“‘INVADING VACATIONLAND FOR CHRIST’: THE CONSTRUCTION OF EVANGELICAL IDENTITY THROUGH SUMMER CAMPS IN THE POSTWAR ERA”

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

History – Doctor of Philosophy

2013

ABSTRACT

"'INVADING VACATIONLAND FOR CHRIST': THE CONSTRUCTION OF EVANGELICAL IDENTITY THROUGH SUMMER CAMPS IN THE POSTWAR ERA"

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Evangelical summer camps blossomed in the post-World War II years, more than tripling their numbers from 1945 to 1960. But scholars have yet to explain the phenomenon at this critical juncture in American history.

Summer camps provide a lens for how evangelicals saw themselves in an increasingly secular postwar world. Many believed the influence of evangelicals was on the decline, and scholars have indicated the overall waning of the influence of mainline Protestant denominations throughout the twentieth century. But an examination of summer camps reveals that evangelicals desired to engage in mainstream culture through reaching American postwar youth. They consciously worked to influence America's youth in unprecedented ways, appealing to them through the combination of faith and fun, working to attract the growing teenage subculture in order to create and sustain the next generation of evangelical leadership. Summer camps, an innovative approach to reaching America's youth, aided evangelicals as they sought to reassert both a Christian and American identity in the postwar milieu of anxiety and change.

The establishment of evangelical summer camps in the 1940s and 1950s demonstrated a clear resurgence of evangelical power. This evangelical power, building on the organizational foundation of the 1940s and 1950s, continued its trajectory into the national spotlight and cultural significance in the late twentieth and early twenty first century. The examination of

the diversity of evangelical summer camps through broader historical lenses provides a variety of different ways to unearth how evangelicals went from a sheltered group that supposedly disappeared in the 1920s to their visibility and influence of today. An exploration of the continuing influence of denominational institutions as well as the growing evidence of non-denominational camps revealed the extent to which postwar evangelicals struggled to neatly identify as liberal, modern, or more conservative. An investigation of the construction of gender-based identities explains how evangelicals sometimes fit with existing gender norms, but also the ways they pushed against traditional gender roles by encouraging girls to pursue evangelical careers. A consideration of the issues of race and environmentalism indicates the immense diversity within evangelicalism during the postwar era. Finally, the exploration of the voices of evangelical youth exposes a language of political activism. Evangelical youth believed they were the solution to the world's problems and that missionizing, political involvement, establishing more Christian institutions, and pursuing world peace were what evangelicals should care about.

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INTRODUCTION

American culture has long been both Christian and plural, both secular and religious, and much of the dynamism of U.S. religious history derives from that paradox. Any story that fails to take seriously both Christians and non-Christians is bound to obscure as much as it illuminates.[1]

Evangelical summer camps blossomed in the post-World War II years, more than tripling their numbers from 1945 to 1960.[2] But scholars have yet to explain the phenomenon at this critical juncture in American history. According to the American Camping Association directory, individual Christian churches and Christian denominations established over one hundred forty new summer camps during the years from 1945 to 1960, close to quadrupling the total number of Christian camps in the United States.[3]

Summer camps provide a lens for how evangelicals saw themselves in an increasingly secular postwar world. Many believed the influence of evangelicals and mainline Protestants was on the decline, and scholars have indicated the overall waning of the influence of mainline Protestant denominations throughout the twentieth century.[4] An examination of summer

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[1] Stephen Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 7.

[2] In contrast, private and secular camps numbered around 100 before World War II and continued a steady growth rate after World War II, doubling to 200 by 1960. These camps include YMCA, Boys Scouts and Girl Scouts, and 4-H camps. American Camping Association directory, 2000; Appendix, Abigail A.Van Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness: Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth, 1890-1960* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 227-252.

[3] Van Slyck, A Manufactured Wilderness, 227-252.

[4] Jason Lantzer, *Mainline Christianity: The Past and Future of America's Majority Faith,* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), introduction, Kindle Edition.

camps reveals that evangelicals desired to engage in mainstream culture through reaching American postwar youth. They consciously worked to influence America's youth in unprecedented ways, appealing to them through the combination of faith and fun, working to attract the growing teenage subculture in order to create and sustain the next generation of evangelical leadership. Summer camps, an innovative approach to reaching America's youth, aided evangelicals as they sought to reassert both a Christian and American identity in the postwar milieu of anxiety and change.

Summer camps offer a nuanced portrait of postwar evangelical identity. Unlike the current divisions of evangelicals along conservative and liberal identifications, postwar evangelicals were full of diversity and wrestling with questions of identity. What did it mean to be an evangelical in the postwar era? Some summer camps focused exclusively on conversion, while others believed conversion important, but that discipleship and leadership training were paramount. Some summer camps reinforced traditional postwar gender roles, while other camps subtly questioned traditional gender roles through the encouragement of young evangelical women to pursue careers in evangelical ministry. Many evangelicals believed racial reconciliation to be a very important issue and a few even explored ideas of racially integrated summer camps. Yet most summer camps merely paid lip service to racial integration and continued to see the reality of American evangelicalism as primarily white. A majority of summer camps espoused the importance of stewardship in God's world and that the conservation of nature was of vital importance. In the postwar era, evangelical youth voiced their belief in political activism. Some advocated the importance of peace activism in a nuclear age, others wanted more evangelicals to become politically involved, and some called for the growth of evangelical institutions to expand evangelical influence in America and around the world.

The establishment of evangelical summer camps in the 1940s and 1950s demonstrated a clear resurgence of evangelical power. This evangelical power, building on the organizational foundation of the 1940s and 1950s, continued its trajectory into the national spotlight and cultural significance in the late twentieth and early twenty first century. The examination of the diversity of evangelical summer camps provides a variety of different ways to unearth how evangelicals went from a sheltered group that supposedly disappeared in the 1920s to their visibility and influence of today. An exploration of the continuing influence of denominational institutions as well as the growing evidence of non-denominational camps revealed the extent to which postwar evangelicals resisted the neat identification of liberal, modern, or more conservative. An investigation of the construction of gender-based identities explains how evangelicals sometimes fit with existing gender norms, but also the ways they pushed against traditional gender roles by encouraging girls to pursue evangelical careers. A consideration of the issues of race and environmentalism indicates the immense diversity within evangelicalism during the postwar era. Finally, the exploration of the voices of evangelical youth exposes a language of political activism. Evangelical youth believed they were the solution to the world's problems and that missionizing, political involvement, establishing more Christian institutions, and pursuing world peace were what evangelicals should care about.

In this dissertation, I argue that evangelicals in the postwar period established their identity as youth-centered. The number of summer camps nearly quadrupled in the postwar era because evangelicals realized the importance of engaging with postwar youth if they wanted to increase their impact and influence in America and the wider world. The traditional view among evangelicals has been that they withdrew from mainstream culture and disappeared after the embarrassment of the famous Scopes Trial in 1925.[5] Recent scholarship reveals evangelicals did withdraw from popular culture, but instead of disappearing, evangelicals forged strong social and cultural networks of their own.[6] My work adds to this recent scholarship as I demonstrate how evangelicals reached America's youth by engaging with mainstream culture in the 1940s and 1950s successfully enough to establish a significant cultural foundation that became more politically salient in the 1970s and 1980s. Scholars have not yet examined the reasons for the surge of summer camps in the postwar era. According to R. Milton Winter, writer of the history of Camp Hopewell in Oxford, MS, "the motivation to develop a camp sprang from several sources."[7] But Winter did not know what those sources were or why summer camp programs expanded so much in the postwar era. Scholars have focused on the importance of secular camps, the growth of evangelical youth organizations in the postwar era, and the impact of the religious right in the 1970s and 1980s but have

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[5] The Scopes Trial took place in Dayton, TN and tested the validity of the Butler Act, which made teaching evolution in Tennessee public schools a punishable crime. John Scopes taught evolution in school and was put on trial. William Jennings Bryan defended the Butler law and helped the prosecution while Clarence Darrow defended John Scopes. In the end, Scopes was found guilty and fined one hundred dollars, yet the fundamentalists were made to look backward and foolish and retreated from the ridicule of mainstream culture. See Jeffrey P. Moran, *The Scopes Trial: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2002, and Edward J. Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

[6] See Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[7] R. Milton Winter, "'A Place Called Hope': A Sixtieth Anniversary History of Camp Hopewell, 1949-2009 with A History of the Hopewell Presbyterian Church." Published at Oxford, MS, April 2010.

overlooked the ways that summer camps reveal the wide spectrum of differences in evangelicals.

Research into evangelical summer camps in the postwar era makes significant contributions to the fields of evangelical identity, evangelical youth, the history of childhood, and the history of camping.

Scholars wrestle with a definition of American Evangelicalism, as it remains a contested term for a shifting and changing group constantly negotiating and re-negotiating its relationship and distance from the term 'evangelical.' In addition, the postwar era reveals a great deal of fluidity with regard to evangelical identity. Summer camps mirrored this wide range of variance along the evangelical spectrum. Evangelical summer camps existed both in mainline denominations as well as more fundamentalist evangelical denominations and non-denominational churches. Today the distinctions between evangelical and liberal Protestant is clear cut. On the whole, mainline denominations are considered to be liberal protestant while groups outside of the mainline fall along the evangelical spectrum from more liberal evangelicals to fundamentalists. But in the postwar era, there was a great deal of mutability with the term evangelical and the beliefs associated with evangelicals. The spectrum of evangelicals was much less clear cut and showed significant variation with regard to more liberal evangelicals and more conservative evangelicals, even within the mainline denominations. My research relies upon the definition of evangelical used by David Bebbington.[8] Bebbington described the centrality of the authority of the Bible, the doctrine of

[8] David W. Bebbington, author of *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* and general editor of the 'History of Evangelicalism: People, Movements, and Ideas in

the cross, a conversion experience, and an emphasis on activism, in the form of spreading the gospel and humanitarian impulses, as the four components of American evangelicalism.[9] Randall Balmer added to Bebbington's definition by characterizing 'evangelicals' as an umbrella term that contains fundamentalists, evangelicals, Pentecostals, and charismatics.[10] Like Balmer and Bebbington, I see evangelicalism as an umbrella term that contains fundamentalists, Pentecostals, charismatics, and evangelicals, all containing Bebbington's four components as similarities while maintaining distinctive differences.

Many assume that fundamentalism is synonymous with evangelicalism, but this is a misconception. The fundamentalists emerged from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century response to intellectual movements and in 1909, published *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth.* This set of books outlined the inerrancy of the Bible, the virgin birth, salvation through Christ, the bodily resurrection of believers, and the pre-millennialist and bodily return of Jesus (which was coming soon).[11] In addition, the fundamentalists are also known for a general suspicion of 'worldliness,' consistent with the climate of separation

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the English-Speaking World,' along with Mark A. Noll, provided the most widely used definition of evangelicalism by scholars.

[9] David W. Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody,* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 21-40.

[10] Randal Balmer, Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into Evangelical Subculture, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[11] Pre-millennialism is the "eschatological doctrine that Jesus will return for the true believers *before* the millennium, the thousand years of righteousness predicted in the Book of Revelation." Randall Balmer, "Premillennialism," *Contemporary American Religion*, Vol. 2, Wade Clark Roof, ed., (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 1999), 548-49, *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. For more on the transition from postmillennialism to premillennialism, see Randall Balmer, *The Making of Evangelicalism: From Revivalism to Politics and Beyond* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010).

between liberal protestants and the more conservative evangelicals. Others confuse fundamentalists with evangelicals because the fundamentalists are the most visible and vocal subset of evangelicals in the twentieth century, according to scholars such as Bebbington and George Marsden.[12]

In many ways, to talk about American evangelicals, especially in the postwar, is to discuss significance of evangelicals acclimating to a changing postwar world. American Evangelical scholar Mark Noll describes American evangelicalism as "a form of culturally adaptive biblical experientialism." He highlights three major attributes of evangelicals: their value of religious experiences before God, an emphasis on the Bible as an authority for the ways they live their lives, and their ability to adapt to larger cultural trends. [13] My research adds to Noll's conception of evangelicalism. Evangelicals used innovations like reaching youth through summer camp experience to both convert and disciple evangelical youth. Noll also

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[12] Bebbington, 262. George Marsden, in his book *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870-1925,* maintains fundamentalism as a movement among American 'evangelical' Christians. Marsden explained how Henry Ward Beecher and Charles Blanchard, at the turn of the century, evinced the growing divide between liberal Protestants and evangelical Protestants. Large influxes of immigrants, growing numbers of Catholics, technological changes, a growing emphasis on the perfection of society, the push toward moral reform and social justice and the advent of growing scientific expertise, Darwinism, and historical criticism of the Bible all manifested this gradual split between the liberal Protestants and evangelical Protestants. Beecher advocated the adaption of religion to cultural changes, a focus more on the morality of religion reflected in society, and the moral reform of society while Blanchard reacted against the moral decay of society as American cultural moved further away from its divine roots and purposes. Blanchard advocated a reassertion of God's purpose and divine intervention in human lives, according to Marsden. This growing divide between liberal and more conservative Protestants complicates the term 'evangelical' as both groups contain elements of 'evangelicalism.'

[13] Mark A. Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity, An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 2.

highlights the variances within evangelicalism. He writes, "these evangelical traits have never by themselves yielded cohesive, institutionally compact, or clearly demarcated groups of Christians."[14]

Postwar summer camps, rich in diversity, exemplify this variety among evangelicals. In fact, summer camps demonstrate how wide the diversity within evangelicalism really was in the postwar era. From varying views on gender, race, discipleship, and political activism, summer camps place a spotlight on the wide array of differences among evangelicals. Nevertheless, despite their differences on a number of issues, evangelicals still shared the belief in the importance of conversion and the authority of the Bible.

Research into evangelical summer camps includes a spectrum of evangelicals, both conservative and liberal evangelicals, as well as fundamentalists. Many of the camps I examine are aligned with mainline denominations such as the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Lutherans, which some consider to be liberal protestant, not evangelical. However, a close examination of these mainline denominational camps demonstrates that a conversion experience remained important, which helps to place them more accurately as evangelicals than liberal protestants. Today the focus is on the conservatism of evangelicals and fundamentalists, especially because of the political affiliations of conservative religious groups. But an association of conservatism with evangelicalism is a recent concept. In the postwar era, the identity of evangelicals was much more diverse. The growing visibility and popularity evangelicals in the postwar, as evidenced in the rise of summer camps, parachurch organizations and Billy Graham crusades, served to re-energize an evangelical movement in the postwar and pushed evangelical

[14] Noll, 13.

Americans to think about how to identify themselves in the aftermath of World War II. American evangelicals wrestled with what it meant to be Christian, American, and evangelical and why those identifications mattered, especially for America's youth. As a result, diversity marked postwar evangelicals. Ideas of racial reconciliation, environmentalism, discipleship of women, and the importance of political activism were all in play for postwar evangelicals.

An exploration of summer camps demonstrates the significance of focusing on evangelical youth. Summer camps essentially functioned as informal educational institutions and created a unique environment of socialization and education to fill in gaps of the public education system. Evangelical summer camps functioned outside the oversight of public education and the requirements, restrictions, and regulations related to public education as youth. The unique setting of summer camps reflected increasing interest in aiming education not merely at young children but addressing educational needs such as life skills and character building activities for postwar preteens and teenagers. Numerous campers seem to have been significantly affected by their camp experiences as many went on to pursue innovative evangelical ministries such as Youth for Christ, Campus Crusade for Christ, and Inter-varsity Christian fellowship. This indicates the significance of the nation-wide effort to create the next generation of evangelicals through a less formal environment than classrooms and churches. In addition, the role of complementing an evangelical message with a natural or more wilderness-centered atmosphere struck a chord with postwar parents and educators who linked activity and experience in the wilderness to character-building and constructive activities.

Recent scholarship on evangelical youth has recognized the significance of parachurch organizations and the ways that these organizations gained popularity in the second half of the twentieth century.[15] An examination of summer camps complicates the narrative of growing parachurch organizations. Scholars indicate the current power of evangelicals is directly connected to their ability to organize the evangelical movement through parachurch organizations instead of local congregations or more traditional denominational structures. Most of the summer camps established in the postwar era were under the auspices of denominations and the denominational structure and institution was instrumental in planning, staffing, fundraising, and construction of the camps. Yet most summer camp programs functioned with their own board of directors and without the strict oversight of denominational leadership structure in the form of classes or synods. Thus postwar summer camps occupy a unique space between parachurch organizations and denominational structures.

The history of childhood recognizes the significance of the postwar era as critical to modern conceptions of childhood.[16] Unlike previous generations of parents, American postwar parents wanted to give their children opportunities to build character through organized play and leisure time. But postwar parents also tried to make sure their children were protected and inculcated with middle-class values through organized play. They believed childhood

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[15] Parachurch organizations, defined as "programs that blend business sensibilities with evangelical fervor…outside traditional church settings and operate instead through special–purpose organizations" which often more closely resemble modern corporations, began to gain popularity in the second half of the twentieth century. From D. Michael Lindsey, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 193-94; See also Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); John G. Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ: The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

[16] In this study, evangelical youth refers to children aged eleven or twelve to eighteen. Some camps had programs for fifth and sixth graders, but most camp programs were aimed at youth in junior high and high school.

activities should encourage good citizenship, a concern that became more significant in the postwar milieu of anxiety and change.[17] Evangelical summer camps highlight many of these concerns, but also add the concerns of evangelical parents who wanted their children to share their faith. For evangelicals, summer camps were not just arenas for play and character-building through competition and crafts, they were a place for children to make a decision for Christ and to discover God's call for their life. Summer camps demonstrate postwar white, middle class conceptions of childhood and parenting, but evangelical summer camps display the desires of postwar evangelical parents to embrace a distinctly evangelical and American identity.

The scholarship on summer camps does not address religious summer camp programs. The two most recent and prominent books about summer camps, Leslie Paris' *Children's Nature: The Rise of the American Summer Camp,* and Abigail A. Van Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness: Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth, 1890-1960,* deal with secular camps and mention religiously-affiliated summer camps only in passing. The scholarship on

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[17] Paula S. Fass and Mary Ann Mason, *Childhood in America: Past and Present* (New York: New York University Press, 2000); Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004). See also John Modell, *Into One's Own: From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 213-262 for a statistical analysis of the baby boom and childhood by the numbers; Joseph F. Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America 1790 to Present* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1977), 173-211 for a discussion of college, high schools and Christian Youth "Activities;" Grace Palladino, *Teenagers: An American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1996) for an assessment of teenage culture, especially with regard to consumption; Elliot West and Paula Petrik, eds., *Small Worlds: Children and Adolescents in America, 1850-1950* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 143-163 for an examination of popular culture on the home front; Elliott West, *Growing Up in Twentieth-Century America: A History and Reference Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 171-253; Joseph M. Hawes, *Children Between the Wars: American Childhood, 1920-1940* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997).

summer camps covers a myriad of geographical regions, gender, architecture, parenting, and many other useful resources in evaluating the impact of summer camps in the United States. They investigate the ways that summer camps attempted to re-define modern childhood through examining the key trends in camping practices and exploring the interplay of modernity with the primitive in summer camps. Research into evangelical summer camps reveals ways that these evangelical camps, at times, mirrored larger trends in secular camps, such as the use of Indian lore and the attempts to recapture pioneer identities.[18] But evangelical summer camp experiences differed significantly from the secular camp experiences because they focused on conversion and discipleship. For white middle class American evangelical parents, evangelical summer camp programs demonstrated the significant of religious goals for their children, not just good parenting or good citizenship.

When examining evangelical summer camps, a variety of sources are available. Although many scholars of religious subjects rely on ethnography and oral history, my project is primarily focused on written sources and material culture. An emphasis on the diversity of evangelical identity naturally fits with an examination of prescriptive literature from denominations, camping manuals, and individual summer camp programs. I am primarily interested in how evangelicals understood and explained their identity to parents, community members, campers, and wider communities of churched and unchurched Americans. The way

[18] See chapter 3 for a discussion of the use of Indian lore with regard to creating masculine identities for boys at evangelical summer camps like Camp Ridgecrest for Boys in Ridgecrest, NC and the use of pioneer designations for girls at Camp Crestridge for Girls in Ridgecrest. The Pioneer Girls organization also employed early colonist and pioneer designations. For more on the Pioneer Girls, see Eunice Russell Schatz, *The Slender Thread: Stories of Pioneer Girls' First 25 Years* (Mukilteo, WA: WinePress Publishing, 1996).

that campers, evangelicals, and Americans in general received and processed the message of evangelicalism is much more varied and the subject for another study. A concentration on the message itself, not its reception, is the reason for my focus on prescriptive literature.[19] However, while this study examines the impact of postwar summer camps throughout the United States, most sources from postwar-era camps are ephemeral. Well over a hundred summer camp programs were established throughout the northwest, southwest, Midwest, southern, and northeastern areas of the United States, but the sources from that era were difficult to attain. Some camps preserved historical materials and records but many did not or lost their records through fires or other natural disasters. A few evangelical summer camps from the postwar era left their records in an archive but the vast majority did not. Some camps responded to my queries for more information and many did not, which means the historical materials from the camp programs that I do have is selective and includes a number of camps from the Midwest, and a few from the south, northeast, southwest, and western regions of the United States. The Midwest region is overrepresented, but most evangelical summer camps established in the postwar era were in the Midwest region.[20]

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[19] For more on material culture and what it tells us about children's religious experiences, see "Material Children," in Robert A. Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 73-109.

[20] This study includes materials from Camp Crestridge for Girls, Ridgecrest, NC, Camp Geneva, Holland, MI, Camp Hopewell, Oxford, MS, Camp Lutherhaven, West Albion, IN, Camp Ridgecrest for Boys, Ridgecrest, NC, Camp Wyoming, Wyoming, IA, Cedar Campus, Cedarville, MI, East Iowa Bible Camp, Deep River, IA, Hidden Villa, Los Altos Hills, CA, Holston Area Camps, TN, Glorieta Baptist Assembly Camp and Retreat Center, Glorieta, NM, Lake Ann Camp, Lake Ann, MI, Lakeside Lutheran Camp, Spirit Lake, IA, New Life Ranch, Colcord, OK, Pine Ridge Bible

In this dissertation, each chapter explores a specific example of diversity within evangelical identity in the postwar through summer camps. The first chapter demonstrates the growth of summer camp programs within a larger postwar evangelical context of youth culture. Summer camps were introduced in large numbers during the postwar era in against the backdrop of successful youth organizations such as Young Life, Youth for Christ, Inter-Varsity, and Campus Crusade for Christ. Summer camps blossomed at the same time as other evangelical youth organizations grew, pointing to the larger interest of postwar evangelicals in American youth and the diversity of approaches to postwar youth. The second chapter explores the significance of denominational and non-denominationally affiliated postwar summer camp programs. Many scholars believe that the twentieth century is one of gradual decline for denominations, but the vast majority of summer camps in the postwar era had denominational affiliations. Denominational structures were important for funding, publicizing, and finding volunteers to run the camp as well as campers to attend the camps. However, non-denominational summer camp programs were also present in the postwar era, albeit in small numbers. The non-denominational summer camp programs focused more on conversion experiences at summer camp and tended to be more fundamentalist in their theology. The denominationally-affiliated postwar summer camps focused more on discipleship and grooming the next generation of leaders. Chapter three examines the implications of gender identity in postwar summer camps. A comparison of Camp Ridgecrest for Boys and Camp Crestridge for Girls reveals how some evangelicals focused on developing masculinity in evangelical boys

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Camp, Cedar Springs, MI, Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp, Canon City, CO, Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp, Story City, IA, Victory Bible Camp, Palmer, AK, and Wesley Woods, Indianola, IA.

through elements such as Indian lore. But the camp programs for girls focused on spiritual development and encouraged young evangelical women to pursue careers in ministry, which adds complexity to scholarship of gender in the postwar era. In chapter four, the significance of diversity among evangelicals is highlighted as both denominational and non-denominational postwar summer camps demonstrated significant amounts of diversity with regard to environmentalism and race. Postwar summer camps emphasized the importance of conservation and stewardship of God's creation as well as the role of nature in bringing campers closer to God. A few postwar summer camps were established as interracial summer camps, but the vast majority of white postwar evangelicals believed racial reconciliation was important yet did little to enact it. Chapter five shows the diversity of postwar evangelical identity through the calls for political activism by evangelical youth. Through the voices of the Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament speech collection, I explore the ways that evangelical youth believed American evangelicals needed to engage politically through peace activism, the establishment of Christian educational institutions, and training more missionaries to combat the threat of communism in America and abroad.

Religious scholar Robert A. Orsi explores the ways that children reflect the religious beliefs of their tradition. "One such medium of religious materialization—for rendering the invisible visible and present—of special importance for religious practitioners is children." Adults fret about passing their religious beliefs and values onto their children and, as a result, organize catechism classes, Sunday school programs, after school programs, and other special rituals to instill these beliefs and values into their children. While parents might say their children will be "bereft and alienated" without such instruction, Orsi says the core issue is the way that children "represent, among other things, the future of the faith…at stake our very existence, duration, and durability of a particular religious world." [21] For evangelicals, who emphasized the centrality of conversion for a true Christian identity, this anxiety over ensuring the next generation would not only join the tradition but champion the tradition led to the creation of new ways to convert and disciple: summer camps. In the midst of a postwar era of change and shifting currents of identity, evangelicals struggled to define themselves and displayed a striking amount of disparity with regards to issues such as gender, the environment, race, and political engagement. Yet evangelicals remained unified in their assertion of a renewed focus on youth. In a postwar world with unprecedented opportunities, especially for parents who survived the Great Depression and World War II, they channeled many of their anxieties into converting and discipling their youth to ensure the duration of evangelicalism into the next generation.

Orsi believes the simple desire to pass beliefs to our children obscures a much more complex relationship between religion and children. "Children's bodies, rationalities, imaginations, and desires have all been privileged media for giving substance to religious meaning, for making the sacred present and material, not only *for* children but *through* them too, for adults in relation to them."[22] In many respects, the summer camp is the ideal arena for seeing the ways that camp rituals like campfire services, recreational activities, crafts, songs, and even Native American and pioneer rituals served to mark children's bodies as places of

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[21] Robert A. Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 77.
[22] Orsi, 77.

religious meaning. Evangelical summer camps did not merely instruct children in evangelical values and principles but physically engaged children with religious rituals. Evangelical summer camps operated as vehicles for socializing and internalizing evangelical identity for postwar youth.

CHAPTER ONE:
"A Concentrated Opportunity to Place God back in the Thoughts of Youth": The Efforts of Postwar Youth Movements and Evangelical Summer Camps

"We used every modern means to catch the attention of the unconverted—and then we punched them right between the eyes with the gospel." Billy Graham[1]

The growth of evangelical summer camps in the postwar era occurred as part of a larger postwar trend focused on youth and evangelical youth. As postwar youth began to develop a distinct teenage identity, evangelicals redoubled their efforts to reach postwar youth. Evangelicals worked to engage evangelical ideas with postwar youth through popular postwar mediums like clubs, youth rallies, youth organizations, and summer camps. Evangelical postwar summer camp programs were unique from other youth organization in that camps provided an isolated environment away from the distractions of daily life. But summer camps were also part of a larger postwar effort by evangelicals to make evangelical beliefs and decisions relevant to the next generation of Americans.

In 1943, A.J. Bringle, wanted to organize a Bible camp in the area of Story City, IA. He had a reputation for being passionate about summer camps and believed that summer camps were the best to way to help the era's children to identify with the faith of their parents.[2]

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[1] George C. Douma,"Should a Classis or Presbytery Own its Camp Site?" in the *Earnest Worker*, A Sunday School Teacher's Magazine, March 1955 issue, 2, Holland Museum and Archives and Research Library (HMARL); William Martin, *A Prophet with Honor: The Billy Graham Story* (New York: William Morrow and Company), 1991), 90-94; Larry Eskridge, "'One Way': Billy Graham, the Jesus Generation, and the Idea of an Evangelical Youth Culture," *Church History* Vol. 67, No. 1 (March 1998), 83-106.

[2] N.E. Wuam, "Randall Minister Transforms Cow Pasture into Beautiful Bible Camp," Newspaper article, source unknown, August 29, 1946, as cited by Helen Severe, "Sweet Hour of Prayer: The Story of Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp, 1943-2004," 2; unpublished book manuscript; Riverside

According to Bringle, too many evangelicals focused on the traditional means of Sunday Schools, parochial schools, and weekday Bible Schools to teach their young children about the evangelical faith but neglected children as they aged out of the lower elementary-level stages. Bringle thought the church should do more to help children who drifted away and sowed "their wild oats" before coming back to their faith and the church. Too often summer camps existed in "usually unwholesome atmosphere of commercial summer resorts," so Bringle wanted to promote and develop evangelical summer camps in more isolated environments but still close to the churches it drew its campers from. Summer camps, according to Bringle, were ideal for nurturing young people in their faith.[3]

Bringle's vision of an evangelical summer camp was realized in Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp, established in 1943. The focus of the camp was clear: for campers to experience Jesus in a "new and more personal way."[4] The camp banner proclaimed, "The main purpose of our Bible Camp is to make Jesus better known to the campers and to guide them into conscious faith in Him that they might live the life which is in His name, live truly Christian lives. Pray that God might use our Bible Camp to magnify Jesus Christ by leading many boys and girls into the life which is in His name."[5] Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp's purpose was a concerted effort to encourage a religious conversion experience as well as discipleship and leadership training for

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Lutheran Bible Camp Archives, Story City, IA. Bringle organized a Bible camp in the Madison Circuit area of South Dakota and worked as the director of a camp nearby his Wisconsin church before his tenure in the Story City area of Iowa. Bringle also served on the National Bible Camp Committee in 1940, which oversaw more than sixty Bible camps in the Luther League.

[3] Severe, "Sweet Hour of Prayer," 3.

[4] Severe, "Sweet Hour of Prayer," 9.

[5] Riverside Bible Banner, July 22, 1945, in Severe, "Sweet Hour of Prayer," 1.

children while at summer camp.[6] It is typical of many evangelical summer camps of the postwar era. However, Riverside also exemplified the postwar summer camp's attempt to engage in popular culture in a more relevant way. Campers spent mornings and afternoons listening to different speakers teach about the Bible in forty minute sessions.[7] In many of their discussion periods, campers were encouraged to "speak out, question, or even disagree with their teachers," a departure from the traditional teaching methods of rote memorization and ingestion of teachings without critical analysis. In the 1940s, many of the questions that campers engaged with included topics such as smoking, dancing, movies, marriage age, Bible reading, and attitudes of Christians in the armed forces.[8] This new method allowing campers to question aspects of their faith and culture revealed recognition by evangelicals of the need to engage with popular culture to effectively reach postwar youth.

Evangelical summer camps did not suddenly emerge in the postwar era. Summer camps, both religious and secular, existed before the turn of the century, beginning in the 1880s and blossoming in numbers and gaining popularity for another five decades.[9] But most evangelical summer camps found their roots in the 1940s and 1950s as evangelicals connected the importance of summer camp with conversion, training, and discipleship of American youth for the purpose of grooming the next generation of evangelical leadership. For example, many

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[6] A "decision for Christ," in evangelical terms, is a conversion experience. It is also referred to as being "born again" or committing one's life to Christ, leaving behind an 'old life' and beginning a 'new life.'

[7] Severe, "Sweet Hour of Prayer," 9.

[8] Severe, "Sweet Hour of Prayer," 12.

[9] Leslie Paris, *Children's Nature: The Rise of the American Summer Camp* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 6.

summer camp programs in the United Methodists' Holston Conference area of Tennessee existed before World War II. But during the postwar period, the number of summer camp programs grew rapidly. "Nine camps were established and built. Many people were trained and worked as volunteer camp counselors. Nearly all the pastors of the post-war period worked a week of camp. It was an unspoken understanding that to hold a pastoral appointment meant that one served a week in camp. This effort by so many people paid off in a time when so many camp age children were available."[10] The study of postwar evangelical summer camps, at its core, is an examination of the ways that evangelical adults understood their own identity and how they envisioned passing their faith and evangelical identity to their children of the next generation.[11] For evangelicals, that required new tactics to appeal to postwar youth. Evangelicals focused on engaging with popular culture, as evidenced in the rallies and meetings of postwar parachurch organizations, and on creating environments where learning about the evangelical faith was fun and active, as evidenced in summer camps.

The rise of evangelical summer camps corresponded with the postwar context of an expanding middle class interested in new ideas of 'proper' parenting and ways to encourage 'meaningful play' in their children. American parents concentrated on establishing more summer camps in an effort to apply "intensive parenting" strategies as means of expressing

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[10] Charles W. Maynard, *Where the Rhododendrons Grow: A History of Camping and Leisure Ministries in the Holston Conference*, (Johnson City, TN: The Overmountain Press, 1988), 23.

[11] See also Randall Balmer's chapter about Jack Wyrtzen's Word of Life Bible Camp in Schroon Lake, NY, "Adirondack Fundamentalism" in *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture of America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 92-108.

postwar citizenship.[12] Van Slyck described this parenting focus as a product of a growing middle class: “Like ballet lessons and Little League, summer camp became an increasingly common enhancement activity for middle-class children, as well as a welcome break for their parents, who were devoting so much of their time and energy to child-rearing responsibilities.”[13] In the thriving economic era following World War II, more Americans understood their role as parents to include character-building and religious experiences through summer camps. Notably, evangelical leadership viewed this newly distinctive group, *teenagers,* as the ideal opportunity to recreate and redefine their postwar image. Both parachurch organizations and churches underscored the need for intervention in this postwar youth generation and created clubs, groups, and summer camps in order to train and inculcate evangelical values in American youth. In the process of these innovations, evangelicals tapped into a crucial strategy for establishing their modern twentieth century identity: an engagement with mainstream American popular culture to successfully influence American youth.

In this study of evangelical summer camps, I am particularly interested in the ways that evangelicals, and, more specifically, evangelical parents, understood their own identity as they

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[12] For a more comprehensive picture of postwar parenting, see Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era,* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Julia Grant, *Raising Baby by the Book: The Education of American Mothers* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), Hugh Cunningham, “Histories of Childhood,” *American Historical Review* 103, no. 4 (1998): 1195-1208; Joseph Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); N. Ray Hiner and Joseph M. Hawes, eds., *Growing Up in America: Children in Historical Perspective* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Viviana A Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York: Basic Books, 1985); John Modell, *Into One’s Own: From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989).

[13] Van Slyck, xxvi; Paris, 236-37.

sought to package and convince the next generation to accept those same beliefs and values. To ground this study of evangelical youth, an exploration of scholarship on childhood and evangelical youth is necessary. Scholars of childhood recognize the significance of the postwar period but overlook the ways that evangelical youth are similar and different from non-evangelical youth. Scholars of evangelical youth typically focus on techniques of youth ministry or explore organizational histories with an emphasis on the leadership instead of the youth. An examination of summer camps allows the two bodies of scholarship to meet. Summer camps provide insight on the ways that evangelicals realized the importance of the postwar youth and endeavored to construct their message to find success with this influential group.

An understanding of the history of childhood in American is critical to understanding how postwar evangelicals understood their children. Historian of childhood Paula Fass claims children have "always been critically important for parents as well as communities," but the value of children differed based on the time period. Before the twentieth century, the value of children was economic, not emotional. Expected to contribute to the family unit, children were considered adult producers around the age of twelve.[14] By the beginning of the twentieth century, children began to be viewed and valued in more emotional and relational terms, rather than economic terms. Many new laws prohibited child labor and imposed longer periods of schooling, education, and 'play,' while parents, as a general trend, had fewer children and "put more effort into raising them rather than receiving the services of many children."[15]

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[14] Paula S. Fass and Mary Ann Mason, *Childhood in America: Past and Present* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 1.
[15] Fass and Mason, 3.

Increasingly, according to Fass, children in the twentieth century had their lives "increasing routinized around school, not work, and augmented with more varied forms of play and entertainment."[16] The upsurge in popularity of postwar summer camps correlated with this larger trend of an emotional, educational, and leisure emphasis for children.

Steven Mintz also considers childhood and children as "active agents in the evolution of their society."[17] Mintz illustrates the importance of children in the years after World War II as many wartime separations and losses "led many Americans to place a heavy emphasis on family life in the postwar years."[18] The word *teenager* first appeared during World War II, and the postwar period developed the distinct teenage language, style, and music for the first time for this particular age group. Virtually universal high school attendance, suburbanization, early entrance into adulthood, and a degree of affluence "allowed teens to become an autonomous market segment."[19] Mintz cites postwar patterns of high birthrates, stable divorce levels, and lower numbers of mothers in the workforce as an "aberration, out of line with long-term historical trends."[20] However, this 'aberration' created a similarly unique focus on children and childrearing. Modern medicine eventually triumphed over the polio epidemic, and while medical dangers began to ebb in the face of modern science, "public attention to childrearing

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[16] Fass and Mason, 3.

[17] Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), ix.

[18] Mintz, 274.

[19] Mintz, 285.

[20] Mintz, 276.

mounted, as did anxiety that faulty childrearing could produce enduring problems."[21] Dr. Spock's groundbreaking book, *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care,* reproved mothers to trust their instincts and did little to alleviate anxiety that mothers felt towards childrearing. In the postwar focus on childrearing, parents were not only pressured to produce a happy child but also a "psychologically well-adjusted adult and a harmonious democratic society."[22] Not only did postwar parents need to worry about their children turning out 'right,' they also had to ensure the continuation of democracy through their parenting skills.[23] Postwar summer camps reflected this new postwar concern about instilling not just evangelical beliefs but ideals about what the next generation of good American citizens looked like in the postwar world.

Although some Americans may reminisce about the placidity of the 1950s, scholars of childhood portray the postwar era more accurately as a time of anxiety. The cover of *Newsweek* in 1956 read "Our Teenagers Are out of Control" and reported of youths "torturing" the elderly and "horsewhipping girls."[24] Mintz claims that these reports of delinquent child

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[21] Mintz, 279. For more information on polio, see John R. Paul's *A History of Poliomyelitis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971); Jane S. Smith, *Patenting the Sun: Polio and the Salk Vaccine* (New York: Morrow, 1990); and Richard Carter, *Breakthrough: The Saga of Jonas Salk* (New York: Trident Press, 1966).

[22] Mintz, 279-80; Julia Grant, *Raising Baby by the Book: The Education of American Mothers* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 201-244. See also Benjamin Spock, *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946); republished in many later editions as *Baby and Child Care.*

[23] Grant, 161-200.

[24] "Our Teenagers are Out of Control," *Newsweek,* 1956, as cited in Mintz, 291.

and teenage behavior targeted American parents, "haunted by the specter of Hitler youth,"[25] to be less indulgent and to ensure a "proper" home life. Some observers blamed parents, but others reproached overcrowded schools, broken homes, lack of good role models, and, notably, the decline of religion.[26] Some American parents used places like summer camps or other youth organizations to keep their children from delinquency.[27] But in light of broader postwar understanding of Hitler Youth and other totalitarian indoctrination of youth, evangelical

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[25] MIntz, 291-92; See also Abbott Gleason, *Totalitarianism: The Inner History of The Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Leerom Medovoi, *Rebels: Youth and the Cold War Origins of Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005)

[26] Miner, *What about the Children?* 152, 159, 162, 164; Mintz, 291-92. See also John Modell, *Into One's Own: From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 213-262 for a statistical analysis of the baby boom and childhood by the numbers; Joseph F. Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America 1790 to Present* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1977), 173-211 for a discussion of college, high schools and Christian Youth "Activities;" Grace Palladino, *Teenagers: An American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1996) for an assessment of teenage culture, especially with regard to consumption; Elliot West and Paula Petrik, eds., *Small Worlds: Children and Adolescents in America, 1850-1950* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 143-163 for an examination of popular culture on the home front; Elliott West, *Growing Up in Twentieth-Century America: A History and Reference Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 171-253; Joseph M. Hawes, *Children Between the Wars: American Childhood, 1920-1940* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997).

[27] For more on parenting in the postwar era, see Ruth Feldstein, "Citizenship, Motherhood, and Race in New Deal Liberalism," and "Psychology, Masculinity, and Maternal Failure," in *Motherhood in Black and White: Race and Sex in American Liberalism, 1930-1965* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 12-39, 40-61; Ellen Seiter, "Toys R Us: Marketing to Children and Parents" in *Sold Separately: Children and Parents in Consumer Culture* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 1-3, 193-226; Drew Humphries, *Crack Mothers: Drugs, Pregnancy and the Media* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), 1-15; Viviana Zelizer, "From Baby Farms to Black-Market Babies: The Changing Market for Children," in *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Values of Children* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 3-6, 169-207; Rima Apple, *Perfect Motherhood: Science and Childrearing in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006); Robert Griswold, *Fatherhood in America: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); Judith Waltzer Leavitt, "Fathers in Waiting Rooms" in *Make Room for Daddy: The Journey from Waiting Room to Birthing Room* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 48-79.

parents desired to instill an American evangelical identity that included evangelical beliefs, hard work, and discipleship training to give youths a purpose, mission, calling, and career.

Significantly, scholars of childhood such as Mintz and Gilbert recognize the widespread concerns about youth and delinquency, but fail to connect concerns about delinquency with the rise of evangelical youth movements. Other scholars have recognized this "surprising surge" of evangelicalism among American youth during the 1940s and 1950s, but few have provided satisfying answers to explain where this surge came from and why it occurred.[28] William G. McLoughlin contends the noted postwar evangelist, Billy Graham, and his crusades and rallies of evangelical rebirth should be understood as the "nativist phase" of the "Fourth Great Awakening."[29] However, McLoughlin's claim makes the evangelical youth expansion part of a larger 'tradition' of revival and renewal in American history when it is quite clear that American youth, as a group, did not widely participate in evangelical revivals during previous centuries. In addition, McLoughlin's assertions overlook the fact that these parachurch organizations and summer camps focused *specifically* on youth, not just Americans in general.

Postwar evangelicals recognized the connections between concerns about youth and the upsurge of youth organizations in response to anxious evangelical parents. A thesis published in 1950 by Alma Culton promoted the intentional formation of youth organizations to address current postwar fears about America's youth. She identified concerns about rising

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[28] Shelley covers the history of Youth for Christ, Young Life and Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship in his article, Bruce L. Shelley, "The Rise of Evangelical Youth Movements" *Fides et Historia* XCIII, 1 (January 1986), 47-63; 58.

[29] William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reforms* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 1-12, 212-216.

secularism, the prevalence of science, laxity of parental controls, and higher paying jobs leading to satisfaction in material goods instead of religion as the key contributors to 'the problem.' Culton explained World War II placed many American youth in uniform and "they were cut loose from home and church ties with the resulting pessimism of 'let's live for today'….Their spiritual sensitivity was numbed by lowered moral standards and increased laxity. Crime among young people began to climb as they sought new and greater thrills."[30] Significantly, Culton also referred to ineffective church programs, "combined with a spiritually lax home life" left American youth to "drift spiritually."[31] The solution, according to evangelicals like Culton, was to create more appealing programs for postwar youth education to combat growing secularism and delinquency.

More recent scholarship also recognizes the connection between postwar perceptions of delinquency and the rise of youth organizations but does not recognize the role of summer camps as effective sites of youth transformation. Bruce Shelley, in his article tracing the history of evangelical youth movements, argues the postwar perception of the rise of juvenile delinquency spurred evangelicals to action. Jim Rayburn, founder of Young Life, "acknowledged that teenagers in America were 'on a rampage.' He blamed parental neglect and John Dewey's philosophy of self-expression in the schools for contributing to this 'rowdyism and crime.'" Rayburn's solution? Americans needed to spend more time in church and teaching teens the

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[30] Alma Culton, master of religious education thesis, *A Comparison of Extra-Church Organizations for Youth: Young Life and Youth for Christ*, (Biblical Seminary in New York, April 1950), v-vi.
[31] Culton, v.

"knowledge of God."[32] According to Shelley, postwar evangelicals believed new and more vibrant evangelical youth organizations were the answers to American concerns over delinquency. For example, a 1948 edition of *Watchman-Examiner* praised Youth for Christ Saturday night rallies as meeting a need that churches neglected: "In the midst of community revelry and promiscuity and irresponsibility the churches were utterly indifferent and incompetent to meet the situation."[33] "As a result," Shelley writes, "parachurch youth ministries arose and spread…the need constituted the call."[34] But Shelley only focuses parachurch youth organizations of Youth for Christ, Young Life, and Inter-Varsity Christian fellowship. He fails to address the ways that evangelical summer camps, as organizations focused on youth, also addressed evangelical concerns about delinquency and identity in the postwar world. Evangelical summer camps, more than parachurch youth organizations, embody postwar concerns about delinquent youth. Summer camps provided a more complete immersion in an evangelical identity as camps were intended to take campers away from mainstream American life and away from its secular influences, in order to encourage an evangelical commitment from its campers.

In light of these concerns, evangelicals (and evangelical parents) mobilized to instill Christian education in America's youth. Evangelical scholar Joel Carpenter uncovered the

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[32] Jim Rayburn, "Teenagers on the Rampage" *Christian Life*, February 1954, 28-30.
[33] *Watchman Examiner,* March 18, 1948, 274-75.
[34] Bruce L. Shelley, "The Rise of Evangelical Youth Movements" *Fides et Historia* XCIII, 1 (January 1986), 47-63; 59-60.

renewed importance for evangelicals to concentrate on America's youth.[35] Carpenter re-evaluated the 'underground' period of fundamentalism after Scopes as he traced the tension between the fundamentalist identity as "quintessential Americans" and "alienated outsiders." Carpenter successfully demonstrated that between 1930 and 1940, American fundamentalists 'underground' period enabled them to "establish their identity, consolidate and institutional network, and rethink their mission to America." In the 1930s and 1940s, according to Carpenter, evangelicals appealed to youth by tapping into mainstream culture. For example, rally directors imitated well-known entertainers' personalities and program styles, rallies, updated gospel music, and good publicity. In parachurch organizations such as Youth for Christ, Carpenter reveals the connection between "exuberant evangelicalism" and a "war-inspired revival of the American civic faith."[36] In the 1940s, noted youth evangelist Billy Graham worked for Youth For Christ (YFC), a parachurch organization for teens, as a traveling evangelist after his graduation from Wheaton College. Graham, "resplendent in the flashy suits, hand-painted ties, and bright 'glo-sox' that characterized the YFC style," gained popularity on the YFC rally circuit from 1945 to 1947.[37] From his message to his style and the orchestration of the YFC rallies, Graham embodied the new effort of evangelicals to capture teenage audiences with "snappy choruses, instrumental solos, magicians, and Bible trivia contests." According to evangelical scholar Larry Eskridge, Graham rapidly consumed the "methodological rule of

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[35] Joel A. Carpenter's work, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* is the most recent and dominant scholarly treatment of American fundamentalism. Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), xii.

[36] Carpenter, *Revive Us Again,* 162-6.

[37] Eskridge, "'One Way,'" 85.

thumb" of using popular culture to reach the postwar American youth: "We used every modern means to catch the attention of the unconverted—and then we punched them right between the eyes with the gospel."[38]

Thomas Bergler, in a dissertation about Christian youth groups in the postwar era, linked the 'culture of crisis' with the religious needs of youth, which differed from the needs of earlier generations. However, Bergler ultimately argued the postwar culture of crisis as the groundwork for the 1960s culture wars while I connect the postwar culture of crisis to the construction of evangelical identity. This evangelical identity cemented the political and cultural dominance of evangelicals in more recent decades.[39] Many evangelicals tied the postwar culture of crisis with the unique religious needs of young people, emphasizing "patriotism, popular music, star athletes, and fervent evangelistic preaching." Protestant adult leaders saw America's youth demanding different spiritual, political and recreational opportunities than the adult leaders. This suggested that American youth embraced a religious message that "incorporated popular culture and emphasized patriotism and clean living alongside traditional Christianity." [40] Evangelicals viewed the establishment of religious and

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[38] Eskridge, "'One Way,'" 85; Martin, *A Prophet with Honor,* 90-94.

[39] Culton, iv-viii; Thomas E. Bergler, dissertation, *Winning America: Christian Youth Groups and the Middle-Class Culture of Crisis, 1930-1965*, (Notre Dame, December 2000), introduction. See also Thomas E. Bergler, *The Juvenilization of American Christianity* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012).

[40] John G. Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ: The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America,* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 23.

youth organizations as effective ways to reassert Christian influence in America in a time of communist threat.[41]

The explosion of new evangelical summer camps during the 1940s and 1950s affirms Carpenter's scholarship on the transition from underground to an established and powerful institutional network. But while summer camps maintained similar goals as other postwar evangelical youth organizations—conversion and discipleship—summer camps were unique. They created a separate space for youth that physically detached them from their home environment. Summer camps still used popular culture to appeal to postwar youth but deliberately created a separate space for campers to experience evangelical beliefs and values throughout the day, days, or weeks of attendance. The camp experience, according to Jon Pahl, in his book, *Youth Ministry in Modern America: 1930 to Present,* was to aid youth in shedding more childish behaviors and engage them "as thoughtful Christian young people in practices that do not simply conform to a shallow intimacy, challenge or community." The camp experience is different from other Christian educational experiences because "young people leave home and live together for a period of time in a community where issues of intimacy, compassion, and community coalesce in dramatic ways."[42] This immersion into an evangelical lifestyle, while still maintaining connections to mainstream culture, appealed to evangelical parents and campers. Scholars have overlooked the significance of an evangelical immersion

[41] Bergler, introduction.

[42] Jon Pahl, *Youth Ministry in Modern America: 1930 to Present*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2000), 174. Pahl acknowledges the importance of the summer camp experience but devotes most of his scholarship to summer camp experiences within youth organizations such as The Walther League, Young Christian Workers, and Youth for Christ.

experience at summer camps. But this summer camp experience serves to illustrate the ways that evangelicals recognized the importance of focusing on youth in the postwar and were willing to try new and innovative ways to reach them, by engaging with popular culture and using a summer camp environment.

Evangelicals understood that winning over youth was crucial in the postwar. They used many techniques to reach postwar youth through parachurch organizations. Organizations such as Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, Campus Crusade for Christ, and Young Life were effective ways to connect with postwar youth.

Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) is a significant example of postwar efforts to socialize and train young evangelical Americans in the development of an evangelical identity. IVCF, an evangelical campus ministry established in 1919 with an emphasis on student leadership and responsibility, viewed the undergraduate years of America's youth as a critical time in making a decision for Christ.[43] The IVCF National Secretary at the time and author of an Inter-Varsity manual published in 1958, Charles Hummel, expressed his concern about students facing "an increased emphasis upon the scientific method and outlook." He continued to explain the task of Christian students "will not have been completed until there is an effective evangelical witness in every tertiary educational institution in the United States, and until there is a similar witness established in the other universities of the world."[44] Hummel's IVCF, while emphasizing the conversion and discipleship of fellow students at the collegiate level also

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[43] Charles E. Hummel, *Campus Christian Witness: an Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship Manual* Written by Charles E. Hummel, (Chicago, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1958), 8.
[44] Hummel, 13.

underscored the evangelical focus on conversion and discipleship. IVCF was uneasy with the lack of religious instruction in the public education system. Hummel's instructional manual also highlighted the degree to which he believed the postwar American culture was in disarray and lacking in core values:

> "An uncertainty has arisen out of theoretical advances on the frontiers of physics and practical consideration of the nuclear monsters which science has produced. In the realm of ethics and morality all seems to have become relative so that no longer is there any absolute right and wrong. Finally, philosophy and religion have witnessed the bankruptcy of optimistic liberalism and humanism which dominated Western thought at the turn on the century, which their confidence in the goodness of man and the inevitability of progress. Thus the culture in which we find ourselves is, in a broad sense, characterized by a breakdown in authority and a resultant lack of direction and purpose in life."[45]

Hummel characterized American postwar society as missing purpose and direction. He traced the concept of the university from its creation in the Middle Ages, which connected all areas of learning to Christianity, and then to the Renaissance, when questioning and experimentation displaced a primarily Christian and church-centered worldview. Eventually, according to Hummel, Christianity became just another department and a conflict developed between scientific objectivism, trusted because dealing with *facts,* and the humanities, more subjective because dealing with *values.*[46] Hummel bemoaned the postwar education as secular to the extent of eliminating a Christian worldview from education. Religion had become compartmentalized, according to Hummel. Hummel understood the role of IVCF as vital because "the modern campus has been characterized as a marketplace of ideas, each with its

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[45] Hummel, 22-23.
[46] Hummel, 24-27.

own booth hawking its wares. In the absence of the earlier unifying force of Christianity, with God at the center of education, today it is pretty much every idea for itself."[47] The role of IVCF, and more broadly, Christian education, enabled students to place Christ at the center of their lives, understand Christianity's relevance in the postwar daily life, and taught them how to weigh and recognize the secular ideas and objectives of the world as limited and unfulfilling. This was an important innovation in reaching American postwar youth, but, as the name demonstrates, IVCF specifically targeted college-age youth.

The story of Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ also illuminates the postwar renewal of evangelicalism in youth in response to anxieties and changes in postwar America. Bill Bright founded the parachurch organization in 1951 on the University of California at Los Angeles. Scholar John G. Turner, in his history of Campus Crusade, emphasized a significant reason for the "vitality of evangelicalism" in the postwar United States was "the ability of evangelical parachurch organizations to creatively adapt and market their faith to modern culture."[48] Most summer camps did not exhibit precisely the same parachurch qualities as Campus Crusade or IVCF by planting branches of their organization across college campuses. But many evangelical summer camps functioned, in some ways, as parachurch organizations in that they began as an outgrowth of a particular denomination but were then run by their own board of directors in a more corporate model functioning "outside" the church. Turner

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[47] Hummel, 28. See also C. Stacey Woods, *The Growth of a Work of God: The Story of the Early Days of the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship of the United States of America as told by its First General Secretary* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1978).

[48] John G. Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ: The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 2.

understood the growth of parachurch organizations since the end of World War II as significant inroads that evangelicals made into mainstream popular culture. Furthermore, Turner claims the methods of parachurch organizations of the 1940s and 1950s allowed them to successfully reach America's youth.

The organization, Young Life, also illustrates the successful methods of parachurch groups to tap into mainstream culture in order to reach the postwar youth. Notably, Young Life started a camp program and provides an important window into the ways that postwar evangelicals sought to reach youth and discovered the particular effectiveness of a summer camp program in reaching youth. Young Life, the vision of Jim Rayburn, centered on moving "from the traditional revival ten to the suburban living room."[49] Rayburn, through trial and error experiences in his focus on youth ministry, articulated the core principles of Young Life:

1. Hold meetings with teenagers away from school. They are more comfortable in homes than they are in school or in church. Teenagers will go where their friends are.
2. Aim for leaders in the school; others will follow.
3. Make the meetings enjoyable: skits, jokes, singing.[50]

Notice how the principles of Young Life correspond to overarching evangelical goals in the postwar. They engaged with mainstream culture through making meetings fun, and separated the youth from their typical environments—a key attribute of summer camp programs.

Young Life staff, in their first staff conference from June 24 to July 8 in 1945, entered into a time of planning, praying, and sharing ideas in an attempt to explore ideas outside of the

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[49] Shelley, 53.

[50] Char Meredith, *It's a Sin to Bore a Kid: The Story of Young Life,* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1978), 21; Shelley, 53.

big rallies, tents, assemblies, which evangelicals had used for generations. Bruce Shelly, who traced the history of evangelical youth movements, writes, "they were trying to discover what made teenagers tick. Young Life, it seemed, was most effective when leaders contacted teenagers one on one. That is one reason camping proved so effective."[51] Significantly, Young Life envisioned a camp and retreat center as an ideal solution to the problem of effectively reaching postwar youth with an evangelical message. Young Life purchased Star Ranch near Pike's Peak in Colorado, and Star Ranch soon became the central location for the Young Life headquarters and organization. In 1952 alone, over 4,000 campers attended Young Life camp. Shelly contends that Young Life had an effective way of reaching America's youth that differed from other secular camping programs at the time. "Young Life ranches stressed personal relationship between leaders and campers: laughing, singing, hiking, eating; praying. And just as the clubs were designed to attract non-Christian young people, so the camping experience was tailored for teenagers from unchurched families." The promotional information from Young Life camp highlighted the effectiveness of the camp program in reaching youth. While hiking across a lovely meadow in the mountains, one camper remarked, "We don't have the teensiest chance against God out here! You guys have got it rigged."[52] This particular statement reflects how effective Young Life, specifically its summer camp program, 'got' American evangelical teens and designed an evangelical message and identity effectively to postwar youth.

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[51] Shelley, 54.

[52] Meredith, 21; Shelley, 55.

While the effectiveness of youth parachurch organizations like IVCF, Campus Crusade, and Young Life continued their influence in the postwar era, summer camps operated primarily outside of youth parachurch organizations. The rise of summer camps coincides with the rise of youth organizations but the camp experience was unique. Postwar summer camps removed youth from their homes and created a separate sacred space to encourage a meeting with God that would be life-changing.

Camp Geneva, on the beaches of Lake Michigan in Holland, Michigan, illuminates the ways that evangelicals questioned their effectiveness in reaching the postwar era youth and proceeded to consider new ways to connect to youth through summer camps. Camp Geneva professes its evangelical roots from the Reformed Church denomination, which claimed a firm commitment to education. [53] An informational booklet published in 1950 cited the denomination's founding educational institutions as evidence of its commitment to Christian

[53] The Reformed Church in America claims the Collegiate Reformed Church in New Amsterdam, established in 1628, as the "oldest evangelical church in North America with a continuous ministry." The Reformed Church grew out of the Protestant Reformation, following the doctrines and teachings of John Calvin, whose reforms extended to Scotland (the Presbyterian Church) and also to the Netherlands as the Dutch Reformed Church, where it spread to North American through the Dutch settlers in New Amsterdam, now New York. In 1867 the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church changed its name to the Reformed Church in America. Although located initially in the New Amsterdam/New York geographic area, Dutch settlers, buoyed by new immigrants, moved to Pella, Iowa and Zeeland, Michigan where they united their churches with the Reformed Church. Utilizing a representative form of government, the Reformed Church places Jesus Christ and his resurrection as central, emphasizes the spreading of the gospel and the central authority of the Bible. Today the Reformed Church consists of roughly three hundred thousand members. See "Brief Outline of RCA History," Reformed Church in America denominational website, http://rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=2181, accessed May 6, 2009.

education and scholarship.[54] The booklet stated "We believe in an educated people and ministry. All men have been placed on earth to live for God."[55] But despite the denomination's commitment to the education of youth, the interest of youth in evangelical beliefs and values continued to wane. In the 1950s, evangelicals took notice and decided to find ways to interest postwar youth.

The evangelicals who founded Camp Geneva desired to connect these new innovations of a summer camp program as merely a new technique to reach youth that still retained the evangelical values of Christian education.[56] On July 19, 1946, a finance committee formed to attain funds for the project. The theme of the fund drive, "Invading Vacationland for Christ," encompassed many of the goals and visions of the camp, which would later appear on all the promotional materials for the camp: "Camp Geneva would be known for: its Christian influence, its warm evangelical emphasis, its high moral and spiritual standards, its atmosphere of friendliness." Founder George Douma's history of Camp Geneva emphasized the connection between Reformed theology and Christian education. He outlined the prominence of parent-child relationships, the language of covenant, infant baptism as a promise of parents to train and teach their children in Christian way of life, daily devotions of families, Sunday School

[54] The RCA established Rutgers University and New Brunswick Seminary in New Brunswick, NJ, Hope College of Holland, MI, Central College of Pella, IA, Northwestern Junior College and Academy in Orange City, IA and Western Theological Seminary in MI.

[55] "The Reformed Church –What Is It?" Published in the interest of the Reformed Church in America by The Church Press of Grand Rapids, MI, 1950.

[56] Douma, *A Brief Record of Camp Geneva,* 33. The name, Camp Geneva, evoking the location of John Calvin's activities in the days of the Reformation, was finally agreed upon after the board of directors debated and discarded the other possibilities of Hope, Calvin, Reformed Church Youth Camp, Heidelberg, and Camp Van Raalte. Douma, *A Brief Record of Camp Geneva,* 31.

classes, and catechism classes to teach doctrine all pointing to the centrality of education of youth to the Reformed Church.[57] Douma and the other founders and visionaries of Camp Geneva envisioned Christian education as multifaceted and zeroed in on adding a summer camp element to an already substantial Christian education programs through the church because of the way a summer camp functioned as a retreat and uniquely outdoor experience, away from a church building.[58] In an editorial written by 'Reverend Klaus' concerning the unique residential and retreat aspect of Camp Geneva, Klaus wrote, "I wish that all members of the Reformed Church in America could realize what these conferences do for the churches." He continued,

> "there are the youngsters coming from as far away as Cleveland. All types, all sizes, all descriptions. It is a treat to be with them for a week. You play and eat with them. You get into their minds and hearts. You watch their abilities and interests. You help enrich their lives and they help to enrich yours. You were uncled and aunted for a week. No living being will ever have more nephews and nieces for the rest of his or her life."[59]

This excerpt highlights Christian education, adult and youth relationships formed, and the recreational and active outdoor environment that summer camps such as Camp Geneva provided for both the adult leaders and the youth attending the weekly sessions or 'conferences.' But Douma did not believe summer camps such as Camp Geneva should substitute for the church and its education but should instead supplement and complement the church and the denomination's work to reach the unchurched and to educate Christian youth.

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57 Douma, *A Brief Record of Camp Geneva*, 9-10.

58 Letter to George Douma from Jeanette Hecisses, dated July 19, 1991.

59 Editorial written by Reverend Klaus, *Sunday School Guide,* September 7, 1947.

Camp Geneva reflected concerns about the dominance of science in public education. According to evangelicals, the church needed to reassert its commitment to the education of youth in biblical principles. In order to do this effectively, churches, through programs like summer camps, could engage popular culture, but with an evangelical message. George C. Douma, the founder and first president of Camp Geneva's board of directors, explained that postwar young people needed to know their "origin, their purpose, and their destination." According to Douma, the evangelical's purpose was to "live for God" in order to demonstrate that the "crown of His creation may be studded with jewels unmatched anywhere in the universe. Man has an elevated purpose. This challenge will not go unheeded by our young people. They want to know. Youth camps can solidify what our churches teach."[60] Concerned about the apparent secularism prevalent in postwar American society and its effect on postwar youth, Douma wrote,

> "God is often omitted from the textbooks in our schools. As one prominent Presbyterian leader said, 'By our silences in secular education we have indoctrinated children to believe that God does not exist and that Jesus Christ does not matter,' To have education without God is as foolish as writing words without letters or working mathematical problems without numbers. Camp gives the Church a concentrated opportunity to place God back in the thoughts of youth. This is God's world." [61]

Douma's statement reflects a widespread evangelical apprehension at the prevalence of secularism in American society and the failure of churches to seek and save the 'lost,' especially the postwar youth. A report on churches and evangelism from the Kalamazoo Reformed Church classis revealed frustration with the diminishing power of the church in the life of

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[60] Douma, "Should a Classis or Presbytery Own its Camp Site?" 2.

[61] Douma, "Should a Classis or Presbytery Own its Camp Site?" 2.

Americans. The report stated that the church had “very little force in the world of men,” and “in the face of all the pagan philosophies of our world and the isms that have made their inroads into our strongholds that somewhere and somehow we are failing to grip the thoughts and hearts of men. We must face that fact that the religion of former generations, once virile and vital, has been weakening in the lives of their children. There is a form of godliness but there is an evident denial of its power.”[62] This 1946 report demonstrates the evangelical leadership believed the influence of Christianity was ebbing in many postwar American lives and discussed ways to combat their declining influence. The report concluded by recommending redoubled efforts to pray, seek God’s will, and organize retreats for church leadership. In addition, the report recommended pursuing the creation and implementation of youth camps as a way to insulate postwar American youth from aversive secular influences while also employing the unique natural environment to appeal to a new generation of youth to commit their lives to God.[63]

Yet the central focus of Camp Geneva never lost its prominence. Douma wrote,

> “Long after the buildings crumble the living stones in God’s Kingdom will bear witness to what Camp Geneva has done in winning young people to Christ. After all what matters if ‘builders unbuilded go’? Camp Geneva is an attempt to invade vacation time for Christ. How effective is the work? Almost every pastor who has young people at Camp Geneva know that the fall finds many who have been at Camp coming to make an open confession of Christ as personal Saviour. That’s why Camp Geneva was constructed!”[64]

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[62] Theodore Cook, James Schut, and Gary De Witt (chair), “Report of Committee on Evangelism,” Classis of Kalamazoo, January 23, 1946, HMARL.

[63] Cook, Schut, and De Witt, “Report of Committee on Evangelism;” Rev. J. J. Hollebrands, letter to George Douma, January 23, 1946, HMARL.

[64] Douma, “Should a Classis or Presbytery Own its Camp Site?”

Camp Geneva's commitment to a "Christian influence," a "warm evangelical emphasis," "high moral and spiritual standards," and an "atmosphere of friendliness" remained central to the camp's purpose and vision throughout its postwar years and into the present. Camp Geneva stressed the importance of impressing evangelical beliefs onto postwar youth through a fun, outdoor experience in order to combat growing secularism.

The story of Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp also illustrates how evangelical summer camps began in response to a desire to revive evangelical faith, especially in the postwar youth. The editor of the *Lutheran Herald,* O.G. Malmin, described the postwar climate:

> The times are such, both psychologically and economically, as to encourage growth of the Churches. Twenty-five years ago, America was leading a rather self-satisfied existence; the world had been made 'safe for democracy,' and there were to be 'a chicken in every pot and two cars in every garage.' The truth is that most people just didn't sense any need of the Church.[65]

Walter Lunden, from the Department of Economics and Sociology at Iowa State College, chronicled the changes and decline in church membership in the *Lutheran Herald* and expressed the need for the church to find ways to bring members back in, especially in the uneasy postwar climate. Lunden observed, "in a day when a mobile population is beset with anxieties, it may be that the Church could give to people a sense of security….unknowingly, many people are looking for a stable sense of belonging to an unchanging reality."[66] Both Malmin and Lunden connected Americans' concerns about postwar realities to the evangelical

[65] O.G. Malmin, editor, "Home Missions: A Case History," *Lutheran Herald,* May 27, 1952, 508, Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp Archives, Story City, IA.

[66] Walter A. Lunden, "Membership and Stability," *Lutheran Herald,* May 27, 1952, 514.

church. Faith would sustain Americans, according to folks like Malmin and Lunden, and save them from disillusionment.[67]

The voices of evangelical youth also demonstrate the effectiveness of camps such as Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp. Camper Donald Hall explained the "thrilling" experience of vesper and camp fire services at the camp, a prime vehicle for transmitting an evangelical message to youth for the purpose of conversion and/or discipleship. Hall wrote, "we, as young people, should fit ourselves for work in the churches as ministers, deacons, and whatever we are best fitted for…." Hall also summarized other camp fire services and their messages: "the church wanted all the young people at the foot of the Cross," and "we as young people should go out into the world to bring others to Christ."[68] This clearly demonstrates the effort of summer camps like Riverside Lutheran to present a specifically youth-centered evangelical message. Another camper, Virgil Tiegland, expressed his experience at summer camp:

> Bible Camp…gives us the opportunity to meet and converse with teachers who can help us to understand the Bible and give us a clearer vision of Christ and the way of salvation.…The evening vesper and campfire meetings have meant much to us, in that they explained what the work of us, as young people, is in the church…We also learn to cooperate and share with our fellow-campers in our Bible study, in our play, in our tents before bed, and in the dining halls. Truly, I am sure that we all feel that this first Bible Camp has proved to be a very successful week, one that we shall never forget as we travel on through life's road.[69]

Tiegland provides a valuable window into the ways that the evangelical message was received by postwar youth. He identified three key aspects of the camp experience: discipleship by

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[67] Malmin, 508.

[68] Donald Hall, "The Vesper and Camp Fire Services," *Riverside Bible Banner,* Vol. 1, No. 1, July 24, 1943, Randall, Iowa; Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp Archives, Story City, IA.

[69] Virgil Teigland, "What Bible Camp Means to Us," *Riverside Bible Banner,* Vol. 1, No. 1, July 24, 1943, Randall, Iowa; Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp Archives, Story City, IA.

adults, an emphasis on a conversion experience and/or a commitment to continue walking in the evangelical faith, and having fun doing outdoor recreational activities. Specifically, Teigland mentions the mentoring or discipleship by adult leaders and teachers that enabled the youth to ask questions and interact in a more critically engaged way, a new method of summer camps that fit more naturally in an outdoor environment away from the formality of Sunday School classes or catechism classes in a formal church building. Hall also points to the impact of an evangelical message directed specifically at young people, alluding to the message that "all over the United States boys and girls are learning to know Jesus at Bible Camps."[70] Lastly, Tiegland connected the unique outdoor vacation-like environment that allowed the campers to "enjoy themselves physically" as well as "bringing joy into our hearts by the bringing of Christ." He concluded, "These things combined make up a true vacation, in that everyone feels healthy, both spiritually and physically. We also learn to cooperate and share with our fellow-campers in our Bible study, in our play, in our tents before bed, and in the dining halls."[71] These campers at Riverside Lutheran illustrate the ways that evangelicals integrated their message into the recreational activities of summer camps to effectively reach postwar youth in an age of change and anxiety. Campers learned more about the evangelical faith and learned how to live the evangelical faith as youth in postwar America. Some campers felt a calling to participate in ministry to other youth or even to pursue careers in evangelical ministry. This study is particularly focused on the ways that evangelicals, specifically leadership, created their postwar identity through the lens of summer camps, and less on the ways that evangelical message was

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70 Hall, "The Vesper and Camp Fire Services "

71 Teigland, "What Bible Camp Means to Us."

received by postwar evangelical youth. But it is interesting to note the ways that postwar youth camper voices correspond with the leadership's vision of the camp experience. However, the voices of campers come from promotional literature of the camp, thus is assumed to be an 'approved' camper voice that fits into the camp's vision of evangelical identity.

Ultimately, evangelical summer camps like Camp Geneva and Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp and parachurch youth organizations like Young Life, Youth for Christ, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, and Campus Crusade for Christ all reflected postwar adult evangelical concerns about an effective means of presenting an evangelical identity to postwar youth. While the parachurch organizations and summer camps took different routes to achieve commitments and discipleship of postwar youth, they both recognized the importance of recalibrating the 'old' message of evangelicalism to appeal to a new generation of postwar consumptive youth. Summer camps differed from parachurch organizations in that they effectively engaged with popular culture and used the seclusion of natural camp settings to instigate evangelical youth to think about their evangelical identity in a postwar American world and commit to an evangelical belief system.

CHAPTER TWO:

The Continuing Influence of Denominations and the Rise of Non-denominational Summer Camps

"I came to New Life Ranch to have fun, but while I was having fun, God built a fire in my soul and now I want to go home and tell everyone I know about Him." [1]

"Camping has changed the life of the Lutheran Church. It has produced a generation of leaders. It nurtured and, some would argue, grew the youth programs of our church. I sense in its historical record a sweeping theme, perhaps a spiritual phenomena. I am amazed that the development of our church camps was completed in a few short decades. The determination of lay and clergy leaders who built our camps is remarkable. They believed that faith in God could be nurtured most effectively through camping." [2]

In an article from the Des Moines, IA newspaper, *The Tribune,* written in 1958, author Jane Boulware wrote, "A survey by the Tribune of the major denominations indicates a growing popularity of the church camping program." She continued, "For many denominations, summer camping is looked upon as a means of keeping the church 'alive' during vacation months. For at camp sessions (average session, 6 days) the fun of outdoor living and recreation is combined with worship and religious education."[3]

Postwar summer camps strove to ensure the religious formation of America's youth, away from competing secular activities.[4] They demonstrate that parents were particularly

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[1] "The First 50 Years: A Short History of New Life Ranch," compiled by Clara Lou Willis, based on the diary of Willard Heck, 73, 2008 from New Life Ranch Records, Colcord, OK.

[2] Ralph Yernberg, *The Camping Movement of the American Lutheran Church*, vol. 1, 2003, Introduction, ii.

[3] Jane Boulware, "The Church's New Interest in Camping," *Des Moines Tribune,* May 31, 1958, no pagination, Wesley Woods Records, Indianola, IA.

[4] R. Laurence Moore explained the prominence of the postwar idea of selling God in the marketplace of culture. Moore wrote, "following World War II, religiously inspired

concerned with fomenting religiosity in their children in the reality of growing juvenile delinquency rates and postwar anxieties about race, gender roles, and a changing political climate.[5] More specifically, postwar evangelical summer camps reveal a particular concern with conversion and discipleship. Denominationally-affiliated camps, which dominated the postwar growth of summer camps, believed conversion was important, but spent more time on discipleship and leadership-training. Non-denominational summer camps existed in very small numbers in the postwar establishment of camp programs, but they focused on conversion and demonstrated the growth of a more fundamentalist end of the evangelical spectrum.

Scholarship on the influence and importance of denominations typically highlights the strength of denominations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but agrees that by the

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commodities saturated the American cultural landscape. It was as if a hundred fifty years of history had worked with determined persistence to produce the purported spiritual awakening of the late 1940s and the 1950s." He detailed the way that Americans understood secularization had as much to do with the commodification of religion than its disappearance. Tracing back to the First Amendment, Moore argued, alongside other scholars, that eighteenth century religious leaders worked to make religion popular and competitive in a market system morally neutral and full of contending services, ideas, and goods. Moore asserted, "the environment of competition among denominations created by the First Amendment's ban on religious establishment simply accelerated the market rationale." As a result of the culture of consumption prevalent in American postwar culture, evangelicals and parachurch organizations worked to compete in the marketplace of ideas through youth education and more creative educational approaches such as summer camp. R. Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 239; 7. See also Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism,* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1991).

[5] See chapter three for more about evangelical identity with regard to gender roles. For more about the context of political postwar anxiety, see chapter five.

beginning of the twentieth century, the mainline denominational dominance ebbed.[6] This gradual decline over the twentieth century is typically attributed to the rising importance of an identification as modernist (often liberal) or fundamentalist (usually more conservative). In addition, the rise of smaller, non-denomination sects in the twentieth captured the "zeal" that many mainline denominations lacked. Summer camps in the postwar era complicate this narrative. According to postwar summer camps, a denominational connection remained critically important to their implementation and success. In addition, denominationally-affiliated summer camps emphasized discipleship and priming future leaders for ministry within the existing institutional framework of the denomination. Postwar summer camps show very small numbers of non-denominational programs. However, the non-denominationally affiliated camps that do exist in the postwar era focus on conversion. The denominational camps emphasized discipleship but the non-denominational camps emphasized the saving of souls.

The Continuing Influence of Denominations through Summer Camps

In the postwar era, denominational identity continued its significance, especially with regard for the implementation of a camp program. Camps required personnel, curriculum, some sort of camp site, and all of these things required money. Denominational summer camps remained exceptionally important in the area of fundraising for the purpose of

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6 Lantzer defines 'the Mainline," as "the Seven Sisters of Protestantism: The Episcopal, Congregational/United Church of Christ, United Methodist, Evangelical Lutheran, Presbyterian, American Baptist, and Disciple of Christ denominations." He then explains, "these churches dominated the religious landscape of the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries, in terms of both membership and cultural influence." Jason Lantzer, *Mainline Christianity: The Past and Future of America's Majority Faith,* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), introduction, Kindle Edition.

purchasing land and developing a camp program. In the postwar era, the three most dominant denominations with regard to the establishment of summer camp programs, the United Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the Lutherans, all successfully established very popular summer camp programs.[7] Other Protestant denominations did not come close to these three mainline denominations in establishing summer camps during this time period. Due to the strength in numbers of churches and membership throughout the United States in the postwar years, it is not surprising that these denominations created such successful summer camp programs that continue even into the present day.

The birth of denominationalism can be traced back to Roger Williams, in the mid-1640s, who asserted 'the hedge or wall of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world,' and Thomas Jefferson, who in 1802 claimed a "'wall of separation between Church and State.'" Religious disestablishment stimulated the growth of voluntarism and, therefore, denominationalism. Unlike a state-supported religion such as the Anglican Church in England, the newly established United States did not pay clerical salaries or officially require compliance with a particular church. Volunteers and voluntary societies flourished to take the place of an established church.[8] In fact, according to Nathan O. Hatch's seminal

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[7] According to the American Camping Association Accredited Camps, the United Methodists started the most summer camps in the years from 1945 to 1960, followed by the Presbyterians, and the Lutherans.

[8] Catherine L. Albanese, "Understanding Christian Diversity in America," in *American Christianities: A History of Dominance and Diversity,* Catherine A. Brekus, and W. Clark Gilpin, eds. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 41. See Roger Williams, "Mr. Cotton's Letter," and Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to Messrs. Nehemiah Dodge, Ephriam Robbins, and Stephen S. Nelson," as quoted in John T. Noonan Jr., *The Believer and the Powers*

scholarship, *The Democratization of American Christianity,* the fifty years following the American Revolution and subsequent disestablishment produced two-thirds of the nation's Protestants.[9]

Scholarship cites varied reasons and events for the decline of denominational influence,[10] but they that denominational influence waned throughout the twentieth century, largely due to the effects of the modernist-fundamentalist debate.[11] The modernists advocated the adoption of religious thinking to contemporary culture. Modernists also viewed "tests of orthodoxy" and "confessional conformity" as disruptions to progressive goals and thus

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that Are: Cases, History, and Other Data Bearing on the Relation of Religion and Government (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 66, 130-31.

[9] Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), introduction.

[10] Lantzer argues the decline of denominationalism resulted from the mainline's strategy to "*raise* Christians rather than seek converts." He asserts this thinking the late 19th and early 20th century corresponded with "wide cultural trend to tone down popular religion." Church membership became more about "birth than rebirth," as revivals turned into scheduled events instead of spontaneous ones as in the first and second Great Awakenings. According to Lantzer, local conditions and consumerism performed the leading roles of precipitating the decline of the mainlines, as the emphasis on church membership brought "stability and respectability" at the cost of "zeal and lead to complacency." Denominational bureaucracies became more interesting in "maintaining the status quo" than "spreading the Good News." But smaller sects and other lesser known denominations did not follow this trend, thus providing for more competition, and the "zeal" that many of the mainline denominations were missing. In many respects, evangelical summer camps further illustrate this larger trend. Denominational summer camps, on the whole, were much more concerned with discipleship and training of youth to become future leader than they were with conversion and finding new converts, especially in the postwar era. The Presbyterian, Methodist, and Lutheran-affiliated summer camps demonstrate a strong commitment to discipleship of Presbyterian, Methodist, and Lutheran youth while at summer camp. Lanzer, chapter 6, "Unto the Ends of the Earth: Global Christianity and Mainline Decline," Kindle edition.

[11] Bennett argues that the Modernist-Fundamentalist debate supplanted denominational distinctions in the twentieth century. James B. Bennett, "Tensions Within: The Elusive Quest for Christian Cooperation in America," in *American Christianities,* 133-51; 143.

rebuffed them in favor of more religious toleration.[12] Fundamentalism rejected Modernism and stressed the inerrancy and literal truth of the scripture in all matters, including history and science. The series of booklets, *The Fundamentals,* which gave the movement its name, laid out the uncompromising points of doctrine.[13] Fundamentalists essentially failed in their attack on Modernists, in that they were unable to gain control of denominational leadership and institutions, and they failed in their attempts to upend the teaching of evolution. But the deeply running "fault lines" between Modernists and Fundamentalists played out as battles throughout denominations in the early twentieth century and continued to fracture and divide the mainline denominations.[14]

The significant question to ask, with regard to denominational decline, is whether these apparent divisions were evident in the regular functioning of the local and denominational programs. Summer camps provide an ideal window into this critical time period for denominations. A study of the establishment of postwar summer camps bring to light the apparent importance of denominational support in raising funds, programming, and finding the

[12] Bennett, 143. See also William R. Hutchinson, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992).

[13] Bennett, 143; See also George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism*, 1870-1925 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

[14] According to Bennett, denominationalism's decline can be traced to rising educational and income levels that removed socioeconomic distinctions between church traditions, as well as church members increasingly changing denominations due to rising marriage rates across denominational lines as well and geographic mobility. In fact, Bennett argued the gap in American Christianity became so wide that it "characterized the differences within denominations than the divisions between them," so that a liberal Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran, "or even a Catholic," now have more in common with each other than with conservative members of their same denomination." Bennett, 144.

staff, volunteers, and campers to attend the summer camp program. While denominations may have been experiencing a gradual overall decline in influence and membership throughout the twentieth century in America, postwar summer camps do not provide an example of this decline. In fact, the summer camps established in the postwar era reveal denominational loyalty through a commitment to disciple and train young people, through summer camp programs, into primarily denominational leadership programs.

Denominational Support through Fundraising and Programming

The story of Camp Wyoming and its founding at the behest of the local Presbytery provides evidence for the continued strength and importance of the mainline Presbyterian denomination. The denomination played a pivotal role in the establishment of Camp Wyoming's program, especially with regards to raising the necessary funds to start and sustain a camp as well as providing the volunteers and campers to attend the camp.

Camp Wyoming began as an idea in the Cedar Rapids Presbytery when a committee was appointed in the spring of 1957 to investigate the possibility of a new church camp for the presbytery. The committee not only agreed that a church camp was a good idea, they found and recommended two plots of land idea for a camp site. The trustees of the Presbytery voted to borrow up to $2,000.00 and to take out a mortgage on the 40 acres they found. By the fall of 1957, the Presbytery was ready to begin development of the camp site and in 1958, 106 acres of property was acquired for $4,500.00, thus demonstrating the importance of denominational connections when faced with the reality of finding and purchasing land.[15]

In 1959, a number of local presbyteries combined, which included a combined support of the new camp. Cedar Rapids and Dubuque Presbyteries united to form the Northeast Iowa Presbytery and the Southeast Iowa Presbytery was persuaded to support the camp as well. In the fall of 1959, a camp corporation and board of trustees formed, elected by both the Northeast and Southeast Iowa Presbyteries. An additional one hundred ninety two acres of land was also purchased. By September of 1962, all the Presbyterians in eastern Iowa were invited to the dedication of the dining hall, Whippoorwill Lodge and the Bird Unit Cabins, "to the Glory of God and the churches ministry to youth and adults in eastern Iowa."[16] The first session of camp took place in the summer of 1961 as a junior high camp with 24 campers, both boys and girls, and five adults. The Reverend Edwin Ewing Hancock was the director and recalled "one cabin had been built that summer. We used it as a kitchen and dining hall. The campers were housed in tents with wood floors."[17] Although the program began, as most camps did in the postwar era, as a strong vision and a rather rustic reality, it grew into a very successful program, due in large part to the consistent support of local Presbyterian churches and the regional Presbytery.

Reverend George Tjaden, pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Wyoming/Onslow in 1958, narrated the story of how the location for Camp Wyoming was found, using

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[15] "Camp Wyoming History," 1, Camp Wyoming Records, Wyoming, IA.

[16] "Camp Wyoming History," 2, Camp Wyoming Records, Wyoming, IA.

[17] Camp Wyoming 50 Year Celebration, "Add to the History of Camp Wyoming," Rev. Edwin E. Hancock, Camp Wyoming Records, Wyoming, IA.

denominational connections. At the time, Tjaden was on a committee of Presbytery with the express purposed of discovering a possible location for a camp site in that area of the Presbytery. An elder from the church, Leon Coleman owned a pasture that he wanted to sell as it was "getting to be kind of a burden. Tjaden saw the land, "mulled this over and later mentioned to Coleman about the Presbytery's search for potential camp land and said, I may have just found it!" Coleman responded by saying "'If the church wants to buy it for a camp, I'll cut my price.'"[18] Soon after the cattle roundup and conversations between Tjaden and Coleman, Tjaden presented picture slides of Coleman's pasture and timber property to the Presbytery. In addition, to acquaint people involved in the camp property acquisition committee with Coleman's property possibility, they were invited to a "steak fry on the green pasture." One of the men at that steak fry, according to Tjaden, was the father of Revered Ralph Adamson, who became a full-time program director for Camp Wyoming in the mid-1970s. Next, the Presbytery hired a camp specialist from Minnesota to look over the land. According to Tjaden, "when he saw the open grassland surrounded by timber and bluffs, he stated, 'You don't want 55 acres of this; you should have 400 acres of this for a campsite! I had no idea there was anything like this in Iowa." After hiking around Coleman's property as well as some adjoining property, Tjaden recalled that they knew if the camp was to expand, it would "be a good idea to chat with some of the area land owners." Tjaden knew that south of Coleman's property was another 40 acres or more owned by another farmer.

> "One evening I pulled up to his place, and he was still in the barn milking. So, I pulled up a stool and started speaking in general about the farm and cows. He looked up at me

[18] "Helping Bring in the Cows," 1, Reverend George Tjaden narration, edited by William Collett, Camp Wyoming Bible Camp Records, Wyoming, IA.

> and said, 'Oh Revered Tjaden, I understand your church is thinking of putting a camp on Coleman's land. I've got 40 acres adjoining that land, if you guys want to guy it; you can have it for what I paid for it 20 years ago.' He brought up the subject; I never had to ask him." [19]

The retelling of "Camp Wyoming History," highlighted the critical importance of denominational support in finding and acquiring property in order to implement a summer camp and retreat program.

Many postwar summer camps like Camp Wyoming attribute their success to denominational support. The author of "Camp Wyoming History," noted, "over the past 40 years Camp Wyoming has been a partner in ministry with the Presbyterian churches in the areas now covered by the East Iowa and John Knox Presbyteries. The East Iowa Presbytery and its predecessor bodies have always been at the forefront of providing leadership and support for the Camp Wyoming Ministry. Without this ongoing and faithful support from the East Iowa Presbytery the camp would not exist." The author then detailed the particular "blessings of this ministry," which included youth leadership development, church session and committee planning, family enrichment, faith growth in youth and adults, and "a quiet resting place for those who need spiritual refreshment." The History of Camp Wyoming closed by recalling the benefits of the ministry, which impacted children, adults, and families who had "life changing experiences at camp and many have been challenged and renewed in their faith." The author then connected once again with the denomination in the form of the local presbyteries – "The support and prayers of the East Iowa Presbytery are greatly appreciated."[20] The story of

[19] "Helping Bring in the Cows," 2.

[20] "Camp Wyoming History," 7, Camp Wyoming Records, Wyoming, IA.

Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp in Hillside, CO also demonstrates the importance of denominational support. In fact, Rainbow Trail was described this way by the *Rocky Mountain Lutheran* newspaper, "And so—the Synod owns a camp. This means to each of us who are members of congregations of the synod that 'we' own a camp. This ownership confers great privileges and responsibilities upon each of us."[21]

An early camp booklet promoting the local support of Camp Wyoming, also clearly connected itself to the Presbyterian denomination. It proclaimed in large letters on the front page, "Developed, Owned, and Operated by the Presbyteries of Northeast Iowa and Southeast Iowa."[22] On the first page, the booklet contained information for the local pastor and Session, which explained the acquisition of the property, the camp architect, Mrs. Glenn Wallace of Minneapolis, and the preliminary plans that indicated the overall development would require an investment of 350,000, spread over a seven year period, or more. The 'Information for Pastor and Session' section described that part of the needed funds would be raised through "the Presbytery approved Equal Allocation of 1.00 per capita per year." The author wrote, "It is sincerely hoped that 100% of our Sessions will recommend the per-capita gift each year to their congregations. It is further hoped that the Sessions will encourage the cooperation of the local organizations of their churches. This booklet is designed to simplify the program for organizations." The section concluded with an underlined statement: "<u>It is suggested that Rural</u>

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[21] "Synod Owns a Camp." *Rocky Mountain Lutheran,* Volume XXVI, October 1957, Number 4, as cited in Angela Tarrant, *When the Bell Rings: A History of Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp,* Westclif, CO: Printed by Arterburn Fine Art & Graphics, 2007.

[22] Eastern Iowa United Presbyterian Camp booklet, cover, 1961, Camp Wyoming Records, Wyoming, IA.

Life Sunday, May 7, 1961 be a time to emphasize the importance of the camp in the local congregation."[23] This effort at fundraising clearly connects the importance of local Presbyterian support to the success of the summer camp program.

Men, women, youth, and families were all encouraged to contribute to specific portions of camp, underscored by the connection between raising funds and serving God. The booklet invited youth groups to contribute funds to a recreation building through a variety of ways to raise money. One suggestion, was a use of a "'slave auction,' wherein the young people sell their services to the members of their church and community. Such an auction could be designated as a camp benefit."[24] Families were also encouraged to contribute to a Family Campsite – a picnic shelter and family campground. The booklet declared "one of the fastest growing Christian experiences is Family camping, which will receive lots of attention in our new camp." It also asserted "the younger married bracket in the United Presbyterian Church constitutes a very potent force. This makes us optimistic about the successful outcome of this particular project."[25] Even the United Presbyterian Women were offered the "privilege" of providing for the construction of the Dining Hall. The booklet noted, "while the Dining Hall may not be aptly described as the 'heart of the camp,' no one will minimize its importance. It would seem appropriate if United Presbyterian Women were offered the privilege of providing for its construction." The women were also reminded "let it be remembered that here too, we are

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[23] Eastern Iowa United Presbyterian Camp booklet, 1961, 1.
[24] Eastern Iowa United Presbyterian Camp booklet, 1961, 7.
[25] Eastern Iowa United Presbyterian Camp booklet, 1961, 9.

building to the glory of Christ."[26] The men were encouraged to contribute to the proposed dam and lake, as "a beautiful lake will do much to enhance the enjoyment and inspiration afforded by this camp." The local United Presbyterian Men's chapters were encouraged to raise funds for waterfront equipment to make the lake a reality, and were reminded that in the midst of fund-raising, "however it is done, each group should look on its efforts as serving the Lord."[27]

The targeting of each subset of local Presbyterian reveals an understanding that the camping program will be used, supported, and enjoyed by men, women, and children. Fundraising efforts also demonstrate the influence of local denominations in creating and funding a local or regional summer camp program in the postwar era. The prayers, volunteerism, and financial support of a number of local and/or regional denominationally-affiliated church congregations were critical to the success of postwar summer camps.

Discipleship

Wesley Woods Camp and Retreat Center connects the importance of summer camps with a strong emphasis on discipleship. It also highlights the relationship between the regional and local arms of the United Methodist denomination in the postwar era, especially with regards to discipling and mobilizing the Methodist youth organizations.

Wesley Woods began in 1956 as fifty-four acres of an abandoned sandstone rock quarry land near Lake Ahquabi. The camping board 's vision consisted of a program where campers

[26] Eastern Iowa United Presbyterian Camp booklet, 1961, 3.

[27] Eastern Iowa United Presbyterian Camp booklet, 1961, no page number.

could experience a themed camp while living in the woods, cooking meals over the fire, and becoming more connected with nature.[28] According to a Methodist pastor, a summer camp program for youth was "vital to their total Christian experience."[29]

Notably, the youth of the Iowa-Des Moines Conference of the Methodist Church made the reality of a conference grounds and summer camp. The purchase of the camp land "resulted from the prodding of church youth who each gave $10 to the camp effort and so impressed the conference, the land was purchased."[30] According to the first publication of the Iowa-Des Moines *Methodist Camper, Latest News of the Conference Camp Site,* youth workers desired conference-owned grounds for youth activities for over ten years. Working together, both youth and youth workers formed a Committee on Camps and Institutes since money was coming in to fund the development of a summer camp with "no one prepared to accept it." The Committee appeared before the Conference Board of Education, which decided the money

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[28] Wesley Woods History, Wesley Woods Records, Indianola, IA. See also "Methodists Develop Camp at Lake Ahquabi," *Indianola Tribune,* October 2, 1956, Wesley Woods Records, Indianola, IA. The name Camp 'Wesley Woods' (now named Wesley Woods Conference and Retreat Center) was chosen by popular vote, with ballots sent to every minister of every church in the Conference, which amounted to more than 3000 ballots. The name Wesley Woods was the clear winner, with the other options including Methahqua, Sunnycrest, Mthabi, Fairhaven, and Ahquabi. From "New Name Chosen," in *The Iowa-Des Moines Methodist Camper, Latest News of the Conference Camp Site,* vol. 1, no. 4, June 1957, 3. See also "Methodists Open Parley," *The Des Moines Register,* June 10, 1957, 4, Wesley Woods Records, Indianola, IA.

[29] Glenn Bush, pastor, Luther, IA in *Campsite Issue, Luther-Napier Methodist Messenger Newsletter,* November 20, 1957, Wesley Woods Records, Indianola, IA.

[30] Margery Hanes, "Camp Wesley Woods Celebrates 40 Years of Positive Peer Pressure," *The Record Herald and Indianola Tribune,* July 31, 1996, Wesley Woods Records, Indianola, IA. A newspaper article from a Wesley Woods scrapbook (no newspaper title included) wrote, "Methodist youth groups raised 'a considerable part' of the purchase price of the tract, Methodist officials said," in "Methodists Buy Site Near Lake Ahquabi," October 23, 1954, Wesley Woods Records, Indianola, IA.

raised for a camp site should be taken care of by the Committee's treasurer and properly invested to draw interest. The Committee was also empowered to "take option on a site if in its judgment a proper one could be found." The article in the *Methodist Camper* finished the article update on the camp site by explaining the present site was located and "carefully studied," then purchased from Gordon Shaver of Indianola at a price of 100.00 per acre in 1954, as approved by the Annual Conference of 1954. The author of the article also made a point of addressing the role of the youth in the process thus far and the need for their continued role, writing, "the site is ours. From here on it is up to you who are youth, and adults interested in youth, as to how fast development may progress." The article closed with the name and address of the treasurer of the Iowa-Des Moines Conference, accepting donations specifically for the camp site.[31] Much like Camp Wyoming, Wesley Woods makes it abundantly clear that denominational support and denominational organization both created the need for the camp site and the vision for the conference grounds as a place of discipleship for youth through camp and other retreats and activities.

Another article in the inaugural issue of *The Methodist Camper* illustrated the postwar interest in investing in America's youth through discipleship. An article entitled "Are You Looking for a Good Investment? Here It Is." The article explained, "we have long needed a camp site in southern Iowa to serve Christ and our people. The total cost of developing this site will be less than the cost of construction of our larger church sanctuaries and will cost little more to maintain if adequately used. This sum will be very small indeed when we consider the

[31] "A Camp Site for Iowa Des Moines Youth," in *The Iowa-Des Moines Methodist Camper, Latest News of the Conference Camp Site,* vol. 1, no. 1, February, 1955, 1, Wesley Wood Records, Indianola, IA.

number of youth which may be reached for Christ every summer through an enlarged camping program."[32] Notice the assumption that readers know what a camp site is, and that this particular conference of the Methodist church had "long needed" a camp site, which suggests that, despite traditional youth programs, a summer camp experience was the best environment for effective discipleship to take place.

Summer camps emphasized the importance of religious experiences that occurred as well as the magnitude of discipling postwar youth to grow in their evangelical beliefs. The most important feedback about camp came from young people, according to an article in the *Methodist Camper*. "Not only do I learn about Our Savior, but I meet and make new friends," one camper explained. "I have a chance to learn how to lead in recreation and to learn how to present a worship service that is not just a scripture, song and prayer."[33] This comment speaks to the emphasis on discipleship in the form of leadership training, a common theme in the wider emphasis of postwar evangelical summer camps. Another youth said, "Camp is a wonderful experience. You meet new friends and have a kind of fellowship there that cannot be attained anywhere else." This particular comment reveals a commonality with most postwar camp materials. There is something elusive and unique about a camp experience that is impossible to recreate in 'normal' life. In the words of the Iowa Director of Camping of the Methodist Church, every summer "thousands of our Church youth leave behind them the school room, the city streets, the noise, bustle, competitive activities of our culture, the close

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[32] "Are You Looking for a Good Investment? Here It Is," in *The Iowa-Des Moines Methodist Camper, Latest News of the Conference Camp Site,* vol. 1, no. 1, February, 1955, 4.

[33] "Why are you Building Camps?" in *The Iowa-Des Moines Methodist Camper, Latest News of the Conference Camp Site*, vol. 1, no. 4, June 1957, 2.

support and supervision of the family, the multitude of ‘planned for them’ activities, the security of not having to face themselves and be on their own, and take off for Camp.”[34]

Most evangelical camps cited the spiritual experience of growing closer to God or experiencing some sort of ‘call’ to ministry or Christian service as the reason for the uniqueness of the experience. *The Methodist Story,* a publication of the United Methodist Church, challenged its readers:

> “’Look,’ said the young minister, placing his hand on the lad’s shoulder. ‘Here is Wesley Woods, our new camp. Won’t our week together here be wonderful! We’ll sing, and work, and study, and pray. We’ll get to know each other better than we possibly could back home. We’ll do some listening, too, and hear the words of the One who was the Master at living in Gods’ great out-of-doors. He will call to us. We’ll be listening, won’t we?’ ‘Yes,’ said the boy, ‘and we’ll answer, too.”

Following this conversation, the article encouraged full-time service at Wesley Woods. “Would you like, this summer, to challenge some young person to a life of service in Christ’s name—as a minister, as an agricultural missionary in some blighted land, as a worker in the ‘jungle areas’ of some great city?”[35] A Methodist pastor put it this way, “at a summer camp one can lead young people (and adults) through and into a concentrated, cumulative, adventurous religious

[34] “Is This Camp???” J. M. Steffenson, Director of Camping, December 1962, Wesley Woods Records, Indianola, IA. The Reverend J.M. Steffenson, pastor of the Methodist Church at Marne, IA, worked for 25 years with the YMCA in Moline, ILL before entering the ministry of the Methodist Church. He was initially appointed to oversee the financial campaign for the construction of Wesley Woods (with the title of Campsite Director) and also became the Associate Secretary for the Camps and Institutes (often referred to as Camping Director of the Iowa Area) in the 1958. “Steffenson to Promote Youth Camp,” unnamed, no date, newspaper article from Wesley Woods scrapbook; “Steffenson Given New Camp Post,” *Hawkeye Methodist,* March 1, 1958, Wesley Woods Records, Indianola, IA.

[35] “Young Camper Hears God’s Call at Wesley Woods,” *The Methodist Story,* April 1957, Wesley Woods Records, Indianola, IA.

experience which is difficult to duplicate anywhere else."[36] However, summer camps, on the whole, did not claim that a spiritual encounter, call, or experience could *only* occur while at camp. Camp just provided an ideal setting, away from daily life and distractions. Another youth recalled his/her experience while at summer camp, "I felt closer to God than I'd ever been before. I thought my prayers had really reached Him. When I came back home, it felt as though a new world had opened for me."[37] Camp literature encouraged the support of summer camp programs by demonstrating the ways that religious experiences at camp changed the lives of postwar youth.

Special attention to leadership training highlighted the purpose of Wesley Woods summer camp. According to the *Methodist Camper,* "the most important part of any camp or institute program is the leadership." The article detailed the various leadership training sessions that took place all over the state of Iowa and a new leadership manual prepared and distributed to adult leaders. Plans were even made to extend the leadership program to the college, seminary, and local areas, because "this is important to the use of the new camps so that the greatest possible good can come from the camping program. Emphasis is made on the importance of the group in human behavior, how groups function, the matter of belonging, our philosophy, group sharing which enriches program and also in the field of resources."[38] Clearly

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36 Glenn Bush, pastor, Luther, IA in *Campsite Issue, Luther-Napier Methodist Messenger Newsletter,* November 20, 1957, Wesley Woods Records, Indianola, IA.
37 "Why are you Building Camps?" in *The Iowa-Des Moines Methodist Camper, Latest News of the Conference Camp Site*, vol. 1, no. 4, June 1957, 2.
38 "Dedication—Skill—Service" in *The Iowa-Des Moines Methodist Camper, Latest News of the Conference Camp Site*, vol. 1, no. 4, June 1957, 4.

Wesley Woods exemplified larger postwar camping trends in focusing primarily on leadership training and encouraging campers to go into denominationally-affiliated Christian vocations.

Lutheran Lakeside Camp, founded in 1960 by the United Lutheran Church, Iowa Synod, also focused on youth discipleship and training for Christian vocations through the Lutheran denomination.[39] In its main three objectives, the camp would provide Christian training by implementing the "best in programs and leadership," offer the "experience of living together in a Christian community," prepare and encourage "intelligent leadership" in the church through both lay workers and those in full-time ministry, and to "use nature, crafts, skills, worship, recreation, and group living to achieve these first three objectives."[40] A more specific Camp Philosophy spelled out the purpose of Lutheran Lakeside Camp, as part of the Iowa Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America. It read, "through its nature setting and the style and intensity of its program this camp intends to help each camper, whatever his age, to respond and witness more faithfully and adequately to the Word of God." The Philosophy then indicated the top seven ways to achieve these objectives, starting with the "quickening and deepening Christian commitment," then "giving a sense of Christian vocation and providing

[39] Lutheran Lakeside began as a project of the Camp Development Committee of the United Lutheran Synod in Iowa. On October 14, 1957, the United Lutheran Synod in Iowa voted to purchase 133 acres of farmland that bordered the East Lake Okoboji at Spirit Lake, IA. In July of 1958, the Camp Development Committee retained site consultants to provide a preliminary study to "determine the design potential of the area for a camp site and the estimated cost of developing a camp which would provide usable facilities at an early date, a program of continued expansion, low cost of operation and maintenance and ultimate facilities to serve a camp population of 300." From "Master Plan and Report" by Arthur L. Harrison of Harrison and Associates of Ames, IA (site planning consultants) for the Camp Development Committee of the United Lutheran Synod in Iowa, December 14, 1959, 7, Lutheran Lakeside Camp Records, Spirit Lake, IA.

[40] Master Plan and Report, 22.

direction for the choice of vocation." Next the philosophy listed "developing potentialities for Christian leadership," followed by "providing opportunities for intimate contacts with Christian leaders and opportunities for personal counseling with them," and "providing for experience in co-operative Christian living." The final two objectives of the Camp Philosophy were "broadening the conception of Christian community and widening participation in it," and "interpreting the religious values of God's total creation." This philosophy illustrated and echoed philosophies and purposes of other summer camps around the country. Strikingly, the discussion of leadership training is dominant, alongside a Christian commitment to service, with an emphasis in choosing a Christian vocation. While this was typically understood as a full or part time ministry position in the church, denomination, or missionfield, it could also encompass other forms of church-related work. The other objectives dealt with cooperative living with other Christians and a connection with nature and God's creation,[41] in keeping with larger postwar summer camp trends.

The youth program called the Iowa Luther League highlighted the emphasis of youth discipleship through specific programs for future leaders as well as the continuing influence of denominations with regard to youth programs. Any young person in the Iowa Synod of the United Lutheran Church of America between the ages of 12 and 20 and up was considered eligible to attend the Iowa Luther League Bible Camp. The Iowa Luther League Bible Camps appealed to youth, leaders and pastors interested in camp programs, and ideally, in starting or leading their own camp programs in a local and permanent setting. The Luther League Bible Camps strove to provide both a model for a camp program and to train leaders to lead, run, and

[41] "Camp Philosophy," undated, Lakeside Lutheran Bible Camp Records, Spirit Lake, IA.

implement camp programs. The Camp rotated locations around Iowa each year. The Luther League Bible Camp 'Pledge of Loyalty' to God underscored the purpose of the camp.

> "WE, the members of the Luther League of Iowa, do recognize and acknowledge that faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God Whose death on the cross atoned for our sins, is the only way thru which we may obtain salvation and life everlasting.
> WE deem it our desire and purpose to earnestly and sincerely live our lives after the example of Jesus Christ. This means that we will
>> Attend regularly and faithfully the worship services of our church.
>> Be diligent in our attendance at Church-school and at Luther League.
>> Be loyal to God in our private lives by daily prayer and daily Bible reading.
>> Always conduct ourselves in a manner worth of the name 'Christian.'
>
> WE do further pledge our loyalty and help to the Executive Board of the Luther League of Iowa, fully realizing the many and important duties this Board must perform."[42]

The Luther League motto, "Of the Church, By the Church, and For the Church," underscored the importance of identifying with the church, of being "guided" by the teachings of the church, and working and giving time to the church in order to spread the gospel.[43] But it should also be noted that these articulations clearly connect the beliefs to a particular church structure, in this case the Lutheran church, or through specific programs such as the Luther League itself, revealing its critical connection to the Lutheran denomination.

Later Luther League Bible Camps articulated aims and objectives for the camp that emphasized discipleship far more than conversion. The camp explained that "Bible camping is a very personal experience, and has become a vital part of the 'growing up' process of young people." This seems to indicate an understanding that summer camps, particularly evangelical summer camps are neither rare nor sporadic, but had become a common and perhaps even

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[42] "Our Pledge of Loyalty to God," in 1948 Iowa Luther League Bible Camp, Lake Okoboji, August 15-August 20, Brochure, Lakeside Lutheran Camp Records, Spirit Lake, IA.

[43] "Of the Church-By the Church-For the Church," in in 1948 Iowa Luther League Bible Camp, Lake Okoboji, August 15-August 20, Brochure, Lakeside Lutheran Camp Records, Spirit Lake, IA.

expected part of church and/or denominational youth education. The 'Aims and Objectives' also spelled out their objectives as "temporal, such as will insure for all campers the best in outdoor living, combined with a spiritual experience that is both rich and deep." The spiritual objectives, in ranked order, consisted of: "Spiritual Growth, Physical Health, Emotional wellbeing, Social adjustment and growth, Fun and fellowship, Safety, New interests and appreciations, and Inspiration for Christian Service."[44] This list does not include any sort of 'conversion' or commitment language in the sense of campers making a commitment to believe in or to follow Christ and become a Christian, as typically expected in evangelical camps of the 1970s and currently. Instead, the emphasis is clearly on the discipleship and growth of Christians into well-rounded leaders in the church. A song from the camp in 1950 entitled, "At Bible Camp," also revealed this emphasis on receiving a calling for Christian service. Each stanza of the song begins with a description of Jesus calling us, often through the language of nature, activities, through Bible studies, and "amid the campfire's glow." The song ended with the verse,

> "Jesus called us, and we answered:
> Answered: 'Christ, we are Thine own;
> We will follow Thee, our Master,
> Worship humbly at Thy throne.'"[45]

[44] "Aims and Objectives, in 1952 Iowa Luther League Bible Camp, Lake Okoboji, August 23-August 29, Brochure, Lakeside Lutheran Camp Records, Spirit Lake, IA.

[45] "At Bible Camp," in 1950 Iowa Luther League Bible Camp, Lake Okoboji, August 20-August 26, Brochure, Lakeside Lutheran Camp Records, Spirit Lake, IA.

While explicitly denominational language is not in evidence in this particular aspect of the camp programming, this emphasis on a calling into a Christian vocation remains consistent with other postwar camps around the country.

A sample of the courses of study reveals a sophisticated grasp of biblical familiarity, which strongly points to the camp as primarily a place for believers and leaders, not necessarily a place to recruit non-believers to the faith. The Courses of Study also demonstrate a clear Lutheran emphasis in its teachings. One session required attendance at a course entitled, 'Studies in Galatians,' and provided five other elective courses to choose from. The program offered a course in 'Marriage and the Home,' specifically for those 18 and older, and "will concern itself with the planning of life's partnership," as well as a course, 'The Christian and Race,' open to all high school campers, endeavored to "answer the questions young people are asking about race; the solution to the problem of how to be Christian in race relations will be indicated." The other three electives were 'The Life of Martin Luther,' 'The Patterns of Christian Life,' available to 12-14 year olds, and dealt with "the many sides of a complete Christian life: Bible study, worship, prayer, service, etc." and 'Christian Service Today,' open to all but especially recommended to "those who are sincerely interested in service to their church, both part-time and full-time."[46] Other courses offered included a study of the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), which was a required course for the 1948 camp with two class ages; one for youth ages 12-14 and one for ages 15 and up. Of the electives, campers could choose from 'Our Lutheran Heritage," which, for 18 and up, studied the elements that made the

[46] "Courses of Study" in 1947 Iowa Luther League Bible Camp, Lake Okoboji, July 28-August 1, Brochure, Lakeside Lutheran Camp Records, Spirit Lake, IA.

Lutheran church "distinctive in its background, teachings, and practices;" 'Boy-Girl Relationships,' for ages 15-17, and featured "the best possible approach to coming courtship and marriage;" '20th Century Disciples,' for those aged 12-14, and examined the question "'What is Christian discipleship in this, our day?' It is based on the Gospel of Mark;" 'Recreational Leadership,' open to all campers, but "planned specifically for those who will plan and lead recreation in their home leagues…it is not a 'play' course;" and also 'Planning, Preparing, and Presiding at the Luther League Meeting,' led by the representatives of the Lutheran League of America, and also open to all campers but primarily for those currently or future leaders in their local leagues.[47]

Another list of courses included a study of the Gospel of John required for all campers and four other electives. The electives included, "The Manhood of the Master,' a "study of the characteristics and virtues of Jesus, and how these can be applied to our lives today," for those 15 and older; 'How We Worship,' also for 15 and up, as "a thorough study of our worship services, music, and related subjects;" 'Wanted, Leaders!' for campers 12-14, "to help young people become effective as leaders in and through the church;" and 'Christian Vocations Today,' for all campers, "a study of the possibility of making our vocations 'Christian' in every sense of the word. Also a consideration of vocations which are in themselves distinctively 'Christian.'"[48] The topic of 'the Manhood of the Master' demonstrated interest or perhaps concerns with idea of masculinity, a topic scholars have discussed at length and describe as

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[47] "Courses of Study" in 1948 Iowa Luther League Bible Camp, Lake Okoboji, August 15-August 20, Brochure, Lakeside Lutheran Camp Records, Spirit Lake, IA.

[48] "Courses of Study," in 1949 Iowa Luther League Bible Camp, Lake Okoboji, August 14-August 20, Brochure, 3, Lakeside Lutheran Camp Records, Spirit Lake, IA.

muscular Christianity, a push to masculinize the overly feminized images (and overwhelmingly female membership) of most religious organizations.[49]

These course topics and description, although brief, provide a significant insight into the ways that the Lutheran leadership understood discipleship of postwar youth and the significance of engaging in the relevant issues of the day. In addition, the topics also demonstrate the Lutheran denomination's interest in and attempt to integrate Lutheran heritage (in courses such as 'The Life of Martin Luther' and 'Our Lutheran Heritage') with the current and relevant matters of the postwar era, a critical combination for the success of leadership. Since the Luther League Bible Camps focused specifically on future and current Lutheran leaders, the fact that the sessions included topics such as boy/girl relationships and marriage and home life indicates the importance that Lutherans, and evangelicals in general placed on the decision of finding a proper spouse.

Overall, programs such as the Luther League and summer camp programs such as Camp Wyoming and Wesley Woods illustrated the importance of denominational connections in creating and implementing postwar camps programs. They also illustrate the strong emphasis on discipleship and grooming future leaders for ministry, typically within the existing framework of the established denominational intuitions.

Non-denominational Camps, Conversion, and the Rise of Fundamentalism

[49] See Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

Willard Heck, visionary and founder of New Life Bible Camp in Colcord, OK, wrote in his diary in February of 1958 about the grace of God in bringing him and his business partner, Tom Hull, to find and purchase the ideal property for the summer camp and conference center. He recalled, “Tom and I stopped at New Life Ranch entrance and bowed in thanksgiving for God’s leader step by step. We dedicated ourselves and the grounds to the glory of God in the expectation of souls saved and believers led into victorious living.”[50]

The purpose of the East Iowa Bible Camp in Deep River, IA also involved the saving of souls. Camp literature assessed the camp’s purpose “to establish and promote an interdenominational Bible Camp, the aim of which is the winning souls to Christ, the edification of the saints, and to encourage the dedication of lives for Christian service.”[51] A 1946 brochure of EIBC described it as “The Camp That God Built” and also proclaimed the camp’s slogan, “To Know Christ and to Make him Known.”[52] An East Iowa Bible Conference brochure pronounced, under a picture of the camp, “where souls and bodies are nourished.”[53]

A director’s report on the end of a camping season at Victory Bible Camp in Palmer, AK praised God for his “leading and provision” throughout the season and explained “there were many who made professions of faith in Christ and many who convenanted [sic] with the Lord to

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[50] “The First 50 Years,” 4. See also Bob Kobielush’s column, “Your Big Holy Audacious Goal,” in *Executive Briefing,* a monthly publication of the Christian Camp and Conference Association (CCCA), Volume 5, Number 8, August 2007.

[51] East Iowa Bible Conference camp brochure, 1946, East Iowa Bible Camp Records, Deep River, IA.

[52] East Iowa Bible Conference camp brochure, 1946, East Iowa Bible Camp Records, Deep River, IA.

[53] East Iowa Bible Conference brochure, 1946, East Iowa Bible Camp Records, Deep River, IA.

be a faithful witness at home and school." The director also recalled the closing week of camp as a "climactic blessing and experience" as Reverend Floyd McElveen "brought home the truths of the Word of God in a forceful and loving spirit" which resulted in many "decisions" among campers and even the staff members found themselves "blessed as we saw the Holy Spirit move many of the young people."[54] The director ended his report by asserting the central purpose of Victory Bible Camp: "though the camping field, in general, is becoming more competitive year by year with the addition of new camps, in essence, there is no competition in the realm of winning boys and girls to Christ."[55] A similar report from 1951 emphasized "of course the greatest blessing of all in these camps is to see boys and girls changed by the Gospel. The whole aim and purpose of the camp since its beginning has been kept uppermost—that of reaching these young people for Christ."[56]

While at Lake Ann Camp in Lake Ann, MI, camper Charles Alber recalled, "We met in the chapel that was a tent pitched beside the hotel. It was marvelous to come out of morning missionary chapel and see young people and the counselors scattered all over the camp grounds. It was one of those weeks of camp that I dedicated my life to Jesus Christ and for full

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[54] Director's Report, submitted by Sherman E. Roth, Assistant Director, 1, Victory Bible Camp, 1960, in Victory Bible Camp Records, Billy Graham Archives, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL. Interestingly, the Reverend Floyd C. McElveen mentioned in this report is the same McElveen who wrote the popular book, *The Mormon Illusion: What the Bible Says about the Latter-Day Saints* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1977, 1997) as well as many books, including *The Call of Alaska*. McElveen graduated from Western Conservative Baptist Seminary in Portland, OR and served for the Conservative Baptist Home Mission Society, among other ministries.

[55] Director's Report, 3, Victory Bible Camp, 1960.

[56] Director's Report, submitted by John Gillespie, Director, 2, Victory Bible Camp, 1951.

time service."[57] Another camper from Lake Ann, Joanne (Kuhn) Carnagy, remembered her conversion experience and call to ministry: "I dedicated my life for full time service then and the Lord led me to attend Baptist Bible seminary."[58]

The narratives of New Life Ranch, East Iowa Bible Camp, Victory Bible Camp, and Lake Ann Camp capture a key component of non-denominationally affiliated postwar summer camps: an emphasis on saving souls and conversion. While the mainline denominations dominated the postwar boom in the establishment of summer camps, non-denominational camps existed in small numbers and provided different experience for campers—an experience focused on conversion. Most denominational camps would certainly agree that 'saving souls' and 'conversion' were important. But in most of the promotional literature of denominational summer camps, conversion language was deemphasized. Instead, denominationally-affiliated summer camps consistently accentuated the camp as a place of discipleship and grooming of future pastors, teachers, missionaries, and church workers. Non-denominational camps would also incorporate themes of discipleship into their programs, but the overall emphasis remained on conversions and reaching the unchurched.[59] Camps without the benefits of denominational

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[57] Grace Scholtens, "Chapter One: Beginning with a Vision," unpublished book manuscript, 1995, Lake Ann Camp Records, Lake Ann, MI.

[58] Joanne (Kuhn) Carnagy, "Copy of Questionaire Answers from Kathy," no date, Lake Ann Camp Records, Lake Ann, MI.

[59] See also Pine Ridge Bible Camp of Cedar Springs, MI. The camp began in 1946 by a Bible Club Movement missionary, James Ver Lee. As stated on the Mission and History portion of Pine Ridge Bible Camp's website, "thousands of children and youth have come to know the Lord Jesus as their personal Savior because of the Camp's ministry…Many others have gone on to serve Christ with their life including many pastors and missionaries serving around the world today." The Camp also notes that over the past 20 years, with an average of 700-900 campers over nine weeks, 125 recorded salvation decisions are made. "Mission & History," Pine Ridge

membership needed to cast a wider net in order to find campers instead of relying on the populations of youth from the local denominational churches in the area.

Non-denominational camps such as East Iowa Bible and New Life Ranch camp indicate the small but growing influence of non-denominational organizations. Denominations still maintained dominance with regard to the establishment of summer camps in American Protestantism. But an examination of non-denominational camps demonstrates a growing influence of non-denominational or interdenominational organizations, consistent with the rise of parachurch organizations such as Youth for Christ, Young Life, Campus Crusade for Christ, and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.[60] In addition, the non-denominational summer camps emphasized the importance of conversion in the reality of growing fears of juvenile delinquency in the postwar years. Instead of a strong emphasis on discipling church-involved youth, non-denominational camps used parental concerns about troubled postwar youth to encourage them to send their kids to a summer camp where they could hear the 'good news' of salvation. The postwar non-denominational camps also suggest significant connections to a more fundamentalist end of the evangelical spectrum, evident by the push to save souls, emphasis on the literal interpretation of the Bible, and glimpses of apocalyptic language.

Most of the non-denominational summer camp programs established in the postwar era had fundamentalist leanings. The historiography on fundamentalists and evangelicals underscores the tension fundamentalists experienced as they rejected so much of modern

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Bible Camp, http://www.pineridgecamp.com/index.php/about-us/mission-a-history, accessed July 2, 2012.

[60] For example, Cedar Campus began as a camp site for training university students for Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship ministry. Gladys M. Hunt, *A Place to Meet God: The History of Cedar Campus, 1954-2004* (self-published, 2004).

popular culture as worldly and thus problematic, yet also desired to use enough popular culture to win legitimacy and be respected by the larger American culture. Postwar non-denominational summer camps, which were typically fundamentalist-leaning, reflected concerns about juvenile delinquency but also illustrated larger concerns about saving souls. Since non-denominational camps needed to spread a wider net to appeal to campers from a variety of backgrounds, not just members of the regional denomination, they made a conscious effort to focus on conversion more than discipleship and leadership. In this way, fundamentalists attempted to reassert a measure of religious identity through converting American youth.

Beginnings, Fundraising Efforts and the Value of Volunteers

For non-denominational summer camps in the postwar era, implementing a summer camp program was not an easy task. Without the support of national, regional, or local churches from a particular denomination, non-denominational summer camps had to find their own sources of support. In addition, many non-denominational camps found themselves in a sort of competition with denominational camps in an attempt to appeal to potential campers. As a result, the promotional literature of non-denominational reflected a self-conscious effort to underscore their evangelical credentials as Bible-believing programs and staff members committed to working with youth from all different backgrounds, not just from churched backgrounds. The story of the beginning of East Iowa Bible Camp, New Life Ranch, and Victory Bible camp illuminate the difficulties of implementing a non-denominational summer camp program. These camps highlight the importance of a strong vision, inviting reliable volunteers to do most of the structural and building work of a camp site, and finding funding in creative ways without the aid of local and regional denominations.

The East Iowa Bible Conference of Deep River, IA consisted of both EIBC personnel (the camp registrar as well as the camp manager), as well as their own executive committee. In a "Short Review of E.I.B.C.," which stood for the East Iowa Bible Conference (not the Camp), the conference explained the brief history of both the organization and the camp. It cited the beginning as

> "Having had its birth in much prayer in the fall of 1943, the building of the camp began in the winter months of 1944. By July the camp was sufficiently ready to hold some 60 girls and 33 boys in two ten day periods. In 1945 the program of the conference was enlarged to include a junior camp, an adult conference, a youth conference and a men's camp."

The conference brochure then explains that 1946 would include a similar schedule, with an addition of a pastor's conference. It also boasts of the 'modern facilities' of 10 cabins housing close to 100 people, two guest dormitories, a main building with tabernacle and basement dining room and a shower room. "Located in a beautifully wooded section of land about 9 miles east of Deep River and 4 miles west of Millerburg, the calm and quiet setting of the camp site invites communion with God." The brochure elucidated,

> "That the blessing of the Lord has been upon the work of the conference is evidence by the fact that reports of spiritual victories continually come from and concerning those who attended the various camps. It is the prayer of the conference leaders that this approval of God may continue to rest upon its work and be even more apparent during the 1946 season…..we extend a cordial invitation to spend your vacation in the beautiful East Iowa Bible Conference ground dedicated to the task of helping you 'to know Christ and to make Him known.'"[61]

[61] East Iowa Bible Conference brochure, 1946, East Iowa Bible Camp Records, Deep River, IA.

Under a picture of the Young Peoples Camp in 1945 a caption read, "Would you like a part in this glorious work? An Eternal Investment." It then quoted "Lay not up for yourselves treasurers upon earth…but lay up for yourselves treasurers in Heaven."[62] Underneath is a brief detailing of a financial statement of the camp listing assets, non-assets, and current debts. The brochure read, "We desire to pay this off as soon as possible. This is a faith work and is dependent up on the gifts of God's people. There is no other such work in this section of Iowa. We invite your investigation—and assistance." The page then explained "Let Us 'Redeem the Time for the Days are Evil'" followed by an entreaty to send financial gifts to the camp treasurer and ended with the statement "Souls have been Saved in Each Camp –THINK!"[63] East Iowa Bible camp created a strong vision centered on the evangelical principle of conversion. In addition, the founding of East Iowa Bible camp suggests a typical fundamentalist concern about the influence of the outside world, in statements such as "the days are evil" and the importance of "spiritual victories" taking place in the camp programs.

The beginnings of New Life Ranch demonstrate the difficulties of finding adequate funding and the ways that volunteers essentially created the camp, almost single-handedly. And, all the help of volunteers was framed in an understanding of God's providence for the project. Willard Heck, writing in his diary in July of 1957, explained that he and his wife had turned over the pastorate of Tulsa Bible Church to another minister and, while on vacation with their boys in Mesa Verde, Colorado, considered their next step. Heck wrote he was "heavily

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[62] Reference to Matthew 6:19-20, King James Version. However, the KJV uses the term "treasures," not "treasurers."

[63] East Iowa Bible Conference Camp brochure, 1946, East Iowa Bible Camp Records, Deep River, IA.

burdened" to find a property and location for a summer camp ministry. He went on to remark, "I am now in much prayer regarding a place called "Kellem's Ranch" which we used as our first camp in Oklahoma for our Children's Bible Mission program. Can it be that the Lord is leading in this direction? It would seem to be far too great a venture for me from a human viewpoint." After meeting with Homer Kellem, Kellem agreed to not only sell the Ranch to Heck for the purposes of a summer camp and conference center but to do so at a reasonable price. By February of 1958, Heck had signed the papers and put a down payment on the property. He recalled, "Tom and I stopped at New Life Ranch entrance and bowed in thanksgiving for God's leadership step by step. We dedicated ourselves and the grounds to the glory of God in the expectation of souls saved and believers led into victorious living."[64] Some of the obstacles in fundraising at New Life Ranch reveal the difficulties in operating a summer camp program outside the membership and resources commanded by mainline denominations. In addition to paying for the property out of his own pocket, Heck also took out a loan to help pay for the property under the name of "Christian Ministries, Inc., chartered under the Laws of Oklahoma."[65]

Volunteers played a critical role in doing the work needed to both build and maintain the camp program and property. For mainline denominations with large memberships to draw from, local and regional churches could take turns and each spend a week, a few days, or implement a specific project, such as building a cabin. For non-denominational camps,

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[64] "The First 50 Years: A Short History of New Life Ranch," compiled by Clara Lou Willis, based on the diary of Willard Heck, 4, 2008 from New Life Ranch Records, Colcord, OK.

[65] "The First 50 Years," 5.

volunteers were equally critical, but often far few volunteers were available without the support of local and regional denominationally-affiliated congregations. At New Life Ranch, Heck and his business partner Tom Hull did a great deal of the work themselves. In addition, Heck, as the buyer, leader, and visionary of New Life Ranch, would also be living on the property. "Tom and I worked at the NLR getting it ready for the summer. Although it was wet and cold, we made good progress in strengthening the floors of the Heck house and the Mess Hall." Heck also recognized the significant amount of volunteer work needed and trusted God to provide: "Such work helped us to realize the reality and responsibility of the Ranch and the need for resting in the Lord for continuous strength and wisdom."[66] In an example of God's provision for the camp, Heck recalls that the camp needed a sufficient water supply in the form of a new well. After drilling to 200 feet, with no water, the driller recommended moving to another site.

> "Driller called to say that he was down to 298 feet and no additional water had been found. He wants to move to another site. I strongly felt that the Lord would supply our need at 300 feet. I told him to continue drilling. Tom and I would be up with the pipes to put in the hole. We arrived at noon just as the driller completed bailing the hole at 300 feet. He stated that there was no appreciable supply. We still believed this could not be so for our confidence was in the Lord. We asked the driller to make a float test of the hole. He dropped his float and was very surprised at the height of the water in the 6 foot hole…Upon the second test, he found the same supply."

Heck also noted, "although the driller insisted that the situation would not last, the well overflowed for about a year."[67] In another story framed around God's providence as well as New Life Ranch's need for funds and volunteers, Heck explained, "in going over the needs of

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[66] "The First 50 Years," 5-6.

[67] "The First Fifty Years," 6.

the Ranch and the improvements necessary to help in the spiritual ministry to which we are dedicated, we are asking the Lord to give us a cement floor in the dining hall." The floor, at the time, consisted of sawdust, and Hull believed it would cost around seven hundred dollars to convert it to a cement floor. Seven months later, the county purchased the right of way for a new bridge across Flint Creek, which was part of the New Life Ranch property. "They [the county] have paid $700. This is the amount needed for the dining hall floor. We praise the Lord and repair[ed] the inside of the dining hall for pouring."[68]

At Victory Bible Camp, the lack of denominational structure and organization served to highlight the need for local volunteers. For example in the camping season of 1951, a 'work week' was organized in May to make key improvements for VBC, including toilets and a septic tank, tent floors and frames, a speaker's building, light plant, kitchen improvements, and a hot water tank. VBC accomplished this work by contacting "interested friends" and forty-five men and women Church of the Open Door in Anchorage drove one hundred ninety miles to help out for a day of the work week. VBC also had "a goodly number of friends" join them to work on the camp in early June. The report listed the names of the volunteers and also explained "we were thankful that in this group there were carpenters, an electrician and a plumber."[69] VBC director John Gillespie also praised the women's volunteer efforts as well: "a word of thanks and encouragement must go to Rachel Gilman for the fine way in which she planned all the meals, handled the food and faithfully dished it out at every camp…and all of this without remuneration." More specifically, Gillespie acknowledged the many women who worked with

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[68] "The First Fifty Years," 6-7.

[69] Director's Report, 1, submitted by John Gillespie, director, 1951, Victory Bible Camp.

the campers and did much of the teaching of classes. "These all served faithfully without one word of dissention or ill feeling of any kind" and "the camp owes much of its success to these tireless workers" and their "invaluable help…cannot be fully accredited in this life."[70] One could sum up the need for and appreciation of volunteers in this statement from the report: "All along the Lord provided as the need arose. Men volunteered not only their help, but trucks and drivers were provided by the Lord several times."[71] The camp had needs and lacked funds to hire or pay to accomplish those tasks, the leadership trusted God for providence, and volunteers rose to the task, giving of their time, talents, and energy to make the camp work or to improve the camp property. However, unlike most denominationally affiliated camps, camps like VBC did not have organizational funding at local, regional, or national levels, nor did camps like VBC have pools of local and regional members from which to draw from. Instead, VBC found most of their volunteers from local or regional "friends" that supported the camp ministry and program.

In addition, camps like VBC often explored various options for raising revenue, including the use of their camp property by other groups. VBC's director, John Gillespie made a number of suggestions for new sources of income, including advertising the programs in Alaska through a mailing list, accruing shareholders for development, leasing out the camp to "other groups on a restrictive basis," encouraging individual "special projects for specific requirements," and the Advisory Board pushing the summer program and winter camps.[72] Board of Director Minutes

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[70] Director's Report, 1-2, submitted by John Gillespie, director, 1951, Victory Bible Camp.

[71] Director's Report, 1, submitted by John Gillespie, director, 1951, Victory Bible Camp.

[72] Minutes of the Meeting of the Board, April 7, 1959, VBC.

from VBC explained the new director of the nearby YMCA desired to use VBC grounds. The Minutes explained the VBC policy this way:

> "The opinion of the Board was that we must maintain our standards as a Bible camp, with strict prohibition of smoking and liquor, on which we feel there can be no compromise. Although we have desire to permit other groups to use the camp as a source of revenue, we feel that church groups should be given first priority, and that invitation should be extended to them now so that plans can be coordinated for next year."[73]

While evidence suggests that denominationally affiliated camps occasionally 'rented out' their camp property as well, more often the camps were filled with denominationally affiliated weeks, camps, youth organizations, retreats, and other activities.

Overall, non-denominational camps worked harder to find friends and volunteers to do a large share of the work that needed to be done, especially with regard to building the camp site. They did this by emphasizing their biblical message in order to appeal to as many Christians as possible and to prove their legitimacy as an evangelical summer camp program without the association with a denomination.

Fundamentalist Leanings

Many of the nondenominational summer camp programs provide evidence of ties to fundamentalism. This is displayed through an emphasis on biblical inerrancy, the use of

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[73] Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, September 3, 1960, Victory Bible Camp, VBC Records, BGA Archives. An earlier Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors discussed the matter of other outside groups using the facilities. The Minutes explained "this is not to be down without the authorization of the Board. The statement was made that we do not consider any group that is not a Christian group. It was said that any group who would come in must fit into the plans and programs of VBC." Minutes of Victory Bible Camp Board, 3, February 18, 1954.

apocalyptic language, and the voicing of concerns about youth in the postwar era and the need to save the souls of those youth from delinquency. However, among non-denominational postwar summer camps, there was a great deal of variation on the application of fundamentalist doctrines, especially with regard to end times theology.

According to 1946 camp promotional literature, the purpose of the East Iowa Bible Camp was "to establish and promote an interdenominational Bible Camp, the aim of which is the winning of souls to Christ, the edification of the saints, and to encourage the dedication of lives for Christian service."[74] A 1946 brochure of EIBC described it as "The Camp That God Built" and also proclaimed the camp's slogan, "To Know Christ and to Make him Known."[75] An East Iowa Bible Conference brochure pronounced, under a picture of the camp, "where souls and bodies are nourished."[76] The obviously 'general' Christian language underscored the non-denominational nature, although the use of 'interdenominational' seems to suggest an inclusive invitation to all Christians, inside or outside of mainline denominations.

East Iowa Bible Camp's Doctrinal Statement illustrates its connections with fundamentalism. The Doctrinal Statement was necessary because the non-denominational status of the camp would naturally elicit churches and other groups to wonder what sort of values the camp intended to teach. The Doctrinal Statement listed nine points and included the affirmation of scripture as inerrant and inspired by God, thus the "final authority in faith and

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[74] East Iowa Bible Conference camp brochure, 1946, East Iowa Bible Camp Records, Deep River, IA.
[75] East Iowa Bible Conference camp brochure, 1946, East Iowa Bible Camp Records, Deep River, IA.
[76] East Iowa Bible Conference brochure, 1946, East Iowa Bible Camp Records, Deep River, IA.

life," the trinity, the divinity of Jesus Christ, the creation of man in the image of God, sin as a separation from God, Jesus' death and bodily resurrection as a restoration of humanity's relationship with God, a born again experience by the Holy Spirit, the bodily resurrection of the "just and unjust," as well as a final judgment. In addition, the statement recorded a belief of the "personal, pre-millenial and imminent return" of Jesus.[77] This particular articulation of the Camp (and Conference's) doctrine strongly correlates with the basic tenets of twentieth century evangelicalism in America, with an emphasis on Biblical inerrancy and authority, centrality of the cross for salvation, and conversion. What sets the camp more firmly in the fundamentalist end of the spectrum is its belief in pre-millenialism, which is the "eschatological doctrine that Jesus will return for the true believers *before* the millennium, the thousand years of righteousness predicted in the Book of Revelation."[78] While the camp literature does not explicitly use the term 'fundamental' or 'fundamentalist' at any point (as evidenced in the aforementioned generally-stated purpose of the camp), the tenor of the doctrinal statement compellingly connects the camp to more fundamentalist leanings. This link is significant, as it highlights what scholar James Bennett articulated as the key division in American Protestantism

[77] East Iowa Bible Conference brochure, 1946, 1947, East Iowa Bible Camp Records, Deep River, IA.

[78] Randall Balmer, "Premillennialism," *Contemporary American Religion*, Vol. 2, Wade Clark Roof, ed., (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 1999), 548-49, *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. For more on the transition from postmillennialism to premillennialism, see Randall Balmer, *The Making of Evangelicalism: From Revivalism to Politics and Beyond* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010).

in the twentieth century, the division between modernist and fundamentalist ideas.[79] In the case of East Iowa Bible Camp, the fact that the camp is not only non-denominational but also more closely connected with fundamentalist doctrine illustrates the growing significance of the conservative-liberal divisions instead of merely mainline denominational differences.

New Life Ranch also created a doctrinal statement, in a page entitled "Articles of Faith," that was to be signed and returned to the camp. Interestingly, NLR's statement also contained nine statements with striking similarities to East Iowa Bible Camp's statement. NLR affirmed a belief in the Old and New Testaments as "inerrant in the original writing, and that they are the supreme and final authority in faith and life." This particular statement of inerrancy is significant in the broader context of the growing Modernist/Fundamentalist debate that placed the inerrancy and authority of scripture against the more modernist twentieth century impulses of Biblical Criticism, which examined the Bible as a form of literature and the product of years of human convention instead divine revelation. The fundamentalists insisted on the authority and revealed nature of the Bible, while the modernists viewed the Bible as written over time and filled with moral teachings.[80] The NLR "Articles of Faith" also included a belief in the three persons of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the belief of Jesus as "begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of Mary, a virgin and descendant of David." It asserted "man was created in the

[79] James B. Bennett, "Tensions Within: The Elusive Quest for Christian Cooperation in America," in *American Christianities,* 133-51; 143. See also William R. Hutchinson, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992).

[80] See also George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Henry Emerson Fosdick, *The Living of These Days,* (New York: Harper & Row, 1956); J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism,* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923).

image of God," but that sin separated humans from God and all humans are "born with a sinful nature," a belief that Jesus died for "our sins," and the "resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord and His ascension into Heaven." Significantly, the doctrinal statement included a statement of end times, "a belief in that blessed hope – the personal and imminent return of our Lord and Savior…and that He will set up His Kingdom on earth." The "Articles" ended with beliefs in "all those who in faith accept the Lord Jesus Christ are born again…and thereby become children of God," and the "belief in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust," which is the "everlasting blessedness of the saved" and the "everlasting punishment of the lost." Each of the nine doctrinal points from NLR cited a number of scriptural passages as support of each statement.[81] Much like East Iowa Bible Camp, NLR's "Articles of Faith" do not employ the word 'fundamentalist,' but its adherence to biblical inerrancy and probable literalism (when interpreting the phrase "inerrant in the original writing,") indicates a significantly more conservative end of the evangelical spectrum.

The use of apocalyptic language remains a significant indicator of belief for evangelicals in general and fundamentalists in particular. As a basic principle in Christianity, whether liberal or more conservative, sharing the gospel of Christ for the purpose of leading, or, converting people to believing in Christ and the principles of Christianity is a core concept. If one believes the world will end with Christ's return and some form of judgment of the people on the earth will take place, the saving of souls takes on a degree of urgency. How much urgency is dependent on the particular theories and believes about end times. The theology and ideas of

[81] "New Life Ranch Articles of Faith," no date, New Life Ranch Records, Colcord, OK.

end times is so vast that it has its own title of study, eschatology.[82] However, for the purposes of examining postwar summer camps, it is significant to note that evangelical summer camps that fall under the fundamentalist banner tended to suggest a stronger affinity to apocalyptic language. A camper of New Life Ranch named Mary Nolan recalled Bill Biggs "speaking in chapel and sharing about the rapture. Campers could not get enough of him teaching them what the Bible says will happen."[83] In another example, New Life Ranch founder and director Heck wrote,

> "Many things seem to indicate the soon return of Christ. I take this as an indication that we are, with much prayer, vision, and energy, to move forward with every means possible to present God's redeeming grace to all who pass our way. Not only so, but we must use everything possible to attract new souls to NLR and to the message of New Life in Christ."[84]

Notice the urgency that concerns over the coming of end times produces for Heck and the way he connects the immanent coming of Christ as a call to escalate and intensify the work of saving souls at camp. The following year, Heck wrote, "As never before, world conditions, especially in

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[82] For more information on eschatology, see Keller, Catherine, "Women Against Wasting the World: Notes on Eschatology and Ecology." In *Reweaving the World: the Emergence of Ecofeminism,* edited by Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein. 1990; Moltmann, Jürgen. *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology,* translated by Margaret Kohl. 1996; Niebuhr, H. Richard. *The Kingdom of God in America.* 1937; reprint, 1988; Pannenberg, Wolfhart. "Theology and the Kingdom of God." In *Theology and the Kingdom of God,* edited by Richard John Neuhaus. 1969; Russell, Robert John. "Cosmology from Alpha to Omega." *Zygon* 29 (1994): 557–577; Jon R. Stone, *A Guide to the End of the World: Popular Eschatology in America,* 1993; Cohn, Norman Rufus Colin. *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith.* New Haven, Conn., 1993; Evans, Craig A., and Peter W. Flint. *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls.* Grand Rapids, Mich., 1997; Polkinghorne, J. C. *The God of Hope and the End of the World.* New Haven, Conn., 2002.

[83] Mary Nolan, "New Life Ranch Most Memorable Moments, 2008 in "The First Fifty Years," 114.

[84] "The First 50 Years," 14.

the Middle East, indicate that Jesus may come today—Praise God! But we must work while it is yet day."[85] This particular statement demonstrates the efforts of fundamentalists to examine current events and their significance with regard to the coming end times.

East Iowa Bible Camp, while it affirmed a commitment to "a personal, pre-millennial, and imminent return" of Jesus, as stated in its doctrinal statement, did not employ end times language as the primary reason for the reason of saving souls at summer camp.[86] In fact, the only reference that could be interpreted as a possible statement of end times language is a brochure's admonition to its readers that read, "Let Us 'Redeem the Time for the Days are Evil'"[87] This suggests that while end times theology remained a key aspect of fundamentalist doctrine, wide variation on the application of end times theology and the statements and applications of end times theology in post war summer camp literature remained diverse and heterogeneous.

Along with links to apocalyptic language and affirmation of the inerrancy of scripture, nondenominational summer camps stressed the need for conversion in the midst of the anxieties of postwar America. An article published in *The Pioneer-Republican* Newspaper from Iowa County in 1957 provides a valuable outside perspective on EIBC. Significantly, the newspaper cited the camp as "interdenominational in fellowship, evangelistic in spirit and fundamental in doctrine." It is interesting that the newspaper employed the label of

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[85] "The First Fifty Years," 16-17.

[86] East Iowa Bible Conference Camp brochure, 1946, 1947, East Iowa Bible Camp Records, Deep River, IA.

[87] East Iowa Bible Conference Camp brochure, 1946, East Iowa Bible Camp Records, Deep River, IA.

‘fundamental’ even though that exact term is not used in any of the camp publications. The article also noted that the camp was not a “local camp serving only people in this immediate area” but that it drew campers and adults from much of eastern Iowa, eastern Illinois, and “faculty members” from around the world. After detailing the schedule of camps (5 one week sessions of junior boys, junior girls, intermediate boys, intermediate girls, young peoples camp and family camp), the prices (an average of 12.50/ per week per person), and the camp directors and board members, the article noted the purpose of the camp, which echoed the camp materials:

> “…the purpose and determination of the camp make up for modest surroundings: To win to Christ those who do not know him as a Saviour and Lord, to impart and teach the word of God, to provide fellowship and fun for practical Christian living….As you drive into the camp, a road marker tells you where to drive. The sign leaves no doubt: ‘This is the way.’ It is more than a key to the direction of the road, it underlines the purposes of the camp.”

The article also mentioned the faculty members for the 1957 camping season, which included primarily ministers and missionaries. Missionaries and their families from Kano, Nigeria, and Africa, ministers from Waterloo, IA, the Midwest Bible Institute at St. Louis, and the Moody Bible Institute at Chicago all provided the spiritual teaching and discipleship for the campers.[88]

A clear concern with the saving of souls at non-denominational camps such as EIBC also connects with larger missionizing concerns. While overseas missionizing peaked in the nineteenth century and began to decline into the twentieth century, it still maintained

[88] “Bible Camp Says, ‘This Is the Way,’” *The Pioneer-Republican*, Iowa County, 1957, East Iowa Bible Camp Records, Deep River, IA.

significance, especially among more conservative and fundamentalist evangelicals.[89] Saving souls, whether the youth, unchurched, or people outside of the United States who had never heard the gospel message, nondenominational summer camps showcased both pastors and missionaries, but with a special emphasis on missionaries.

Many evangelicals perceived that juvenile delinquency was rising to unprecedented levels in the postwar years. The nondenominational summer camps tapped into these fears by framing their camp programs as effective ways to save the souls of American youth, in a religious sense but also to save them from the dangers of delinquency.

Fundamentalists voiced their concerns about larger progressive trends in American culture by cited the widespread evidence of juvenile delinquency and the need for more American youth to be saved. The East Iowa Bible Camp newsletter publication entitled *Camp Echoes of the East Iowa Bible Conference* was dedicated to the junior campers with much of the material provided by the junior workers. The March 1950 edition listed all the workers at Junior Camp in 1949 and included a letter from the Dean, presumably from the same 1949 Junior Camp. Dean Rev. Darrell A. Rhodes of First Baptist Church in Jesup, IA wrote

> "I find that the young people who spend a week of the summer in a Bible camp come home and make the best workers in the Church. In the Church and Sunday School Christianity is so often only presented to the child as theory, but at Camp it becomes a living reality; he lives Christ from morning to evening every day. J. Edgar Hoover says that the Sunday School is the first line of defense against juvenile crime. I wonder if he

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[89] For more on the history of missionizing, see Green, Vivian. *A New History of Christianity.* 1996; Latourette, Kenneth Scott. *A History of the Expansion of Christianity: The Great Century A.D. 1800 –1914.* 1941; Tinker, George E. *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide.* 1993; Walls, Andrew F. *The Missionary Movement in Christian History.* 1996.

> considered the summer Bible Camp? Hour for hour I believe the summer Camp does more than a year of Sunday School. The two together are a great force for God."

Rhodes cited a report from Hoover about the rise of juvenile delinquency. J. Edgar Hoover wrote "we must open a 'third front' against this growing evil of juvenile crime here at home, which, unchecked, may lead to a serious era of adult lawlessness in the future and undermine that security we are now fighting to protect." Hoover also believed the solution to delinquency in American youth was for parents "to see that their children are growing up fully appreciative of the rights of God and their fellow-man" and recommended parents required their children to attend church or Sunday School on a regular basis as well as take advantage of youth centers and other recreational programs. Hoover does not specifically mention camps, but encourages communities to provide more healthy vocational and recreational outlets for teens.[90] Reverend Rhodes seized on this comment by Hoover to encourage parents to follow Hoover's advice and take advantage of a summer camp program as a way to protect their children from delinquency. Concerns about rising rates of juvenile delinquency were consistent across the US in the postwar era, certainly not restricted to evangelicals, mainline denominations, or non-denominational or fundamentalist groups.[91] However, publications like *Camp Echoes* do seem

[90] John Edgar Hoover, "A 'Third Front'—Against Juvenile Crime," *New York Times,* February 27, 1944, SM8; See also "FBI Reports Big Rise in Crimes by Women; Hoover Fears Spur to Juvenile Delinquency," *New York Times* December 30, 1946, 10.

[91] For more on fears of juvenile delinquency in the 1950s, see James Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Max F. Baer, "The National Juvenile Delinquency Picture," *Personnel* & *Guidance Journal,* 38 (December 1959): 278-279;"Why Law Fails to Stop Teenage Crime," *U.S. News & World Report* (14 January 1955): 64-75.

to articulate more of these concerns than the newsletters from the other mainline denominational camps in Iowa at the same time period.

Another section of the newsletter entitled "THINK OF IT!" connected EIBC to the larger current events in the postwar US, thus providing a valuable insight into the pre-millennial overtones evident in the push to convert American youth. The newsletter explained, "reports indicate that 37,000,000 US youth have NO religion of any kind. If you marched them four abreast you would have a column reaching twice across the continent. They would fill the 20 largest cities of America PLUS the State of Texas. Think of it! Will you help us reach these young people for Christ? Pray for them. Testify to them. Bring them to Camp next summer." In another example of urgency with regard to saving souls, the *Camp Echoes* "Evangelist" from Junior Camp in 1949 wrote "I can picture those of you who came to Christ for salvation, and, because He saved you, you gave Him your heart, your head, your hands—your all!" The Rev. Ivan C. Bachtell of Muscatine, IA ended his piece by telling the Junior Campers to "bring others with you, help them to come to Christ." The urgency for conversion in American youth displays the pre-millennialist leanings of a fundamentalist desire to bring as many people to Christ so as to usher in the return of Christ.

The section entitled "A Judge's Statement," from Denver's Juvenile Court Judge, Philip B. Gilliam, also connected EIBC to larger American postwar concerns. According to "Camp Echoes," Judge Gilliam declared "there is a great need to teach children simple things. They need to get close to earth. We much do something for our children now. We not only need to save the world for our children, but also to save the children for the world which will be [theirs] tomorrow." The Judge also went on to state "We have never had an active church boy in real trouble in the juvenile court." Under this statement the editor of *Camp Echoes* wrote an editor's note that read, "bring children to Christ. Help them come to Camp that we may help them 'grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.'"[92] In a final tie to larger concerns of juvenile delinquency, a section of "Camp Echoes" entitled "Lambs Make Sheep" connected the care of young lambs to the care of young people in the church. After citing some biblical and anecdotal examples of the importance of taking care of the lambs, not just the adult sheep, the author of this section acknowledged it may feel "slow" to work with lambs, or, children. But the reward is valuable, according to the author, as those parents, pastors, and churches that care for children will have "sheep of the finest kind." The author then makes an impassioned case for youth evangelism, writing "Remember the early converted are, other things being equal, the best. They have a time for preparation for service and a time for service which is not possible in case of the convert of adult years."[93] Again, this use of 'conversion language,' not evident in most evangelical summer camps until decades later, suggests an important distinction between the mainline denominational emphasis on leadership and the non-denominational emphasis on reaching the unbelievers and unchurched.

In reflecting on New Life Ranch, pastor Bill Biggs explained the conversion story of three young girls as a formative memory.

> "Three young girls came to camp for the whole seven weeks. That was a bit unusual but their parents were having their house redecorated and it would be better for the girls if they were somewhere else having a good time. The oldest sister told me that her

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[92] "Camp Echoes of the East Iowa Bible Conference," March 1950, East Iowa Bible Camp Records, Deep River, IA.

[93] *Lambs Make Sheep* in "Camp Echoes of the East Iowa Bible Conference," March 1950, East Iowa Bible Camp Records, Deep River, IA.

> parent chose the Ranch because it was a good place to have fun and it was safe. She also told me that her folks told them not to get involved with any of that religious stuff, just have fun and enjoy themselves.
> To make a long story short, all three of the girls were "born again" at camp. They fell in love with the Lord Jesus and were really totally converted. They did not know how their mom and dad would like that but they knew they could not turn back."

Biggs then explained the girls' parents came to pick them up and came to the Friday chapel service. As the parents listened, the girls gave their testimonies about their conversion experiences. "Mom and Dad did not look any too pleased but they didn't say anything to the staff that I can recall." Biggs said he did not hear from these girls ever again and did not know "if they were able to convince their parent that what had happened to them was not 'religious' but real and life-changing." But, Biggs concluded, "guess I'll have to find out in heaven some day."[94] This conversion story not only demonstrated the saving souls focus of non-denominational camps such as New Life Ranch, but it also sheds light on the assurance of this purpose by camp directors, staff, and counselors. Summer camp workers experienced and remembered many conversion stories and testimonies. While certainly every camper did not convert or experience a spiritual revelation, camps such as New Life Ranch encouraged themselves and others by pointing to the myriad of examples of changed lives as an affirmation of their ministry and an impetus to continue in that mission. In addition, in Bigg's story of the three girls, he clearly displayed his confidence that they were in fact "really totally converted," and even though he never heard from them again, remained assured that these girls were believers, would be in heaven someday, and Biggs seems to presume, be able to share their life stories of God at work in their lives.

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[94] Bill Biggs, "New Life Ranch Reflections," 2008, from Nolan, *The First Fifty Years,* 112.

Conclusion

An examination of postwar evangelical summer camps challenges the denominational decline narrative.[95] While overall denominational decline is evident in the trajectory of the twentieth century, summer camps reveal the strength of denominations continued, at least in the immediate postwar era. The establishment and success of mainline denominational camps demonstrates a strong denominational dominance at the local and regional levels with regard

[95] A recent Pew Forum on religion and public life, a project of the Pew Research Center, found that mainline Protestant churches in the US "continue to experience decades-long decline," according to figures compiled by the National Council of Churches. The NCC listed the 10 largest Christian bodies in 2011 as the Catholic Church, followed by the Southern Baptist Convention, the United Methodist Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American at rank number seven, with the Presbyterian Church (USA) ranked tenth. The NCC found an overall continued national decline in mainline Protestant churches, but also found some smaller denominations'' membership increase, such as Pentecostal churches and the Jehovah's Witnesses. Richard Yeakley, "RNS: Report: U.S. Churches Continue Growth, Decline Trends," *Religion News Service,* February 15, 2011, from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, a project of the Pew Research Center, http://www.pewforum.org/Religion-News/RNS-Report-US-churches-continue-growth-decline-trends.aspx, accessed 5/30/2012.
The response to a similar Pew Study on the decline of denominational significance in American religious life prompted responses from scholars and other leaders in the field of religious studies. Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress (and former president of Chicago Theological Seminary), declared the US as "Post-Denominational." Thistlethwaite defines post-denominational as "it is far less important whether you are Methodist or Baptist, or even Catholic, than where you fall along the continuum of fundamentalist to evangelical to progressive (liberal) to secular or unaligned." She elaborates further, "While some faiths or denominations generally are more evangelical or more liberal, each tradition has a wide spectrum within it. If you are a liberal Christian in a conservative Protestant denomination, you may have more in common with a Reformed Jew than with the Christians in your own denomination." Thistlethwaite explains that while the Pew study indicates "'the United States is on the verge of becoming a minority Protestant country,' these trends toward self-direction in faith is the distinctly, even unique Protestant ethos. We may be declining in numbers, we Protestants, but sociologically speaking, in the U.S. we won." Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, "The U.S. is Post-Denominational," *The Washington Post,* February 27, 2008. See also James B. Bennett, "Tensions Within: The Elusive Quest for Christian Cooperation in America," in *American Christianities,* 147-48.

to vision, acquisition, and the successful programming and attendance of a summer camp. In addition, most denominationally affiliated summer camps committed themselves to discipleship and leadership training of youth to prepare them for service in the larger Christian church, but also within their specific denominational structure.

While denominationally affiliated summer camps dominated the postwar evangelical camping boom, the evidence of nondenominational summer camps demonstrates the growing influence and organization of more conservative evangelicals, the fundamentalists. Though small in number and influence, nondenominational summer camps placed a much stronger emphasis on the saving of souls. As singular programs, nondenominational summer camps did not hold an organizational or fundraising structure with churches, seminaries, colleges, and missionary programs with which to groom campers for future church work like denominational summer camps did. As a result, nondenominational summer camps focused on the most basic goals of Christianity: saving souls. With sufficient ties to fundamentalism, although not necessarily explicitly stated, nondenominational summer camps more consistently reflected more conservative evangelical and fundamentalist doctrines, adding to the growing influence of fundamentalism in twentieth century United States. Whether the saving of souls was because of Christ's immanent second coming, or to protect American youth from growing rates of juvenile delinquency, nondenominational summer camps flavored everything they did with conversion and making a decision for Christ. Ultimately, this emphasis on conversion separated nondenominational summer camps from their more numerous, more popular, more liberal, and more discipleship-oriented denominational postwar summer camps.

CHAPTER THREE:

Gender Goes Camping:

A "Clarion Call" for Evangelical Identities of Masculinity and Femininity in Evangelical Summer Camps

"Sunshine, fresh air, the peace of the mountains and the forests, freedom from tension—these we owe to our youth. The summer camp, an American contribution to the world, is the answer to the question 'Where will I find freedom from strain for my boy this summer?' Let's send them to camp, where in a calm atmosphere they will build strong bodies and calm nerves for that which lies ahead."

A Message to Parents, Camp Ridgecrest for Boys, 1949 [1]

"It is our desire that your daughter advances in truth, growth, courage, perseverance and purity while at camp."

Note from the Director, Camp Crestridge for Girls, 1956 [2]

In postwar America, gendered ideas of masculinity and femininity played out in a summer camp environment. Research into Camp Ridgecrest for Boys, Camp Crestridge for Girls, and the Pioneer Girls reveals an emphasis by evangelicals on grooming young boys and girls for future leadership roles in the church. More specifically, the boys received a strong emphasis in masculine training, based on masculine activities more than religious training. This seems to suggest that qualities of leadership were assumed and embedded in ideas of masculinity. The girls, on the other hand, had a more explicitly spiritual emphasis in their summer camps, which seems to suggest that leadership qualities were not embedded in ideas

[1] A Message to Parents, Camp Ridgecrest for Boys Brochure, 1949, Southern Baptist Historical Archives (SBHA).

[2] Note from Director, Arvine Bell, Camp Crestridge for Girls Brochure, 1956, SBHA.

of femininity but needed to be taught. As an important caveat to traditional understandings of postwar female gender roles as primarily domestic, evangelical summer camps taught young evangelical girls spiritual leadership skills for the express purpose of grooming female leadership roles in the evangelical church.[3]

Historians complicate the roles of women in the postwar era and vacillate about the extent to which women were encouraged to enter the workplace, entered the workplace out of necessity, or were encouraged to work in the home. Elaine Tyler May answered why this widespread embrace of the traditional family occurred in the postwar era and explored what lead to its rejection by their children. She argued the nuclear family unit became the first line of defense against communism and represented the glories of democracy: the home. A desire for the return to normalcy saw the women-liberating years of the 20s and 30s revert back to a more traditional gender role as the work force became more sex segregated.[4] But scholars like Joanne Meyerowitz have found evidence of both domestic and non-domestic ideals in 1950s popular culture and claimed the postwar era was a time of predominately mixed messages for women. Meyerowitz claimed the qualities of a strong work ethic, political activity, and public service were praised in postwar women and suggests the Cold War called for greater female participation as an international obligation.[5] An examination of gender roles in evangelical summer camps complements and complicates these ideas of postwar gender roles. In more

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[3] See Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

[4] May, *Homeward Bound*.

[5] Joanne Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946-1958," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, Joanne Meyerowitz, ed., (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1994):229-62.

conservative evangelical circles, girls and young women were encouraged to support their husbands and families through working in the home. Yet summer camps demonstrate the ways that postwar evangelical young women were encouraged to embark on careers in ministry and to take leadership positions in the evangelical church, at home or abroad.

Very little scholarship exists that addresses the postwar interaction between gender, Christianity, and youth.[6] However, scholar of childhood, Paula Fass, has argued that the postwar period is a unique period in the history of childhood. She described the period as a "reinvention of childhood" because of the social, political, and legal transformations crammed into the relatively small time frame of the postwar period. Fass cited the extension of schooling to older youth and children from a larger variety of social backgrounds, institutionalization of the welfare state, boom of consumer and popular culture aimed at children, shifting family dynamics including more effective contraception, assisted reproduction, and increased divorce rates, the continued growth of women working outside the home, the expansion of civil rights to groups previously excluded, and a more globalized economy and the internationalization that complemented that globalization as the primary reasons for understanding the postwar period as critical and distinct historical episode of children and youth in the United States.[7]

Steven Mintz's article in Fass's edited volume on postwar childhood argued the "Cold War childhood remains the yardstick against which Americans assess contemporary

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[6] Paula S. Fass and Michael Grossberg, eds, *Reinventing Childhood After World War II* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012) provides an excellent overview of childhood in the postwar era. However, the book neglects to discuss the topic of religion and/or Christianity.

[7] Fass and Grossberg, *Reinventing Childhood After World War II*, x-xi.

childhood."[8] Mintz outlined the specific historical moments that created the unique children's cultures of the postwar period for boys and girls. Cold War boyhood was characterized by gun play, large numbers of kids to participate in play, larger spaces for boys to roam free of adult supervision, team competitions, and the ingrained values of patriotism. Postwar girls, according to Mintz, focused on the indoors, domesticity, motherhood, and personal attractiveness.[9]

This examination of evangelical summer camps builds on Fass and Mintz's scholarship concerning the era of the postwar United States by adding the element of evangelicalism. Specifically, evangelical summer camps reveal the significance of the postwar period in shaping gender roles for evangelical boys and girls in distinct ways. Evangelicals employed tools of the more consumer-based postwar period to appeal to the 'active nature' of boys through competition, sports, and outdoor activities. Significantly, evangelical camps for girls differed from Mintz's description of the traditional postwar emphases on staying indoors and domesticity. Camps such as Camp Crestridge for Girls and the Pioneer Girls encouraged girls through outdoor activities and competitive sports. In addition, evangelical summer camps pushed girls to pursue more spiritual training with an end goal of evangelical careers and even leadership roles in missions and teaching.

Many evangelical summer camps encouraged girls to pursue Christian vocations. Much of the scholarship on gender and missionwork is centered on the nineteenth century, which

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[8] Steven Mintz, "The Changing Face of Children's Culture," in Fass and Grossberg, *Reinventing Childhood After World War II,* 41.

[9] Mintz, "The Changing Face of Children's Culture," 42-3.

also corresponds with the height of missions from the United States to other countries. The research on missionwork in the nineteenth century typically deals with questions of gender in relation to imperialism and colonialism.[10] There is less scholarship on missionwork after World War II, but what scholarship exists underscores common themes in the history of women and missions.[11] American missionary women, across the years, all experienced the "subordination to the official, usually male-dominated, structures of the church." In many instances, the work of missionary women was considered secondary to an ordained male's work, even when women had their own gender-specific missions societies or separate communities (such as the Pioneer Girls). As a result, women functioned in "an ecclesiastical context that was unpredictable and accepted or rejected them according to its own whims."[12] Women

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[10] See Fiona Bowie, Deborah Kirkwood, and Shirley Ardener, eds., *Women and Missions: Past and Present: Anthropological and Historical Perceptions* (Oxford: Berg, 1993); Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996); Mary Taylor Huber, and Nancy C. Lutkehaus, eds., *Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999); Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997); Ann L. Stoler, "Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in Twentieth Century Colonial Cultures," *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 4: 634-60; Nuper Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, eds., *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992); Sarah Miller-Davenport, "'Their blood shall not be shed in vain': American Evangelical Missionaries and the Search for God and Country in Post-World War II Asia," *Journal of American History* (2013) 99 (4): 1109-32.

[11] Ruth Tucker claims women missionaries still face sex discrimination and that singleness is a significant issue for women missionaries. Single male missionaries have increased in numbers (largely due to an increase in short term missions), but "single women still far outnumber single men in foreign missionary service." Ruth A. Tucker, *Guardians of the Great Commission: The Story of Women in Modern Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 253.

[12] Dana L. Robert, "The Shape of American Women's Mission Thought: A Concluding Note," in *American Women in Mission*, 409.

missionaries typically expressed a priority for helping to educate and heal women and children, leading to a more holistic practice that rejected mission theories about a "radical separation of the spiritual and the physical."[13] They tended to be categorized as "spinsters." In addition, their work was not publically recognized. While nineteenth century female missionaries may have planted churches, there were always "suitable men" who took over the pastoral work as soon as possible.[14] However, Dana L. Robert, author of *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice,* indicates that since World War II, there has been more support for the role of married women planting churches alongside their husbands. But evangelical summer camps such as Crestridge for Girls and the Pioneer Girls organization emphasized the importance of a calling of young women to ministry at home and abroad.

Camp Ridgecrest for Boys and Camp Crestridge for Girls

One way to understand the differences expectations for girls and boys is to look at a two parallel camps like Camp Ridgecrest for Boys in Ridgecrest and Camp Crestridge for Girls, both in Ridgecrest, North Carolina. Camp Ridgecrest began "in response to the clarion call of the needs of boys" in 1928 as a project of the Sunday School Board of Southern Baptist Convention (of Nashville, TN) and the Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly.[15] It ran for two five-week sessions each summer. However, though Camp Ridgecrest began before the post-World War II boom of summer camps, its promotion and popularity significantly increased in the postwar era, in

[13] Robert, 411.

[14] Robert, 410-11.

[15] Camp Ridgecrest for Boys camp brochure, 1948, AR795-555 RCCC, SBHA.

keeping with a larger evangelical focus on using summer camps to reach youth.[16] A Press release from August of 1955 explains that, since 1950, the size of Camp Ridgecrest for Boys "doubled in its facilities and enrolment."[17] In the eyes of Camp Ridgecrest's leadership, summer camps offered an alternative for boys to the intensely feminized home environment that threatened the development of American masculinity.[18] In the postwar era, many leading experts of the day still concurred with G. Stanley Hall's prevailing ideas concerning 'meaningful play' and his emphasis on child psychology and progressive educational theory. These same experts connected the experience of attending summer camp to the development of character.[19] Camp Ridgecrest for Boys demonstrates the connections between cultural concerns about masculinity and evangelical concerns with grooming future leaders.

Camp Crestridge for Girls started in 1955, much later than Camp Ridgecrest for Boys, but opened in response to "a constant and growing request for a girls' camp" since Camp Ridgecrest "filled a need of a great number of boys." Camp Crestridge, much like Camp Ridgecrest, ran for two five-week sessions in the summer and included "recreation for mental, physical, and spiritual growth" and under "Christian leadership. The camp will provide a

[16] Letter to George Pickering, Director of Camp Ridgecrest for Boys, not signed, September 2, 1955, invited the submission of pictures to use for publicity for the camp. AR795-555, RCCC, SBHA.

[17] Press Release, August 24, 1955, Baptist Sunday School Board. AR795-555, RCCC, SBHA.

[18] Van Slyck, A Manufactured Wilderness, xxiv.

[19] Van Slyck, 110-ff.

wholesome, fun-filled summer for your girl."[20] It is clear that Camp Crestridge for Girls, under the same direction of the Southern Baptist Assembly and also located in Ridgecrest, NC, maintained a similar vision and emphasis to Camp Ridgecrest on character, activities, and Christian leadership training. It is also significant to note that the Southern Baptist Assembly did not create a coed program to incorporate girls but created Crestridge and Ridgecrest as separate camps for boys and girls

Unlike Camp Ridgecrest, Camp Crestridge and its creation linked to a particular woman: Arvine Bell. An article from *Baptist and Reflector* noted that the "spirit of Camp Crestridge, which is really the spirit of God, comes from Miss Bell."[21] While Camp Ridgecrest mentions and appreciates the roles of its various directors, Camp Crestridge singularly extolls the leadership of Arvine Bell, who is mentioned as a person synonymous with Camp Crestridge. 'Miss Bell,' as she is referred to in all references from the camp and in Southern Baptist sources, received her Master of Religious Education degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary as well as a Master of Science degree in physical education from Indiana University. Miss Bell worked at Camp Crestridge for twenty-nine years. According to an article published in May of 1969, Miss Bell was also a doctoral candidate in physical education at Indiana University.[22] Miss Bell

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[20] Camp Crestridge for Girls, Auspices of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention Publication, Ridegecrest, NC, 1955, Camp Crestridge – Information and Brochures, 1956-1959, SBHA.

[21] "Girls Camp Celebrates Twentieth Anniversary," *Baptist and Reflector,* Thursday, September 12, 1974, page 12 in Information and Brochures, 1956-1959, SBHA.

[22] James Evans McReynolds, "Camps Provide Guidance for Youth: Camp Crestridge Provides Creative Religious Activities," *Facts and Trends,* May 1969, page 4 in in Information and Brochures, 1956-1959, SBHA.

provided a role model for evangelical girls as a woman who dedicated her life to full-time ministry.

The first published catalog of Camp Crestridge dedicated that catalog to the people "who gave wisdom, time, and influence, ingenuity and prayerful guidance to the establishment of Camp Crestridge for Girls. Their devotion to Christian ideals and their desire to offer meaningful camping experiences to our girls has and will inspire staffers and campers through the years." The dedication was surrounded by the pictures of all the key (male) leaders of the Sunday School Board, including the Business Manager and the Manager of the Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly, who selected the site for the camp, raised the funds, and built the camp facilities from 1954 to 1955.[23] Significantly, while the male leadership of the local Southern Baptist chapter started the camp, raised the funds, and built the camp, it was the female leadership of Miss Bell that implemented the vision of Camp Crestridge for girls. Leaders like Miss Bell provided an example for female campers of female leadership and career in ministry.

The Purpose of Camp Ridgecrest and Camp Crestridge

Camp Ridgecrest promotional brochures addressed the purpose of a camp for boys, citing the unique needs of boys and extolling the use of nature to build character. Notice the 1948 brochure's contrast between the rather negative characteristics of the city and the inherently good qualities of nature:

[23] Camp Crestridge for Girls, 1956 Season Catalog, Sponsored by Baptist Sunday School Board, of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, TN, in Information and Brochures, 1956-1959, SBHA.

> Cities with their hurry and bustle, their activity and business often overlook these ideals. There is something in the gems of nature that pierce the innermost recess of our being. Especially is this true in the case of a boy. Universally he is interested in nature. A boy, too, likes to be with other boys. He is content in a congenial group. A boy needs and responds to leadership and guidance, if this is sympathetic and understanding. Unquestionably a boy cannot find the fullest life without religion, yea more, without the religion of the Master.[24]

This particular elucidation of purpose strikes many chords. The contrast of busy cities with the quiet of nature seems especially striking in light of growing suburbanization trends,[25] although one wonders if the suburbs, where many of the middle class white boys came from, also contained such "hurry and bustle." In addition, the writer(s) of this brochure see the "universality" of boys instead of the diversity of boys. Most striking, perhaps, is the lack of evangelical language. Including a vague statement about the importance of religion (not even Christianity) and, perhaps, the 'correct' religion may reflect a downplaying of evangelical, or in this case, Southern Baptist values. But it may also be an indication of an assumed audience of Southern Baptist Convention and/or Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly members. A 1956 brochure, in its message to parents, put it this way:

> Do you want to make a real investment in the future of that boy of yours? Then give him the opportunity of spending a summer at Camp Ridgecrest for Boys. Nestled among the scenic Blue Ridge Mountains, Camp Ridgecrest will provide a wholesome, well-spent, fun-filled summer for your youngster. Here abound nature's finest: sunshine, fresh air, majestic mountains and peaceful forest in 'the Land of the Sky.' Boating, swimming, horseback riding, tennis, crafts, and hiking are just a part of the complete camp program. A capable and experienced staff guides and ministers to the needs of the campers. We propose to help guild in your boy the finest in physical, mental, and

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[24] Camp Ridgecrest for Boys camp brochure, 1948, AR795-555, RCCC, SBHA.

[25] Van Slyck cites the postwar language of contrast between the lush, green American outdoor summer camps with the stark, industrialized coldness of the Soviet Union. Van Slyck, xxvi. See also Neil Maher, *Nature's New Deal: The CCC and the Roots of the American Environmentalist Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

> spiritual qualities. To help him live with others—to learn to give and take. Camp Ridgecrest instills life-lasting values. It is a BOYHOOD'S DREAM COME TRUE. We promise a sincere, conscientious job, in a camp with a heart and a purpose, with Counselors interested in boys, men who will be your boy's friend.[26]

While the later publication still did not explicitly mention Baptist or Christian values, it also seemed to assume that the 'spiritual qualities,' 'life-lasting values,' and 'heart and purpose,' refer to evangelical faith. The emphasis on spiritual development is firmly tied to the outdoors and 'fresh air,' character building through competition and cooperation, and the spiritual guidance through the discipleship of counselors, speakers, and camp leadership. In addition, this statement of purpose subtly points to a desire for upward mobility, in the statement about "a boyhood's dream come true." The opportunity to play at work, instead of just to work, for the purpose of learning life-long skills seems to also be connected to an upper working class and middle class postwar American ideal.

Later camp literature still emphasized nature and character development in boys, but put more stress on the longevity and legacy of Camp Ridgecrest's emphasis on training current boys for future leadership.

> America's most precious possession is today's boy who will be tomorrow's man. The only reason a boys' camp has to exist is solely in the interest of the development of the BOY physically, mentally, and spiritually. How can this character-molding be best done at Camp? We, at Camp Ridgecrest, still believe that example is the best teacher. To this end only the finest of consecrated Christian young men are selected to give guidance to this most precious possession. Through the years Camp Ridgecrest has met this test and many boys and man have been blessed because of it. Will your boy become one of these? [27]

[26] Camp Ridgecrest for Boys brochure, 1956 season, Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly, Willard K. Weeks, Manager, AR795-555 , RCCC, SBHA.

[27] Camp Ridgecrest for Boys brochure, 1958, Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly, Willard K. Weeks, Manager, AR795-555, RCCC, SBHA.

This later material is more explicit about the committed Christianity of the camp leaders and the way those leaders act as models for the next generation of leadership.

The purpose of Camp Crestridge, as expressed by Miss Bell, was much more explicitly religious in its language, especially in comparison to Ridgecrest. Miss Bell pronounced:

> Our purpose at Crestridge while we work, play, camp out, live together, is to give the camper opportunity to 'lift her eyes unto the hills." It is our hope that as she does that she will turn away with a new understanding of 'The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein.' Applying this understanding to her own life, we hope that she will be able to say positively and proudly 'The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?' It is our desire that your daughter advances in truth, growth, courage, perseverance and purity while at camp. The director and the staff dedicate themselves to give each camper guidance toward this purpose.[28]

Crestridge reiterated the importance of physical activities and cooperation, but did not explicitly tie those physical activities to character or spiritual development. More importantly, Crestridge's stated purpose contained three separate scriptural references and emphasized qualities of "truth, growth, courage, perseverance and purity." Like Ridgecrest, Crestridge articulated the importance of competent and dedicated staff to provide model leadership and discipleship to each camper. Unlike Ridgecrest, it is clear that Camp Crestridge's mission was spiritually explicit.

A 1957 letter from a Crestridge camper included in the camp's promotional brochure conveyed the mission of the camp. The camper noted some of the other camp girls sewing on the camp emblem (a horseshoe with an arrow through it framed by pointed cross with a circle

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[28] Camp Crestridge for Girls, 1956 Season Catalog, Sponsored by Baptist Sunday School Board, of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, TN, in Information and Brochures, 1956-1959, SBHA. References to the Bible include Psalm 121:1, Psalm 24:1, and Psalm 27:1, respectively.

around it) to their blouses. She wrote, "my counselor told us that the points in the circle stand for growth in spiritual mental, physical, and social areas of our lives. The circle means that we will try to be well-rounded in our outlook. And the horseshoe is a good-luck wish as we try to find a piercing purpose (arrow) for life."[29] The camp emblem was new to the summer 1956 season but created a symbolic imagery that captured the goals and identity of Camp Crestridge. In addition, the 1956 Camp Crestridge catalog described the religious heritage of the camp, citing

> the lasting values which were evidenced from the operation of Camp Ridgecrest for Boys created a desire…to make available equal facilities for Camp Crestridge with a definite religious atmosphere. It is the desire of the camp leaders that this atmosphere be as wholesome and as practical as possible. It also must have soul appeal and must seek to inspire the campers to live at their best. Our parent organization, Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly, is a religious bulwark for Southern Baptists. Our brother organization, Camp Ridgecrest for Boys, hold like ideals and find many opportunities to give recognition to them.[30]

Early in its development, it is clear that Camp Crestridge deliberately made its spiritual mission explicit. In fact, it seems Crestridge's spiritual goals were much more obvious than Ridgecrest's. In addition, Camp Crestridge visibly connects itself and its goals to its parent organization, Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly and the larger Southern Baptist denomination while Ridgecrest did not.

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[29] Camp Crestridge for Girls, My Piercing Purpose, 1957 Season Catalog, Sponsored by Baptist Sunday School Board, of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, TN, in Information and Brochures, 1956-1959, SBHA.

[30] Camp Crestridge for Girls, My Piercing Purpose, 1957 Season Catalog, Sponsored by Baptist Sunday School Board, of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, TN, in Information and Brochures, 1956-1959, SBHA.

Activities at Camp

A 1948 Ridgecrest booklet revealed the primary *method* of building character in boys: by keeping boys busy with cooperative and competitive activities. It read: "it is recognized that the most effective development of character comes from participation in activities for the promotion of helpful habits. The camp program never loses sight of this important principle and utilizes it in the activity of each day." Camp Ridgecrest for Boys provided a wide variety of ways to "promote helpful habits."[31] It promoted horseback riding, arts and crafts, marksmanship, hiking, tennis, first aid and lifesaving, canoeing, swimming and swim meets, baseball and basketball, archery, boating, surf boarding, boxing and wrestling, track, scout work, camp newspaper, orchestra and music.

The activities for the girls at Camp Crestridge had a significant amount of overlap with the boys at Camp Ridgecrest. The girls could participate in art, archery, badminton, basketball, canoeing, ceramics, choir, copper craft, copper emailing, dramatics, group games, hiking, horseshoes, horseback riding, leathercraft, life-saving, mosaics, nature lore, riding, riflery, sketching, softball, swimming, table tennis, tennis, tours and volleyball. Like Camp Ridgecrest, the Camp Crestridge catalogs offer very similar activities for the girls as for the boys, including the more typically masculine fields of archery and riflery. Also, much like Camp Ridgecrest, Camp Crestridge catalogs are full of pictures of girls participating in each of the activities.

Unlike Camp Ridgecrest, Camp Crestridge provided many more "religious opportunities" for its female campers as well as "special activities." In addition to morning devotions, the camp materials specifically mentioned that there were Sunday School classes, Sunday worship

[31] Camp Ridgecrest for Boys camp brochure, 1948, AR795-555, RCCC, SBHA.

services, guest speakers from the Baptist Assembly, informal camper and staff discussions, Bible Classes, the chorus, "I Know Whom I have Believed" mission speakers, Training Union, cabin time for Bible reading in the evenings, and "mission offerings of Scarlett's orphanage and Children's Hospital in Gaza." For special activities, Camp Crestridge cited Camper Day, Dinner and Game at Camp Merri-Mac, a swim meet, Rattler Day, Recreation Park and bumper cars, Fourth of July, Saturday night movies, overnight trips, horse shows, Mount Mitchell and bus trips.[32] Despite the opportunities for girls to participate in a number of secular activities, many of them similar to the opportunities for boys, the bulk of religious activities for girls is striking. Clearly, camps like Crestridge believed they needed ample opportunities to train girls and young women in the evangelical faith.

The Use of Indian Lore

The use of Native American rituals played a significant role in the life of Camp Ridgecrest and provides a glimpse into an evangelical summer camp's purposeful construction of masculinity. Ridgecrest taught Indian lore classes on a daily basis and the Council Ring was the center of camp life. In fact, the camp was organized around three tribes for each age group: the Apaches for boys 9 to 12, the Choctaws, for boys 13 to 14, and the Navajos for boys 15 to 16.[33] It seems popularity and name recognition were the key elements for the chosen tribe names as geographical ancestry was clearly not considered. The Council Ring also played a

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[32] Camp Crestridge for Girls, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960 Season Catalogs, Sponsored by Baptist Sunday School Board, of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, TN, in Information and Brochures, 1956-1959, SBHA.

[33] Press Release, August 24, 1955, Baptist Sunday School Board. AR795-555, RCCC, SBHA.

significant role in the organization of camp activities. Camp Ridgecrest describes the Council Ring:

> in a lovely spot mid overhanging trees and overlooking the Lake, there is a circle of rustic seats with a stone base for a large fire in the center. Here the Hunters, Warriors, Braves, Little Chiefs, and Big Chiefs assemble around the Council Fire for interesting hours of Indian Lore. One distinctly worth-while feature of this phase of camp life is the emphasis placed upon and recognition for the attainment of strength of character. The winning of a name is the cherished honor of such attainment.[34]

In fact, the director, George Pickering, received an award for "Indian Lore" from the American Indian Lore Association of Sioux Falls, SD in 1955. Red Dawn, the head of the Indian Lore Association and chief of the Santee Sioux, made Pickering an honorary member of his tribe. The *Biblical Recorder* described the event:

> In the ceremony performed in Council Ring before the entire Ridgecrest Indian Nation, Red Dawn gave Pickering the Indian name, E-Tonchon Wambe Wachte, Chief Good Eagle, and presented him a headdress, trimmed with genuine Sioux beadwork, which he had made himself.
>
> The bestowal carried with it a lifetime registration by the select Continental Confederation of Adopted Indians. In the past twelve years Red Dawn has made only one other such bestowal.[35]

This use of Indian lore and pioneers are examples of ways to construct masculine identities for Ridgecrest campers. Historian Leslie Paris defined the pioneer ideal as "national character…shaped by a distinctive outdoors tradition." With a focus on historical America and groups such as colonists, armies, frontiersmen, and women on the trails, railroad builders, and highway workers as examples of people who camped, summer camps situated the pioneer as a "forward thinking outlier, living where the ordinary rules of civilization did not fully apply."

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[34] Camp Ridgecrest for Boys camp brochure, 1949, AR795-555, RCCC, SBHA.

[35] "George Pickering Receives Indian Lore Honor," September 10, 1955, *Biblical Recorder,* AR795-555, RCCC, SBHA.

Although summer camps did not actually function as literal pioneers on the land, they did position themselves as "trailblazers at the cutting edge of political and social transformation" as a successful way to emphasize and construct a more 'primitive' ideal in the face of modernism and progressive camp facilities and technologies.[36]

Camp Ridgecrest, instead of using American pioneers and frontiersman, used Native American tribes and 'Indian' lore to act as constructed ideals of masculinity. Historian Leslie Paris argues that "Indian iconography allowed camp communities to lay claim to exciting local histories." But for Ridgecrest, historical accuracy, remained secondary. Instead, Ridgecrest's use of Indian lore connected to ideas of masculinity. Paris writes, the natural backdrop of summer camps "represented a masculine retreat from the 'stagnant' conventions of everyday modern life that ordinarily hemmed in white urban boys in favor of qualities ascribed to Indian cultures: great playfulness, physicality, and emotional expressivity."[37] The use of Indian lore at camps like Ridgecrest allowed young evangelical boys to be playful, physical and competitive and act in a more primitive manner yet praised and encouraged those masculine characteristics.

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[36] Paris, 240-1; 226-256.

[37] Leslie Paris, *Children's Nature: The Rise of the American Summer Camp* (New York University Press, 2008), 201-202. See also Robert F. Berkhofer Jr*., The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); S. Elizabeth Bird, ed., *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996); Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998). The term "playing Indian" was popularized by Ernest Thompson Seton in *The Red Book; or, How to Play Indian* (Self-published, 1904). See also Jay Mechling, "'Playing Indian' and the Search for Authenticity in Modern White America," *Prospects* 5 (1980): 17-33; and Rayna Green, "The Tribe Called Wannabee: Playing Indian in America and Europe," *Folklore* 99, no. 1 (1988): 30-55.

Significantly, Camp Crestridge for girls did not contain elements of Indian Lore. Unlike the Ridgecrest boys, the Crestridge girls had a Council of Progress, an contest for exemplifying the spirit of camp. The Council of Progress was considered an "outstanding feature of camp" as a "challenge to many campers to grow into better campers, citizens, and Christians." The criteria of being better "campers, citizens, and Christians" provides a clear window into the most desirable gendered characteristics of evangelical women at that time.

Camp Crestridge held its Council of Progress each week throughout the five week session of camp, as a way to encourage its female campers to constantly improve. The winners were selected by the camp staff. The camp staff "observe[d] each camper closely and recommend[ed] her for promotion as she is ready for it." As the camper received the "promotion," she also received an emblem that represented the rank and a cloth stole, worn around the shoulders. The stole seemed reminiscent of something between a clerical stole and a beauty pageant sash, but the similarities to a beauty pageant are particularly striking, especially when one considers the ranks and their meanings. "The highest rank is called Belle. The camper must be quite outstanding to receive this rank. With it goes the privilege of being a candidate for Queen Crester. The Camper who best typifies the spirit of Camp Crestridge for Girls." The Queen Crester is pictured wearing a crown of flowers and is flanked by the other Belles, who each are holding bouquets of flowers, almost like a bridal party, all wearing "Sunday best" dresses. The rank of Belle included the emblem of a bouquet of flowers and meant "white—purity." The Trekker rank had an emblem of a shepherd's staff and represented "brown—perseverance," while the explorer rank was a coonskin cap that symbolized "red—courage." The Pioneer emblem was a tomahawk and represented "green—growth" and the

Pilgrim emblem of a bonnet was "blue—truth."[38] When considering the gendered concepts of masculinity and femininity, it seems clear that Camp Ridgecrest used Indian Lore to tap into primitive, and thus more masculine, gender ideals. Camp Crestridge, on the other hand, used a form of a beauty contest, with an emphasis on more colonial ideals of Trekking, Pioneer, and Pilgrim. Yet the top prize of Belle and, ultimately, Queen Crester ultimately cast female gender roles as primary feminine forms of leadership and southern ideals, while the more primitive roles remained secondary.

Evangelical Teaching and Training

The emphasis on training boys to become evangelical leaders is evident, albeit implicitly, in Camp Ridgecrest's publications. An article by James E. McReynolds explained "through the years Camp Ridgecrest has met the test of developing finer, stronger, more useful men because of experiences at camp." He also described Ridgecrest as "simple, virile, and robust," and a place that taught "cooperation and independence." It brought out "qualities of leadership" that made for "courageous and successful living. The reason for the existence of this Christian boys' camp is to promote the physical, mental, and spiritual development of boys."[39]

The application for admission to Camp Ridgecrest signaled the camp's assumption of a religious and, more likely, a Baptist or evangelical background. The camp asked if the applicant was a church member, and what denomination, not 'if so, what denomination?' It also asked

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[38] Camp Crestridge for Girls, 1956 Season Catalog, Sponsored by Baptist Sunday School Board, of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, TN, in Information and Brochures, 1956-1959, SBHA.

[39] James E. McReynolds, "Camp Ridgecrest Promotes Development of Boys," *Facts and Trends,* May 1969, 5, AR795-555, RCCC, SBHA.

for the religious denomination of the applicant's parents or guardian. In addition, the application stated "only boys who have good moral character and habits will be accepted," which further indicated the stance of Camp Ridgecrest as a camp that functioned to groom young boys and men already in the church, not to reach unchurched or unconverted boys.[40]

Camp Ridgecrest for Boys highlighted the outdoor chapel, which was "one of the most beautiful spots and one of the most worth-while features of the camp." The camp emphasized the natural setting of the chapel as fitting for spiritual development. "Here the campers can realize how the groves truly could have been God's first temples and instantly feel the spirit of reverence." The chapel was located under a natural arch of rhododendron trees with rustic logs for the seats, pulpit, and bridge. Camp Ridgecrest believed a natural setting, such as the outdoor chapel, intrinsically connected campers with their creator. The speakers for the camp consisted of Baptist Assembly approved pastors and speakers and "the truths instilled into the campers in this inspiring place are carried over into the everyday camp life and on into the days to come." The camp, while emphasizing the fun activities, which presumably appealed to prospective campers, also stressed the spiritual guidance that Ridgecrest provided and underpinned the whole purpose of the camp. Camp Ridgecrest described the importance of Morning Watch, which took place at 8am each morning, "in the [outdoor] chapel, campers and counselors assemble for a period of meditation, Bible reading, and prayer. Each day thus begins on a high plane of spirituality. Further, every effort is made to maintain this high level

[40] Camp Ridgecrest for Boys camp brochure, 1949, AR795-555, RCCC, SBHA.

throughout the day."[41] But one cannot help but notice that the Morning Watch lasted a mere fifteen minutes.

A more implicit aspect of evangelical leadership is the special awards of Camp Ridgecrest. Each season, the camp awarded "three silver loving cups" to outstanding campers. An award was given for Best Camper, who "proves outstanding among all the boys in camp leadership, attitude, co-operation, and camp spirit," Most Improved Camper, who "advanced most in the above qualities, and who has shown most improvement as a camper during the camp season," and the Best Junior Camper, who "is he who stands out among the younger boys of camp in leadership, camp spirit, and co-operation."[42] Significantly, no explicitly Baptist, evangelical or even Christian attributes were mentioned as components of any of the three awards. However, it seems that these qualities of leadership and 'camp spirit' were assumed to contain evangelical qualities.

In Camp Crestridge for Girls, there was a much more explicit emphasis on spiritual development. Each camper and staffer attended a daily Bible study lead by "Doc Woodie" on the Sermon on the Mount. Notably, Sunday School classes and Training Unions were led by staffers from Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly in order to familiarize and train campers in leading and teaching Bible classes to children. In addition, Camp Crestridge girls had the opportunity to walk through and meditate in the "Prayer Garden, which campers helped to develop, and

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[41] Camp Ridgecrest for Boys camp brochure, 1948, 1949, 1954, and 1955, AR795-555, RCCC, SBHA.

[42] Camp Ridgecrest for Boys brochure, 1955, AR795-555, RCCC, SBHA.

where they may go when they so desire."[43] This may be understood as the feminine version of the outdoor chapel for the Ridgecrest boys, where girls could commune with God and nature in a naturally spiritual setting.

Camp Crestridge's camper application, while similar to Ridgecrest's, showed some key differences. It asked for the parent/guardian's church affiliation, other camps attended, school last attended, and asked whether the applicant was a Christian, church member, and what denomination, just like Camp Ridgecrest's application. Then, interestingly, the application asked if the applicant had "good moral character and habits," and "is there some information concerning applicant's family history or personal relationships that would help camp leaders to understand the applicant better?" The application also asked "is there some particular way that you think we might serve your applicant,"[44] which demonstrated the extent to which Camp Crestridge desired to attend to more emotional and social needs of female campers, in contrast to Camp Ridgecrest which was only interested in physical information about its male campers.

Pioneer Girls

The Pioneer Girls Clubs and camping programs, established in the 1940s by Wheaton College students, also underscored spiritual and religious leadership specifically targeted at

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[43] Camp Crestridge for Girls, 1956 Season Catalog, Sponsored by Baptist Sunday School Board, of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, TN, in Information and Brochures, 1956-1959, SBHA.

[44] Camp Crestridge for Girls, 1957 Season Catalog, Sponsored by Baptist Sunday School Board, of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, TN, in Information and Brochures, 1956-1959, SBHA.

female youth in the postwar era.[45] As a club organization, similar to the Girl Scouts of America, the Pioneer Girls provide valuable insight into the structure and purpose of character and leadership training for postwar American female youth.

More specifically, the Pioneer Girls emphasized the training of believers as well as the saving and teaching of non-believers, foreign missionwork, and biblical study and memorization. A brochure from the PG asserts their slogan, "Christ in every phase of a girl's life" and accentuated the primary aspects of the club: weekly meetings, outdoor life, achievements, and serving the church. Notably, the purpose of the PG is stated: "TO WIN girls to a personal knowledge of Christ as Saviour. TO BUILD them spiritually through experiences which encourage good habits of Christian living and lead toward Christian maturity. TO DEVELOP in girls well-rounded lives and gracious Christ-centered personalities. TO TRAIN them in effective Christian leadership and service."[46] Much like Camp Crestridge, the PG have an explicitly evangelical mission, with an emphasis on spiritual language and development.

Also similar to Camp Crestridge for Girls, the Pioneer Girls camping program, Camp Cherith (KEE rith), underlined the importance of teaching girls leadership skills to use in the evangelical church and wider community. Specifically, the PG promoted leadership opportunities for women in ministries like the PG as well as full-time service opportunities as foreign missionaries. In a brochure entitled "The Story of Pat and Shirley," Pat recalls her experience at Camp Cherith:

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45 See Timothy Larsen, "Pioneer Girls: Mid-Twentieth-Century American Evangelicalism's Girl Scouts," *The Asbury Journal* 2008, 63/2:59-79.

46 Pioneer Girls brochure, undated, Billy Graham Center Archives.

> Pat looked at Shirley sitting beside her. Her friend's expression was intent as she watched the fire-shadows flicker across the face of her favorite counselor, who was speaking. Pat knew it had meant a great deal to Shirley to be in the genuine Christian environment of this camp. When the counselor had finished, the camp director announced a chorus. 'It may be that the Lord is speaking to your heart about giving yourself to Him for full-time service. Perhaps He wants you to join Marge in India some day, or teach the Bible in public schools, or be on the staff of Pioneer Girls. If you believe He is speaking to you and you want to obey Him, stand quietly while we sing."[47]

While at the same time instilling 'feminine' qualities and skills that corresponded with domestic work, the PG also professed a commitment to evangelical leadership training for women. As the historian Timothy Larsen notes, "for Pioneer Girls in mid-twentieth century America, being 'Career Girls' was not a term of suspicion or disapproval, but rather an option in life to which girls were explicitly invited to aspire."[48] The PG program provides further evidence that evangelicals encouraged girls and young women to pursue careers in ministry.

The story of Joan Killilea illustrates the impact of a program like Pioneer Girls in encouraging young evangelical women to pursue careers in ministry. Killilea's father died when she was eight and she, along with her siblings, were divided among relatives since her mother struggled to support them. As a young girl, Killilea envisioned a happier future, "When I finish high school, I'll get a good job and earn lots of money. Then I'll buy all the things I want—pretty clothes, a car, a home of my own. I'll take horseback riding lessons, and learn to play tennis and golf. I'll be popular—and have boyfriends—"[49] Killilea clearly aspired to exhibit many attributes of the postwar teen: popularity, possessions, admirers of the opposite sex, and a

[47] Pioneer Girls brochure, "The Story of Pat and Shirley" undated, Billy Graham Center Archives.
[48] Larsen, 70.
[49] Virginia Anderson, *Restless Redhead and God* (Wheaton, IL: Pioneer Girls, 1968), 20.

middle class lifestyle. But her encounter with the PG and experiences at summer camp resulted in a conversion experience that changed Killilea's values, interests, and life goals. Killilea grew up Catholic, but was interested in her friends' evangelical faith. The friends invited Killilea to PG club meetings. "Her two new friends seemed so happy and contented—they seemed to have an inner peace and strength that she herself lacked," Killilea recalled.[50] She was also invited to work as a counselor at Camp Cherith, the PG camping program, along with the two friends who got her interested in Pioneer Girls and learning more about the evangelical faith.[51] While Joan thoroughly enjoyed the outdoor adventures and activities of summer camp, she felt conflicted about the evangelical message.

> My, what a strange environment I found myself in. Everyone had a Bible and I had hardly seen one before. Off to campfire I went to hear what was going on, and shall never forget the singing, especially from a little nine-year-old Pilgrim who would always sit beside me and sing from the bottom of her heart, 'There's within my heart a melody.' Oh how my old heart would ache because there was no melody at all in my heart; in fact, it was quite the opposite.[52]

It was 1952, and in the months following her experience at camp, Killilea eventually made a decision for Christ and set out to discover what plans God had for her life. "I knew the night I received Christ that it didn't mean giving the Lord Jesus first place in my life, but it meant giving

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[50] Anderson, 36.

[51] Anderson, 41. Joan told her work supervisor she was concerned about working at a Protestant camp as a Catholic. Her work supervisor recommended talking to a priest, which she did. The priest informed her it was okay as long as she did not "join in the singing or give any contributions. So Joan felt she could come to camp with a clear conscience as far as her church was concerned." 41.

[52] Anderson, 42.

Him my life completely, for him to do with it whatever He wanted."[53] As an active member of the PG, she also helped in teaching Sunday School and joined a young adult group at a local evangelical church. Her biographer even noted that Killilea may have even had the opportunity to date and marry, but she "had her eyes fixed on another goal."[54] She decided to attend Gordon College for 'Bible training,' but struggled with loneliness and the difficulty of balancing school work with working to pay for school. However, that summer, Killilea spent five weeks at Camp Cherith as a counselor and "received many answers to prayer."[55] Due to her experience at Camp Cherith, she decided to transfer to Columbia Bible College because it had a graduate program in missions. At twenty-six, Killilea decided she would prepare for the mission field; "this was the place for her."[56] In a her testimony to fellow students at CBC and the PG, Killilea recalled,

> When God called me to be a missionary, I said, 'Lord, I want to go, but I don't know what you're going to do with me. I'm not a teacher, I'm not a nurse. You know I don't have any talent. What can I do for you?' He said, 'Joanie, I'm not looking for clever boys and girls or men and women. I just want clean boys and girls and men and women.'"[57]

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[53] Anderson, 52.

[54] Anderson, 52.

[55] Anderson, 55.

[56] Anderson, 58. Anderson noted that Dean Petty "recognized Joan's potential. She realized that Joan's stubbornness and tenacity, when properly tempered, would be valuable qualities in missionary work, where persistence and perseverance are sorely needed in times of difficulty and discouragement," 63.

[57] Anderson, 70. This particular statement is telling, as it reflects postwar ideas of gender embedded in the ideas of women's work as primarily nurses or teachers. But it also raises the question about what it means to be a 'clean' woman or man, as opposed to 'clever.' Certainly obedience is underscored as the most desirable quality, but Killiea and Anderson fail to unpack exactly what is meant by 'clean' in this particular instance.

During the Christmas holidays of 1954, Killilea attended an Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship missionary conference in Urbana, IL and believed God called her to work with the China Inland Mission.[58] Her call was confirmed as she again spent her summer as a counselor at Camp Cherith. Notably, Killilea was supported by the PG club organization as a missionary in Thailand for many years, until she died in 1964 at the age of thirty-seven from hepatitis near Bangkok, Thailand.[59]

Killilea's story, published as a biography by the PG, exemplifies the desire of the PG to nurture and promote successful evangelical women with careers in ministry. Killilea shared her testimony with PG, and encouraged them in pursuing careers in ministry. She travelled to many states to visit PG clubs "so that her young supporters could get a personal glimpse of her and hear her testimony. Her account…made a deep impression on Pioneer Girls everywhere."[60] The PG considered her a role model to emulate. In fact, Killilea's biographer noted that many PG became Christians and entered the ministry as a career because of Killilea. One girl wrote, "I became a believer while a Pilgrim at camp when Swiftie was my counselor," and the biographer wrote that same girl became a club leader and camp counselor.[61] Another camper by the name of Dorothy Mainhood also recalled that after time and conversations with Killiea, "God broke into my life that day and laid His hand on me, and I have never been the same since."

[58] Anderson, 77-78.
[59] Anderson, 150-55.
[60] Anderson, 94.
[61] Anderson, 75.

Mainhood later worked in Thailand as a missionary nurse.[62] Other girls, Virginia Patterson, and Ruther Carlson, made commitments to Christ through experiences and interactions with Killiea as a camp counselor and then became missionaries supported by the PG and Latin American Mission, respectively.[63] Larsen noted the PG read about women missionaries, wrote essays about their own calling to missionwork, and sent care packages to missionaries, "all partially aimed at helping the girls consider whether the missionary life might be the one for them."[64] In fact, most of the directors and leadership of the PG were single women who, in the 1950s, allowed women to "envision a life of singleness or a career outside of being a housewife and mother."[65] Even for postwar women who did marry, the PG still provided an outlet for them. Shirley McKay wrote, "I was newly married and frustrated because now I felt I could never go to school and study the things I should have studied." The PG gave McKay a cadre of inspiring and motivating friendships with other women. McKay explained, "I began to hope that I found a place that I might fit."[66] The PG not only affirmed an evangelical commitment to God, but also one to following his plan for their lives, which often included a form of ministry, whether in a group such as the PG or abroad as a missionary. An examination of postwar evangelical

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62 Anderson, 84-85.

63 Anderson, 85-87.

64 Larsen, 64. Larsen notes Viola Waterhouse, the second director of the Pioneer Girls, served with Wycliff Bible Translators in Mexico, Lois Thiessen, the fourth director, served with the Latin America Mission, and Louise Troup and Carol Erickson, other key leaders in PG, served in Zululand with Evangelical Alliance Mission. Larsen wrote the leaders of the Pioneer Girls "led by example." 64-65.

65 Larsen, 69.

66 Eunice Russell Schatz, *The Slender Thread: Stories of Pioneer Girls' First 25 Years* (Mukilteo, WA: WinePress Publishing, 1996), 244; Larsen, 72.

summer camps adds to Larsen's exploration of evangelicals encouraging careers in ministry for female youth. Camps like Crestridge demonstrate that evangelicals affirmed the need and importance of full and part time work in ministry for young women.

Conclusion: The Nature of Boys and the Nature of Girls at Summer Camp

A 1958 publication of Camp Ridgecrest for Boys entitled "What is a Boy?" described the characteristics of a 'typical' American boy. Using descriptors like: "a boy is Truth with dirt on its face, Beauty with a cut on its finder, Wisdom with bubble gum in its hair, and the Hope of the future with a frog in its pocket," the essay placed postwar boys "between the innocence of babyhood and the dignity of manhood." The essay went on to outline:

> A boy is a composite—he has the appetite of a horse, the digestion of a sword swallower, the energy of a pocket-sized atomic bomb, the curiosity of a cat, the lungs of a dictator, the imagination of a Paul Bunyan, the shyness of a violet, the audacity of a steel trap, the enthusiasm of a firecracker, and when he makes something he has five thumbs on each hand.[67]

This essay encapsulates the image of evangelical masculinity in postwar America. The descriptions of his spirituality are quite vague, if mentioned at all, and possibly assumed. But the descriptions of his character resonate with masculine concepts of exploration and curiosity, bravery and courage, leadership and perseverance.

Camp Crestridge for Girls, while without a companion essay entitled "What is a Girl?" still manages to clearly convey the feminine identity of its female campers. Purity and spiritual

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[67] "What is a Boy?" Camp Ridgecrest for Boys, 30th Year Publication, 1958, AR795-555, RCCC, SBHA.

growth, with an emphasis on evangelical leadership in the church through choir, drama, and teaching Sunday School, provided clear ideals of evangelical womanhood in the postwar era.

My research into evangelical summer camps of the postwar era reveals summer camps as agents of masculine and feminine socialization with regards to bodies and behaviors. Summer camps for boys, such as Camp Ridgecrest for Boys, explicitly emphasized masculine activities such as marksmanship and tribal themed council meetings but implicitly accentuated spiritual growth and discipleship. Summer camps for girls, such as Camp Crestridge for Girls, provided traditionally understood 'masculine' activities like archery and riflery in addition to more 'feminine' activities like drama, sketching, and art, but with an explicit emphasis on the spiritual development of female youth. Significantly, and in contrast to the dominant literature on postwar gender, summer camps groomed girls and young women for leadership in the evangelical church. Female evangelical youth were strongly encouraged to become missionaries, both foreign and abroad, especially in groups such as the Pioneer Girls, in addition to being prepared for local leadership in churches through teaching and discipleship. Groups such as the Pioneer Girls organization promoted and celebrated their initially girls-only program, designed to give evangelical young women purpose and Christian activities, as well as a sense of belonging and connection with other evangelical women.[68] This encouragement of evangelical ministry as suitable female gender role places an important caveat to the historiographical emphasis on women as primarily career mothers in the postwar era.

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[68] Recorded interview with Pioneer Girls founder, Betty Bouslough; Billy Graham Center Archives.

CHAPTER FOUR:
A Spectrum of Evangelicals: The Examples of Race and Environmentalism

"'Look,' said the young minister, placing his hand on the lad's shoulder. 'Here is…our new camp. Won't our week together here be wonderful! We'll sing, and work, and study, and pray. We'll get to know each other better than we possibly could back home. We'll do some listening, too, and hear the words of the One who was the Master at living in Gods' great out-of-doors. He will call to us. We'll be listening, won't we?' 'Yes,' said the boy, 'and we'll answer, too." [1]

In the postwar era, evangelicals exhibited a significant degree of variation, opinions, and perspectives on a wide range of issues. When examining postwar summer camps, the issues of environmentalism and race illustrate this spectrum of difference. Theological white conservatives had conversations about the environment, human relationships with nature, and racial reconciliation in a time period of debate amongst themselves about what it meant to be an evangelical. While topics like environmentalism and race seem to belong to the realm of the evangelical left in the current political arena, during the postwar era, it was all in play for white evangelicals.

Scholars of evangelicalism typically place discussions of race and discussions of environmentalism in the 1960s and 1970s, but an exploration of evangelical summer camps demonstrates that the ideas of nature conservation and racial reconciliation were active among evangelicals in the 1940s and 1950s.[2]

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[1] "Young Camper Hears God's Call at Wesley Woods," *The Methodist Story,* April 1957, Wesley Woods Records, Indianola, IA.

[2] Racial issues percolating in the 1940s and 1950s and eventually led to the organization of the National Black Evangelical Association (NBEA) in 1963. For more on the NBEA, see http://www.the-nbea.org/.

Nature, Environmentalism and Stewardship at Summer Camps

Significantly, postwar summer camp programs professed a commitment to nature education and conservation. However, camp programs emphasized these commitments to nature because they believed that an intimate connection with nature or in a natural environment brought one closer to God or to a religious experience with God. Many postwar denominational summer camps demonstrated a concerted effort to instill the love and respect of nature to their campers. Even in the postwar, Americans were still rooted in ideas about nature that dated back to the Progressive Era. They believed in providing parks, outdoor recreation and summer camps in order to reform city youth, who were tempted by street corners and enticements of city vice. They also still held to the concept that the countryside had reformative and rejuvenating power, an idea that reflected early Depression ideas of 'back-to-the-land" country life sentiments, wilderness fads of experiencing life in the wild, and fresh air movements, promoted by influential people such as Teddy Roosevelt, Henry Stoddard Curtis, Frederick Law Olmsted, and Edward Bok, editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal.* Many believed relocating urban dwellers to the countryside was significantly "curative." The idea of a natural environment with "curative" properties reflecting Olmsted's widely held ideas that one's surroundings and environment shape social behavior.[3] The historiography of leisure chronicles the postwar shift from a focus on labor and producer to a focus on leisure and consumption. The turn of the century to the 1940s exhibited the growth of leisure, especially

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[3] Neil Maher, *Nature's New Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Roots of the American Environmental Movement* (Oxford University Press, 2008). See also Sharon Wall, *The Nurture of Nature: Childhood, Antimodernism, and Ontario Summer Camps, 1920-55* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009); Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

after an eight hour work day became the norm after WWI. The debates over leisure included pessimism about the future of leisure and inspiration of the advocates of "democratic leisure." Some blamed leisure for the erosion of work ethic and economic difficulties as increased leisure meant reduced work time, which some thought would undermine economic growth. The 1930s Depression sparked discussion of leisure due to general unemployment but found spare time for the unemployed filled with tension and forced family togetherness. However, others worked to organize and channel leisure time into "individually uplifting, self-disciplined, and even familial expressions."[4] Other scholars of leisure noted that camping essentially guarded against the possibilities of leisure by linking vacation and the restorative power of nature with work. "Advocates of camping often walked a fine line, balancing an emphasis on work with the idea that camping was pleasurable, relaxing, entertaining, and safe," scholar Cindy Aron writes.[5] Summer camps seem to reinforce these historicized debates over the growth of leisure as well as the continuing linkage of nature to healthy child development. This is the debate that advocates of summer camping especially espoused. Evangelicals, like most Americans, believed the natural surroundings helped youth to develop character. Too much leisure time for children led to delinquency. Unlike other Americans, evangelicals also believed that an intimate connection with the natural environment also taught campers more about God. For evangelicals, a natural environment provided an ideal place for a religious encounter, perhaps even more ideal than a church setting.

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[4] Gary Cross, *A Social History of Leisure*, 172.

[5] Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States*, 175. See also Donald J. Mrozek, "The Natural Limits of Unstructured Play, 1880-1914" in *Hard at Play: Leisure in America, 1840-1940,* Kathryn Grover, ed., 212.

Evangelical scholar on youth ministry Jon Pahl suggested a connection between youth in natural surroundings as a way to connect with God, as opposed to more urban areas filled with distractions. "Camping not only brought youth out of cities, it brought them into contact, many came to feel, with God."[6] Executive camp director Dr. Ed Hayes also believed the connection with nature as essential to the summer camp experience. He stated, "'Christian camping is in danger of losing the one distinctive—the unique simplicity of nature's impact on the human spirit. In our attempts to diversify programming to appeal to wider markets and rising expectations, we dare not cut the top-roots of our existence."[7] With regard to the connections with nature and to God, one youth remarked, "our Methodist Camp Site is one of the most beautiful spots in Iowa and with its natural beauty, is just the place for Methodists to see the beauty of God's World." This comment illustrates the connection between nature and a closeness to God, that Wesley Woods and other postwar camps were particularly keen to emphasize.[8] Evangelicals believed that summer camps should reach postwar youth, and the reason they believed camps were uniquely equipped to reach youth was because of the power of a natural setting to point to God.

A manual for leading young children entitled *Let's Go Out-of-Doors* connected spiritual experiences for children with nature. The author assumes the spiritual connection between

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[6] Jon Pahl, *Youth Ministry in Modern America: 1930 to Present*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2000), 166.

[7] A statement from Dr. Ed Hayes, Executive Director of Mt. Herman Camp in a 1988 Christian Camping international Journal article, from "The First 50 Years: A Short History of New Life Ranch," compiled by Clara Lou Willis, based on the diary of Willard Heck, 77-8, 2008 from New Life Ranch Records, Colcord, OK.

[8] "Why are you Building Camps?" in *The Iowa-Des Moines Methodist Camper, Latest News of the Conference Camp Site*, vol. 1, no. 4, June 1957, 2.

humans and nature and explained that a mere invitation to explore a part of nature could lead to a very spiritual experience:

> To a little child the world of Nature is filled with beautiful, wonderful things; and, with proper guidance, the child will respond with love and reverence toward the loving Father, who made all these marvelous thing: flowers, trees, birds, sun, rain, wind, clouds, sky, butterflies, sunsets, rainbows, and animals. The simple injunction, 'Come and see this lovely spider web,' may be the beginning of a great spiritual experience. Joy in and regard for inanimate and growing things—and eventually for their creator—can come only from actual contact with these things, not in a laboratory or in the teacher's hands as an object lesson, but in the natural setting where God placed them….We do not revere when we do not care deeply, and our emotions are not genuinely and wholesomely touched until we have participated in the care of life.[9]

Furthermore, the manual believed the seeing parts of nature was not sufficient. Only a complete immersion in the outdoors would produce an interest and responsibility in caring for the world. The goal of the outdoor experience for children included talking "frequently and responsibly" with God, experiencing the "joy and responsibility of working with God in caring for his world and making it more beautiful," enjoying experiences with beauty, cultivating the ability to play and work "happily and helpfully" with others, working harder to help mom and dad at home, "feel the beauty and wonder in the world of Nature," and perhaps most importantly, "associate the beauties of Nature with God, their creator."[10] For postwar

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[9] Jennie Lou Milton, *Let's Go Out-of-Doors*, Leader's Manual, Co-operative Vacation Church School Manual for Kindergarten Vacation Church School Groups, Published for the International Committee on Co-operative Publication of Vacation Church School Curriculum, (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1935), 9-10.

[10] Milton, 10. The manual included songs and games for children to play outdoors. The songs, many written by the author of the manual, contained simple lyrics such as "Jesus loved the flowers…We love them too….Flowers make us happy…Here are some for you." "Jesus Loves the Flowers," Lyrics by Jennie Lou Milton, Music by E. Renner, 1935 in Milton, *Let's Go Out-of-Doors,* 142. The games included Drop the Handkerchief, I Saw, Bean Bag Toss, Hen Chicks and Hawk, Roll the Ball, Follow the Leader, and Ring-Around-the-Rosie. Milton, 139-40.

evangelical summer camps, the emphasis on nature and conservation seemed universal. While denominational camps may have devoted more space in their promotional literature to emphasize the importance of learning about God through nature, both denominational and nondenominational summer camps highlighted the importance of the nature and stewardship of God's world.

Wesley Woods summer camp cultivated a strong commitment to nature education and conservation. This was not an incidental emphasis as the camp site bordered the Lake Ahquabi and Ahquabi State Park as well as Hooper Conservation Area. In the early stages of camp planning, the State Conservation Commission gave the camp "complete cooperation" and access to Lake Ahquabi where the camp would construct a dock for their boats. Wesley Woods also used water from the lake for camp use. The superintendent of Parks for the Conservation Commission helped the planning stages of water use and the superintendent of Forestry of Iowa as well as a member of the State Horticulture Society offered their services to aid in development of the camp. Even "another fine Methodist layman" of Iowa State College helped with the planning and layout development of the camp. In addition, Wesley Woods "working closely with the State Department of Health," strove to find and use the best materials for the best construction and development of the camp.[11] In a "Camping Philosophy" by the Director of Camping in the Iowa Association of the Methodist Church, the director wrote, "conservation and stewardship should be a must in both the design and building of a camp as well as in the overall operation, so that the proper maintenance of all natural facilities should be preserved

[11] "We're On Our Way" in *The Iowa-Des Moines Methodist Camper, Latest News of the Conference Camp Site,* vol. 1, no. 2, March 1956, 6.

and maintained for maximum beauty, service, and use."[12] Events such as a tree planting day under the direction of youth leaders and through the cooperation of the State Forrestry [Forestry] Department, when two thousand evergreens were planted, demonstrate this environmental focus. Furthermore, the camp planned to "plant the evergreen trees each spring and when they reach a marketable size for Christmas trees, some will be cut and sold by the youth for camp funds while the rest will be allowed to grow into a beautiful evergreen forrest [forest]." This connection demonstrates that a commitment to the environment had to be balanced with the importance to keeping the camp funded. However, the camp also committed to keeping the area as native as possible: "Other trees of native variety will be planted each year to make the camps look as near as possible as a native Iowa wood can be made to look."[13] By 1964, approximately 15,000 trees had been planted. Ordered and paid for each year from the Iowa State Conservation Commission, Forestry Division in Des Moines, IA, the camp maintained planning plans that they approved with the state foresters as well as soil reports.[14]

A nature lore manual made especially for camp leaders included nature games, crafts, and hiking trip suggestions, but took special care to connect nature with recreation, science,

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[12] Camping Philosophy, for design, construction and use of Camp Properties, J. M. Steffenson, Director of Camping, Iowa Area, February 1964, Wesley Woods Records, Indianola, IA.

[13] "'…As Lovely as a Tree'" in *The Iowa-Des Moines Methodist Camper, Latest News of the Conference Camp Site,* vol. 1, no. 4, June 1957, 4.

[14] Director of Camping Duties and Responsibilities, J.M. Steffenson, Director of Camping, February 1964, 7, Wesley Woods Records, Indianola, IA.

and religion.[15] As a form of recreation, the manual encouraged experiences in nature because it would result in "consciousness of the beauty, varied forms, multiple relationships, and rule of law and order of the world about us." The manual author, Reynold E. Carlson, questioned if true appreciation of nature could be taught, but believed that acquainting people with nature would "bring people in contact with things of beauty and call attention to line, color, and harmony and relationship with things with which they are already familiar."[16] The use of nature lore in outdoor camp programs would, Carlson thought, develop "hobby interests and skills in outdoor living and in working with nature materials," and appeal to people across generations and physical and mental abilities.[17] According to Carlson, nature lore and science could be connected by starting with a discussion of "common things about us" and then learning more about the natural and scientific perspectives of those common things. Carlson cautioned, "the nature program must be honest science, but the primary purpose is not the accumulation of knowledge." Instead, the purpose of nature lore was most closely connection with religion. In the context of recognizing human's role in disrupting the natural world, Carlson wrote

> "the nature program can aid greatly in developing a sense of love, reverence, wonder, and devotion to truth. It should help all of us see the orderliness, beauty, and unity of the world in which we live. It should develop a sense of responsibility for the care, use,

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[15] Reynold E. Carlson, *Nature Lore Manual for Church Leaders* (Nashville, TN: The Methodist Publishing House, 1945), 7. The Manual is copyrighted by the Board of Education of the Methodist Church. Its title page reads: "A manual which will help workers with all age-groups in the church school to enrich the year-round program with nature lore interests and activities. Especially helpful for camp leaders."

[16] Carlson, 7.

[17] Carlson, 8.

> and conservation of the world's natural resources. These are a divine heritage which man has seriously abused."[18]

Carlson associated wonder of God's creation and an appreciate for its uniqueness and intricacy with the acknowledgement that humans caused problems by "abuse" of the "divine heritage" of the world's natural resources. Songs, such as "God Who Touchest Earth with Beauty," reflected the desire to combine an appreciation for understanding God's nature through the natural world with evangelical beliefs.

> "God who touchest earth with beauty,
> Make me lovely too,
> With thy Spirit recreate me,
> Make my heart anew.
>
> Like thy springs and running waters,
> Make me crystal pure,
> Like the rocks of towering grandeur,
> Make me strong and sure.
>
> Like the dancing waves in sunlight,
> Make me glad and free,
> Like the straightness of the pine trees,
> Let me upright be.
>
> Like the arching of the heavens,
> Life my thoughts above,
> Turn my dreams to noble action,
> Ministries of love.
>
> God, who touchest earth with beauty,
> Make me lovely too,
> Keep me ever, by the Spirit,
> Pure, and strong and true.[19]

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[18] Carlson, 8.

[19] "God Who Touchest Earth with Beauty," Words by Mary S. Edgar, Music by C. Harold Lowden, reprinted with permission in Carlson, *Nature Lore Manual for Church Leaders,* 20.

The use of nature metaphors connected to evangelical beliefs of renewal and transformation, a product of a conversion or personal religious experience. The song also illustrates the larger evangelical truth of God as a creator, a key component of virtually every summer camp program that highlighted the natural environment as a primary way to experience God. In the words of the *Nature Lore Manual for Church Leaders,* "through the law, order, majesty, and beauty of the natural world God may be revealed to man."[20] Significantly, manuals such as the *Nature Lore Manual for Church Leaders* illustrate the universal appeal of nature and conservation for camp leaders. While the manual was published by a denominational (Methodist) publishing house, the title and content of the manual appealed to a wide evangelical audience and was created for use by any Christian summer camp program.

Much like Wesley Woods, Lutheran Lakeside Camp committed to responsibility with regard to the environment. The Camp Development Committee created a very detailed master plan and report which pointed to the Committee's commitment to responsible stewardship of the land. Consulting with the Soil Conservation District office, the Iowa Geological Survey, the Iowa Conservation Commission, the Iowa Great Lakes Sanitary District Office, as well as the Soil Research Laboratory and Geology Departments at Iowa State University demonstrated a thorough concern with the best possible way to create and implement a camp in tune with its natural surroundings.[21] For example, in the design and aesthetics of the camp buildings, the report commented, "the camp buildings must be visually pleasing, to the campers, intrinsically and in relation to their natural setting." It went on to explain, "the camper must find this camp

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[20] Carlson, 17.

[21] Master Plan and Report. 4.

a refreshing interlude from the complexities of our society, otherwise, it will fail in its prime function of facilitating through nature and good fellowship a communion with God."[22] The thoughtful consideration of both location, topography, and elevation all combined in the planning of the camp for the end purpose of reminding campers of the purpose of the camp…a spiritual encounter with God, or in the words of the master plan and Report, "the primary objective of the total project is to provide an opportunity for spiritual growth for the individual."[23] The chapel construction was to be located on a higher point of elevation, visible from virtually everywhere on the camp site. "It has been isolated from the general camp activity area so that a transition might be made mentally as well as physically as one leaves the central area and approaches the chapel site." The plan continued the discussion of the chapel placement, "its prominence will serve as a constant reminder to those approaching, entering or leaving the site as well as participants in the camp program, of the spiritual purpose of the camp site."[24] In its master plan and layout of the camp, Lutheran Lakeside demonstrated a commitment to using natural resources properly. But ultimately, the goal of responsibly creating a camp in a natural environment was to point campers and staff to a stronger relationship with God.

A Methodist publication of religious education from the 1940s illustrates an evangelical interest in understanding the natural world for the purpose of better serving God and men. In past centuries, many argued that the control or dominance over nature was a biblical concept

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[22] Master Plan and Report, 32.
[23] Master Plan and Report, 30.
[24] Master Plan and Report, 31.

connected to the stewardship of the earth. Some believed stewardship meant using the earth and its resources however humans desired. Others, especially in more recent generations, believed stewardship to mean a thoughtful use and preservation of natural resources. The 1940s publication included a unit on nature entitled, "Victories Over Nature," that explored "the victories which men have won over nature through discovering the laws of God."[25] The 'Suggestions for Teaching' section includes an interesting mix of praise for people who have "won over nature" and a surprisingly current view of health care, eating healthy foods, and the ways that "Jesus was one of the first heroes of peace who learned about God through nature."[26] The lesson plan reads: "read this statement: The President of the American College of Physicians said at a recent convention in New Orleans, that American doctors are giving $1,000,000 a day in charity services to Americans too poor to pay their doctors' bill. Yet, he continued, the people of the United States will never be healthy until they have decent food to eat and healthier places in which to live. Ask: What heroes are needed to make this possible?" Next, the lesson encouraged the teacher to discuss "discoveries about God through nature" through topics such as transportation, earthquakes, and weather. Interestingly, the focus of the lesson is on the ways that humans have conquered nature through learning God's laws in order to be heroes by saving lives. When discussing earthquakes, for example, "man has yet to fathom God's laws which govern the tremblings of the earth. But Frank Lloyd Wright, the architect, has studied the results of these laws. His study enabled him to build a hotel in Tokio,

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[25] Frances Nall, *When are we Patriotic? Two Units in Weekday Religious Education for Christian Citizenship Series for Grades Seven and Eight* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1940), 80.
[26] Nall, 80-81.

Japan, that has withstood earthquakes." The lesson then made this interesting connection about Wright: "He is a hero of peace in the saving of lives."[27] The lesson also includes a portion devoted to the "need of heroes today for new conquests" and cited the areas of flood and soil erosion, dust storms and desert as needing heroes to fix them. Despite the attention to learning the "laws of nature" in order to 'subdue' them, the lesson also acknowledges the role of humans in causing some of the problems in the natural world. With regard to dust storms, "some theories are advanced that they are caused because man has violated the laws of nature by plowing up the prairies. The hero is awaited who can solve this problem."[28] Despite this acknowledgement of humans in creating the problem, the lesson still underscores the faith in humans to find a solution to the problem through learning more about "God through nature."[29] But the lesson plan also connected nature with a religious experience, much like most postwar summer camps. It advised "have a worship service out of doors in a quiet shaded spot where the class can feel God speaking to them through nature."[30] This statement assumes that God will speak to them through nature, given the opportunity.

Evangelicals believed nature itself contained inherently religious qualities that would precipitate a religious experience for postwar youth. In addition to the explicitly religious messages of summer camp programs, the experience of living in a natural environment would also bring youths closer to God, according to evangelicals. Evangelicals also believed that they

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[27] Nall, 83.
[28] Nall, 84.
[29] Nall, 84.
[30] Nall, 84.

had a sacred duty to take care of God's creation and to be responsible stewards of His world. An examination of summer camps reveals that an attention to nature conservation and stewardship of the earth was prevalent among evangelicals in the postwar era, long before the popularity of the environmental movement in the 1960s and 1970s.

Ideas about Race and Racial Reconciliation

The scholarship on race and evangelicalism underscores the relationship as one of similar beliefs but a distinct separation. Paul Harvey argues that Christianity both fostered racialization and undermined it. "Christian myths and stories were central to the project of creating racial categories in the modern world. But the central text of Christianity, the Bible, was also amenable to more universalist visions."[31] The "intertwining" of whiteness, Christianity, and civilization was evident and used to justify the exclusion of African Americans from U.S. citizenship. But in the twentieth century, Christian thought undermined the racial system it helped to create. Harvey believes the civil rights revolution "was, to a considerable degree, a religious revolution." The legacy of the intertwining of Christianity and race in the United States is religious institutions essentially (and voluntarily) separated along racial lines.[32] Evangelical scholar Mark Noll acknowledges this concept of similar beliefs but a separation by race. Noll wrote, "informal attitudes and ingrained community habits rather than laws

[31] Paul Harvey, *Through the Storm, Through the Night: A History of African American Christianity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2011), 5.
[32] Harvey, 5-6.

continues to separate blacks and whites who share roughly the same evangelical beliefs."[33] Noll also highlights the reasons for the continued voluntary separation of white evangelicals along racial lines. He writes, "This religious style opens up great room for innovation and creativity, but it also is inherently conservative because it thrives on the ability to enlist audience support. Moving against the grain in this case, by changing economic habits, rethinking what good housing should be, or questioning assumptions about racial stereotypes—required the sort of top-down leadership authority that evangelicals have always mistrusted."[34] Noll recognizes the attempts of white evangelicals to demonstrate more unity instead of separation, but the gap between white and non-white evangelicals remains significantly large because evangelicals distrust the type of authority and leadership which could effectively encourage more integration.

Voluntary separation helps to explain why the vast majority of evangelical summer camps established in the postwar era were envisioned, implemented, and populated by white evangelicals. Out of the hundreds of evangelical summer camp programs, only a few camps operated as sites of racial integration, which demonstrates that racial integration was an idea that was considered 'unnatural' in the sense that it would take a program specifically designed

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[33] Mark A. Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity, An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 74.

[34] Noll, 76. See also Curtis J. Evans, *The Burden of Black Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), Jonathan L. Walton, *Watch This! The Ethics and Aesthetics of Black Televangelism* (New York: New York University Press, 2009); Edward J. Blum and Paul Harvey, *The Color of Christ: The Son of God and the Saga of Race in America* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Marla Faye Frederick, *Between Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Edward Gilbreath, *Reconciliation Blues: A Black Evangelical's Inside View of White Christianity* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006).

to integrate campers for this sort of racial intermingling to take place. The study of evangelical summer camps in the postwar era reveals the conflicted relationship between race and white evangelicals. However, postwar summer camps also demonstrate that some white evangelicals were discussing race and the need for racial reconciliation long before the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum in the 1960s.

Denominations such as the United Methodists understood the universality of God's grace and believed in equality of all races. Southern Baptist youth accepted that the equality of all men required equal treatment. Yet little evidence of actual integration at summer camps exists. Many postwar evangelicals seemed to believe in equality of all the people in the world, but, as evidenced in summer camps, were not necessarily willing to put this idea into actual practice. The Hidden Villa summer camp program, started in the mid-1940s, was founded for the purpose of integrating children from a variety of racial backgrounds. However, its evangelical beliefs were quite loose, if evangelical at all, demonstrating a distinct distance between evangelical lip service to integration and the reality of an evangelical summer camp program that integrated its campers and staff.

Very few summer camps established between 1945 and 1960 discussed race, but some camps did, and a few even envisioned interracial programming as an important evangelical message of unity in Christ. The story of Hidden Villa is not a typical example of an evangelical postwar summer camp because the camp was founded specifically as a place of racial integration. However, the history of Hidden Villa and its founders, the Duvenecks, illustrates larger postwar tensions with identity and race in the postwar era as well as glimpses of progressive ideas about race and reconciliation.

Frank and Josephine Duveneck bought Hidden Villa in 1924, in the Los Altos Hills, California with the intention of preserving the wilderness of the land and preserving the farm as a family ranch, instead of exploiting the land for commercial reasons. Frank Duveneck, a civil engineer, wanted to protect the watershed and, over time, purchased small parcels of property so that he eventually owned the entire watershed. Josephine Duveneck shared her husband's ideas of using land to "advance social justice and promote environmental education," and pushed those ideas even further with her vision for a residential, multicultural, and racially integrated summer camp, the first in the country. The vision for the multiracial camp stemmed from the Duvenecks' experiences helping Japanese-Americans during their forced internment after the attack on Pearl Harbor and their aid of refugees fleeing the rule of Nazis in Germany. The Duvenecks believed in social justice, as further evidenced by their help of the United Farm Workers movement in the 1960s as well as their provision of a location for Cesar Chavez to safely organize the first strike of farm workers in California.[35]

The Duvenecks established living quarters for 'The Experiment in International Living,' which hosted European refugees, and 'Friend's Workshop,' which housed Farm Labor advocates in the 1940, '41, and '42. These experiences allowed the Duvenecks to acquire the equipment to host around fifty people, which Josephine then decided to use as the basis for

[35] "The Duvenecks," The History of Hidden Villa, http://www.hiddenvilla.org/about-us/history/the-duvenecks; accessed April 1, 2013. For more information on the ways the Duvenecks helped European refugees, Japanese-Americans, Mexican laborers and Farm Labor with Cesar Chavez, see chapters 23 -27 in Josephine Whitney Duveneck, *Life on Two Levels: An Autobiography* (Los Altos, CA: William Kaufmann, Inc., 1978).

organizing an “ongoing regular camp program” using the existing facilities of Hidden Villa.[36] Josephine started the camp in 1945. She explained her thought process this way:

> I attended a great many meetings and conferences with other agencies working for minority groups. Beside the Johnson Survey which I had participated in, there were other surveys and conferences to determine the nature of the problem. It seemed there was no end to the lengthy discussions of housing, education, employment, police and court discrimination. I got awfully tired of these deliberations which duplicated what we already knew and seldom resulted in positive action. I wondered what I could do as an individual to make an actual concrete program to combat discrimination and further integration. What did I have at my disposal to use in such as cause? [37]

Josephine realized Hidden Villa was the perfect site for establishing an independent interracial camp program. “It was a ready-made surrounding. Why not organize a summer camp aimed at multicultural understanding?”[38] Josephine had experience working with children at Peninsula School, a school that she started, based on child-centered learning and more progressive educational philosophies. Though she did not have any formal teacher training, Josephine taught in various capacities at the Peninsula School and worked as the school’s director for sixteen years.[39]

In her autobiography, she reflected on her views of integration. Josephine believed that “adults immersed in accepted social patterns were extremely slow to accept change,” but it seemed to her that “if one could get ahold of children *before* prejudice intervened there might be a good change to prevent its development.” If a group of people lived and worked together

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[36] Josephine Whitney Duveneck, *Life on Two Levels: An Autobiography* (Los Altos, CA: William Kaufmann, Inc., 1978), 287.

[37] Duveneck, 287-88.

[38] Duveneck, 288.

[39] Duveneck, 158. For more on the founding of Peninsula School, see chapter 16, “Peninsula School is Born,” in *Life on Two Levels.*

"from the cradle," they should be able to live "harmoniously on common interests all through life," according to Josephine.[40] But as she began to discuss the idea of an interracial camp with others, she encountered resistance. Many believed that the children would not actually "mingle" together or that parents would never agree to send their children to such a place. Some even told Josephine, "'the black parents will not trust you to take care of their kids,'" to which Josephine responded, "same old nonsense!" Josephine decided to go ahead anyway, as she had built a reputation as an educator and organizer and had many contacts in minority groups from her work on community relations. She invited a small mixed group to operate in an advising capacity and found "a Negro girl to be director of the first camp." Josephine described her: "She had just graduated from Mills College with a degree in playground and recreation work. She was an enthusiastic, bubbling sort of person with great physical vitality, a keen sense of humor and had a natural way with children." Josephine and the director planned the program together, created registration forms, purchased athletic supplies and recruited campers through the advisory committee. "Black or white, rich or poor, any boy or girl between the ages of 7 and 13 was welcome. To our amazement, recruiting was not at all difficult. Within a few weeks we enrolled sixty-one children in three two-week sessions, representing Black, White, Filipino, and Mexican families."[41]

Hidden Villas divided children by age and made sure to allocate two or three "minority youngsters" in each group and this worked quite well. Josephine remarked, "it was surprising to me and very gratifying that there were practically no conflicts due to ethnic differences."

[40] Duveneck, 288.
[41] Duveneck, 288.

Now obviously the campers came to Hidden Villas knowing that children of different races and background would be in attendance, as Josephine used to call the camp "The Camp of Many Colors." She remembered only one instance of a boy singing a song with a verse about "'Chink, chink, Chinaman sitting on a fence…'" but Josephine brought up the issue at the morning meeting and requested the kids come up with "other name tags that were equally uncomplimentary." They came up with an impressive list of objectionable names and every camper as well as staff member fit at least one of the names. Then they discussed their reactions to those labels and how it made them feel uncomfortable when such disparaging remarks were applied.[42]

The conception and founding of an interracial summer camp program like Hidden Villa seems progressive for many postwar evangelicals. However, the religious message of Hidden Villa, by most evangelical standards, was nonexistent. Josephine described the religious tradition which took place immediately after breakfast. She "felt it to be the time of invocation, worship if you will, a sharing of the deeper consciousness." Josephine continued, "I did not seek to proselytize, but only to draw forth from each one his own response to the 'communion of saints.'" She characterized the time as "a moment of recollection" to begin the day, and she amassed a "little treasury of poems, stories, prayers, proverbs, legends." The time of reflection was followed by a moment of silence.[43] For evangelicals, this programming, while perhaps commendable, probably did not contain a strong enough evangelical message to be considered an evangelical camp. The Duvenecks did not make any religious claims about Hidden Villa,

[42] Duveneck, 290.
[43] Duveneck, 291.

despite Josephine's commitment to Quakerism. Josephine certainly believed in God's providence and the importance of God's leadership in all aspects of her life. But Josephine also encountered a great variety of religious beliefs in her journeys and interactions with many different people from various backgrounds. As a result, she believed in toleration and acceptance of all forms of diversity, religious beliefs included, which helps to explain why Hidden Villa did not necessarily adhere to the idea of passing specifically evangelical beliefs to its campers. While Hidden Villa camp did have a religious message of sorts, it did not conform to the basic evangelical beliefs of crucentrism, biblicalism, activism, and conversion. This is most evident with Josephine's statement that she did not desire to proselytize the campers. Evangelical summer camps, on the other hand, believed the core purpose of the camp program was to proselytize and disciple their campers in evangelical beliefs. While white evangelicals may have discussed ideas about race and racial reconciliation in the postwar era summer camps, the actual work of racial reconciliation and racial integration took place only very rarely. Furthermore, the few camp programs that did encourage racial integration did not contain core evangelical beliefs as part of their program. This suggests that for most postwar white evangelicals, ideas of racial reconciliation were still just ideas to discuss, not implement.

Other denominations discussed their views on race and emphasized the importance of accepting people from all backgrounds. A debate about the joining of smaller Lutheran denominations into a larger Lutheran union, sheds some light on the seldom mentioned issue of race. The discussion was framed around "the concern that differences in national background will make for difficult working relationships" and had to do with Lutherans from primarily Scandinavian background (ALC) and Lutherans from primarily German background

(ELC) contemplating a unified Lutheran denomination. The article introduces some thoughtful questions about "differences in national backgrounds" in the evangelical church. Frederik A. Schiotz, from the New York Commission on Orphaned Missions and Younger Churches, NLC, believed the concerns about joining German and Scandinavian Lutherans tapped into larger national issues about race. Schiotz wrote,

> there is a far more serious aspect to this concern about national background. Essentially, this fear is of the same class as the feeling that exists concerning racial differences. Today the peoples of the Orient and Africa seethe with loathing for the people of the West. One missionary in Africa, whom I know to have the confidence of the African in a greater degree than most white people have it, states without reservation that the color bar countenanced by Christians in America robs the Christian Gospel of its power.[44]

He argued that differences in national background should be ways to "enrich the fellowship of the believers," instead of a "barrier" for Christians. In addition, Schiotz warned, to not agree was to be "dangerously close" to a rejection of the Christian faith that teaches, "in Christ 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female.'"[45] He reasoned that while differences in "national backgrounds" may "occasion difficulty," that was not a legitimate reason "for giving up, but an invitation to persist in faith and obedience."[46] This discussion illuminates the idea that some evangelicals acknowledged the biblical stance on race as one of acceptance. However, while the article emphasized that races should be viewed as equal, it did not spell out the practical application of the principle of equality.

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[44] Fredrik A. Schoitz, "Shall We Unite or Walk Alone?" in *The Lutheran Herald* May 27, 1952, 534; Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp Archives, Story City IA.

[45] Schiotz is quoting Galatians 3:28, King James Version.

[46] Schiotz, "Shall We Unite or Walk Alone?" 534.

A Methodist publication providing units for weekly religious education in Christian citizenship discussed the importance of "God's love for all" in a session entitled "Heroes of the Color Line." The objective of the session was to "help the class to see what contributions people of different races have to offer to world civilization. Stress that God's love for all people is the same, and that it is the responsibility of every race to help make the lives of others safe, comfortable, and happy."[47] The lesson plan encouraged teachers to show students "the handiwork of other races and nationalities" and to think of various contributions to the U.S. from other races and nationalities. The lesson plan included the story of Jesus going to Samaria and showing compassion to a Samaritan woman. Then the plan tells the teacher:

> Ask: What do we learn from Jesus about how to treat people of other races? Tell: In our large cities there are some clubs that will not admit Jews. There are some small towns and townships that will not allow a Negro to remain after sundown. Ask: What does Jesus think of such prejudices? Tell: A society lady from the United States was visiting in Mexico City. She discovered that Roland Hayes, the great Negro singer, had the room above hers in the hotel. Ask: What would she do if she had race prejudice? If she followed Jesus' example? [48]

Next the teacher asks for ways that "the love of God overcomes racial and social differences today." The manual suggests to "let the class name persons who are helping to break down these barriers of race and social standing" and to also tell what people from four different races are doing to break down those barriers.[49] Then, the manual gives detailed accounts of George Washington Carver, Toyohiko Kagawa, Albert Schweitzer, and Henry Roe Cloud (as

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[47] Frances Nall, *When are we Patriotic? Two Units in Weekday Religious Education for Christian Citizenship Series for Grades Seven and Eight* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1940), 109.

[48] Nall, 111.

[49] Nall, 112.

representatives of “the black race” the “yellow race” the “white race” and the “red race” respectively). The lesson then calls for “more practicing” and underscores three main points: “that all races have an equal chance to get an education,” “That all races may have an equal chance to earn a living,” and “that all races should be treated fairly.” As examples for each principle, the lesson explains of numerous boys and girls in the United States who do not have a chance for a good “grammar-school” education such as “youth in rural districts, Negroes who are segregated in inferior schools, Jews who are restricted from some colleges by the quota system, and poor children who must work to help support their parents.”[50] Next the lesson instructs the teacher to ask “do you give everyone in your class an equal chance to hold office, or take part in your games? What can you do in your school to help each pupil be his best?” The lesson also tells the teacher to ask the students for examples of minority races being treated unfairly, then ask “how can we help these minority races to live abundantly in the United States? Are there any hotels, restaurants, theaters, apartments, or residential streets in your community which discriminate against Jews, Japanese, or Negroes? Are there any playgrounds, swimming pools, or beaches which are restricted? What is the Christian thing for you to do?”[51] The lesson concludes with proposals for worship, an interracial play for the children to act out, and suggestions for projects, which include collecting articles about examples of racial reconciliation, planning an “Interracial Week,” dramatizing the included interracial play, creating a “Hall of Nations” or “Avenue of Races” with museum articles made by various ethnic groups, do an exchange where the students visit the “Mexican church school”

[50] Nall, 116-17.
[51] Nall, 117.

or visit the "Negro church school" one Sunday and the "colored students would be guests in the intermediate class of the white church."[52] This particular lesson, unlike the majority of evangelical discussions of race in youth programs during the postwar era, provided some practical examples of way that the youth can help to combat racial prejudice. However, this lesson is an exception, rather than the rule, and still underscored the importance of recognizing the importance of equality. Furthermore, while the lesson calls for the youth to "help each pupil be his best," it is a far cry from a call for systematic restructuring of institutions exhibiting racial prejudice.

Lutheran Lakeside Bible Camp included a session on race in its course offerings for campers. The session on race provides a significant insight into the Lutheran leadership and/or denomination's understanding of the consequences and meaning of 'the race issue.' While one can only guess at the actual session materials and answer to the question, "how to be a Christian in race relations" the fact that the leadership recognized young people were asking questions about race and religion and prepared a session for it as early as 1947 indicates, to some degree, the weight of the issue and the desire to engage with important current issues in the postwar era.[53]

A collection of speeches given by Southern Baptist youth in the postwar era provide valuable insight into the youth's concerns about the racial discord in the United States.[54]

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[52] Nall, 117-18.

[53] "Courses of Study" in 1947 Iowa Luther League Bible Camp, Lake Okoboji, July 28-August 1, Brochure, Lakeside Lutheran Camp Records, Spirit Lake, IA.

[54] The Glorieta Baptist Assembly Camp and Retreat Center in Glorieta, New Mexico, and Camp Ridgecrest in Ridgecrest, North Carolina, alternatively held a Young People's Speakers'

Overall, the speeches reflected an understanding that God created all humans equally. However, while the speeches agree about the equality of humans, they failed to provide answers about what true racial reconciliation actually looked like in reality. Margaret Hall gave a speech entitled, “All Men are Created Equal- A Truth Self-Evident?” and referenced the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court decision. Hall began by recounting all men were created equal in the scripture of Acts 17:26 which reads, “And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth”[55] then connects that passage with the Declaration of Independence passage about all men created equal. With regard to the Brown vs. Board decision, Hall wrote, “Last year the Supreme Court realize that all—black and white—were equal and should have the same advantages so this court has taken action toward ending segregation.” Hall then explained, “we thought this was one step further in making this truth evident. However, it seems that many people disagree with this ruling, because they aren’t willing to accept the Negro as their equal.” She then gives some examples of the contrast between income levels and the ways that social divisions make equality difficult to see, but

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Tournament each year. The entries on varied topics came from young people in the high school and young adult age group. Glorieta is a retreat center in Glorieta, New Mexico, founded after World War I because Camp Ridgecrest in Ridgecrest, NC ran out of room and the Southern Baptist Assembly needed more space for retreats and conferences.

[55] The passage of Acts 17:23-28 from the King James Version reads: For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.”

since God made all people equal, they should be treated fairly and equally. [56] Ellis West adds to the discussion of race in his 1957 speech, “The Field is the World,” where he explains the importance of race in global politics. He discussed the tensions evident in the middle east and called on Christians to help ease the conflict. “God expects something more basic before any of our works count for good…he requires that we have the right attitude and a real concern for the entire world. In other words, How many of you really love all men regardless of race and color? How many of you really believe that an Arabian is loved by the Lord as much as you?[57] A 1959 speech about “Being a Christian Citizen Under Pressure,” cited the “significant and pertinent” issues that Christian citizens should “wrestle” with. He wrote the “race controversy” on the domestic front was “booming to enormous proportions” and chastised Christians for not pointing out a “Christian approach to the issue,” saying, “How many of you, if challenged, would admit the moral dignity and worth of every human under God?”[58] Another speechwriter cited “the horrid thing we call race prejudice and class conflict” as “misery and exploitation…injustice and gross inequality.” He believed that “Christian citizens of the world must come to see that all problems are religious problems,” thus connecting the general problem of social inequality as a religious problem that demanded an answer from those who

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[56] Margaret Hall, “All Men are Created Equal – A Truth Self-Evident? A Speech to be Given in the Young People’s Speakers’ Tournament at Ridgecrest, NC, 1954, Southern Baptist Speakers’ Tournament Collection, volume 1, Southern Baptist Historical Archives.

[57] Ellis West, “The Field is the World,” 1957, Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptist Speakers’ Tournament Collection, volume II, 202-3, SBHA.

[58] Paul Bergerson, “Being a Christian Citizen Under Pressure,” 1959, Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptist Speakers’ Tournament Collection, volume III, 128-133: 131-2, SBHA.

identified themselves as Christians.[59] Still another speech recalled a professor telling his students that "ten times as many African students go to Russian universities as attend American schools." She reacted with horror and, like the other student speeches, connected the reality of racial prejudice with the scripture's call for equality. She wrote, "I became painfully aware that my racial prejudice doesn't affect only the Negro girl that I refuse to sit by on the bus, but serves to alienate all of the colored races of the world from the 'equality of democracy' and the brotherhood of Christian love."[60] All of these speeches by Southern Baptist youth reflect the firm beliefs that God created equality among humans and that youth needed to demonstrate this equality to the various races and ethnicities they encountered. Yet, much like the denominational summer camps, beliefs in equality remained distinct from the implementation of that belief into integrated and interracial realities.

While a few postwar camps were envisioned as places of racial integration and reconciliation, most evangelicals paid lip service to racial reconciliation but did not work to make it a reality in summer camp programs. While white evangelicals were united in their desire to focus on youth in the postwar era, the issues of environmentalism and race illustrate the wide spectrum of differences among white evangelicals. Most scholars discuss the issues of environmentalism and racial reconciliation in the broader contexts of the environmental movement and civil rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s. But postwar summer camps

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[59] Keith Lovin, "Christian Citizen of the World," 1961, Ridgecrest, NC and Glorieta, NM, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume IV, 123-125; 124, SBHA.

[60] Beverly Woodruff, "Christian, Citizen of the World," 1961, Ridgecrest, NC and Glorieta, NM, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume IV 136-138; 137, SBHA.

demonstrate that evangelicals were engaging with these issues earlier than previously thought and in ways not traditionally associated with evangelical thought.

CHAPTER FIVE:
"In the Face of Evil's Prevailing Threat to our Cherished Way of Life": Evangelical Youth Identity in a Cold War Context

In the face of evil's prevailing threat to our cherished way of life, perhaps the easiest way out is to befuddle our brains with dope, sink deep in the Slough of Despond, and despairingly hope that we can sleep it off, that it will wear away like a headache in the morning; we may withdraw into the hermitage of our closed minds and bitterly denounce the world, but within the walls of our seclusion we find ourselves and we must admit with shame that we have not evaded evil but have found its source.[1]

The greatest danger to our freedom comes not from external forces, but from the slow moral decay of our country from within.[2]

The diversity among evangelicals in the postwar is evident through the call for action and political activism by evangelical youth. Evangelical youth believed American evangelicals needed to engage politically, as evidenced through the Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament speech collection. Specifically, postwar evangelical youth voiced the need for peace activism, the establishment of more Christian educational institutions, and training more missionaries to combat the threat of communism in America and abroad.

In a speech prepared for the Baptist Speakers' Tournament in 1957, Ellis West articulated significant postwar concerns in his discussion of the current times. "I believe with all my heart that our leaders realize that there is some[thing] different, unique and crucial

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[1] Charles Leach, "Keeping Faith with the Future," 1954, Glorieta, NM, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume I, 5-8, Southern Baptist Historical Archives, Nashville, TN (SBHA). Leach cites this particular passage of his speech with Mark 7:21. Mark 7:20-23, NIV, chronicles Jesus teaching his disciples, "He went on: 'What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person.'"

[2] Charles Clayton, "Serving Christ as an American Citizen," 1957, Glorieta, NM, Southern Baptists Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume II, 106, SBHA.

about the present day and age." West then connected the perilous days of postwar America with a strong need for mission work by Christians in 'the field,' meaning the missionary field. "There are certain characteristics that make it imperative, as never before, that we consider the field as the whole world."[3] West cited a college conference with the theme of "The Christian Student and the World Crisis," in Nashville during December of 1956, with more than two thousand college students in attendance, thus linking American youth to missions in the postwar world. West believed the conference summed up three main points. First, the postwar world had become quite small with the advancements in transportation and communication. West wrote, "why the hated Mr. Khrushchev of Russia has actually visited in our living rooms." Second, according to West and the college conference, the world "has no sense of stability. Revolution and change are the key words of today. Nobody has any faith in anything....To use an old phrase, people are 'running around like chickens with their heads cut off.'" The third and most important characteristic, in West's mind, of the uniqueness of the postwar world was "the underprivileged, down-trodden people are on the march," which "could lead to the destruction of the Western World." West then continued, "the most powerful force in the world today is not Christianity, democracy, communism, but a thing known as nationalism, the determination of the little people to be somebody."[4] After he established the problem of the postwar world, West recommended the solution: present Christianity to these unhappy and dissatisfied people around the world. West illustrated his

[3] Ellis West, "The Field is the World," 1957, Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume II, 202, SBHA.
[4] Ellis West, "The Field is the World," 202-3.

push for missionizing with a current postwar example: "in a recent issue of the U.S. News and World Report, the Prime Minister of Lebanon, Mr. Charles Malik, was asked what was the best thing that the United States could do for the tense situation in the Middle East. His answer had nothing to do with communism, the Eisenhower Doctrine, military, or economic aid. He said, 'Give us your way of life. We must learn to live as Christians.'" And the stakes of foreign mission work had never been higher. According to West, "what Christianity does with such situations will determine whether the world sinks or swims. This is the logic of foreign missions." West ended his speech with an explanation of the diversity of foreign missions and challenging his listeners to action, not just by attending more church services or giving more money to missions or even volunteering to become a missionary. Instead, West asserted an attitude of love and caring was at the core of changing the restless people of the world's hearts and minds. "God expects something more basic before any of our works count for good….he requires that we have the right attitude and a real concern for the entire world. In other words, how many of you really love all men regardless of race and color?"[5]

West's speech embodies many of the key issues in postwar America for evangelical youth. But what is most significant is West's solution: a call to action. West and other evangelical youth of the postwar era sought to ameliorate the changes and anxieties of the postwar reality through a call for political engagement of evangelical youth.

Evangelicals in the United States understood the threats to democracy and Christianity as inextricably linked. Evangelicals asserted their postwar identity as both Christian and fiercely American. In fact, evangelicals spent a great deal of time and effort to redefine their identity as

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[5] Ellis West, "The Field is the World," 203-4.

both patriotic Americans and Christians and to successfully argue the naturally connected nature of Christianity and democracy. They did this in order to combat threats from within, which included the moral decay of the United States most associated with materialism, greed, loss of Christian principles, and corruption of American youth and society, and to combat threats from the outside, such as the blatant and atheistic pressures of communist expansion. Postwar evangelicals believed that democracy and Christianity were merely two sides of the same coin, and that America's youth provided the solution to both the inner moral decay of the United States and the impending threat of communism: political engagement.

American evangelical youth believed that Christianity accounted for the uniqueness and exceptionalism of America. They highlighted the history of Christian political engagement in America as a way to motivate postwar Christian youth to engage politically. Evangelical youth believed the most effective antidote to the growing threat of communism in the postwar world was to support and training of more missionaries throughout the world. To combat the growing evidence of moral decay through materialism, greed, and selfishness, evangelical youth believed in political activism through the building of Christian educational institutions. Evangelical youth trusted peace activism to contest the threats of atomic weaponry and the reality of living in a nuclear age.

Recent scholarship on the relationship between the Cold War and Christianity provides valuable insight on the shaping of evangelical identity in the postwar era. However, while current scholarship connects evangelicals' postwar worldview with political activism, the historiography fails to acknowledge the role that evangelical youth played in encouraging political engagement. Scholars Jason W. Stevens and Jonathan P. Herzog demonstrate the way that the Cold War reality of postwar American galvanized evangelicals. Stevens traces the Cold War era reaction to modernism and he examines the "belief that an engaged Christianity must look to cultural expression and political realities for sources of religious revelation, inspiration, and provocation."[6] Stevens concludes that in the two decades after World War II, Americans "became versed in the lesson that they were not only favored by God but also under his judgment" and the language of re-education through "the vicissitudes of sin and grace became a superpower."[7] Stevens recognizes the role of the Cold War in mobilizing evangelicals, in unprecedented levels, to engagement. Herzog argues the "almost frantic promotion of religion" in the postwar era was due to the evocation of the enemy of evangelicalism: communism.[8] Postwar Americans faced a "theologically alien enemy" that shunned religion and offered an alternative to religion in the form of communist observances, rituals, and festivals. According to Herzog, postwar America accepted that communism was "a disease of the psyche and spirit that arms alone could not defeat." Postwar evangelicals believed communism called for the obliteration of organized religion. As a result, evangelical Americans "concluded that

[6] Jason W. Stevens, *God-Fearing and Free: A Spiritual History of America's Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), viii. See also Andrew S. Finstuen, *Original Sin and Everyday Protestants: The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr, Billy Graham, and Paul Tillich in an Age of Anxiety* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Jonathan P. Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America's Religious Battle against Communism in the Early Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011); Kevin M. Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to its Protestant Promise* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[7] Stevens, 3.

[8] Jonathan P. Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America's Religious Battle against Communism in the Early Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4.

religious faith was one of the most potent arrows in the quiver of domestic security."[9] What needs to be added to this scholarship is the ways that evangelical youth also identified communism as a primary adversary to Christianity. In particular, the language of the evangelical youth fully engages with this Cold War battle between the godless communists and their direct threat to both Christianity as a religion, and Christian America as a religious democracy.

Scholars such as Angela M. Lahr have also illuminated the political roles of evangelicals in postwar America. Lahr examined case studies: the rhetoric of nuclear weaponry and its ability to annihilate life on earth, the Cold War climax in the Cuban Missile Crisis, the interest in the new state of Israel and its relationship end times, and the Vietnam war to illustrate her larger argument that "conservative evangelicals employed their apocalyptic understanding of the world for political and religious ends, becoming staunch advocates of 'Christian America' and opponents of 'atheistic communism.'"[10] Much like Lahr's argument, the speeches of evangelical youth examined here reveal the urgency of the evangelical message while tapping into a dramatic and, at times, apocalyptic rhetoric that highlighted the differences between Christian American and the atheistic communists. However, Lahr and other scholars who examine the postwar evangelical leadership fail to account for the importance of the youth in articulating the importance of political activism. While the ideas of evangelical political activism may have taken root in postwar youth because of the call of adult leaders like Billy Graham,

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[9] Herzog, 4-6.

[10] Angela M. Lahr, *Millennial Dreams and Apocalyptic Nightmares: The Cold War Origins of Political Evangelicalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

evangelical youth believed they would be the ones to fix America's problems. Whether accepting the call for activism or articulating it themselves, the postwar generation of youth recognized that the social ills and problems, both domestic and foreign, should be solved through activism. In the past, evangelicals may have recognized and desired to enact change, but shied away from mainstream political activism because they viewed mainstream popular culture as a corrupting influence. In the postwar era, evangelical teens believed that becoming missionaries, politicians, peace activists, and establishing more Christian institutions were the best solutions to address the postwar problems in America and around the world. The implications of this mindset of evangelical activism are evident in the rise of the right and the role of evangelicals in exercising their political, culture, and economic influence in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s to correct the problems of modern society.

The speeches written by young people from the Southern Baptist Convention provides the majority of the evidence for an emphasis on political engagement of evangelical youth in the postwar era. Beginning in 1934, the Sunday School Board's Training Union Department sponsored a Speakers' Tournament for young people throughout the Southern Baptist Convention. They organized both state and regional contests and the finalists from the tournaments presented at Glorieta or Ridgecrest. The Glorieta Baptist Assembly Camp and Retreat Center in Glorieta, New Mexico, and Camp Ridgecrest in Ridgecrest, North Carolina, took turns hosting the Young People's Speakers' Tournament each year.[11] For the Speakers' Tournament, young people would choose a topic and create an original speech on the chosen

[11] Glorieta is a retreat center in Glorieta, New Mexico, founded after World War I because Camp Ridgecrest in Ridgecrest, NC ran out of room and the Southern Baptist Assembly needed more space for retreats and conferences.

topic, lasting from five to six minutes.[12] The young people originally presented their speeches to their local Baptist church, then the winner went on to the associational tournament, and those winners presented at the state convention contest. State finalists attended and presented at the National Convention conference center, Ridgecrest or Glorieta, depending on the year. The entries provide remarkable insight into how American evangelical youth articulated the relationship between themselves, America, and the rest of the world. While these speeches cannot possibly speak for all American youth or represent all American evangelical opinions on matters of identity, Christianity, and the postwar world, they do provide a broad spectrum of thoughtful and carefully prepared opinions. The speeches were presented in front of an audience composed of both peers and adults in a competitive atmosphere. These speeches were the 'best' of all the speeches and give significant insight to the layers of evangelical youth perspective in postwar America.[13] In addition, since the speeches come from young people all over the country, their variety of perspectives and similarities in their advocacy for political engagement is remarkable.

American Exceptionalism: A History of Political Activism

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[12] The topics came from a recommended list of broad topics, which included: sharing your faith, attributes of God and Christ, faith, stewardship, moral living, beliefs, God's will, church membership, Christian citizenship, missions, prayer, separation of church and state, and commitment to Christ. Finding Aid, Speakers' Tournament Collection, SBHLA.

[13] The archival collection of the Speakers' Tournament at SBHLA does not provide the criteria for judgment of the speeches, although one could speculate that the 'best' speeches reflected the most well-articulated ideals of the youth in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Many of America's evangelical youth discussed the uniqueness of American democracy and linked that uniqueness to specifically evangelical aspects of American Christianity. This was not a new idea, but it did take on greatest significance in postwar America because of the atheistic communist threat to both Christianity and democracy. The speeches chronicling American exceptionalism point to the history of political activism, in the eyes of the postwar youth. Youth then used this explanation of America's uniqueness, of a Christian democracy, to encourage postwar youth to continue the history of political engagement through their activism.

Postwar evangelical youth believed the founding of America was a story of exceptionalism and understood the United States as a covenant nation. Tommy Smith told the story of a World War II veteran who had recently returned from the North African campaign, wearing a Purple Heart medal. A minister asked the soldier "what do you think of America?" and the soldier's answer "was a composite of ideals, concepts, and principles that we call the 'American Dream.'" Smith explored the idea of the 'American Dream' and explained that the 'American Dream' is what made the United States different from other countries. Smith asked, "What has America to give the rest of the world?" Interestingly, the answer Smith proposed dealt with America's relationship to the rest of the world. He answered his question by remarking that if what America had to give the rest of the world had only to do with "grain or money or armaments, then we have already lost the war and the peace." Instead, Smith believed America was, in the words of Dr. Peter Marshall, a "'covenant nation…the only surviving nation on earth that had its origin in the determination of the founding fathers to establish a settlement to the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith.'"

According to Marshall (and Smith), a covenant nation was one that understood its dependency on God and accountability to God, especially acknowledging God and his purposes "'stand over and above the nation.'"[14] Essentially, Smith argued "God was recognized as the source of human rights and freedom" which is what made America unique and different from all other countries. Another postwar youth, John Quincey explained American exceptionalism this way: the early colonists "have given us a democratic form of government, and a way of life which no other people on earth, except we as Americans, can enjoy."[15] Smith highlighted the uniqueness of religious freedom to "worship God according to the dictates of one's conscience, and equal opportunity for all men. It was these two ideas—religious freedom and equal opportunity—that formed the foundation of the American Dream."[16] After reminding his hearers of Roger Williams, William Penn, and Thomas Jefferson, who espoused the freedoms of human rights and freedoms, Smith said there were times in American history when some of those freedoms were forgotten. He then connected this era of forgetfulness to the postwar era, saying, "we take no notice that we can say what we want. We never thought of watching TV or listening to

[14] Tommy Smith, "Freedom—A Privilege and Responsibility," 1956, Glorieta, NM, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume II, 42-44, SBHA. Smith is quoting the Rev. Dr. Peter Marshall, a well-known Presbyterian minister in America during WWII.

[15] James Quincey, "Freedom—Priviledge [sic] and Responsibility," 1956, Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptists Speakers' Tournament, volume II, 99-101, SBHA.

[16] Smith, "Freedom—A Privilege and a Responsibility," 43. Smith may also be referencing President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's memorable speech delivered on January 6, 1941, the "Four Freedoms." In this address, Roosevelt espoused the essential human freedoms as a method for battling fascist ideology. They consisted of: the freedom of speech and expression; the freedom of worship; the freedom from want, and freedom from fear. Norman Rockwell's illustrations of each of the Four Freedoms and specifically the Freedom of Worship poster, which read, "Each According to the Dictates of His Own Conscience," became enormously popular during and after WWII.

the radio as being freedoms," But Smith clarified that freedom was *not* just the right to do as one pleased, but "the opportunity to do what is right and just." Smith believed Americans enjoyed the greatest freedom "the world has ever known," including the freedom to neglect the privilege of suffrage, worship, and entitled liberties.[17] Smith ended his speech by noting Americans had more freedoms and responsibilities to God and country than any other country in the world. For Smith, American Christians had a history of political engagement. Furthermore, American freedoms and liberties safeguarded the ability of Christians to continue their engagement and influence in American politics, society, and life.

In another perspective, a manual for the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist conference described the interconnectedness of Christianity and democracy. Though not the voice of a postwar youth, the manual was created for American youth and highlighted the history of political activism of the church, dating back to the New Testament period. The author of the manual, Gaines Dobbins, argued that democracy was more than a theory of government. "It is an ideal of human relationship, a program of social co-operation, a method of human progress, a school for training in good citizenship and character, an environment in which Christianity has its best opportunity to succeed." He claimed the New Testament churches were established under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and intended as models. Dobbins asserted "we cannot understand the true meaning of a spiritual democracy until we understand the nature and functions of these first churches."[18] According to Dobbins, the

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[17] Smith, "Freedom—A Prilvilege and a Responsibility," 44.

[18] Gaines S. Dobbins, *Working Together in a Spiritual Democracy* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1935), 13. See also Frank H. Leavell, *The Master's Minority* (Nashville, TN: Broadman

early Christian church organized for conquest, commissioned to witness to others about the gospel, existed as a the "body of Christ and family of God" as well as a "school of Christ and temple of truth, an ideal spiritual society, a missionary institution, a soul-winning and character-building agency, and as a source for transforming human society.[19] Dobbins believed representative government was "about the nearest approach which even the most ardent champions of political freedom have been able to make toward a pure democracy" and that Jesus came to transform individual lives, who would in turn transform society. "Redeemed men and women live together for each other, not seeking their own advantage but the common welfare," according to Dobbins. Furthermore, like many other postwar evangelicals, Dobbins believed the early Christian church better exemplified the principles of democracy than the Greek city states or the Roman empire.[20] Dobbins' described the early Christian church, or, the spiritual kingdom, as a place where "co-operation replaces cutthroat competition, brotherly helpfulness takes the place of jealous rivalry, generous giving supersedes selfish accumulation, contentment with God's provision of necessities supplants anxiety and worry over bodily needs."[21] This manual written for Sunday School explained how firmly the concepts of democracy and Christianity intertwined in the minds of American evangelicals. In addition, this passage underscored the importance of democratic freedoms for the purpose of engagement

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Press, 1949, Jacques Maritain, translated by Doris C. Anson, *Christianity and Democracy* (New York: Scarles Scribner's Sons, 1950), and Paul Blanshard, *Communism, Democracy, and Catholic Power* (Boston, MA: The Beacon Press, 1951).

[19] Dobbins, 13-25.

[20] Dobbins, 5.

[21] Dobbins, 3-4.

through missionizing, cooperation to help ameliorate social problems, and to politically transform society.

Other postwar youth connected the uniqueness of American individual liberties and freedoms to political engagement. They believed those freedoms gave American youth the permission and encouragement to engage politically. One postwar youth explained that "democracy is worth it because democracy is fundamentally based on New Testament doctrine" (emphasis original). According to Sylvia Smith, Jesus did not create a new government or world order, but changed individuals, who then changed both society and government. She cites the early New Testament church's struggle for religious freedom and links it to the American Baptist members in the early republic who worked to place freedom of religious practice into the American constitution. In addition, democracy was 'worth it' because "democracy has produced the greatest nation the world has ever known" (emphasis original). Smith believed that living in a democracy was not only a Christian form of government, but a form of government that required active participation by its citizens.[22]

The unique dominance of America in the postwar age was a product of Americans continuing to engage in their civic responsibilities, according to evangelical postwar youth. In particular, Dan Duckworth cited the use of voting. He described voting as a privilege but also a responsibility because "the fate of a nation is often controlled by those who exercise their privilege of voting, or, more often, by those who do not exercise this privilege." In a not so thinly veiled reference nations recently seized and under dictatorial control, Duckworth said,

[22] Sylvia Smith, "Is Democracy Worth It?" 1954, Ridgecrest, NC. Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume I, 89-90, SBHA.

"many nations have awakened to the realization that while they were relaxing in complacency and indifference a skillful demagogue or dictator wrested their ballot from them and made slaves of a once-free people."[23] Duckworth made a case for the uniqueness of America in the postwar world, as a country that maintained its freedoms through the vigilance of utilizing its political leverage through voting. Postwar youth believed that America was exceptional because of its Christian-based democracy. They also believed the only way to keep America democratic and Christian was for its Christian citizens to be political engaged and active.

The Threat of Communism and the Need for Missions

Postwar America cannot be fully understood apart from a Cold War context that pitted the democratic United States of America against the communist Soviet Union and its satellite powers. The speeches from the tournament all reflect an understanding of communism as a serious threat, although perspectives differed on how subversive or overt that threat was to postwar Americans. Moreover, the speeches equated the fight against communism as a religious fight, not just a democratic one. The best way to combat the threat of communism, according to evangelical youth, was to engage through missionizing. To them, the spreading of the gospel message would redeem the world and save it from the evils of communism.

Sylvia Smith's 1954 speech "Is Democracy Worth It?" not only highlighted the uniqueness of American democracy as it related to the freedom of religion, but also connected the importance of democracy as a way to combat the evils of communism. Smith articulated

[23] Dan Duckworth, "Freedom—A Privilege and Responsibility," 1956, Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptists Speakers' Tournament, volume II, 66-68, SBHA.

that democracy is worth it because "<u>the hope of world freedom depends upon it</u>" (emphasis original). She explained, "more than anything else this way of life needs protection against a power dedicated to stamping it out. We wonder how Communism in thirty-three years has enslaved one-third of the world's people and dominated fifteen nations. Communism has followers who believe that it is the 'salvation of the world.'" Smith then tied support for communism with poverty and low literacy rates: "we must remember that seven out of twelve people in the world can neither read nor write. Ignorance is fertile soil for Communism." Smith's speech recounted the story of a communist prisoner in America who believed the prison food and accommodations were better than his previous life in communism. In addition, the prisoner recalled he could discuss anything with fellow prisoners and believed that "a convict in America enjoys more freedom of mind and spirit than a 'free' man under a dictatorship."[24] Smith used this story to illustrate that "only in a Christian nation can you find such treatment of an individual whose country is against everything in which we believe, especially our belief in God." Strikingly, Smith used the term "Christian nation" instead of democratic nation. Smith then explained that Americans who accept the "responsibility" of democracy can then determine "freedom, tolerance, and equal opportunities shall be for all people." Smith concluded her speech with a call to action: "our nation needs to turn to God…pray that Christ will find His way into more American homes, more American churches, more American schools." She also zeroed in specifically on American youth to "prepare themselves for the task ahead….to study hard, to work hard, and to keep their minds and

[24] Legislative Reference Service, The Library of Congress, Citizenship Series II, as cited in Sylvia Smith, "Is Democracy Worth It?" 1954, Ridgecrest, NC. Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume I, 90, SBHA.

bodies clean and their hearts pure; so that when the time comes for them to accept responsibility, they will be prepared."[25] America's evangelical youth needed to save their country and it was evangelicals' job to prepare them, through programs such as summer camps and other leadership training, at an early age, to do just that.

Other evangelical youth clearly underscored the battle against communism as a religious battle, in which Christianity would ultimately win. Employing dramatic language, Virgil Strimple, Jr. asserted, "it is FAITH that will continue to provide us with strength during this, our most crucial hour; most crucial because the war we are now fighting—the Cold War—is not a war just of tyranny vs. freedom, but primarily a war of principles—democracy vs. communism; Christianity vs. Atheism!" Strimple used the term "Christian Americans," a prime example of the fusion of faith and nationalism prevalent in postwar evangelicals. "Christian Americans cannot remain on the defensive any longer. We must arouse the righteous forces to take the initiative immediately or be wiped from the face of the earth." [26] Strimple's use of apocalyptic language and urgent need for activism is striking. Strimple then quoted a French Communist Paper, "Paix and Liberte," to incite listeners to action:

> "The Gospel is a much more powerful weapon for the renewal of society than is our Marxist philosophy. All the same, it is we who will finally beat you. We are only a handful, and you Christians are numbered by the millions….Of our salaries and wages, we keep only what is strictly necessary, and we give the rest for propaganda purposes. To this propaganda, we also consecrate all our free time and part of our holidays. You, however, give only a little time and hardly any money for the spreading of the Gospel of Christ. How can anyone believe in the supreme value of this Gospel if you do not

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[25] Sylvia Smith, "Is Democracy Worth It?" 1954, Ridgecrest, NC. Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume I, 90-91, SBHA.

[26] Virgil Strimple, Jr., "Here I Stand," 1961, Glorieta, NM and Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume IV, 225-26.

> practice it; if you do not spread it; if you sacrifice neither time nor money for it? Believe me, it is we who will win, for we believe in our Communist message, and we are ready to sacrifice everything, even our lives, in order that social justice shall triumph; but you people (You Christians) are afraid to soil your hands."[27]

Strimple used this selection to incite the audience to the active spreading of the gospel. He explained that the response to "this insulting challenge" was to believe in America and its religious freedom, the wars Americans fought to attain this freedom, and, most of all, to believe in and spread the truth of the gospel message.[28]

Many evangelical youth envisioned the threat of communism as intimately linked to a threat to religious liberty, a prime example of the way that postwar evangelical youth understood their identity as both American and Christian. Keith Lovin, in his speech, "Christian Citizen of the World," explained that communism was "the most tragic crisis" that Christianity had faced in two thousand years. Lovin expounded, "After years of public neglect and complacency, the real threat and danger of communism is becoming known," presumably referring to the relative popularity of the communist party in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s shifting into the threatening powers of World War II and the expanding communist influence in the postwar world. Lovin also expressed the urgency of combating this communist threat: "today it is a highly important matter and with its inescapable implications for religious liberty, it makes the issue a living and paramount one. I believe that I am safe in saying that religious liberty was never more at stake than now." Lovin believed the very existence of the

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[27] "It Can Happen Here," C. Calvin Herriott, American Tract Society, New York 32, New York, quoted from the French Communist paper "Paix and Liberte" as cited in Virgil E. Strimple, "Here I Stand," 1961, Glorieta, NM and Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume IV, 226, 229.
[28] Strimple, "Here I Stand," 226-27.

United States depended on the outcome of this battle. "The success or failure of America to endure rests in whether or not its Christian citizens are willing to rekindle on the altars of their hearts the ancient fires of faith, morality and patriotism. We must recapture the idologies[ideologies] and principles for which Christian men and women have lived, fought and died since the beginning of time." Lovin also characterized the postwar era as one with many competing ideas and ideologies: "if Christianity is to come out victorious in this time when we are subjected to every kind of idea and philosophy imaginable, then Christian citizens around the world must unite." He ended his speech with a reassertion of the looming danger of communism and the need for Americans, and, more specifically, Christians, to shake off the "most detrimental sin," complacency. "Unless Christian citizens around the world respond to the desparate[desperate] need of this mid-twentieth century, I shall, before I die, live in Soviet America." Lovin dramatically continued that unless Christian Americans fully embraced Christ's teachings and sacrificed some of their own "luxuries and comforts" to bring people to Christ through mission work, "my children will not live under the waving stars and stripes, but under the hell of the hammer and sickle."[29] Lovin's rather theatrical-sounding language revealed the extent to which postwar American evangelical youth perceived the communist threat as intensely real and imminent. This imminence also created the urgency for Christian citizens to respond through mission work.

Another common thread in the understanding of communism was the employment of vivid language to describe communism's threat and the need for youth to stand up against this

[29] Keith Lovin, "Christian Citizen of the World," 1961, Glorieta, NM and Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume IV, 123-25.

threat. Sue Moser's speech, "Here I Stand," traced the example of Martin Luther, paragon of Protestant Christianity, as a person who stood for something. Moser compared this to the "inroads…being made upon our cherished American Way of Life" (emphasis original) and called American men and women "of sterling character and deep conviction" to "face the formidable foes of our time." Martin Luther also stood against something, according to Moser. Luther protested against "a mighty Theocratic Empire" (emphasis original) and "his voice rang out against the injustices of the vested powers." Moser compared this to postwar Christians' need to stand against the "impending doom" of communism. In dramatic language, Moser stated, "as our shores are being threatened by the Communistic Manifesto; as Rome once again sends forth her bugle call to fight for the espousal of church and state; and as Satan decamps against the bulwarks of right and casts battle against the citadels of truth, we must take our stand with the true and faithful."[30] The use of dramatic language makes the call for youth activism to "take a stand" more compelling.

Another speech writer explained the growth of communism in America and the need for Christians to speak out against communism and to actively engage politically through electing and supporting Christian leaders. Paul Bergerson stated, "the pressure of an encroaching Communist movement is making itself keenly felt in our nation today." He described the communist doctrine as "alien" and "insidious" as it held "the hearts and minds of millions of

[30] Sue Moser, "Here I Stand," 1961, Glorieta, NM and Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume IV, 148-49. In addition to Moser's characterization of the menace of communism, Moser's jab at the Catholic Church in Rome presumably referred to the recent election of the Catholic John F. Kennedy, which concerned many evangelicals, but especially many Baptists with their strong convictions on the necessity of the separation of church and state.

persons in its iron grip." Bergerson then elaborated on the places where Communism was flourishing in the United States: "in the university lecture rooms, in the textbooks our children study, in the labor union movement, in our government agencies, and even in certain religious groups." Clearly, Bergerson was aware of the red scares associated with the particular groups he named. But Bergerson's solution to fighting "this Satanic creed" was for "Christians to man the front lines and to speak out against Communism, support anti-Communist groups, elect competent and proven officials, and finally, re-affirm our faith in the Christian way of life."[31] It is notable that Bergerson's speech utilized a "Christian way of life" as the antithesis to a communist way of life and that the solution to eradicating communism was as simple as speaking out against it, supporting anti-communist groups, electing the right kinds of officials, and supporting Christianity, which, by definition, was considered fundamentally anti-communist by evangelicals. He also substituted the word 'Christian' for 'American' when characterizing the American way of life.

Other evangelicals acknowledged the menace of communism while affirming the superior power of Christian love. Nolan Moore's speech detailed his encounter as a five-year-old boy, with two German prisoners of war in the 1945 while waiting with his mother in an outer office of the army medical building in Ft. Stanton, New Mexico. Moore's father and uncle fought for the United States in World War II and Moore's uncle had been killed. Moore described the hatred he had, just looking at these men. But then one of the prisoners stared at Moore and asked, in "rather broken English" how old Moore was. Moore's mother replied,

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[31] Mary R. Austin, "The Need for Christian Education in Today's World," 1959, Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume III, 128-33.

"'He is almost five years old,'" and the German prisoner remarked that "'I had a son too.' He would have been five this month. He was killed in the battle of Targou.'" The room became quiet and Moore explained the German prisoner continued, "'There is no love in the world today. I have nothing to live for anymore. I would give anything to be loved by somebody.'" In that moment, Moore recalled that he understood the German prisoner as a human being, "burdened with the sin that man has brought upon himself…and I felt my childish hate and scorn melt into the tears of love and compassion." Moore then linked that story from his past to the present world's need for Christian love, above any other needs. "A few weeks ago, Fidel Castro proved to the world that Cuba is the powder keg that can set off World War III. A few months earlier, Nikita Khruschev threatened the Christian world with this statement: 'In the next ten years…we will bury you!'" But Moore still believed that Christian love would triumph: "time and time again, we see our world trudging down the path to destruction and death as we as Christians sit idly by. And yet, we hold the power that can save mankind."[32] Moore's view on the winning power of Christian love provides a valuable perspective that Christianity would ultimately win the battle over communism and atheism, but it would be through spreading the gospel message of love and acceptance instead of might and brute force.

The Great Commission became a common theme in postwar American evangelical ideas about how to save the world from the threats of communism.[33] In fact, a renewal of

[32] Nolan Moore, "Christian Citizen of the World," 1961, Glorieta, NM and Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume IV, 171-72.

[33] The title for the teaching of Christ to his disciples. He instructs them to go into the world and tell the gospel/spread the good news of Christ's death and resurrection so that all may hear and believe.

missionizing fervor took hold in postwar America because of the way that missionizing and spreading a Christian gospel message intermingled with the importance of winning hearts and minds to the freedoms and liberties of democracy. Charles Leach specifically called on America's youth to become the saviors of democracy by spreading Christianity. After his explanation that the preservation of freedom needed to be based on the "same firm foundation as that upon which she has grown: and that is God," he stated that this generation needed to do the work. "As the hand pauses over your generation it seems to be momentarily arrested. The insistent, urgent voice of God pierces your consciousness with the cry, 'Whom shall I send and who will go for us?' Into your vision then will stream those who year after year have volunteered for mission service to the world."[34] Leach does not just connect America's postwar youth as needing to combat communism and other pernicious influences in a generalized way, but specifically tells American postwar youth to volunteer for foreign mission work. He said, "the world waits for someone to come into the darkness and bring light, into the cold and bring warmth, into the loneliness and bring love, into the sin and bring the Savior. As you wait and no one comes, you look more carefully at the milling throngs: there you see an Alaskan native, there a Mexican National, here a Korean refugee, your next-door neighbor, an African, a Japanese."[35] In this particular part of the speech, Leach selects groups of people who need to hear the gospel. His selection of those persons seems significant as he chose particular

[34] Charles Leach, "Keeping Faith with the Future," 1954, Glorieta, NM, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume I, 7, SBHA. Leach quoted Isaiah 6:8, NIV, "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'" which references the vision of Isaiah regarding his call to be a prophet for God.

[35] Leach, "Keeping Faith with the Future, 8.

people groups at odds with the United States because of their distinct religious beliefs, ethnic backgrounds, and/or political associations. Terry Lee Fields also explained the importance of the Great Commission. According to Fields, "Christ gave us the Great Commission so that we might spread His gospel to all nations. And so, we must dedicate ourselves to those things which we believe."[36] Fields demonstrated that commitment to beliefs is not the problem but commitment to the wrong beliefs of fascism and communism is a problem. Fields indicated the solution to people committed to the wrong beliefs was to present the correct beliefs of the gospel. Apparently, in Fields' mind, the act of simply presenting people convicted of the cause of communism to the gospel would be enough to change their minds and their commitments to the correct beliefs – Christianity, and the cause of democracy.

When the postwar evangelical youth encouraged activism through missions, they envisioned both foreign and domestic mission work. Shirley Sanders' speech, "Growing in Faith," like Fields, called for youth to engage in missionizing. She believed the most important way to grow in faith as a Christian was through Christian service. However, Sanders understood Christian service to mean "the task of proclaiming the faith in every way possible," which included local mission work as well as work in foreign countries. The mission work of teaching, preaching, Sunday School, becoming an active part of Training Union, prayer meetings, and other church-related activities were all ways to apply mission work domestically and abroad.[37] The theme of the Great Commission applied to both domestic and foreign needs continued in

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[36] Terri Lee Fields, "This I BELIEVE" 1955 Ridgecrest, NC. Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume I, 154-55, SBHA.

[37] Shirley Sanders, "Growing in Faith," 1954, Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume I, 46-48, SBHA.

Betty Jo Lossiter's speech, "My Part in World Missions." She described a frightened, sick, and needy young girl who "hesitantly held up her small hand for me to see the cut on the third finger, eager for a word of sympathy and an expression of love. This little needs my love, she needs your love—but most of all she needs her love for a Saviour of whom she does not know." Lossiter then explained that this little girl could have been a Hungarian refugee or a Korean orphan, but that she was in fact living less than two miles from Lossiter's home, a clear connection to the needs evident at a local level. Then Lossiter cited the Great Commission as the primary reason to leave the United States, "as a Christian young person," and go into world mission work. "The emphasis is not placed on the word 'go,' Lossiter clarified, "but more on the activities set forth—teach, preach, baptize. This is where I, an individual Christian, must place the emphasis as I venture to be more like Him—forever helping others." She made the case for missionizing: "this world will never be more Christian until you and I are more Christ-like." Lossiter believed most countries in the world looked to America for leadership in the years after World War II. As a result, Lossiter saw the need for individual Christian influence in areas such as literature, film, and missionaries to influence the world in a positive Christian way. But Lossiter visualized missionwork in a particular way. She believed the white missionaries would help the non-white, poor, and indigenous people with their indigenous beliefs. In her speech, Lossiter discussed a "dark skinned mother holding her screaming baby" while waiting to see a missionary doctor in "the neat, fresh waiting room of the Baptist hospital" which was in stark contrast to her own "rude, grass hut." The "dark skinned mother," according to Lossitor, hoped the white doctor "could do more for her sick child than the witch doctor had done. And indeed, he can do more to help both the baby and the mother, with his knowledge of medicine and his knowledge of Christ." Thus Lossiter neatly connected the importance of both missionizing as a service to the underprivileged and poor people of the world, who also happened to be most 'at risk' for turning to communism in the postwar dialogue, with the need to missionize and spread the gospel at the same time. She ended her speech with an emphasis on the need for American youth to pursue missions: "as a Christian young person, my part in world mission is to do what I can to help those in need near me; to use my influence here to honor Christ, thus projecting Christ abroad." [38]

Other evangelicals believed American youth, especially evangelical youth, had a unique call to mission work. James Quincey thought missionizing was the best way to spread democracy around the world, especially to those behind the Iron Curtain deprived of rights such as the freedom to worship God. And the youth needed to do it. "Instead of being stirred or moved to the point of doing something to help these people, like giving our money to help send missionaries, too often we sit back and gory in our superiority and in our freedom. How can we feel so secure when we are failing to do the thing God commanded, when he said, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel'?"[39] Robert W. Powell believed that the youth wanted to serve. "Youth will be sent, for he wants to serve; in fact waits to serve, and will at some near future time begin to serve some cause, some plan some idea." In typical Cold War rhetoric for postwar America, Powell used the Soviet Union as a contrast: "Mr. Khrushchev boasts that within twenty short years world communism will no longer be a dream but will be a reality. If

[38] Betty Jo Lossiter, "My Part in World Missions," 1957, Glorieta, NM, Southern Baptists Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume II, 109-111, SBHA.

[39] James Quincey, "Freedom—Priviledge [sic] and Responsibility," 1956, Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptists Speakers' Tournament, volume II, 100, SBHA.

this horrible threat is to become fact, Mr. Khrushchev and his comrades must control a great number of the world [world's] youth. If its [it's] terrible ends are carried out. Communism must have Youth as a pawn to stir trouble, incite to riot, and harbor rebellion." Powell then explained the postwar youth desired action, were full of energy and "that must be focused in some positive direction. The direction is either positively evil or positively good," thus cementing the stark black and white contrast between good and evil, Christianity and communism. Powell also describe postwar youth as brave, "block-headed, thoughtless, over bearing," ones who needed an example to follow and imitate. Youth needed their spiritual needs to be met, according to Powell. Youth needed ideas, programs, or causes to challenge their minds. Powell ended with this description of the youth in postwar America: "While we sit smugly, complacent, self-satisfied a very real crisis is faced by the Youth of the world. He has to decide what, where, and why and how he is going to serve….But let us first give Youth Christ. Then let him decide what he will do, and I believe that Youth's decisions, based on Christian principles, will be the right decisions."[40]

The relationship between evangelicals and the early years of the Peace Corps program provides an interesting example of the ways that evangelicals saw humanitarian work and mission work and youth as thoroughly intertwined.[41] While the mission of the Peace Corps

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[40] Robert W. Powell, "Here Am I Send Me," 1961, Glorieta, NM and Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume IV, 183-86.

[41] See Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, *All You Need is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). Hoffman wrote ,"The men and women of the Peace Corps spearheaded a generation that believed deeply in its potency" (1). Hoffman claims Americans always viewed themselves as humanitarian and entitled with a sense of mission to spread democracy. She identifies the heart of the Peace Corps and its relationship

certainly overlapped with a great deal of evangelical interests, the Corps did not have an explicit religious message. A Methodist publication directly addressed the decision to join the Peace Corps. Entitled, "Should I Join the Peace Corps? Or, put the question another way, Should you as a Churchman be encouraged to Join the Peace Corps?" the publication provided both pros and cons of joining. Essentially, the publication encouraged youth to join the Peace Corps if they enjoyed hard work, stewardship, and serving others.

> "Yes…if you believe the purpose of the Church is to serve the world and that your vocation is to be Christian as contrasted with doing "Christian" things…if your response is to the love of God as well as man's need…if you value the life of every human being…if you regard work as something to be welcomed rather than avoided…if you have interest in a genuine experiment in international partnership…if you can learn as well as teach…if your personal stewardship results in your being a person of technical competence, maturity, good physical condition and clear motivation…if you possess qualities of stability, adaptability and determination, cultural empathy, initiative, creativity and ability to communicate…if you can forget yourself in true service to others."[42]

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with foreign policy when she raises the questions, "is humanitarianism real or it is a smoke screen for the most basic intent of policy, which is to fulfill the will to power? If it is a smoke screen, whom does it fool, Americans or the rest of the world or both? Why do Americans persist in thinking of their nation's mission—at least to some extent—as a moral one?" (3). Americans sense of both mission and effectiveness combined to produce a powerful source of social capital, needing only to be tapped by the right leadership, in this case, the so-called youthful and vigorously empowering president, John F. Kennedy. Hoffman takes her argument one step further by contending a correspondence exists between the United States' sense of idealism and its practice of employing expansionism. Hoffman's analysis of the Peace Corps program as tapping in to American ideas of missionizing and expanding influence is particularly interesting in light of the evangelical publication that believed the Peace Corps supported the mission work of the Christian church. While the Peace Corps was not explicitly religious in its rhetoric, its humanitarian impulses appealed to many postwar evangelicals, especially as this was a federal government sponsored program created for humanitarian work with underdeveloped nations. Hoffman describes the program as secular and does not address the extent to which evangelicals participated in the Peace Corps with a humanitarian and missionizing agenda (13).

[42] "Should I Join the Peace Corps?" 1962 printing, Division of the Local Church, General Board of Education of the Methodist Church, 2355-6-1:42, Peace Corp leaflet, 1961-1966, (1999-060)

The publication extolled the virtues of the Peace Corps in regard to "serving human needs." It also praised the Peace Corps as "one alternative worthy of serious consideration as a challenge to make a Christian witness in our time." Interestingly, while the Peace Corps program did not encourage missionizing or proselytizing, the Methodist publication essentially imagined the work of the Peace Corps as mission work.[43] However, the publication also encouraged youth to join short or long-term missions with explicitly evangelical messages, if one was interested in overseas humanitarian work.

On the other hand, the publication gave these reasons for not joining the Peace Corps:

> "No, if you desire to be a missionary of the church (you can better accomplish the total mission of the church through now existing overseas projects operated by the church). Nor should you apply for the Peace Corps if….you expect financial security…if you have difficulty being one with people of meager means or of another race…if you are on a pro-America crusade as contrasted with genuine humanitarian interests…if your primary motive is to see the world…if you regard the Peace Corps as a cold war gimmick."[44]

If evangelical youth wanted to become church-sponsored missionaries, then the Peace Corps was not a good fit. The publication lists some other very interesting reasons to say no to the Peace Corps, which have less to do with the difference between the Corps and missions as they do with general objections to the mission of the Peace Corps. If youth considering the Peace Corps did not want to do humanitarian work, then they should not join the Peace Corps. The General Executive Committee of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church made a statement about the Corps that emphasized the shared goals of the church and the Corps: "the

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GBOD, in the General Commission on Archives and History, The United Methodist Church, Drew University, Madison, NJ.

[43] "Should I Join the Peace Corps?"

[44] "Should I Join the Peace Corps?"

Church stands not only for peace between man and man, but between God and Man—the real key to all peace."[45] The Methodist Board of Missions saw the Peace Corps as a "creative proposal" with "great potential" and a program that pastors, student workers and youth counselors should call young men and women to seriously consider. The board envisioned the Corps as a "challenge to service with the Church for here is service at a deep dimension," as long as youth and those advising youth were aware of the "pitfalls." The board did not spell out those pitfalls, but they were likely the same 'warnings' outlined earlier in the publication. In addition, the publication contained a statement from President Kennedy warning of the difficultly of working the Peace Corps—physical hardships, primitive conditions in developing nations, and little financial gain.[46] Overall, evangelical concerns about joining the Peace Corps had to do with the difficultly of the living conditions and the lack of financial gain, which, in many respects, was part of the vision of the Peace Corps. It seems clear that evangelicals, to some degree at least, applauded the opportunity to serve God and the church through political organizations such as the Peace Corps. A missionary wrote that the Peace Corps was "a man-made but God-given opportunity for a host of Christian young people…to dedicate themselves to the practical implementation of the teachings of Christ, to perform a definite service for mankind in need, to be a support by exemplary living to the verbal witness of the local Christian and the missionary."[47] Evangelicals understood it was not officially a Christian organization for the purpose of missionizing, but saw the purposes of humanitarian work and mission work as

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[45] "Should I Join the Peace Corps?"

[46] "President Kennedy's Message to Congress," in "Should I Join the Peace Corps?"

[47] Philip D. Anderson, Covenant Missionary, in "Should I Join the Peace Corps?"

completely intertwined. "While the Peace Corps is not a missionary movement in the sense that the Church conventionally interprets missions, its volunteers in Liberia demonstrate that it is a movement with a mission. And here in Liberia, particularly in the field of education, its touch upon life is profoundly redemptive."[48] Evangelicals seemed to acknowledge that the Peace Corps was not an evangelical program. Yet, they clearly believed the Peace Corps, if full of evangelicals, could do very similar mission work. The Peace Corps was a ready-made opportunity to send out enthusiastic youth who desired to serve without material gain. From the perspective of American evangelicals, why would anyone do that unless they had evangelical beliefs and desired to missionize and spread the gospel during their humanitarian work?

Internal Moral Decay and the Need for More Christian Institutions

While many American youth expressed distaste for attitudes and actions of greed, selfishness, and materialism, they did not explicitly connect those ideas to the American system of capitalism or democracy. Instead, postwar youth connected these negative aspects of American culture as part of the human condition. Nevertheless, many postwar evangelical youth clearly believed that America had a problem of moral decay from within that needed to be addressed through some sort of Christian renewal, especially in American youth as the next generation of leaders. Moral decay could be addressed through political activism, but also through the establishment of more Christian institutions to guard against apathy and materialism.

[48] Bishop Prince A. Taylor, Jr., Monrovia, Liberia, in "Should I Join the Peace Corps?"

Beverly Woodruff expressed her concern with the apathy of American evangelical youth. She believed that Christians, as citizens of the world, "cannot withdraw and leave world affairs, or even the intelligent concern about world affairs to other people." Woodruff used herself as an example of apathy, as she limited her concerns to her own personal interests and those related to her family and close circle of friends with only "an occasional prayer for the poor heathen of Africa." But her perspective changed after hearing about a German student in a Texas university who gave a "frank" evaluation of his impression of evangelical youth in America: "'I'm concerned,' he said, 'about the casual quality of their faith. They don't give anything like one tenth of the devotion we once gave to the Hitler youth movement in Germany.'" Woodruff then expressed the duty of young American Christians to set aside apathy in favor of learning more about the world, caring more about the rest of the world, and actually doing something for the kingdom of God. "I must fight my mania for materialism, deny myself a Coke that some child in India might live, a dress, that a family in a refugee camp might be fed for a month."[49] Woodruff's use of particular ethnic groups is particularly striking and clearly demonstrated her understanding of certain peoples and countries in a postwar context. Shirley Sanders specifically connected threats of communism with underlying flaws in America, but did not explicitly connect the issues of materialism and temptation with capitalism or democracy. She explained "today, there are forces that are trying to pervert or destroy the faith of Christians everywhere. If we are to grow in faith, we must help overcome these forces." The "present day evils" that Sanders mentioned included advocates of communism, as

[49] Beverly Woodruff, "Christian, Citizen of the World," 1961, Glorieta, NM and Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume IV, 136-38.

they would "utterly destroy and stamp out every semblance of Christian faith" as well as ridding the world "of any belief in the Bible as the word of God and even God himself. Communism would have us believe that there is not God, and that Jesus Christ was merely a mortal man rather than the Son of God." In typical postwar fashion, Sanders equated communism not merely with unbelief or atheism, but as a systematic destroyer of the Christian faith. However, in her next breath immediately after her description of the evils of communism, Sanders explained the power of materialism as "another force that is trying to overpower every Christian. Greed for money and for the power it brings in this world has corrupted and destroyed many thousands of people." Materialism turned "hearts and minds from thoughts of God and good and love to mankind to thoughts of evil," which sounds noticeably similar to Sanders' objections to communism. But Sanders does not make that connection. She only asserted that mankind should have dominance over the material world instead of the other way around and gaining control over materialism was necessary to grow in faith.[50]

Other postwar youth targeted youth as particularly susceptible to materialism and selfishness. Ann King detailed the ways that "the modern world does not encourage character-building thought. There is literally no place in our dizzy, busy schedule of living for 'time out for thinking.'" King then tied lack of serious reflection to individuals, not broader social, economic, or cultural institutions. "The distractions from without are trivial when compared to those within us. And these inner bars to thought are all the more dangerous because we seldom realize that they are so destructive." King believed that most people, Americans, youth, (she

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[50] Shirley Sanders, "Growing in Faith," 1954, Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume I, 45-48, SBHA.

employed “we”) did very little thinking and logical reasoning. Instead, according to King, “most of the time we use a handy substitute. We may line up our prejudices, for or against, and call it thinking” or “merely adopt the opinions of others” or think that worrying is a kind of thinking. But the worst enemy of thoughtful reflection, according to King, was “self-centered thought. Only those things that concern our comfort, our pleasure, or our profit. We consider people only in light of what they can do for us” (emphasis original). While this may seem like an apt critique of capitalism, King frames this as an individual choosing selfishness over a generous and thoughtful Christian attitude. “We think in terms of self-assurance, and we scorn reliance upon God. She also connected self-pity as simply another form of self-interest, and therefore destructive. King ended her speech by providing a solution to the lack of thinking by Christians through more thoughtful meditation on the Bible.[51] Barbara Molligan zeroed in on the “mad pursuit of selfish pleasures.” She explained, “the members of too many of our present-day homes may be found in divorce courts, in juvenile courts, in liquor stores, in the streets, in mad pursuit of pleasures, in a frantic race to acquire wealth, and in a busy rush to meet the demands of society.” While Molligan does not mention capitalism specifically in her speech, much like King’s speech, she seems to be critiquing capitalism, specifically the acquisition of private wealth. Also like King, she connects these large societal ills to individual human sin and believed the solution could be found by individual believers at the nuclear family level. Molligan wrote, “a nation can be no better than the homes from which its people came.” Significantly, while Molligan does not explicitly address communism, she used Cold War

[51] Ann King, “As a Man Thinketh,” 1954, Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptist Speakers’ Tournament Collection, volume I, 70-74, SBHA.

rhetoric that taps into fears related to infiltration by communists and concerns about national defense. "Millions have been spent on national defense. But, perhaps, while we have been busy barring the windows, the enemy has crept unheeded through the open door and is even now tearing away at the very framework of our nation, the home." She listed "crime investigating committees" and a "committee on un-American activities" (HUAC) as the government's way of protecting citizens, but stated there were no committees or interest in safeguarding the homes of America. Molligan's solution is for a husband and wife to be faithful to each other as well as their children in provision as well as wisdom. Then Molligan takes another shot at materialism and wealth as she stated, "in this day when so many children have any and everything they want, parents need to be faithful in depriving the child of those things which would hinder him from increasing in 'wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.'"[52] Maxine Davidson provided a unique insight into her idea of an overly materialistic postwar America through the United States' relationship with the rest of the world. Davidson thought most people outside the United States thought of American as an "unbelievable young, rich country," and acknowledged that most looked at America with "envy and with more admiration than we can imagine," although she also admitted some looked at America "with bitterness—even hatred." Most likely, Davidson is referencing the Soviet Union or other communist countries that disliked America. Yet Davidson also demonstrated a nuanced point of view. She asked the question, "are we always Christian in our dealings with other people?" She cited that many churches existed in America and that Americans were free to worship as

[52] A reference to Luke 2:52: "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." NIV. Barbara Molligan, "Faithfulness in Home Life," 1954, Ridgecrest, NC. Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume I, 64-66, SBHA.

they pleased, but that "we are also pagan. Sunday is not the day of worship as it should be, nor is our testimony to the world very strong evidence that our nation trusts in God." Davidson then explained an account of a person talking with a Japanese friend who admitted they would enjoy a visit to the United States, but would not like to live in America because "Americans have a pitiful standard of values. You seem to judge a man by his gadgets. If he has a television, telephone, automobile, etc., he's successful."[53] To Davidson, the economic prosperity of postwar America, at least for many Americans, revealed the extent to which the nation desired things and possessions instead of character values.

As a solution to the widespread evidence of moral decay in the United States, postwar evangelical youth proposed political engagement. John Quincey warned of the neglect of individual liberties such as voting. Quincey cautioned,

> "if we refuse to accept our responsibility to keep the things we cherish, be neglecting to vote, our freedoms and our priviledges [sic] may be taken away from us. Suppose, because of our neglect, Communism crept into our land and seized our government, then we would be deprived of all the things we now cherish so dearly; but take so much for granted. We couldn't enjoy freedom of speech, nor freedom of religion, nor freedom of education and the right to choose what we want in life, nor could we enjoy true, secret, balloting for our convications [convictions] and beliefs. No, we don't want such a disastrous thing to happen to our country. Why it would be almost as if life itself had ended."[54]

Quincey's portrayal of communism as creeping into America and taking over as a result of voter apathy or disinterest highlighted the postwar concerns over the subversive nature of communism. Charles Clayton also expressed concern over the moral decay of the United States

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[53] Maxine Davidson, "As Others See Us," 1956, Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptists Speakers' Tournament, volume II, 95-98, SBHA.

[54] James Quincey, "Freedom—Priviledge [sic] and Responsibility," 1956, Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptists Speakers' Tournament, volume II, 101, SBHA.

and the ways that Christians involved in politics could save America. In his speech, "Serving Christ as an American Citizen," Clayton asserted, "the greatest danger to our freedom comes not from external forces, but from the slow moral decay of our country from within." In Clayton's opinion, a Christian's responsibility was more than merely voting. "We should form the nucleus for an informed electorate. We should know the qualifications and records of the various candidates for office from President down to county assessor." In fact, Clayton even went as far as arguing for Christians to be actively involved in politics, as members and as office holders. Many people thought politics a "dirty, crooked, game," but Clayton said, "this reflects the type of people running the parties." If more moral, upstanding, Christian citizens ran for office, then the country would reflect this moral uplift, as "the necessity for qualified Christians leaders can not be over emphasized." Clayton elaborated, "as Christians we should be ready to take advantage of every privilege of American citizenship" which included jury duty and following all the laws, including traffic laws, "for if the Christians will not obey the laws, who will?" Clayton firmly believed that the primary duty of an American Christian was to "apply the teachings of Christ and to exert Christian influence on every phase of life, both public and private," which included the social, political, education, and economic parts of life as well as places such as the PTA, lodge, businesses or factories because "a Christian must exert a maximum of influence." In this way, according to Clayton, American would become stronger.[55]

Jerry DeLaughter proclaimed the errors of Christians who willfully ignored or dismissed national and world political affairs. In his speech, "Serving Christ as an American Citizen (Or,

[55] Charles Clayton, "Serving Christ as an American Citizen," 1957, Glorieta, NM, Southern Baptists Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume II, 106-108, SBHA.

'Democracy's Epitaph'), DeLaughter vividly focused on the apathy of many Americans. "it is beyond denial that we as a society are at least subject to the malignant destruction of this mortifying disease; this one-word epitaph etched onto the tombs of a score of civilizations before us: apathy! That demon, 'Don't care-ism;' that lethargic laxity which lulls the well meaning into drowsy, deadly, content!" DeLaughter described the primary reasons for this American apathy as the sin of tolerance and allowing the liquor traffic to flourish. With regard to tolerance, DeLaughter, said, "We must learn to be intolerant of these things in society, politics, and government which are destructive to the dream of a sincere Christian," although he did not specify the destructive elements by name. As for liquor, DeLaughter explained, "for a century, we have glibly, unconsciously compromised for a quarter of a century until the finances of the liquor traffic flourish at a rate a hundred times that of God's churches." DeLaughter, like the other speech-writers, failed to connect his ideas of apathy or overindulgence to larger concepts of materialism as excess of capitalism and economic bounty. "The average Christian home is flooded with radio, television, magazine and newspaper advertising designed to disguise the adder-sting of alcohol. And we permit it!" Instead, DeLaughter colorfully depicted the cause of American apathy this way:

> "Whatever the cause—be it fear of church-state fusion; or timidity to taint ourselves with the putrescence of politics; be it an excessive measure of other-worldliness—whatever the cause, the frightening facts nevertheless point ominously: Because of a lack of Christian awareness and acceptance of the responsibilities of freedom we are nurturing the cancer of civilization!"[56]

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[56] Jerry DeLaughter, "Serving Christ as an American Citizen (Or, 'Democracy's Epitaph'), 1957, Ridgecrest, NC. Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume II, 166-167, SBHA.

DeLaughter's assessment of American apathy reflects the particularly strong rhetoric that Lahr described in her book *Millennial Dreams and Apocalyptic Nightmares,* which functioned as both a motivational technique but also as evidence of the need to paint the communists as not only a different social, political, and economic system, but as a clear enemy of organized religion.[57]

Moral decay of America from within played a dominant role in Mary R. Austin's speech on Christian education. Austin believed "an upswing in all crime categories" placed "a great evangelistic responsibility upon the Christians of our nation today." Crime was costly, and the publishing, selling, and reading of "obscene and lewd literature has obsessed our country." Austin also named the rising amounts of alcoholism, divorce rates, and juvenile drug addiction "that has burst upon the American public." Austin's solution was Christian education, she stated, "the definite Christian influence of our homes, our churches, and above all, our schools and colleges…Christian education can reduce the number of divorces and cut down on the juvenile delinquency that is prevalent today mainly caused from broken homes." Mary R. Austin extolled the merits of Christian education as the best preparation for America's youth to serve God, especially in domestic and foreign missions. She explained the enormous need for Christian training in the postwar United States as churches could not keep up with the demand for workers. "The hospitals and medical centers of our land are in need of Christian doctors and nurses. In those areas where the people have never heard the name of Jesus, young

[57] But this is not solely a critique of communism. It is also it is also about the postwar cultural and intellectual critique of abundance. See David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1950), Robert Cohen, *When the Old Left was Young: Student Radicals and America's First Mass Student Movement, 1929-1941* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), Douglas C. Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

people trained for this task are needed. The churches cannot possibly carry on the full responsibility of God's commission to them if they do not have a sufficient number of trained workers."[58] Specifically, Austin pinpoints America's youth as the ones who needed to volunteer for these positions.

Jerry Keese also detailed the differences between secular and Christian institutions of learning. "A person who has the advantages of a Christian education realizes more fully the temptations and trials which he will encounter in life and will discover the best way to overcome them" and "a Christian college trains the body, the mind, and the Spirit." On the other hand, "A state college provides in its program little room for religion and religious training" and Keese also thought "a Christian college is not hampered by state politics and is not subject to the uncertainties of political change." In fact, Keese even asserted "our finest" leaders came from Christian colleges, "where character, as well as intellectual training, is emphasized." According to Keese, college years were "crucial" and Christian colleges saved people "from the perils of a 'churchless' college life." In addition, Christian colleges provided training and personal satisfaction because they gave their students "self-confidence, a cheerful out-look on life," and an aptitude for solving problems with a Christian attitude. Solving the world's problems was more attainable with Christians doing the problem solving: "problems are easily overcome by the educated Christian, but the person who is educated without Christian principles in mind often finds many hindrances in solving his problems." Keese explained, "perhaps one may thing that he can get along just as well without a Christian education, but as

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[58] Mary R. Austin, "The Need for Christian Education in Today's World," 1958, Glorieta, NM and Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume III, 33-35.

we look around for guidance in our time of trouble, it is always the educated Christian who is able to help us most. We must remember that all our help cometh from heaven above and that God sent his son into the world to teach us." Keese chronicled the importance of Jesus as primarily a teacher as well as the leading figures of the New Testament as teachers of "real intellectual ability and in many cases…scholarly attainments." Keese then explained the church "has a right to speak in the realm of education. The church has been the mother of schools during her history….The Christian religion has a message which educators, as well as other men, need." The importance of proper education could not be underestimated, according to Keese, for "the future leaders in all realms of life are the young people in our institutions of learning." Furthermore, the best leaders included the ideals of Jesus.[59]

While many American evangelical institutions existed into the postwar era, youth believed that more Christian institutions, especially in the form of Christian education and leadership training, needed more prominence. In addition, youth seemed to believe the Christian educational institutions that already existed needed to become more assertive about their evangelical beliefs in the postwar era.

Nuclear Threats in the Atomic Age and the Need for Peace Activism

A significant focus of anxiety and concern about the new modern world was connected to the introduction of nuclear weapons. For many evangelicals, the dawning of a nuclear age and the evident destruction of these new weapons resonated with apocalyptical visions of the

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[59] Jerry Keese, "I Believe in Christian Education," 1957, Ridgecrest, NC. Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume II, 182-183, SBHA.

end of the world, or, at the very least, an unprecedented weapon that could result in widespread destruction of human life. Many evangelical youth conveyed concern with the destructive capability of atomic weaponry and believed the solution was peace activism.

If evangelicals truly believed in Jesus, they should follow his exhortations for peace, according to postwar youth. "Besides possessing a love for truth, justice, and fairness, a true Christian has the sincere and genuine desire for peace," said Jackie Ellis. She pointed out that Jesus blessed peacemakers as children of God. Ellis then proclaimed, "in a world when man has so ingeniously devised weapons that are capable of annihilating civilization, every nation desperately needs leaders who will try their best to maintain at all times a dignified and honorable peace."[60] Certainly the unprecedented level of destruction by nuclear weaponry caused many Americans to seriously consider the implications of employing nuclear weapons. But to see the strident language of evangelical youth advocating for peace, on the heels of a World War II victory, bought in part through the use of atomic weapons, is significant. In addition, some youth even equated the lack of godly people as the obstacle to peace. In a basic assessment of the fundamental problem with America in the postwar days, Lela Chavez cited the lack of God as the primary barrier to peace.

> "To see how miserably man has failed to achieve and keep peace, we need only to look back over the history of the past two thousand years. Man does not have the answer. Mans' greed for money, power, and land has been far too great for even a thought of peace. Why has there been no peace? The tragic answer is that GOD has been left out of the hearts and lives of individuals, out of the homes, out of the governments, and out

[60] Jackie Ellis, "A Christian Career in Politics," 1960, Glorieta, NM, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume IV, 38.

> of the nations. The United Nations is set up as a peace organization, but the 'Author of Peace' has been left out."[61]

For Chavez, peace was the ultimate goal. This reflects a common postwar perspective of a generation that lived through 'the Great War' as well as World War II and struggled to balance a desire for peace and an unwillingness to lose more fathers, husbands, brothers, sons, and family members in military service with the desire to be the triumphant superpowers in a global postwar world. Chavez is also providing a critique of the United Nations and its lack of religious commitment or use of religious principles. But to hear this language employed by a generation of youth that grew up during the wars and may have lost older family members and relatives, but did not participate themselves, is noteworthy.

Other evangelical youth expressed concern for atomic weaponry and nuclear experiments and believed only the teachings of the gospel could save the country from such darkness of destructive power. Bruce Bell recalled the morning during World War II when he first read about the atomic bomb dropped on the Japanese at Hiroshima. "At the moment that bomb was dropped science released, as a new means of destroying man, one of the most deadly weapons that could be conceived." Since the use of atomic weapons on Hiroshima, science "has continued to develop even more and more powerful means of destruction….November 1, 1952, marks the date that scientists were able, just be[sic] pushing a button, to remove an island from the Pacific Ocean." Clearly Bell understood the dawn of the nuclear age as a destructive force, especially in the cost of human lives. He also commented, "what a dark picture this seems to be. What kind of an outlook does this make for the coming

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[61] Lela Chavez, "The Bible: Our Authority from God," 1958, Glorieta, NM, and Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume III, 18-19, SBHA.

generation?" Bell then connects the darkness of the current postwar nuclear age with the darkness during the times of the early Christian church and the apostle Paul and asked, "does our outlook contain less hope than the one of Paul's day?" Bell even highlighted that the current nuclear age was less troubling than the struggles of early Christians because "we have the privilege of freedom of worship…to believe and teach the truth of Jesus Christ to our nation, while in Paul's day it was a crime to believe or teach about Christ." The persecutions of early Christians, were, according to Bell, much more discouraging, and yet persons such as Paul still took comfort in the cause spreading the gospel message. Bell ended his speech by vividly encouraging his audience to "say as Paul said, facing the future, 'Lord no matter what happens…sink or swim…live or die…even if this earth may some day be blown to bits beneath my feet, I will put my faith in Thee" as a way to help during "times of facing what seems a dark future."[62] It is significant that Bell's discussion of nuclear power is particularly concerned with its destructiveness, not its potential as a source of power or its use as a weapon to combat and balance out the evils of communism.

The perilous nature of the postwar atomic age revealed the need for Christians to be more actively involved in the government. Jerry DeLaughter believed "In this precarious nuclear age, the hope of a nation such as ours lies in a citizenry with a world-awareness." DeLaughter then provided a popular perspective on the understanding of world politics and its delicate balance between the US and the Soviet Union. He asserted, "With the present world crisis—peace suspended by a thread—the front page ought to be our daily reading habit."

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[62] Bruce Bell, "Keeping Faith with the Future," 1954, Ridgecrest, NC. Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume I, 31-33, SBHA.

DeLaughter believed Christian Americans should be very well-versed in world and national events, “we know Dagwood, but who is King Hussein? We are familiar with Hootin’ Holler, but where is the Gaza Strip? We are more concerned about the outcome of the Sadie Hawkins Day race than the shaky politics of the Middle East.” According to DeLaughter, an integral part of Christian service included “a burden of individual responsibility” to be knowledgeable of public affairs and to maintain a “sense of personal responsibility for free government.”[63]

Other evangelical youth believed the application of Christian teachings to nuclear physics would help to create peaceful applications of nuclear power. Bill James thought that the definition of Christian education should be much broader: “I personally believe that a Christian education can and will be obtained in any school if that Christian youth applies Christian beliefs to the teachings laid before him.” James provided an apt example of what this application of Christian beliefs to secular education looked like. When learning about “atomic physics,” the non-Christian could “sit down and chart out ways and means to build a more powerful bomb for the destruction of mankind.” The Christian, with the same education in nuclear physics, “will learn these facts and try to mold this discovered energy into a formula to aid our society in a peaceful manner….illustrating how a Christian interprets his education in the light of God’s teachings.” James’ speech ended with a warning about the perilous nature of the postwar world and the competitive nature of education between the United States and Russia: “this generation is watching the rise of nation after nation as a result of increased education. We have seen Russia advance in education perhaps beyond the United States. We

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[63] Jerry DeLaughter, “Serving Christ as an American Citizen (Or, ‘Democracy’s Epitaph’), 1957, Ridgecrest, NC. Southern Baptist Speakers’ Tournament Collection, volume II, 166-168, SBHA.

know that such education can destroy the world. It is not optional, but imperative that we give it a Christian education. Education alone will damn the world! Christian education will save the world!"[64] This connection between Christians in nuclear physics who would focus on ways to help people, instead of destroy people, illustrates the broader point that evangelical youth assumed peace activism to be a central core of evangelical beliefs.

The postwar era was a significant time in American history. Not only did World War II and its aftermath alter the nation's domestic life, it reworked American foreign policy and diplomacy. As the United States emerged virtually unscathed from the destruction of World War II on the victorious side, it took a decisive leadership role in settling the terms for worldwide peace. Moreover, sole possession of the atomic bomb both assured and reinforced America's new position as global leader.[65]

Prior to World War II, the United States had typically retained a position of isolation in all of its foreign relations. But in another example of the watershed of the second world war, the nation assumed a new position in the world of foreign policy with new global implications. Given its unquestioned military dominance, especially with regard to nuclear weapons, the United States commanded the world's attention. America scrambled to assert its will in the postwar world, reflected in foreign policy concepts such as containment, the Truman Doctrine,

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[64] Bill James, "The Need for a Christian Education in Today's World," 1958, Glorieta, NM and Ridgecrest, NC, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume III, 25-27.
[65] See Gerard J. DeGroot, *The Bomb: A Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

the Marshall Plan and the NSC-68 report.[66] As American qualms toward the motives of communist Russia dissolved into deep suspicions, the Cold War ushered in a novel global American leadership: defender of democracy and the free world. Significantly, many former colonial empires disintegrated and found themselves characterized by political instability in the postwar years. The United States recognized such instability as a dangerous liability in the battle between democracy and communism, and viewed these Third World countries as a prime location for implementation of a democratic ideology, at the expense of communist ideals. Not only did the United States begin to shape global governance, it also claimed a mantel of moral superiority that it endeavored to spread around the world.[67] Current scholarship on the impact of the Cold War on domestic policy provides valuable insight. Civil rights reform was partially a product of the Cold War, yet the Cold War framed and limited civil rights commitment in that broadly based social change was off-limits.[68]

Evangelicals in the United States understood that threats to democracy were also threats to Christianity. In the postwar era, Evangelicals asserted their identity as both Christian and fiercely American. As a result of this dual identity, postwar evangelicals believed they were threatened from outside of the United States and from within. Inside of America, postwar evangelical youth cited the threats of moral decay, materialism, greed, loss of Christian principles, and the corruption of American youth and society. From outside of the United

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[66] Henretta, *America's History,* 870-977.

[67] Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light*, 181-195.

[68] See Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); and Penny M. Von Eshchen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

States, postwar evangelical youth pointed to the threats of atheistic communist expansion. According to postwar evangelical youth, the best way to combat these threats from the inside and the outside was political engagement.

The voices of postwar evangelical youth provide evidence of a desire for political activism. While most scholars focus on the political activism of youth in the 1960s and 1970s, the Speakers' Tournament illustrated that postwar evangelical youth believed evangelicals had always been politically active in America and needed to commit themselves to missions, building more Christian institutions of education, and to peace activism. In the words of Jackie Ellis, Christians needed to be politically active throughout the government and society. "Though Church and state must always be separate, God still needs men of faith and humility in public office who uphold the standards of Christianity while carrying out faithfully their duties." Ellis concluded, "Only when we have leaders who are just as dedicated to the words of Christ as Communist are to the words of Marx and Lenin, can we be assured of victory over the foes of mankind."[69]

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[69] Jackie Ellis, "A Christian Career in Politics," 1960, Glorieta, NM, Southern Baptist Speakers' Tournament Collection, volume IV, 36-37.

CONCLUSION:

The Legacy of Formative Summer Camp Experiences

Evangelical summer camps, established in the postwar era, significantly impacted evangelical youth. Scores of evangelical youth underwent formative experiences while at summer camps in the 1940s and 1950s. Some had conversion experiences and many others received callings to leadership, mission work, and ministry. The goal of the summer camp experience, according to evangelicals, was to convert and disciple. But the long term goal of summer camp programs was to create the next generation of evangelical leadership in American society and culture. The implications and legacies of the summer camp experiences, though widely varied, suggest the success of summer camps in providing the training ground for future leaders, at the local, national, and international level.

Ruth Bamford, a Pioneer Girls guide and camp counselor, believed the camping experience uniquely prepared women to be leaders, whether they participated as campers or as camp counselors.

> It was at camp where the essence of Pioneer Girls' philosophy came to life: Christ in every phase of a girl's life. The counselors, especially those who were guides, felt it, lived it, and returned home to put more vitality into their club work.
>
> Women received from each other a feeling of support and energy which was essential to the spirit of camp. Without that energy, camp could not exist. Perhaps men can function more as individuals, but women work better when they develop strong friendship bonds with one another.
>
> Camp was not run by experts but by all of us who were growing and learning. I was told that 'a week at camp is worth a year of experience in club' and in my case I can vouch for it. What I learned at camp I was able to take back to my girls in club, especially the quality of relationships I saw at work in camp. I knew my campers were seeing me as 'a

> real person' without a façade of spirituality. The depth of interpersonal contact with my campers and the other counselors was new to me.[1]

Bamford's statement reveals the ways that the camp experience surpassed the club experience in providing a safe environment to experience evangelical beliefs and values and to learn how to take those camp experiences and apply them to the rest of her life. Particularly, Bamford recognized the significance of seeing women of all ages and life-stages working together and learning from each other, a formative experience for her. "Older and younger women, married and single—all worked together in harmony. Even my Mom joined in as camp cook. For the first time, she saw me in shorts and slacks, which was new to her. I think my Mom liked making friends and being with women together doing things."[2] For Bamford, the summer camp experience as a counselor prepared her to be a better leader in other areas of her adult life.

Dr. Harish Merchant, a student at Case-Western Reserve University in the postwar era, remembered his summer camp experience as formative, not only for his own religious life, but for his discipleship and impact on many other lives. As a camper at Cedar Campus in 1957 Merchant, "woke up next morning wide-eyed to a new world of great beauty, warm fellowship, bible studies, group prayers, hymn singing, stirring evening talks which spoke to heart as well as to mind, and friendships which have nurtured me over the years." Merchant continued to return to Cedar Campus as a graduate student, associate staff, faculty and alumnus, "thankful for the legacy of sound biblical teaching lessons in godly living, those who patiently discipled me." As a result, Merchant was "instrumental in discipling many students, faculty and church

[1] Eunice Russell Schatz, "Guides: Portraits of Pioneer Women" in *The Slender Thread: Stories of Pioneer Girls' First 25 Years* (Mukilteo, WA: WinePress Publishing, 1996), 230.
[2] Schatz, 231.

people, an ever-widening circle of believers."[3] In many ways, Merchant reflects a common testimony from postwar summer camps. While one can assume that not all campers pursued evangelical leadership positions and many drifted or rejected their evangelical faith outright, there are a striking numbers of campers whose experiences at summer camp encouraged them and equipped them to pursue evangelical work, whether through full time ministry or through ministry in addition to their chosen profession. As a result, evangelical faith and its influence continued its growth and strength in American culture as more and more evangelicals, formed by their camp experiences, sought recreated and sustain those experiences for the next generations of evangelicals.

Other evangelicals believed their experiences at summer camps as formative to their careers in evangelicalism. Willard Heck, founder of New Life Ranch in Colcord, OK, recalled Luis Palau's seminal camp experience.

> "We remember a quote from Luis Palau, an international Evangelist, Bible Teacher, and Author, in his tract, 'The Greatest Decision,' he tells of the night he turned his life over to God by accepting Jesus Christ as his Savior. He tells about sitting in the rain with his summer camp counselor, a flashlight, and a Bible, and responding to the challenge before him. He was just a kid when he made this decision, but he has influenced thousands of lives with the Gospel since that rainy night of camp on a mountaintop in Argentina. Among the thousands of campers attending New Life Ranch, will God place His hand on some of them for a special work like that? We may not now until Heaven calls, but it's an exciting thought."[4]

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[3] Gladys M. Hunt, *A Place to Meet God: The History of Cedar Campus, 1954-2004* (2004), 42. Luis Palau has established an international evangelical ministry. He broadcasts radio programs in English and Spanish in 3500 radio outlets in 48 different countries, founded Alliance Ministries, Luis Palau festivals, and is the author of a number of books on evangelical life. See http://www.palau.org/ for more information on Luis' biography and ministry.

[4] "The First 50 Years: A Short History of New Life Ranch," compiled by Clara Lou Willis, based on the diary of Willard Heck, 77, 2008 from New Life Ranch Records, Colcord, OK.

Camp founders and camp leadership ultimately desired to not only convert and disciple their campers, but for their campers to continue their work of conversion and discipleship for the next generation. Luis Palau's summer camp experience spurred him to become a recognizable leader in evangelical ministry around the world and especially in Latin America.

Still others believe camp experiences as responsible for the revitalization of whole groups of evangelicals. Manlove recalled his experiences training the first staff at Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp, founded by A.J. Bringle, in Story City, Iowa in 1943.

> "I was honored to have been asked to train Bringle's first staff. This marked a key moment in the life of Bible Camping. Clergy, lay adults, and parent saw the unique contribution made in the life of campers by young adults who walked their faith alongside of campers. During this period the program of our Bible Camps became more diversified with backpacking, canoe tripping, leadership camps, horse programs and vagabond camping. A wider range of children, youth, and adults were served. These programs were made possible because of the advanced training that summer staff members received. The maturity of returning staff members allowed for many program advances. Later it was learned that 70% of clergy and lay leadership in the ALC [American Lutheran Church] could point to their camp experience as being a defining turning point in their faith journey."[5]

It is remarkable to connect a significant majority of clergy and lay leadership to their summer camp experiences. Evangelicals were and are reluctant to provide data on the numbers of people who are 'saved' or who dedicate or rededicate themselves to evangelical ministry of some sort, especially to scholars, which makes this statement by Manlove insightful. While numbers certainly vary, most evangelicals will assert the significant of the summer camp experience in converting and grooming future leaders.

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[5] Manlove, forward, v, in Ralph Yernberg, *The Camping Movement of the American Lutheran Church*, vol. 1.

However, all those who attended an evangelical summer camp program did not become the future leaders Religious Right and Moral Majority. In another example of the diversity of evangelical summer camp experiences, evangelical scholar Randall Balmer recalled the ways his summer camp experience spurred him to question his faith.

> I sat next to a fire and shifted uneasily on the stony ground. My repeated attempts to appropriate the faith of my parents were desultory and imperfect, as I realized even then. Summer camp was where I tried annually to get it right, to conjure the same piety that my elders showed, to claim the elusive 'victory in Christ' that they professed. More often than not, what I felt instead was defeat and inadequacy, a gnawing sense that the persistent doubts I harbored about God and Christianity or my occasionally transgressions of the fundamentalist behavioral codes would consign me to damnation."[6]

Yet Balmer's assessment of his own summer camp experience as a youth in the postwar era still demonstrates the significance of the summer camp experience in the postwar. While it was certainly not the case that all postwar youths who attended summer camps became evangelical political leaders or evangelical leaders of any kind, Balmer's evaluation of his own summer camp experience highlights the appeal of summer camp, even for those who did not have a life-changing experience. What brought Balmer back to summer camp each year, "aside from the perennial, elusive quest for summer romance," was

> "the same reason that our parents want us there. We too want to claim the faith, not merely to win our parents' approval, but also because of a deep yearning for a religious experience that will meet our expectations and dispel our anxieties. We seek above all an experience that will yield the spiritual fulfillment we see (or think we see) in our parents. That experience comes to some. Others grasp it for a time and then lose it, year after year. Still others find the standards too high and abandon the quest in frustration or despair."[7]

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[6] Randall Balmer, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory*, 105-106.

[7] Balmer, 107.

While the summer camp experience spurred many campers to life in local, national, or international ministry, many other campers did not experience a calling. However, while all campers may not have had a conversion or calling experience, as Balmer demonstrates, the desire to have a religious experience at summer camp still compelled campers. In addition, the experience of campers like Balmer serves to illustrate the great diversity of evangelical identity in the postwar era and the willingness of some to question and re-examine their faith.

The heyday of evangelical summer camps was in the postwar era, from the 1940s and into the 1950s. But beginning in the 1960s, postwar summer camp programs began to shift. Secular camping scholar Van Slyck identifies the 1960s as the advent of skill-based summer camp programs, thus she dates the postwar camping boom occurring from the 1940s and beginning to end in 1960. Evangelical scholar Larry Eskridge provides a different explanation for the shift in evangelical focus, beginning in the 1960s. Eskridge writes the generation maturing in the 1960s was quite different from the baby boom generation of the 1940s and 1950s. He traced the evolution of evangelical youth through noted evangelist Billy Graham's ministry and the ways he shifted his ministry to most effectively reach American youth. Graham observed the mounting evidence of discontent on college campuses and the budding counterculture. "These were not the same sort of kids whose most serious problems he had once addressed by advising not to go steady and to stay away from rock 'n' roll." Eskridge asserts that Graham and other evangelical messages was not "falling on the ears of a totally deaf generation" and that the parachurch organizations such as Campus Crusade and IVCF, aimed toward high school and college-age youth, expanded in the 1960s.[8] But in the 1960s, the message of evangelicals shifted to line up with the new frustrations and interests of 1960s youth. The emergence of counterculture movements provided evangelicals with a new sort of competition and required them to shift their message away from combating juvenile delinquency to appealing to those drawn to groups such as the Jesus People. Thus the examination of evangelical summer camp programs in the 1940s and 1950s most accurately characterizes the efforts of evangelicals, with varying degrees of success, to re-forge their identity as focused on youth.

The Second World War provided the watershed of change that Americans attempted to understand in the postwar years, including their country's vastly different status in the world and their altered social and economic status within their own country. The war and its aftermath provided an ideal battleground for the tension between the 'old' and the 'new' in society and religion, as evidenced in the forms of religious revivalism and concern over the rising influence of secularism and decline of evangelical values. Intimately linked to these changes in society, religion acted as a stabilizer that mediated the apprehension related to tides of transformation. The 'old' concepts of isolationism, economic depression, avoiding modernity, doctrinal divides, and secularity retained a degree of authority in postwar America. At the same time, the old concepts lost substantial ground to the 'new' ideas of global leadership, economic prosperity, embracing modernity and technology via the atomic age, and

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[8] Larry Eskridge, "'One Way': Billy Graham, the Jesus Generation, and the Idea of an Evangelical Youth Culture," *Church History* Vol. 67, Nol. 1 (March 1998), 83-106.

more innovative, relevant, and cutting edge techniques to engage America's youth and renew the faith of Americans.

An examination of summer camps reveals a great deal about the creation of evangelical identity in the postwar. The postwar provides a wide spectrum of differences as evangelicals negotiated their identity. Yet, despite their differences, evangelicals in the postwar united on the importance of engaging with youth. They realized that engaging with mainstream and popular culture struck a chord with much of America's youth. Evangelicals consciously created summer camp programs to convert and disciple the next generation of evangelical youth, and evangelical youth responded to the summer camp experiences by asserting the importance of political engagement. Evangelical summer camps operated as vehicles for socializing and internalizing evangelical identity for postwar youth.

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