authority it will be a problem for the rest of our lives. John Thompson, a Vision Forum speaker, describes the family as a “perfect laboratory in which to practice role relationships of submission” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 6); and Gary DeMar, president of American Vision, refers to it as “the training ground for future leadership” (1990, p. 30). This is the language of CR and of CR Christian identity, which has family and Biblical Patriarchy at its core.

The “people” of CR and their understanding of what it means to be a Christian is brought into being, as Charland (1987) theorizes, through the telling of historical narratives which are motivated by social demands (Laclau, 2005). This accomplishment is achieved with the aid of ideographs (McGee, 1980), open terms that show commitment

⁵⁶ Where “track” is noted, this indicates a CD recording and each track is a recording of a different speech/speaker.

to a political goal and visual ideographs (Edwards & Winkler, 1997), images that invoke these terms and cite ideological beliefs and political ideals, drawing identification, commitments, and establishing cultural norms. Visual ideographs also go as far as concretizing verbal ideographic slogans (Cloud, 2004); the image makes “true” the slogan that has been said. CR’s ideographs are also made relevant and enacted through other forms of display (Hill & Helmers, 2004; Olson, Finnegan & Hope, 2008; Prelli, 2006; Selzer and Crowley, 1999). The CR community has surrounded and thus ‘spoken’ themselves into existence with a distinct language which includes specific grammars (Ives, 2004a, 2004b; Gramsci, 1971) or a generalized rhetoric (Laclau, 2005) that reaches well into all areas of their civil society: family, “church,” (or worship), work, commerce, and leisure and consumption. This language has reached a level of mobilization where it has become a “stable system of signification” (Laclau, 2005) and though they are seeking a Christian hegemony in the world, the CR language maintains an internal hegemonic dynamic amongst this “people.” Enough participation in the CR language culminates in the altering of individual identities so that they become ‘CR people.’ This process, what it looks like, and how it produces a particular CR Christian identity is discussed below.

Living out a Biblical Worldview is the single most important tenet of CR and one of its main social demands. This commitment is all-encompassing. It requires acknowledging the sovereignty of God and Scripture in all things and in every area of life. Interviewees consistently mention that this means in work, family, and social life; in play; in relationships; in education; in politics and policy; in government; and in economics. One leader explained that it is relevant to a child’s educational curriculum in

grammar, composition, music or math (Phillips, 2002-2007a).⁵⁷ An interviewee described the Biblical Worldview as comprehensive; as “the way I relate to God, the way I relate to other people, the way I do my job, the way I spend my money, the way I interact with the culture and government of the USA” (C. Washburn, personal communication, May 31, 2007). It is explained as being primary “in every situation, with every thought, every action” (K. Martin, personal communication, June 1, 2007). Another individual stated that the Biblical Worldview is “taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, or thinking and living your life according to precepts and principles from the Bible” (D. Carter, personal communication, April 23, 2008). To underscore this thought, one interviewee commented that “The Bible is not a “spiritual book,” it is a “life book” (A. Clark, personal communication, April 2, 2008), (meaning that whereas many people compartmentalize their spirituality, this perspective understands it as lived out in every moment of life.) The Biblical Worldview is “a framework for viewing every aspect of life” (Phillips, 2002-2007). This means being under the authority of God and making decisions and taking actions with God’s guidance. Many of those I interviewed explained that, according to this view, one should not make up one’s own mind based upon one’s own experience of things. Rather, one must presuppose and act from God’s and Scripture’s authority and not upon self-sufficiency, will or desire.

In my coding, I found twenty-five different themes to be related to the living out of a Biblical Worldview. Many of these were already described in the CR literature review. I found that by far, the themes of family and patriarchy and Biblical manhood were mentioned the most often by respondents, leaders, and other media materials (see

⁵⁷ In the talk referenced, Phillips tells about how he once read a book on how math demonstrates the existence of God and God’s design.

Appendix A, Figure 1 for images of media materials on Biblical manhood); and they appeared to be highly prominent in my observations. There were 206 references to family and together, over 150 references to patriarchy and Biblical manhood. These topics were mentioned the most often as being vital to fulfilling a Biblical Worldview. Additionally, family, patriarchy and Biblical manhood were referred to as the main method or mode for achieving another main CR social demand, which is cultural change or reformation (towards creating a Christian nation). For this reason, family and Biblical Patriarchy are the focus of this chapter, in terms of how they both symbolize and are methods for achieving two of the CR social demands, living out the Biblical Worldview and achieving cultural change and reformation. These social demands characterize what it means to be a CR Christian and impel the telling of historical narratives and the presentation of forms of display whose ends are to justify and reinforce these narratives' reality and legitimacy; all the while constituting this "people."

Biblical Patriarchy and Manhood

Biblical Patriarchy is a topic that is quite central in Vision Forum materials and events, and is also alluded to in the talks of other CR organizations and leaders. There is evidence of the importance of this concept to adherents, in their talk, and in the way that they have structured their family lives. Doug Phillips (Vision Forum President) refers to patriarchy as a "society led by strong, Godly men"... a "God-ordained program" where a husband and wife "co-labor together," raising their children to share their faith, with the goal of structuring all life and society in Biblical terms (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1). Biblical Manhood, in other words, is completely premised upon taking and demonstrating rightful leadership in this vision, and devoting one's life and resources to those activities

that will prepare a male to fulfill this role. This might include studying and knowing the scripture, developing one's character to not be distracted by 'worldly' things, and taking actions and making choices that will draw a man to the right wife in order to create a family and begin influencing society through one's family structure. Phillips (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1) explains that it is in the home where men influence cultures, societies, nations, and entire civilizations. This vision of Biblical Manhood and patriarchy has faced challenges, Phillips explains: men have failed to take up this mantle and institutional structures in society have made it difficult to attain. It is consistently noted in CR discourse that society has failed to recognize God and the biblical model (and so the nation has gone into decline),⁵⁸ and it is men who have failed in their responsibility to lead according to Biblical Law. It is made clear that it is the responsibility of Biblical men to restore the nation through their leadership in homes and with their families.

Phillips and other speakers emphasize that men have struggled to fulfill this responsibility since Biblical times, and have often not been successful. More recently, it is believed that men have retreated from their calling to be patriarchs and have let feminism reign (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1). Men's roles have been relegated only to politics and business and women have managed the formal institutions of the family, church and the school. Allegedly, these women have not led from a Biblical perspective, and this fact and the women's' leadership have led to the emasculation of all men in society. Phillips declares that

Boys are feminized as they are raised primarily by women at home, in Sunday school, in the classroom. ...the masculine inclination to lead and to protect and to provide for is squelched by the attempt to create a new

⁵⁸ The verbatim refrain is "society," but "contemporary American society" is presumed.

sensitized, that is, feminized, version of manhood. (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1)

The modern American male, states Phillips, “doesn’t know who he is,” what he is doing, where he is going, and is “obsessed with sexuality,” “oppressed with immaturity” and “distressed with anything which threatens his job security” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 7).

He has been sensitized to the point at which he has lost every vestige of genuine leadership ability...convinced that emotional and intellectual androgyny are a virtue,... shirks responsibilities to seek refuge in the idolatries of our modern age...sports and big boy toys. Like cars...It appears that modern man knows little about fatherhood; in fact, he has become a spiritual eunuch. (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 7)

Phillips, of Vision Forum; Gary DeMar of American Vision, various speakers of Chalcedon, and interviewee respondents see this time in history as a turning point. They see men admitting that they have been neglectful and

are turning their hearts toward God and their families...with a hunger to learn more about Biblical Manhood. This quiet revival is taking place in homes where teary-eyed fathers are standing before their wives and children, repenting for their lack of vision and leadership, and recommitting themselves to God’s priorities for men. (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1)

Phillips remarks that men are becoming aware that they need to make “dramatic changes in their lives...which reflect a Biblical re-examination of the way our fallen culture approaches family, work, finances, education, citizenship...” They are seeking to learn the “big picture of Biblical Manhood” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1) and “are throwing off the shackles of post-feminist America and rediscovering the true meaning of masculinity by embracing their manhood” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 7).

What is required of Biblical Manhood? In order to take seriously the responsibility to restore the nation through the home, men must take the role of ultimate

authority in the home. A man is to be the primary decision maker, teacher, financier, and leader of family activities. Not giving in to the temptations of the rewards in the secular world or of the fulfillment of self-oriented desires, he must view fatherhood in the home as his first priority. This involves shedding any commitments or diversions outside of the home that interfere with this role, and spending as much time in the home and with the family as possible. In order to prevent the falling away of future generations, and to influence the restructuring of society, a patriarch must have a long-term plan for securing his family in the ways of God, instilling the biblical perspective in family structures. He must have a multi-generational view and work to create a family dynasty or clan so that generation after generation will turn their hearts to God. Phillips states that in order to achieve this, men must do two things. First, following Psalm 78,⁵⁹ they must become “resident historians” of their households, reminding their families of the good works of God throughout history (“His story”), including an understanding of “the biblical principles upon which our government is based, and the providential hand of God in establishing our nation” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1). Secondly, the patriarch must be a resident theologian or priest, making sure that his family is well-versed in the Scripture and understands how to live out a Biblical Worldview. “Home historians and theologians create generations of world-changers” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1). These

⁵⁹ Psalm 78, which has 72 verses, encourages parents to share the words of God and the stories of God's people with their children. In fact, it is stated that Israeli law commands that fathers share these things with their children. This is important, the Psalm states, so that generation after generation will come to learn about God, find hope in Him, and keep his commandments. When His people follow his will, God imparts the ability to do great and miraculous things. Yet many forsake him and God has punished these men mightily. His followers came to realize they had forsaken God, and asked forgiveness and received compassion. They continued, however, throughout history, to forget God despite His many signs. He eventually chose one tribe over another, and those chosen ones will receive his blessings. (King James Version)

responsibilities will be addressed in more detail when describing the structure of the biblical family.

Phillips calls men to action to join this vision of Biblical Manhood and patriarchy, and all of the interviewees agreed with this goal, though sometimes to different degrees. Some just state that “most would agree that the husband is the head of the household and the leader of the family” (S. Evans, personal communication, April 2, 2008); that they are to be the “providers” or “servant leaders who give honor” A female respondent stated that “men should be servant-leaders of the family, church and community – husbands, fathers, providers and protectors” (J. Taylor, personal communication, August 12, 2007). Another female quoted Ephesians 5:23,⁶⁰ stating that “the Bible says that there is biblical hierarchy in the world, with God as the Head of Christ; Christ the head of man; and man the head of woman” (H. Roberts, personal communication, June 10, 2008). This is seen in Susan’s example, where she explains that

Man is the ultimate decision maker in the household, like a CEO is the head of a business...He makes a decision that’s good for his family. The role he’s supposed to take is like Jesus showed Peter in the bible. He’s to serve, but the woman can participate in discussions and make suggestions.

Shawn agrees with this depiction. He states that

Man is the ultimate authority under God within the home [and that] the Bible commands the father to teach the children. I’m the primary person who’s supposed to be doing that, [he says]. I can’t delegate that responsibility to her and watch television or something like that (S. Evans, personal communication, April 3, 2008).

Images of patriarchy are constantly displayed in CR literature. Illustrations on books, catalogs, and websites depict patriarchal sensibilities and relationships between

⁶⁰ For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body.

males and females, often in period dress. Though I never observed any instance of this style being explicitly explained, it seems to be invoked as a nostalgic reference to a time when patriarchy was assumed and women and women's styles, demeanor, and comportment were more feminine, gentler, and more submissive and controlled. The images serve as an alluring invitation for women and young girls, for whom the prevailing convention is to be as feminine and demure as possible. There are also many images of women in period dress or Victorian style caring for children, almost like a Madonna, therefore upholding the Dominionist role for women. These images double as a silent but understood index of the dominance of men. Philip Lancaster's (2003) book *Family Man, Family Leader* (which has been noted as being popular among interviewees and in terms of books sales) has an illustration on the cover, in Victorian style, showing a man with his arm around his wife's shoulder, going over a map with her (see Appendix A, Figure 2). This depiction symbolizes patriarchal leadership, in that the man's responsibility is to show his wife and his family 'the way.' Another author that interviewees mentioned is Doug Wilson (M. and B. Thompson, April 11, 2008). His book "Federal Husband" (1999) depicts a man, from an earlier time, leaning over a desk with presumably important papers on it (see Appendix A, Figure 3). He is looking out the window, seeming to contemplate the importance of his work for his wife and family.

I encountered a more modern instance of patriarchal art at the Vision Forum event in Jamestown. A woman who, with her husband, owns "Big Family Shirts" (www.cafepress.com/bigfamilyshirts) was wearing one of the t-shirts that they sell through their business. In bright pink capital letters with a black background, the t-shirt read "helpmeet" (which is a biblical term to denote a husband's helper, or wife). Their

company also sells t-shirts with “helpmeet in training” for little girls and “Patriarch” and “Patriarch in Training” for men and boys (see Appendix A, Figure 4). The book images mentioned invite a patriarchal view of social relations and the t-shirts allow believers to both identify with and express their pride in living out Biblical Patriarchy. These displays create an environment conducive to and supportive of the valuing of and living out of Biblical patriarchy. They set a standard for those who witness them, accepting those who agree and distancing those who do not.

Patriarchy’s Charge: Restoring the Nation through Family

In his conference talk in the “Patriarchy/Building a Family that Will Stand” series (Vision Forum, 2003a, track 1), Phillips exhorts that the patriarch is responsible for the future of America; and his task “is nothing less than the restoration of a civilization [which] ...begins with your actions in restoring your home.” He has called the home the “building block of the world” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1). Gary DeMar (President of American Vision) has called the home “the building block of western civilization” (1990, p. 25). Restoring the biblical family, according to Phillips, is “the most important work in America today” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1). Phil Lancaster, the author of “Family Man, Family Leader” (2003) and a speaker at Vision Forum’s “Building a Family that Will Stand” conference, counsels that contemporary Christianity has become far too atomistic and individualistic, focusing on Jesus as a personal savior (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 6). He explains that the view that actually gets presented more often in the Bible is the idea of a corporate savior,⁶¹ where God relates to a family, a church, or a

⁶¹ The definition of corporate here is “of, relating to, or formed into a unified body of individuals” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary), i.e., group-focused as opposed to focused on the individual.

nation; working much more through this corporate connection rather than individual relationships. He states that God works through a generational connection, pointing to Romans Chapter 5 verse 18,⁶² where it states that the trespass (sin) or righteousness of one person in a line of men will have great impact for future generations and societies. Therefore, one does not have the luxury to think as an individual; he must always think of how his actions will affect the family and future generations. Joshua, an interviewee I met at the Chalcedon event, makes a comment that resonates with this idea. He explained that the Bible tells us that God works through nations; rewards nations and punishes nations, so we must be invested in the religious makeup of America at a corporate level (J. Harris, personal communication, March 18, 2008). Voddie Baucham, a speaker and writer on family, claimed at the American Vision conference that families were created by God as a vehicle for exercising dominion and that dominion could not be achieved any other way. He noted that when God called people out of Egypt, “land was distributed to family by family by family. Not a socialist economy, not a corporate-based economy, but a family by family by family free enterprise system.” Herb Titus also mentions this at the same conference in his talk on biblical economics.

Family, then – family worship, the birth and rearing of many children, and the demonstration of Biblical Patriarchy and values through the family, is the method not only for living out a Biblical Worldview and creating cultural change, but for the creation of civilizations, the taking of dominion, and the creation of a kingdom. This conception of family is connected with the postmillennial belief that Christ will only return after the

⁶² Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

arrival of a Christian kingdom on this earth. Having large families and instilling particular worldviews and ways of life in great numbers is a way to bring that kingdom into existence. CR leaders, speakers, media and interviewees continually mention that this was known by the early pilgrims of the United States and that their family structures reflected this vision.

Both Phillips (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 4) and John Thompson (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 2), another speaker at the Vision Forum's "Building a Family" conference mention three institutions that changed during the 1800's or the industrial revolution that led to the decline of the family: public schooling removed children from the home, factory work removed the father from the home, and youth culture distracted children from spending time with the family and led them to peer grouping and age-segregated activities. John Thompson decries the terrible mistake made by the father of 1850, who "with the purpose of providing a better education for his children,... took his children out of the home and placed him with peers in the classroom" (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 4). This threatened the bond that parents had with their children, the sheer time that they had together, and deprived them of customized education that only a parent can give. Handing children off to public schools also eschewed the biblical mandate in Deuteronomy 6:6-9 for parents to educate their own children and gave that job to 'strangers.'⁶³

⁶³ ⁶And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: ⁷ And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. ⁸ And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. ⁹ And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

Phillips makes it clear that he does not believe technology is inherently evil and that it is our response to technology that is crucial. The response of industrial revolution fathers to the presence of new technologies in their lives, he believes, sowed the seeds of family disintegration when fathers permanently left the home and were separated from their families (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 2). Thompson also comments that “before the industrial revolution, the whole family worked together. Wherever the industrial revolution spread, it destroyed a traditional way of life” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 4). He goes on to say that

Purposing to provide more material possessions for his family ... [the father] dissolved the family business and took a job at the local factory. Though his goals may have been noble, the effect was devastating, and resulted in his irresponsibility at home. (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 4)

Phillips takes us back to the mid-1800's and he quotes Thomas Jefferson as saying that every family was a mini-factory in itself.⁶⁴ “What we saw before the industrial revolution,” Phillips notes, “was the amazing circumstance that the home was an economically vital unit. In the year 1800 the average family had seven living children... [and] they contributed to the very economy of the home” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 2). At that time, he continues, fathers ran a family business with their families and were home to be “primarily responsible for the discipleship and education of their children” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 2). He describes that time period as a time of specialized trades, a “cottage life,” where families aimed for self-sufficiency in food, clothing “and other essentials,” keeping cows, pigs, chickens, a kitchen garden, and

⁶⁴ CR commentary does revere Thomas Jefferson as a Godly Founding Father; it is not believed that he was a Deist, as it is claimed in many liberal circles.

prepared their own meats, vegetables, clothing, furniture, and candles.⁶⁵ “Wife and husband, child and parent, were functionally intertwined” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track, 2). But the industrial revolution changed much of this and significantly altered family life. Thompson adds that once the children were away at the public school and the men were working long days at the factory, “the wife” had nothing to do at home. She, wanting to add to the family’s material wealth and find fulfillment in work, joined her husband at the factory. The result, he surmised, was ultimate ruin for the family.

“With mothers and fathers pulled out of the cottage” Phillips continues (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 2), “the care of children became a social question again.” This, he asserts, was “something altogether new in human affairs.” The family no longer had time to care for the cottage garden or family cow and

families were forced to go to the market to buy all their food...the ownership of productive property such as land and tools gave way to reliance on cash wages and factory-produced goods. Economic loyalties were no longer rooted in family relationships but the employing firm which was after all the source of cash needed for subsistence. (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 2)

As the children’s main activity (school and play) took them away from the home and parents and increased their time with their peers, youth culture developed. Thompson (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 4) describes how children began to spend more time with and be more influenced by their peers than by their parents and family. In the face of this development, adults started spending more time with their own peers for enjoyment.

⁶⁵ Many CR families are attempting to have as much of a ‘self-sufficient’ lifestyle as possible, whether that means raising their own farm animals for meat, chickens for eggs, gardens for vegetables, building their own houses, sewing their own clothes, or creating food items from scratch as opposed to buying them already prepared. This is not required within CR doctrine, however. For some, being self-sufficient extends to not paying taxes or expecting social security or Medicare, not having health insurance, and not having a social security number (Doug Phillips’ children do not have social security numbers).

Children and parents would go their separate ways in pursuit of recreation and pleasure and this began to affect the structure of many other institutions. One-room schoolhouses began to be age-segregated; Churches began to hold Sunday school instead of having children sit and learn with their parents; youth groups began to offer to teach young people about spirituality so that their parents did not have to, further fragmenting the family. Thompson believes that this led to much less mature and serious Christians in both adults and their children (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 4). Young people, he explains, used to speak

about the serious topics of theology, government and work and were absorbed with family, ministry and the family business...They were family centered and peer-independent. Today the focus of our youth is on entertainment, fun, sports, and interaction with their peers; rather than more serious pursuits. (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 4)

Thompson, Phillips, DeMar and other leaders condemn this turn as leading to irresponsibility, egoism, and the inability or neglect of righteous action.

Phillips attributes many social changes to the time of the industrial revolution. He claims that during this historical time, rates of divorce increase, the average age of first marriage is delayed, the birth rate declines and families are smaller; and children are seen as an economic burden rather than an asset and a blessing. Six generations later, Phillips indicates, the family and its relationship to greater society, and society itself have become completely re-structured. Along with this re-organization came a loss of memory: the forgetting of the Godly providence and Christian plan for this nation; the forgetting of a truly Biblical Worldview; and the forgetting of the idea that the way life is lived everyday will impact families, nations and civilizations long into the future. Altogether, this resulted in losing the vision of Godly dominion.

What sort of plan of action do the Reconstructionists have for responding to this crisis? It is a plan of remembering, retelling, and restructuring. They aim to remember the biblical perspective and historical models of Godliness in Scripture, in the persecuted European Calvinists, and in the early American Pilgrims, Founding Fathers and patriarchs. The recounting of Scripture and stories of Biblical patriarchy, dedication, and patriotism will assure that current and future generations will not forget again. Re-learning biblical ideas about the family and unlearning humanist presumptions is the foundation of restructuring. Undoing the three institutional changes of the industrial revolution is also key to this plan: turning to homeschooling instead of public schooling; the father returning home and enjoining his family in the home business, constant shepherding, and fellowship; and the rejection of youth culture and peer-grouping, so that the family again becomes the main unit of socialization. There is strong belief that a commitment to and the challenge of re-structuring lives according to these precepts will lead to long-term restructuring of culture and society.

Structure of the Family: A Whole New Pattern of Life

In his discussions of the changes that need to be made in order to follow a biblical view, Phillips refers many times to the idea of a “remnant” of people who will be responsible for the change. He is referring to the scriptural concept of how a third temple must be built in Jerusalem before the coming of God. The temple presumably refers to a body of followers of Christ. (Worldview Weekend has a conference talk about ‘preparing the remnant,’ which is ‘the people’ who will work to build this third temple) Phillips looks to the book of Haggai, and its description of the building of the second temple, for signs of how the third temple (the body of Christ, or His followers) will be achieved.

Haggai writes, in chapter one verse 14,⁶⁶ that a remnant of people will do the work of God to build the temple. Phillips refers to those gathering around him and CR as a “remnant.” In his “Building a Family That Will Stand” conference, he mentions this remnant five times in his first session. He first proclaims that “we’re here because we believe God is raising up a remnant. And Scripture tells us in Isaiah 1 and in many other passages, that it’s often for the sake of the remnant that God spares a nation” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1). He invites the audience to consider that many of their children might be a part of this remnant in the future, and encourages them by saying, “the fact that you’re here, the fact that God still has a sizeable remnant preserved in this land brings me encouragement that he may yet see fit to restore our nation” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1). It is the job of this remnant, Phillips discloses, to build that temple (or to rebuild a loyal body of followers of Christ) by building families that will stand in the face of time and all pressure.

What they must do, Phillips counsels, is “use the Bible to develop a whole new pattern of life for our families” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1) (see Appendix A, Figure 5). Quoting Herbert Humphrey (a Christian statesman) in 1840, Phillips describes the structure of the family as “a little state or empire unto itself ...governed by its patriarchal head whose prerogative no power on earth has a right to interfere” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 2). He continues quoting Humphrey, who claims that

In the family organization, there is but one model. It is for all times and all places... It is at once the simplest, the safest, and the most efficient organization that can be conceived of. Like everything else, it can be

⁶⁶ And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God.

perverted to bad purposes but it is a divine model that must not be altered. Every father, he wrote, is the head and constitutional ruler of his household. God has made him the supremely earthly legislator. (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 2)

This sense of family as a legislative body is echoed in DeMar's *God and Government* (1990), where he delineates a whole section on family government.⁶⁷ As noted in the literature review, DeMar expounds that early America understood a different definition of government. Government, DeMar suggests, was not simply a body of people who sought to oversee and discipline the people; government began with self-discipline, self-control and self-governance. He backs this up with quotes from early American writings (such as those of John Winthrop, a Puritan lawyer and one of the Founding Fathers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony) and Scripture (such as the statement that "self-government is generated through the power of God's spirit" which he ties to Galatians 5:16-26⁶⁸). Additionally, DeMar claims that early Americans believed that under the jurisdiction of God as sovereign governor, there are actually three branches of

⁶⁷ This use of "legislative" means to enact laws; it does not refer to a legislative or 'law-making' committee.

⁶⁸ ¹⁵ But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye not be consumed one by another. ¹⁶ This I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. ¹⁸ But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are manifest, and they are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, ²⁰ idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, quarreling, rivalry, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, ²¹ envying, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like. About these things I tell you again, as I have also told you in times past, that those who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³ meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. ²⁴ And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another and envying one another.

government that answer to God: the family, the church, and the civil arena. Each of these areas, he states, were determined to be integral to the following of God's law. The new pattern and structure for families, therefore, relies upon restoring the biblical family government, where the husband is under God, the wife is under the husband, and the children are accountable for following Biblical Law by way of obeying their parents.

Invoking History and Historical Figures as Guides

As noted earlier, leaders, interviewees, and CR media materials regularly turn to history to both support this idea of family, this way of life and this mode for cultural change, and to uphold models that illustrate how to live it out. They cite writers from the 1600's, the 1800's, historical figures, both Puritans and Pilgrims, and uphold the early Puritans as their best models (see Appendix A, Figure 6). My coding of leader speeches, interviews and media materials shows that the most frequent concept mentioned about the Puritans or Pilgrims is their long-range vision and commitment to having their families live in a particular way, with great sacrifice and cost. Vision Forum's Doug Phillips and American Vision's Gary DeMar and their various speakers, for example, often mention the Pilgrims in their homilies about the importance of dedication to patriarchal family structures and the need for long range vision. Both of these organizations utilize images of Pilgrims on their websites and materials as an indication of who should be looked to and revered as those to imitate.⁶⁹ Many of their products advocate for the study of Pilgrim history as a guide for Biblical Worldview and cultural reform.⁷⁰ Speakers at the events of

⁶⁹ This will be covered in more detail in the next chapter, as it relates to American history.

⁷⁰ See Vision Forum's catalog at <http://www.visionforum.com/search/productlist.aspx?search=pilgrim>

Vision Forum, American Vision, and Chalcedon often mention the Pilgrims ways and their plight, and refer to texts that document their ways of life, such as “Pilgrim’s Progress” (1678), “Plymouth Plantation” (1650), or writers and figures of that time that were associated with reformed theology or Calvinism (or something resonant), such as William Bradford.

One interviewee, when asked about how cultural change might occur, stated that “we need to return to the values of the 1600’s” (the time of the Pilgrims) (L. Adams, personal communication, June 16, 2007). Some interviewees mentioned that they read books about the Puritans, and Brenda noted that the books that help her family the most are those on the Puritans because they speak to how their family is trying to live. These actors and CR media materials consistently turn to biblical stories, accounts of the early church reformers, the Founding Fathers, and writers and thinkers from the 1600’s and the 1800’s to set out a model for Biblical Patriarchy, family, and commitment to long range vision for cultural change. This use of historical narrative and images as it regards family and cultural change will be noted in the appropriate sections below. A more extensive analysis of CR historical narrative and images and display will be included in the following chapter on CR American patriot identity.

Decisions to Make a Radical Change

Phillips has stated that dramatic changes are required for those who respond to this call to be part of the remnant (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1). Some of those whom I interviewed shared their stories of how they came to the decision to make radical changes in theirs and their families’ lives. Brenda and Mike Thompson attended the American Vision conference and the Jamestown Quadricentennial event. They have fourteen

children, eleven of them adoptees. When I visited their home, Brenda told me how at one point they were attending a more mainstream Methodist church, and had two children at the time. She then came across a homeschooling magazine and became “convicted” in her heart that this is what God wanted them to do with their children.⁷¹ She told her husband about it and he said, according to Brenda, “Are you crazy, you’ve got to be kidding!” (B. Thompson, personal communication, April 11, 2008). She began to read more books by women who were involved in the homeschooling movement and said,

I got a glimpse into what a really godly woman looks like and became so sorely convicted of who I was before the Lord because I love Scripture and love the Lord, but I had never been disciplined – I had no idea what a godly woman looked like vs. a more worldly ...Christian, ...so I began changing and wanting these things.

She and her husband joked about how she dragged him along into this and he followed. They had a good experience with homeschooling and explain that this was the catalyst for moving towards Calvinism and living more biblically.

The Thompsons relayed that they started making changes as they learned things through literature and at various events. They were not really sure if they were doing what they were supposed to be doing, but said that it all really tracked well with what the speakers were saying at the Jamestown (Vision Forum) event. Brenda stated,

I see God raising up a standard, of reforming the family – one family at a time. Not just this great massive work, though I remember when we started homeschooling there were thousands of us – and now there are hundreds of thousands and how it’s just exploding that way. Whether it’s Christian or not, it’s changing the way America looks and thinks... I mean first it’s Christ and then you throw in homeschooling and then you throw in Daddy, patriarchal, without being – not dictatorial, but just patriarchal, with dad, he fulfills his biblical role, mom fulfills her biblical role; and that picture of the family - children obeying their parents happily, not grudgingly ... large families, the idea of having as many children as God

⁷¹ Saying that one is “convicted” is typical of conservative Christian (Protestant) vernacular. It means that you are convinced through God’s spirit (from the Latin root) and that you have related convictions (firmly held beliefs or opinions).

will bless you with, seeing the children as a gift from God that's gonna propagate our nation; also the patriotism that I think is God is raising up in the nation again, that fizzled out somewhat after WWII.

They explain that their home was not completely at peace before their conversion.

They just decided to "obey God and do what he called us to do as husband and wife."

Then they found their church, and then this conference: "the vision is really becoming brighter...And it's exciting."

Nikki and Lisa, whom I met at the Jamestown event, told me that they had both been college graduates and, Nikki said they

used to be career women. We had busy schedules and worked hard. But each of us had this conviction that we needed to change our lives in order to fulfill our roles as women, according to God, according to the Bible. We quit our jobs and became mothers and teachers, and we welcomed children as God's gift. This has brought so much happiness and peace to us and to our families.

Their husbands, Nikki and Lisa told me, liked the changes these women made and were supportive of the plan. Lisa shared with me that when she made a decision not to wear pants anymore (and only wear skirts and dresses), she saw a change in her husband. He began, she claims, to take responsibility and take care of the things that she used to have to do around the house and in the home. He now knew it was his godly role to take care of these things. Also, she delighted, he treated her more gently, more affectionately...he opened up more emotionally. She believed that when she was taking care of the 'manly' duties (and wearing pants), she was threatening to him and that made him put up his guard around her. Since she has restricted herself to more feminine duties and has started to only wear skirts and dresses, Lisa explained, her husband has begun to treat her more gently, more like a woman (L. Adams, personal communication, June 16, 2007).

Other stories found in CR discourse seem to focus on what women have done in order to effect structural change in their families' lives. One recurring story that follows this theme is the idea of 'daughters staying home,' which refers to young women staying at home to be the helpmeets and servants of their father (and not go away to college or a career life) until they are married and can become the helpmeet to their husbands. A movie made by two well-known young female authors within the CR community entitled "The Return of the Daughters" (2007) chronicles the stories of eight young women who have committed themselves to this lifestyle and how it has affected their families. The narrators state that they have met dozens of young women all across the country that are doing the same thing. These young ladies both assist their mother in the home and help their fathers with his business and ministry⁷². The illustration on the DVD cover depicts a young woman dressed all in black business wear, carrying a briefcase, walking away from the viewer and toward her home (see Appendix A, Figure 7).

The first family highlighted in the film is one that I met in Jamestown; the father was one of my interviewees.⁷³ The narrator states that at age twenty-three, Katie Valenti is well-established in business, as the interior designer and decorator for a respected Louisiana homebuilder, her father. Katie shares that she loves working for her father, helping him in his business, and that he is the greatest man in her life. She believes that working for her father is a "better use of her youth" (better than going out into the world

⁷² Ministry, as it is used here, does not denote strictly official pastoral duties; it refers broadly to a man's patriarchal responsibilities, such as disciplining his wife and family or inviting Christian or non-Christians into the home for fellowship.

⁷³ All other interviewee names are pseudonyms, but the actual names are used for this family because they are showcased in the film mentioned (which uses their actual names).

and focusing on individual aspirations) and is helping her to prepare to be a better helpmeet for her future husband. Rather than pursuing her own selfish ambitions, she explains that this is very good training for her to learn to submit to a man. Her father explains that the Scripture says that women are to be keepers at home, so he is trying to train his daughters to be good helpers for their future husbands (see Appendix A, Figure 8). He also says he is following Scripture, which prescribes that we teach these things to our children from when we rise up until we go down to sleep. Keeping his daughters at home and working with them all day long helps him to fulfill that mandate. To his understanding, he believes that young women should serve their fathers until they have found a mate. He would never consider putting his daughters out into the world until that happens.

The narrator of the film tells us that Psalm 144:12 describes daughters as corner pillars in the home that should be both beautifying and supporting.⁷⁴ This was not always the way of the Valenti family. Mr. Valenti, in the spirit of Malachi 4:6 turned his heart towards his children and began to make the change.⁷⁵ Katie recounts how it was originally hard for her to submit, but now this way of life has brought the family transformation, serenity and peace. Before the family “knew Christ,” they used to have a cold, lonely, tense atmosphere, including yelling and screaming. They had nine televisions before, Mr. Valenti admits. Now, he says, the televisions are off and they play music instead; or his daughters are singing and you can smell pasta and garlic cooking in

⁷⁴ That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.

⁷⁵ And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

the kitchen. They now have close relationships and this change has helped them to detach from materialism and feminism, autonomy and independence, and they work together as a family. “Everyone together – not everybody doing their own thing,” explains their mother. Their home, Mr. Valenti says, is now lively, productive, a place for industry, education, and countless visitors. The other young women’s’ stories on the DVD tell similar tales of how their life decision to ‘return home’ and serve their fathers resulted in major change, satisfaction, and blessings in their families. They all feel they are a part of a greater plan to make a change in the world.

Multigenerational Vision

A biblical passage seen on many American Vision materials and used by Gary DeMar in his conference talks is Proverbs 29:18, which is “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (see Appendix A, Figure 9). CR leaders talk about creating a multigenerational vision, one that is lived out through families over time. Chris Ortiz, the Director of Communications for Chalcedon, informed his audience at the Chalcedon conference that “we should always work in terms of multigenerational. Most in Christendom,” he said, “don’t think in terms of generations.” In his commentary on how a remnant is gathering to build a new temple, Doug Phillips declares that “we must develop a multigenerational vision.” He continues, challenging that

rebuilding families takes time and rebuilding churches, nations, and civilizations takes even longer. Though some fruit will be evident in the short term, particularly with our children, most of the fruit of our labors will not be seen for a long time and so it’s essential that we, too, do not despise the day of small things and that we develop a long range vision for our work. (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1)

Phillips turns to Psalms Chapter 78 to verify the biblical origin of his call, explaining that it speaks of telling the sayings of old and the works of God to the generations to come.⁷⁶ This is required so that the children to come “may set themselves aright” and not be stubborn like those in the past. In another talk, Phillips claims that what made America great is being “the product of multi-generational faithfulness on the part of parents; that children were given a multi-generational philosophy” (Phillips, 2002-2007). This, he argues, is what motivated the Founding Fathers to create a great nation. ‘Where do you think they came from?’ he asks.

They were the great grandchildren of people that settled in America and passed on a vision. They were the fourth generation. We’ve lost that. Your children can’t think beyond tomorrow and neither can you. You kill a vision, you kill a people. (Phillips, 2003)

“We must aim,” Phillips urges, “for nothing less than the establishment of what we could call a Christian family dynasty. Our name should be nothing less than the flowering, the reflowering of Christian civilization” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1). Citing William Bradford in *Plymouth Plantation*, Phillips explains that a foundation must be laid and that is done in simple acts over time, “as one small candle can light a thousand” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1). “God’s plan,” he continues, “is for each man to become a patriarch of a Christian clan. To have generation after generation of descendents who will follow him as he follows the Lord” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1). This idea is repeated by many different speakers in the form of a legacy story, where the speaker mentions either their ancestors and what they have brought into the world or how their offspring will create a legacy for them. Two hundred years is repeatedly mentioned

⁷⁶ See footnote 2 for Psalms 78.

as significant because it is claimed that the United States went from a Christian nation to one that is mostly secular within that time frame. It is thought that if families plan for two hundred years of faith in their families, they can transform and not lose the nation again. For example, Phillips, introduced at a conference as one who “is building his own dynasty,” (see Appendix A, Figure, 10) tells the legacy story of his own family. He explains that

Each one of us, right now, whether you know it or not, you stand, today, at the apex of an unfolding generational drama. You and I are heir to the past or ancestor to the future and counting our grandparents for those of you who had grandparents . . .we will mentor or be mentored by people whose life spans will extend beyond two hundred years. Now imagine this. This is the generation of a patriarch. Here’s my family – my grandfather was born back in 1880, my father had me . . .if my son is married and has a baby when he’s about twenty five and he has a son whose married at about the same time period, my great grandson – the total lifespan that I will touch is 240 years! 240 yrs, that’s the lifespan of a nation. That’s the influence that you have before you. Maybe that old part of that generational vision was not Christian. Let’s start it today. (Vision Forum, 2003a)

At another point in his talk, Phillips speaks of the legacy of Charles Francis Adams, who was ambassador to England during the American Civil War.

He found himself at the center of an extraordinary family tree. He wrote a ten volume biography of his grandfather who happened to be our second president. He compiled a twelve pound volume of the notes of his father who happened to be our sixth president and then he saw one of his sons who was a celebrated author write a biography of him . . . their combined lifespans were 220 years!

Phillips immediately followed this story with one about a large family he knows who came to the U.S. from the Netherlands. They were very poor, but they put their faith in God and continued having children. He explains that together, the family created a successful business and became very wealthy. All of their children had large families,

and when they get together, they have generations around them, and you can visibly see that they are capable of making a big impact.

Another common legacy story, which I heard at the Worldview Weekend conference and it was also published in their *Christian Worldview for Children* book is the story of John Adams.⁷⁷ This is a quote from Ham, Howese & Chapman's (2000) *No Retreats, No Reserves, No Regrets*. They write that:

We can all leave a two hundred year footprint if we so desire. We each one of us, right now, whether we know it or not, stand at the apex of an unfolding generational drama. We are heir to the past, and ancestor to the future. Counting our grandparents or early mentors, through our children and grandchildren, we will most likely mentor or be mentored by people whose life cycles will extend well over 200 years and include parts of four centuries. 173 years after John Adams' marriage, a study was made of some 1,400 of their descendants. By 1900 this single marriage had produced thirteen college presidents, sixty-five professors, one hundred lawyers, a dean of an outstanding law school, thirty judges, fifty six physicians, a dean of a medical school, eighty holders of public office, three United States senators, three mayors of large American cities, three governors, one Vice President of the United States, one comptroller of the U.S. Treasury. Members of the family had written 135 books, edited eighteen journals and periodicals. They had entered the ministry in platoons, with nearly one hundred of them becoming missionaries overseas. (*Christian Worldview for Children*, p. iix)

This is the reasoning behind Vision Forum's *200 Year Plan: A Practicum on Multigenerational Faithfulness* (2007-2010) conference and media materials.⁷⁸ Many families whom I interviewed commented on their interest in this long range vision, though I did not hear of many two hundred year plans. The circulation of this idea is still fairly new. Holly, an interviewee, mentioned that her husband was not sure that this was a

⁷⁷ The publisher (WorldviewWeekend.com) does not list a copyright date for this book.

⁷⁸ See <http://www.visionforum.com/search/productdetail.aspx?search=200+year&productid=43872>.

biblical idea, but that they do have a long range vision for their family: They are buying land so that their extended families can live together on the same property over the generations (H. Roberts, personal communication, June 10, 2008).

Large Families

The passing of this vision from generation to generation must be done, according to Phillips, by the hearts of fathers turning toward the hearts of their children. Having many children is a strategic part of the vision, as large numbers will help to populate the land with believers and keepers of the vision (see Appendix A, Figure 11). They are seen as a blessing, but they are also considered a form of weaponry. In *How To Think Like A Christian*, (Vision Forum, 2003b), an audio recording of conference lectures, Phillips doesn't mince words about the spiritual war that is to be waged. He rallies his troops, stating that

The war of the worldviews is real. The war of the worldviews is comprehensive. You're fighting it in your classroom; you're fighting it in your church; you're fighting it in the entertainment media; it is all-comprehensive. We will only win if we are engaged with a full-frontal assault in the battle; if we believe the Bible, if we'll stand on the Bible and we'll teach our children to do the same.

They must be raised as warriors for Jesus, he insists, and they must be trained to think with a warrior mentality. "You let them know they are in battle mode; you show them the battle; and you get rid of neutrality" (Phillips, 2002-2007). At the American Vision conference, Gary DeMar used the analogy of 'trading up paperclips' based on a story about a man who began trading a small red paperclip and after several trades, ended up with a two-story farmhouse (MacDonald, 2007). He suggests that in a covenant or promise to God, children can be traded to Him in return for the inheritance of a kingdom.

The number of babies that Americans are *not* having seems to be a great concern in this discussion of Christendom. One interviewee, Brenda, told me about the book *America Alone* (Steyn, 2006), which conveys that Islam is taking over most of the world because of the number of babies that Muslims are having. Brenda stated that “the ones who are having tons of babies are the ones that are going to rule. And the Muslims are having tons of babies and they are quietly taking over nations who are blind until more recently” (B. Thompson, April 11, 2008). Having more babies, a war tactic, is expressed as a priority on one of the Big Family T-shirts which reads “MILITANT FECUNDITY” (see Appendix A, Figure 12). (The pattern on the t-shirt is military camouflage.)

From this perspective, birth control is seen as rejecting a blessing from God and not trusting His sovereignty to know what is best for your family; but it is also an impediment to the long term vision and the strategy of war. Many interviewees were very direct about their rejection of birth control. Roy shared that he believes that long-term cultural change “involves abandoning modern family planning...[that we should] bring as many children into the world as the Lord chooses to give” (R. Booker, personal communication, June 18, 2008). Laura explained that the birth control pill not only prevents what might be a God-ordained pregnancy, but that it is also an “aborto-facient” because it prevents just-fertilized eggs, or new embryos from attaching to the uterine wall (L. Austen, personal communication, September 21, 2009). There are a number of books and media devoted to teaching on this matter of leaving family planning up to God (see Appendix A, Figure 13).

Phillips refers to this in one of his talks as well (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 7) and connects birth control to being economic slaves to materialism. Being financially

overstretched, he reasons, leads to bigger problems like birth control, because the parents' priority is materialism rather than God-ordained children. If children do come when parents have an inappropriate allegiance to materialism, he warns, parents will delegate their parenting responsibilities to other people (because they are busy working to make more money). Phillips portends that this will cycle into the next generations if it is not curtailed. R. C. Sproul, at a homeschooling conference, compares this materialistic worldview to that of the Romans, who, he says, believed children were dispensable and would leave unwanted children out in the forest. For Christ to come along and say that children were a precious gift at that time, he asserted, was radical.

The number of children that one has, therefore, is something to be celebrated and displayed, both as a way to express one's faith and also as a mode to communicate the priority of this value upon others. At the American Vision conference, Gary DeMar announced that of the attendees that weekend, 33% of the families had seven or more children. This was met with a cheer from the audience. Roy, an interviewee, told me he was about to have his seventh child (R. Booker, personal communication, June 18, 2008). Many speakers at events announced how many children they had – one author, mentioning his book entitled *Raising Maidens of Virtue* (2004) (see Appendix A, Figure 14) noted that he had nine children.⁷⁹ One speaker said he had seventy-seven grandchildren and received strong applause.

It was not uncommon at conferences to hear groups of women talking about someone they knew who had just given birth to one of their many children. One group wondered out loud, “this is ten for her, right?...yea – I think she's got six boys and four

⁷⁹ His wife, Stacy McDonald, is the author of the book.

girls.” My interviewees had from zero to fourteen children (some of them adopted), with the average being around two to four. From my observations, it seemed that the large family movement within CR is fairly new; people in their late forties to sixties had smaller numbers of children and people in their twenties to early forties tended to have larger families. At least three to four of the women I spoke to did mention that they had had tubal ligation surgeries before they understood things as they did now. Each of those women had unsuccessfully tried to get reversals, and had either accepted having a smaller number of children or decided to adopt. Brenda was one of the women who told me this story, and she said adoption was “put on [her] heart by the Lord with a burning passion”. She and her husband now have fourteen children (B. Thompson, personal communication, April 11, 2008).

The display of large families can be a way to find solidarity in purpose with others as well as a way to demonstrate and witness faith to outsiders. One man shared his and his family’s joy and appreciation at seeing all of the large families at the Jamestown event. He felt that it was evidence that they were not alone in what they were doing; that they were part of something bigger. He said that in their town, they are the only ones with a sixteen passenger van. But at Jamestown, there were three or four-hundred sixteen passenger vans, in white, green, blue – all sorts of colors (see Appendix A, Figure 15). He was in a group with many families who were waiting to be picked up. He thought that normally, for these people at home, when a sixteen passenger van pulls up, they know that it is theirs. Not that weekend, he said, when one of those vans pulled up, no one knew whose it was! Another interviewee, Brenda, mentioned that eyes turned when she and her fourteen children went to Wal-Mart together. She said the family can be a way to

explain their vision to others. When people ask, ‘why do you do this?’ she says it is an avenue to share their beliefs and way of life with others (B. Thompson, personal communication, April 11, 2008).

Father Returning Home

Phillips explains why the father-child relationship is critical (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1). In the last sentence of the Old Testament, Malachi prophesies that before the Lord sends the Messiah, he will turn the hearts of fathers to children and the hearts of children to their fathers. If this does not happen, God will strike the land with a curse. To avoid this curse, hearts must turn. Phillips teaches that Zachariah of the New Testament proclaims that in order to prepare people to ready for the Lord, the hearts of the fathers must turn toward their children and hearts of the disobedient must turn towards wisdom. These people, whose fathers are turned toward their children’s hearts, he portends, will advance the kingdom over the face of the earth. They are described by Phillips as having a “heart bond” between fathers and children. Why is this critical, he asks? Because the family is the essential building block of the world. Psalm 78,⁸⁰ Phillips remarks, reveals that it is the obligation of the father to teach his children the ways and the law of God. Yet, he decries, for the past six generations, the father’s only role has been the breadwinner. He must be more than this; he must be a leader, a teacher, a priest, and a guide. As Deuteronomy 6 states, he must instruct his children in the ways of God from sunrise to sunset.⁸¹ In order for this to be possible, Phillips expounds, fathers must

⁸⁰ See footnote 2 for this verse.

⁸¹ And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

reverse the extraction of the father from the home that occurred during the industrial revolution; release himself from economic dependence; and make a business in his home in order to spend his days discipling his children.⁸² He must make his home and his family a vital entrepreneurial unit again. John Thompson (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 3) instructs on the importance of the father shepherding his children, as God does for his people and as Christ did for his disciples. He describes this as spending time together, communicating, walking with each other, listening, talking, and transparency about how to go about doing all things from a biblical perspective. Children, Thompson teaches, must abide in the protective and instructive shadow of their parents.

Many families whom I interviewed and who have established names within CR circles have made this adjustment and have the father's business run out of the home. Phillips himself shares that though he was trained as an attorney, he would warn anyone not to take a job in a secular law firm where one would be required to work fourteen hours a day. He shares that he and his wife "continually work to creatively structure our lives so that we can travel together, we can work together, we can co-labor together.... and it was for this reason that we started a home business" (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 2). When he is working side by side with his sons, he explains, they can see what he is doing, ask him questions, and he can explain the ways of the world through a biblical lens. Both Nikki and Lisa, interviewees, who once were "career women" and decided to 'return home,' told me about their husbands deciding to start home businesses in order to turn their hearts to their families. They each said that they help their husbands in his home business. This has enabled them to be together more and to do things like travel to

⁸² They do not recommend any particular business. Men I met were involved in sales, computing, CR literature and curriculum, and other products and services.

conferences, such as the Jamestown event where I met them. They consider this type of conference to be a way to teach and share the ways of God with their children, as they can listen to the talks and witness the models of the other families. Both of them believed that most of the families at that conference had home businesses in order to live in this way (L. Adams, N. Smart, personal communication, June 16, 2007). Holly, another interviewee, disclosed that her husband has a home business and he is starting to bring their two young sons (ages 10 and 13) into the business. She mentions the importance of Deuteronomy 6 (teaching the children all day long) and says that “it’s hard to disciple the children as a father if you’re not home a large portion of the day” (H. Roberts, personal communication, June 10, 2008). Holly voiced some skepticism about the need to have a home business, however. She has seen first-hand how difficult it was and thought that it would be possible to disciple your children if you are able to find some flexibility in a job outside of the home. Some men I interviewed explained that they do this before and after work, as they work outside of the home (A. Clark, personal communication, April 2, 2008; J. Harris, personal communication, March 18, 2008). Having the father return home is another decision to radically change the life of the family in order to ascribe to a Biblical Worldview and to restructure society.

Activities and Practices within the Home

Many times I heard parents criticizing what they called the humanist assumption that children are inherently good. CR holds quite the opposite: that because humans are inherently sinful, they need transformation in various forms before they can be godly people. Thus, parents need to properly train their children. Besides teaching the value of living under God’s authority, parents are to offer discipline, training and instruction, and

protection for the children. The hope of the future, John Thompson believes, is not the youth – it is “wise parents who train wise children in the context of the family” (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 4). This responsibility and the agenda of family governments, DeMar (1990) advises, cannot be entrusted to “impersonal and distant bureaucrats. Too many families willingly sacrifice their children to such institutions as the public schools, day care centers, and welfare agencies” (p. 28). Nor should parents rely on mainstream parenting or psychology books. In his talk on parenting, Thompson warns that these texts on self-esteem theory or behavior modification are based on ungodly humanist ideas that assume that man is inherently good (self-esteem theory) and that he is essentially an animal to be bribed (behavior modification). He recommends that parents follow biblical models for discipline and instruction so that children will be properly motivated and will become spiritually mature (John Thompson, in Vision Forum, 2003a; track 4). When parents are ever-present, they can be “imitators of our Heavenly Father” (Thompson, in Vision Forum, 2003a; track 3) and preserve “the harvest they’ve worked so hard to gain” (Thompson, in Vision Forum, 2003a; track 4). This means keeping children within eyesight and earshot at most times so they can be trained by observing parental wisdom and guided for physical and moral protection.

R. C. Sproul Jr., at the homeschool conference, described the training that he does with his children. He comments that the word for discipline is “paideia” in Greek, which comes from the same root as the word “culture.” To discipline, he explicates, is to inculcate children with culture. So that popular culture does not get the upper hand, he utilizes what he calls a family liturgy, to train his children about whom they are and what their values are. His liturgy, he shared, goes something like this: Who are you? He asks

them. I'm a Sproul, the child replies. What are Sprouls? he questions. Their answer should include something about Sprouls being free, and that freedom means not getting carried around by corporate America, or advertising, etc... Finally, he asks, whom do Sprouls fear? The children respond: No man, – only God. Commenting on his liturgy, Sproul asserts, "I'm giving them their identity – they don't get to choose that – it's imposed on them." He proclaims that it is his obligation, and that of all fathers, to do this for their children.

Another way to train children is by teaching them focused study and observation. Voddie Bauchum, a speaker at the American Vision conference, commented that he thought bringing children to conferences will have great impact on them: "They will grow by watching us. We are different from the world around them" and they will begin to see that. In his talks at conferences, Doug Phillips engages the children at conferences and events, asking them if they will do their part and come back to these places to see the monuments and historical sites that Christianity and the Christian heritage of the nation is connected to, so they may understand their place in the legacy and the vision.

Within the confines of the family, there are some practices that leaders and families prioritize: learning about authority, dissolving youth culture and embracing family culture, and disconnecting from secular values and lifestyles and replacing them with biblical values. Learning to submit to authority has at its root the lesson to eternally submit to God. The structure of the home is a constant reminder of that, in the hierarchies present in Biblical Patriarchy. Family members have a part in representing and recreating submission to God through their submission to each other in their appropriate roles as father, wife, or children. The father is to be leader of all things in the home in order to

maintain this hierarchy. The wife and the children will see him submitting to God and submitting his own selfish desires to the well-being of the family, which is a reminder for the wife to submit to her husband. Children are admonished that they will be more successful and effective in the world if they submit to their parents; and girls must submit to and follow the lead of their male siblings. One reason for teaching about God's authority is to eradicate rebellion, which is the rejection of God's authority and prioritization of self-will. Thompson explicates a biblical cure for all rebellion, where he also uses the Greek word *paideia*. He defines *paideia* as a consistent and organized training program through structure and various punishments for different levels of sin. If this sort of program is not applied, he advises, a child will become spoiled, immature and foolish of the ways of God (Thompson, in Vision Forum, 2003a; track 4).

One of the ways that children are tempted to be self-willed and foolish is by the influence of peers. Thompson witnesses that he's "seen peer influence steal so many children's hearts from the Lord," and for this reason, he cautions that "we are to put off peer grouping" (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 4). That is, he goes on to explain, "we are not to allow our children or youth to engage in unsupervised or inadequately supervised speech or activities with other children." For many CR families, this means that families recreate amongst themselves or families spend time with other families; but same-aged children are discouraged from grouping off and playing or spending time alone. Phillips (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 1) tells his audience that even in 1935, a poll on children in rural areas in America answered that they would rather spend a night away from home sleeping over at a friend's house than be at home with their own family. This, he

counsels, is a travesty to be worked against. He denounces a world where children would rather spend time with their peers than with their families.

Thompson explains the danger of children spending time only with their peers and not with their parents or family by addressing what he calls the hug-a-pig principle, derived from Haggai 2:13 (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 4).⁸³ His explication of this concept is that defilement can become transferred and that it is erroneous to think that a righteous person ‘hugging a pig’ will make the pig clean. Bad company, that of wrong thinking and behavior, should be avoided. Central to Thompson’s thesis is that even homeschooled children from righteous families are not to be trusted as peers because of the foolishness of youth. Keeping children close is the antidote to one’s children’s corruption through peers. Their company should be their parents.

Thompson cites some “great Christian writers” who attest to this approach, including Richard Baxter, an English Puritan church leader, who in 1673 warned readers to be exceedingly wary of the company with whom you familiarly converse....none are more in danger than the inexperienced. Thompson introduces some teaching from J.C. Ryle, the first Anglican bishop of Liverpool, in his 1844 publication *How Should a Child Be Trained*. He instructs that there is no security for good behavior like having your children under your own eye. Children should go with you to church and sit near you, he recommends. Thompson also mentions Jacob Abbot from the mid- 1800s, who was a pastor and writer of children’s books. Abbot wrote that children should be kept, as much

⁸³ If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, if one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, it shall be unclean.

as possible, by themselves, away from evil influences; separate, or even alone. Thompson claims that you will know when your child is grown and no longer foolish when he decides, on his own accord, that he would rather spend time with and learn from his elders than enjoying his peers. Vision Forum sells an audio recording called *Rebuilding a Culture of Virtuous Boyhood* that instructs parents on the ways to instill virtue in young boys (see Appendix A, Figure 16).

Encouraging family culture through a restructured home, values, and both work and leisure time ensures that the predominant social unit and unit of identity is the family, not adult grouping, peer grouping, or individuals on their own. Voddie Baucham speaks to this concept on an audio recording called *The Centrality of the Home* (see Appendix A, Figure 17). Family time begins to be structured in terms of home schooling, home business, family leisure and recreation and family worship. Family worship means that members have some sort of devotional time together at least a couple times a day. Beyond that, however, many CR families participate in what they call family-integrated worship. This means that either within a church or in a home, families gather together to worship and learn about Scripture. These groups are usually headed by male elders, and according to the National Center for Family-Integrated Churches, work against the age-segregated activities of mainstream churches, their almost secular forms of consumerism and pragmatism, and feminism (www.ncfic.org/FAQ). At CR events, interviewees told me about their family or home churches that followed these principles. These churches, according to one woman, take almost the whole Sunday to spend the day together (M. Briar, personal communication, May 31, 2008). They have a potluck dinner after church and spend the afternoon together, with no separate groups or separation of the ages.

Another person spoke of their church as a group of families that emphasize the importance of home discipling (anonymous, personal communication, October 14, 2007).

An interviewee at the Jamestown event commented that she expected that many of the families at that event participated in family integrated home worship, as her family does (N. Smart, personal communication, June 16, 2007).

For some families, this means not participating in activities outside of the family home. Phil Lancaster, author and Vision Forum speaker (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 6), confides that his children do not engage in activities beyond the home except for music lessons. He reasons that if his children did have other activities, their family life would be utterly dictated by the children's' schedule and he does not believe that is God's calling for his family. They do things together; they depend on the children to help and to work; and they spend time together. He looks to the image of pioneer life by the fire with the family and says that the problem of many families is too much activity and not enough real quality relationships. He believes that families have to say no to the busy life of the humanist mainstream. That, he thinks, is a symptom of arrogance and a desire for self-sufficiency, just like the Tower of Babel in Scripture. The builders of the tower forgot about devotion to God and wanted to build a life for themselves. Their busy lifestyle presented a distraction from their relationship to God and was symptomatic of their brokenness. Instead of turning to God, Lancaster believes, many people involve themselves in a busy life filled with activities. This lifestyle, he thinks, will distract families from their priorities, and should be avoided. Lancaster's opinions are circulated widely among CR families, as he is a speaker on Vision Forum audio DVDs and his book *Family Man, Family Leader*" (2004) is well known among CR families.

Finally, a family's values are often represented by either a dress code or a distinctive pattern of dress. Phillips advises his audience that it is a father's responsibility to establish a dress code in his family (Vision Forum, 2003a; track 7). He tells the story of his wife's decision to only wear dresses and skirts for the purpose of showing modesty to glorify God. He shared that people really noticed a difference and started telling her that she looked like a lady, that she seemed special. He calls this a standard for his home and does not prescribe it for everyone, but says that all men should work through "this problem" for their families. In addition to glorifying God, this practice also physically marks individuals and families as participating in CR's Biblical Patriarchy. Modest dressing (see Appendix A, Figure 18 & 19) demonstrates submission to God and husband rather than the ideal of self-expression and being generally attractive for one's self, other men who are not even one's husband, and even other women.

Those whom I interviewed shared a variety of differing positions about dress, but one consistent element of a dress code for most people I spoke to is that it is almost exclusively concerned with women and girls. The bodies of boys and how they are adorned do not seem to receive as much attention. The one aspect of dress that I saw relating to boys and men was the practice of families wearing outfits that are either similar or identical, marking themselves as part of what Phillips would call a dynasty or clan. Overall, fathers and mothers seemed concerned that their daughters dressed modestly, not showing too much skin or wearing clothing that is too tight and form-fitting. When describing their way of dress and their reasoning for it, many women I spoke to (besides stating that it glorified God) found it desirable to dress in what they called a "feminine" style. There is a whole internet cottage industry of online stores

supplying both clothes and sewing patterns for this purpose.⁸⁴ This clothing and these family policies do seem to serve as both modes of expression and of witnessing one's faith. "Modest" dressing allows women and girls to express themselves, albeit within particular parameters, and also display shared values that might interest and draw the curiosity of outsiders.

The value of the family and of children, according to CR adherents, has been lost in mainstream secular humanist culture. Ann, an interviewee I met at the American Vision conference, compares the complaints of non-believers about children and family to the satisfaction and contentment of CR Christians. She said that nonbelievers just do not understand the blessings of children and family. "They think it's a problem to have children; that it's undoable, chaos... But with God, it's not chaos," she said, "it's order (K. Smith, personal communication, July 7, 2007). These families [at the CR events] are a testament to that." In my observations at the American Vision conference, I saw large families sitting together during talks, young children taking notes and listening attentively, older children taking care of younger children, and families spending time together during breaks and recreation time (without peer grouping). There was no sign of irritation about children's noises during sessions and very little attempt by the adults to 'hush' the children. These were the most 'well-behaved' children I have ever seen. I saw no whining, no crying, no resistance, no protests or temper tantrums. Sometimes a baby cried. I did not see any parent become distressed or frustrated with a child. As for attendees reacting to children that were not their own, they did not ever seem to be

⁸⁴ Dressing for his Glory: www.dressingforhisglory.com/store/swimwear-c-12_3.html; Up Stream Girl www.upstreamgirl.com/about.aspx; Maidens of Worth: <http://maidensofworth.org/2007/08/maidens-for-modesty-values.html>.

bothered by the sounds of the children. The presence and sounds of the children seemed to be an expected element of any gathering. Gary DeMar commented explicitly on the children's behavior, during the American Vision conference, saying that they were so well-behaved and that he was impressed with the loving parenting he was seeing, absent of any cross words or yelling from parents to children.

A similar scene played out at the Vision Forum Jamestown event. Some entire rows were taken up by large families and children sat quietly and listened during the talks. Some families at this event were sitting on the lawn, in earshot of the amplified talks; others walked through the grounds with their children, letting them play. Play did not seem to be contrary to being at a conference listening to speeches. It seemed an integral part of their experience. This seems to resonate with some parents' comments that they are just happy that their children can meet and observe other families who are living like they do. These familial practices were definitely valued at the Reclaiming America conference, the homeschooling conference, the Chalcedon event, and Worldview Weekend. Similar patterns were seen at all of these venues. The family and the way they embody their beliefs is a way to impact culture. Fundamentally, the biblical model of the family is to be a model for the world, to illustrate a commitment and to interest others in it. Paul Jehle, a pastor who spoke at Jamestown, reminded the audience not to idolize their family and to remember that in the end, the family is not just for their own pleasure and satisfaction. It is their way to reach others.

Discussion

It can be seen in the previous sections that the social demands of living out a Biblical Worldview and achieving cultural change and reform generate a whole

succession of discursive phenomena that eventually constitute a “people” of Christian Reconstruction and the contours of their social and political terrain. Following Laclau’s (2005) insistence that a social collective is the result of social demands expressing themselves (and not the converse), it can be said that CR’s social demands of living out a Biblical Worldview and changing the culture through patriarchy and family motivate individuals to create and embrace a political myth (Charland, 1987) (that America was once and should be again a Christian nation) that validates their activities. This myth presents the social demands to be compelling enough to be supported and acted upon and explains why the demands are requisite; why they have not yet been fulfilled; how they can be fulfilled; and who will fulfill them. Charland (1987) claims that “a people” or collective identity comes to be when those identifying with a particular discourse and ideology agree to live within this myth. Different historical narratives (Charland, 1987) are used to substantiate that myth and anchor it to what is perceived as a material reality. The CR political myth dictates why its social demands are necessary according to a particular interpretation of scripture and theology. The historical narratives of Scripture, early Christians, and Pilgrims and Puritans indicate that others knew about and acknowledged this truth long ago, demonstrating its long-abiding nature and an enduring acknowledgement of its significance. Also, Scripture is called upon to clarify that Christians and, for that matter, any group, nation, or civilization, will not thrive if these demands are not met. In fact, they will be cursed or fail, as shown by contemporary ills.

The myth explains how the demands have not yet been fulfilled with a number of different historical narratives. First, Scripture is invoked to tell how since biblical times, it has been difficult for man to live according to God’s law. This challenge in and of itself

has interfered with the proper structuring of society and biblical living that will bring Christ's return to the earth to pass. (Consequently, this narrative sanctifies those who are able to successfully work towards this goal.) In addition to the use of Scripture, other narratives convey different times in history where even the most strong and dedicated followers have faced challenges and barriers to these demands. The early European reformers were discriminated against by the church and society, moved to a different country, and then sailed across the ocean in order to attain their demands.⁸⁵ Many of them died in excruciating circumstances. Their heirs, the Pilgrims and the Puritans, were steadfast for a period of time, but were then muffled by the growing population. The Founding Fathers and early Americans also knew this truth, but were outnumbered by those who did not agree. Subsequently, the changes brought about by the industrial revolution wrought disaster for those who still persisted in the faith.

These tales, grounded in historical events, impart a long-standing knowledge of and effort towards meeting the CR social demands. They engender a sense of martyrdom; of gratitude and debt for those who seek to take up their mission. The stories offer a view towards how the demands can be fulfilled – returning to these ancestors' ideas and ways of life - and using their tenacity for inspiration. The myth communicates who will be the ones to continue with this mission: only those who follow CR. It is revealed that this path is the only way and it is not for the weak or weary. Those who are called will endure hardship, sacrifice, and will have to change their lives significantly. Only a remnant of people, a small number, will take up the challenge. This remnant consists of the spiritual

⁸⁵ Vision Forum produces a 10 DVD series about the Reformers and other revolutionaries: see www.visionforum.com/browse/product/reformers-and-revolutionaries.

heirs of those who came before, those who ‘would not be here if it were not for *them*.’

And they are obliged to take on this task.

CR’s political myth is strengthened not only by historical narratives but through ideographs (McGee, 1980) and visual ideographs (Edwards and Winkler, 1997). CR’s main demands are ideographs themselves: “Biblical Worldview, law and government;” “patriarchy,” and “family” are the most present and powerful driving concepts in CR discourse and they act as ideographic rhetorical fragments that bring this “people” together in solidarity. Though their meanings seem strictly prescribed, men and families are invited to enact them with their own understanding of Scripture, creating an openness in the interpretation of the meanings of the ideographs. The ideographs are symbolized in visual ideographs (Edwards and Winkler, 1997) in the form of images on book covers, on websites, and in scenes at events. Their visibility of these ideographs aids in concretizing them and bolstering their importance (Cloud, 2004). Historical images of patriarchs create a personal connection with those men from the past who chose to live according to the Biblical Worldview and inspire contemporary men to follow in their footsteps (see Appendix A, Figure 20). Current photos of men with their large families illustrate that Biblical Patriarchy is not only historical, but a currently realized ideal. These demands are reinforced by other forms of visibility as well.

Images of patriarchal hierarchy, family and related expected behaviors are displayed on media materials and everyday objects. The ways that bodies move, gesture, and interact instruct on how individuals should compose themselves and relate socially.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Besides seeing girls, women, boys and men interact at events, there is literature that directly instructs on comportment. See the Beautiful Girlhood collection at www.visionforum.com/beautifulgirlhood/ and see Appendix D.

Bodies are adorned with “modest” clothes, clothes that mimic Pilgrims, Puritans and early Americans, or clothes that are identical to announce clanship. These bodies display submission to authority, acceptance of particular gender roles, and an emphasis on family and Godly activity over independence, self-satisfaction and individual pleasure. The emphasis on God's sovereignty in the area of family planning is displayed through large families spending time together, being respectful and loving towards each other, and engaging in family-centered activities. Large families walking around together in public and at events display a model and a guide for patriarchy and family. Hearing about how the leaders of these families have restructured their lives during conference talks provides modeling and motivation.

The performance of self also creates a visual display of CR social demands. For example, if someone was to explain how something in their lives came about, the appropriate language to use is “all glory goes to God” for what I achieved (or I felt “convicted” that God was telling me to do this.) Statements such as “I wouldn't be satisfied if I didn't do X” do not fit within this discourse; they are too self-oriented and do not acknowledge the sovereignty of God. Any one instance or even a few instances of these examples of the display of the ideographs of patriarchy and family would not have a significant impact. What makes these images and displays incredibly powerful is that they are continuously repeated and constantly present, in a variety of different mediums (Burke, 1939; Butler, 1990, 1993). In the midst of the CR community, one is surrounded by these visuals in such an ongoing fashion that they and their contingent narratives become the prevailing social reality (Cloud, 2004). They present an unyielding catechism that offers considerably delimited discourse, political, and social options (Charland,

1987). Though there is some connection to the secular world and its other choices (or even mainstream Christianity), it is very clear what the prescribed options are.

These displays act as empty signifiers so that any adherents' understanding of CR can be projected onto their symbolizations, another way of bringing diverse perspectives and experiences together into a sense of unified understanding and coherence. These rhetorical sites and modes both broadcast an ideology or way of life and function as part of its constitution. Demands are also inscribed upon CR leaders, such as Doug Phillips, Gary DeMar, and their wives and children, who display CR demands and discourse. The leaders can act as empty signifiers for any sort of undifferentiated demand a group or individual might have, as they fit their desires and wills to conform to what the leader is displaying. The leaders, in these transactions, seem to satisfy and direct those demands.

Despite the seemingly rigid meanings prescribed in CR images, Laclau (2005) theorizes about the level of openness that also must exist for a social collective to be maintained. According to Laclau's framework, two rhetorical moves must be accomplished for a collective to be constituted: both an equivalential chain and an antagonistic frontier must be established. Both of these require a balance of both open and closed meanings. At this time, I will address the equivalential chain and the antagonistic frontier will be discussed towards the end of this analysis. Laclau writes that many differing social demands are expressed within a discourse. They become linked through their differences and yet begin to take an appearance and meaning of equivalence. When very undifferentiated, this link of demands offers a "vague solidarity." Within CR discourse, social demands are presented that might not necessarily or inherently relate. There are themes of living under a Biblical Worldview/under God's

authority, taking dominion, living under patriarchy, and an emphasis on family government and a rejection of government interference in private lives and economies; economic independence and the father 'returning home' for work; large families and the rejection of birth control as a strategy for proliferation over the land; cultural change, long-range vision and the importance of taking personal responsibility; bringing the family home and embracing homeschooling; postmillennialism and the idea that God will return to the earth once there is a Christian nation; a multitude of conservative policy issues, such as anti-abortion, an anti-hate speech bill, anti-welfare, etc.; and the idea that they are in a spiritual war and that war must be fought keenly and strategically.

These demands are not necessarily inherent to this particular community, and many of them are shared by other worldviews and collectives. For example, many liberal Christian congregations uphold the idea that they are living a Christian worldview. Other faiths or atheists might prefer to live a patriarchal life, just as they might agree with the notions of small government, personal responsibility, or conservative policy issues. Even among a community of people such as those who follow Christian Reconstruction, many of its adherents are linked by similar goals and values but have very different socioeconomic statuses, education, geographical locations, or familial circumstances. How they all relate to CR demands is differentially figured. Leaders and adherents participate in advancing these demands and constructing their equivalence, by establishing a logical link between them by way of their political myth, historical narratives (Charland, 1987), and both normative and spontaneous grammars (Gramsci, 1971). This logic is produced and re-produced in its repetition and circulation in everyday conversation, conference talks, and media materials; by the depiction of patriarchy,

family and Godly man and womanhood in images and the scenes at the conferences; in the display of bodies and how they are grouped together as families, adorned with modest clothing or identical dress. These meanings derive cohesion, induce a sense of well-being and solidarity; and are linked with positive affect and deep commitment. The signification of these demands is open enough so that a variety of differing people with differing circumstances and stances can identify with them in their own ways. In the act of identification, they can find more meaning in creating particularity with others than in establishing their differences. This chain of equivalence and this “people” that is produced out of identifying with its demands are constituted through a process of the symbolization and inscription of those demands onto various symbolic and material forms in both civil society (Gramsci, 1971) and in the private realm.

Together, CR demands, their political myth, its historical narratives, and their symbolization come together into a “stable system of signification” (Laclau, 2005) which can be considered a language or a rhetoric. Laclau sees collective identities as made up of this “generalized rhetoric,” which he also calls hegemony. To Gramsci, (Ives, 2004a, 2004b) this is a “grammar” and it is Charland’s (1987) constitutive rhetoric. I will refer to it, in this case, as CR discourse. This discourse takes the form of language, actions and logic that both provide direction and explanation for CR adherents and in their use, act as linguistic material that is in and of itself constitutive of the CR collective. Certain words, phrases, actions, and displays are grouped around the demands of patriarchy and family (see Appendix B) and though they are employed with some variance, they performatively present a strong uniformity. Comments about patriarchy are projected at events and conferences or on audio recordings or in books by leaders. They are also pronounced by

adherents in their everyday talk and displays of self (women stating that their husbands are the ultimate decision-makers; or that they must submit to the will of their fathers; or men stating that they must take responsibility for leadership and they cannot let that fall to their wives). It is implicit as a guiding logic in observed actions, such as interviewees wondering why I was traveling to events without my husband (suggesting I had a will and direction apart from him); or when male speakers at events asked their wives to stand up and receive recognition (sometimes referring to her as his helper, demonstrating that her job is to support him). This logic is also symbolized and implied in the CR dress code and is indicated in the face of its breach (I received noteworthy looks when I wore a skirt above my knee to events before I knew better.)

The articulation of these demands begins to constitute a 'broader social subjectivity' (Laclau, 2005) for CR, which is similar to Gramsci's (1971) "national-popular collective will," out of which options for thinking, acting, and feeling are provided. It becomes desirable, for example, to embrace the risk and uncertainty that accompanies starting a home business because it is coupled with the blessing of returning home, being able to shepherd one's children, and the righteous act of patriarchal leadership and following Biblical law. Social habits are created around the ideal of 'returning home,' such as detaching from outside activities and events and focusing more on the home. Relations between husband and wife, parents and children, and between children, are shaped both by the ideals of family and of patriarchy. Men's groups, worship with other families, conferences, and a distancing from secular humanist culture provide accountability and reinforcement for these practices.

A particular identity is acquired, varying for men, women and boys and girls. Much CR literature is available for study and training on this topic, providing prescriptions and admonitions about biblically-based gender-specific roles. This translates into family practices, how the day is structured, and how individuals are expected to talk to and relate to one another and to the topics of the day. Additionally, the CR identity translates into whole institutions, such as family-integrated worship, the family itself and how it is structured, and its sub-institutions such as courtship, daughters returning home, or homeschooling. A popular identity (Laclau, 2005) has arisen out of the circulation and representation of these demands and their influence. It is clear that there are families within the CR collective who are more well-known because of the books, movies, or activities they have produced and sponsored. Some of them, such as the female producers of the “The Return of the Daughters” DVD (2008) are asked for autographs at conferences and events. These families or individual women or men have been given a certain kind of celebrity and ‘stand for’ the CR popular identity and symbolize the manifestation of the demands and how that is possible for all adherents. They are empty signifiers onto which other individuals and families can place meaning, find affiliation, and gain hope for their future attainment of social demands.

The articulation of the chain of equivalence and the hegemonic language that it constructs leads to the creation of antagonistic frontiers, the second rhetorical accomplishment required for a collective identity to be established (Laclau, 2005). There are many different areas where CR adherents contrast themselves to an ‘other.’ The main entity with whom an antagonism exists is that of the secular humanist mainstream. Its values of materialism, feminism, ‘Godlessness,’ the destruction of the family and the

celebration of the individual and of youth; of the quest for entertainment and personal pleasure, are a constant point of comparison in CR discourse. Giving in to and assimilating into the secular humanist culture, it is said, has been the downfall of Christianity, a nation of Christendom, and individual Christians everywhere. Alignment with early European Christians who were also discriminated against, the Pilgrims, and the Founding Fathers, works to bolster this antagonistic frontier. There are sub-frontiers that together support the greater antagonistic frontier, such as the criteria for godly men and godly women versus the weak and selfish secular male and the worldly woman who puts herself before her children and her family. A godly man has a full quiver (or large family); he prioritizes family (and puts his heart towards his children) and God; he is a leader, and he follows a biblical program. He does not allow feminism or humanism or pop psychology to lead his family. As mentioned earlier, one interviewee began seeing the difference between a more “worldly” woman and a godly woman and began to change toward the latter (B. Thompson, personal communication, April 11, 2008).

As might be expected, Christian Reconstruction sets up an antagonistic frontier with other religions or non-religious groups, especially Islam and atheists. Those from these groups are called “heathenists,” “pagans,” and “non-believers” and adherents are cautioned not to be too close to them. At the Worldview Weekend event, Arabic Muslims and Indian yoga practitioners were depicted in a slideshow that displayed what might be considered raw and vulgar expressions. The Arabic Muslims were only portrayed as terrorists: they were pictured in a stereotypical pose with masks on, holding someone captive. One slide of a yoga practitioner highlighted very dark skin, scarring tattoos, long, unkempt hair, and a contorted pose. Jason Carlson, who showed this slide, referred to the

poverty, neglect of humanity, and paganism 'there' (in India) with disgust, paternalism and pity.⁸⁷ Carlson proclaimed that India's lack of development, its poverty, and its depravity are a result of its allegiance to Hinduism and other religions more so than Christianity. Both of these examples (the depictions of the Arabic Muslims as terrorists and the yoga practitioner as vulgar or somewhat animalistic and base) can be described as 'Orientalist' (Said, 1978) and racist. They are Orientalist in the way that they negatively portray and judge religious, ethnic and geographic Others with limited information and the systematic way in which these judgments are made regarding ethnic Others is racist. Both atheists and other active religions are looked to as the enemy that must be engaged with warfare in order to win the spiritual war. In the Worldview Weekend conference, a whole talk by David Barton of Wallbuilders was dedicated to the history of "this Muslim Anti-American thing," which he alleges has existed since the late 1700's. Perhaps not surprisingly, it is other (non-CR) Christians who often receive the most negative rhetoric from Reconstructionists. Claiming to be a believer but not following the Biblical Worldview (as CR understands it) is perhaps the worst sin, as it weakens the strength and ranks of Christianity.

Through these antagonisms, a frontier is set up between the Reconstructionists and their opposing entities, which assists in their self-definition and constitution. The system of signification, or hegemonic rhetoric, that forms this frontier works at every level of sociality to constitute a people that, without these rhetorical moves and practices, would not exist. It is in the cooperation between the strategic and intentional acts of leadership (or normative grammar, Gramsci as cited in Ives 2004a, 2004b) and the

⁸⁷ A very similar tone and harsh humor is taken when referring to American secularists or mainstream Christians.

idiosyncratic active uptake and participation of adherents (spontaneous grammar, Gramsci, as cited in Ives, 2004a, 2004b) that this hegemonic discourse shapes and gives rise to a collective of people. This discursive existence, according to Laclau, depends on a delicate balance between openness and particularism, because if its meanings were allowed to be too open, it would fall towards heterogeneity and not have the material to create cohesion. Yet if the discourse veers too close to homogeneity, there would not be enough space for the diversity of the collective's demands and members. Participants are constantly engaging in creative acts in order to maintain this balance.

Gramsci believed that a formation of a "people" could not occur or would not be effective if it was directed in a top-down fashion. Coercion alone would result in an imposed language and way of being that would not be naturally embraced. He asserted that a hegemonic dynamic must be produced within a balance of coercion and consent so that if taken up, a new language and way of life would appear natural and normal. CR leaders and organizations do appear to stand at the head of CR discourse. But it could be argued that, in sheer numbers, it is 'the people' who give it its full force. They devour the books and media, share it with others, organize their family and business structures around it, and create and circulate media and commentary that promulgate CR ideology and practices. One conundrum is that I repeatedly met and heard about women who drew their husbands and families into this patriarchal system. It was their wish to enter a worldview that would have them submit themselves to God, husband, and God's family planning. E. Stephen Burnett, a pastor, shared in a blog post that he and his wife began to see this pattern (that it is women who seem to "lead" the CR movement) and identified it as "re-routed feminism" (www.quiveringdaughters.com/2011/02/bill-gothard-and-

patriarchy-re-routed.html). They saw that most of the websites and blogs and books that were devoted to patriarchy and rearing daughters for submission were written by women and began to ask themselves these questions: “is this movement really about submission?” and “is this “patriarchy” primarily a female-led movement?”

Burnett and his wife began to realize that it is sometimes taught that Jesus said that ‘the greatest among you is the servant.’ They believe that the movement is run by passive-aggressive women who are leading their families in a contest to see who can most successfully submit. Certainly there are many reasons for participation in this hegemony, among them seeking order in contrast to a non-religious upbringing or a religious upbringing that was deemed too lackadaisical. Whatever the reason, contemplation of this lifestyle inevitably leads to the question of how it will impact the identities of the children involved. Will they maintain this as they grow into their own adulthood? Will they reject it and take a place at the other end of this religious pendulum? Or do they find a more nuanced spirituality for themselves. There is evidence that this last statement is true for many women who have left patriarchy behind. There is a burgeoning list of books written by these women, detailing their family stories, to warn others and comfort those who are confused and hurt by their parents’ abuse of patriarchal ideology (McFarland, 2010).⁸⁸ This is compelling evidence of the openness in the process

⁸⁸ Also, Vyckie Garrison's blog is "No longer quivering" (<http://nolongerquivering.com>). She writes of her own experience in an abusive patriarchal relationship and features similar stories of other women. She is working on a book about her experience and she lists several other blogs by women in comparable situations. Meg Mosley (<http://megmoseley.com/>) has written a novel about a woman's experience in a patriarchal family, *When Sparrows Fall*. Robin Sampson at Heartofwisdom.com tells her story since leaving her patriarchal husband and features links to resources relating to leaving "patriocentric" husbands.

of identity construction and interpellation: that individuals are not wholly restricted in their choices and can choose change above all.

The “people” of CR are invested in a “war of position” (Gramsci, 1971). On the face of it, this collective identifies itself as a subaltern group that is suffering from its oppression by a secular humanist mainstream. They must, to align with the political myth about returning America to its Christian roots, and to free themselves from that hegemony, engage in long term symbolic and linguistic warfare that will eventually bring the country to Christendom. CR is both externally and internally engaged in hegemony, however. In addition to attempting to create a Christian hegemony within the nation (and eventually the world), there is an internal hegemony that involves submission to and participation in CR ideology and practice. For this historical bloc to continue, both hegemonies must be reproduced and maintained.

Charland’s (1987) theory requires that a “people” will only be successfully constituted if three ideological effects occur: the creation of a collective subject, the construction of a transhistorical subject, and the illusion of freedom involved in the constitution of this subject. These effects are well-documented in this account of the CR social collective. Charland explains that a constituted subject in a narrative is given a history, motives and a telos, which is strongly present in CR discourse, and that they will come together to be identified as a community, as consubstantial. Though there is little recognition of the CR community in mainstream society, the voices in this movement recognize each other as a “people.” CR narratives abound with references to their theological and ideological ancestry, and simultaneously, they commit themselves to a multi-generational presence in the future, giving them a transhistorical persona. The

effect of the illusion of freedom in the constitution of this subject is not lost on the CR adherent. The families I met ‘freely’ entered into their relationship with CR. Yet from their standpoint, they know better than to naively embrace the liberal humanist notion of freedom. Whereas the liberal humanist conducts life doing as he or she pleases, the CR adherent finds “freedom” in his wholehearted submission to God and all that He requires.

CHAPTER 6

CONSTITUTING THE CHRISTIAN AMERICAN PATRIOT

In 2008, the American Vision catalog had a full-cover depiction of three Pilgrim children looking out towards the horizon (see Appendix A, Figure 9). The caption, which is taken from Proverbs 29:18, reads “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” The verse continues, “but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” This seemingly simple cover is an exemplary instance of how CR discourse articulates the biblical view with historical narrative, and how CR provides biblical justification for maintaining a particular perspective on the significance of history and how it connects with the CR way of life. Whereas the former chapter focused on CR Christian identity, this chapter will concentrate on CR conceptualizations of American identity.⁸⁹

One of the primary social demands of CR is to return America to its Christian roots. This demand is always articulated with a sense of American patriotism, such that “returning” America to Christendom would be the act of a patriot. More specifically, it seems that a “good” CR Christian is always a patriot and one cannot be a good patriot unless he is a Christian. In order to return the nation to a people of good Christian patriots, the remnant must re-tell its historical narratives and re-educate the people in order to re-build once again. This demand motivates the telling of historical narratives about America’s origin and how this “people” is connected to those stories. In the process of telling these stories, enacting their importance, and connecting with them personally, a CR Christian patriot identity is constituted (Charland, 1987).

⁸⁹ This conceptualization of Americanness is inherently a part of CR Christian identity; I have addressed it separately in this chapter to be able to address it in more depth.

Liberty or Death

The CR demand to acknowledge America's Christian foundation and return to those roots is backed up by alleged institutional evidence of America's Christian-based government. This is made clear by John W. Whitehead,⁹⁰ in the foreword written for Gary DeMar's (1990) book *God and Government*. He alleges that America, its laws, policies, and conventions are undergirded by a biblical foundation, and that this country has succeeded (at least until fairly recently) because of that foundation. According to Whitehead, the commitment of the early Americans to dedicate themselves to a Godly and biblical lifestyle was the only reason for the liberty that America enjoyed, and that biblical foundation is "essential for future liberty." Following CR logic, if that foundation is not honored and lived out, then America and those living there will not have a free life, or in other words, will suffer and face death. This is based on a very distinct CR understanding of the terms "liberty" and "freedom." Liberty, from this perspective, is the freedom to obey God and the freedom (from sin and of everlasting life) one receives and experiences under that authority. The origin of this philosophy is explained by Doug Phillips at a ceremony in Jamestown. He says, "How did America come up with this idea of freedom?" The answer was that in Jamestown in 1607, the new settlers erected a wooden cross when they landed and thanked God for their freedom to worship God as they believed, without cultural or governmental persecution.

⁹⁰ J. W. Whitehead is a conservative constitutional attorney who founded the Rutherford Institute. The institute is a civil liberties advocacy group that focuses on religious and free speech issues. Their board of directors has included Rushdoony of the Chalcedon Foundation, Howard Ahmanson, Jr., a California millionaire and funder of conservative politics and fundamentalist Francis Schaeffer.

When asked what religious liberty or freedom means, interviewees stated the “freedom to worship the triune God with liberty of conscience”; and the “freedom of speech, thought, and conscience” (R. Booker, personal communication, June 18, 2008). It means being free to worship the one, true God...of the Bible...” (A. Smith, personal communication, July 7, 2007); or, as Jonathan sees it, liberty is

The ability to apply our Christianity to all areas of life. Even if we are in political office or have a government job...we should not be hindered in bringing our religious beliefs to bear upon our actions, attitudes or speech...Religious liberty was intended (in the historical writings of our founding) to give freedom to worship the God of the Bible as your conscious dictated. (J. Ziegler, personal communication, October 24, 2007)

Paul Jehle, President of the Plymouth Rock Foundation spoke at Jamestown and referred to the liberty to worship God according to one’s conscience, where no bishop or bureaucracy or common book of prayer could tell anyone how to pray or worship. On a corporate level,⁹¹ the liberty of the people extends to a nation only if its people remain committed to the Christian God and form of worship. David, an interviewee, explained that “only in a nation that adheres to a philosophy of government that presupposes the Creator, can there be liberty” (D. Carter, personal communication, April 23, 2008). Jehle, speaking at Jamestown, also states that God is the source of human rights, so the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, and any other rights extended in America have been conferred by the Creator. If the citizens do not believe in this God or live accordingly, then these rights and related freedoms dissolve. The extrapolation of this, which I did hear from some speakers and interviewees, is that other nations do not have

⁹¹ As in the prior chapter, the word “corporate” here means group as opposed to individual.

liberty, do not have rights as conferred by the Christian God; and are operating, in so many words, without legitimacy.

Those I spoke to were quick to explain that liberty does not mean the freedom to do whatever one wants. Liberty, Roy said, is the freedom that comes out of doing what God has called one to do (R. Booker, personal communication, June 18, 2008). Herb Titus (a constitutional lawyer, former professor of law and Dean of the law school at Regent University), when speaking at the American Vision conference, instructed that the “word liberty is not the word license.” Some of the interviewees had more of an open definition, such as the freedom to choose how to worship and express yourself spiritually...or the ability to worship as you please without harming your neighbor. The concept of liberty was demonstrated in various ways in CR discourse. Phillips, in a talk in his “Building a Family That Will Stand” conference shared that he and his wife named their daughter Liberty as a reminder of biblical liberty and said that many “colonial fathers used that name for their daughters in appreciation for the newfound political freedoms that they had.” At the opening of the American Vision conference, there was a very solemn ceremony where an exact replica of the Liberty Bell was rung at the opening of the conference. Joseph Morecraft, a speaker at the Chalcedon conference, recommended a book for study on the Puritans and liberty.⁹² This understanding of liberty is strongly tied to the presumption that America was founded and blessed by God so that people could freely live out Christianity in this nation without restriction. This understanding of liberty provides the reasoning for the urgency to return the land to its alleged Christian origins (if it is not, the nation will fail). Historical narratives help to

⁹² The title of this book was unclear.

build this logic rhetorically, justify the goal of a 'return' to that original land, and create solidarity with the early pioneers of this Christian America.

When asked directly whether religious freedom and liberty applied to people of other religions, some were very clear that this is a freedom only for Christians. Throughout CR discourse (in talks, materials, and in conversation), it is noted that the original intent for the idea of religious freedom was to protect Christians from being restricted in how they could worship; the origin of this idea, in other words, was to prevent one Christian denomination from having dominance over others – but all the denominations were always presupposed to be Christian. Some stated that it is fine for other religions to practice their beliefs, but that they should not impose their practices upon others. Harriet and Mildred spoke of Muslims coming to America, and said that these people should not impose their religion upon America, because America is not an Islamic nation (H. Robinson & M. Briar, personal communication, May 31, 2007). When asked if non-Christian people could be (elected) leaders in America, Roy, referring to Muslims, said that it might not be possible for “them” to lead because “these people do not understand the foundations of our nation...its freedom comes from a Christian ethic.” (R. Booker, personal communication, June 18, 2008). Others seemed to echo this sentiment, that legislators probably could not be non-Christians because their ethics and choices would not be based on (Christian) truth and the guidance of the sovereign God. Harriet and Mildred presented the idea that complications arising from the presence of other religions in America have appeared only fairly recently. They explained that the idea of religious diversity was working for a while, but more and more Islamic people came into the nation. They began to receive freedoms and Christians ended up being

persecuted and discriminated against because of society's move toward openness and tolerance. The openness backfired, they explained, and worked against Christians and their right to claim America as Christian.⁹³

Many of the interviewees gave voice to a paradox: that religious freedom should be for all religions, but that the majority religion and the government should operate on Christian/biblical principles (C. Washburn, personal communication, May 31, 2007; M. Briar & H. Robinson, personal communication, May 31, 2007; K. & T. Martin, personal communication, May 31, 2007; M. & B. Thompson, personal communication, April 11, 2008; A. Clark, personal communication, April 2, 2008, to name a few). For these respondents, it was fine for others to worship as they would like in private, but ultimately, the true religion that must guide society is Christianity. Ann stated that though all people can have religious liberty, "not all religions are equally valid and true" (A. Smith, personal communication, July 7, 2007). Part of this line of reasoning is that Christianity should not be forced on anyone,⁹⁴ but Christians should work to illustrate to non-believers that Christianity is the one true religion. Once they accept this truth, these new believers will agree that Christianity should be the national religion and the religion of America's government and leaders. According to interviewees and CR speakers, the liberty that Christianity provides and did provide for early America no longer "covers" a

⁹³ We did not discuss examples of discrimination, but these came up often during my research. Incidents spoken about include individuals being asked not to display or talk about religion at the workplace; schools not allowing prayer or Bible study; universities not funding religious clubs; Christian icons and monuments being taken down (such as the cross in San Diego and state images of the Ten Commandments in courtrooms).

⁹⁴ There seems to be an assumption that no government should force religion institutionally, through laws. However, there is great interest in the sharing of one's faith and its defense through performatives, argumentation and debate.

nation of unbelievers.⁹⁵ Returning to a state of Christian liberty, then, is necessary for the freedom of families and for the American nation.

The work of returning to the state of Christian liberty is understood as a battle. Gary Cass at the American Vision conference, exhorts that we must “be on the offense” to protect our freedoms. You must see the First Amendment, he charges, as given to you as part of a duty to defend the freedoms of the next generation. According to Doug Phillips, each individual must choose their place in this battle. He challenges his listeners to consider whether they will, “... live as a free man or a slave?” (Vision Forum 2003, track 6). This type of dichotomy may seem familiar, as it has been made famous in Patrick Henry’s “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death” speech. At the Jamestown event, Henry’s speech was re-enacted by a man in full costume. He spoke very personally to the audience, as if he was confiding in them about his convictions. Henry’s speech is known to be arguing for Virginia to join the Revolutionary War against the tyranny of Britain. In Jamestown, the Patrick Henry speaking to the crowd spoke of a tyranny against the right to practice religion as one believed; that he would rather die than not have that kind of liberty. His audience consisted mainly of families who want to tell their children the stories of history, complete with Christian narratives, so they can understand their place in the battle. The Patrick Henry at Jamestown finished his speech with these words: “I hope this [his famous phrase] is used as a battle cry, as there is no other option for Americans, nor for Christians.” Henry’s re-enactment is an example of one of the methods of this battle: an educational campaign.

⁹⁵ “Covers” here, means includes, protects, provides for; included in God’s grace.

Re-Learning History: The Fight against Revisionism

The year 2007 marked the four hundredth anniversary of the founding of Jamestown. The state of Virginia held several large commemoration events during the year leading up to the anniversary date. In contrast to commentary that Jamestown as a settlement was a failure (Cotter, 1998; D'Alto, 2011), the state of Virginia sponsored events focused on how its settlement was a catalyst for “a series of cultural encounters that helped shape the nation and the world” (www.historyisfun.org/Americas-400th-Anniversary.htm). Events explored innovations originating at the settlement and celebrated its diversity, as it was said to bring together Anglo-Americans, Africans, and American Indians. Some Virginian Native Americans did not attend the event, because for them and their ancestors, the landing at Jamestown signified the beginning of the demise of their people and heritage.⁹⁶ Other critics, such as some black and Native American members of the planning committee required that the events be called a “commemoration” rather than a “celebration” because of the implications of the invasion (Vision Forum, 2009j). Some of the exhibits referred to human bondage and Indian displacement (Joyce, 2007). This critical interpretation of Jamestown prompted a strong reaction from Doug Phillips and Vision Forum. Their official stance was that “For two hundred years, Americans have recognized the importance of commemorating the providential goodness of the Lord through our nation’s birth at Jamestown. But for America’s 400th birthday, what should be a celebration of gratitude to the Lord is fast becoming an homage to revisionist historiography and political correctness” (Vision Forum, 2009j). As an alternative to the official state functions that did not properly

⁹⁶ See press release at <http://www.assatashakur.org/forum/rbg-street-scholars-think-tank/22947-jamestown-va-400th-anniversary-genocide-immediate-release.html>.

acknowledge Virginia's Christian history, Vision Forum planned a week-long celebration of their own: a celebration of God's providence in the settlement and the founding of America.

This action by Vision Forum is characteristic of CR's attempts to counter what they call "revisionism," a term that is defined as the re-writing of history that has erased God's and Christianity's place in it. It labels a practice of secular humanists in mainstream society.⁹⁷ This revisionism involves a portrayal of America's founding that emphasizes industry and capitalism, ignores the spiritual designs of the founding and development of the country, and paints the Founding Fathers as primarily Deist rather than committed Christians. Many CR materials and activities are dedicated to an alleged 'correction' of history. Like Gramsci's "war of position," adherents and leaders uphold a plan to teach these 'corrected' stories to their children and children's children so that ultimately, the land will be covered with "a people" who will dedicate themselves to the re-establishment of America as a Christian nation.

Interviewees express anger about revisionism and insist that it must be corrected. Cheryl explained that she never used to pay attention to history until she realized it was "*HIS-tory*" (His story), which means it is about "how God interacted with us and his creation over time" (C. Washburn, personal communication, May 31, 2007). Watching God's providence through history, she said, builds your faith; and "knowing your past is

⁹⁷ The CR community does not see themselves as practicing "revisionism." Rather, they are *correcting* the revisionism of others by re-telling the "correct" versions of history. This practice is often included under the umbrella term "unschooling." Whereas that term is sometimes used in liberal circles to refer to the throwing off of institutional structures in order to express individuality and creativity, it is use within CR discourse to describe 'unlearning' secular humanist versions of history, ontology and epistemology in order to re-learn them from a CR Christian standpoint.

knowing how your future can be.” Another interviewee emphasized that it is important to understand the connection of Christian values with U.S. history because “the connection has been systematically and purposely hidden from our generations” (J. Ziegler, personal communication, October 24, 2007). Changing history, Ziegler continues, can lead to the enslavement of a whole people because they do not understand where they have come from and cannot appreciate “the benefits or consequences of the ideas that built a nation.” Phillips, speaking at a ceremony in Jamestown to dedicate a monument to children, stated that today, “we face an enemy intent on mocking” and because of that, “we must tell our children the stories” and “place landmarks before their eyes.” He claimed that “it is our job, our God-given right to stand up against these people [who want to ‘change’ history] and we will never allow Him to be thrown from our public square.” The effect of revisionism, claims the narrator from “*America’s Christian History: The Untold Story*,” an audio DVD produced by American Vision, is that as a people and as a nation, we have “forgotten,” “lost sight of” the truth; and lost our memory. Paul Jehle, of Plymouth Rock Foundation, warned that Americans are “forgetting their roots.” What is at stake is that losing sight of this history threatens America’s liberty (and the prospect of taking dominion so that Christ will return). What is to be done is to break down the stories of revisionism; run interference with invalid and incorrect sources of knowledge; rebuild the Christian republic and memory; and re-educate on America’s Christian heritage and its Godly providence.

It is common to hear CR leaders or adherents talk about how they have had to ‘unlearn’ the secular humanist perspective that they learned in ‘government schools,’ from their peers, or from unknowing parents. The Thompsons mentioned this in their

interview, noting all of the re-learning that they are doing, having realized the bias of their upbringing and schooling. Organizations such as American Vision and Wallbuilders lament that American history and values have been taught without their Christian component and their missions are devoted to correcting this. At Jamestown, the speakers repeatedly referred to the importance of breaking down the accepted stories of history in contemporary America and starting to tell ‘the truth’ again. Some of the methods that are embraced for doing this are attending conferences, reading literature and watching DVD’s produced by CR organizations, homeschooling with Christian heritage curriculum, and traveling to and touring historical locations with children, making sure to teach them the Christian history of that region. Running interference with any entity that does not provide this type of education is another approach. This might involve not sending one’s children to secular public schools (and homeschooling instead), carefully screening or boycotting movies or news stories or any research sources that do not accurately depict Christian history; and choosing novels and historical literature written by Christian authors of Calvinist orientation.⁹⁸

The goal to re-educate goes a long way in driving and supporting the majority of CR organizations. Five main organizations associated with CR have missions and activities devoted to the study of history in order to inform about America’s Christian heritage and motivate activities toward restoration and reformation. Vision Forum’s mission includes “teaching history as the providence of God” as one of its central goals (Vision Forum, 2009f). A part of their mission is to preserve the covenant with God through multi-generational faithfulness, which upholds the idea that it is through the

⁹⁸ Novels that are not overtly Christian but convey conservative and patriarchal values seem to be accepted.

historical activities of families that a culture is transformed. A page on Vision Forum's website entitled "God's Hand in History" (Vision Forum, 2009g) is dedicated to the recounting of God's providence in history, exhorting that it is "our duty to study history" in order to know how God has interceded in time through families and nations. It is stated that seeking out these stories and regaling youth with them is a requirement, so that future generations might persevere.

American Vision's mission involves making disciples of all nations and teaching them to obey and apply the Bible to all of life (American Vision, 2009). One method laid out for this purpose is the study of history "where the providential hand of God can be seen as working to expand the church and reach all nations." By studying history, American Vision attests that the mistakes of the past can be avoided in the future. The Chalcedon Foundation vision is committed to recovering the intellectual foundations and restoring and reestablishing Christian civilizations through education and self-study. Their website asserts that their goal is not to merely reproduce "a glorious Christian past" but to work to "press the claims of historic Christianity as the biblical pattern of life everywhere" (Chalcedon, 2009). Similarly, Wallbuilders' mission is "presenting America's forgotten history and heroes with an emphasis on our moral, religious and constitutional heritage" (Wallbuilders, 2009). It aims to "educate the public concerning the periods in our country's history when its laws and policies were firmly rooted in biblical principles." A Wallbuilders speaker at the Coral Ridge Conference in 2007 introduced his talk by saying that "we need to know where we came from in order to know what we're about." Coral Ridge Ministries does not explicitly address history in its mission, but many of the materials found in its online store (<http://store.coralridge.org>)

are designed to educate readers about America's Godly and Christian heritage (Barton, 1992) so that their followers may be motivated to advocate for its return. Many other organizations whose missions are to educate people on Christian heritage speak at the conferences of these five organizations and most of them have their own online multimedia stores.

The speakers at CR events and conferences often noted the importance of working against "revisionist" history. At the Chalcedon conference, the introductory presenter claimed that there is a growing intolerance for Christianity, and one way that is seen is that [Christian] "history is repudiated and maligned through systems of false representation." Jonathan Falwell, the son of the late Jerry Falwell came to Jamestown to deliver the speech that Falwell was supposed to give (he died unexpectedly earlier that month). He pointed out that "our nation is in trouble... [it is] trying to erase all references to God." He pointed to examples of lobbies advocating the removal of the phrase "one nation under God" from the pledge of allegiance; "In God we trust" from currency; and the Ten Commandments from the Supreme Court painting. Falwell claimed that God's word is all over the federal buildings, all throughout the Capitol; and they're trying to erase it because "there are many out there who want to change the history." At Jamestown, Doug Phillips spoke of "exploding the myths of historiography" because you need to know your heritage to know where you came from. He decries the changing of monuments and stories in order to be more politically correct. For example, he told the audience of a monument to the explorer John Smith that is on Star Island in New Hampshire. It had originally depicted him celebrating his decapitation of three Muslim warriors in battle. This monument, Phillips explained, showed young men what it means

to be a man. And it was taken down because it was not politically correct. Another “mythology” of Jamestown, he recounts, was that the natives were peaceful and it was the Christians who raped the land, slaughtered the natives and came for the money they could make. This mistake, he proclaimed, must be corrected, since the Christians came for the Great Commission (to spread the Gospel). We need to tell these stories, Phillips urged, and see God working through the events. He asked the audience: “should we be about the business of teaching history? Yes, we should,” he answered for them. History, he explains, tells the trajectory of our collective lives over time. The Jamestown poet laureate, Rebecca Belcher Morecraft, put these sentiments about revisionism into verse. Her poem reads,

We gather here to celebrate a true vision of the past: not reconstructed
lore...remember God’s providence, my Lord – remember and hold it
dear...God trained his hand for battle and the wicked lies the other tell,
they are wicked and meaningless prattle...remember God’s providence
towards children, remember and persevere!

Media materials from the stores of CR organizations both repeat and add detail on the topics of the importance of re-learning history. The Chalcedon Foundation sells materials on the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians and the early European reformers, and a CD set that details events up to 1865 about American history.⁹⁹ These materials are based on Rushdoony’s theology and philosophy, showing the Christian motives and events within this historical time. Its advertisement states that “there can be no understanding of American history without an understanding of the ideas which undergirded its founding and growth.” The American Vision online store has a category of items in “History,” and

⁹⁹ According to Rushdoony, 1865 “marked the beginning of the secular attempts to rewrite history;” see (<http://chalcedon.edu/store/American+History+%26+the+Constitution/American-history-to-1865-cd-set/>).

a sub-category of “American History.” This page includes several different books, DVD’s and audio CD’s on Christian heritage, government, the First Amendment and the limits of civil government (including a book by Glenn Beck). Their “History” page on the website lists articles that cover interpretations of history through a Christian Reformed perspective. DeMar produces videos under the title “History Unwrapped,” which delivers history lessons in 60 second videos. They are available on YouTube (www.youtube.com/user/historyunwrapped).

The home page for visionforum.com has an image on it of a “bluecoat” whispering a story into the ears of two little boys, displaying the significance of learning from the past. Their “Books & Media” page (<http://www.visionforum.com/booksandmedia/>) lists six things the catalog is designed to do. Number five on this list is to “Build gratitude for the providence of God in our great history.” On this page, there is a link to their “Heroes and Histories” page, depicting Pilgrims sailing a ship. Here, many products on history are listed, including the Scottish and other European reformers, an all-inclusive ‘history of the Reformation,’ the history of western civilization and of the United States, a book on the liberty that various landmarks represent, another about the freedom established in Philadelphia, and many more. These internet platforms position CR organizations to authoritatively tell historical narratives with Christian and dominionist themes. As Lancioni (1996) learned in her study of civil war photographs, the medium allows creators to frame historical data according to how they would like it to be interpreted. When observers believe they are viewing “documentary” information, they expect they are receiving a factual account.

Additionally, CR adherents are more likely to trust these accounts than anything they might encounter from the secular humanist mainstream.

Many interviewees commented that they purchase and read these materials with their family as a way of teaching them about Christian heritage. At the Coral Ridge Ministries bookstore, their bestsellers were the book *Pilgrim's Progress*, and many stories about the Reformation. At the "Reclaiming America for Christ" conference, they were showcasing books on Calvinism and books by D. James Kennedy on America as a Christian nation. At the homeschooling conference I attended, beyond the typical education books (for math, reading, or science), there were many materials available on citizenship (from a Christian perspective); Calvinism; and Christian nationalism. Many of the homeschool curriculum companies displayed there, associated with Dominionism or CR, such as Abeka and Liberty Press, offered materials about American history and patriotism.

Historical Figures as Inspirational Models

Inspirational tales of those who fought this fight before are continuously interwoven throughout CR discourse. These instructive stories go as far back as those of the Scottish Presbyterian Reformers and the other Reformers of Europe in the 1600s. Dr. Marshall Foster, of The Mayflower Institute,¹⁰⁰ spoke at the Jamestown conference. He told of the example of those in Scotland who in the 1600's fought for their right to stand under the banner of God and not the King of Scotland; how they were killed and persecuted because of this. The Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, he said, came to America for

¹⁰⁰ Their mission is "to proclaim the untold story of America's history, to prepare individuals and families to defend their Judeo-Christian heritage in all spheres of culture, and to inspire a new generation to rise up and restore America to "One Nation Under God," (www.mayflowerinstitute.com/vision.php).

that reason: so they could live under their God and not a king or a government. Joseph Morecraft, the leader of a prominent CR church in Georgia, also spoke at Jamestown about early reformers. He focused on what we could learn from the Puritans in England and how they tried to ‘clean up’ during Cromwell’s time.¹⁰¹ Cromwell was motivated by Calvinism and is known to be one of “the great reformers.”

Throughout CR speeches, Pilgrims or Puritans are looked to as models to be celebrated and emulated for cultural reformation. The Founding Fathers and colonial revolutionaries are looked upon as heirs of the Pilgrims who were guided to America by providence and faith. Gary DeMar (President of American Vision) often speaks about how Christians need to establish a vision of the future by looking at their roots. Specifically, he refers to how the Pilgrims began their colonies in the U.S. with the Bible as the foundation of American government and law. This idea is thematized throughout American Vision’s literature, coupled with images of Pilgrims and the Bible quote, “where there is no vision, the people perish,” (Proverbs 29:18),¹⁰² (see Appendix A, Figure 9). Some American Vision materials equate the Pilgrim vision with the American vision. CR adherents are spoken about as spiritual heirs of the Pilgrims and revolutionaries, and according to DeMar, contemporary Christians owe their forefathers for their early zeal and dedication. On Vision Forum’s (2003a) audio CD entitled *Building a Family That Will Stand* (a recording of a conference), Doug Phillips stated that he prayed that each person there would

¹⁰¹ I do not know exactly what this speaker was referring to by ‘clean up,’ but Cromwell was known for his Puritan moral codes and his persecution and execution of Catholics.

¹⁰² Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

Embrace the Pilgrim vision; those same Pilgrims who came over here who knew that it wouldn't all be established in the first generation, that it was going to take a lot of work and a lot of time, but by God's grace it would be accomplished. I pray, he said, that each of us today would have a vision for what God is going to do.

Both Phillips and another speaker at that conference reference William Bradford's book *Of Plymouth Plantation*, (1650) a recording of the Pilgrims' early lives in the colonies.

Phillips explains that he and his wife carry this book with them and summarizes the Pilgrims' tale, offering up their perseverance through strife as an exemplar to follow. He shares with the audience that his children have names that were typical Pilgrim names, such as Joshua, Justice, Liberty, Jubilee, Faith Evangeline, Honor, Providence, and Virginia Hope.

Linking Past, Present and Future: Changing of the Guard

The content covered at CR events and circulated through its media materials and internet sites aims praise and thanks upon those who came before; it establishes a debt to those from the past, and sets up a legacy for the future. This CR "remnant" of people is being prepared for a great mission, and this message is especially timely. During my fieldwork, there were occurrences that marked this time as a bridge between the past and the present. In May of 2007, a significant figure of the religious right, Jerry Falwell, died. During the "Reclaiming America for Christ" conference, sponsored by Coral Ridge Ministries, D. James Kennedy, its head (another significant figure), went into the hospital and died four months after Falwell. DeMar (American Vision), Phillips (Vision Forum), those currently leading Chalcedon, Worldview Weekend and other CR organizations represent a changing of the guard. In his talk at Jamestown, Dr. Jehle of The Plymouth Rock Foundation mentioned several times that a changing of the guard is occurring. As

more and more Christians are beginning to remember and learn about America's Christian heritage, he asserted, the more they are qualified to be the new guard. These are the people who will be engaged in rebuilding the republic, or "rebuilding the walls" and fortifying this Christian Nation. The organization "Wallbuilders" uses that name because it signifies the rebuilding of the walls around Jerusalem after they were broken down by the (pagan) Babylonian army in the Old Testament book of Nehemiah. The city had taken for granted its safety and strength, and let its walls remain weak and unguarded. According to the Wallbuilders website (www.wallbuilders.com), the nation of Israel rallied to help to rebuild its walls, and this story allegorically represents the call for citizen involvement, through education and action, to rebuild the Christian walls of America. This is the burden and the calling of this remnant.

The Christian Foundation of American Institutions

In addition to telling stories about early Americans, CR speakers educate on the Christian principles that undergird the laws, policies and institutions that were created during the time of the country's founding. Rick Green, of Wallbuilders, presented at Coral Ridge's "Reclaiming America for Christ," conference and gave a fast and highly tailored PowerPoint presentation on the Christianity of the Founding Fathers. He also gave a lesson on the First Amendment, explaining its establishment and free exercise clauses and underscoring that it has no mention of the separation of church and state.¹⁰³ If that was the intent of The Founders, Green argued, than it would have been stated clearly. Sam Kastenschmidt, at the same conference, lectured on the dangers of the ACLU and

¹⁰³ Americans United For the Separation of Church and State use the First Amendment's clause "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." as evidence of this separation (<http://www.au.org/resources/brochures/Americas-legacy-of-religious-liberty/>).

the history of the freedom of religious expression. He built a case showing that for the first 158 years in America, there was no mention of any wall between church and state. He also presented several quotes to illustrate the Christianity of the Founding Fathers. In 1892, he noted, the Supreme Court declared America to be a Christian nation.¹⁰⁴ But beginning in 1947, he recounted, the Court began talking about the separation of church and state, which began the erasing of the Christian heritage of the United States. These speakers were polished in their presentational skills, they spoke quickly and presented sharp slides and visuals, and seemed authoritative in their knowledge.

In one of his talks, Phillips (Vision Forum) mentioned that Common Law, a republican representative system of government, and the constitutional system was brought to America by the Pilgrims in Jamestown. Also crediting the pilgrims at Jamestown for establishing many American institutions, Foster, of the Mayflower Institute, commented that many Americans fail to understand that everything they enjoy – freedom, liberty, a covenantal form of government, marriage, monogamy, etc., were all determined in May of 1607. At the Jamestown event, there were two speakers who focused specifically on the explanation of the biblical moorings of Common Law and of the republican representative form of government. Constitutional Attorney Colonel John Eidsmoe spoke about how Common Law was Christian in orientation; based upon the principles of the Ten Commandments. He explained that Common Law is based upon the presumption that God is the ultimate authority. The belief in God's ultimate authority,

¹⁰⁴ The speaker did not reference this at the conference, but the act he is referring to is the *Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States*, case number 143 U.S. 226 (1892). According to a writer from the Separation of Church and State, this is a labor act and its language is often manipulated to interpret it as a declaration of a Christian nation (<http://candst.tripod.com/tnppage/arg7.htm>).

Eidsmoe taught, also led to the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence, which are based on the idea that individuals possess rights that are conferred by the Creator. As these laws and policies are based upon the premise that a Christian God has ultimate authority, Eidsmoe argued that they can only work in a “moral society” (Christian) led by Biblical Law. He reasoned that if a society was not Christian, it would not have rights conferred by the Creator nor would its law ‘work,’ because it would not be based upon people obeying the law because it had God as the ultimate authority. The only alternative, he offered, would be totalitarianism.

Morecraft of The Mayflower Institute spoke on the republican representative government and how it is based upon the ideas of Puritanism and of the thoughts of Martin Luther, John Knox, and John Calvin, the men of the Reformation. This perspective emphasized the doctrine of original sin and God’s sovereignty over all of life. Because of the acceptance of the wickedness of man (original sin) in republicanism, Morecraft asserted, checks and balances were established to limit any one man’s power. Early Americans, he claims, did not want to form a democracy in North America (he points to the absence of the word “democracy” in founding documents). The Founders understood, Morecraft explained, that a man’s whims and individual forces of the majority are in control in a democracy. On the other hand, he assures, in a republic, the people are safe, because “the people” don’t rule; the law (based upon the Scriptures), rules.

Visual Displays as Constitutive

CR discursive activity impressively exploits the mediums of visuality and display in a way that conveys meanings, provokes sentiment and nostalgia, invites identification,

and prompts the formation of values, opinions, or desires. This form of epideictic rhetoric connects with the viewers' sense of the aesthetic and shapes the worldviews by which they live (Walker, 2000). Similar to the scene of the revolutionary war bluecoat telling little boys stories on the Vision Forum store site, CR books and other media tend to have covers and illustrations depicting romantic and idealized images of historical scenes and figureheads. On vendors' tables at CR conferences, it was common to see images that combined patriotism and Christianity or history and Christianity. For example, one frequently seen image is that of the first prayer in Congress (see Appendix A, Figure 21);¹⁰⁵ another is Pocahontas' baptism (see Appendix A, Figure 22). Other images that combine history, patriotism and Christianity are American flags or flag bunting draped next to titles that give a faith perspective on history (see Appendix A, Figure 23); headshots of Reformers and "Christian" early Americans next to patriotic symbols, such as flags and stars (see Appendix A, Figure 24); and significant buildings in American government that are presumed to have a Christian origin (see Appendix A, Figure 25). Similar images were displayed on the literature and mailings and brochures for events and conferences and they were laid out at every event in the vendor section.

These images and their circulation and repetition in various forms and at multiple venues in combination with the telling of narratives potently produces a reality of a Christian America in need of reviving. These images serve as visual ideographs (Edwards and Winkler, 1997) for the concepts of "Christian America," and all that is entailed in the idea of the "Christian American patriot." In combination with CR events, literature, and lectures, the images aid in reifying the CR worldview (Cloud, 2004).

¹⁰⁵ A framed print of this scene was on the wall in a house of a family that I interviewed.

In addition to the display of images bearing historical content, CR events involved several other types of display. The most illustrative example of this was the Jamestown event. Vision Forum's events, materials, and visuals masterfully employ visual modes in order to communicate ideology, values and practices and constitute identity and community. Vision Forum runs a Christian filmmaking school and hosts a Christian film awards ceremony every year. They seem very aware of the strength of this medium and of the visual in general, showing their understanding that the visual is the "dominant rhetoric" of this time (Prelli, 2006). Invocation of the visual began at the very beginning of the Jamestown event. Sitting outside under cover, or on blankets outside of the tent, the audience was welcomed to the land, where, they were told, four hundred years ago, their ancestors, the first American Christians, settled this place for Christian worship. And later, the speaker continued, the Revolutionary War was fought on this very spot. Attendees were invited to stand on the banks of the bay leading to the Atlantic Ocean and we were told that if one were to walk over to the water, we would be looking out on the same bay that the original settlers boated in on as they made their way inland from the ocean. We were placing our feet in their footsteps, and the land held great memories for us to share and to build for ourselves. We were standing in the same place as our forefathers once stood; and we were challenged to take up their mission. The landscape, as theorized by Halloran and Clark (2006), offered a common rhetorical experience for the attendees, where they encountered common meanings, values and aspirations. Their time in Jamestown gave attendees a shared experience with others, extended their social network, and if there is a desire to return, will begin a ritual. The "place" created by "Jamestown 400" produced a collective memory that is part of the CR identity story by

making history come alive in real time to offer a visceral and sensual experience of the forbearers and their activities.¹⁰⁶

During the course of this event, every aspect of its programming layers upon each other to offer meanings and experiences that constitute the ideal of the Christian American patriot. The week was impressively planned to offer an encounter with a narrative inscribed on bodies, in drama, in music, in speeches and educational activities, designed to “convict” and transform attendees. These visual and embodied experiences, more than any written doctrine, have the potential to alter the subjectivity of attendees in ways “that elicit new modes of experience and being” (Charland, 1987, p. 148). Eighteenth century rhetoricians knew that in order to convince laymen of the truth of their findings, scientists needed to provide an experience of the object of their study rather than just asking their audience to imagine it. The Jamestown event accomplished that task for Vision Forum and the CR worldview by offering attendees both a glimpse into a possible world and a chance to experience and embody it for a period of time. Together, organizers and attendees created a collective bodily memory.

On the green grass and under the shelter of white tents, attendees paraded themselves about: in costume, by family, and by gender. This form of display involved the physicality of bodies: their dress and adornment, comportment; the use and display of implements; and how bodies engaged in activities. The bodies at Jamestown moved, related, were adorned, and were marked in distinct ways. Attendees were invited to dress in period costume, “historical clothing from 1607 to 1807” (covering the time of the

¹⁰⁶ There is evidence of this on Phillips’s blog, where families write him to tell him that they are marking the Jamestown 400 on their calendars, remembering what a special time it was for them and their families. Many children say they look forward to returning in the future (<http://www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/>).

Puritans until colonial Jamestown), and many arrived dressed accordingly (see Appendix A, Figure 26). The web page on arriving in costume states that “reenacting is a popular hobby today, encouraging thousands of Americans to portray historical events so that future generations will not forget them” (Vision Forum, 2009h). The same web page offered pictures of the various dressing styles from 1607 to 1807 and patterns for sewing the costumes.

On a different Vision Forum web page that discusses costume wear for a bicentennial event in Boston (www.visionvorumministries.org/events/r500/001/costume.aspx), early American history is linked with the Protestant Reformation and Calvinism. This encourages attendees to imagine their dress as an expression of both their American and Christian identity. It becomes linked with the Calvinist beginnings of America and assists current Calvinists to perform their sense of religio-political ancestry. The ideas of the early colonists, such as Calvinism, patriarchy, or modesty, are exhibited through costume. The costumes ranged from casual to formal, for both men and women. Some of the costumes were considerably recognizable as “American,” as many of the men wore revolutionary war outfits (see Appendix A, Figure 27).

Women wore period dresses with gloves and fans. Their hair was in updos or bonnets or hats with flowers on them (see Appendix A, Figure 28). The men also wore colonial garb, either everyday common wear or the uniforms of soldiers: bluecoats, redcoats, drummer boys and bugle players (see Appendix A, Figure 29). In many of the families, dresses for all the girls were made of the same material, showing familial affiliation and clanship. Some families had similar outfits for all family members (see

Appendix A, Figure 30). When asked, one woman said this could be because there might be a discount for buying material in bulk. Another stated it really would not be a significant discount, if the children really wanted to look unique. Some families all wore the same t-shirt: some of them plain, some of them had family names on them. The effect of this display is not just temporary; apart from this gathering, many CR families sew and dress in clothing that is similar or that mimics a colonial or Puritan style on an everyday basis.

Accessories were on sale at the event that added to children's' outfits or that served as memorabilia to take and play with at home. For boys, swords, bugles, and revolutionary war or colonial hats were sold.¹⁰⁷ For girls, they offered colonial dresses or dresses similar to those of Pocahontas; fans, and hats and gloves.¹⁰⁸ These clothes were not explicitly labeled as "for boys" or "for girls." However, at the vendor tables, dolls were displayed with the boy doll wearing battle gear and the girl dolls wearing the dresses and gloves. Also, these accessories are vended by Vision Forum and those familiar with their online store would know that the battle gear is sold in the "Boys Adventure Catalog" and the dresses and gloves are sold in the "Beautiful Girlhood Catalog." Many children at the event did purchase and wear or carry these implements, giving them a tactile experience of what it meant to be an early American. Not just observing an act, they were invited to embody the life and being of the early Calvinist-

¹⁰⁷ See "Toys and Tools"
<http://www.visionforum.com/browse/productlist.aspx?categoryid=0&browseby=product&producttype=4&page=2>.

¹⁰⁸ See "Patriot Dresses"
<http://www.visionforum.com/beautifulgirlhood/productlist.aspx?categoryid=181>.

American. These accessories are not only for special events. They are regularly sold and marketed in the Vision Forum online store so they can become part of children's everyday play lives and encourage them to relate to a different way of life.

This type of dress 'makes known' and celebrates the ideas associated with Calvinism and the American memories and narratives associated with colonial times. It invites attendees to consider how they are or can be part of their contemporary practices and identity. To newcomers, the display presents an opportunity to identify with and take up a form of adornment and comportment already well-known to others. The act of dressing in costume was a form of epideictic that was visibly moralizing (Prelli, 2006), facilitating the positive experience of not only appearing like, but being like historical heirs (because the dress compelled walking and moving in particular ways). It moved others to emulate them (especially children who did not come dressed in costume), and the vendor tables provided the means for those parties to join the others in costume. The costumes invoked fidelity to country, its Calvinist origins, and to the Calvinist principle of patriarchy wherein individuals are to dress in gender-specific clothing to mark a particular societal and biblical role. This marking facilitates gender classification and makes possible the regulation of gender-specific behaviors. Though this is a special event, these principles of dress and comportment continue to be important in everyday CR lives.

The bodies at Jamestown also displayed a preferred way of relating. The most common display of groupings of bodies was large families, where husbands and wives cared for their children or older siblings cared for younger ones. As a person traveling alone, or even more significant, a woman traveling alone, my body did seem very much

out of place. I felt myself being observed as a woman traveling alone. Certain activities seemed to condone gender-specific practices and there was evidence that it was not appropriate to violate those roles. For example, at one point, little boys were being handed bayonets and taught how to march in formation. They were given battle tips, taught how to hold the bayonets, stab it at the enemy, and shout, “Huzzah!” in uniform (see Appendix A, Figure 31). One girl showed up and asked for a bayonet. I watched as she was told by the boy handing them out that these were for boys and that girls should not learn how to fight. The girl persisted until her male peer gave in and handed over the bayonet. She was the only girl standing in line.¹⁰⁹

Another activity was sword-fighting, which boys were coached on by men in a ring of trees (see Appendix A, Figure 32). Girls gathered around and talked as they cheered the boys on. No female attempted to sword-fight, as far as I was able to see. Girls did walk together on the grounds of the event, arm-in-arm or taking care of babies and young children. Young women commented on and discussed each others’ sewing accomplishments. Young boys gathered together as well. They were less likely to be caring for other children, and more likely to be looking at books, swords, or other period paraphernalia. Families lounged together on blankets and in chairs on the grass. The ways that these bodies were displayed exhibits an order of desire (Weaver, 1970), for ways of being that are and are not desirable and valued. The activities they engaged in (sword-fighting and bayonet-marching, strolling the grounds) gave attendees, especially the children, an experience and a way to embody and share the ideas, feelings, and acts of

¹⁰⁹ As far as I could see, this girl’s parents were not around and other parents did not ask her to get out of line. No other boys asked her to get out of line either. They were very busy focusing on their guns.

early Christian Americans. This was made paramount by the “Children’s Parade,” where children were invited to showcase their costumes and accessories (see Appendix A, Figure 33). Some other activities the children were invited to be involved in were the setting off of cannons, giving them a war-like experience. At another time, children were marching in formation, screaming out “charge!” on command and blowing bugles, pretending to run towards battle (see Appendix A, Figure 34). This type of embodied and performative activity is more likely to plant a memory than simply sitting in a chair and listening to a lecture.

Displays of self demonstrate ideals, values, and aspects of one’s identity. At CR events, but especially at Jamestown, I noticed distinct ways of speaking that set adherents apart from mainstream culture. Some spoke with words or phrases that can be considered biblical or early American. In the course of conversations or listening to lectures or media, it was not uncommon to hear individuals speaking with words like “doth” or “unto”, “needeth,” or phrases such as “he purposed to...” or “all glory goes to God” (instead of taking personal credit for an accomplishment).¹¹⁰ In CR literature, young CR ladies are counseled to “guard the tongue” (McDonald, 2004). These ways of speaking relay a sense of self that is allied with early Americans and a value of virtuous and biblical speech.

In addition to attendees’ bodies being on display, the bodies of historical figures were also showcased. Throughout the week, different well-known historical figures gave performances to teach attendees about the past from their personal perspectives. For example, Patrick Henry gave a talk about the importance of rebellion against the

¹¹⁰ Some of these words or phrases are more common in written forms, such as individuals’ websites, in poems, or in quotations.

government (for citizens and for Christians). Other performances enacted were by Samuel Davies (a well-known preacher) and George Whitfield (an itinerant minister who was a part of ‘The Great Awakening’ in America), including a re-creation of Reverend Hunt’s first Protestant worship service in America, the marriage ceremony of John Rolfe and Pocahontas, and exhibitions of some of the first experiments in republican representative government (see Appendix A, Figures 35, 36). Besides the opportunity to witness the performances of historical figures, interactions with historical figures were made possible, especially for the children. When not on stage, these figures roamed the grounds and talked to the children. On the brochure for the event, there was a section for acquiring signatures from famous persons. Phillips encouraged the children to go and meet these characters, talk to them, learn from them, and get their signatures. This added a performative and interactive dimension to the display and performances of important historical figures, which gave the children an experience with the character, beyond simply a visual encounter and memory.

An additional activity demonstrating Christian American sensibilities and practices were re-enactments and dramatic performances involving the participation of attendees. These acts presented the potential for transformative experience; becoming a ‘different person’ after the performance because of enacting the role and the life of an early American. These encounters produce more embodied, physical, tactile, and experiential ways of learning and creating memories than are possible compared to learning from more cognitive activities. One re-enactment invited attendees to participate in the “First Landing,” in which the settlers’ exit from their ships, walk ashore, and gather for prayer on the new land (see Appendix A, Figure 37). Everyone was invited to

participate in this activity and it allowed participants to embody the experience of providentially coming upon the land given to Christians by God, feeling the water and the sand that the settlers felt, and joining in their first prayer of thanks. The “Faith and Freedom Mini-Tours” were also potentially transformative, as they were designed to “change [one’s] perspective about what it means to be a Christian in America” (Vision Forum, 2009i). These tours take attendees to sites such as the Original Jamestown Settlement, Colonial Williamsburg, and the Yorktown Battlefield (the scene of the final defeat of the British in the American War for Independence) (see Appendix A, 38). Guided by docents from Vision Forum who delivered the tours in historical character and costume, these tours were designed so that participants would hear the story firsthand. They allowed attendees to share time and space with their heirs, learning about it from the early American’s Christian perspective (which is not a part of the Colonial Williamsburg tours). These customized CR tours gave attendees a sense of how they and their futures might be connected to those spaces and peoples.

Music was another form of display at the event, whether it was piped in over loudspeakers or in the form of performance and sing-alongs. Phillips advertised that some of the music heard over the speakers could be purchased from their online store. He described it as the music of “early Americans, wholesome and pure, enjoyable for the whole family.” Musicians performed on stage in between talks and sang and played instruments, delivering early American, folk music, and patriotic songs. When a performer sang “Dixieland,” the audience stood, clapped, and whooped. They joined in when others sang “Yankee Doodle Dandy” or “God Bless America”, and showed their appreciation of war songs about revolutionary times, the Scottish, and the Alamo.

Landmarks and monuments were other forms of display utilized during the Jamestown event. Towards the end of the event, there was a ceremony for the dedication of the “children’s memorial” (see Appendix A, Figure 39). This monument was to be seen by the children, so that they may know it is for them, honoring their important part in the multigenerational and covenantal plan for the future. “Placing landmarks before the eyes of children,” Phillips stated, creates a memory for them to participate in. After its dedication, prayers, and viewing, Phillips asked the children to return to it in fifty and 100 years, and revisit where they were in their task of living according to God’s sovereignty and dominion. Interviewees exclaimed to me how special it was that their children had a monument to return to, to help them to keep their eyes on the goal. Children, depending on how old they are, and how much they understand, may find gravity in such a ceremony, feeling that it calls them to service or renders their participation important.

Though Jamestown was unique and provided many examples of rhetorics of display, bodies and performance, visual scenes did occur at other venues. The “Reclaiming America for Christ” conference was held in the Coral Ridge cathedral in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The welcome session involved the presentation of both the U.S. and the Christian flag and the speaker welcomed attendees to celebrate the Christian heritage of the nation.¹¹¹ The lights were lowered and a snare drum rolled. The pledge

¹¹¹ The Christian flag was inspired by a speech given by Charles C. Overton, a Sunday school superintendent in New York, on September 26, 1897. He stated that Christians should have their own flag. In 1907, he and a team created the Christian flag, whose colors include red (symbolizing Christ’s blood sacrifice), white (representing purity and peace) and blue (indicating fidelity). The pledge to the Christian flag was written by Methodist pastor Lyn Harold Hough: “I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag, and to the Savior for whose kingdom it stands; one Savior, crucified, risen, and coming again with

was given to both flags – to the U.S. flag first and then the Christian flag (see Appendix A, Figure 40). When the pledges were finished, the national anthem was sung by a guest performer with a multimedia backdrop. A slide show depicted an eagle flying, after which different images and icons in Washington, D. C. conveyed the Christian nature of the founding of America: walls, memorials, paintings, the U.S. dollar, and the words “under God” in the pledge of allegiance – all indicated the involvement of God in the founding of the nation.¹¹² The room where the conference was held was adorned with U.S. flag bunting, on the front of the stage and the sides of the room. There were large stars hanging in the front and sides of the room. The flags of all of the states were hung all around the room. The presence of both patriotic and Christian symbols, language and music successfully articulated the religious with the political.

Later, there was a patriotic concert, which was kicked off by a performance by an all-girls’ baton-twirling and marching troupe. These young girls seemed to be from about nine to twelve years of age. They wore gymnastic leotards, skirts and boots with red, white and blue colors on them. They all wore makeup and had curled and hair sprayed hair. They marched, moved their arms in unison, and waved flags and batons to patriotic marching band music coming from a stereo. After this performance, attendees were ushered back into the cathedral, where the concert took place. There was a full orchestra on stage with a number of singers. Behind them, a screen constantly displayed images of

life and liberty to all who believe." The flag has sparked controversy about where to place it in relation to the U.S. flag and its implied link between faith and patriotism (www.Christianitytoday.com/ch/asktheexpert/jul13.html).

¹¹² There is no reference to the fact that the words “under God” were added to the pledge in 1954. It is presented as if they were always there, since composed by Francis Bellamy in 1892. It might be presumed that many people do not know that these words were added in 1954.

patriotism and nationalism timed to be relevant to the words of the songs. After the singers performed several songs, all of the children from the church (from elementary to high school) were invited to go up on stage. The pledges to both the U.S. and Christian flags were given again, and the adult and children singers performed patriotic songs (including both “America” and “America the Beautiful”). During “America the Beautiful,” there were scenes of fields, mountains, oceans, deserts, along with patriotic images displayed on the screen. Again, the display of flags, patriotic colors and images on the screen in the context of Christian prayer, rituals, symbols and language effectively merges the sentiments, history, and concepts of Christianity with nationalism and being American. These displays and their articulation with Christian and historical meanings show the power of visual rhetoric to exploit nostalgia, sentiment, regulatory discourses, and aesthetic beauty in persuading audiences to claim and identify with distinct meanings.

Christian America, Heroism and Nationalism

Harriet, an interviewee, told me that the idea of America as Christian gave her “a warm, fuzzy feeling” (H. Robinson, personal communication, May 31, 2007). This was because, she explained, there were so many bad things about America that she would not want to be associated with, but if America was seen to be Christian, that would make her feel good. This “warm, fuzzy feeling” is active in nationalism and in the act of linking America with heroism and Christianity. It links the past and historical narratives with contemporary stories, both of which can point towards a hopeful future. In CR discourse, there seems to be an attempt to herald heroes and the women who supported them and in some way link them with current heroes and those who are in the making; those who can

be counted on to save the state of the future. All of the CR organizations and conferences had some type of discourse around the reformers, the settlers and Pilgrims, and the Founders as heroes. American Vision's *Untold Story* DVD refers to Christopher Columbus as a hero. Wallbuilders does not use the term "hero," but in the books, images and documents that they sell depicting and describing men such as George Washington and the Founders, they clearly celebrate them as valiant Christian champions. Chalcedon, Coral Ridge, and Worldview Weekend do this as well. All of the men upheld are considered heroes because they were committed to living out Christian principles which led to the America that has been enjoyed until today.

Though this way of speaking about and honoring heroes is spread across all of these organizations, Vision Forum does so more explicitly and formally because of its mission to train up young boys to be heroes and adventurers to lead this culture into Biblical Patriarchy. It seems that one of Doug Phillips' favorite heroes is John Smith, the explorer and captain who helped to found Jamestown. Smith's story is in books and audio recordings on the Vision Forum's online store's "Heroes and Histories" page (www.visionforum.com/browse/productlist/?cid=449) and Phillips spoke about him at the American Vision conference and again at Jamestown. He told the story of how, on the way over to America, Smith battled with Muslim Turks. In order to capture the new world, Phillips narrates, he decapitates them, "as their women were watching on," crying and screaming (and there is laughter in the audience about this). "The Christians are victorious and Smith is a hero," exclaims Phillips. "This man is a true warrior," he says, "and his character is so strong. Because of this man, we are here in America." Another story about heroes Phillips tells (and it is for sale online on the "Heroes and Histories"

page) is the story of the H. M. S. Birkenhead, a British ship that sailed for South Africa in 1852. It struck ground and began to sink and the captain knew the ship was going down fast. They only had enough lifeboats for the women and children, so the captain made a quick decision to put them all into the boats. Phillips claims this was the first use of the phrase “women and children first!” As he tells it, the captain said,

This boat is not going to make it; I want you to die like good men. He explained to these boys, these men that were on the boat, that if they swam over to those lifeboats, they would tip them over, and they would probably endanger the lives of the women and children. He said I want you to stand at attention and we’re going to play the British national anthem, and you’re going to die and by the way there’s one more bit of bad news for you, there are sharks circling our boat right now. Every single one of those men went to their death quietly, they were eaten alive by sharks in front of their wives, their sons and their daughters, or they drowned. Seven hundred men. Or close to that. Now as a result of that, boys, for almost seventy years, heard the stories of heroism. They heard the stories of sacrificing for women, for children, and they grew up...understanding that the quintessential aspect of the sacrifice that Jesus gave is that the groom dies for the bride, the strong die for the weak, and it’s the role of men to act sacrificially on behalf of women and children. Dads, if you want to raise up virtuous boys ...you have got to teach them to act properly...

In his audio CD *Building a Culture of Virtuous Boyhood: Raising Boys To Be Godly Men Of Courage* (2002-2007), Phillips asserts that young men must learn to emulate the lives of heroic Christians because they too will be called to leadership. “Do you realize,” he challenges, in *Building a Family That Will Stand*, (2003)

that as Christians we must pay the ultimate price? I don’t know what God intends for America the next ten, twenty, fifty years; I hope it doesn’t come to that. But I can tell you, I’m going to prepare my sons so that no matter what happens, by God’s grace, they will be ready to stand. And to do this, we have to train sons to be warriors...

The story of David Livingstone, an adventurer and missionary, is another account of a hero that Phillips repeats. (His story is on the “Heroes and Histories” page and

Phillips talks about him at conferences and in audio recordings.) Phillips, in *Rebuilding a Culture of Virtuous Boyhood* (2003) reads a quote by Livingstone:

My view of what a missionary is not so contracted as those whose ideal is a dumpy sort of a man with a Bible under his arm. I have labored in bricks and mortar, at the forage of the carpenter's bench; as well as in preaching and in medical practice. I feel that I am not my own. I am serving Christ when I am shooting a buffalo for my men. Or taking an astronomical observation.

“Now that's a phenomenal thought,” Phillips continued,

...that every aspect of a boys' life when focused on God whether he's taking dominion or whether he's hunting so that he can prepare or whether he's learning great leadership skills by studying great men of the past, is for the glory of God. Every bit of it, every part of that life, every adventure God gives him is for a Christ-centered purpose; even shooting a buffalo for the glory of God. What a far cry from the abysmal, shaky foundation of Christianity we live by today!¹¹³

The combination of godly virtue and a sense of heroism, masculinity and adventure that Phillips is characterizing describes Vision Forum.com's “All American Boys Adventure Catalog” (www.visionforum.com/boysadventure/). This catalog showcases books, media, games and toys to galvanize boys to be heroic and to have adventures, so that they can become the leaders of tomorrow. Phillips encourages men and boys to see the heroes in their fathers, their elders, and in history; and to shape themselves after them “for the task that is upon them,” as the future of America and Christendom depends on them. Though women cannot be heroes in the same sense (because they are not supposed to lead), those who have stood by and supported the heroes of history are honored by Vision Forum. On the “Patriot Girl” page in their online store

¹¹³ Phillips is referring to his opinion that today both men and mainstream Christianity have become emasculated. Most Christian men, in other words, are and are stereotyped as weak men who are sitting around in armchairs and standing in pulpits, not able to accomplish the tasks of real men nor strongly claim and advance Orthodox Christianity.

(www.visionforum.com/beautifulgirlhood/productlist.aspx?categoryid=174), the “Daughters of History” are featured. This is a paper doll series of “historical women in Christ’s Kingdom who sacrificed much to serve the Lord, their husbands, and their families.” The women featured are “two ladies from the Reformation: Katharina von Bora (hospitable wife of Martin Luther, the great reformer) and Idelette Calvin (caring wife of John Calvin, the great theologian)... two ladies from the 1700’s: Abigail Adams (encouraging wife of our second president, John Adams) and Sarah Edwards (diligent wife of Jonathan Edwards the great preacher)... [and] two ladies from the 1600’s: Pocahontas ...and Priscilla Mullins (faithful Pilgrim who came to America on the Mayflower and married John Alden)” (Vision Forum, 2001-2009k). With these women upheld as role models, young girls have an ideal to follow for serving the heroic men in their lives.

Talk and symbolism about heroism extends from the past to the present. Acknowledging and applauding those fighting in the war and war veterans occurred at every event I attended. The multimedia presentations at “Reclaiming America for Christ” included images of American fighter jets flying through the air in formation. David Barton, of Wallbuilders, spoke of his friend who served in Iraq and suffered severe injuries. Brenda Thompson (interviewee and conference attendee) told me that with patriotism, “God is raising up the nation again.” When asked about the relationship between America and Christian identity, Thompson explained that in the early days, the preachers talked about God, freedom and liberty and it was just natural for people to want to fight and defend the country. Now, she believes, God is drawing people out in a militaristic way. She told me that she and her husband have so many children who are

patriotic and even though they adopted many of them from other countries, they want to serve. It is probably not a coincidence that a spike in this Christian patriotism occurred just after the 9/11 attacks, which, by many, were called a Muslim attack on America and Christianity. The recording of *Building a Culture of Virtuous Boyhood* (Vision Forum, 2003a) was completed just after 9/11. In that recording, Doug Phillips recounts that

The world has been shocked by the events of September 11... if ever there has been a time to raise up a generation of young men to act heroically, the day is now. It's interesting as we have read the reports of heroism and courage to see that feminism died at Ground Zero on September 11th. For it was there, on that day, that men – three hundred men, firefighters, all of them, men, gave their lives for women and children. We see on the Pennsylvania airline flight that three men charged in defense of women and children and the others on the plane. We live in a day and age in which it must be repeated once again – that we must raise up chivalrous boys; boys of responsibility; boys of manhood. And I present the following tape in hope that it will encourage you and bless you as you seek to rebuild a culture of virtuous boyhood.

Phillips' personal story of heroism begins with his father. In *Building a Family That Will Stand*, he confides that "today my dad remains my hero." His father was appointed by Richard Nixon to lead the Office of Economic opportunity. This office allegedly gave money to groups that funded abortion and mothers on welfare. Phillips proudly shared that his father single-handedly shut down that office. He describes the criticism and persecution that his father and his family suffered as a result, and he remembers seeing his father's "constant stand. He would not vacillate, he would not back down, he would not change; because he knew what was right in the eyes of God." He goes on to say that this was "the same sort of spirit that led our Founding Fathers to say they were willing to give their lives, their sacred honor, and their fortune for the cause of freedom" (Vision Forum, 2003).

This talk of Christian American heroism leads to calls for action and battle from most CR speakers, leaders and adherents. Literature and media about battles, wars, and war heroes of the past are sold by Vision Forum and American Vision. Doug Phillips speaks about the importance of talking about the wars of history and its brave soldiers as one aspect of remembering American history and God's providential hand as it is seen through the outcomes of war. For example, the May 6, 2011 entry of Phillips' blog (www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/) features a multimedia lesson Vision Forum created on the theological significance of World War II and how it influenced the twentieth century (Phillips, 2011). Coral Ridge Ministries sells material on serving God while in the military (Coral Ridge, 2009a) and how to, as Christians, support the ranks of the military (Coral Ridge, 2009b). This research was performed during the Iraq war, and every event I attended included some comment honoring those fighting the war and war veterans.

There is another war that is often referred to, which is characterized as the war against Islamic terrorism and the proliferation of the Muslim faith. This war narrative is present in lectures on Islamic terrorism at conferences, books and media detailing the same phenomenon in the online stores of American Vision and Coral Ridge Ministries, and interviewee comments about Islam 'taking over' in the context of Al Qaeda's "terrorism and the war in Iraq." This suggests a sentiment that those fighting in the war now (and those involved in "Homeland Security") are engaged in some type of holy war to protect Christian America, as soldiers from the past fought to protect other Christian freedoms. Many comments and lectures reinforce a narrative that Muslims are the

enemies of Christianity and of America.¹¹⁴ Some speakers make a case for how Muslims have been launching campaigns of terror against Christians and Americans for hundreds of years. This narrative adds to the accounting of various persecutions American Christians have suffered. David Barton, the founder of Wallbuilders, conducted a talk entitled “The Spiritual View of the War on Terror.” His claim was that Muslims have waged war on America since at least 1784 and the Barbary Powers War. He explained that a large percentage of the American federal budget at that time and even into the late 1700’s and early 1800’s went towards fighting Muslims. Barton then fast-forwarded to listing three decades of Muslim terrorist attacks beginning in 1979 in Tehran until the 9/11 attacks, the war in Iraq, and the contemporary activities of Al Qaeda. “They fight us for their salvation,” he exclaimed; “for an easy ticket to paradise.”

At the Worldview Weekend event, Walid Phares, an Islamic scholar, warned that Islamic terrorists cannot be ignored and that they have engaged in systematic attacks against Americans and “Christian civilization” since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. His talk explained the “Islamic mindset” and advised that there will probably be more to come and this behavior should not be overlooked or excused. These accounts serve to establish the idea that American Christians have been embattled throughout history and have always had to engage in dedicated battle to maintain their hegemony in western civilization. They also reinforce the supremacy of the CR Christian American identity in contrast to a heathen Other, bolstering CR’s antagonistic frontier (Laclau, 2005).

¹¹⁴ It is noteworthy that for the most part, the only other religious group mentioned when interviewees referred to non-believers or other religions was Islam. One exception is when a conference speaker mentioned the dangers of yoga because it is based upon Hinduism.

Discussion

Principal to the perspectives of Charland (1987), Laclau (2005), Ives (2004a, 2004b) and Gramsci (1971) is the idea that a collective does not essentially exist apart from the discursive activity that constitutes it. In other words, the collective is a rhetorical effect (Grossberg, 1979) or a product or consequence of discourse (Charland, 1987). They do not exist in nature prior to their constitution in discourse (Charland, 1987). The identities of a collective are constituted in rhetorical operations and as a rhetorical totality, they consist of an articulation of social demands (Laclau, 2005). Ives (2004a) describes Gramsci's understanding of "a people" as made out of or arising from an organically-constructed cultural language. In this sense, collective identities "depend upon rhetoric... [they] exist only through an ideological discourse that constitutes them" (Charland, 1987, p. 139).

In this chapter, I have described some of the ways in which CR discourse constitutes a people who envision themselves as American Christian patriots, pioneers and warriors, who demand that America be acknowledged as a Christian nation and who avow to struggle for the Christian America that their forbearers once had in their grasp. The majority of the people whom I interviewed, with one exception¹¹⁵ articulated a link between their understanding of Christianity and being American. They all mentioned hearing about the ways in which the noted CR organizations and leaders were working against revisionism in order to restore America to its Christian origins and found themselves wanting to take part. Those with children felt that it was important for them to

¹¹⁵ The Director of Communications of the Chalcedon Foundation, Chris Ortiz, commented that God's message should not just be about America; that it should be spoken about to all nations. Though I am sure most within this discourse community would agree with that statement, the prevailing focus is Americentric.

hear about the Christian founding of America, so that history would be clear in their minds and so they would be prepared to reclaim the culture. They responded to the message prevalent in CR discourse about the need to be wary and vigilant of other groups, such as Muslims (or the U. S. government) ‘taking over.’ They also resented the country, its identity and its meanings becoming degraded through the lens of political correctness. Setting the historical record straight, being loyal to the CR understanding of liberty and the obligations it contains, and working towards cultural change were all ideas that interviewees identified with, which interpellated them into a discourse that they quickly began to participate in and expand, thus constituting themselves as CR Christian American patriots.

A Collective Language: Constitutive and Hegemonic Rhetoric

Each in their own way, Gramsci (Ives, 2004a; 2004b), Charland (1987), and Laclau (2005) propose that members of ‘a people’ participate in their own constitution through the use, enactment, and embodiment of a collective language. This language, according to Gramsci (Ives, 2004a; 2004b), guides how subjects think about and make sense of the world; it organizes what he calls “common sense” about sociality, politics, and culture. The CR constitutive rhetoric has two main tensions at work in regard to what it means to be “American.” First, it emphasizes the primacy of God’s sovereignty and the Biblical Worldview within all areas of life (government, economics, and the cultural and social arenas) and what that means for America and the identity of Americans in contrast to the dominance of the secular humanist worldview. From the CR perspective, the secular humanist ideal of America and what it means to be American is widely packaged, made available, and distributed within American consumer capitalist modes and sites. As

its circulation is manifest in television, mainstream news, movies, books, music, clothing, social activities and cultural practices, the strategy for CR resistance and cultural reformation has been to create a 'language of their own' through the alternative production, circulation, and enactment of these very same modes and sites of meaning. The circulation and commodification of cultural objects can be considered a form of display that is designed to show forth a set of values, and to even facilitate the incorporation of those values into one's habits, routines, or leisure time. The work of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1976) has been instructive on how culture can be made into an industry and how objects can become a part of a peoples' language. The media, toys and objects sold at Jamestown and on the Vision Forum and other CR websites insert themselves into family schedules and children's' play lives as powerful signifiers for CR language, theology, and American nationalism. These products celebrate both early American and Godly values, and facilitate the expression and insertion of those values into a child's and family's daily life.

Doug Phillips has said that how children play determines who they will become (Vision Forum, 2003). Vision Forum very deliberately intervenes into this mode for the cultivation of the CR language and identity. As Olson, Finnegan & Hope (2008) note, rhetorics of commodification symbolically engage the sentiments of social, political and cultural relations and rhetorical acts of consumption symbolically express social status or individual and collective identity. These experiences and products not only supply the CR collective with daily practices for life, but they both mark them as belonging and make them feel committed to the CR lifestyle and identity. With these carefully crafted cultural forms, CR contests the secular humanist answer to what it means to be American.

Whereas “freedom” in the language of secular humanism means to support and practice individual self-expression, within CR rhetoric it is the freedom to worship the Christian God and an obligation to insure America’s Christianity. To be a patriot within secular humanism is to rebel, critique, and suggest change based upon the best outcome for the self, for the market, or for the greatest number of people. In CR language, it would be to only abide in and by the knowledge of God, regardless of what any individual desires. In a CR worldview, the concept of comforting and accommodating the greatest number is misguided. There is only the way of God’s sovereignty.

The second main tension in the constitutive rhetoric of CR is a need to manage the understanding of America’s past in order to influence its legacy and status in the future. A particular way of speaking about history is required in order to establish and maintain the rationale for American Christians to be obligated to act into the future in a distinct manner. It is necessary for CR Christians to speak about the providential finding and founding of America, the commitment and hard work of the early settlers and the Founding Fathers, in order to be able to speak about a burden of obligation to those actors and to God to do the work to reclaim that America. It is important to work against the secular humanist language of “revisionism” and the erasing of God and Christianity in the public sphere so the Christian character of America will be salvaged and re-asserted. Speaking about the CR definition of “liberty” facilitates a people who will see their debt and America’s debt to God rooted in the past. It will prepare them to do the groundwork and participate in the operations of “war” to assure America and its people will not lose God’s favor. These two aspects of CR constitutive rhetoric are expressed, maintained,

and extended through normative and spontaneous grammars, historical narratives, and many forms of display.

Gramsci believed that a hegemonic language operates through normative and spontaneous grammars, and Ives (2004a) claims that Gramsci never states this explicitly, but that normative grammar seems to be a powerful metaphor for hegemony. The CR normative grammar surrounding the tension between secular humanism and God's sovereignty puts the Biblical Worldview at the center of all heuristics and hermeneutics. This means that either the Bible will provide the answers for how to think and live, or that trusted leaders will offer their guidance on the matter. Though it is rare to hear it stated directly, there is an impression that following God's sovereign way is the ultimate form of patriotism and this narrative is circulated by leaders, organizational products, and social interaction. CR adherents participate in upholding this aspect of the normative grammar by repeating it in their own lives and conversations. It is also maintained through their spontaneous grammars, where individuals might exhibit idiosyncrasies in their interpretations, dissent, or new ways of expressing the normative grammar.

In the tension between discussing the past in order to offer salvation in the future, a normative grammar is formed by way of concepts such as "liberty", "Christian heritage", and "revisionism" that mark American Christian history in a particular way. Terms and phrases such as "vision," "multi-generational faithfulness," "cultural reformation," "rebuilding the walls of the republic," "remnant," "changing of the guard," and "heroes and warriors" foster a normative understanding of what is to be done now for the future. These concepts and their use and enactment by way of the normative grammar compel adherents into distinct cultural, social, and political discourse positions

(Charland, 1987) and a particular view of what it means to be an American. Beyond terms and phrases, a constitutive language employs social habits that repeatedly enact and regulate its ideals and goals (Butler, 1990, 1993), such as following the models of the early Americans by dressing, speaking, and carrying the body modestly and performing gender-appropriate practices. For men and boys, this means to take on a leadership stance in speech and actions; and women and girls should embrace “Biblical Womanhood” (submitting to and supporting the men in their lives and caring for children, hearth and home). Because adherents have some agency and choice about whether or how to identify with and participate in this language, it becomes hegemonic when they find it and its values and practices desirable and participate in its maintenance.

For Gramsci, this hegemonic language comes to be in its interaction with other languages (Ives, 2004a). It asserts itself in terms of conflicts that it has with other languages; or in terms of aspects its interlocutors like or want to take up in other languages. CR constitutive rhetoric is highly dependent upon its conflict with secular humanism, its main concepts and terms often directly in contrast to it (i.e., “freedom,” “American,” “patriotism,” democracy vs. republic, and God vs. the individual). The secular humanist rhetoric of “revisionism” is continuously being contrasted to CR rhetoric of Christian heritage and taking back the nation. Ives (2004a) explains that Gramsci was influenced with how linguists of his time used the word “hegemony.” To them, it meant one language ‘winning out’ over another because of its attraction or prestige. By this definition of hegemony, populations would adopt or adapt to the linguistic forms of other social groups if it was attractive (identification) or if it offered some prestige or advantage. This is a form of consent to take on the language, culture,

and ideas of another and Ives (2004a) asserts that this understanding of hegemony and consent led to Gramsci's later development of the tension between consent and coercion.

This can be addressed in the CR context in two ways. First, CR organizations can be seen to be attracted to and embracing technology, the benefits of increasing and utilizing material wealth, and some of the practices of business and capitalism. Though it could be argued that these are the trappings of the modern American secular humanist culture, the rhetoric of CR celebrates these practices, if they are harnessed appropriately. Technology is the basis for the discursive circulation of CR ideas and products; material wealth enables families to be large and to effectively disseminate their ideas; and a savvy understanding of business and the market supports the creation of an alternative marketplace both to provide believers with alternative literature and media, products and lifestyle events and also to provide families who are attempting to 'bring the father home' with a source of income. Small business and entrepreneurialism is the mode for eradicating dependency upon big businesses and the government and for fostering dependence upon God's sovereignty and an emphasis upon the family. In this way CR rhetoric has taken on some of the 'linguistic' tendencies of secular humanism and the American marketplace. Consent to these practices is given wholeheartedly, while the justification for them and the participation in their CR manifestation may be due to the coercive power of CR rhetoric.

Participation in CR practices is seemingly consented to due to their potential to communicate the Biblical Worldview to the rest of the world. Overt displays of a body or multiple bodies can confront institutional and established meanings through their use of images, artifacts, symbols, or performances (Olson, Finnegan & Hope, 2008). CR

speakers and adherents see themselves as activists who hope to use the display of their bodies and practices in order to interrupt the flow of typical or prevailing images in order to redefine and restructure the available array of accepted ideas, ways of being and ways of speaking. I repeatedly heard individuals speak with joy about how their families' presence in public prompted questions and discussions about their beliefs. At the Jamestown event, speakers exalted the event as a way, through their actions, to change the way that Jamestown and America's history are understood. They hoped that people would see them in their activities glorifying God in the founding of America; they welcomed coverage by the media; and shared with pride that the purveyors of hotels and restaurants said that they would welcome them back anytime and wished all guests were so affable and courteous. DeLuca (1999) refers to these actions (such as the Jamestown event) as "image politics," wherein an event can persuade the public to engage in social change. DeLuca & Peeples (2002) describe the "public screen" that is created by public political performances and their construction of visibility politics, which is the refusal to be invisible. This sentiment is very prominent in CR discourse: being seen is a deliberate act accompanied by an insistence that the ideas and ways of secular humanism are not the only option. Not only are CR's public actions a gesture to provide alternatives, but their "visibility politics" are tactics that seek greater power and legitimacy (Brouwer, 1998). Finally, CR's public display of themselves and their bodies are ways of growing the community. Because their identities are visibly marked (Phelan, 1993), their presence in public invites others to identify and join.

Gramsci, Charland and Laclau agree that the language and its meaning for the collective does not just take place at the level of words, images, and stories: It is also

“sedimented in practices and institutions” (Laclau, 2005, p. 111). Words and actions are articulated together to embed themselves in material practices and “acquire institutional fixity” (Laclau, 2005, p. 111). Charland quotes rhetorical critic Walter Fisher (1984) as describing this process as giving “order to human experience and...induc[ing] others to dwell in [it] to establish ways of living in common, in communion in which there is sanction for the story that constitutes one’s life” (p. 8). This final piece, asserts Charland, is what makes constitutive rhetoric powerful: that it is oriented toward the material world and exists in the realm of material practices. For the CR understanding of American Christianity, this takes the form of taking on and exhibiting political views and practices that align with the CR conception of American Christian patriot. This can take the form of a conservative stance that government should be small, and that it should not provide for the welfare of people, for churches and families should do that for each other (or individuals and families should rely on God and one’s own sense of responsibility instead of the government). This is often coupled with an economic position of self-advancement (according to God’s will); not relying on loans or government, but only living within one’s means in order to be free to follow God’s calling. Patriotism is embraced as a way of thinking in terms of clans and nations, where a sense of honor and duty is Godly, and if people live Godly lives, then their nation will be blessed. Military action, if it seems to be honorable or attempt to work against non-Christian entities or to protect the free market (which aligns with biblical economics), is usually strongly supported. These institutional values manifest in practices, such as ‘fathers returning home;’ family businesses; living in order to avoid using credit or having debt; socializing by family and within the family rather than connecting with greater civil society; using a prayer and

volunteer assistance health organization instead of health insurance; and widespread military service.

As pointed out by Laclau (2005), the constitutive rhetoric of CR creates an equivalential chain of social demands. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) describe this as an articulation of not necessarily connected demands that in their linking are perceived as a totality. The CR demand for the acknowledgement of America as a Christian nation and the aim to do the work of cultural change to help it to ‘return’ to that state becomes articulated with certain political perspectives. Those may involve a desire for ‘small government,’ an economic perspective supporting a ‘free market,’ a conservative patriotic American perspective, seeking to return to the values of the early founders, the Federalists, and those who were loyal heroes and warriors for a cause; and a demand to have fathers ‘return home.’ All of these perspectives are characteristic of the CR American patriot perspective. They are also articulated with a Calvinistic/Reformed Presbyterian theological view, which is also linked with many specific social and political policies. If this chain of equivalence is taken up and lived by in most arenas of public and private life, Gramsci (1971) would call it a “historic bloc.” This particular constitutive rhetoric cannot be said to be a historic bloc in all of American society, but indeed, within the CR community, that has been accomplished. It can be said to be a very successful hegemony within its ranks, and from the evidence available, it is steadily growing.

Out of this equivalential chain, an antagonistic frontier develops. Those people, ideals, or discourses that contrast with the demands within the equivalential chain become ‘other,’ or the enemy, and in identifying that antagonism, the CR identity is

solidified. Views that differ with the CR perspectives are, for the most part, framed as distinctly un-American. As already noted, the American Christian patriot identity is identified and gains stability through its contrast with the secular humanist who seeks 'big government' to care for the people instead of God; checks on capitalism that are overly protective of people in a way that interferes with biblical economics; and an anti-American (and anti-Christian) stance that shows preference with the atheism of socialism, communism or pacifism.

Charland (1987) writes that "These members of the people whose supposed essence demands action do not exist in nature, but only within a discursively constituted history" (p. 137). The telling of a history that connects with subjects' identity and mission grounds and gives account for the existence, demands, and telos of the collective. CR's historical narratives effectively create a memory of Christian America for its people, influencing "what is and is not remembered, whose interests become present, whose remain absent, who has the authority to define, who challenges, what constitutes past transgressions, ...assumptions about what is worth remembering and what is worthy of praise or condemnation" (Prelli, 2006, p. 11).¹¹⁶ In addition to a memory, CR produces a preferred identity and cultural practices. Ideologically, these are detailed in CR speeches and media. In daily practice, they are performed and made apparent through the bodies and displays of adherents. In that venue, the CR body and way of being is socially produced (Dickson, 1999) and reproduced, instructing and disciplining other bodies (Mortensen, 1999) towards what is acceptable and ideal.

¹¹⁶ See also Kendall R. Phillips, (Ed.), (2004). Framing public memory. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Charland writes about how narratives create a temporal connection with those who share our story and lived long before us. “Narratives,” he writes, “lead us to construct and fill in coherent unified subjects out of temporally and spatially separate events” (Charland, 1987, p. 139). In the case of the Quebecois, “the past is presented as an extension of the present through the use of the pronoun “our” for those in the past. Their struggle is our struggle, and it continues, and it is our charge to complete it. This accomplishes, explains Charland, a “consubstantiality,” (Burke’s term, 1969), between “the dead and the living”; the construction of a “transhistorical subject.” For this subject, “time is collapsed” and “ancestry is offered as a concrete link between those in the past and those now” (Charland, 1987, p. 140). They have a right to their own state because members of their own community discovered, claimed, and occupied the land. In CR talk about Pilgrims and ancestors, their mission becomes the mission of those alive today; their realities become shared; and the task is being picked up as if it was only recently left off.

The telling of these narratives has an ontological function, which is to make the narrators’ political myth real (Charland, 1987). It animates a people into being, gives them a framework for acting, and positions them in this narrative text. As Charland explains it, these subjects operate within a range of freedom and constraint. They are constrained by the discursive positions the narrative and its historical account offers them, so the narrative has power over them and directs them. The subjects’ identification with the narrative and the constitutive rhetoric induces cooperation (Charland, 1987). It points them toward “political, social, and economic action in the material world,” (Charland, 1987, p. 141) which is the narratives’ ideological character. Yet unlike a

classical narrative, a constitutive rhetoric remains open and it is the task of the subject to complete it. The people operate with some constrained freedom to accomplish this. They must finish their own story. Thus, the narrative and its political myth is “not a mere fiction” (Charland, 1987, p. 142). It constitutes a motivated subject and orients them in particular ways toward future action; but inscribes these things upon real social actors and “inserts them into the world of practice” (p. 142).

CR rhetoric does offer what may seem like rigid prescriptions for theological belief, home life, and political, social, and economic views. It positions adherents into the gender-specific discourse positions of the patriarch, hero and leader; the helpmeet; the family or virtuous boy or girl; or the American patriot. These roles point to very highly scripted practices. Yet CR discourse, its constitutive rhetoric, never paints an explicit picture of what the future will resemble. The language is replete with ideals, such as a “Christian America” or having ‘daughters returning home,’ but the outcomes and implications of those concepts are not filled out. I did question one young woman about the prospect of these devoted young women not finding mates and having to spend the rest of their lives at her father's home. She was content to say it would be God’s will and did not comment on how it might affect the numbers of possible offspring or future ‘warriors’ for the mission. I also inquired about how a family’s income will provide for the needs of a large family, such as food, clothing, cars, or college. The responses I have gotten inform me that the outcomes of these scenarios will be up to time, individual and collective actions, (and God’s sovereignty), to be filled out.

Laclau (2005) finds that the way in which a language and its contingent sensibilities are cultivated is through its repetition over time and in many different social

moments and sites. He suggests that “it is through repetition that social habits are created” (p. 27). CR discourse presents its constitutive rhetoric repetitively and at a wide diversity of arenas in its social milieu. Laclau suggests that this repetition shapes social relations: through “a plurality of antagonistic experiences,” a people will recognize its enemy and acquire “a sense of its own identity” (p. 27). Laclau addresses how a contemporary discourse may connect itself with one of the past, thus reinforcing their longevity. He asserts that in rituals, institutional arrangements, images and symbols, “a community acquires a sense of its temporal continuity” (p. 27). This continuity and coherence confirms that “repetition is a condition of social and ethical life” (p. 27).

Laclau also suggests that affect is required for the signification process. Affect, he writes, does not exist on its own, apart from language. It is constituted through an investment in a narrative and the myth that it upholds. When particular words, symbols, images, or other signifiers are articulated with the meaning of a myth, affect comes into being, which is stimulated by any of those symbols or aspects of the narrative. When an object becomes the embodiment of a myth, it is articulated with and produces affect: enjoyment, belonging, or satisfaction. Laclau summarizes that “hegemonic formations would be unintelligible without the affective component” (Laclau, 2005, p. 111). Any meaning becomes whole in the articulation between signifiers and an affect. CR constitutive rhetoric repeatedly links affect with the symbols of CR Christianity and American identity. Cheers of support and personal liberation go out when Patrick Henry shouts, “Give me liberty or give me death!” Heads nod in earnest when a speaker proclaims the travesty of secular American culture and its certain downfall unless things are turned around. Individuals talk about feelings that come over them when they made a

decision to live this way; and again, there is that “warm fuzzy feeling” that one interviewee articulated about America being a Christian nation. She just wanted to feel good about that.

A constitutive rhetoric, by way of disseminating and repeating itself through grammars, historical narratives, displays and bodies, and creating successful articulation between its signifiers and affect, brings about a people and its cultural and political terrain. The rhetoric creates something new. Out of formerly unaddressed and disconnected subjects, it constitutes a people. With individuals, it transforms and reworks their subjectivity and practices. Charland (1987) claims that transformation occurs at two levels. At the level of the narrative, constitutive rhetoric provides stories that rework and shifts a subject and its motives. At the aesthetic level, it alters a subject through music, drama, architecture, or fashion in ways that elicits new modes of experience and being. Ives (2004a) explains that Laclau and Mouffe (1985) discuss something similar in their explanation of a hegemonic formation. They assert that it involves creating something new, not just presenting something that already exists. This practice, they explain, requires articulating elements together so that their identity is modified as a result. Many of those I interviewed talked about how they were always going through a process of regeneration; that their worldviews had to be broken down and then re-learned. They could not live their old lives and many said they could no longer keep the same friends or socialize with family members. They experienced a sense of conviction and well-being about what they were doing and saw incredible changes in their families as a result. Some of them even noted that what they were doing was going to eventually change the face of the nation – maybe even the world.

Repeatedly, speakers and interviewees thanked the CR leaders, writers, and conference organizers for assisting in their own transformation and offering a vision for them to follow. They share that they are grateful for their leadership and that they hopefully anticipate a changing world. Despite the prominence of these figureheads, however, it seems as if the ancestors, European reformers, Pilgrims, and Founding Fathers still remain the most popular role models and icons for CR adherents. Their images, actions, and stories are circulated in a way that gives them narrative life – and it is almost as if they are alive within the CR community- working side-by-side with this “people.” Even the most popular identities, successfully acting as empty signifiers for the meanings of this people, are supported and bolstered by the personas of history.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the ways in which the rhetorical constitution of the “people” of Christian Reconstruction is accomplished through various modes; what types of identities are being constructed; and what type of cultural and political terrain this process creates. The nature of this discursive community, its history, and both academic and journalistic accounts of CR, was explored in the literature review. Finding its origins in the early revolt against the institutional church, the beginnings of CR lie with the ideas of the early European Reformers of the 1600s and it is now refashioning itself for the twenty-first century and beyond. Religion and its practice have been treated by multiple disciplines in very different ways, and each has viewed CR through their own particular vantage. Political science has considered religion in terms of the broad societal trends and influences that have impacted its practice, such as the relationship between fundamentalism and globalization. It frames CR as a fundamentalist movement that is re-asserting itself in order to become more relevant in relation to contemporary conditions and events. Religious Studies positions CR as a New Religious Movement (NRM), because of its reputation as a ‘fringe’ manifestation of Christianity. Anthropological research on religion in the public sphere has attempted to articulate the uniqueness of more recent religious activity as it intersects with traditional liberal humanist conceptions of the public sphere. It focuses on specific situations of practice and the material forms of religion. These disciplines have broadened their approach to religion in a way that matches the interdisciplinary nature of Communication Studies (an

intersection of media, rhetoric, cultural studies, and ethnography). The review of the treatment of religion in Communication Studies confirms the topical and methodological variety with which it has approached religion. In the face of this extensive research on religion, I was unable to find a model that adequately addressed the characteristics and questions provoked by the existence of the CR people, ideology, and rhetoric. I note the extent to which each of these literatures speaks to religion in its own right; its discursive activities, or the political. But many of them leave out vital areas of focus and discussion. I chose to utilize theories of constitutive rhetoric (Althusser, 1971; Burke, 1939, 1950/1969; Butler, 1990, 1993, 1997; Charland, 1987; Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 1976, 1985, 2003; Ives (2004a, 2004b); Laclau, 2005; McGee, 1975, 1980) in combination with theories of visual rhetoric and display (Butler, 1990, 1993; Charland, 1987; DeLuca, 1999; DeLuca & Peeples, 2002; Hill and Helmers, 2004; Olson, Finnegan & Hope, 2008; Prelli, 2006; Selzer & Crowley, 1999), combining ethnographic fieldwork with discursive analysis, to investigate the multiple modes of CR that together constitute this “people” and influence their cultural, social and political terrain. Once analyzed as the rhetorical constitution of a people, CR can be considered in terms of the questions of political science, religious studies, anthropology, and public sphere theories.

According to this combinatory perspective, a collective does not exist prior to its discourse and rhetoric; it is the product or effect of those communicative practices. Individuals and groups find themselves identifying with a way of being, take up its ways of speaking and its practices, and in so doing participate in the constitution of a people, its identities and subjectivities. A collective language becomes embodied and enacted by this people, organizing its ideology, sociality and culture. According to Gramsci, the

common sense of a “people,” which is activated through the language of the collective, operates through normative and spontaneous grammars. Normative grammars contain all of the logic, memories, and conventions from history and tradition that have been codified in the language of a collective. Spontaneous grammars involve the ways in which normative grammars are expressed and experimented with in idiosyncratic ways in the everyday or vernacular. A people’s language comes to be and gets formed in its interaction with other languages. It also is not imposed in a top-down fashion, but develops through the organic contributions of those within the collective (and in contrast to those that it “others”). To be effective and for a people to absorb and enact a language, it must connect with their everyday experience and in part, be constituted by them. This language becomes hegemonic when it is taken up because it offers some advantages and meets the desires of the people; and though it participated in with consent, it still wields significant power over the identities, subjectivities, and practices of those who adopt it.

A collective’s language, its grammars and the constitution of a people are supported by the telling of historical narratives (Charland, 1987). These narratives assist in constituting a people within a particular historical background. It provides them with a logic from a grounded past to justify and explain their existence, demands, and telos for the future. The peoples’ language by way of words, images, stories, the arrangement of physical spaces and sites, various other forms of display and use of bodies, practices and institutions in combination with affect, guides them and positions them, with the help of these historical narratives, toward particular positions and actions in the world. The layering and repetition of these discursive forms and practices serves to condition and signify (Laclau, 2005) social life. Guided by the social demands of the people, their

language presents many differing demands, which eventually become articulated into a chain of equivalence. This chain eventually represents and expresses the most popular demands of the people, their subjectivity, and their social, cultural, and political terrain. In contrast to this equivalential chain, these demands, their manifestation and expression, form an antagonistic frontier with those peoples and discourses that differ. Interactions with and reactions to those differences work to refine and assert various identities in the social and political field, and set the conditions for how they are interpreted, represented, and struggled over. On a greater scale, these characteristics and machinations describe the nature of the players and the activities that are carried out in the public scene.

Using multi-sited ethnography, I researched five CR organizations: Coral Ridge Ministries, Wallbuilders, American Vision, Vision Forum, The Chalcedon Foundation, and Worldview Weekend. For my site visits, I attended at least one event or conference of each of these organizations. Wallbuilders had speakers present at both the Coral Ridge Ministries conference and the Worldview Weekend conference. I also attended a regional homeschool conference because it was supported and recommended by CR organizations, and its keynote speaker R. C. Sproul Jr., is a key figure in the CR community. At each event, I observed the language, practices, and visual displays of the CR collective. Further data included interviews, media materials, and internet sites produced and circulated within the CR community. Using the theoretical framework of constitutive and visual rhetorics, I utilized NVivo qualitative analysis software to code the data for themes. This analysis guided me through a great amount of data in order to further comprehend the language of the CR “people” and to discern its most important and prominent aspects.

In my analysis, I identified the main social demands of this people (Laclau, 2005) and examined how those demands drove the constitution of particular aspects of the identity, subjectivity, ideology and activities of this people. In Chapter Five, I focus on a particular identity constituted by CR discourse and rhetoric: what it means to be a CR Christian. I found that living out the Biblical Worldview and cultural change or reformation towards a CR Christian nation were primary social demands within the collective. Growing multi-dimensional and patriarchal families are valued tenets within the Biblical Worldview and they are also seen as methods for cultural change. These are the prominent areas of CR Christian identity highlighted in Chapter Five.

Biblical Patriarchy is a central concept because it is seen as fundamental to living out the Biblical worldview and organizing individuals, families, culture and society according to God's plan. A man who rightly takes on the leadership of Biblical manhood devotes his life to this role before all else. Patriarchal leadership in the home is believed to influence society because of the belief that it is in the home where men influence entire societies and civilizations. It is believed that men have failed in this role in the recent past (in the past 200 years), prompted by societal changes, the feminization of men and boys, the opinion that men have become lazy and selfish, and the idea that feminism has emasculated male leadership. The result, it is believed, has been the decline of society. Men are being called by CR leadership to restore the nation through leadership in their homes and families. Many within the CR community state that they see a shift happening where men are turning toward their families and women are stepping back to their roles as helpers and mothers.

Families are so important in CR ideology because, it is claimed, God works and creates change in nations and civilizations through families. The Pilgrims are upheld as understanding this and presenting a good model of family life. However, changes in the 1800's and the industrial revolution led to the decline of the family (and of the nation). CR presents a plan for responding to this crisis. It is remembering, retelling, and restructuring society in order to reflect the Biblical Worldview so that it looks much like the 1600's again. The plan involves taking children out of public schooling and schooling them at home where their parents are their main influence; having the father become an entrepreneur both in terms of profession and lifestyle so that he can 'return home' and have constant presence in and watch over the functioning of the home and family; and the rejection of youth culture and peer-segregated activities. This plan, it is told, can lead to the restructuring of society and a 'remnant' of people will take up this charge.

The telling of historical narratives reinforces this mission, as stories about historical events and figures provide reasoning, precedent and inspiration for this task. These stories involve the trials and successes of European reformers, Pilgrims, and the founders of the United States, always providing evidence for their righteous Christianity and their commitment to creating a land of Christian practice and dominion. According to CR rhetoric, the return to this type of society will involve families making radical change. Families shared stories of the types of changes they were making in order to participate in this plan. Fathers are "returning home" to family-run businesses, mothers are leaving careers and work and gladly taking up their roles as "helpmeets," and daughters are returning home rather than going to school or living independent lives in order to serve their fathers as practice for serving their future husbands.

Other aspects of radical change involved in this plan include creating a multi-generational vision (for some families, this involves creating a two hundred year plan); having large families (and rejecting birth control); and home practices of learning to live under submission (having the parents be ever-present with children, enculturation through family liturgies, eliminating outside activities and peer influence, family worship, and a dress code). The CR language and grammars that emphasize these concepts and their symbolization and manifestation through repeated practices, institutions and displays constitutes the CR Christian identity. In the process, the popular demands of living out a Biblical Worldview and working towards cultural reform are articulated and forwarded and many symbols, individuals and practices signify and represent these demands. Together, these symbols, people and practices characterize a CR collective consciousness and this is formed and reified in contrast with secular humanism and its demands. This antagonism assists to solidify each of these identities, their goals, and their struggle within the greater social and political terrain.

In Chapter Six, I focus on another driving social demand (Laclau, 2005) of CR, which I found to be the need to acknowledge and prove that America had been founded as a Christian nation, and to work towards the reclamation of that type of society again. This demand constitutes the Christian American patriot identity of the CR people. There is a very distinct definition of liberty at the foundation of this identity and this social demand. American liberty, from the CR perspective, is the freedom to worship God freely and the spiritual freedom that comes out of relationship with God. Liberty, in this sense, obliges individuals to follow the Biblical Worldview in their lives and to work towards God's plan. This definition indicates that liberty, or freedom in America may be

reserved only for CR Christians. There were differing comments from interviewees on that question, showing some confusion about the implications of this; but ultimately there was clarity that freedom only “covers” CR Christians.

The obligation of those who have liberty is directed towards another crisis identified by CR: that of historical “revisionism” and the denial that America ever was or should be a Christian nation. Those who enjoy liberty must work against this revisionism in order to prepare CR Christians to understand their true Christian American identity and to do the necessary work, for country and for God, to re-establish Christian America. This will involve re-learning history, invalidating ‘incorrect’ sources on history, rebuilding the Christian republic and memory, and actively re-educating others on the American Christian heritage and its Godly providence. The mission statements for almost all of the CR organizations I studied include the goal to “educate” about Christian heritage and history. In those organizations’ mission statements where that goal is not explicitly stated, it is still indicated because of their production and sales of materials that align with this goal. Many materials, toys, games, and activities that are designed for this end are produced, organized, sold, and consumed within the CR community.

Historical narratives about European reformers, Pilgrims, Puritans and early Americans are told to support this story of the Christian heritage of the nation. An entire week-long event devoted to the telling and performing of narratives was held in Jamestown, VA (sponsored by Vision Forum). The week involved speeches, re-enactments, dramatic performances, narrated tours of physical and historical spaces, music, parades, and costuming geared toward the telling and retelling of the Christian heritage narrative. Embedded within this event and other CR discourse and materials are

stories that attempt to further establish this heritage. One theme is the denouncing of the alleged “erasing” of this heritage from public policies, institutions, and buildings, which contributes to the ‘loss of memory’ of the general public about the Christianity of the American nation. Another historical narrative of CR recounts the persecution of Christianity over the ages. Reports of the Islamic war against Christianity urgently caution the CR American people to remain steadfast and proactive against this encroaching threat. Finally, the narrative of America’s Christian foundation is manifested in lectures, literature and media that expound upon the Christian nature of America’s republican representative government and its practice of checks and balances. According to this narrative, these institutions rely on the assumption of the doctrine of original sin, as they set up government by the wise and not by the masses and prevent power from being in concentrated hands.

The narratives told within CR discourse notate the dedication and commitment of many throughout history to establish and maintain Christian principles in America’s institutions and practices. They establish an obligation to ancestors, praise them for their hard work, and set up a legacy and a direction for the future. These beliefs and narratives are conveyed through symbolic events, media materials, social relations, and display. CR discourse indicates a changing of the guard and a challenge that it is going to be up to a remnant of very special people to take charge, to rebuild the walls of the Christian republic that have fallen or have been broken down.

Stories that showcase heroes conflate Christianity, adventure, heroism and patriotism with pride and call adherents to action to take on the task of rebuilding a nation. These narratives ultimately establish the types of demands that rise to significance

in an equivalential chain. It becomes clear how to exhibit the qualities of a Christian American patriot, and particular leaders and very active adherents act as empty signifiers, models, and beacons of hope and inspiration. The formation of the ‘good’ Christian American patriot relies, in part, on the calling out of the ‘bad’ American: the non-Christian, the traitor, communist, or socialist. These antagonisms and their articulation lead to larger political activities and struggles for hegemony.

Interpretation of Findings

The analysis performed in this study has several implications. It expands the field of research on Christian Reconstruction itself, moving from a focus on its ideology and leadership to how its ideas are enacted, embodied, and extended within and with the participation of its adherents. It provides an exemplar for a socio-cultural, political, and communicative interpretation of religion, showing the value of this approach and suggests the lost opportunity when the effects of religious discourse and activity are dismissed as irrational, private and personal spiritual experience. Finally, the theoretical framework of this study offers an extension of constitutive rhetoric, both in terms of theoretical and methodological dimensions. The following section will delineate these contributions in more detail.

The Activities of Christian Reconstruction

Former studies of CR focused on their theological writings, oratory, and leadership. This study has shifted that focus to look towards how adherents are participating in, taking up, and helping to shape the rhetoric and its people. This is significant for two reasons. First, it acknowledges the hegemonic dynamic between leadership and members in the maintenance and extension of a people and its rhetoric.

Secondly, the shift reveals and documents the activities of this people in the vernacular realm, which has not yet been addressed. Though the events, online businesses and circulation of media and practices may have been present before, they have not yet been incorporated into a study of Christian Reconstruction. This study shows that these activities and practices are fundamental and integral to the constitution of this “people.”

Religion and Modernity

In the effort to understand the role of religion in contemporary society, scholars have interrogated its relationship with modernity. On the face of it, fundamentalisms can be interpreted as reacting against modern conditions. But as Myszal and Shupe (1992a) point out, these movements are concomitant with modernity. They effectively respond to contexts and environments that provide them with new opportunities (Simpson, 1992). CR has noticed and capitalized upon a shift in their demographics (younger families joining), a ‘changing of the guard’ and current events and sentiments (such as the September 11 attacks; ‘Islamic terrorism’ and wars within Islamic populations; a feeling of danger and insecurity; discontentment with the government; an economic crisis, recession, and nationwide job losses; a number of cases involving the removal of religious symbolism on government and public property; and ongoing struggles over social and environmental issues such as the legality of abortion, same-sex marriage, healthcare, and global warming lobbies).

The CR community has successfully catalyzed a number of social demands around these happenings and articulated them into one equivalential chain which moves and mobilizes its interlocutors. These occurrences have offered CR opportunities for new symbolic capital (Garfinkel, 1956) to draw on to promote and extend its ideology and

language. This particular list supplies CR with heroes (such as those from September 11); reasons for arming themselves, both literally and figuratively (such as the Islamic threat); the need to be on the offense and defense, in terms of protecting Christian heritage (the removal of religious symbols); reasoning for fearing big government and a dependent economy (a 'liberal' president, economic bailouts, and healthcare changes); and social concerns that inspire a return to traditional and 'biblical' values. The images of firemen rescuing people from the burning twin towers are invoked in the context of Biblical Manhood and patriarchy; the faces and voices of Al Gore and Barack Obama stir fears of socialism; and pictures of Hindu men doing yoga or depictions of terrorist Muslims exoticize, alienate, and bolster defenses against other religious groups. These are some of the ways in which CR animates a diversity of demands and sensibilities and focuses them on particular unifying and mobilizing symbols (such as 'the family,' particular heroes, or celebrity CR figures like Doug Phillips), effectively responding to global modern conditions for the benefit of CR. This study demonstrates that religion cannot be understood as purely theological or spiritual, but as a social/cultural and performative/communicative phenomenon.

CR and the Public Sphere

Theories of the public sphere have been strongly oriented towards a focus on the activities and discourse of progressive entities undergirded by liberal humanist ideas, yet this discursive space is populated by both left and right-leaning groups (Downey and Fenton, 2003). Therefore, definitions of freedom, public and private, and of rational-critical debate within this literature are encased in a history of liberal democratic theory. This one-sidedness functions to ignore or dismiss a large and very influential sector of

society, the end result of which could be to hold tight to idealisms and not experiment with more realistic and comprehensive views of the political spectrum. Conservative discursive communities like CR are well aware of and are actively taking up concepts of public and private, redefining and exploiting these terms to benefit their rhetorical purpose.

As Laclau (2005) recommends as it regards pluralism, it would only behoove scholarship within social, cultural, and political theory to discontinue dismissing this type of discourse and turning to examine it to learn about and take seriously its origins. As with the contemporary 'tea parties,' these peoples are significant in number and influence and it would open up public sphere theory to consider how those within this left-right spectrum might co-exist within a framework other than one that is purely deliberative or stemming from liberal humanist theory. The literature on religious counterpublics, which is small, just begins to address this. However, the case studies coming from that body of work are exclusively from countries outside the U. S. They involve South Africa and Egypt with a focus on the conundrum of the overlaying liberal humanist theory in democracies that have strong religious communities. This case of CR can begin work on this question in the U.S. context and might start to address this concern that public sphere theory is still largely based on an outdated understanding of publics, which only include liberal humanist and secular sensibilities. If the general public continues with its current demographics, we must consider how our theories can encompass liberal and secular and conservative and religious discourses and sensibilities. Theories of radical democracy, agonistics, and dissensus are a beginning for productivity on this topic, and should be considered in relation to this question.

The research on New Religious Movements (NRMs) affirms that they competently respond to modernisms and CR proves to be a good example. However, for CR there is the question of how thoroughly the children can be enculturated, how long they will carry on this legacy, and whether or not they will embrace living under submission. In my fieldwork, I looked closely for evidence of dissatisfaction with the patriarchal lifestyle among adherents (in the form of dissent with ideology, antagonism between parents and children, or disruptive or undisciplined behaviors). Perhaps not surprisingly, I only saw explicit enthusiasm for this way of life when in the field. More recently, I have come upon evidence of cracks in the system. A website called “Quivering Daughters”¹¹⁷ describes its mission as “Gentle Christian encouragement for women affected by Biblical Patriarchy, spiritual and emotional abuse in the family, and life in the Quiverfull movement.” Its founder is Hillary McFarland, who has written a book called *Quivering Daughters: Hope and Healing for The Daughters of Patriarchy*. She is the oldest child of eleven children in a homeschooling family. She continues to have a strong Christian faith and her work is an attempt to uncover the shadows within authoritarian homes in the Quiverfull Movement. Referring to the potential for a dark side to arise from this way of life, McFarland speaks of controlling parents, performance-based love, depression, guilt, exhaustion and stress among women, some of whom eventually resort to self-injury or contemplate suicide. Her book includes the voices of many women who have had a negative experience in a patriarchal family. Beyond McFarland’s book and those she profiles, her website displays a lengthy list of other blogs devoted to the same

¹¹⁷ <http://quiveringdaughters.blogspot.com/>

topic. It does appear as if the doctrine of patriarchy and submission to authority within CR will have some challenges.

Another question about CR that can be considered is its predominantly white membership. It simultaneously offers an explicit welcome to a diversity of people (and self-consciously advocates interracial marriage and the recognition of important people of color in history),¹¹⁸ yet idealizes a time in history that includes slavery and the oppression of native peoples without acknowledging or criticizing those institutions. In fact, many comments in CR discourse resist the idea that early colonialists interacted with Native Americans with any antagonism and focus on their harmony with and emancipatory efforts towards black slaves. This uncritical presentation of the CR ideal coupled with its very Caucasian following belies its priorities despite its explicit message about race. In their online store, Wallbuilders has a “Black History” link showcasing several products to emphasize the heroism and involvement of black Americans in the founding of the nation.¹¹⁹ These include posters of first black legislators, first blacks in congress, and one highlighting George Washington Carver, a scientist, botanist, and inventor. Their American Heritage DVD series includes an entry on the legacy of black Americans in U. S. history and the civil rights movement. Its description hails the black heroes, patriots, and revolutionaries that many “might not know about.” Similarly, their “Setting the

¹¹⁸ . <http://www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2009/04/5035/>

¹¹⁹

http://shop.wallbuilders.com/index/page/category/category_id/4/category_chain/4/name/Black+History/

Record Straight” book and DVD tells the “untold yet significant stories”¹²⁰ about the religious and moral heritage of black Americans that “are sure to amaze and inspire.” The other CR organizations, however, do not appear to carry this genre of material. Though Wallbuilders is presenting black history in a positive light, it may be a self-conscious attempt to anticipate the critique I have stated. Additionally, framing people of color as successfully participating in the building of the nation (and getting acknowledgement for it) eradicates the need for a lobby for equality. (In other words, ‘why should anyone get “special attention” or advocacy if we can see that there has been equal involvement and recognition throughout history?’) This analysis of the CR configuration of race and religion can be addressed in future work.

Extending Theory

This study both extends the theories of constitutive rhetoric and breaks new ground methodologically by bringing together ethnographic fieldwork with contemporary rhetorical and discourse analysis. First, Charland’s (1987) theory of constitutive rhetoric lays the ground for a substantive theory of the constitution of identity and culture. He focuses on how subjects are interpellated into discourse positions, logics, and ways of life through their identification with particular narratives. Though this is a good starting point for analysis, Peter Ives’ (2004a, 2004b) linguistic reading of Antonio Gramsci adds another dimension, which is how hegemonic languages and identities are constituted at the mundane level of vernacular language and the discourse of the everyday. Beyond

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http://shop.wallbuilders.com/index/page/product/product_id/162/category_id/4/category_chain/4/product_name/Setting+the+Record+Straight%3A+American+History+in+Black+%26+White+%28DVD%29.

narratives, this adds another level of analysis to the constitution of a people with its focus on societal conventions, institutions, and normative and spontaneous grammars. Still, Gramsci's observations of society can be seen as more general and lacking specificity in terms of avenues for rhetorical criticism. Ernesto Laclau's (2005) study of the constitution of a populist people considers the ways in which individuals and peoples utilize and manifest language in ways that rhetorically transform identities, practices, and material outcomes. And finally, the theories regarding visual rhetorics of display and of bodies point to the ways in which this theory of constitutive rhetoric can be extended to images, physical spaces and environments, monuments, public performances, and the manipulation, interaction and adornment of bodies. Simply put, visual rhetorics are constitutive; they support the constitution of meanings, identities, practices and places. They invite a way of thinking and being, persuade peoples to consider ideas and change their thinking, and impel the enactment of distinct emotions, practices, and appearances. Together, all of these theories provide a more robust and heuristically comprehensive analytic framework for the study of the constitution of "a people."

Though Charland encourages investigating how peoples are constituted by way of architecture, music, or other forms of display, his own study of the people Quebecois does not supply any sort of a model for how to theoretically or methodologically investigate these multiple expressive forms. In a search on "constitutive rhetoric" within the Communication & Mass Media Complete database, I found twenty two references that included ICA and NCA paper abstracts and journal articles from 2000-2010. All of these essays involved an analysis of written discourse, texts, or images. This search reveals that the prevailing mode of analysis for constitutive rhetoric is still text or print-

based. Though Charland indicates that constitutive rhetoric is not limited to written texts and encourages the analysis of other discursive forms, it appears that the scholars within this area have yet to take him up on his recommendation. Analysis continue to investigate written or print texts and do not move out towards music, drama, fashion, bodies, performatives, or social interaction to examine how these forms contribute to a constitutive rhetoric. My study of the CR people incorporates his suggestions, utilizing ethnographic observation and interviews in addition to the study of CR-generated texts, multi-media, and internet discourses to delineate how these various forms, in their layering and repetition, contribute to the constitution of a “people.” This multi-dimensional data collection and analysis provides a window into the many different levels of language, culture and society at which a people is constituted, which cannot be approached with the study of a singular site, text or mode. This study exemplifies the detail that this theory and method offer, and invites its replication and development.

Limitations of the Research

The phenomenon of CR is multi-faceted, disparate, and presents many challenges to analysis. Despite this, I have attempted to utilize the methods of ethnographic fieldwork and the analytical tools of contemporary rhetoric and cultural studies in the most efficacious manner possible. Still, there are some critiques that should be brought to attention.

It may appear as if the discourse of Doug Phillips and Vision Forum is brought to the foreground in this research. This effect evolved through ongoing analysis, as much of what I heard at the conferences and events, in interviews, and on websites and blogs not only supported but prioritized the work and values of Phillips and Vision Forum. I

centered upon many of his comments and products of Vision Forum because they represented the valued ideology and practices of the discourse I was reviewing. It does appear as if other organizations support and uphold these ideas and practices, but that they are not 'niched' in that way, as every organization seems to have a slightly different focus. Another factor may be that out of the new leadership in CR, Phillips seems to be the most successful as a rhetorician, business developer, and organizer. He presents a strong and attractive 'package,' is charismatic in his delivery, and articulates the CR message more clearly and stronger than other leaders. For this reason, many of his quotes and comments nicely encapsulate the sentiments and comments I recorded from interviewees and observations. Subsequent research could focus on each leader or an item or product from each organization equally for a more systematic analysis.

Due to the amount and different types of data recorded and analyzed in this study, it was more difficult to go into great detail with each specific data point within the scope of a dissertation project. The emphasis of this study was to show the breadth and depth of distinct discourse that contributes to how it powerfully layers and repeats at multiple levels and in multiple forms and how these elements exist in relationship to each other. Additional research could go into more detail on a few chosen areas of data, allowing for a more detailed research in that particular area. For example, one could look at the interaction between patriotic images and narratives; or concentrate on gender, patriarchy, and bodies; or investigate the discourse about economics and family practices. There are many combinations among the CR discourse laid out in this study that would benefit from closer examination.

This study may be charged with bringing up more questions than it is able to address within its confines. On its own, this data can be interrogated to illustrate the constructed nature of religion (Brian Larkin, 2008) and how it is mobilized and emerges out of everyday practices (Hirschkind, 2001, 2006; Mahmood, 2005). Finally, its implications for coexistence of differing peoples and values within a shared public have yet to be drawn out and theorized. Though the study is extensive in what it covers, it would surely be improved upon with follow-up on these topics in subsequent work.

Future Research

The outcomes of this study have implications for future research in five areas: 1) the option of delving deeper into any one area of this study within a more restricted or bounded field; 2) pursuing the discourse and constitutive rhetoric of those who have left CR; 3) addressing the aforementioned unaddressed questions; 4) further experimentation with the combination of ethnographic fieldwork and the theories of contemporary rhetoric and cultural studies; and 5) addressing questions of access to groups who do not want to be studied and mobilizing strategies and methodologies for pursuing that type of study. This section will overview these five main implications for future research.

First, follow-up studies on this topic can attempt to look in more depth at the constitution of CR within a more restricted field. For example, looking at how this occurs within one family, a set of families, or a worship group or church would provide a more confined view into the process. Additionally, within this type of site, it is an option to choose a fewer number of rhetorical and discursive variables with more focus over time and space. Another option is to look specifically at one CR organization and follow the

discourse in terms of how one or a few of its main mission themes is constituted (i.e., changing culture, shaping gender identities, or patriarchy).

Second, there is the possibility to begin a related but new line of research, one that follows those who have left CR circles because of hardship within the discourse of patriarchy and submission. The majority of these people seem to be young single women who were still living with their parents or women who had been married and who left their husbands along with their children. This usually causes their alienation, but brings an opportunity to deconstitute and reconstitute themselves and their relationship with Christian theology and religion. This move has resulted in a proliferation of web sites, blogs, books, and therapies around advocacy for women who have lost their senses of self-esteem, who have been abused, who have become depressed and dysfunctional, and whose children have suffered developmentally. These women must find new identifications and in the process, attempt to find each other in solidarity in their shared enterprise. This line of research can engage with theories of deconstitution and reconstitution of identity.

Third, future research stemming from this project can address the unanswered questions just mentioned in the “limitations” section. It can, in more depth, argue with the taken-for-granted treatment of religion and show its constructed and political nature.¹²¹ One way in which religion can be politically loaded which is only referred to in this study is the ways in which it becomes articulated with a legacy and ongoing program of institutionalized racism. This discussion deserves to be delineated in far more detail,

¹²¹ Many studies relating to religion, for example, look for relationships between religion and voting habits or political party affiliation and do not question how that particular manifestation of religiosity was constructed.

resulting in an approach to analysis that effectively reveals political actions and messages that are 'silent.' Too many methodologies that emphasize the empirical collection of data do not allow for the study of obviously very real phenomena because they are not explicitly expressed in verbal texts. Having more case studies and models to exemplify the deconstruction and exposure of these subtle realities is crucial.

In terms of public sphere theory, this data can be more closely analyzed in terms of how this "people" is manipulating conceptions of the public and private to further their identity and mission and how the practices and ideology of CR has implications for the public sphere. Finally, religion in public has not yet adequately been considered in terms of dissensus (Ziarek, 2001) rather than consensus. Dissensus is the allowance of and embracing of differing opinions, perspectives, and ways of being within one sphere. It is an effort toward coexistence among the realities of difference. This discussion has been growing within the areas of technology (Steinert, 2009) education (Kafala and Cary, 2006), public policy (Wildavsky, 1988) and philosophy (Grebowicz, 2005); but has not been brought to the fore in discussions of contemporary religion and public discourse. With the realities of the concomitant presence of modernity and religion, the theorization of dissensus, religion, and publics is greatly necessary.

Fourth, this study is a call for more research that combines the collection and examination of multiple and varying observations, texts, and vernacular practices with an investigation of how they rhetorically constitute social worlds, identities, and cultural and political terrain. Though there is a small body of work that is beginning to demonstrate this approach (Brouwer and Asen, 2010; Olbrys Gencarella, 2007; Pezzullo, 2003), it is still in need of development and growth. Authors such as this push beyond the purely

text-based analysis of traditional rhetorical studies and view how embodied or mediated practices combine with texts and images to constitute culture. These exemplars and my study add to the analysis of peoples and publics by including a more comprehensive range of activities that produce public culture, instead of only focusing on a narrow section of that process. This provides a more realistic look into cultural production and a more rigorous heuristic.

Fifth, this study and the preliminary research and attempted studies that foregrounded it point to the question of access to groups who do not necessarily want to be studied. A traditional ethnography can only operate if the researcher is able to have intensive presence for a long duration in a bounded field site. Doing multi-sited ethnography that allows for some of its 'observations' to be the analysis of media, events, images, and online presence creates access to the discourse of a people without being confined to a bounded site. Not only is it necessary to do this when access is denied, but the point must be made that accessing these other modalities, in an increasingly mediated world, might be fundamental for the understanding of any discourse. Relying purely on face to face data, in this scenario, only reaches a portion of discursive cultural production. The need for this type of multi-mode access is evident for certain religious groups, and it could also be useful for the study of political entities, hate groups, or movements restricted to a particular gender, race/ethnicity, or sexuality, where the researcher might not be welcome.

These avenues for future research can further knowledge about the impact of CR on public culture and individual and group identities and practices, as well as advance the study of constitutive rhetoric; the investigation of religion; and its relationship with

public spheres and public culture; ways to penetrate social spaces for its implicit 'isms'; the need for combinatory methodological approaches; and the question of access to groups who do not want to be studied. This study set out to examine the constitution of a people and the ways in which its discursive practices contribute to that process on multiple levels. It sought to describe the mechanisms through which social and political identities are constructed, and whether and how individuals participate in their constitution. It is my hope that this research has shed some light onto the practices of CR as well as contributing to the development of theory and offering advancement of methodology.

In closing, I would like to note my own phenomenological experience of engaging with those within the CR community. As with much of human interaction, I (for the most part) found written accounts of CR ideology or its representation in lectures or media extremely problematic; conversely, I was able to connect with and relate to many of the driving sentiments and rationale reported by individuals. It is important that my readers understand that I was met, for the most part, with friendliness, curiosity, and a welcoming attitude by those I met at CR events. I found myself agreeing with many statements that I heard, such as the idea that America has been overtaken by the entertainment culture and no longer knows how to be participants rather than spectators. 'Get off the couch,' someone said – 'and learn how to sing a song, play an instrument, or participate in sports instead of simply watching others on the television.' I agreed with the comment that families seem to have taken a back seat in the American marketplace and that mothers and mothering are undervalued to this nation's detriment. I shared the excitement of more than one interviewee when they told me that they think they've come

upon something fantastic and they've been seeing evidence that something's happening in the world. This chain of equivalence between me and my interviewees might contain too much difference and not enough homogeneity to be maintained, but it is important to recognize these moments of connection.

It has been my goal not to demonize or mock CR discourse or those I interviewed, as I am committed to the ethnographic ethos of coming to understand another (and effectively communicating that understanding). Though I disagree with much of CR ideology and practices, I support Laclau's (2005) statement that it is misguided to ridicule or dismiss the worldviews of conservative collectives as "irrational." Indeed, I hope this detailed account of CR illustrates just how very highly rational and deliberate its activities are. This is the most intensively purposeful and organized collective I have ever witnessed. Its motives, planning, and programming must be considered in terms of the creation of a hegemonic language, the constitution of identity, and implications for the public sphere.

APPENDIX A

IMAGES OF CHRISTIAN RECONSTRUCTION

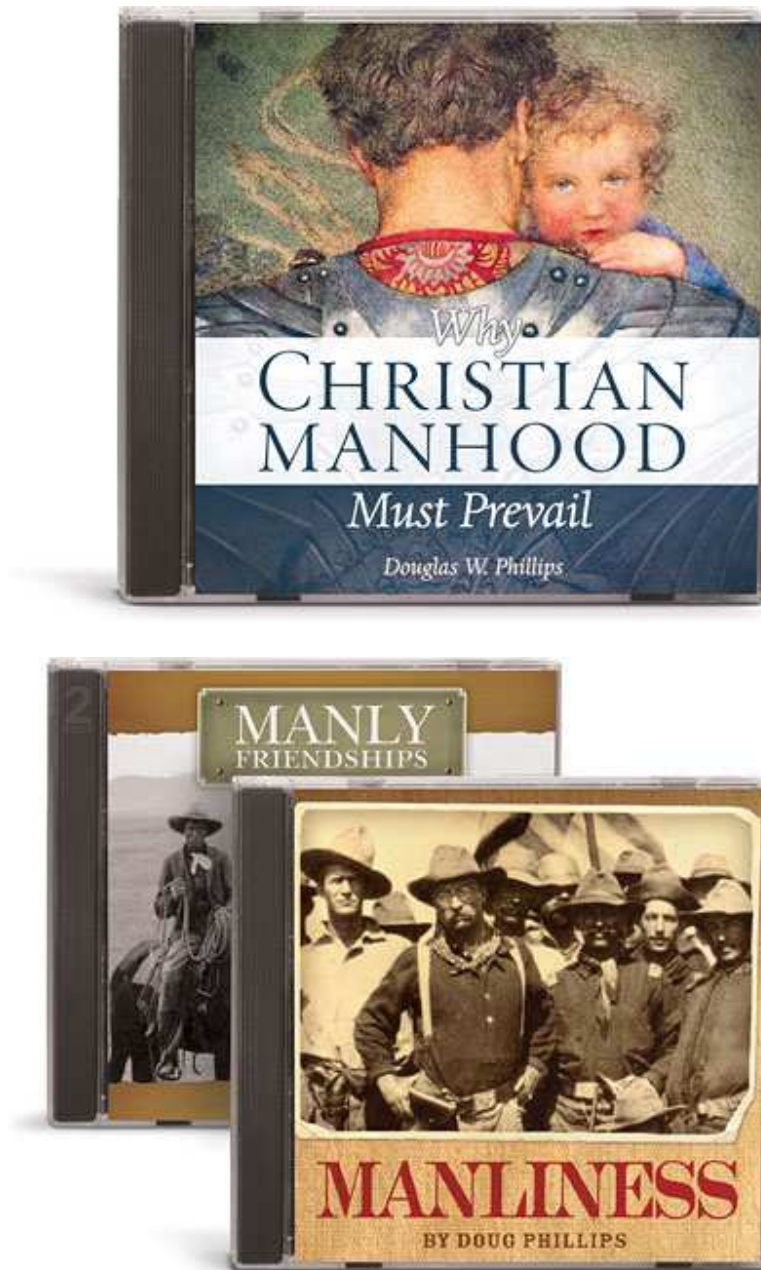


Figure 1. Biblical manhood. Images depicting CR Christian masculinity. Image can be found at www.visionforum.com/browse/product/why-christian-manhood-must-prevail and www.visionforum.com/browse/product/manliness-collection-audio-cd.

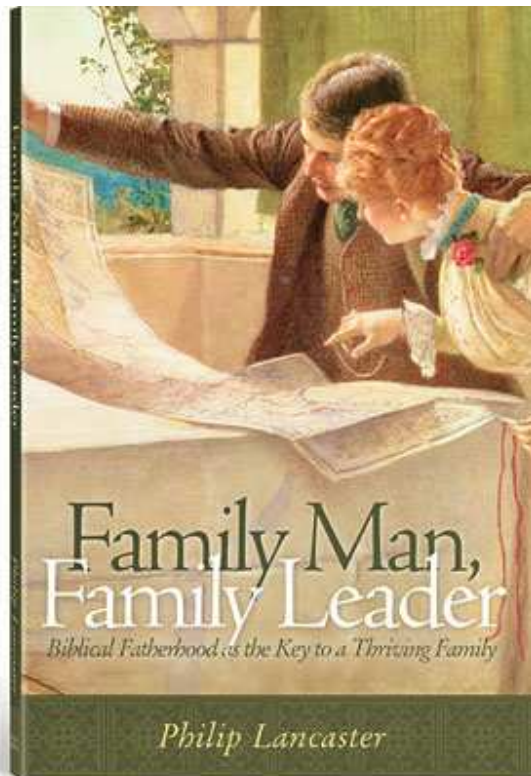


Figure 2. Patriarchal leadership. Image showing the man/husband as head and leader. Image can be found at www.visionforum.com/browse/product/family-man-family-leader/.

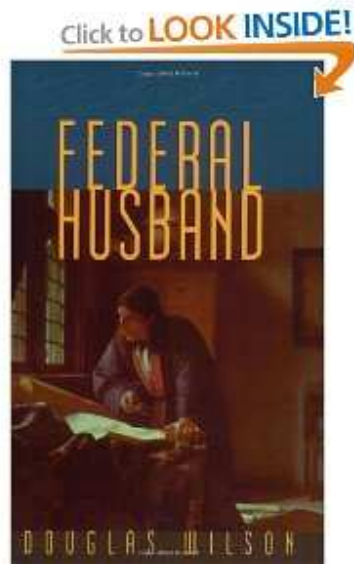


Figure 3. Another image of patriarchal leadership. This image also illustrates a man with authority and leadership going over plans or maps in order to lead. Image can be found at www.amazon.com/Federal-Husband-Douglas-Wilson/dp/188576751X.



Figure 4. Patriarchal t-shirts. Images of patriarchy sold by Big Family Shirts. Images can be found at www.cafepress.com/bigfamilyshirts.

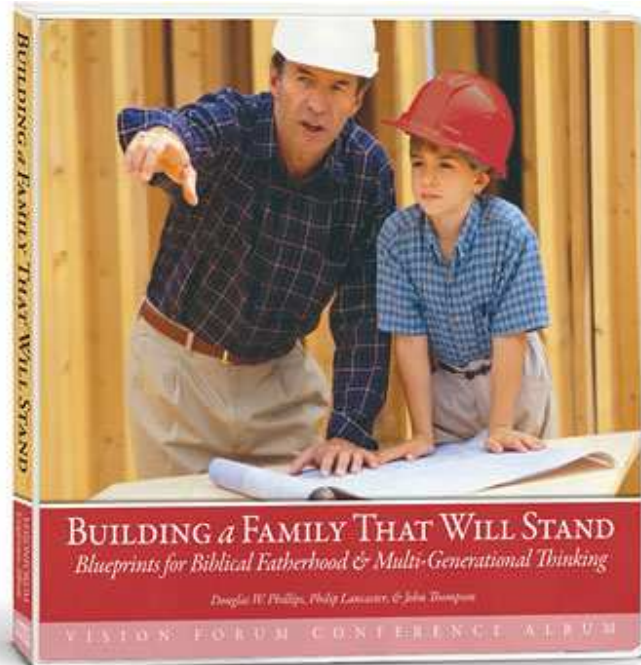


Figure 5. Blueprint for family-building. An audiotape of a conference on the family with an image showing the men are in charge of the planning and building.. Image can be found at www.visionforum.com/browse/product/building-a-family-that-will-stand-audio-cd/.

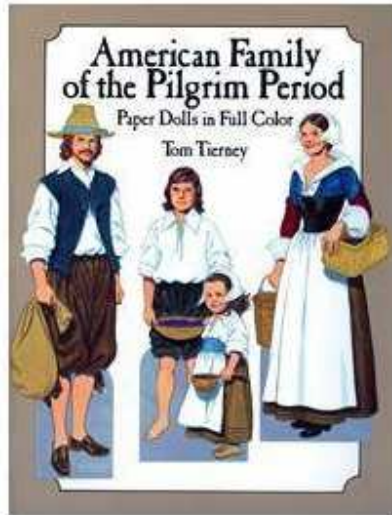


Figure 6. The American Family During the Pilgrim Period. A book showing images of families during the times of the pilgrims. Image can be found at www.amazon.com/American-Family-Pilgrim-Period-Paper/dp/048625335X.

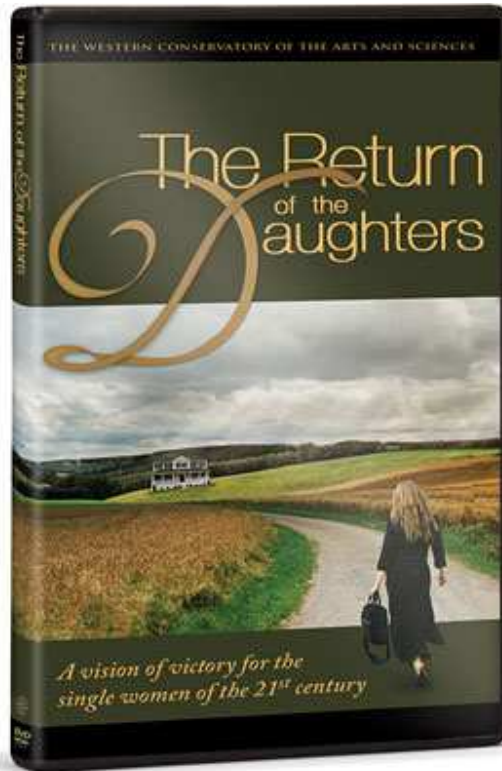


Figure 7. The Return of the Daughters. A DVD cover showing a young woman walking away from career life in the secular world (and its black clothing) toward a more traditional home life. Image can be found at www.returnofthedaughters.com/.

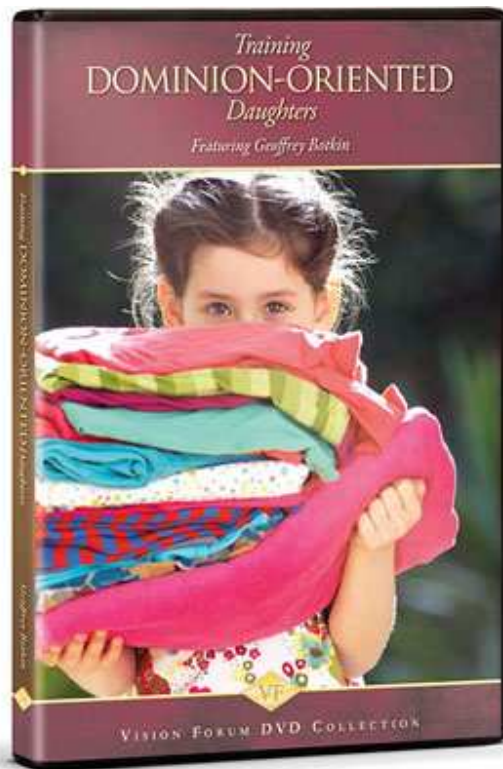


Figure 8. Training Dominion-Oriented Daughters. A DVD cover depicting a young girl dedicated to gender-appropriate tasks in a patriarchal home. Image can be found at www.visionforum.com/browse/product/training-dominion-oriented-daughters/.

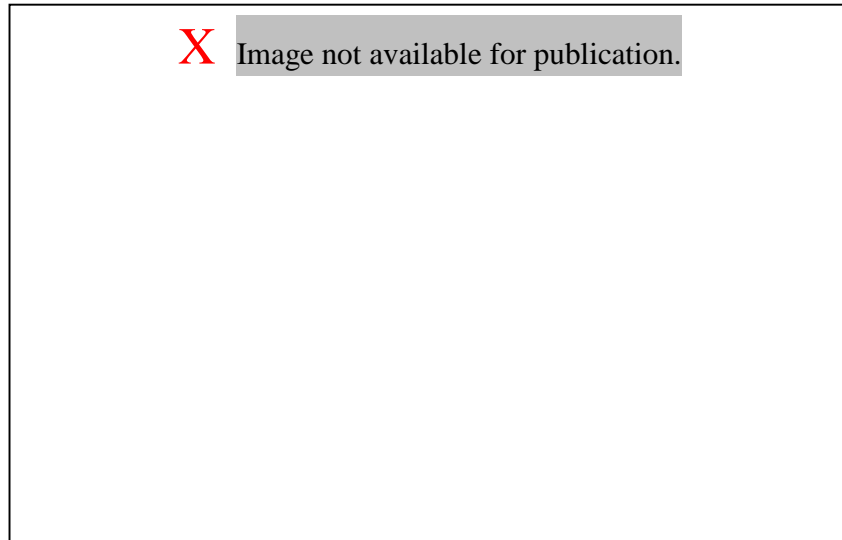


Figure 9. The American Vision. The cover of the American Vision catalog, citing Proverbs 29:18 to emphasize the importance of long-term vision.



Figure 10. Doug Phillips' Dynasty. Doug, his wife Beall, and their eight children. Image can be found at www.visionforumministries.org/home/about/about_the_president.aspx.

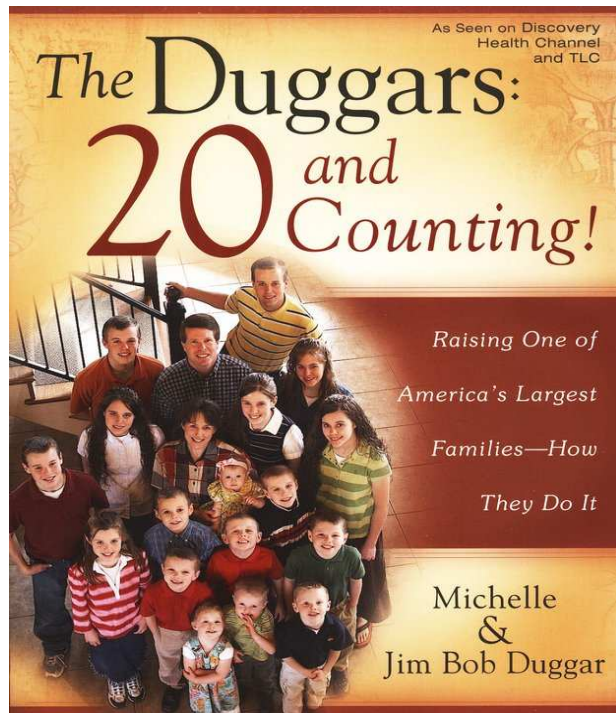


Figure 11. Having many children. This is part of the Quiverfull movement philosophy, which aims to change culture through having and enculturating many children. Image can be found at www.amazon.com/Duggars-Counting-Raising-Americas-Families-How/dp/141658563X.

MILITANT FECUNDITY

Figure 12. Militant Fecundity. The label on a t-shirt sold by www.bigfamilyshirts.com supporting the Quiverfull movement (“having as many children as God provides”). The phrase illustrates the strategic aspect of the movement, which is the idea that having many children who are enculturated to be CR Christian will facilitate cultural change. Image can be found at www.cafepress.com/bigfamilyshirts/3291616.

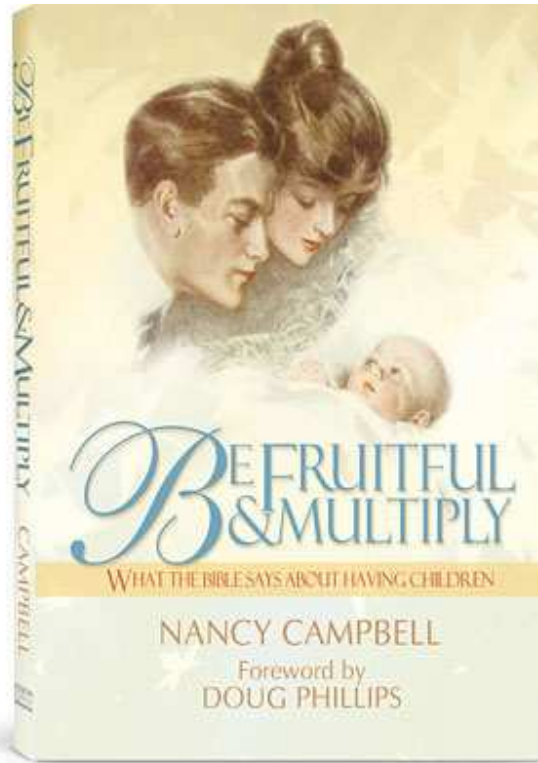


Figure 13. Be Fruitful and Multiply. One of the books addressing the theory of the Quiverfull movement. Image can be found at www.amazon.com/Be-Fruitful-Multiply-Nancy-Campbell/dp/0972417354.

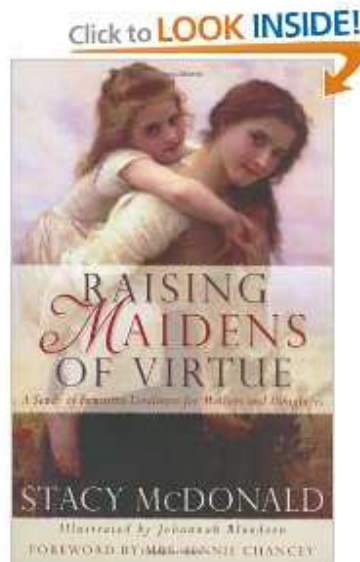


Figure 14. Raising Maidens of Virtue. A book by the wife of a conference speaker explaining how to raise young ladies with feminine virtues who submit to patriarchy. Image can be found at www.amazon.com/Raising-Maidens-Virtue-Loveliness-Daughters/dp/0974339016.



Figure 15: Sixteen Passenger Vans. Many families attending the conferences have these vans in order to accommodate their large numbers. Image can be found at www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/07/2757/.

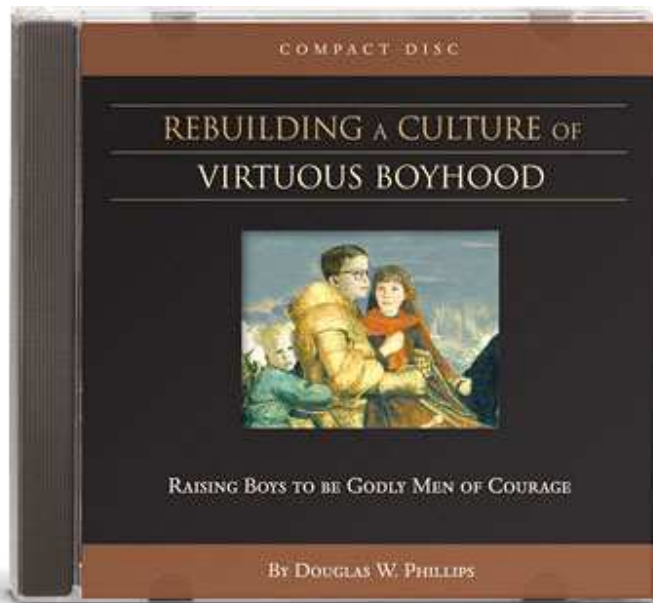


Figure 16. Rebuilding a Culture of Virtuous Boyhood. A DVD devoted to enculturating young boys into their role as patriarchs, showing leadership and chivalry on the cover. Image can be found at www.visionforum.com/browse/product/rebuilding-a-culture-of-virtuous-boyhood-audio-cd/?sc=jpweb.

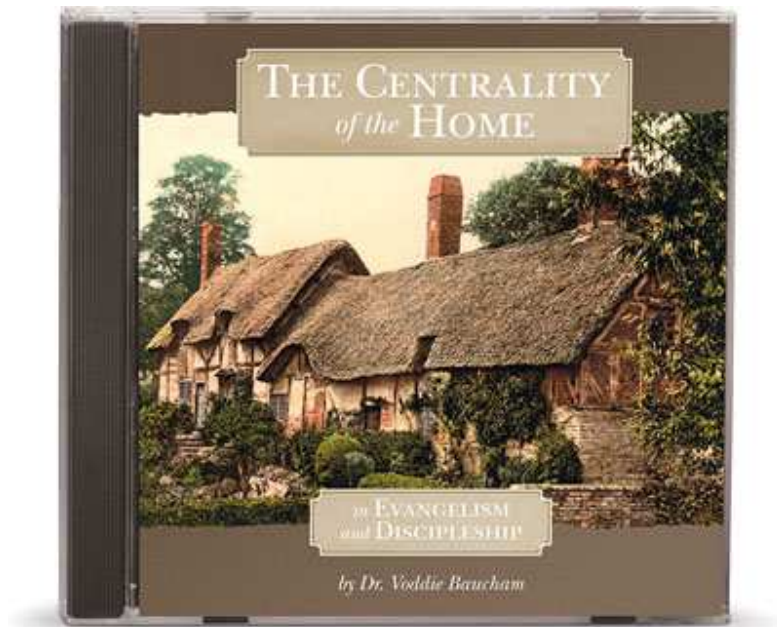


Figure 17. The Centrality of the Home. A DVD cover glorifying hearth and home and the culture that is cultivated there. Image can be found at www.christianbook.com/centrality-home-evangelism-and-discipleship-audio/voddie-baucham/9781933431338/pd/431338#curr.



Figure 18. Dressing Modestly. Homemade dresses designed for biblical modesty. Image can be found at http://worksoftheheart.com/sc_images/girlsdresses.jpg.



Figure 19. More Modest Dresses. Homemade dresses designed for biblical modesty. Image can be found at http://www.worksoftheheart.com/images/gallery/denim_jumpers.jpg.

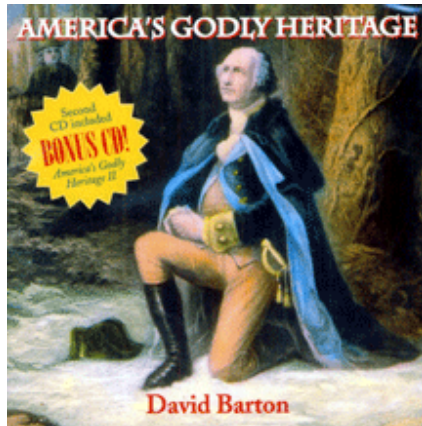


Figure 20. Biblical patriarchs from history. Image depicting a historical figure with a title that links him to America's Christian heritage. Image can be found at www.amazon.com/Americas-Godly-Heritage-Video-Transcript/dp/1932225668.



Figure 21. First Prayer In Congress. Image illustrating Congressman praying in Congress. Image can be found at www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/2/25/The-first-prayer-in-congress-september-1774.

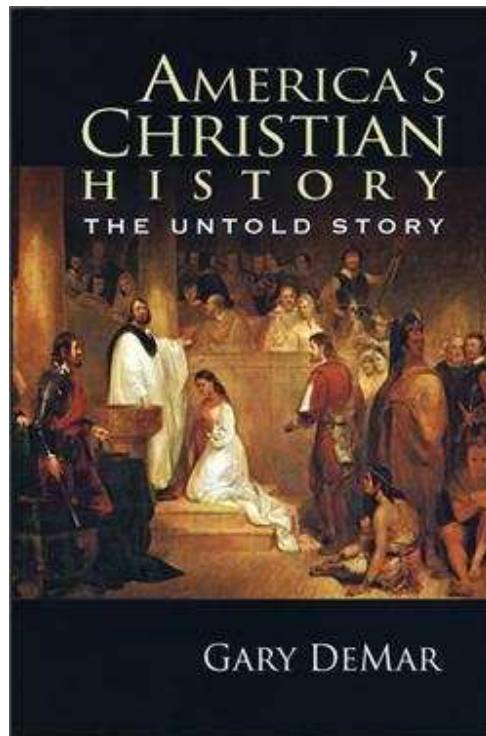


Figure 22. Pocahontas' Baptism. Image showing Pocahontas during her Christian baptism. Image can be found at www.americanvision.com/products/America%27s-Christian-History%3A-The-Untold-Story.html.

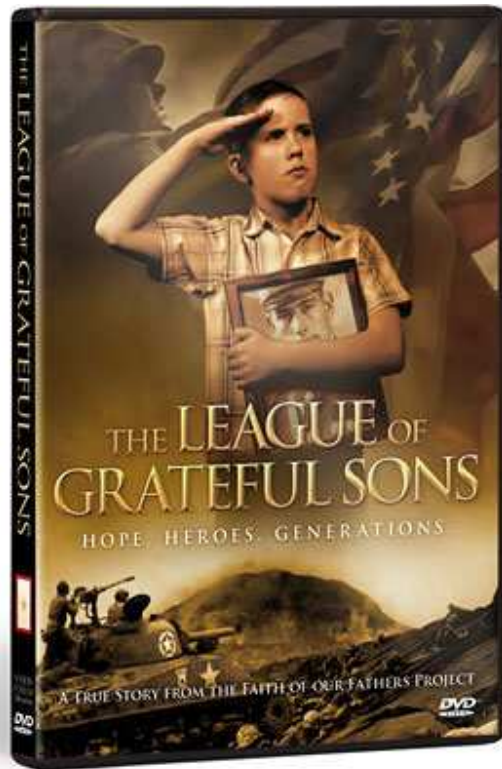


Figure 23. American nationalistic imagery and symbols. Nationalistic imagery combined with Christian interpretation of American history. Image can be found at <http://www.visionforum.com/browse/product/league-of-grateful-sons/>.

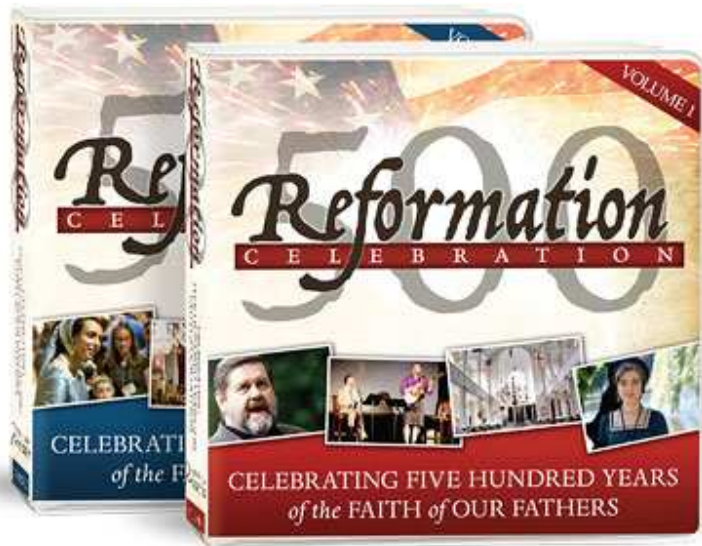


Figure 24. American symbols with Headshots of Christian Historical Figures. Images combining American nationalistic symbols with pictures of figures important to fundamentalist Christian history. Image can be found at www.visionforum.com/browse/product/reformation-500-celebration-audio-collection/.

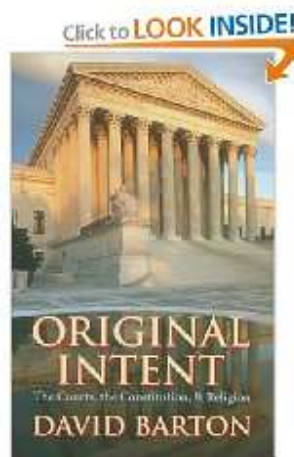


Figure 25. Significant Buildings. Buildings of American History interpreted from a fundamentalist Christian perspective. www.amazon.com/Original-Intent-Courts-Constitution-Religion/dp/0925279579.



Figure 26. Arriving in Costume. Attendees wearing period costume at events. Images can be found at www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/06/2670/ and <http://www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2008/06/3844/>.



Figure 27. Men and Boys in Revolutionary War Costumes. Attendees wearing costumes at a Vision Forum event. Images can be found at www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/06/2715/, www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/06/2672/ and www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2008/06/3844/.



Figure 28. Women and Girls In Period Costume. Attendees wearing costumes at a Vision Forum event. Images can be found at www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/07/2759/, www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/06/2672/ and www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/06/2805/.



Figure 29. Men Wearing Colonial Garb. Attendees wearing costumes at a Vision Forum event. Images can be found at www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/06/2672/ and www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/07/2789/.



Figure 30. Families In Similar Attire. Some families wore clothes made out of the same material. Seemed to reflect a sense of membership, clan, or dynasty. Images can be found at www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/07/2770/.



Figure 31. Boys Shouting Battle Charge – Huzzah! Boys being led re-enacting battle charges at Vision Forum’s Jamestown event. Image can be found at www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/06/2699/.



Figure 32. Sword-fighting in Jamestown. Boys displaying their sword-fighting skills at Vision Forum's Jamestown event. Image can be found at www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/06/2672/.



Figure 33. Children's Parade. A parade for the children at the Jamestown event for children to display their costumes. Image can be found at www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/06/2709/.



Figure 34. Children's Charge! Children re-enacting a battle charge at Jamestown. Image can be found at www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/06/2670/.



Figure 35. Performances at Jamestown. Actors performing historical events in character. Images can be found at www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/07/2755/ and www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/06/2672/.



Figure 36. More Performances at Jamestown. Actors performing historical events in character. Images can be found at www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/06/2672/.



Figure 37. First Landing Prayer. Attendees and organizers re-enact the first landing of the pilgrims at Jamestown. Image can be found at www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/06/2672/.



Figure 38. Taking Tours. Attendees take tours of Christian history led by CR docents. Image can be found at www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/06/2672/.



Figure 39. The Children's Memorial. Photos of attendees looking at the memorial and the service commemorating the memorial. Images can be found at www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/2007/06/2670/.

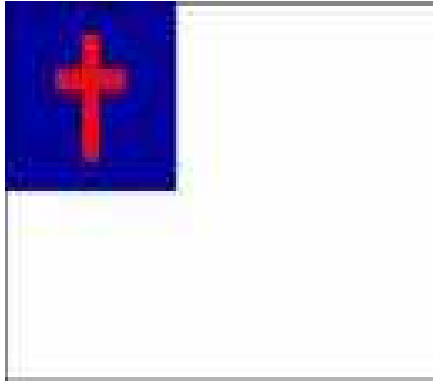


Figure 40. The Christian Flag. Image of the Christian Flag. It was raised at the Coral Ridge conference and the Pledge to the Christian Flag was a part of the event. Image can be found at www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.auburn.edu/~allenkc/graphics/flag/chrflag.gif&imgrefurl.

APPENDIX B

LANGUAGE OF CHRISTIAN RECONSTRUCTION

Biblical worldview, Biblical model, Biblical law
submit to God's authority
God's sovereignty
"taking every thought captive"

Family
family worship, family-integrated worship
youth culture, age-segregated, peer grouping
returning home, staying at home
discipling, training children
family government
homeschool

Patriarchy
turning their hearts toward God and their families
helpmeet
women are to be keepers at home (Titus 5 wives)
modesty, dress code

Culture change, Reform, Restoration, Rebuilding
world-changers, war, warriors
multi-generational view, long-range vision, 200 years
Providence (God's)
remnant

Pilgrims, Puritans
patriotism, Founding Fathers

Popular Scriptures:
Psalm 78
which has 72 verses, encourages parents to share the words of God and the stories of God's people with their children
Deuteronomy 6:6-9
And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7
And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up...
Haggai

(about the “remnant”)

Psalm 144:12

(about daughters being cornerstones) That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace: (KJV)

Malachi 4:6

(Fathers turning their hearts to their families) And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Proverbs 29:18

“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he”

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Review/sign informed consent form, ask for permission to record, etc.

Can you tell me about your religious background and how you got to your current faith/denomination and related practices and lifestyle?

How do you refer to/label your faith ? (reformed? Non-denominational, etc?)

Do you affiliate with pre- or post- millennialism? (something else?)

What are the main practices/beliefs that make your faith/way of life distinct from others?

Why did you decide to attend the conference where we met (American Vision, Vision Forum, Chalcedon, etc.)?

How long have you known or used the resources of this organization? (And how did you learn about them?)

Which speakers /activities did you enjoy the most/why?

Has anything you've heard

- Surprised you?
- Been new to you?
- Strengthened ideas/values you already held?
- Made you want to go home and tell others?

Do/did you:

- Agree with everything the speakers at the conference said
- Agree with most of it, but have some questions
- Not really sure
- Have a lot of disagreement

(if you have questions/disagreements, what are they?)

A central idea in the event is about transforming America's culture. What about America's culture, do you think, needs to be changed?

What do you think is the best way to change America's culture?

What do you think is your own calling/task towards this goal?

How about young people/the 'next generation'?

Doug Phillips, of Vision Forum Ministries, said, "Those who cast the vision define the culture"

What is your vision for the ideal America?

What is needed to get there?

Are there things from the past that should become a part of this future vision?

When did you first hear the term "Christian (or Biblical) Worldview"?

What does the term mean to you?

When did that term really 'click'/make sense to you/why?

Does anything about the Christian Worldview give you a sense of harmony?

Why?

How do you, personally, try to incorporate it into your world?

Do you feel that being a Christian connects in some way with being American?

(If yes, how?)

Some say that America's connection with Christianity is being inaccurately revised. Do you agree? Please explain.

Regarding being American and how it relates to your beliefs,

What does it mean to be a good citizen?

What is your idea of the ideal type of government/laws?

Should we have a democracy? (how do you define democracy?)

What does religious liberty/freedom mean to you?

Should all religions have liberty/freedom in America, or just Christianity?

Is it important to you to try to get along with/be able to live together with those in your city/town or in America in general, including those from other religions, those who are secular, or atheist? How do you do this?

If you are raising children, do you address this issue?

How do you teach youth/people in general to relate to people who are different, in terms of religion? (How were you taught?)

Describe how you communicate your Christian values to others.

How has it affected your relationships?

What is your opinion on the Godly role of women/men? Is there a clear biblical role for women and for men? (what are they?)

[If you have children] Does this influence how you raise your children/make plans for them?

Dr. Gary North, at the 2007 American Vision's Superconference said that people who agree with and try to live out these ideas are on 'the fringe'. Do you agree with him/what do you think of that?

I'm interested in the media that you use that inspire/guide/teaches you. Please tell me the names of authors who most influence you and your family, and titles of your favorite/most used books/media)

Also, if it applies:

Figureheads/mentors	internet websites
Seminars/conferences	homeschooling curriculum
Books, movies, music	particular schools/trainings/colleges

Do you see others using these resources? Do they come up in or influence your daily conversations with family or friends? (can you give an example of how they come up in conversation?)

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please identify your:

Age: 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 65+

Race/ethnicity:

Sex:

Educational level attained: middle school high school college profess'l
training (circle) some graduate school graduate degree

Household level of income: (if you like, you may indicate lower/middle/upper socioeconomic status)

Contact info, for follow-up (phone/email):

Region of the U.S. where you reside:

Political Affiliation: (democrat, republican, independent, non-voting)

Is there anything else you'd like to add to this interview?

APPENDIX D

BEAUTIFUL GIRLHOOD

The Beautiful *Girlhood* Collection



The Beautiful Girlhood Collection

The Beautiful Girlhood Collection aspires, by the grace of God, to encourage the rebuilding of a culture of virtuous womanhood. In a world that frowns on femininity, that minimizes motherhood, and that belittles the beauty of being a true woman of God, we dare to believe that the biblical vision for girlhood is a glorious vision.

It is, in fact — a beautiful vision. It is a vision for purity and contentment, for faith and fortitude, for enthusiasm and industry, for heritage and home, and for joy and friendship. It is a vision so bright and so wonderful that it must be boldly proclaimed. We are here to proclaim it.



Faith & Fortitude

The spirit of beautiful girlhood is alive in the girl who, with courage and fortitude, perseveres through the many challenges of life. She realizes that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," and consequently, strives for the principled course of action.



Enthusiasm & Industry

Proverbs tells us that a virtuous woman "works with her hands with delight," and "does not eat the bread of idleness." The truly beautiful girl is one who sees her life as a mission of service. What others view as a burden, she views as a blessing and opportunity.



Purity & Contentment

To be pure in body, mind, and spirit is more precious than all the promises the world offers. Young ladies who experience a beautiful girlhood guard their hearts against anything that would rob them of purity and are content to wait upon the Lord and trust the leadership of Mom and Dad.



Home & Hospitality

One of the defining qualities of beautiful girlhood is a love for home and hospitality. A young girl watches her mother and looks forward to the day when she, too, will have a family. While other girls are driven by wanderlust, the hospitable girl finds true contentment at home.



Femininity & Grace

The truly beautiful girl is one who radiates that inner grace which only comes from the confidence in being a woman of God. She enjoys dressing like a lady and being about the business of women. Because of this, others think of her with respect. Her very comportment communicates a gentle, gracious spirit.



Joy & Friendship

The woman of God is joyful and seeks companionship with those who share the same vision. For the daughter who has embraced the beauty of Christian girlhood, the richest friendships begin within her family, where she learns to love and honor, and first learns the joy of belonging to another.

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