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VISIONS OF A CHRISTIAN CITY: THE POLITICS OF RELIGION AND GENDER IN CHICAGO'S CITY MISSIONS AND PROTESTANT SETTLEMENT HOUSES, 1886-1929

By

Mary L. Mapes

A DISSERTATION

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for the degree of

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Department of History

1998

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ABSTRACT

VISIONS OF A CHRISTIAN CITY: THE POLITICS OF RELIGION AND GENDER IN CHICAGO'S CITY MISSIONS AND PROTESTANT SETTLEMENT HOUSES, 1886-1929

By

Mary L. Mapes

This study examines Protestant civic activism, focusing on the laymen who ran Chicago's city missions and Protestant clubs, the laywomen who labored in the city's Protestant settlement houses and institutional churches, and the relations between these men and women as each jockeyed for position, space, and authority in the public life of the city. In it I argue that the public significance and influence of Chicago's civic-minded Protestant community increased as women became the central actors. Focusing on the years 1886-1929, this study discusses how Chicago's laymen and laywomen attempted to define and influence the city's ever-changing public order; how, more specifically, each affected the city's contested class and ethnic relations and hierarchies; and finally, how they both tried to justify the role of their organizations to the city's other competing public voices, namely secular settlement workers and professional social workers.

The story this dissertation tells begins in the early 1880s when middle and upper-middle class Methodist and Congregational laymen responded to Chicago's rising labor conflict, and the influx of immigrants, by establishing missions in the city's working-class immigrant neighborhoods. It describes how city missionaries–believing that the processes of becoming "American" and converting to Protestantism were not only intertwined, but inseparable–claimed that they had both a moral and a civic responsibility to shape the civic identities of the city's newest residents. Armed with an evangelistic

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rhetoric that was imbued with militaristic images, these primarily male city missionaries sought a central place in the then current debates raging about citizenship and public order.

The study turns next to the turn of the century when Chicago's Protestant community divided over the appropriate message and means to be used in building their Christian city. The study describes how many of Chicago's lay Protestants, especially women, began to question whether the traditional evangelistic message the city missionaries promulgated was sufficient to "Americanize" immigrants and to solve the city's many social ills. Believing that the amelioration of social ills was as important as individual salvation, these women turned to two new institutions: the Protestant settlement house and the "institutional" church. After examining the process by which these women staked out part of the urban terrain as their own, the study turns to discuss the conflicts which ensued during the 1900s, 1910s, and 1920s between these Protestant women and the city's secular settlement leaders and professional social workers, each of whom had their own vision of how best to structure Chicago's public order. Finally, the study ends with an epilogue in which I provide a brief analysis of the Great Depression, focusing on the development of Chicago's Community Fund and its impact on Protestant civic voluntarism.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Over the course of my graduate career, and more specifically the researching and writing of this dissertation, I have benefitted from the financial, intellectual, and emotional support provided by numerous individuals and institutions. The College of Arts and Letters at MSU awarded me a research fellowship which enabled me to conduct the bulk of the research and later a writing fellowship which provided me with the time to finish writing. The Newberry Library's In-Residence fellowship gave me important financial support in addition to providing a congenial and supportive environment in which to work. The financial support I received from the Pew Program in Religion and American History based at Yale University allowed me to spend additional time writing without having to become further indebted to the infamous "Sallie Mae."

The intellectual questions upon which this dissertation is based, and from which it initially grew, date back to the beginning of my graduate program when my interest in religion was first sparked by the seminars I took with David Bailey and my interest in women and gender in the classes I took with Lisa Fine. Since these early years David Bailey has been an important role model, showing me through his example that teaching, researching, and writing are all important to becoming a well-rounded and engaged scholar. If I can cultivate a small percentage of the enthusiasm he has for teaching, I will consider myself a fortunate scholar. His confidence in me provided important emotional and intellectual support–especially during my first few years in graduate school. Lisa Fine introduced me to women's history and the history of gender and in so doing forever altered my understanding of history. She has always been a careful and critical reader,

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Numerous scholars and fellow students have read the dissertation and I would like to thank them here for their help. Sam Thomas and Donald Rosenberg both read the dissertation in its entirety and provided helpful comments. Fellow graduate students Steve Wilkshire, Randi Storch, and Susan Stein-Roggenbuck each read several chapters and provided constructive criticism, making it possible to improve the work. When my computer "crashed" one late night close to the end of the writing process, Susan helped me keep my sanity by reinstalling all of my software. At the Conference for the Pew Fellows, Harry Stout commented on chapter two, providing insightful criticism of the material I presented as well as strong support for the project as a whole.

Coming from a family of historians–both my parents and two of my three sisters teach history–it is inevitable that my thanks to them are both intellectual and emotional. The love my mom has for teaching convinced me as a young girl that there must be something special in being a teacher. With my father I've shared many conversations about history. All three of my sisters have provided me very important intellectual and emotional support, encouraging me in my pursuits. Though it has yet to be seen how many, if any, of my six nieces and nephews will pursue a degree in history, they have in many ways provided me with critical emotional support. My twin sister Kathy who is

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also pursuing a Ph.D. in history deserves special mention. She has read every single word of this dissertation several times and has improved it with her thoughtful comments. Most important, she has always believed in me and this project, providing the kind of emotional support that I suspect is somewhat unique to twins. It is to her that I dedicate this dissertation.

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INTRODUCTION

"Of the Perils which threaten our future, such as socialism, skepticism, the liquor power, the criminal classes, the congestion of wealth, and political corruption, each is enhanced and all are focalized in the city. And here, where moral and Christian forces need to be strongest, they are weakest."

—Josiah Strong (October 8, 1885)

Inviting the Christian public to an interdenominational congress on city evangelism, Josiah Strong outlined the central fears many white native-born Protestants held of their cities. Yet rather than reject the city, Strong called for its evangelization. He urged civic-minded Protestants to pursue their Christian work on the nation's "urban frontier." This dissertation examines Protestant civic activism, focusing on the laymen who ran Chicago's city missions and Protestant clubs, the laywomen who labored in the city's Protestant settlement houses and institutional churches, and the relations between these men and women as each jockeyed for position, space, and authority in the public life of the city. This study discusses how Chicago's laymen and laywomen attempted to define and influence the city's ever-changing public order; how, more specifically, each affected the city's contested class and ethnic relations and hierarchies; and finally, how they both tried to justify the role of their organizations to the city's other competing public voices, namely secular settlement leaders and professional social workers. The central argument of this dissertation is that the public significance and influence of Chicago's Protestant community increased as women became the central actors in the religious urban realm.

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middle-class Methodist and Congregational laymen responded to Chicago's rising labor conflict and influx of immigrants by establishing missions in the city's working-class immigrant neighborhoods. Believing that the processes of becoming "American" and converting to Protestantism were not only intertwined, but inseparable, these city missionaries claimed that they had both a moral and a civic responsibility to proselytize among the city's expanding immigrant population. At the turn of the century, however, Chicago's Protestant community divided over the appropriate message and means to be used in building their Christian city. Many of Chicago's lay Protestants, especially women, questioned whether the traditional evangelistic message which the missionaries promulgated was all that was needed to "Americanize" the immigrants and to solve the city's many social ills. Believing that the amelioration of social ills was as important as individual salvation, these women turned to two new institutions; the Protestant settlement house and the institutional church. Although these women had, by the 1910s, successfully staked out part of the urban terrain as their own, they found themselves and their work challenged in the 1910s and 1920s by both the city's secular settlement house leaders and professional social workers, each of whom had their own vision of how best to structure Chicago's public order.[1] Secular settlement leaders who feared that open

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[1]I should note here that I use the term "secular settlement" to refer to those settlements that did not condone evangelism or which did not include any religious services or programs. I do not mean to imply that the women and men laboring in the secular settlements were not faithful Christians. Most were active Protestant church members who drew inspiration from their faith; however, they did not believe that evangelism was acceptable within the settlement house. For a discussion of the question of religion and the settlement house movement, see chapter 2 of this dissertation. Also, see Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); and Ruth Crocker, *Social Work and Social Order: The Settlement Movement in Two Industrial Cities, 1889-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press,

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evangelism was not compatible with the social goals of the settlement, and professional social workers who were committed to the notion that professional social work methods must be separated from Protestant charitable traditions, sought to minimize the influence the above Protestant women wielded in the public life of the city.

Urban history is one of the most dynamic subdisciplines of American history. Coming from various perspectives, and bringing with them an equally rich diversity of methodologies, urban historians have written a plethora of books and articles describing and analyzing all aspects of urban life, both public and private. Anyone hoping to learn about municipal politics, immigration, labor, and reform has an almost limitless number of works from which to choose. It would be impossible to list even the most recently published books, numerous as they are.[2] However, religion–institutionally, socially, and ideologically–is conspicuously absent from most urban histories focusing on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In a recent forum on "The Place of Religion in Urban and Community Studies," prominent historians lamented this fact, noting that

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1992).

[2]The works on Chicago alone are, as one might expect, quite numerous. Recent publications include Donald Miller's *City of the Century: The Epic of Chicago and the Making of America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996). Though lacking the scope and the thoroughness of the still-classic three volume, *A History of Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1937-1957) penned by Bessie Louise Pierce, Miller attempts to grapple with the city as a single entity. Political histories include Robin Einhorn, *Property Rules: Political Economy in Chicago, 1833-1872* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); and Karen Sawislak, *City Smoldering: Chicagoans and the Great Fire, 1871-1874* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). Especially popular are the cultural histories of Chicago. Among the best of these recent publications are Carl Smith, *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief: The Great Fire, The Haymarket Bomb, and the Model Town of Pullman* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995); and James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

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religious institutions are seldom viewed as having had any significant impact on urban development. The forum's participants pointed out regrettably that religious and urban historians have rarely viewed religious institutions as an integral part of the city. By describing how "churches have been important as direct city builders, as urban service providers, and as shapers of civic cultures," Kathleen Conzen, one of the forum's participants, suggested ways that scholars can begin to reconceptualize the urban landscape to include religion as part of the city, as helping to construct and define the city.[3]

Though the forum's participants expressed concern that urban religious history is growing too slowly–and is more often than not marginalized in the larger historiography–scholarship which takes seriously the role of religion in urban life during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has over the last decade been expanding and receiving a wide readership.[4] In particular, historians have heaped praise on the work

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[3]Kathleen Conzen, "The Place of Religion in Urban and Community Studies." *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, Vol. 6 (Summer 1996) p.112.

[4]I should note here that the topic of religion and the city is, of course, not completely new. For the classic works on Protestantism in the city, see Henry May, *Churches in Industrial America* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949); Robert T. Handy, *The Social Gospel in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966); Aaron Abell, *The Urban Impact on American Protestantism*, 1865-1900 (London: Archon, 1962); and Charles Hopkins, *The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940). Numerous works have also been written about Catholicism in the city. Too often, however, these histories isolate Catholicism from the larger public life of the city, allowing historians who are not directly interested in religion to ignore Catholicism as part of the city. This is particularly true of many church histories, or "in-house" publications, which focus primarily on individuals and institutions. For an example, see *Caritas Christi Urget Nos: A History of the Offices and Institutions of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago Illinois* (Archdiocese of Chicago, 1981). However, even mcre academic discussions of Catholicism tend to focus on institutions, heeding not nearly enough attention to those institutions within the larger

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of Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950* (1985). Focusing on devotional practices, Orsi demonstrates the important influence popular religion had on the lives of Italian immigrants, especially women, in Harlem. John McGreevy's recently published book, *Parish Boundaries: the Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North*, which examines, among other things, the relationship between urban ethnic neighborhoods and Catholic national parishes has also been reviewed favorably by urban and religious historians, both of whom are now beginning to understand how the actual construction of urban geography is determined not only by the class, ethnic, and racial identities of urban residents, but by their religious loyalties as well. McGreevy writes with concern that in most discussions of twentieth-century cities, "Religion frequently ends up at the bottom of a list of variables presumed to shape individual identity, as an ethical afterthought to presumably more serious matters of class, gender, and ethnicity."[5] His excellent book points out the danger of making such an assumption, the danger of not considering religion along with the other categories of identity currently so popular among urban historians.

Like McGreevy's work, Elizabeth Hayes Turner's study of Galveston Texas,

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context of the city. For example, Charles Shanabruch's well researched and thoughtful discussion of Catholicism in Chicago is in large part an examination of the institutional structure of the church, largely separate from the public life of the city. *Chicago's Catholics: The Evolution of an Identity* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1981). Though historians, including Leslie Woodcock Tentler, have described the many ways Catholicism was central to city life, providing social services and helping shape working-class activities, religion is usually left out of the most popular and widely discussed histories. Leslie Woodcock Tentler, "On the Margins: The State of American Catholic History," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 45 (March 1993).

[5]John McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) p. 4.

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Women, Culture, and Community: Religion and Reform in Galveston, 1880-1920 (1997), is forcing historians to reconsider the role of religion in the city. In this well researched and thoughtful book, Turner explores the connections between women, religion, and reform.[6] Although Turner is not the first women's historian to focus on churches in explaining women's public activism, she is one of the few twentieth-century historians who sees churches as central to urban reform, who sees religion as more than merely a stepping stone to public life.[7] Turner's research into women's public activism in Galveston shows that churches and religiously based institutions were at the center of much of the city's public activity, from poor relief to civic reform. Her work confirms an observation recently made by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese: "It would be no exaggeration to claim that, certainly until the twentieth century and, arguably, through it, religion has afforded American women their most important source of strength, purpose, and identity."[8]

The works of Orsi, McGreevy, and Turner, taken as a group, suggest the myriad ways religion was an integral part of the urban landscape of the late nineteenth and early

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[6]Among nineteenth-century women's historians the connection between women, religion, and reform is well documented. See Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982); Mary P. Ryan, *The Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1780-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and Nancy Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822-1872* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984). It is interesting to note that even though these historians don't talk about their books as "religious history," religion is central to the stories they tell.

[7]African-American women's history is one notable exception. For a discussion of African-American women and the church, see Evelyn Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[8]Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "Female Experience in American Religion," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, Vol. 5 (Winter 1996) p.16.

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twentieth centuries. They show, among other things, that religion has helped construct immigrants' world views, reconfigured the spatial geography of neighborhoods, and informed both the ideology and practice of reform and public activism. In these studies, religion is understood to be at the center of the city, affecting the private lives and public activities of urban residents from all classes and ethnic groups.[9]

Chicago is more than an appropriate place to extend our discussion and exploration of religion in the city because of its prominence during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the nation's most tumultuous city, the nation's quintessential city. Few American cities grew at a faster rate than Chicago, a city which came close to doubling its population every ten years during the last three decades of the nineteenth century largely through the influx of immigrants from Europe. By 1900, Chicago became the nation's second largest city, and ethnically one of the most diverse. Even more significant, Chicago epitomized for most Americans both the best and the worst that urban life had to offer the nation. Chicago's rapid rebuilding and commercial growth after the fire of 1871 suggested that the acumen of its business leaders was unprecedented and the resources of its "common" people endless; on the other hand, the frequency of

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[9]These are only a few of the most recent works on religion in the city, but they illustrate best the varied ways that religion is central to the larger field of urban history. For other recent works that deal in one way or another with religion in the city, see Ken Fones-Wolf, *Trade Union Gospel: Christianity and Labor in Industrial Philadelphia, 1865-1915* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989); Clark Halker, *For Democracy, Workers, and God: Labor Song Poems and Labor Protest, 1865-1895* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Kathryn J. Oberdeck, "Labor's Vicar and the Variety Show: Popular Religion, Popular Theater, and Cultural Class Conflict in Turn of the Century America," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1991); Kathryn J. Oberdeck, "Religion, Culture, and the Politics of Class: Alexander Irvine's Mission to Turn-of-the-Century New Haven," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 47 (June 1995):236-279; and James W. Lewis, *The Protestant Experience in Gary Indiana, 1906-1975: At Home in the City* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992).

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Chicago's labor disputes–the most famous ones being the Haymarket riot of 1886 and the Pullman strike of 1894–made many Chicagoans, and Americans more generally, question not only the stability of Chicago but the very viability of urban life itself.[10]

That Chicago was the center of so much change and conflict makes it a fruitful city to study. That urban citizens and Americans as a whole self-consciously thought about, wrote about, and debated the place and future of Chicago–and acted upon those concerns–makes it vitally important to study. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Chicago was home to hundreds of voluntary organizations, each seeking to influence in one way or another the shape of the city's ever-changing public order. Regardless of how unstable the city might have seemed, Chicagoans remained optimistic that the particular shape of the city's public order was something that could be controlled, something that could be molded. Urban citizens hoping to affect the shape of the larger public order flocked to such organizations as Chicago's Civic Federation, the Commercial Club, the Committee of Fifteen, the City Club and the Woman's Club, to name just a few.

This dissertation extends our understanding of these discussions concerning civic life and public order by focusing on the laymen and laywomen who belonged to Chicago's civically active Protestant voluntary organizations. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, long after Catholics had become the religious majority in many American cities, including Chicago, Protestant continued to wield significant political, cultural, and social influence. From the works of Henry May, Charles Hopkins,

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[10]For an excellent discussion of perceptions of urban life, see Carl Smith, *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief.*

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and Robert Handy we have learned much about how national Protestant denominational bodies and organizations responded to the religious, economic, and social changes occurring in the nation's cities.[11] However, we know surprisingly little about how city-based Protestant organizations and communities helped structure public life in specific cities. Too often in religious history the city is depicted as merely a foil or trope, something against which religious institutions reacted but rarely something which they helped to construct. This dissertation seeks to deepen our understanding of urban religion by telling the story of how a small section of Chicago's lay Protestant community attempted to claim both religious and civic responsibility for their city, how they attempted to build a "Christian city."

To tell this story requires paying close attention to the different ways men and women participated in the urban realm and how notions of gender affected their activities. Notions of masculinity and femininity helped structure many aspects of American life during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the Protestant urban endeavor was no exception. Not only did men tend to gravitate to missions and clubs, and women to settlements and institutional churches, but both groups drew on what they understood to be the proper roles of men and women to explain and justify their activism. Equally significant, middle and upper middle-class Protestants' views of class and ethnicity were also mediated by their notions of gender, notions that were rooted in their understanding of Protestant Christianity. As will be shown, the manner in which Protestant laymen and laywomen interacted with Chicago's diverse working-class population was shaped not

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[11]Henry May, *Protestant Churches in Industrial America*; Charles Hopkins, *The Rise of the Social Gospel*; and Robert Handy, *The Social Gospel in America*.

only by their Protestant faith and their class standings, but also by their gender.

Chicago's Protestant community faced opposition from the larger secular society as it struggled to find a place for itself in the city. At the most general level, then, this study explores how Chicago's civic-minded Protestants carved out a space in the nation's quintessential city, how they participated in the construction of the city's public life; it also focuses on the conflicts this public activism engendered within the Protestant community and between the Protestant community and the larger society.

Chapter one, "Christian Citizenship: City Missions and the Americanization Question, 1886-1900," begins this investigation of religion in Chicago by examining Chicago's Congregational and Methodist city missionary societies. I argue that the mostly middle and upper middle-class laymen who joined these societies hoped to use their missions as a vehicle for shaping the civic identities of Chicago's growing working-class immigrant residents. Armed with an evangelistic rhetoric that was imbued with militaristic images, these male city missionaries sought a central place in the then current debates raging in Chicago about how best to Americanize the immigrants arriving each year from Europe. Focusing on the German and Bohemian populations in particular–the immigrant groups assumed to be the most "radical"–city missionaries gained for their missions important financial and moral support from middle and upper middle-class laymen as well as from Chicago's business elite. Having established a place for their missionary enterprise in the larger public life of the city, these missionaries argued that their evangelistic work was necessary for constructing a stable Christian public order.

In chapter two, "A House of One's Own: Women in the Protestant Settlements and Institutional Churches, 1886-1920," I discuss the women who labored in the city's

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institutional churches and Protestant settlement houses. I argue that these women attempted to define the urban realm as a woman's domain by melding their religious, social, and civic concerns, and by combining the goals of the evangelical mission with the objects and methods of the secular settlement house. In addition to offering Sunday school classes, prayer meetings, and Sunday Vesper services, these Protestant women sponsored a wide range of social and recreational activities and services including, among other things, kindergartens, day nurseries, gymnasiums, industrial schools, and public health programs. Yet because these Protestant women were moving into territory already staked out by the city missions and secular settlements, they were often embroiled in conflict–attacked by male missionaries who feared the expansion of this woman's domain and questioned by secular settlement leaders who argued that the evangelical focus of the Protestant settlement was not reconcilable with the larger social goals of the settlement institution. Although very little historical attention has been paid to either Chicago's Protestant settlements or its institutional churches, this dissertation confirms the most recent work by Ruth Crocker and Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn which shows that many of the nation's smaller, less prominent settlements were openly Protestant institutions whose workers not only refused to follow, but openly struggled with, the nation's leading secular settlement leaders.[12]

The different ideas about religion, gender, and urban order that Protestant men and women brought to their religious civic activism, and the conflicts these ideas engendered between them, is the subject of chapter three, "'More Men For Religion:

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[12]See Ruth Crocker, *Social Work and Social Order*; and Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors*.

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More Religion For Men:' The Chicago Sunday Evening Club and the Men and Religion Forward Movement, 1900-1920." From their Protestant settlements and institutional churches, Protestant women offered a wide range of religious-based services and classes, all of which were devised to bind Chicago's diverse population into one community, a community joined by a shared faith. Concerned that religious urban work had been "feminized," the native-born upper-middle and upper-class businessmen who established the Chicago Sunday Evening Club in 1908 hoped that through sponsoring a Sunday evening lecture series, and by becoming active in the national Men and Religion Forward Movement of 1911-1912, they would begin the task of masculinizing religion in Chicago. While the Chicago Sunday Evening Club and the Men and Religion Forward Movement attracted large followings, I argue that the men involved in these organizations failed to masculinize religion largely because they failed to offer the kinds of services which would compete with the expansive social and recreational programs the women based in the institutional churches and Protestant settlements offered. That the men in the Chicago Sunday Evening Club and the Men and Religion Forward Movement attempted to masculinize religion in the urban domain shows that gender figured centrally into Chicago's intra-religious conflicts.

Chapter four, "Whose City is This?: Professional Social Workers Versus Protestant Settlement and Institutional Church Women, 1900-1929, discusses how the Protestant women based in the city's settlements and institutional churches responded to the emergence of social work as a secular profession. During the first three decades of the twentieth century, Chicago's Protestant settlement and institutional church women played a central place in the city's emerging social welfare matrix, providing social

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services to their working-class immigrant neighbors and serving as intermediaries between these neighbors and the city's other social welfare organizations, both public and private. As social work became professionalized and secularized in the 1920s, these Protestant women found themselves engaged in heated debates with the professional social workers staffing Chicago's Council of Social Agencies over the proper role of religion, and the place of volunteers, in social service work. I show that even though most of the professional social workers based in the Council of Social Agencies believed that there was no place for religion in urban social service work, the women who labored in the Protestant settlements and institutional churches combined the tools of modern social work with their Christian commitments. As they had reconfigured the settlement institution in a Christian fashion, lay Protestant women imparted Protestant values into modern social work, establishing a Protestant definition of social work.

Thematically and methodologically, this study stands at the juncture of religious, urban, and women's history. For while it places primary emphasis on Christian beliefs and commitments in explaining Chicago's Protestant civic activism, it also considers how notions of gender, and concerns about class and ethnic diversity, informed the civic activities in which lay Protestants engaged. By so doing, this dissertation demonstrates that the development of Chicago's Protestant voluntary organizations cannot be understood separate from the larger political, cultural, and economic dynamics of the city, and that, in turn, these dynamics cannot be fully elucidated without considering the role religious organizations played therein. More specifically, this dissertation shows that it is only by breaking down the barriers that usually separate religious history from women's and urban history that we can understand the ways that religious faith and religious

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CHAPTER 1

CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP: CITY MISSIONS AND THE AMERICANIZATION QUESTION, 1886-1900

On Tuesday, May 4, 1886 the Haymarket riot catapulted Chicago into the national limelight. What had started in Haymarket Square as a peaceful and uneventful labor demonstration to commemorate the lives of three striking workers shot by police, ended in a blood bath. An unknown assailant threw a bomb into the mixed crowd of demonstrators and police; the police responded with a swift reprisal of bullets.[1] In the days and weeks following the riot, people across the nation read about it in horror, with most focusing on the bomb which killed seven policemen rather than the retaliatory police gun fire which claimed the lives of at least two workers and injured countless others.[2] And as the police were being applauded for their quick and violent response, eight of Chicago's labor radicals were rounded up and brought to court. All eight were found responsible for the carnage: four were sentenced to death, three received fifteen year sentences, and one committed suicide.[3]

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[1]Numerous historians have recounted in great detail the story of the Haymarket riot, and thus I will not repeat the full incident here. The classic work on Haymarket is Henry David's *A History of the Haymarket Affair: A Study in the American Social-Revolutionary and Labor Movements* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart,1936). More recent discussions include Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); and Carl Smith, *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief: The Great Chicago Fire, The Haymarket Bomb, and The Model Town of Pullman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1995).

[2]David, *Haymarket Affair*, p.219, n.1. As for the policemen killed I should note that only one officer, Mathias Degan, died on the spot: the other six died in the days and weeks following the riot. *Ibid.*, p.234, n.20.

[3]In 1893, the three defendants who received fifteen year sentences were pardoned by Governor Altgeld. See David, *Haymarket Affair*, pp.179-203.

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Haymarket quickly dominated American public life, largely because its symbolic significance was both powerful and malleable. To members of America's working class, many of whom had recently emigrated from Europe, Haymarket represented one of largest travesties of American justice, showing them how difficult their battles in the courts, and in their work places, for fair working conditions would be. For years thereafter, workers would draw on the memory of Haymarket to galvanize support for their alternative visions of American society, visions of a more just, tolerant, and egalitarian society.[4] In contrast, most native-born middle and upper middle-class Americans saw Haymarket as proof that repressive labor practices were necessary; even more important, Haymarket provided them a vehicle through which they could articulate their more general fears about the growing class, ethnic, and religious diversity of the nation's cities. To put it more specifically, for the "well born" Haymarket became a rhetorical trope signifying all that was wrong with the pluralistic modern city, the epitome of what historian Carl Smith has referred to as urban disorder.[5] Haymarket not only

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[4]It should be noted that even though Haymarket quickly became central to the collective memory of organized labor, in the weeks and months immediately following the riot many workers' organizations tried to distance their unions from the accused, most notably the Knights of Labor. On labor's response to Haymarket, see David, *Haymarket Affair*, pp.210-218.

[5]Carl Smith explores the history of urban disorder by looking at what he calls the "imaginative dimensions" of the Chicago Fire of 1871, the Haymarket riot, and the Pullman strike of 1894. His primary focus is with how different groups "thought and spoke about urban disorder." Smith defines imaginative dimensions as "the context of thought and expression that suffuses individual and social life." He claims that dimensions is "a broader yet more accurate term than 'responses' since, to a greater extent than is obvious at first, what may appear to be an intellectual or literary reaction to an event often inseparably precedes and at least partially determines the nature of that event and the manner in which it is described, and so affects subsequent thought and action." Smith, *Urban Disorder*, p.1.

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highlighted America's ever-changing religious, class, and ethnic divides--as the different responses to the event demonstrate--but the memory of the event itself proved to be contested ground.

The debates about Haymarket's significance, evident in the days following the bombing, had the most direct and immediate impact within the city of Chicago itself. The day following the riot, one Chicagoan noted that as he walked the city's streets: "I passed many groups of people...whose excited conversations about the events of the preceding night I could not fail to overhear." [6] As the city was reeling from the initial shock of the violence, people of all classes, ethnic groups, and religious faiths rushed to describe what had happened, to tell the true story of Haymarket. These descriptions of Haymarket were especially important because the facts surrounding the event were unclear and thus open to competing versions. However, not too surprisingly, workers were not allowed as much access to public forums to voice their understanding of the event as was accorded the city's more prosperous residents. Chicago's city newspapers, with the exception of some labor papers, whole-heartedly condemned the labor movement as alien and un-American. [7] Referring to the bombing as a "barbarian attack" a writer for the *Chicago Tribune* questioned the claims of the Haymarket labor protestors that they were "true American citizens," arguing instead, "not one of them is a true American. Not one of them performs the duty of a good citizen, is loyal to his government, or has the interest of the community at heart."[8] Another *Tribune* writer,

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[6]David, *Haymarket Affair*, p. 207

[7]For a thorough discussion of the Press's reaction to Haymarket, see David, *Haymarket Affair*, pp.206-218.

[8]*Chicago Tribune*, May 5, 1886.

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blaming the attack on the "city administration" which had allowed too many "anarchist demonstrations," saw the bombing as an opportunity to "arouse public opinion in Chicago and unite law abiding citizens in defense of their rights." He excluded many citizens from his conception of the polity, in particular the Haymarket labor protestors who he referred to as an "incendiary and alien rabble." [9]

Even more significant than these rhetorical flourishes were the police attacks on those forums which the working class had established as their own; in the days following the riot the police raided known labor meeting halls as well as individual homes, bringing hundreds of workers known to have been involved in the city's labor movement into the city's police stations.[10] The police were responding to the widely held view expressed repeatedly in the *Tribune* that "there should be no more meetings on the Lake-front, nor anywhere else, and all attempts to parade the streets with the red flag should be immediately broken up."[11] In the days following the riot the *Chicago Tribune* was full of virulent attacks on the working class, especially those members who were foreign-born The repressive power of the state provided the native-born middle and upper middle classes greater space within which to begin to shape the symbolic meaning and larger practical repercussions of Haymarket.

Among the important participants helping shape the public meaning of Haymarket were the city's ministers who, on the Sunday following the riot, used their pulpits as platforms from which to warn their congregations about the threat radical labor posed to

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[9]*Ibid.*

[10]David, *The History of the Haymarket Affair*, pp.221-232.

[11]*Chicago Tribune*, May 10, 1886.

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Chicago, thereby helping make Haymarket above all a moral conflict, a moral issue.[12] Speaking before the Reformed Episcopal Church, Bishop Fallows expressed a sentiment common to most of the sermons preached that Sunday in Chicago: "For years it has been an open secret that the jails of foreign countries have been emptied in this country."[13] There was little doubt among the city's ministers that Haymarket was directly connected to the presence of foreign-born labor, and that August Spies, Samuel Fielden, and Albert Parsons, three of the Haymarket defendants, were "dangerous purveyors of doctrines manufactured for the most part on the other side of the sea."[14] Though the ministers did not represent a homogenous body–a few called for immigration restriction while others warned the city's residents that not all laborers were socialists and anarchists–almost all would have agreed that "one of the first lessons on hand now was for the people to teach every one who came to these shores that only one banner was allowed here...the stars and stripes."[15]

By speaking about Haymarket in terms of the city's foreign-born population, the city's many ministers made sense of this incident in the same way that most prominent white native-born citizens did, by pointing to the supposed radical influence of Chicago's majority immigrant population. In the years following Haymarket, Chicago's city

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[12]On the Saturday following the Haymarket riot, the *Chicago Tribune* printed a preview of the sermons scheduled to be preached the following day, highlighting those which were to deal directly with the riot. Sixteen riot sermons were listed including, "Our Enemies and the Late Anarchist Troubles," "Nihilism and Godlessness," and "Some Lessons of Last Week." *Chicago Tribune*, May 8, 1886.

[13]*Chicago Tribune*, May 10, 1886.

[14]*Ibid.*

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missionaries were among those who helped keep Haymarket's legacy alive, continually warning Chicagoans, "if left to themselves they [the immigrants] will largely increase the number who sympathize with and aid the anarchists in our midst." [16] Not surprisingly, city missionaries warned their fellow citizens that the trial had not solved Chicago's problems because "foreigners who are unacquainted and in many cases out of harmony with our American institutions," continued to live in Chicago.[17] Chicago's city missionaries helped to guarantee that the public debates Haymarket inaugurated would be principally about the association between foreigners, foreignness, and urban order and that these debates would define much of the political and cultural discursive landscape of the 1890s and beyond.

Yet however much Chicagoans were concerned about the connection between radicalism and the foreign-born, they were even more interested in who would save the city by claiming responsibility for determining the shape of its ever-changing public order. Most believed that this involved nothing less than defining what constituted a proper civic identity and deciding how the public spaces of the city should be used, and by whom.[18] Though most native-born middle and upper middle-class Americans

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[16]Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1888.

[17]Reviewing the events of May 1886 over a year after the riot, a Methodist city missionary laboring in Chicago characterized Haymarket as "the grossest exhibition of anarchy our country had ever seen." Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1887.

[18]Chicagoans were not alone in pointing to the "radical" influence of European immigrants to explain almost all urban ills including labor unrest, political corruption, and the "liquor" problem. It is important to note, however, that nativist sentiment was transformed by the events of 1886. No longer was anti-Catholicism its defining feature; instead a rabid anti-radicalism became the dominant motif, coloring not only the rhetoric of nativists but also the objects of nativists' concerns. Anti-Catholicism continued to be important but it was usually incorporated into this new anti-radical fear. John Higham

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accepted the increasingly ethnically diverse nature of America's cities, they nonetheless believed that there were "good" and "bad," "worthy" and "dangerous," civic identities.

Even during this time of great duress and violent conflict, middle and upper middle-class Americans remained optimistic about their own abilities to shape the civic and moral characteristics of the nation's most recent immigrants, and to retain their own civic and cultural leadership of the nation's cities. Haymarket had undoubtedly inaugurated a new anti-radical nativism which would continue to influence nativist movements up to the passing of the immigrant exclusion act of 1924, but the 1880s and 1890s were a time when few Americans seriously challenged America's long-standing immigration policy; most Americans, Chicagoans included, remained committed to the principle of the open door.[19] While it might seem ironic that Americans, including Chicagoans, would remain committed to the open door in light of the their growing anti-radical rhetoric, it must be noted that most Americans believed that the majority of immigrants could be taught how to be "American." How to "Americanize" immigrants,

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described this change best when he referred to the post-1886 period as one in which "No image prevailed more widely than that of the immigrant as a lawless creature, given over to violence and disorder." John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955) p.55.

[19]Support for Chinese restriction is one obvious significant exception. John Gleason states that up until the early twentieth century the U.S. had a relatively consistent policy with regard to immigration and naturalization. He notes that even during periods of extreme nativism and strong anti-Catholicism, Americans had "great confidence in the power of American principles, institutions, and environment to transform foreigners into acceptable Americans." See Philip Gleason, "American Identity and Americanization," in *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980) p. 33. For other discussions of nativism, see John Higham, *Strangers in the Land*; Barbara Solomon, *Ancestors and Immigrants: A Changing New England Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956); and Ray Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (Glouchester: Peter Smith, 1963 [1938]).

then, became a central topic in public discourse.

In Chicago there was little consensus about what the Americanization process should entail, or who should be in charge of it. As confident as Chicagoans were about the general power and attraction of their Americanism, they rarely agreed about what exactly it was that made one an American. Not only did Chicago's prosperous white native-born residents disagree amongst themselves about what constituted a "proper" or "good" civic identity, but they were always challenged by the city's various working-class and immigrant groups, each of whom had their own ideas about how and when one became American and even more importantly what it meant to be American.[20] Starting

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[20]Prior to the 1970s, "Americanization" was a dominant theme, if not assumption, guiding American history. Historians generally defined "Americanization" as the process by which immigrants adopted "American" values, beliefs, and practices, eventually becoming "assimilated" into American society. Social and ethnic historians writing in the 1970s and 1980s rightfully questioned the usefulness of both Americanization and assimilation, arguing instead that it was only by focusing on the characteristics unique to each immigrant group that one could truly understand immigrant life and community. In recent years the concepts assimilation and Americanization have received renewed attention. In "Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History," Russell Kazel argues that these concepts have become popular again (although in changed form) because they allow historians to study such issues as cross ethnic working-class alliances. *American Historical Review*, Vol.100 (April 1995): 437-471. In "Americanization from the Bottom Up: Immigrants and the Remaking of the Working Class in the United States, 1880-1930," James Barrett has shown that the working class had its own understanding of Americanization, an understanding that can provide historians insight into the ways class relations were constructed. *Journal of American History*, Vol. 79 (December 1992): 996-1020. Even more recently, James Barrett and David Roediger have examined the issue of Americanization by looking at how notions of "whiteness" affected how and when various immigrant groups came to be viewed as "American." They argue that "for immigrant workers the process of 'becoming white' and 'becoming American' were intertwined at every turn." See James Barrett and David Roediger,"Inbetween Peoples: Race, Nationality, and the "New Immigrant" Working Class" *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol.16 (Spring 1997): 3-45. Other recent discussions of Americanization and assimilation include the forum "Race, Religion, and Nationality in American Society: A Model of Ethnicity from Contact to Assimilation," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 14 (Winter 1995). For a discussion of Americanization and settlements, see Rivka Lissak, *Pluralism and*

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in the late 1880s, the issue of Americanization provided a terrain upon which various urban actors, including city missionaries, settlement house workers, civic club members as well as immigrants and members of the working class mapped out and debated their beliefs about what constituted an acceptable and truly "American" civic identity. These different ideas about civic identity are significant because they show how various groups had competing visions of what it meant to be American, visions which were shaped by class, race, ethnicity, gender, and religion. Most importantly, because speaking on the issue of Americanization was a way to claim the right to shape the city's ever-changing public order, to claim the city as one's own, these debates tell us much about the making of public life in Chicago.

This chapter sheds light on the city's public discussions concerning Americanization by focusing on the "Americanization" work of two Chicago city missionary societies: the Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the City Missionary Society (affiliated loosely with the Congregational Church). Although historians have long acknowledged that most white middle and upper middle-class native-born Americans envisioned the United States as a Protestant nation, few have considered seriously and specifically how religion affected

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Progressives: Hull House and the New Immigrants, 1890-1919 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989). In the twentieth century both employers and the federal government became key actors in Americanization campaigns. On corporate Americanization, see Gerd Korman, "Americanization at the Factory Gate," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, Vol. 18 (1965):396-419; Stephen Meyer, "Adapting the Immigrant to the Line: Americanization in the Ford Factory, 1914-1921," *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 14 (1980):67-82. For A discussion of the federal government, see John F. McClymer, "The Federal Government and the Americanization Movement, 1915-1924," *Prologue: The Journal of the National Archives*, Vol. 10 (Spring 1978): 22-41.

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the public discussions surrounding Americanization.[21] Even more generally, urban historians have failed to recognize that urban citizens drew on their religious beliefs to make sense of the city and their place within it. Historians have tended to regard class, ethnicity, and gender as somehow more real; when religion is discussed it is usually "treated simply as a variable that stands for something else---race, ethnicity, or social class."[22] Instead of privileging ethnicity, class, and gender over religion, this chapter will show that the city missionaries' understandings of citizenship most generally, and class, ethnicity, and gender more specifically, were intertwined with, and mediated by, their religious beliefs.[23]

The lay Protestant men who joined Chicago's city missionary societies believed that Americanization and Christianization went hand in hand, that the processes of becoming American and converting to Protestantism were not only intertwined but inseparable. As Protestant men, they believed that they had both a civic and a religious duty to define the meaning of citizenship and to determine the shape of the larger public

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[21] One exception is James Jaros, "The Gospel of Americanization: The Influence of the Protestant Economy of Salvation in Defining the Ideal Immigrant Experience" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Case Western University, 1973.)

[22] Introduction to the Forum, "The Place of Religion in Urban and Community Studies, *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, Vol.6 (Summer 1996): p.107.

[23] For years women's historians have emphasized that racial and class identities and constructions cannot exist separate from gender but are, in fact, inherently "gendered." They have also argued the reverse, that gender identities and constructions are always mediated by race and class. Building upon the insight provided by these historians, I will show that the city missionaries' discussions and concerns about Chicago's class and ethnic conflicts cannot be understood without paying attention to the myriad ways that religion helped structure their class concerns, their understanding of ethnic difference, and their ideas about proper gender roles. For a discussion of the varied ways that gender, class, and race intersect in the world of work, see Ava Baron, ed., *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

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order in a Christian fashion. These native-born Protestant men hoped to use their city missions as a vehicle for shaping the civic identities of Chicago's growing working-class immigrant residents and as vehicle for making the city a Christian city. Yet as this and the next two chapters will show, women became increasingly active in the movement, challenging the notions that citizenship was coterminous with manliness and Christian Americanization a man's battle.

CITY MISSIONARIES AND CIVIC LEADERSHIP

In 1883, three years before the Haymarket riot brought the issues of immigration and Americanization to national attention, laymen from Chicago's Congregational churches gathered to form the City Missionary Society. Concerned about what they referred to as Chicago's "poor, vicious and neglected classes," these men declared their own city, which they commonly referred to as the "urban frontier," as Protestantism's newest and most important evangelical field.[24] At a time when most missionaries traveled either overseas to far away lands in Asia and Africa, or to the rugged American western frontier, these men were helping redefine the missionary field.

Though Chicago's city missionaries expressed confidence that they had chosen the most important field for their work, they nonetheless found it necessary to justify their work, to explain more fully than the western and foreign missionaries the necessity of their labor. City missions had been important in the United States since the early nineteenth century, but they were not as popular or as well-supported as were the foreign

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[24]City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1884.

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and western home missions. In contrast to western and foreign missionary societies which had hundreds of thousands of members, city missionary societies tended to be localized, depending mostly on local financial support.[25] Even those national home missionary societies which supported work in both the west and the urban arena tended to provide comparatively little financial assistance to the cities.[26] Within missionary circles, foreign and western missionary work in Asia, Africa, and the American West seemed somehow more authentic, more legitimate than work in America's cities.

Chicago's city missionaries defended their missionary work by claiming it was useless for Protestants to seek converts overseas, or in the American west, if the nation's cities had not already been secured. "Whatever else we do for the wide world we must

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[25] That the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society–MEC had in 1895 over 150,000 members, and over 6000 locals, provides some sense of how popular foreign missionary societies were. Carolyn Gifford, "Sisterhood of Service and Reform: Organized Methodist Women in the Late Nineteenth Century, An Essay on the State of Research," *Methodist History*, Vol.23 (October 1985) p.19. The emphasis which nineteenth and arly twentieth century men and women placed on both western and foreign missions is flected in the abundant secondary historical literature. For recent examples, see 'illiam Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign ssions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Susan Yohn, *A Contest of 'ths: Missionary Women and Pluralism in the American Southwest* (Ithaca: Cornell versity Press, 1995); Patricia Hill, *The World Their Household: The American ıen's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920* (Ann r: University of Michigan Press, 1985); and Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The h for Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University 1990). In contrast, there have been only a few major works dealing with city ns, most of them focusing on the early nineteenth century. See Carroll Smith- erg, *Religion and the Rise of the American City: The New York City Mission ent, 1812-1870* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971); and Lawrence Davis, *ınts, Baptists, and the Protestant Mind in America*, (Urbana: University of Illinois 973).

[26] For example, the National Evangelization Union of the MEC had as its primary "the evangelization of our American cities," but it did not provide the kind of o the cities that the western missions received from their supporting missionary s. See the *Christian Cosmopolitan*, October, 1899.

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not neglect home. While sending the Gospel to India, China, Africa, we must not forget our sacred duty and high privilege to lead Chicago's needy ones to that fountain opened by our savior."[27] Chicago's city missionaries argued that God had allowed widespread immigration to the U.S. so that "we may demonstrate to them [the immigrants] the value and power of Christianity."[28] The city missionaries described the city mission as an amalgamation of the home and foreign mission because it directed most of its attention to the foreign-born immigrant. It was the belief of the city missionaries that the nation would be threatened if the city was "lost" that led them to argue, "Chicago today is the field of the greatest responsibility and the greatest opportunity of any on this continent and perhaps of any in the world."[29]

Like the western missionaries who saw evangelization and Americanization as a dual process, Chicago's city missionaries believed that they had the moral obligation both to proselytize among Chicago's immigrants and to determine the process by which these immigrants would become "American." Because Chicago had been torn asunder by class and ethnic conflicts, the city missionaries claimed that the success or failure of their endeavor would have even greater national significance than would the western missions: "It needs no prophet's eye to forsee that not only the moral and religious safety but our national prosperity is largely dependent on the moral force exerted in these great centers

[27]City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1888.

[28]*Ibid*, 1884.

[29]Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1889. These kinds of declarations filled the publications of the city missionary societies into the twentieth century. For example, see *The Christian Cosmopolitan*, November, 1911.

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[33]*Ibid.*, 188

of population."[30] Speaking of their work among Bohemian's, one city missionary stated: "This work is in Chicago; but it is no means for Chicago alone. Chicago is the center of Bohemian influence in this country. Whatever is done to improve, elevate and Americanize the 80,000 residing here will be felt in every colony in our great west and north-west and among the already 500,000 within our borders."[31]

Laymen who believed that the shape of the city's public order was their responsibility found the combined civic and religious messages of the city missionary societies particularly appealing. In contrast to western and foreign missions, where trained ministers often predominated, Chicago's city missions were distinguished by the fact that laymen not only provided the necessary labor but also the leadership. For example, the City Missionary Society (hereafter referred to as the CMS) was from its beginnings primarily a laymen's missionary society. Of the sixteen founding members of the CMS, 14 were laymen.[32] Rather than elect a minister to the position of president, the Society chose the successful businessman, Caleb F. Gates, a businessman who believed strongly that missionaries had a responsibility to "improve, elevate, and Americanize" the city's immigrant population.[33] The city's many civic-minded Protestant laymen who joined the CMS shared the view of Caleb F. Gates, that Americanization and Christianization went hand in hand, that evangelism provided the only real solution for Chicago's growing class and ethnic conflicts. "There is no force which has such power in

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[30]Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1895.

[31]Special Report on Bohemian Work, 1887-1888.

[32]City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1884.

[33]*Ibid.*, 1888.

restraining the passions of men from running riot as those sanctions which come from a gospel of Christ as the only salvation for men who are exposed to everlasting ruin."[34] More specifically, the laymen who flocked to this organization hoped to mold the civic identities of Chicago's growing immigrant population through the word of Christ, to situate themselves at the center of the debates then taking place about how best to shape Chicago's public order.

Caleb F. Gates sought to attract men to the city missionary enterprise who had traditionally not been active in the city's churches. In building up the manpower and financial resources of the CMS, he attempted to appeal to non-evangelical Christian businessman, telling them we must "permeate their homes [the immigrants' homes] with the gospel of Christ, because it will make them better citizens and render your property more secure."[35] It was precisely because the CMS was concerned with these larger civic issues, with having influence over the shape of the public order more generally, that the Society's first executive board decided to make the society non-denominational. By becoming non-denominational--even though most of the members came from Congregational churches--the CMS hoped to pull civic-minded citizens of all Protestant denominations into their organization.

Following in the footsteps of the laymen who joined the City Missionary Society, the Methodist laymen who controlled the Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church [hereafter referred to as the CHMS]

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[34] *Ibid.*, 1884.

[35] Caleb F. Gates, *A Christian Business Man: Biography of Caleb F. Gates By His Son Caleb F. Gates* (Chicago: Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society, 1892).

decided in 1884 to begin foreign missionary work in Chicago. Although the men in charge of the CHMS had already established twenty-two English speaking missions, they argued that this new foreign work was of particular importance because it, even more than the work directed to the English speaking native-born, would help "shape the sentiments and lives of the coming generations and stay the progress of vice and maintain the principles of sound morality." [36] Therefore, the men who joined the CHMS, like the laymen in the CMS, saw their evangelistic endeavor in civic terms; they believed that the very future and safety of the city, not only its religious state but its social and economic development, depended upon them.

Both the CMS and the CHMS gave middle and middle upper-class native-born white men a space to address, and thereby influence, Chicago's widening class divisions and changing ethnic and religious composition. The wider context of the city thus provided not only the backdrop but the very reason for their evangelism, particularly in the years following Haymarket. City missionaries from both organizations never made a distinction between civic society and religious life. "The vital force of the true church of God is her evangelistic spirit permeating and dominating the entire social and commercial life."[37] Referring to problems of labor unrest, a CMS missionary claimed, "No disturbances have come where our church work has been done for any length of time."[38] For Chicago's city missionaries civic questions were inherently religious questions just as religious issues necessarily had civic import. Both the CMS, the CHMS hoped to appeal

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[36]Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1884.

[37]*Ibid.*, 1897.

[38]City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1894.

not only to the city's traditional evangelical men but to "all citizens who would preserve our civil institutions."[39]

Even though the city missionaries belonging to both the CMS and CHMS often spoke as if immigration was only a recent phenomenon, "foreigners" had long made up a large percentage of the total population of Chicago. In the early years of the 1870s, 48.4% of Chicago's population was foreign-born. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s the foreign-born constituted between 40.7% and 41% of the population. When the children of first generation immigrants born in Chicago are factored into the "immigrant" population, the percentage of immigrants in Chicago rises to around 75% for the entire period of the 1870s and 1880s.[40]

While the number of foreign-born immigrants in Chicago during the late nineteenth century did not change much, and actually dropped in the 1880s and 1890s, prosperous native-born white Chicagoans became increasingly concerned in the 1880s and 1890s about whether the immigrants coming to Chicago could become a part of the civic order. While Haymarket was the key event which triggered these fears, they were also fed by the changing ethnic and religious make-up of the city's immigrant population. Germans comprised Chicago's largest ethnic group from the period 1870-1900, but Scandinavians, Bohemians, Italians and Polish were the fastest growing ethnic populations. Because the Bohemians, Italians, and Poles, if they professed any religious affiliation, were usually Catholic, every year the city was becoming noticeably less Protestant. By 1890, less than one third of the population was Protestant while over one

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[39]Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1889.

[40]Bruce Nelson, *Beyond Martyrs*, p.15.

half was Catholic.[41]

While city missionaries expressed concerns about the religious affiliations of the Bohemian, Polish, and Italian populations, they were even more disconcerted by the fact that many of these immigrants, especially the Bohemians, were allied with the Germans in labor politics, proving to be some of the most militant members of Chicago's working class.[42] With Chicago's population expanding noticeably every year, and with labor conflicts becoming increasingly frequent, the city seemed ever more unpredictable and volatile.

Though the city was overwhelmingly foreign and Catholic, lay Protestants continued to believe that their Protestantism gave them the right and responsibility to define the public order, that they were the city's religious and civic leaders. It shouldn't be surprising, therefore, that some of Chicago's most wealthy citizens, many of whom had been involved in the city's most violent labor disturbances, sat on the boards of both organizations. William Deering (associated with Harvester) served on the board of the CHMS and in its early years was consistently its largest financial contributor.[43] Lumber magnate Turlington Harvey and meat packing giant Gustavas Swift, both of whom also had contentious relations with their work forces, served on the board of the CHMS and contributed generously to its financial coffers. Although the CMS had fewer nationally

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[41] Kevin Christiano, *Religious Diversity and Social Change: America's Cities, 1890-1906* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) p.173.

[42]For a discussion of Chicago's working class and ethnicity, see Eric Hirsch, *Urban Revolt: Ethnic Politics in the Nineteenth Century Chicago Labor Movement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1990).

[43]See Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Reports*, 1885 through the 1890s.

prominent businessmen on its board, it too received financial support from members of Chicago's business elite, including most notably Philip D. Armour.[44]

While Chicago's wealthiest gave important financial and moral support to the city missionary enterprise, the men actually running the organizations on a daily basis and contributing the majority of the funds, came from Chicago's middle and upper-middle classes. Although the contributions of these middle and upper middle-class men, which ranged from 1-25$, might seem small in comparison to the thousands leading industrialists gave, when added together these smaller contributions constituted the bulk of the financial support received.[45] As such, these two missionary societies were connected to Chicago's wealthiest but shaped by the concerns and values of the city's middle and upper middle-class citizens, those citizens who felt that with the passing of each year that their hold over the city was becoming decidedly less strong. The city missions were thus especially appealing to those citizens who believed that they should wield greater power over the public order and public life than that which formal political structures afforded them.

By joining city missions with the explicit goal of influencing the shape of the larger public order, Chicago's city missionaries confirmed the widely held assumption that public life was ordered best when controlled by private citizens acting through voluntary organizations rather than governmental bodies. Historians of voluntarism have long noted that voluntary organizations became especially important in American public

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[44]See City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1884.

[45]See *Annual Reports* for the City Missionary Society (1884-1890), and Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society (1885-1890).

life during the decades following the civil war.[46] The notion that private citizens were more capable when acting through private rather than public channels had a particularly strong history in Chicago. For example, after the fire of 1871, the Mayor of Chicago gave the Chicago Relief and Aid Society, a private charity organization, full control over the monies donated to the city for the rebuilding of Chicago. In his recent work, *Self Rule: A Cultural History of Democracy*, Robert Wiebe argues that such practices were not controversial. He claims, "the assumption that America's public resources should eventually pass into private hands, already widespread before democracy arrived, acquired bi-partisan, holy fervor by the mid nineteenth century."[47] Using the example of the Chicago Relief and Aid Society, he adds, "even in the area of public order, government had relatively few responsibilities: citizens expected to manage much of that informally."[48]

Chicagoans were especially eager to participate in voluntary organizations because they had found it difficult to control their city through formal political channels.

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[46]Lori Ginzberg's *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* is one of the most insightful books dealing with the rise of voluntary organizations in the post Civil War period. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). Two recent interdisciplinary works on voluntarism which have helped shape my understanding of voluntarism include Peter Dobkin Hall, *Inventing the Nonprofit Sector and other Essays on Philanthropy, Voluntarism, and Nonprofit Organizations* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); and Richard Magat, *Philanthropic Giving: Studies in Varieties and Goals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). Dobkin-Hall notes that religious voluntary organizations have received the least amount of attention from historians, a fact which he describes as unfortunate in light how influential religious organizations were and continue to be up to the present day. p. 36.

[47]Robert Wiebe, *Self Rule: A Cultural History of Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[48]*Ibid.*, p.69.

The ward system of government made the centralization of political power impossible, making voluntary activity necessary for exercising influence over public life.[49] Not surprisingly then, the city missions were not the only private voluntary organizations laying claim to a public voice. During these years voluntary organizations of all sorts proliferated, including the Chicago Civic Federation, the Commercial Club, the City Club, and the City Woman's Club, to name just a few. The men and women who joined the above organizations shared the assumption that there existed a public good, that they knew what that larger public good was, and that they had the responsibility to speak for that larger public interest.[50] Even though the city's political life demonstrated clearly that notions of the public good were as varied as the city's population, middle class and upper middle-class native-born whites continued to act upon the notion that they were the city's civic leaders and that they could speak for the city as a whole. The city missionaries were particularly insistent that there existed a general singularly defined public good and that Chicagoans must share a common civic identity regardless of how fractured and diverse the population might be.[51]

[49]On the City Club and the Woman's City Club, See Maureen Flanagan, "Gender and Urban Political Reform: The City Club and the Woman's City Club of Chicago in the Progressive Era," *American Historical Review* Vol.95 (October 1990): 1032-1050.

[50] James Gilbert describes the 1893 Worlds Fair, Dwight L. Moody's evangelistic campaigns, and the founding of both Pullman and Harvey Illinois as efforts on the part of an increasingly insecure middle class to establish "ideal cities" within the less than ideal city of Chicago. *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). For more general discussions of cultural philanthropy, see Kathleen McCarthy, *Noblesse Oblige: Charity & Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago, 1849-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); and Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Culture and the City: Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago from the 1880s to 1917* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1976).

[51] Philip Ethington describes the decline of the ideal of a singular public good in *The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850-1900*

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The shared identity which Chicago's city missionaries hoped would unify the city's residents was not to be constructed democratically, or even collaboratively. They always emphasized that "this is our city, this is the city for which we will be held accountable at judgement seat."[52] Envisioning their roles as civic leaders directly connected to their obligations to Christian witness, Chicago's city missionaries never doubted, "The Question is not simply, will the unconverted be saved? But will we be saved if we neglect them?"[53] Having bound their religious and civic commitments, they asserted that "the only way to save our cities is to Christianize them."[54]

(Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1994). I should note here that the men who turned to the CMS and CHMS were building upon a significant but understudied tradition of urban religious activism in Chicago. Like the Northeastern cities of the early nineteenth century, Sabbatarian societies dotted Chicago's landscape from its very beginnings as a major city in the 1850s and 1860s. The YMCA was almost as old as the city, having had its origins in the mid 1850s. With the founding of the Salvation Army in 1885, and the Moody Bible Society in 1889, the city gained national attention for its religious institutions. The CMS and CHMS stood out among Chicago's Protestant voluntary organizations because of the overt ways that their members defined their religious work in civic terms. Most of the members of the city's other religious organizations were concerned with the shape of public order but commented only occasionally on the city's class and ethnic conflicts. Even Dwight L. Moody, one of the nation's most famous evangelists, usually refrained from making political and social commentary. James F. Findlay, *Dwight L. Moody, American Evangelist, 1837-1899* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969): Myron Raymond Chartier, *The Social Views of Dwight L. Moody and their Relation to the Workingmen, 1860-1900* (Hays: Fort Hays Kansas State College, 1969). For a discussion of Chicago's early Sabbatarian movement, see Karen Sawisklak, *Smoldering City*.

[52]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, July, 1898.

[53]Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1894.

[54]*Ibid.*, 1888. Historians have long noted the important role that Protestant voluntary organizations played in Northeastern cities during the early nineteenth century. For examples, see Nancy Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change*; Christine Stansell, *City of Women*; Mary Ryan, *The Cradle of the Middle Class*; and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Religion and the Rise of the City*. Much less has been written about Protestant voluntary organizations in the late nineteenth century, including Chicago. However, for an excellent discussion of Sabbatarian movements in the early 1870s in

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RELIGION AND THE PUBLIC ORDER

In 1883 Gates told the laymen in the CMS that city missions should "labor in and for the neglected districts of the city: districts where pawnshops flourish and absorb the accumulations of foreign thrift and often the gifts of charity; where saloons, with all their power for evil, keep open doors by day and night; where vice takes no pains to conceal itself and crime finds many a refuge."[55] By looking at where the CMS and CHMS located their foreign missions, and which foreign populations they targeted, we can better appreciate how the city missionaries drew on their religious beliefs to shape the larger public order. As we will see, early on missionaries conceptualized their city missions as a challenge to the public spaces which immigrants had carved out for themselves in the city; the city missionaries were most disturbed by the city's labor unions which occupied such a prominent role in those public spaces.

Even before the Haymarket riot of 1886 brought the issue of labor unrest to the forefront of public discussion, missionaries' fears about immigrant labor radicalism determined where they chose to locate their missions. At the inauguration of the Lumberman's Mission in 1883, a mission city missionaries established to minister to Germans and Bohemians, one missionary noted, "This is the locality where the riot of 1877 occurred, and the same dynamite element is there now--men who "fear not God neither regard man."[56] When missionaries built missions for Germans in the 1880s, they

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Chicago, see Karen Sawislak, *Smoldering City*.

[55]Caleb F. Gates, *A Christian Business Man* (Chicago: Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society, 1892) p.143

[56]City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1884.

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[60]*Ibid.*, 1

did so not only because Germans were Chicago's largest ethnic group but because they were one of Chicago's most politically radical ethnic groups.[57]

Responding to similar fears, the CMS built a mission for the city's newly arriving Bohemian population in 1884. Although the Bohemians accounted for less than 5% of the city's population, they were quickly becoming an important force in the city's labor movement. Not surprisingly the CMS explained its decision to build a mission for this ethnic group by claiming,"the Bohemian newspapers are teaching atheism, and many influences are at work which will make them dangerous to the welfare of the city and the state unless they can be brought under the power of the gospel."[58]

The CHMS, like the CMS, was also concerned about the influence Bohemians were having on Chicago and therefore decided in 1885 to build their own Bohemian mission.[59] One year later, in the wake of the Haymarket riot, they chose to establish another Bohemian mission, even though the Bohemian population had not risen significantly. They explained this decision by arguing that these two missions "urging the observance of the precepts of the Gospel of Christ, are the surest safeguards to preserve our city from anarchy and crime."[60] That these city missionaries were targeting select immigrant populations based on the reputation of their radicalism rather than the dominance of their numbers demonstrates that city missionaries viewed their evangelistic missions through the civic lens they brought to their work.

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[57]For a discussion of labor and ethnicity, see Hirsch, *Urban Revolt*.

[58]Gates, *A Christian Business Man*, p. 150

[59]Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1885.

[60]*Ibid.*, 1887.

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[64]*Ibid*, 189

Holding to the belief that Chicago's immigrants "must be Americanized and Christianized if we would preserve the civilization of our country," the CMS and CHMS established new missions almost every year in Chicago's working-class immigrant neighborhoods.[61] Between 1882 and 1892, the first ten years of the CMS, the organization established six German and four Bohemian missions.[62] The CHMS was equally active; by 1892 it had three Bohemian missions and four German ones, in addition to one Italian and one Swedish mission.[63]

The eagerness with which the city missionaries blended their civic and religious concerns and activities is demonstrated not only by where they placed their missions but also by the evangelistic rhetoric they promulgated. For example, by arguing that many immigrant men, especially Germans and Bohemians, were "unacquainted" with American principles and had supposedly brought anarchistic and socialistic ideas and goals with them to America, city missionaries infused their city missionary discourse with the political concerns and rhetoric then dominating public discussions in Chicago at large. Referring to labor conflicts in particular, one missionary stated what was certainly a truism among his fellow missionaries: "The everpressing question of city evangelization is rapidly becoming the uppermost thought among the thinking Christian public. And when the church of Christ will take upon itself the burden, care, and responsibility of our great cities, the problem will soon be solved."[64] While city missionaries used such

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[61]Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1888.

[62]City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1892.

[63]Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1892.

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language to gain support for their missions, it must also be emphasized that such rhetoric provided them a way to try to establish a place for themselves in the city's larger public discussions.

The rhetorical trope of the battle, a common Christian image in missionary literature, became especially prominent in Chicago's missionary discourse. City missionaries often warned their fellow citizens that "it is far cheaper and wiser to go with them with the gospel than have them come to us with fire and sword."[65] Yet whereas in most missionary literature the battle is only a figurative rhetorical device, in Chicago's city missionaries' literature the battle was understood as an imminent event. For example, in claiming that "the peace of our country is endangered so long as they are neglected, for Atheism, Communism, and a military organization independent of State control are a menace to society," the missionaries from the CMS were speaking specifically of the Bohemians who they believed "have among them a miliary organization with arms."[66] Although the missionaries had no proof that such an arsenal existed, describing their missionary endeavor in these militaristic terms allowed them to cast themselves as the city's only qualified warriors. Committed to the notion, "It is the power and influence of the Christian church these Anarchists most dread," the city missionaries attempted to establish for themselves a central place in the public life of the city. By focusing on the battle they were also trying to affirm that the city missionary enterprise was men's work.[67]

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[65]City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1884

[66]*Ibid.*

[67]For a discussion of battle imagery, see Donald Mrozeic, "The Habit of Victory: The American Military and the Cult of Manliness," in eds., J.A. Mangan and James Walvin,

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[70] *Ibid.*

[71] *Ibid.*

The city missionaries argued that the Haymarket riot would never have happened had the city's religious and civic leaders recognized their duties and responsibilities. For example, at a city missionary convention held in Chicago one month after Haymarket, one Chicago missionary stated before a large crowd: "SATAN, Fielden, Spies & Company were not slow to see that this district was the best in all the city for them to work, and in their work they displayed energy and zeal that it would be well for Christ's ambassadors to imitate." This missionary claimed to be speaking from experience: "Frequently Fielden attended our meetings for the purpose of breaking up the meeting, but without success. The last time he attended he arose and held the meeting for about fifteen minutes preaching his diabolical doctrine, his friends applauding most vociferously." The missionary added that once the audience recognized Fielden as a labor agitator they "hissed [him] out of the building."[68] Although the veracity of this encounter is more than a little questionable, it is significant that city missionaries discussed Haymarket in terms of the question of civic leadership.

The city's missionaries shared the feeling that "the city of Chicago has many obstacles in the way."[69] Foremost among these obstacles was that it was "the asylum for the unhappy, discontented, and oppressed nationalities."[70] Most importantly, "It is largely a foreign city."[71] While the Haymarket riot brought these issues to the forefront of public

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Manliness and Morality: Middle Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1880-1940 (New York: St. Martins Press, 1987).

[68]*Chicago Mission Worker*, 1886. Meeting for Mission Workers, June 16-23, 1886.

[69]Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1894.

[70]*Ibid.*

[71]*Ibid.*

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discourse, they were continually given new life as Chicago underwent other widely publicized events, including most notably the Pullman strike of 1894. Fearing urbanism in general one missionary made the claim, " These throbbing centers of population are rapidly coming to have an influence, such has never been known in modern times, unless in France."[72] According to another missionary, the fate of the city, as well as the "fate of the Christ of Church for the next five hundred years," was at stake.[73] This missionary believed that this issue "will be largely settled by the progress made in the moral, religious, and political reforms during the new twenty-five."[74] The city missionaries never doubted that "the battle is raging: the tremendous struggle for the supremacy of truth over error, righteousness over unrighteousness, salvation over sin."[75]

During the 1880s and 1890s nationally prominent Protestants also turned their attention to the city, making the claim that Protestant Christianity was the only effective ameliorative for the nation's many urban ills. Beginning with Josiah Strong's publication of *Our Country: Its Possible Future and its Present Crisis* in 1885 and followed by Samuel Loomis's *Modern Cities and Their Religious Problems* in 1887, the "urban frontier" captured the attention of the nation, especially Protestant laymen.[76] In *Our Country*, Strong described in great detail the threat he believed European immigrants

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[72]*Ibid.*, 1895.

[73]*Ibid.*

[74]*Ibid.*

[75]*Ibid.*

[76]In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, religious writers from various perspectives wrote about the "city problem." For examples, see Howard Grose, *Aliens or Americans?* (New York: Young People's Missionary Movement, 1906); and Charles Hatch Sears, *The Redemption of the City* (Philadelphia: Griffith & Rowland, 1911).

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posed to the nation's cities. What concerned Strong most was the influence immigration had had, and would continue to have, on the democratic life of the nation. Believing that the "typical immigrant is a European peasant whose horizon has been narrow, whose moral and religious training has been meager or false, and whose ideas of life are low," Strong questioned whether immigrants could become part of the larger civic body.[77] Underlying Strong's reservations was his concern that the Catholic faith of many of the immigrants was inimical to democratic principles. Like other anti-Catholic nativists, Strong claimed that Catholics made poor democrats.[78] While Loomis expressed greater optimism about the immigrant's potential to become part of the larger body politic, he too expressed concern about the democratic future of the nation. [79]

Even though Strong was popular among Chicago's city missionaries, they did not always share his fears. As the above discussion illustrates, Chicago's missionaries were concerned less about the threat Catholicism posed to democratic institutions than with the threat labor and socialism posed to the public and moral order of the city. Chicago's city missionaries believed that the Catholic church was actually losing its ability to maintain old members, much less attract new members. Gates, President of the CMS, frequently made the assertion: "The young Bohemians have lost all faith in the Catholic church."[80] The most important question for Chicago's city missionaries was, "As they throw off the Papacy, will they be made safer citizens by falling into the hands of atheists

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[77]Josiah Strong, *Our Country*, 53.

[78]Strong was confident, however, that if Catholics could be brought into the Protestant fold, they could become "good Americans."

[79]Samuel Loomis, *Modern Cities and Their Religious Problems*, 1887.

[80]Gates, *A Christian Business Man*, p. 154.

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THE POLITICS OF CONVERSION

Chicago's city missionaries hoped to shape the civic identities of the city's immigrant and working-class population by combining the processes of Christianization and Americanization, not so much because they feared Catholicism but because they feared the other "isms," most importantly communism, socialism, and anarchism. In other words, city missionaries feared the political power immigrant men could wield not because it was Catholic, but because it might be radical. Believing that converting to Protestantism would guarantee the destruction of the other isms, city missionaries saw the conversion of the immigrant working class as both a political and a religious transformation.

The relationship between citizenship and voting has historically been complex. Describing this history briefly will help contextualize the city missionaries' understandings of urban politics. In the nineteenth century in most states the act of voting was the exclusive right of white propertied men, the assumption being that only those who had a clear vested interest in the larger public good, represented by their property

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[81] I should add here that city missionaries hoped to shape the civic identities of Chicago's immigrants not only because they feared that discontented impoverished immigrants would add to Chicago's already militant working-class (and further divide the city along class lines) but because they believed that as long as labor unrest prevailed in Chicago, property itself would never be safe. A typical statement in this regard follows: "Thoughtful Christian men understood that just in proportion as the principles of the Gospel are promulgated, the safety and value of material possessions is secured." *The Christian Cosmopolitan*, February, 1901.

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ownership, were virtuous enough to act as independent voters. Because almost all women and men of color did not own property, and were therefore not independent, they were de-facto denied the most fundamental right of democratic citizenship, the right to vote. Historian Paula Baker argues that when in the Jacksonian period all white men were granted voting rights irrespective of their property holding, the association between virtuosity, voting, and property was undermined. The significance of voting changed significantly in the mid nineteenth century; rather than being an expression of the virtuosity of the propertied independent man, the act of voting became an expression through which men defined whiteness as virtuous and defined the civic as manly.[82] Even after the association between property holding and virtuosity was torn apart, white men were still able to exclude, both practically and theoretically, women's as well as black suffrage.

The association between voting and white manly virtue received its first assault, theoretically if not in practice, with the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment. The second assault came in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the arrival of millions of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. Perceived at the time as non-white, or at least not yet white, these "inbetween" immigrants posed a serious challenge to white male voting hegemony.[83] According to Baker, many white middle-class men and

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[82]On the changing public rituals and meanings associated with voting, see Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 89 (June 1984):620-647; Robert Wiebe, *A Cultural History of Democracy*; and Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Race and Gender in the United States: 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[83]The term "inbetween" comes from Barrett and Roediger, "Inbetween Peoples: Race, Nationality and the 'New Immigrant' Working Class."

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women believed that voting had lost its significance as a signfifer of virtue and even manliness because "universal manhood suffrage offered men incapable of manly virtue the rights of ideal citizenship; blacks popularly recognized as incapable of self-possession and new immigrants, widely viewed as incapable of self-reliance."[84] Universal manhood suffrage offered black men and immigrant men rights which had previously been the sole preserve of white men.

Baker argues that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries "the overlapping characteristics of race, poverty, and dependency among new citizens sharpened anxieties, breeding a moral politics aimed at reclaiming citizenship for old stock white men only." She claims that this politics made "race and nationality the new moral ratchets of citizenship."[85]

Chicago's city missionaries shared many of the fears about immigrant political power that Baker describes. For example, one of the main concerns of the CMS repeated time and time again by its missionaries was the possibility that the immigrant population "will defeat your will at the Polls."[86] The CHMS missionaries also made similar statements: "Our immense and heterogenous forcing immigration startles and alarms every Patriot...they all vote; they may destroy our institutions"[87] City missionaries feared that, "The future welfare of this great city depends upon the moral as well as the intellectual condition of these multiplied thousands when their posterity will have the

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[84]Baker, "The Domestication of Politics," p.96.

[85]Ibid.

[86]City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1885.

[87]Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1889.

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balance of power at the ballot box."[88] Yet, rather than seek to reclaim citizenship rights for white men only, both the CMS and the CHMS argued there was another solution: "They and especially their children must be Americanized and Christianized." The only way to do this was to "build churches and compel them to come in."[89]

Like most other native-born white middle and upper middle-class citizens, the city missionaries did not repudiate the notions that character and virtue were necessary for suffrage, and that voting should remain the preserve of men; they did reject, however, the notion that these traits were defined solely by one's race and class. Through the process of Christian Americanization, the city missionaries believed that the city's immigrant and working-class population would come to possess the virtue and character necessary for a healthy democracy. As much as the missionaries talked about the threat immigrants posed to the city, they were equally adamant that through conversion immigrants would become not only American but"true and loyal American Citizens."[90] City missionaries often claimed that even the Bohemians "make good citizens and first class Christians when converted to God."[91] The city missionaries remained optimistic that the newly arriving immigrants, if brought into the Protestant fold, "can make a genuinely loyal, decent, and respectable citizen" [92] Believing that the processes of becoming American and converting to Protestantism were intertwined, the city missionaries rarely questioned

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[88] *Ibid.*, 1889.

[89] *Ibid.*, 1891.

[90] Gates, *A Christian Business Man*, p. 169

[91] *Christian Cosmopolitan*, July, 1898.

[92] *Ibid.*, April, 1898.

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whether assimilation was a viable objective. Gates, the President of CMS, even likened his own conversion experience, and the conversion experiences of his fellow missionaries, to that of the city's immigrants: "Every such person knows from his own experience the renovating, purifying, elevating, and sanctifying power of the gospel, and that as it was the only thing that could change his character, so it is the only thing that can change the character of the neglected classes and thus cure the evils that afflict the city, state, and nation."[93]

By focusing on conversion as the primary determinant of citizenship, and hence manliness, the city missionaries set themselves apart from much of mainstream culture which, according to historian Gail Bederman was "obsessed with the connection between manhood and racial dominance."[94] In her wonderfully critical and subtle exploration of the racial discourses surrounding the term civilization, Bederman argues that "between 1890 and 1917, as white middle-class men actively worked to reinforce male power, their race became a factor which was central to their gender."[95] While the city missionaries accepted the notion of racial hierarchy as it applied to the social realms of life, they did not accept the notion that citizenship and manliness were the preserve of white men; instead the Protestant laymen saw citizenship and manliness as the preserve of Protestant men, white and non-white. Most importantly, the city missionaries argued that religion could bond men who were otherwise divided by race, class, and ethnicity. Gates thus called on the city's laymen missionaries by telling them they could "help permeate these

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[93]Gates, *A Christian Business Man*, p. 172.

[94]Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, p.4.

[95]*Ibid.* p.5.

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Bohemians again with the same influences that made Moravia and Bohemia in the 14th and 15th centuries so celebrated for intelligence, morality, religion and love of freedom."[96]

It should be noted, however, that not all native-born Americans were so certain about the ability of immigrants, especially the "new immigrants," to become part of a collective America. In the late 1880s and 1890s groups like the Immigration Restriction League began to question whether the racial identities and moral character of immigrants made them "suitable material" for the assimilation process. Guided by the tenets of scientific racism, they claimed to have science on their side. By arguing that the moral and cultural characteristics of all peoples were racially determined, those opposed to the open door provided a formidable foe to the city missionaries. Chicago's city missionaries continued to believe that ethnicity did not determine moral character and that moral character was not inheritable. It was precisely because they believed that the moral character of the immigrants was malleable that they held out so much hope in their missionary endeavors. [97]

While the ability of immigrant men to vote, and to use that vote to express their radicalism, challenged the missionaries' ideas about manliness and civic order, they did not reject the right of Chicago's immigrants to be part of the larger body politic. Instead, they hoped to shape the emerging civic identities of the immigrants by Christianizing and Americanizing them. It was based upon this strong optimism that the CMS decided in 1886 to begin publication of "Pravda," a Protestant Bohemian language paper. That the

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[96]Special Report on Bohemian Work, 1887-1888.

[97]See Higham, *Strangers in the Land*; and Solomon, *Ancestors and Immigrants*.

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city missionaries blended their evangelical goals and civic concerns is evident in the following statement: "It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the paper as an evangelizing agency. Its lessons on the character of our government are worth all its costs and its exposition of the scriptures are sowing seeds that will bear precious fruit."[98]

The missionary discourse promulgated by city missionaries at times seemed foreboding---they talked endlessly about the menace immigrants posed to the city. Like other Protestants who preceded them, the city missionaries used the rhetorical device of the jeremiad. However, it is important to keep in mind the significance of the jeremiad lies as much in what the speaker laments as in what he or she proposes as the conditions for a better tomorrow. By employing the rhetorical device of the jeremiad, the city missionaries established their own significance as society's saviors and therefore cast themselves as the citizens most able to influence the shape of Chicago's public order in a Christian fashion. As a rhetorical device the jeremiad has affected much nativist discourse precisely because it provides the rhetorical space within which to define both what is American and what is not.[99]

By claiming that only the city missionary "can effectively Americanize and Christianize" the immigrant population, the city missionaries were claiming for themselves the right to define the making of citizenship, to define the making of immigrant men's manliness.[100] City missionaries were united in the belief that "there is

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[98]City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1890.

[99]See William Katerburg, "The Irony of Identity: An Essay on Nativism, Liberal Democracy, and Parochial Identities in Canada and the United States," *American Quarterly*, 47 (September1995).

[100]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, April, 1898.

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no power that makes men over so cheaply into good, safe, contented, and happy citizens as the gospel of Jesus Christ as proclaimed through the Church."[101]

While city missionaries talked about uniting Chicago's political citizenry around shared religious beliefs, it must be emphasized that the city missionaries did not believe that all men were, or should become, equals socially, economically, or ethnically. Chicago's city missionaries were committed to establishing a political equality based on shared religious beliefs precisely because they feared the divisiveness of the other inequalities which they did not question. The assumption underlying the missionaries' convictions was that religion was the only one bond capable of creating a peaceful and whole social fabric out of many diverse threads.

SALOONS, PUBLIC SPACE, AND PUBLIC ORDER

The optimism the city missionaries brought to their city missionary enterprise did not temper their critiques of immigrant communities and their fears of an ethnically and class-based politics; instead this optimism actually fueled these critiques and fears. As stated above, Chicago's city missionaries were committed to establishing a shared civic identity based on a common religious commitment because they accepted political equality without questioning the other class and ethnic inequalities and divides defining urban life.

The city's immigrants who resisted the city missionaries' evangelism, as most did, were harshly denounced. This was most apparent in the missionaries' discussions of

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[101]City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1892.

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[102] *Ibid.*, 1

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saloons. "Our city is to be judged by her cancers as well as her churches, by her dens and saloons as well as her schools of learning. The saloon is the most brazen, shameless and destructive force we are obliged to meet." [102] Seeing the saloons as a competitor for the attention of the city's immigrant and working-class men, Chicago's city missions expended considerable energy on the issue of temperance, denouncing the saloon as an impediment to their vision of a Protestant public order.

The city missionaries were right on one account, the saloon was a central part of immigrant and working-class life. Especially after 1886, when the immigrant and working-class population found its access to public spaces greatly limited, the saloons gained greater significance. Not only did the saloon serve alcohol, and provide a place of leisure, it increasingly became the center of immigrant and working-class life, serving critical economic, social, and political functions. Functioning alternately and sometimes simultaneously as bank, union hall, political hall, and place of leisure, the saloon provided the immigrants and working class with a critical space in urban Chicago, a place beyond the purview of the city's middle class and upper-class men.[103]

City missionaries were concerned about saloons, in large part, because of the political and social roles they played. Not only did individuals running for office often frequent the saloon, but it was not unusual for political parties to hold their meetings in them. It also was not uncommon to find the saloon keeper serving as an alderman,

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[102]*Ibid.*, 1888.

[103]See Perry Duis, *The Saloon and Public Drinking in Chicago and Boston, 1880-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983) and James Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicago's Packinghouse Workers, 1894-1922* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

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although the chances of him doing so declined markedly in the 1880s and 1890s. Finally, and most disturbing to the city missionaries, was the fact that it is estimated that one half of all polling paces were inside or near saloons.[104] Considering the significant political functions the saloon served, a University of Chicago settlement worker commented despairingly that the saloon keeper was, along "with the ward politician the only interpreter of American institutions.[105] Chicago's city missionaries worried that the saloon, because it was so important to the immigrant and working-class population, was becoming a defining feature of public life itself.

Equally significant, city missionaries believed that intemperance was a moral individual failing which caused other larger societal ills including labor unrest and urban poverty. Referring to intemperance, The *Advance*, Chicago's weekly Congregational paper claimed, "There is no oppression, no cruelty, no wasting devastation, like that of the damning passion for drink."[106] As labor radicalism became a central issue dominating public discussion in the 1880s and 1890s, the "liquor problem" also gained significant attention. Chicago's city missionaries were not alone in equating the "liquor problem" with the "labor problem." The city missionary who claimed that "the liquor problem is a phase of the labor problem. The solution of the liquor problem will not entirely solve the labor problem, but it will go far toward doing so and the latter cannot be solved before the other has been solved" expressed a commonly held belief.[107]

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[104]Duis, *The Saloon and Public Drinking*, Ch.4.

[105]*Ibid.*, p.127.

[106] *Advance*, December 27, 1894.

[107]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, July 1899.

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By providing a space where workers could meet, and strikers organize, the saloons were, in fact, one of the only safe places in the city for laborers. City missionaries, believing that it was primarily in the saloons that the socialistic and anarchistic ideas of immigrants were formulated and spread, focused on the saloon as a principle threat to their vision of the Christian city. In their quest to fight the saloons, they received generous support from Chicago businessmen eager to discourage union activities. In 1888 a Chicago-based steel car company asked the CHMS to establish a mission near its plant for its employees, hoping that such a mission would "aid in securing the most desirable citizens and in shaping the intellectual and moral tendencies of the community."[108] Gustavas Swift also gave money for evangelistic work to be conducted on 47th Street right next to his stockyards on the South side, his hope being that the mission might diminish the influence of the saloon.[109]

In addition to establishing missions near saloons, city missionaries distributed temperance literature and engaged in city-wide temperance demonstrations. These city missionaries hoped that they could, through moral suasion, supplant the saloon. Through their temperance demonstrations they hoped to gain a greater hold over the public spaces of the city. For example, in the summer of 1894 the temperance forces of the city joined together for a city-wide demonstration.

Even more important than these public demonstrations were the Boys Temperance Unions held in the missions. At the Boys Unions sponsored by the CMS Bohemian missions, the boys gathered weekly to "read the bible" and "listen to its

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[108]Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1888.

[109]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, August 1899.

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stories." The boys were also expected to "give an account of what they have been doing, [and] listen to a talk on some patriotic or otherwise instructive subject."[110] Most importantly, the boys took temperance pledges and were encouraged to invite other boys to attend the meetings. One missionary explained the necessity for these Temperance Unions by stating that the saloon "gets the boy and man and holds them both; it dictates the principles of its victory, telling him how to vote, dominates his life, and digs for him an early paupers grave."[111]

What seems surprising about the city missionary temperance activity is that most missionaries depended on moral suasion rather than legal coercion as their main tactic. The city missionary belief that it was the desire and not the availability of alcoholic beverages which was the true underlying cause for intemperance might have made moral suasion seem a more effective tactic. An even better explanation for the kinds of temperance activities within which the city missionaries engaged is the fact that legal channels had been proven difficult to pursue.[112] Not only did the majority of the population oppose Sunday closing laws but the city had come to depend heavily upon the revenues raised by the saloon business. In order to operate legally, saloons were required to obtain a license from the municipal office. This revenue was crucial for the city. In 1886 it comprised 12.4 % of all city revenue, and by 1906, when the fee was raised from

[110]City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1888.

[111]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, April 1898.

[112]Not only had most of the Sunday closing campaigns conducted in Chicago been a failure, but the police were reluctant to enforce even the saloon closing hour laws. On the enforcement issue, see Duis, *The Saloon and Public Drinking*, pp115-118. For a discussion of the 1873 city-wide Sabbatarian campaigns which failed, see Sawislak, *Smoldering City*, pp. 217-259.

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500 to 1000 dollars, it constituted 22.1%.[113]

City missionaries grappled with the saloon question because it spoke to the larger issue of who would control the public spaces of the city and who would ultimately be responsible for shaping the larger, more general, public order. With the number of saloons numbering in the thousands throughout the 1880s and 1890s, and continually growing, city missionaries worried that the saloon was affecting not only the moral but also the physical landscape of the city. The *Advance* reported in 1895: "The saloons are so numerous, so prominent on the best street corners, so flourishing in the middle of the block and so thoroughly at home in a business way everywhere, that they seem to defy reform and unnerve opposition."[114] City missionaries worried that the saloon was attracting the native-born as well as the foreign-born. In particular, they feared that the "beer gardens entice the native American as well as the foreign element in our midst."[115] These fears would become even greater as the saloons added dance halls and music in the 1890s.

Chicago's city missionaries believed that if they could eliminate intemperance as an individual vice, and the saloon as a collective ethnic and working-class space, they would gain influence over the shaping of the larger public order. The city missionaries' response to the city's saloons was representative of their larger belief that through conversion, by becoming Protestant, the civic identities of Chicago's immigrants would be secured. Even more specifically, city missionaries were strongly committed to their

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[113]Duis, *The Saloon and Public Drinking,* pp.115-118.

[114]*Advance*, June 6, 1895.

[115]Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1889.

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belief that conversion was a religious transformation as well as a political and cultural one. Believing that the process of becoming a "good" American and converting to Protestantism were intertwined, they focused on bringing immigrants into the Protestant fold. Yet, it was impossible for the missionaries to succeed not only because they failed to provide the services the saloon offered but because it was an institution not of the immigrant's making. Speaking about the saloon's importance for working-class life one contemporary reformer stated that "all the charity organizations in Chicago combined are feeding less people than the saloons."[116] Rarely did it occur to the city missions that the wishes and desires of the immigrant and working-class population should be a part of the movement for establishing a Christian public order. Their failure to see the city's immigrants as anything more than objects to be reshaped, or as an enemy with whom to wage battle, is a central part of the story.

WOMEN REDEFINE THE MISSION

The early years of Chicago's city missions were marked by a strong optimism. Most of the laymen who labored in them were confident that "the Cure for all the city's ills is our Christian religion. Whatever the danger may be, its safety lies in our hands.... Good citizenship, faithful husbands, loving wives, dutiful children, righteous employers and contented workers are its [the bible's] natural fruits." [117] Holding regular Sunday services as well as daily morning and evening religious services–half of which were in

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[116]*Commons*, November, 1900.

[117]City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1888.

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foreign tongues–the city missionaries believed that they were well on their way to establishing their Christian city.[118]

However, there were signs early on that this task would be both more long and difficult than originally imagined. The CMS noted in its first annual report in 1884 that among its German missions "preaching in the German language has been maintained part time, but not largely attended."[119] Even more disturbing were the low attendance rates in the Bohemian missions. Between 1884 and 1888 the CHMS had established three missions specifically for the Bohemian population; however, the CHMS reported in 1889 that it had only 233 regular church members in its three Bohemian missions.[120] The CMS was plagued by similar problems. In 1886 the CMS employed two male friendly visitors to canvass the city's immigrant and working-class neighborhoods. Both of these men complained about the hostile receptions they received: "Very often [we are] answered in a most blasphemous way."[121] They were especially critical of the priests who they claimed expressed toward them considerable hostility, warning Catholics to stay away from the missions, and refusing "to receive as pupils any children who attend, or whose parents attend or worship, or who read our publications."[122]

To encourage the immigrant population to attend their foreign missions and foreign churches, the CMS and CHMS made important institutional changes, beginning

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[118]*Ibid.*, 1892.

[119]*Ibid.*, 1884.

[120]Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1889.

[121]City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1886.

[122]City Missionary Society, *Report of Bohemian Work in Chicago*, 1889.

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[123] *Ibid.*

[124] *Ibid.*

[125] *Ibid.*

first with an expansion of their "friendly visiting" programs. Yet rather than rely exclusively on men, as was the practice of both missionary societies in the early and mid 1880s, both organizations turned to the city's women. The CMS and CHMS were hoping that these women would be more successful than the male friendly visitors who had described the experience of being rebuffed at the doors by most of the immigrants they tried to reach. Women from a variety of institutions across the city including Chicago's Training School for City, Home, and Foreign Missions, the Moody Bible Institute, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) were recruited by both the CMS and CHMS to canvass the neighborhoods surrounding their missions. In 1889, the CMS friendly visitors made over 1780 visits, with Miss Rosa Stannus, a Moody Bible Institute student, conducting the majority of them. The CMS reported: "She has called on nearly every Bohemian family in a district of three-fourth of a mile long and one half a mile wide, containing more than one third of all the Bohemians in the city."[123] The CMS also had the help of Mrs Keller, a member of the local WCTU who was noted for having "visited faithfully, circulated Gospel Temperance literature, both Bohemian and English."[124] While the success of such friendly visits was often inhibited by language barriers--neither of these two women could speak Bohemian and thus they had to depend upon the children of the immigrants to translate their messages for the parents--the numbers of families reached by these women numbered in the thousands.[125]

The second major change the city missionaries made in the late 1880s and early

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[123] *Ibid.*

[124] *Ibid.*

[125] *Ibid.*

1890s was their conscious decision to direct more attention to the city's immigrant and working-class children rather than the adults. However much city missionaries hoped to convert the adult population, they could not ignore the fact that children had always been more receptive to their messages than adults. For example, at the same time that the First Bohemian mission sponsored by the CHMS found its work among adults flagging its Sunday school for children grew from only 75 students in 1886 to 344 in 1888.[126] Bethlehem church--supported by the CMS and serving primarily the Bohemian population--was even more successful, recording an attendance of 900 children in its Sunday School in the late 1880s.[127]

Explaining the different interest adults and children expressed in the city's missions, a missionary worker for the CHMS explained, "the work among the older people is slower on account of their habits and prejudices." This city missionary optimistically argued that in contrast "the work among the young people is not only encouraging but prosperous. They learn to speak the English language fluently and imbibe the spirit of our free institutions and when soundly converted, become hearty workers in God's vineyard."[128]

Though city missionaries were disappointed that immigrant adults remained cool to their missions and that it would therefore be difficult to "Christianize and Americanize" them, they quickly realized that in the children was a unique opportunity to

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[126]Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1888.

[127]City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1891.

[128]Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1896.

shape the emerging civic identities of the city's smallest and youngest citizens.[129] As one missionary put it, "childhood must be cared for, both from Christian motives, on account of its intrinsic value, based upon its immortality, and from Patriotic motives, for the safety of the city by forming the character of its citizenship."[130]

Rather than offer only a traditional evangelical program of Sunday school classes and Sunday services in their efforts to attract the children, the city missionaries expanded the social and recreational functions of their missions. A few of the city missions had offered social and recreational programs including gymnasiums, industrial schools, kindergartens, and day nurseries as early as the first few years of the 1880s. It was in the late 1880s, however, that the city missionary men encouraged the expansion of these programs, seeing in them a way to bolster their flagging missionary enterprise. It should be noted, however, that these missionary men did not want to replace traditional evangelism with social and recreational programs; instead, they hoped that the children attracted to the social and recreational services would also go to the missions evangelical programs.[131]

The success of this effort is demonstrated by the fact that by the early 1890s almost all of the city's foreign missions had put in place extensive social and recreational programs. The Bohemian missions sponsored such activities as kindergartens, boys'

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[129]On the history of Sunday Schools, see Anne Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790-1880* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

[130]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, January 1901.

[131]For example, the Lumberman's mission in 1885 had an industrial school conducted by Mrs. Adams with a weekly attendance of 180. City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1885. Ashland and Sedwick Missions, both serving primarily the German population, sponsored kindergartens in 1885.

clubs, reading room, gymnasiums, sewing schools, cooking classes, and women's clubs.[132] By expanding their social and recreational services, the city missionaries hoped to emulate the Young Men's Christian Association and the emerging playground movement, both of which actively supported play activities for boys and girls. As other historians have described, the YMCA and Playground movement organizers believed that organized play was essential for character formation, that organized play was essential for building a "good" citizenry.[133]

While city missionaries also talked about their recreational activities in terms of character development, they never lost sight of the importance of conversion, they never rejected the belief that the most effective and efficient way to become a "good citizen" was by converting to Protestantism. The larger civic and political import of the evangelistic endeavor was not altered as children became the focus of the missionaries. Explaining the decision to focus on children, Reverend E.A. Addams of the CMS described how "considerations of good order, good government, patriotism and the common wealth cannot afford to neglect the opportunity set before them."[134] The social and recreational services were viewed as necessary for shaping the moral development of Chicago's citizens, with the hope that they would be open to the missionaries' evangelistic messages.

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[132]See the *Annual Reports* for both the Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society and the City Missionary Society during the early and mid-1890s.

[133]For a discussion of the Playground Movement, see Cavallo Dominick, *Muscles and Morals: Organized Playgrounds and Urban Reform, 1880-1920* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1981). On the YMCA, see Emmett Dedmon, *Great Enterprises: 100 Years of the YMCA of Chicago* (New York: Rand McNally, 1957).

[134]City Missionary Society, *Report of Bohemian Work in Chicago*, 1889.

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That the city missionary men should turn their attention to children, to molding the emerging civic identities of children, makes sense. In many ways the motivation underlying this new focus was essentially the same as their earlier concerns with adult men: combining the processes of Christianization and Americanization. What was little talked about but of grand significance, however, was that women, not men, conducted most of these new programs for children. Not only did women teach most of the Sunday school classes but they ran most of the missions new social and recreational programs, including the industrial schools, day nurseries, and kindergartens. The male missionaries' decision to focus on children allowed Protestant women to become a greater visible force in the city missionary enterprise, forcing men in many ways to the sidelines of the missionary endeavor.

That the city missionaries, whose primary concerns in the early and mid 1880s were with the shaping of the larger public order and the making of immigrant men's civic identities, should decide to focus on children and turn to women to conduct this work seems at first more than a little ironic. This irony is most visible by the fact that the masculine battle imagery the city missionaries expounded in their literature in the mid 1880s was still the dominant rhetorical motif, a motif which failed to fit with the new programs and women providing them. However, it must be noted that the male city missionaries could not ignore the fact that evangelization among adult men had been a dismal failure. Focusing on Chicago's future generation of citizens only seemed natural; that fact that women had traditionally been Sunday school teachers and were the "natural" caretakers of children made them the obvious program providers.

While one might expect that men as a group would have resisted, or at least been

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ambivalent, about the growing influence of women in this missionary endeavor in the late 1880s and early 1890s, it was not until the turn of the century that men voiced concern about the feminization of urban religion. These new social activities, and women's involvement in running them, were initially envisioned by the male leadership as the best weapon in their quest to evangelize the city. The city missionaries did not foresee that women would challenge the men's leadership as well as the assumption that men were responsible for shaping the larger public order. Because women had been active in religious reform during the early and mid-nineteenth century, it did not seem unusual that Chicago's city missionaries would call on women to aid them in their venture. Finally, it must be noted that these new programs and services, and women's control over them, did not radically alter the belief of the male city missionaries that conversion was the only basis for true and lasting change.

CONCLUSION

Speaking before a group of city missionaries in 1897 the president of the CHMS proclaimed what was probably a truism among his audience: "Unless the sections of our rapidly growing city are provided with the means of grace, and the youth of these localities are gathered into Sunday Schools and morally and religiously instructed, the time is not far distant when every outlying district will become a menace to the moral, religious, and political welfare of not only the city but the entire country."[135] The city, perceived as a "problem," a problem with implications for the life of the nation,

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[135]Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, *Annual Report*, 1896.

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dominated the political and cultural landscape of late nineteenth-century America. Not surprisingly a large number of the discussions which took place at the Columbian Exposition of 1893 centered on the city. Even Frederick Jackson Turner's famous paper on the closing of the American frontier, given for the first time in Chicago that summer, indirectly addressed the "city problem." By lamenting the loss of the frontier, and discussing the implications of this loss for the democratic heritage and future of the nation, Turner might have made some who were listening to him question whether democracy could thrive in the nation's cities.

For the ministers and laymen who came to the Columbian Exposition to participate in the World's Congress of Missions, the "city problem" was also a central topic. Most of the ministers probably agreed with the reverend who stated, "the place of our cities, then, is the place where our greatest problems are to be worked out. They are our modern laboratories in which our experiments in political, social, and religious chemistry are to be made and carried to some definite conclusion."[136] In contrast to Turner, who assumed that the democracy's future in the city seemed bleak, those who gathered at the World's Congress of Missions engaged in heated debate over how best to guarantee democracy's survival in the city, how best to Americanize and assimilate the cities' growing immigrant populations. While there was much disagreement over how these objectives might best be realized, there was widespread agreement that democracy was tied to Protestantism, that "where there is not knowledge of God and his salvation

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[136]*Missions at Home and Abroad.* Papers and Addresses presented at the World's Congress of Missions, p. 54.

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The most conservative ministers participating in the World's Congress of Missions emphasized the threat the immigrant population posed to the city. Drawing on the anti-immigrant rhetoric then being promulgated by the Immigration Restriction League, many ministers talked about the threat of what they termed an "illiteracy of morals." For example, Reverend Hillis argued, "illiteracy in morals must cease to be, or free institutions are doomed."[138] He continued, "The labor riots in our great cities have emphasized the fact that the one condition of the republic's success, and its sole safeguard, is the cultural and moral worth of the individual citizen."[139] To eliminate this "illiteracy in morals," another participant suggested that "the solution of this problem must be the joint work of the church and the state." He argued: "The latter should restrict immigration to those only who promise to become law-abiding, industrious, and desirable citizens; compel their children to attend the public schools, where they may learn what the privileges and duties of American citizenship are; deny the elective franchise to all who have not a sufficient knowledge of our language and political issues to cast an intelligent vote and suppress with a strong arm all disloyal demonstrations as not only absurd, but supremely wicked in a country governed by its own people."[140] By coupling political issues and religious commitments, and privileging their notion of Christian citizenship, these ministers not only provided a moral imperative for their conservative

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[137]*Ibid.*, p.314.

[138]*Ibid.*, p.117.

[139]*Ibid.*, p.126.

[140]*Ibid.*, p. 84.

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agenda but attempted to situate themselves at the center of the debates then raging about the future of immigration and the definitions of "good" citizenship.

Not all of the ministers who participated in the World's Congress of Missions agreed with the views expressed above. For those who were part of the burgeoning Social Gospel Movement, the problem of the city stemmed from the city itself, from the tenements immigrants were forced to live in and from the gross inequalities which defined the urban class system. Graham Taylor, Congregational minister and future head of Chicago Commons settlement argued, "when the churches become social settlements themselves in every quarter, doing week-day service for humanity, sanctifying the secularities of life, becoming of, by, and for the people, the city problem will be solved."[141] Taylor challenged the traditional evangelical presumption that bringing the immigrants and working classes into the Protestant fold was all that was needed to transform the city: "Faithful and effective as is our modern evangelism in its work for individuals, how rarely it transforms places even where it converts the most persons populating these city centers."[142]

In contrast to Taylor, the laymen who joined CMS and CHMS continued to believe that Americanization was tied to the process of Christianization, that the city problem would be solved once the burgeoning immigrant population realized the necessity of converting to Protestantism. By arguing that the civic identities of Chicago's immigrant and working-class population could be molded through the process of religious conversion the city missionaries were clearly rejecting the Social Gospel

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[141] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[142] *Ibid.*, p.68.

message of Graham Taylor. Yet by claiming that the moral character one needed to become a "good" citizen, and to exercise the suffrage, was tied to one's religious state rather than one's ethnic identity, the city missionaries avoided the strictly racial-based nativism marking many of the pro-restrictionist nativists.

At the same time that the men attending the World's Congress of Missions were arguing about how best to respond to the city, Protestant women gathered for a session entitled "Woman in Missions." That these women had their own meeting reflected broader changes occurring in Chicago's city missionary movement. The city missionary enterprise which had begun as a men's movement, with evangelization viewed as a battle, was quickly becoming a woman's movement, a movement emphasizing social services as well as conversion.

Though few Protestants talked about the city as a woman's domain–the city was still perceived by most as a volatile and threatening place that men were best suited to respond to–women were slowly but clearly redefining the city problem as one which they, as women, were best equipped to confront. While men still dominated the leadership positions of the city missionary societies–and theological conservatives had yet to see the full liberal theological implications of the women's social activities–women were expanding their roles in religious institutions and in so doing transforming the place of religion in the city. The next chapter examines women's religious activism, focusing on how and why the women who labored in the city's institutional churches and Protestant settlements began to view the city as theirs. As will be seen, these women had before them a difficult task; the men who had invited women into the city's missions became alarmed when women began to dominate and reconfigure the meaning and practice of

religious voluntary civic activism. Chicago's city missionary men had not been able to foresee that women would eventually challenge the assumptions underlying their city missionary endeavor, in particular the belief that civic and religious questions were the responsibility of men.

CHAPTER 2

A HOUSE OF ONE'S OWN: WOMEN IN THE PROTESTANT SETTLEMENTS AND INSTITUTIONAL CHURCHES, 1886-1920

In 1899 women affiliated with Chicago's Young Women's Christian Association established a settlement house called Association House on the north-west side of Chicago. While certainly inspired by Jane Addams, who has been heralded by generations of historians as the mother of the settlement house movement, the women who ran Association House openly challenged the assumptions she held about religion. In contrast to Addams, who feared that evangelism would alienate the city's immigrant and working-class population, the women of Association House claimed that evangelical Protestant Christianity was the only force capable of uniting Chicago's ethnically diverse and class-divided society. Under the leadership of Carrie Wilson, who headed the settlement for almost twenty years, the women remained steadfastly committed to the belief that their grandest purpose was to "bring every life that can be reached to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ."[1] Anyone entering Association house would have quickly realized that this was not your typical secular settlement, for the women displayed a banner atop the fireplace which read: "Jesus Christ is the head of this house."[2]

During the first two decades of the twentieth century evangelical women established over a dozen Protestant settlement houses, or neighborhood houses as they were more commonly called, throughout Chicago's immigrant and working-class

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[1]"Study of Association House," 1922, Box 294, Welfare Council of Chicago Records (Welfare Council), Chicago Historical Society (CHS).

[2]Association House Collection, Box 1, C.H.S.

neighborhoods.[3] Drawing on both maternalist and religious rhetoric, these women combined the evangelism of the traditional city mission with the social concerns and methods of the secular settlement house. During these same years, the women who ran the recreational and social services of Chicago's institutional churches also expanded their work, adding the same kinds of programs that the Protestant settlements had put in place.[4] Because both the Protestant settlements and institutional churches offered, among other things, kindergartens, gymnasiums, civic lessons, social clubs, and mothers meetings, they were indistinguishable in many ways from the nation's more famous secular settlements. However, the fact that they also provided religious services, meetings, and clubs, and infused their "secular activities" with religious messages, marked them as distinct.

This chapter examines Chicago's Protestant settlements and institutional churches, beginning first with a discussion of the role of religion in the settlement house movement, a movement which is usually described by historians as having been only rarely evangelical and always non-sectarian. I will suggest that religion was not

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[3]While the Protestant settlements usually went by the term "neighborhood house," not all neighborhood houses were Protestant. To be most accurate this chapter uses the term Protestant settlement house to refer to those neighborhood houses which were openly evangelistic.

[4]The term institutional church used here refers to those churches engaging in the institutional church movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The institutional church usually offered a wide range of social and recreational activities including, but not limited to, kindergartens, day nurseries, clubs, gymnasiums, industrial schools, and public health. For the classic works on the Social Gospel, see Henry May, *Churches in Industrial America* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949); Robert T. Handy, *The Social Gospel in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966); and Aaron Abell, *The Urban Impact on American Protestantism, 1865-1900* (London: Archon, 1962).

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peripheral to the movement but rather central to it; in particular I will show that the debates about religion which engulfed the settlement house movement as it spread across the nation were especially intense in Chicago where Protestant settlements and institutional churches were forced to compete with the nationally recognized Hull House.

After establishing the important role Protestant settlements played in Chicago the chapter moves backward in time to discuss briefly the late nineteenth-century deaconess movement, a Methodist women's movement which proved to be a critical source of inspiration for the city's twentieth-century Protestant settlement and institutional church workers. The rest of the chapter examines the women who ran Chicago's Protestant settlements and institutional churches, focusing specifically on the programs they developed for the city's immigrant and working-class mothers. I argue that these Protestant women attempted to define the urban realm as a woman's domain by melding their religious, social, and civic concerns, and by combining the goals of the traditional evangelical mission with the objectives and methods of the secular settlement. Yet because they trod on territory already staked out by the evangelical city missions and the secular settlements, they were often embroiled in conflict: attacked by traditional evangelical male missionaries who feared the expansion of this woman's domain and questioned by secular settlement leaders who argued that the evangelical focus of the religious settlement was not reconcilable with the larger social goals of the settlement institution. Even with this opposition, these evangelical women became increasingly active in the city's public life, claiming that as Christians and mothers only they had the moral means to shape Chicago's civic order in a Christian manner.

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RELIGION AND THE SETTLEMENT HOUSE MOVEMENT

In the late 1880s the settlement house movement, which had originated in London, arrived in the United States with the founding of New York's Neighborhood Guild and Chicago's Hull House, in 1887 and 1889 respectively. While Jane Addams self-consciously molded Hull House after Toynbee Hall, the London settlement which she had visited on her European tour, she expressed concern early on that the evangelical methods of this London settlement would not be suitable on American soil, largely on account of America's broad religious diversity. Explaining the necessity for excluding evangelical religion, Julia Lathrop, one of Jane Addams's closest confidants and fellow Hull resident stated: "It would be impossible to harmonize in clubs of men or women or in societies of boys and girls, as we constantly do, various religious faiths and nationalities, if we undertook any sort of religious propaganda."[5] Many secular settlement leaders agreed with Lathrop, echoing her concerns by asserting that "the settlement if it became a mission would at once alienate the majority of its neighbors, and thus defeat its specific end."[6]

Although Hull House was the nation's most famous settlement, receiving more

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[5]Julia Lathrop quoted in Ruth Crocker, *Social Work and Social Order: The Settlement Movement in Two Industrial cities, 1889-1920* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1992) p.113.

[6]*Commons*, April, 1901. Although I use the term secular to refer to the nation's social settlements which did not evangelize, I do not mean to imply that the men and women who labored in those houses were not faithful Christians. Most were devoted Protestants who openly acknowledged that Christian inspiration was critical for their work. These men and women thought, however, that evangelical and denominational Protestantism had no place in the settlement.

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press coverage than the nation's smaller Protestant settlements, it was far from a foregone conclusion that America's many settlements houses would be secular. In fact, secular settlement leaders constantly complained that "churches, missions, as well as training schools of various kinds have absorbed settlement methods so completely that it is difficult to make distinctions."[7] What was particularly disturbing to them was how "nearly every denomination of Protestant Christianity has its representative settlement." [8] This was certainly true in Chicago where in 1894 six of the city's eleven settlements were, in one way or another, affiliated with the city's churches.[9] What role religion should, and would, play in the settlement movement was a highly controversial and contested issue.

Historians have typically described the settlement movement as non-sectarian, pointing to Hull House and other secular settlements as proof. In contrast, most of the nation's secular settlement leaders recognized that they could not circumscribe the nation's growing settlement movement even though they worked in the country's largest and most widely known settlements and had control over the city's various settlement federations.[10] Across the nation settlement workers were forced to debate the merits and drawbacks of including religious services and programs in their settlements. For example, at a conference on the settlement house movement held in Chicago in 1896 it was

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[7]*Bibliography of College, Social, University, and Church Settlements* (Chicago: The Blakely Press, 1905) p.25.

[8]John P. Gavitt, *Bibliography of Social and University Settlements*, 1897.

[9]Graham Taylor papers, Settlements, Newberry Library.

[10]Even though religion was central in many settlements, it was ignored at the 1899 national settlement conference. See *The Commons*, Special Edition, January-April, 1899.

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reported that the question of religion provided the greatest divide. Upset by the vocality of the many Protestant settlement workers attending the conference, secular settlement leaders complained that in the discussions "there had been too much religion and Christianity." The Protestant settlement leaders countered by claiming that the discussions had suffered for precisely the opposite reason; in the words of one participant, "the Gospel had not been preached sufficiently.[11]

These debates about religion became national front-page news when Graham Taylor, a prominent Congregational minister associated with Chicago Theological Seminary, announced his plans for establishing a settlement house in Chicago. When Chicago Commons opened in 1895, both the Christian and secular presses described it as a Christian settlement house, the Christian alternative to Hull House. *The Advance*, Chicago's Congregational weekly, celebrated its opening by noting that it was "a Christian mission at home." [12] *Forward Movement Magazine* reported gleefully that "Chicago Commons leans more toward church methods than Hull House."[13] The highest praise Chicago Commons received, however, was from the Protestant paper *The Kingdom*, which wrote that Chicago Commons "is a social settlement possessing unique interest because [it is] openly Christian. Throughout the work is manifest the spiritual impulse and ultimate purpose which other settlements have thought best to conceal." [14]

Those who celebrated the opening of Chicago Commons as a Christian settlement

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[11] *Commons*, December, 1896.

[12]*Advance*, June 20, 1895.

[13]*Forward Movement Magazine*, 1896, found in Settlements, Graham Taylor Papers.

[14]*The Kingdom*, September, 6, 1895. Chicago Commons Scrapbooks, Graham Taylor Papers.

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were soon disappointed. Though Graham Taylor was a Congregational minister who hoped that the Commons would serve as a training ground for theological students and laymen and women who wanted to "render social service in connection with the church and missions," he had never intended Chicago Commons to be either denominational or evangelical.[15] Graham Taylor acknowledged that religion was the spirit underlying his work, but he, like most secular settlement leaders, believed that within the settlement open evangelism would always prove divisive.[16] Graham Taylor included Vesper services for the Protestants in the neighborhood, but he made it clear to all of the Common's workers that they were not to proselytize among their non-Protestant neighbors. Using such papers as *The Advance* as his forum, Graham Taylor attempted to assure the city's residents that Chicago Commons was thoroughly non-sectarian, even when it cooperated with Protestant churches.[17] In a letter Graham Taylor wrote to William Stead many years after the founding of Chicago Commons, he summed up his thoughts on the question of religion and the settlement institution: "If the settlement undertook to either encroach upon the prerogatives of the churches or to show preference for any one cult or creed by maintaining religious services itself, it would forfeit its own prerogative of being common ground for all, and might be promptly and disastrously

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[15]See the *Commons*, June, 1896.

[16]I should note here that even though Graham Taylor had called on churches to become engaged in settlement house work at the 1893 Columbian Exposition, he began to express serious concern by 1895 about whether the evangelism of the church was reconcilable with the social mission of the settlement.

[17]For an example, see the *Advance,* March 30, 1899.

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ostracized."[18] In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Graham Taylor became a vocal advocate for the secular settlement and used his nationally distributed paper, the *Commons*, to voice this perspective.[19]

In describing Chicago Commons as a Protestant settlement, the religious press had obviously failed to thoroughly research the settlement's activities or the intentions of its founder. The extensive coverage and enthusiastic response which the Commons received from the Protestant press is nonetheless significant, for it shows that among many civic-minded Protestants there was broad-based support for evangelical settlements. In contrast to Taylor, who believed that open evangelism would prove disruptive, many socially minded Protestants hoped to combine the social services of the settlement house with the religious messages and services associated with missions and traditional Protestant churches. Josiah Strong, among others, actively supported the establishment of religious settlements, arguing that "for the social settlement to neglect the spiritual is even a greater blunder than for the church to neglect the physical."[20] Workers at Marie Chapel, one of Chicago's most active institutional churches, questioned whether "the institutional and settlement work that does not lead to recognition of the great Author and inspiration of all

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[18]Letter from Graham Taylor to William Stead, March 8, 1918, Outgoing Letters, Graham Taylor Papers.

[19]While Taylor believed that the Commons should avoid evangelical activity, it is important to note that this settlement was nonetheless more directly connected to religious institutions than many settlements, at least in its early years. In the first decade of the Commons' history most of those residing at the Commons had close contact with Chicago's Tabernacle Church, a church which sat next door to the Commons. Also, in 1896, the pastor of Tabernacle and his family resided at Commons and many of the settlement workers also worked at that church, running Sunday school classes, industrial school programs, and girls' clubs. See *The Commons*, November, 1896.

[20]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, July, 1905.

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love and compassion and helpfulness has missed the point of its highest mission---the mission of awakening in the hearts of the people the comprehension that it is because of the church of Christ that these blessings have come into their lives." [21]

Based on the belief that religion was necessary for reaching the city's immigrant and working-class populations, and for solving the city's class and ethnic conflicts, religious settlement house leaders often attacked secular settlement leaders for excluding religion from their programs. Even Jane Addams, the nationally recognized leader of the settlement house movement, was regularly criticized by religious groups, both Protestant and Catholic, who thought she had failed in her role as a settlement leader. For example, Isabelle Horton, head of Chicago's Halsted Street Institutional Church work, argued that "it is certainly regretted by many who believe the evangelization of the city to be one of the insistent problem of the times, that a woman so gifted, with logical insight into the conditions and needs of the laboring classes, could not have seen her way to undertake the solution of the problem of how to bring a vital and experimental Christianity to bear upon a community like that in which she labors."[22] In a similar tone, the Protestant paper *The Kingdom* complimented Addams for her "good work," but complained: "I don't quite understand her religious position. She seems to be a Christian without religion."[23] Chicago's Catholic leaders were most hostile, admonishing Addams by claiming that her settlement work was bound to suffer because she has not "a spark of the spiritual in her

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[21]*Ibid.*, September, 1903.

[22]Isabelle Horton, *The Burden of the City* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1904) p. 62.

[23]Newspaper Clippings, Settlements, Graham Taylor Papers.

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These comments demonstrate not only that the nation's Protestant settlements were thriving, but that the men and women who labored in them contested the definition of settlement work expounded by the nation's leading secular social settlement leaders. However, historians usually ignore these intra-settlement debates about religion because they too often assume that the nation's most prominent secular settlement house leaders including Jane Addams, Graham Taylor, and John Gavitt, spoke for all the nation's settlement workers. [25] For years historians have accepted historian Allen Davis's contention that the settlement house was by definition non-sectarian and that it developed largely because the church had failed to serve the social needs of the nation's growing urban centers.[26] The case of Chicago suggests otherwise.

Instead of turning over the reins of social service to their secular counterparts, Chicago's religiously minded sought to maintain and expand their influence in public life by melding religion and service.[27] In the 1890s, the early years of the settlement

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[24]Quoted in Charles Shanabruch, *Chicago's Catholics: The Evolution of an American Identity* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981) p.134.

[25]For an example, see Mina Carson, *Settlement Folk: Social Thought and the American Settlement Movement, 1885-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). Though Carson's book is a thoughtful, and much needed, intellectual history of the nation's leading settlement house leaders, she includes only those settlement workers who received considerable public attention and who were themselves prolific.

[26]Allen Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967). In this work Davis acknowledges that evangelical settlements existed but he chose not to include them as part of the settlement movement and instead designated them as "misguided missions." Following his lead, historians have, more often than not, chosen to exclude the religious settlements from their discussions of the movement.

[27]For a discussion of the relationship between religious and secular voluntary organizations in Chicago's West Town, see D. Scott Cormode, "Faith and Affiliation: An

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movement, churches throughout Chicago were instrumental in establishing settlements. In 1895 Unity Church, which since the late 1880s had been offering many settlement-like activities including a day nursery, sewing school, and boys clubs, founded Eli Bates House. Though the settlement was not legally owned or run by the church, the house was rented to the settlement by the church and it was widely known that "many of the workers come from that church."[28] Similarly, in 1895 All Souls church opened a settlement called Helen Heath settlement. It was reported that at Helen Heath "most of the non-resident workers are drawn from All Souls church, and the money support comes largely, though not exclusively, from the same source."[29] This trend continued into the first three decades of the twentieth century during which time at least six churches were involved in the establishment of settlements and six former missions were reconstituted as settlements and community centers.[30] Even settlements not directly connected to churches often relied heavily upon them for financial resources and necessary labor. For example, Gads Hill settlement was reported to have received significant support from Central church. [31]

Urban Religious History of Churches and Secular Voluntarism in Chicago's West Town, 1871-1914," Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1996. On the issue of evangelicals and social reform, see Norris Magnuson, *Salvation in the Slums: Evangelical Social Work, 1865-1920* (Metuchen, The Scarecrow Press, Inc., and the America Theological Library Association, 1977).

[28]*Commons*, January, 1902.

[29]*Ibid.*

[30]These houses include South Chicago Neighborhood House, South Chicago Community Center, Garibaldi Institute, Samaritan House, Christopher House, Firman House, Marcy Center, Onward House, Laird House, Erie House, Beacon House, and Bethlehem Community Center.

[31]*Commons*, January, 1902

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My findings reinforce recent work on the settlement house movement by Ruth Crocker and Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn. Focusing on Gary and Indianapolis, Crocker found that during the first decade of the twentieth century all of Gary's four settlements were religious (three were Protestant and one was Catholic) and all three of Indianapolis's settlements were openly evangelistic. She claims that this pattern was not unusual, and that in fact, a majority of the nation's settlements were affiliated, in one way or another, with religious institutions.[32] Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn's study *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Moment, 1890-1945*, confirms Crocker's contention that evangelical settlements were more active than historians have recognized. Focusing primarily on the South, Lasch-Quinn discovered that both Black and white southern church women offered a wide range of social services, little different from the settlements in the North. As a result of her findings she argues persuasively that we must regard the nation's institutional churches and community centers, which offered the same services as the more famous settlements, as part of the movement. If we fail to do so, she contends that much of the movement in the South will be ignored, as it has been for decades.[33] Recognizing that Hull House cannot be taken as the "representative settlement house," the works of Crocker and Lasch-Quinn push historians to seek out

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[32]Ruth Crocker, *Social Work and Social Order*, p.6.

[33]Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993) pp. 47-74. For a discussion of Methodist settlements in the American Southwest, see Vicki Ruiz, "Dead Ends or Gold Mines: Using Missionary Records in Mexican American Women's History," in ed., Vicki Ruiz and Ellen DuBois, Unequal Sisters: A Multi-Cultural Reader in U.S. Women's History (New York: Routledge, 1994) pp. 298-315.

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what Crocker calls the "Other Settlement Movement."[34]

WOMEN AND THE RELIGIOUS DOMAIN IN CHICAGO

When we look at the "Other Settlement Movement" we find that it was not only beset by religious/ secular strife, but that it proved controversial within Protestant circles as well. The women who built Chicago's Protestant settlement houses, and those who labored in the institutional churches during the first two decades of the twentieth century, not only had to confront secular settlement leaders, they also had to defend themselves against Protestant male detractors who assumed that the urban religious realm was primarily a man's domain. As chapter one of this dissertation discusses, Chicago's late nineteenth-century city missionary movement was primarily a men's movement; men dominated the leadership and masculine rhetoric shaped the movement's publicly espoused goals. Though women had begun to play a crucial part in the city's missions and institutional churches beginning as early as the 1880s, the assumption that the civic life of Chicago and questions of public order were men's responsibility was still widely accepted in many Protestant circles at the turn of the century. Therefore, female Protestant settlement and institutional church workers were not only battling for an institutional base upon which to pursue their public activism but also a rhetorical space within which to justify their work. Most importantly, they had before them the task of defining the public life of the city as an acceptable domain for women.

To understand how and why women were able to establish Protestant settlements

[34]Ruth Crocker, *Social Work and Social* Order, p.6.

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and expand their roles within the institutional churches during the first two decades of the twentieth century, it is necessary first to move back in time to the mid 1880s when Chicago's female religious tradition was first developing. Even during the 1880s, when the predominately male city missionary enterprise dominated the urban religious landscape, Protestant women were beginning to make significant inroads. In this endeavor Lucy Rider Meyer, who founded the Chicago Training School for City, Home and Foreign Missions in 1885, and the Deaconess Home in 1887, easily qualifies as the most important and influential female religious activist.[35]

LUCY RIDER MEYER AND THE DEACONESS MOVEMENT

Lucy Rider Meyer was not your typical Victorian woman. In the early 1880s she was graduated from both Oberlin College and Northwestern University and had secured a position teaching chemistry at Mckendree College.[36] Yet, academia was not her only pursuit, or even her most important one. For years Meyer had integrated her academic pursuits with her strong religious devotion, actively participating in the nation's expanding Sunday school movement. When she decided in 1883 that she must devote her life full-time to her religious faith, the Illinois Sunday School Association, not surprisingly, asked her to become one of its field secretaries. Though Meyer had hoped

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[35]For a discussion of the origins of the school and the Deaconess Home, see Lucy Rider Meyer, *Deaconesses, Biblical, Early Church, European, American with the Story of the Chicago Training School for City, Home, and Foreign Missions, and Deaconess Home* (Chicago: The Deaconess Advocate, 1897).

[36]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, November, 1910.

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that this new line of work would fulfill both her professional and devotional needs, it did neither. Instead, her brief experience as field secretary for the Illinois Sunday School Association led to greater discontent. What troubled her most was the fact that there were few opportunities for women to act publicly on their religious faith, especially compared to men. Believing that women were an untapped resource, a resource which could be used to evangelize at home and abroad, Meyer began making plans to build a training school for female missionaries.[37]

Along with her husband, J. Shelly Meyer, Lucy opened the Chicago Training School for City, Home and Foreign Missions in 1885. In Chicago there were no training schools specifically for women missionaries. Considering the great need for more missionaries both at home and abroad, and especially in America's cities, Meyer believed she was providing both an important service for her church and for women seeking a way to express and act upon their faith. Meyer hoped to provide women with the skills and experience to prepare them to take a lead in both foreign and home missionary fields. The women who attended the training school during the early years thus took classes to prepare them to teach Sunday school and to run children's industrial school programs. They heard weekly lectures on "medical literature" and Bible history to prepare them to deal with both the spiritual and physical needs of those they hoped to convert. During their training, the women were also expected to visit Chicago's poorer residents two

[37]For a discussion of deaconess training schools in three different cities, including Chicago, see, Virginia Lieson Brereton "Preparing Women for the Lord's Work: The Story of the Three Methodist Training Schools," in *Historical Perspectives on the Wesleyan Tradition: Women in New Worlds*, eds., Hilah F. Thomas and Rosemary Skinner, (Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1980).

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afternoons a week.[38] This way, by the end of her training, the student was expected to have a strong understanding of church history, to be experienced in Sunday school teaching, to have a rudimentary knowledge of medicine, and to have also had enough field experience to begin work either abroad or at home.

The women who graduated from the training school received much more than a mere "diploma." Instead, they were designated as deaconesses and, after 1888, recognized as official officers of the Methodist Episcopal Church.[39] At a time when it was difficult for middle and upper-class women to justify their involvement in the public life of the city, Meyer hoped that the deaconesses would be able to use their religious titles to gain access to public spaces, spaces which as laywomen they were discouraged from entering. By providing women with skills, skills which they could claim were necessary for saving the city, the school made the development of women's religious work in Chicago possible. Equally important, it also allowed them to come into contact with other like-minded women.

Though Meyer had begun this work with grand expectations, only two years after the school was established she expressed frustration that women's influence within the city missionary enterprise had not expanded as much as she would have liked, or as much as she saw as necessary for achieving the kind of public order she sought. Echoing her frustration, one of Meyer's supporters asked: "What is our Church doing? How patient our women have been in this matter! How strange it is that at present we have no place

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[38]Meyer, *Deaconesses*, p.115.

[39]Largely in response to the work of Lucy Rider Meyer, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church officially recognized the work of the deaconesses in 1888.

for the talents and ability of our women who wish to devote themselves entirely to God's work?[40] Although Meyer was well aware of the extensive work women were doing in the city missions, she was nonetheless frustrated that women did not have an even greater role in the city's public religious domain.

Hoping to create a new space for women within the public domain, she established "Deaconess Home," a place where women who"wish to devote their time to city missionary work" were invited to reside.[41] Unlike the city missions, where women had important roles but still labored under the ultimate supervision of men, the Deaconess Home was an all-female home, a place where women lived and worked without any direct male supervision. During the first summer of 1887 eight women took advantage of this opportunity, preceding Jane Addams' Hull House by two years. Considering the widely held assumption that men were responsible for shaping Chicago's public order, it should come as no surprise that these women were highly cognizant of the novelty of their endeavor, especially of the fact that there was no male presence in the house. Because of this, the women felt it necessary to defend the legitimacy of their home. Recounting their first night alone one deaconess described how only "four or more large, cold ,dark rooms, and a large dark hall separated us from the outside world." Playing upon the vulnerability that they, as women, were expected to display, she continued: "Having no man in the house, we---woman-like---feared one might come in. Our

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[40]Meyer, *Deaconesses,* p.150.

[41]That this venture was a woman's one is illustrated by the fact that $5000 of the $12,000 needed to purchase the home was provided by Mrs. A.M. Smith of Oak Park. Furthermore, the Deaconesses' fund-raising ventures usually directly targeted women. See Meyer, *Deaconesses,* p.164.

window shook, and every sound magnified our imagination." Yet, rather than let their fears get the best of them and abandon this adventure, she explains how the women "asked God to take care of us." Confident that he would, she described how "at last we slept, for the Lord has sustained us."[42] By making reference to the Lord as their protector, they were able to justify their independence from the men to whom they usually looked to for guidance, protection, and supervision. In this way it was their identity as Christians which provided them the basis upon which they, as women, could act independently in the city.

The deaconesses not only lived alone in the city but through their activities entered many of the more "dangerous" public spaces of the city. During the summer of 1887, the women living at Deaconess Home visited Chicago's poorest neighborhoods, praying with those who invited them in, and ministering to those who were sick. Special attention was paid to the children whom the deaconesses always invited to attend the city's Sunday schools.[43] By the end of the summer the deaconesses had made over 2700 home visits. Emphasizing the diverse people with whom they came into contact with on a daily basis, one deaconess recounted how on one summer day "we visited twenty-one families and met with Germans, Bohemians, Jews, and Canadians." Particularly intriguing to this deaconess was "the fortune-teller" who she reported "talked incessantly for 15 minutes."[44] By the next summer seventeen women resided at the home.[45]

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[42]*Ibid.*, p.157.

[43]*Ibid.*,p.153.

[44]*Ibid.*, p.111.

[45]*Ibid.*, p.191.

By establishing themselves within one of Chicago's poorer and ethnically diverse sections of town, and, more specifically, by walking the streets and entering the homes of the city's newest residents, the deaconesses were crossing class and ethnic divides which were, at that time, also gender divides. That is, while it was acceptable, or at least tolerable, for middle-class men to literally cross over and between the city's many class and ethnic divides, and still retain their class status, middle-and upper-class women traversing these same sections of the city were not necessarily granted the protection and status that their class and gender afforded them when in the more affluent sections of town or when ensconced within the private home.[46]

While it was the very vulnerability of women's identities which made deviance dangerous, the deaconesses flagrantly rejected the gendered nature of late nineteenth-century Chicago. By crossing Chicago's class and ethnic boundaries, the deaconesses were, in fact, helping to re-define what historian Sarah Deutsch refers to as urban

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[46]As Sarah Deutsch and Christine Stansell have shown in their respective works on Antebellum New York City and late nineteenth-century Boston, middle and upper-class men often traveled to the poorer sections of town, seeking entertainment or just the chance to "gaze." No one questioned the presence of these men and certainly no one would have suggested that such associations invalidated their status as middle- and upper-class men. The same was not true of women who could, when frequenting the poorer sections of town, lose the protections and privileges which their class and gender usually afforded them. As Sarah Deutsch states in reference to late nineteenth century Boston, the cult of true womanhood had "defined working class Boston as off limits to middle-class women." p. 206. In this way, one's class identity was not only tied to one's gender but actually gender specific. The many ways in which men's and women's gender identities were interwoven with their class and ethnic status's differed in that women's class identities were not only more vulnerable, but actually unstable. See Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1790-1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982). Sarah Deutsch, "Reconceiving the City: Women, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870-1910," *Gender and History*, Vol.6 (August 1994):202-223. On the issue of urban space and gender identities, see Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (London: Virago, 1992).

geography; they were challenging the notion that public life, and civic life more generally, were coterminous with masculinity. Chicago's deaconesses were able to challenge and transgress these boundaries, without the aid of men, because of the religious-based and very public identities they had created for themselves, identities made visible by the activities they engaged in and the clothing they donned.

Meyer required deaconess to wear a distinctive garb, hoping that such clothing would protect the deaconess from the perils which she saw lurking in the neighborhoods they visited. In her own words, Meyer hoped that their clothing would function as a "distinctive sign, giving its wearers the protection which is so well known to be extended to the Romish sisters of charity." At the same time, and equally significant, Meyer hoped that this clothing would abnegate or level the class and ethnic differences which separated the deaconesses from those they sought to convert and aid. In this way, the uniform was to be a "badge of sisterly union" which by its very humble simplicity would "prevent possible pain on the part of those who were poor." [47] The clothing thus marked the deaconess as different from the immigrants and working classes but not better than them; that is, the clothing was a symbol of the deaconess's religiosity rather than her class standing or superiority.

Yet while the clothing was meant to make class differences irrelevant, it did not directly challenge these differences, or even effectively mask them. Even so, the unique religious identity which Meyer constructed was supposed to allow the deaconesses to trod

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[47] Meyer, *Deaconesses*, p.192. As might be expected, Meyer worried that some might associate the Deaconess with the Roman Catholic nun. To make sure no association was made between the two she stated emphatically that the deaconess clothing "should be Protestant not Romish in character," *Ibid.*

where few women of their class had trod before. It was this very public religious identity which allowed the deaconesses to traverse these boundaries years before Jane Addams and other settlement houses workers would.

While the women who lived at Deaconess Home recognized that their work was novel, that their all-female urban home and the identities they were constructing were unprecedented, they often spoke of their work in traditional Christian terms. They often made the claim that, "we are trying to help the pastor in the multiplying of cases that drop on his shoulders." At the same time, however, they argued that as women and mothers they were especially suited to reach out to "the poor neglected women of this city," and to "help him [god] care for the children."[48] Though not hostile to the religious work men did, and never openly challenging the prerogatives of the ministry, the deaconesses were beginning to stake out the urban religious terrain as their own, to define the very meaning and expression of civic life as their responsibility.

Most importantly the deaconesses argued that it was their experience and roles as mothers and wives---roles which according to the dominant ideology of womanhood should have circumscribed them within the domestic sphere---- which provided them with the experience and moral character necessary for acting in public life. Instead of rejecting the larger society's dominant ideology of womanhood, the deaconesses used it to justify expanding their influence in public life. By playing on the notion that men and women were fundamentally different, and that women were inherently more moral than men, they were able to argue that they were in the best position to respond to Chicago's growing disorder, especially its class and ethnic conflicts. One deaconess, explicitly

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[48]*Ibid.*,p.154.

playing up on these maternalistic notions to show how she and her sisters were uniquely suited for the work, reported how on a typical day in 1889, "we gained admission into three houses by asking to look at the pretty babies."[49] Furthermore, these women often asked whether middle-class men could understand the plight of working-class and immigrant women, those responsible for raising Chicago's next generation of citizens, and whether men would even be allowed entrance into these homes. As one male supporter asked: "The homes of ignorance and misery in this great city, the thousands that are sick, the children that swarm our streets---do they not need the care and tenderness, the love and sympathy of Christian womanhood?[50] The fact that Chicago's city missionaries had initially decided to begin using female visitors in the late 1880s because of the hostile receptions the male visitors often received suggests that the deaconesses had more than rhetoric on their side.[51]

While the deaconesses were some of the first women in late nineteenth-century Chicago to articulate such notions, historians have described how women of the early and mid-nineteenth century had made similar arguments to justify their expansion into public life. Whether traversing New York's squalid neighborhoods in search of souls to convert, or joining their husbands in voluntary organizations, mid nineteenth-century women claimed the right to do so based on their identities as women.[52] The rhetoric which the

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[49]*Ibid.*, p.111.

[50]*Ibid.*, p.149.

[51]The Chicago City Missionary Society reported of their male visitor: "Very often he is answered in the most blasphemous way." City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1886.

[52]Among others, Nancy Hewitt, Mary Ryan, and Christine Stansell have shown how even in the mid-nineteenth century, when the cult of true womanhood had supposedly made the private and public spheres distinct and seemingly impenetrable, women often

deaconesses espoused was strikingly similar to that which their antebellum sisters articulated. Both groups justified their excursions into public life by making reference to the moral character that they alone as women could bring to public life. However, the context in which the deaconesses lived was dramatically different from that of the early nineteenth century.

In the 1870s, and 1880s, ideas about the relationship between gender, public activism, and most importantly, the city and public life had changed. During the last three decades of the nineteenth century, America's cities, and Chicago in particular, grew at unprecedented rates. Fueling this growth was the influx of immigrants; while most immigrants were still from northern Europe, including Germany most notably, the fastest growing ethnic groups were those from southern and eastern Europe, groups perceived by the native-born white population as threatening because of their Catholic affiliations and diverse cultural practices. Increasingly the city was seen as a place of danger, the site of

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crossed these divides by using the ideology of the cult of true womanhood to establish a place for themselves in public life. In *City of Women*, Stansell, in particular, shows more brilliantly than any other historian the many ways that New York's middle-class women used the notion of separate spheres, and the cult of true womanhood, to justify their involvement in antebellum reform. Hewitt and Ryan also describe these kinds of female-sponsored reform, showing that even in mid-sized cities where men's and women's spheres were not yet distinct, women justified their involvement in public life by referring to the cult of true womanhood. Though Hewitt, Ryan, and Stansell disagree about some very important issues, all of them argue that the notion of separate spheres, and the ideology of the cult of true womanhood upon which it was based, was more rhetorical than organizational. Susan Lebsock's book confirms the tenuous and ideological nature of separate spheres by showing that its popularity, as an ideology, actually increased in Petersburg as women gained more, not less, power in public life. Nancy Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822-1872* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), Mary Ryan, *The Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and Susan Lebsock, *The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984).

class and ethnic conflict. The city's growing ethnic diversity, as well as the rise of labor conflicts, conflicts which the native-born tied to the city's newest inhabitants, fed into native-born Chicagoans fears about the city. More so than at any other time in American history, class conflict was regularly front page news. Events like the railroad strikes of 1877, the Haymarket Affair, and Pullman, all of which took place in Chicago, made the city seem a more hostile place then ever before. The fact that native-born whites understood labor conflict as foreign inspired made the city an especially dangerous place for women.[53]

As discussed in Chapter one, city missionary men established Chicago's city missionary societies in the late 1870s and early 1880s largely in response to the city's growing urban disorder, and the city's class conflicts in particular. They viewed the cause of evangelism in class and ethnic terms–city evangelization was described as a literal war between civic-minded Protestant men and foreign immigrants, immigrants whom the native-born Protestants believed were intent upon destroying America's democratic and Protestant heritage. Because city missionary men believed that these contests over the religious and civic nature of the city were battles, they claimed that they, as men, were best equipped to fight them. In the late 1870s and 1880s city missionary men worked hard to establish benevolent work and religious urban activism as men's work. In this way, male city missionaries had justified their activism in explicitly gendered terms.

By also justifying their religious activism in explicitly gendered terms, the

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[53]For an excellent discussion of Chicago's volatile public life, see Carl Smith, *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief: The Great Fire, the Haymarket Bomb, and the Model Town of Pullman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

deaconesses were not only drawing upon the intellectual legacy of early nineteenth-century reformers but engaging the city missionaries on the rhetorical terms which the city missionary men had already established. That is, because city missionary men had claimed responsibility for shaping civic life based upon their "natural" abilities as men, the women saw the task before them as redefining civic life as a woman's responsibility.

In this way, the women who lived at Meyer's Deaconess Home, and those who attended the training school she ran, challenged the then dominant notions about the urban realm as being a man's space. By so doing the deaconesses laid the ground work for the explosion of female religious activism which took the city by storm in the first two decades of the twentieth century: first, by showing that they could act independently within the city, and secondly, by beginning to fashion a feminine rhetoric to justify women living alone in the city. Equally significant, the school provided an ever increasing supply of women prepared for religious work who, through the contacts they made at the school, were well prepared to expand dramatically their own influence in the city. By 1907 the school had sent a total of 233 women overseas and 1200 into the domestic field.[54] That many of these women flocked to Chicago's Protestant settlements and institutional churches is reflected by the fact that in 1903 alone twenty women from the school worked at the Halsted Street Institutional Church.[55]

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[54]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, June, 1908.

[55]*Ibid.*, April, 1903.

CHICAGO'S PROTESTANT SETTLEMENTS AND INSTITUTIONAL CHURCHES

In the Progressive Era, Chicago became home to over a dozen religious settlements and institutional churches staffed largely by women trained at the Chicago Training School. While it is difficult to establish the exact number of houses and churches in operation at any particular time (many left very few records and new houses and institutional church programs were established ever year, with others closing just as quickly) I have examined materials dealing with fifteen houses and four institutional churches, ten located on the west-side of Chicago, seven on the north-side, and three on the south-side. Because of the large numbers of women hoping to expand their influence within the public life of the city, these institutions never lacked the staff necessary to conduct their wide-ranging services. Located in those areas of the city with the highest immigrant and working-class populations, these institutions gave women the opportunity to play a more prominent role in the public life of the city than they had been able to play up to that point. Chicago's Protestant settlement and institutional church workers not only carved out a new niche in the public world, but like their Deaconess predecessors, they pushed further at the gendered boundaries of the city.[56]

Like the Chicago Training School and the Deaconess Home, the city's Protestant settlements and institutional churches were public spaces women carved out by and for

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[56]Most discussions of the Progressive Era have ignored these kinds of religious organizations, although the Social Gospel is credited as having been one of the most important inspirations for Progressive reform. For example, Daniel Rodgers states "In Search of Progressivism" that "when progressives talked of society and solidarity the rhetoric they drew upon was, above all, the rhetoric of a socialized Protestantism," *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 10 (December 1982): 113-132.

themselves. For example, when Carrie Wilson established Association House on the north-west side of the city in 1899 it was at the behest of the girls and women in the largely Scandinavian and German neighborhood who hoped to have a settlement of their own. That this was a woman's settlement was reflected by the fact that it was completely controlled by women; the first four residents were all women as were all the members of the board of managers. Even more important, in the early years, the house was reserved for girls and women; the playground was the only area open to boys.[57]

In 1905 women from the Women's Presbyterian Society founded Howell House, or what was often called Bohemian Settlement House. The women began settlement work by providing a kindergarten for the largely Bohemian population. By 1910, the program included a sewing class, a mothers' club, and a library, programs directed almost exclusively to the girls and women in the neighborhood..[58]

Included among the many Protestant women taking a lead in this new religious urban work was Mrs. Elizabeth Marcy, corresponding secretary of the Methodist Rock River Conference. Mrs. Marcy saw her opportunity to begin Protestant settlement work when the announcement was made in 1895 that the Bohemian mission located at 1335 Newberry Avenue was closing because of the neighborhood's changing ethnic complexion. Jewish immigrants were quickly outnumbering the Bohemians and the men who labored in the mission believed that their work could be best applied elsewhere. Believing that the Jewish people also needed to be exposed to the evangelical spirit, she

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[57]Association House Collection, Box 22, Scrapbook, CHS. By 1913 the ethnic composition of the neighborhood had changed, with Russian Jews and Polish Catholics becoming the majority. Association House, *Annual Report*, 1913.

[58]See Review of Howell House, Box 330, Folder 1, Welfare Council.

sought financial support from the Women's Home Missionary Society and Rock River Conference to continue this religious work. In 1896 Marcy Center opened but rather than continue with a traditional evangelical program, the all-female staff, which included eleven residents and twenty-nine non-residents, decided to offer a wide variety of social and religious services including Sunday School classes, a medical dispensary, music lessons, and sewing and civic classes.[59]

South Chicago Neighborhood House had similar origins. In 1911, women from the South Chicago Baptist Church responded to the changing ethnic composition of their neighborhood, and the rise of great poverty, by offering a sewing class as well as a Sunday school in the basement of their church. By 1920 they had moved to a separate building and had added a "club room, a library, a kindergarten and two resident workers" as well as a deposit branch of the Chicago library for the predominantly Polish Catholic population.[60]

While not all Protestant settlements and institutional churches employed women exclusively, as did Marcy Center and Association House, women throughout the city were expanding their roles in previously male-dominated organizations. This was the case at both Halsted and Lincoln institutional churches. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was largely because of the contributions of women that these two churches became two of the city's largest institutional churches; women ran the industrial school programs, day nurseries and kindergartens, in addition to teaching most of the Sunday School classes. Though many men were uncomfortable with the fact that the

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[59]Rock River, *Annual Report*, 1911-1912, p.69.

[60] "South Chicago Neighborhood House," Box 402, Folder 3, Welfare Council.

churches attracted more female than male volunteers, the influence and power women wielded in these two churches increased markedly as the twentieth century progressed. This was most visibly evident at Halsted where Isabelle Horton was named superintendent of the institutional work. Under her guidance, Halsted consistently employed more women than men, both as staff members and as volunteers. Though Lincoln did not have the strong female leadership of someone like Isabelle Horton, it too became primarily a woman's institution. In 1904, fifteen of Lincoln's twenty-six full-time workers were women. At least another twenty women, including seventeen deaconesses regularly volunteered on a part-time basis. If one were to factor in the other female volunteers who were often not recorded, the number of women would probably increase even more.[61]

Women gained a strong sense of proprietorship over the above organizations not only because they provided the necessary labor but also because they were instrumental in raising the funds which made the work possible. While some of the settlements and institutional churches received financial support from diverse bodies including the Women's Home Missionary Society, the City Missionary Society, the Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, and even national denominational missionary organizations, somewhere between 50% and 100% of their budgets were usually raised internally. For example, at Halsted in 1903 the Chicago Home Missionary and Church Extension Society provided $2500 while an additional $2500 was raised by the women through miscellaneous fund-rasing ventures.[62] At Association House the entire budget

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[61] *Christian Cosmopolitan*, April, 1903.

[62] *Ibid.*, October, 1904

for 1901 was raised through various fund-raising ventures which the women commonly referred to as the "contributions of interested friends."[63] Even Marcy Center, which received significant funds from the Women's Home Missionary Society, raised a considerable portion of its operating budget from fund raising drives. The success women achieved in these ventures confirmed to them that the city was, indeed, a woman's place.

Along with carving out an actual physical space in the city, Chicago's Protestant settlement and institutional church workers also had to rhetorically define the city as a woman's domain. What's interesting here is that even though these Protestant women had established a large network of very public institutions, institutions which provided a broad range of services including, but not limited to, kindergartens, day nurseries, cooking classes, gymnasiums, and public health, they almost always cloaked their excursions into the city's public life in maternalistic and domestic rhetoric. For example, at the annual meeting of the Home Missionary Society of the Rock River Conference, the conference that served Chicago and gave financial support to Marcy Center, the lead speaker spoke of the work the women did at Marcy as merely "the sacrifice of the homemaker." She described the women's extensive activities, including providing medical care, tending children in kindergartens and day nurseries, finding food for desperate families, and raising most of the budget, as "the moments snatched from home duties, the pennies saved from household expenses."[64] In a similar tone, a woman writing to *The Commons* justified her settlement work by claiming that "the secret of this is that

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[63]Association House Collection, Box 21, Folder 2, CHS.

[64]Rock River, *Annual Report*, 1908-1909.

the settlement is in the first instance simply an extension of the home in its finest conception and offers a field, therefore, in which the trained and enlightened woman has an authority which no one would think of questioning."[65] Rather than explicitly and publicly acknowledge the novel, and very public nature of their work, something of which they were well aware, they chose instead to describe their activism as an extension of their primary roles as mothers and wives.

According to historians Sonya Michel and Seth Koven, such maternalist rhetoric was common among female charity workers. Michel and Koven claim that the larger society's acceptance of such rhetoric led to "a curiously unstable matrix of mutually reinforcing yet contradictory values. On the one hand, women were enjoined to cultivate their womanhood within the home; but, on the other, they were urged to impress Christian values on their communities through charitable work. Inevitably, the practice of women's lives as charitable workers conflicted with the dictates of domesticity."[66]

Chicago's Protestant settlement and institutional church workers saw no contradiction between their rhetoric and their activism.[67] This is the case because the women in the Protestant settlements and institutional churches did more than just use

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[65]*Commons*, April, 1901

[66]Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, "Women's Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of the Welfare State in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, 1880-1920," *American Historical Review*, Vol.95 (October 1990):1085-1112.

[67]For recent work on maternalism, see Theda Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: *The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992); Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); and Gwendolen Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood: Inequality in the Welfare State, 1917-1942* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

maternalist notions to gain a wedge into public life; they claimed that reforming the family was the first step in reforming the city.[68] Among other things, they argued that the city was beset by rampant class conflict and ethnic antagonism because the state of the private family was in disorder; in their view children all too often ran rampant in the streets, fathers too easily evaded their financial and moral responsibilities, and mothers more often than not failed to provide the kind of stable home life necessary for raising Chicago's next generation of upright citizens. Envisioning the city as at base a collection of individual homes, they argued that to save the city it was necessary to begin first by reshaping and reinforcing the most basic of all social units, the family. Because mothers were viewed as responsible for their families, it seemed logical to Chicago's Protestant women to focus on them. For the mothers they offered a wide variety of services and classes including cooking classes, mothers meetings, day nurseries, and home visiting, all of which were devised to make the city's immigrant and working-class women into "better" mothers and wives according to the middle-class model of motherhood. [69]

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[68]In "'Go After the Women:' Americanization and the Mexican Immigrant Woman, 1915-1929," George Sanchez describes how Americanization programs directed to Mexican families often focused on the mothers because the Americanizers assumed that "the rest of the family would follow suit." In ed., Ruiz and DuBois, *Unequal Sisters*, p.288. For an interesting discussion of the home as an actual space and place in Protestant and Catholic thought and practice, see Colleen McDannell, *The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840-1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986). Her assertion that "the home was not only a private sphere unconnected to society but the starting point for shaping the public world" is particularly insightful and has influenced my understanding of the subject here studied. p. xiv.

[69]I do not mean to suggest that they were concerned only with mothers. As the following chapter of this dissertation discusses, the women who labored in the Protestant settlements and institutional churches were equally concerned about children for whom they provided a wide variety of classes and services including gymnasiums, industrial

While almost all Progressive female reformers, including suffragists, drew on maternalistic rhetoric similar to that of the Protestant women discussed here, maternalism had a unique meaning for Protestant women, a meaning not shared by most other women progressives. [70] For example, in contrast to suffragists, for whom maternalist rhetoric was appealing strictly on a rhetorical level–suffragists recognized that voting was an unambiguously public affair–Protestant women understood this metaphor literally. They truly believed that to save Chicago, to affect the shape of the larger public and civic order, one must begin by re-fashioning the homes of the immigrants and working class. This metaphor helped structure both what Protestant women said and what they did. In this way, their rhetoric was not just a means to gain access to the public but affected the direction and shape of their activities.[71] Their focus on the private sphere does not mean, however, that they ignored or were not fully aware of the public significance of their work. They recognized that the public and private existed in tandem with the one always affecting the other. Yet focusing on reforming the private sphere

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schools, reading rooms, medical dispensaries, and civic lessons.

[70]The popularity of the home metaphor is demonstrated in the famous article "Woman's Place is Home," by suffragist Rheta Childe Dorr. "But home is not confined within the four walls of an individual home. Home is the community. The city full of people is the family." She went on to argue that a "woman's place is Home, and she must not be forbidden to dwell there." Gwendolyn Mink, p.97.

[71]The view that the state of the private home directly affected and informed larger social and economic problems was shared by many white women activists outside of Chicago's Protestant community. For example, members of organizations like the National Congress of Mothers argued for Mothers' pensions by making the claim that it was only by providing single mothers with the financial means to stay at home with their children that the larger social dislocations of society could be addressed. Edith Terry of the YMCA expressed the significance of the home as a source of societal disorder by stating "to America the 'immigrant problem' is a great 'problem' of homes." Eileen Boris, "The Power of Motherhood: Black and White Activist Women Redefine the 'Political,'" In *Mothers of a New World*, p.232.

first, as a prelude to the public, allowed them to privilege their own roles as mothers and wives; it provided them a place in the city, a place which was difficult for others to questions because it was based on their "natural roles." Most importantly, by still claiming their roles as mothers and housewives as primary, Chicago's Protestant settlement and institutional church workers were attempting to legitimize their new public roles by the private roles assigned to them.[72]

RECONFIGURING FRIENDLY VISITING

In the popular media and in the minds of most middle and upper-class urban citizens, immigrant and working-class neighborhoods were dangerous places to venture. Any resident of Chicago reading the city's newspapers would have been reminded of this fact by the lurid details of urban crime and squalor described therein on a daily basis. Because the Protestant women running the settlements and institutional church programs not only traversed through these neighborhoods but regularly visited the homes which dotted these streets, they were in a prime position to help articulate, and thereby confirm, the culturally dominant notions about the urban disorder of the city's poorer neighborhoods. While their home-visiting reports reflected the popular obsession with describing, and thereby constructing, the immigrant and working-class homes as threats

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[72]I have been influenced by Sarah Evans's argument that "female activism in the free spaces of voluntary associations subverts classic definitions of public and private." "Women's History and Political Theory: Toward a Feminist Approach to Public Life," in eds., Nancy Hewitt and Suzanne Lebsock, *Making Women Visible: New Essays on American Activism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993). On the public private dichotomy see also, eds., Dorothy O. Helly and Susan M. Reverby, *Gendered Domains: Rethinking Public and Private in Women's History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).

to public order, their visits represented a departure from this literature; as women they thought they could build bridges to the city's immigrants and working-class women, bridges based on their shared motherhood.

From October 1904 to September 1905 friendly visitors from Halsted institutional church made a total of 2330 calls, with Isabelle Horton alone making 375 of them.[73] These "friendly visitors" not only prayed with the families, as thousands of urban "friendly visitors" had done so before, but they claimed to be using these visits to develop new relations with Chicago's immigrant and working-class population. Like their settlement sisters in the city's secular settlements, the Protestant family visitors hoped to avoid the hostilities and condescension that had traditionally marked relations between charity workers and the urban poor. They also tried to avoid the hostility which had traditionally defined the relationship between city missionaries and potential converts. The women claimed that they hoped to "be neither teachers nor preachers in the usual sense but friends and neighbors." [74] By living amongst the immigrants and working classes they were, in their perspective, attempting "to prove in every way possible that they are indeed sisters and that the Christian people whom so many of them now dread are their best friends."[75] While these visits were intended to be the basis of a new relationship between the middle class and the working-class and immigrant populations, one based on friendship between women of different classes and ethnic groups, they never challenged the existence of class hierarchy, or the economic practices that sustained

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[73] *Christian Cosmopolitan*, September, 1905

[74] *Ibid.*, April, 1898.

[75] *Ibid.*

such hierarchy. Rather they wanted only to alleviate the antagonism which defined relations between the classes.

These visits were also meant to provide Chicago's Protestant settlement and institutional church workers a window onto the lives of Chicago's working class and immigrants, a world most of them knew very little about but about which they needed to learn if they hoped to reform the city. In this way, their visits articulated and contributed to the popular obsession with working-class and immigrant vice, although from a distinctly gendered perspective. Focusing on the homes of the city's working class and immigrants, they remarked frequently on their poor state, expressing concern that immigrant and working-class homes, as physical spaces, were an impediment to the spiritual state of those residing within. For example, Halsted workers called for expanded visiting on the part of their deaconess by making reference to the "afflicted household."[76] Horton claimed that the alley and basement homes were the worst, the most "dark, dirty, crowded, and unsanitary."[77] Attempting to justify their excursions into these homes, she explained that "when sickness enters these homes there is no one to help. They have little idea of what to do and less to do with."[78] While these women drew on emerging notions of public health and the connection between civic order and health when describing these homes, they also interpreted these homes in moral and cultural terms. For example, upon visiting the homes of her kindergarten students, one of Halsted's kindergarten teachers described them as places "where ignorance, fretfulness,

[76]*Ibid.*, October, 1905.

[77]*Ibid.*, January, 1904.

[78]*Ibid.*, May, 1904.

and intemperance are laying the foundations for future depravity."[79]

Using the ideal of the private middle-class home as the standard, these Protestant women expressed concern that the immigrant and working-class home, because of its "public nature,"was anything but a real home and, in fact, was a threat to those residing within as well as the larger community.[80] Most disturbing was the fact there were no clear lines separating the immigrant and working-class homes from the neighborhood; the city's immigrant and working-class women and children could as often be found in the streets or at jobs rather than at home. Referring to children in particular, and noting the public nature of working-class life, Horton stated that "their homes offer little attraction---they are merely places to eat and sleep; the street is their playground and school of life." [81] Even more frustrating for Horton was the fact that there were very few private spaces within the home. She perceived this to be a threat to young girls who she assumed were vulnerable to sexual abuses. In reference to these girls, Horton claimed "the home itself is a source of danger."[82]

Horton was not oblivious to the environmental forces causing such squalor; in her reports she noted the insecurity of jobs, the low wages received, and the terrible environments in which the poor lived. Hoping to build sympathy among her readership for these families she warned that "you cannot wholly condemn the sister who fails". However, she always made it clear that these homes could be saved only by the

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[79]*Ibid.*, October, 1905.

[80]In *City of Women*, Christine Stansell provides an excellent discussion of the public nature of working-class life in early nineteenth-century New York.

[81]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, January, 1904.

[82]Horton, *Burdens of the City*, p.160.

intervention of women like herself: "doubtless they [the homes] might be made better, even under present conditions, were the mother wise and capable; but she is not."[83]

While the Protestant women disparaged the city's working-class and immigrant homes they visited, they described their own settlements and institutional churches as "ideal" homes. Referring to the women who lived in Association House, head resident Carrie Wilson commented: "the residents of the home live together as a large family and represent to the neighbors the best elements of a Christian home."[84] The institutional church was also described by the same rhetorical trope. This image of the institutional church as a "home" was advanced as early as the 1880s and 1890s when institutional church programs were first implemented. For example, when trying to gain support for building the city's first Protestant Bohemian church Reverend Adams, the minister in charge of raising the funds, told Chicago's public that "This Bohemian work needs a home of its own." He continued: "I wish to emphasize the word "home," for it expresses just was we most need." He added that this was especially important for the women. "Every meeting of the women's missionary sewing circle causes a change for the better in the whole appearance of those women. We could do nothing better for our new church than invite them often to spend an evening at our home. It would make them acquainted with each other on an entirely different plane from that on which they usually meet, and it would teach them, as no words can teach, what a home is."[85]

Protestant women, going one step further, asserted that they could save the

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[83]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, January, 1904.

[84]Association House Collection, Box 2, C.H.S.

[85]City Missionary Society, *Annual Report*, 1890.

immigrants and working classes only if they lived among them. As Isabelle Horton, head of Halsted Street institutional work would state: "The way to save the masses is not to stand aloof and administer bitter doses of prohibitions and anathemas, but to go and live the Christ-like life among them until they can catch something of its inspiration and power."[86] One of Horton's' co-workers echoed Horton's claim by arguing that their institutional work was more likely to succeed than the city's many rescue missions because they provided the "helpful influence of a church home."... and thus "make certain an upright Christian home." [87] Protestant women saw the settlement institution and institutional church as a way to provide those services which were absent in the immigrant and working-class homes and to inculcate the values of the private middle-class family to the city's immigrant and working-class families.

Even though their rhetoric was shaped by the home and notions of the home as a refuge from the public world, the Protestant settlement and institutional church workers were clearly playing a public role and extending their power into the public realm. In doing so they were challenging the larger society's ideas about the role of women in public and private life-- the idea that the proper domain for white middle-class women was only within their own homes. By arguing that they were providing a larger more important function by inculcating the values of the private home to others, they were able to transgress society's expectation of them. Thus the very public role they claimed for themselves was dependent upon the very ideology that they were escaping from but trying to enforce on others. These women believed that the private domain always had larger

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[86]Horton, *Burdens of the City*, p.51.

[87]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, January, 1903.

significance for the public order of the city, and that they, as leaders of the private domain, must also be the leaders of the public. By teaching immigrant and working-class women how to "remake" their homes in a "Protestant and American" fashion, the religious workers claimed that larger public issues including labor strife, ethnic divisions, and the Americanization process would also be addressed, indirectly yet powerfully.

DAY NURSERIES AND KINDERGARTENS

Day nurseries and kindergartens had been part of the social service programs some of Chicago's city missions since the 1880s.[88] During the first two decades of the twentieth century, most of the city's institutional churches and Protestant settlements here studied continued to provide these services. Of the 36 day nurseries listed in Chicago's Social Service Directory in 1918, twenty two were established and run by religiously affiliated organizations, nine were Protestant, twelve Catholic and one Jewish. Many day nurseries, however, were not included. When factoring other known day nurseries, the number of Protestant ones increases dramatically.[89]

This made the Protestant women staffing these nurseries unique among Progressive reformers because many of the nation's other Progressive reformers, including many secular settlement leaders, opposed day nurseries, fearing that these services would allow women to escape their private duties as mothers and wives. For

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[88]Halsted Street Institutional Church often claimed to have offered the first day nursery in the state.

[89]City of Chicago Department of Public Welfare, Chicago *Social Service Directory* (Chicago: Department of Public Welfare, 1918).

example, Hull House sponsored a day nursery, although reluctantly. Jane Addams worried that "the day nursery is a 'double edged implement' for doing good, which may also do a little harm." What concerned her most was that day nurseries might encourage poor women to "attempt the impossible"; they might try to be "both wife, mother and supporter of the family."[90] Supporting, let along offering, day nurseries was a controversial stand, perceived by many as a direct assault upon the family and the family wage.

How and why did Chicago's Protestant settlement and institutional church workers, seemingly conservative and traditional, concerned most with upholding the family, offer such services? Like all other day nursery advocates, these Protestant women did not support the idea of women working outside of the home, yet they felt compelled to offer day nurseries because they opposed the only other solutions then being offered to deal with single mothers, including orphanages and mothers' pensions. They questioned whether children could be raised in institutional settings and saw the orphanage, by the very fact it broke up families, as an assault on the family. They opposed mothers' pensions, which were popular among many Progressive women, because they believed that these monthly government disbursements were merely another form of poor relief. Their belief that any kind of direct payment to the poor would help create an under-class, and as such would ensure the continuation of class divisions, led them to oppose any kind of long-term poor support, whether private or public.[91]

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[90]Jane Addams quoted in Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood*, p.47.

[91]For an excellent discussion of the debates surrounding mothers' pensions in Chicago, see Joanne Goodwin, *Gender and the Politics of Welfare Reform: Mothers Pensions' in Chicago, 1911-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

On the surface, then, it seems that these Protestant women's ideological and practical goals conflicted; they talked endlessly about inculcating immigrant and working-class families with middle-class values, yet they encouraged and expected the city's immigrant and working-class women, who did not have husbands or fathers to support them, to work. The question that must be answered is how these Protestant women could claim to be teaching working-class and immigrant women about proper motherhood if they expected them to abnegate one of its essential tenets, domesticity. As will be shown, the day nurseries resolved this seeming contradiction. The day nursery was the solution for the problem of female-headed households because it allowed women to escape poor relief, and therefore government dependency, yet it allowed mothers to keep their families intact, a requisite for a stable social order. Equally important, through the day nurseries Protestant women gained an avenue to oversee and supervise the city's working-class and immigrant families.[92] Protestant women could therefore try to enforce their own ideas about parenting and religion on the city's most vulnerable, and in their eyes, potentially threatening families.

Protestant women hoped to use their day nurseries to teach the city's immigrant and working-class women how to be "proper mothers." They also saw the nurseries as an opportunity to shape the values and emerging civic identities of the children in their care. Assuming that the city's immigrant and working-class mothers would not be able to learn how to mother properly, and would not be able to raise upright citizens without direct intervention, the women described the day nurseries as critical for reinforcing

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[92]For an excellent discussion of motherhood, social services, and social control, see Ellen Ross, "Good and Bad Mothers: Lady Philanthropy and London Housewives Before World War I," in *Gendered Domains*.

middle-class notions of mothering and Protestant notions of citizenship. In this way, the nurseries allowed the Protestant women direct influence over the larger public and civic order by the contact they had with these families.

Not all other female progressives shared these Protestant women's ideas about day nurseries. Day nurseries were interpreted by many in the larger society as a direct attack on the family as well as the cult of true womanhood. Organizations like the National Congress of Mothers, which had locals across the nation, worried that day nurseries actually encouraged female headed-households and as such undermined the family ideal. To protect their day nurseries from such attacks, Protestant women had to make it clear to the larger society that they were not encouraging women to be independent of men but instead that their day nurseries served the larger public good, that they reinforced rather than undermined America's families. By depicting the women who brought their children to their day cares as needy and dependent women---women whose husbands could not work or who had deserted them--- Protestant women hoped to avoid these challenges.

According to the annual reports of the day nurseries, the laboring women who used these facilities were neither striving to escape their domestic duties nor challenging the place of the man as the family's appropriate wage-earner. These women were instead understood as victims of the cruel city: "Nothing sweet, nothing tender, nothing clean in their lives, no respect or help from husband, the woman is an abject slave."[93] The Protestant women explained that they had to provide day nursery services because men had failed in their responsibilities. Without the day nursery they claimed that children

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[93]Rock River, *Annual Report*, 1908-1909.

would be sent to orphanages or, even more frightening, allowed to roam the streets. Hoping to attract the working women to their day nursery facilities, most houses made conscious decisions to offer their services at low rates, or with no charge at all. In providing the day nurseries, the women of Rock River claimed to be responding to "the cry of helpless womanhood...the faint cry of the homeless, loveless waifs of the city streets."[94] One day nursery provider warned her critics that "To abandon the day nursery will not only deprive from twenty to thirty five children of its daily care, but will embarrass the mothers in earning the livelihood of their families, which involved the provision for the safekeeping of their children while they are at work."[95]

Considering the large proportion of Chicago's female population which worked, it should not be surprising that these services were very popular. Association House's nursery which began in 1910 reported that it had between 50 and 60 children daily, a full class.[96] In 1903, Halsted kindergarten had 84 pupils and 5 teachers.[97] During this same year Lincoln institutional church had both a kindergarten and day nursery with a weekly attendance of 55 at the day nursery and over 100 at the kindergarten. The kindergarten workers reported that "the kindergarten has enrolled from the beginning all the children it has been possible to accommodate, yet nearly as large a list of children are on the waiting

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[94]Rock River, *Annual Report*, 1911-1912.

[95]*Commons*, October, 1902.

[96]Association House Collection, Box 2, Folder 3, CHS.

[97]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, July, 1903. I should note that the kindergarten was more widely accepted among the general population than the day nursery. Chicago's Protestant women therefore tried to legitimize the day nursery by associating it with the kindergarten.

role."[98] In 1909 Lincoln had an aggregate attendance of 6095, "the largest in the history of the nursery." [99] Marie Chapel served over 135 different families and had "an aggregate of 6346 children cared for" during the first year of its nursery. [100]

While day nursery and kindergarten teachers celebrated their work as a way to keep families together, they also emphasized the larger civic import of their nurseries by making reference to the influence their work was having on the children. Isabelle Horton expressed this perspective when she stated that, "the day nursery and kindergarten give the first opportunity to catch the future citizen."[101] The lengths to which they went to reshape and mold these children's citizenship began at the most basic level with the very clothes the children wore. In most day nurseries the children were undressed and given new clothing to wear during their stay at the nursery. Marie Chapel highlighted among its services that at its day nursery, "the little ones of working mothers may be found bathed and in clean slips."[102] Bathing the children and donning them in appropriately clean attire was only the first step of many citizenship lessons. At the Marcy Center kindergarten, national holidays were routinely celebrated "with drills, games, and songs."[103] More generally, it was expected that the children attending day nursery and kindergartens would learn " habits of order, cleanliness, courtesy and obedience" and that

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[98] *Christian Cosmopolitan*, April, 1904.

[99] *Ibid.*, February, 1911.

[100] *Ibid.*, September, 1903.

[101] *Ibid.*, April, 1903.

[102] *Ibid.*, September, 1903.

[103] Rock River, *Annual Report*, 1907-1908.

these habits would "revolutionize, in many instances the habits of the home itself, and influence it always"[104] In this way, religious workers hoped that through their influence on the children in the day nursery and kindergarten they could begin to counteract what they saw as some of the city's working-class and immigrant homes and neighborhoods. This was particularly important because these immigrant and working-class children were Chicago's future generation of citizens. In this respect, the day nurseries and kindergartens were viewed by Protestant women as a fundamental part of the Americanization process.

Like the city missionary men of the 1880s and 1890s these women did not see Americanization and Christianization as two separate processes but rather one. From their perspective, Christian Americanization was the only true form of Americanization. Leading the child "to a proper attitude towards god" was thus one of the Protestant woman's most basic goals. Nursery and kindergarten teachers commonly used hymns and prayers to introduce the "smallest ones to the word of god.[105] One worker at Lincoln institutional church claimed that the most beneficial aspect of her church's day nursery was that through it "many little ones are being given a Christian home training."[106] A Halsted worker claimed in reference to her work with the children that "it is through them that the great mass of foreign population in Chicago will be assimilated, Americanized, and Christianized."[107] When the Lincoln institutional church day nursery was attacked,

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[104]Horton p.172.

[105]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, July, 1903.

[106]*Ibid.*, December, 1903.

[107]*Ibid.*, July, 1903.

the workers responded by stating: "What service could be more philanthropic and Christian, or receive a richer blessing from Him, who took the children in his arms and blessed them."[108]

The day nurseries were also devised to shape the mothering practices and civic identities of the city's immigrant and working-class mothers. Because it was a common practice for religious workers to visit the homes of the kindergarten and day nursery children for whom they cared, the Protestant women were able to take advantage of the day nurseries to gain what they referred to as "access to darkened homes and neighborhoods."[109] During these visits, kindergarten and day nursery workers tried to establish relations with these women so that they could influence their mothering practices; they showed the mothers such things as how to bathe and dress the children "properly." Commenting on the successes of such visits, Horton noted that "new parental manners" were learned by the immigrant and working-class mothers she visited.[110]

To reinforce the lessons of the home visits, day nursery and kindergarten workers also invited the mothers to come to their settlement houses and institutional churches for mothers' meetings. Women at Erie Institute, also known as Erie House, saw these

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[108]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, April, 1903. I should note here that these nurseries also provided extensive medical care. Marcy center in particular had an extensive medical dispensary which served thousands of people including children as well as adults. See, *Christian Cosmopolitan*, September, 1903. In addition, many of the settlements served as centers for the city's public milk dispensaries. In 1906 Association distributed over 51,000 bottles of milk. Association House Collection, Box 20, Folder 7, CHS.

[109]Horton, *Burdens of the City*, p.174.

[110]*Ibid.*

meetings as an opportunity to "get in closer touch with the homes of our clients."[111] At the typical mothers' meeting, the women heard talks on "food, sleep, play, cleanliness, manners, health, house-work and the like."[112] Association House reported in 1900 that it had fifty women from the kindergarten attending its mothers' meetings. The Protestant women hoped that by teaching Chicago's diverse ethnic groups the white middle-class model of mothering they would help assimilate Chicago's many immigrants into the larger civic body.

While these Protestant women were often intolerant of the women they sought to help, it is important to keep in mind that they did express a genuine concern for the plight of these immigrant and working-class mothers and provided much needed services. Rather than castigate working-class and immigrant women, or ostracize them as others did, Protestant women tried to meet the very real needs of these women. Equally significant, by taking advantage of the day nurseries, working-class women and immigrant women were able to keep their families intact, even female-headed ones.

While the National Congress of Mothers argued that day nurseries undermined family values by encouraging women to work outside of the home, the day nursery women responded by claiming that the influence they had on children and mothers did more to help motherhood, proper motherhood that is, than did such programs as the mothers' pensions. By arguing that working-class and immigrant women did not know how to mother properly, Protestant women could assert that they were the true champions of motherhood. What's more, Protestant women argued that by encouraging

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[111]Erie Neighborhood House Collection, *Annual Report*, 1915-16, C.H.S.

[112]*Ibid.*

independence, and hence discouraging dependence on public relief, they were helping solve Chicago's class conflicts. Although Chicago's Protestant women claimed a conservative victory, they ironically allowed for a new configuration of family by the very fact that the day nursery services they provided allowed women to head their own households. In this way, even though these Protestant women's ideas about proper families would always be explicitly middle class, and the classes they offered were shaped by these assumptions, their day nurseries actually allowed working-class and immigrant women to head their own households.

The large attendance rates at the nurseries suggest that working-class and immigrant women took advantage of these services. Understanding how the activities of the religious settlements and institutional churches were viewed, and used, by the immigrant and working-class population in ways very different from those intended by the religious workers is thus critical for making sense of why these institutions had such broad appeal. Knowing what we do about immigrant and working-class families from social, ethnic, and labor historians suggests that these groups always approached the settlement activities with goals and concerns of their own, that they knew how to take from these programs what they needed, or wanted, and could leave the rest behind.[113] For example, women at Halsted complained that the mothers who attended their mothers' meetings rarely attended the religious services they sponsored.[114] This suggests that the women who used the day nursery knew how to circumvent the evangelical messages and

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[113]On the response of immigrants to the settlement movement, see Rivka Lissak, *Pluralism and Progressivism: Hull House and the New Immigrants, 1890-1919* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

[114]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, October, 1905.

that they used the nursery service to reinforce their own definitions of family and mothering. The immigrant and working class families used the settlements, especially the day nurseries, to keep their families intact. The quest of the Protestant women to impose their vision of the middle-class family on the city's immigrant and working-class mothers was not successful.

That the Protestant women rarely voiced concern over the fact that their services allowed women to live independent of men suggests that their ideas about family might have been more complex, and perhaps broader, than their rhetoric reveals; more importantly, their perspectives might have been shaped, to a limited extent, by the voices of the city's immigrant and working-class mothers whom they served. Historian Regina Kunzel has shown in her work on evangelical maternity homes that maternity matrons often encouraged young unmarried women to keep their babies, believing that the very process of becoming a mother was a redemptive experience.[115] Though the maternity matrons, like the day nursery providers, believed that marriage to an independent and morally upright man was the ideal conclusion to these stories, the services that they provided allowed women to keep their children and head their own households. In so doing, these seemingly conservative women implicitly questioned the larger society's assumption that the only real family was the male headed one. In this way the Protestant settlements and institutional church workers, along with the maternity home matrons, extolled a notion of family which served to exalt women's roles. Most importantly, and most ironically, their services and views provided a space where immigrant and working-

[115]Regina Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

class women could sustain alternative family forms; forms which allowed women to overcome seemingly insurmountable odds and which, by their very existence, challenged the larger society's assumptions about what constituted a proper family.

CONCLUSION

Chicago's Protestant settlement and institutional church women were not the only women expanding their public roles in the early twentieth-century. Progressive women reformers were flocking to a myriad of reform and political organizations including secular settlement houses, the National American Women's Suffrage Association, the Children's Bureau, and the National Congress of Mothers, to name just a few. What united these various women is the fact that all of them, including Chicago's Protestant settlement and institutional church workers, drew on notions of gender to justify their public activism. Together, these women helped to redefine the city, and public and private welfare more generally, as the responsibility of women.[116]

Yet as historians have pointed out, these Progressive women disagreed about what kind of public role women should play. Some Progressive women argued women should vote, while others claimed women should exercise their power through informal channels; some worked in government bureaus while others chose to stay within the

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[116]See Linda Gordon, ed., *Women, the State, and Welfare*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); Linda Gordon, *Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare, 1890-1935* (New York: Free Press, 1994): Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Mothers and Soldiers*; Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); and Joanne Goodwin, *Gender and the Politics of Welfare Reform.*

nation's many settlement houses. Chicago's Protestant settlement and institutional church women stood out among Progressive reformers because of the way that their activism was shaped by their multiple roles as women, mothers, and Protestants. In contrast to many other Progressive women who sought a place for themselves within government, at the municipal, state, or federal level, Chicago's Protestant women seemed content to stay within the voluntary civic sector which they had only just begun to dominate. While these Protestant women cooperated with various public welfare agencies, they felt strongly that they had a role to play in the city, a role which could not be filled by those who ignored the power of faith.

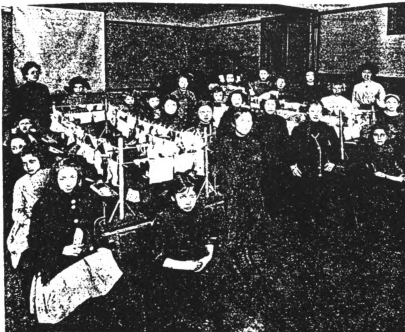

FIGURE 1: KITCHEN GARDEN CLASS AT ASSOCIATION HOUSE (From *Annual Report*, 1913).

FIGURE 2: GIRLS' SEWING CLASS AT ASSOCIATION HOUSE (From *Annual Report*, 1900-1901).

FIGURE 3: BOHEMIAN HOUSE (From *Annual Report*, 1913-1914).

FIGURE 4: MOTHERS WITH BABIES AT BOHEMIAN HOUSE (From *Annual Report*, 1913-1914).

FIGURE 5: KINDERGARTEN CLASS AT BOHEMIAN HOUSE (From *Annual Report*, 1913-1914).

FIGURE 6: GIRLS' SEWING CLASS AT BOHEMIAN HOUSE (From *Annual Report*, 1913-1914).

FIGURE 7: VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL AT BOHEMIAN HOUSE (From *Annual Report*, 1913-1914).

CHAPTER 3

"MORE MEN FOR RELIGION: MORE RELIGION FOR MEN":THE CHICAGO SUNDAY EVENING CLUB AND THE MEN AND RELIGION FORWARD MOVEMENT, 1900-1920

On April 6, 1912, the Men and Religion Forward Movement (M&RFM) arrived in Chicago. Concerned that men had forsaken their responsibility for the religious life of the city, and for the nation more generally, this large retinue of Protestant revivalists descended upon the city's churches. For eight days the Movement's revival "specialists" lectured to the city's men about a wide array of topics including evangelism, mission work, boys' work, Bible study and social service. Having already delivered over 9,000 addresses to approximately 1.5 million men in more than 70 cities, the M&RFM revivalists had carefully honed their message that what the nation needed was "More Men For Religion: More Religion For Men."[1] That Chicago was the last revival to be held in this nine-month tour before the closing campaign in New York City was more than a little symbolic considering the men leading the M&RFM proclaimed Chicago, "the hardest city in the world to reach." [2]

The M&RFM drew attention across the nation, and in Chicago specifically, because it promised to address a fear many men harbored, the fear that they had allowed women to feminize the nation's sacred spaces and to possess the authority that those spaces provided. In the late nineteenth century Protestant ministers and laymen from

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[1]Charles Hopkins, *The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1967) p. 297.

[2]*Chicago Tribune*, April 14, 1912.

across the country began complaining about the numerical dominance of women in the churches and the prominent role women played in religious-based social service institutions.[3] At the 1895 meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, members reported with regret that "the men of our church, as a class, are falling to the rear of the great host of God in both service and benevolence." The General Assembly claimed, "This occurs largely because they [the men] are not organized into associations as the women are."[4] In 1894, the Congregational church held a conference in Boston to address the gender imbalance of the church by examining "The Attitude of Men Toward the Churches." Explaining why "there are so few men in the churches" one participant responded, "The teaching is too effeminate; ministers too largely confine their visits to women." Building on this comment, another participant suggested optimistically

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[3]It is important to point out that the gender imbalance of the churches dated back to the Colonial Era, and the feminization of religion--if one accepts that such a phenomenon occurred--to the nineteenth century. Ann Braude notes, "the numerical dominance of women in all but a few religious groups constitutes one of the most consistent features of American religion, and one of the least explained. See Ann Braude, "Women's History is Religious History," in Thomas Tweed. ed., *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997) p. 88. Gail Bederman points to the persistent gender imbalance of the churches from the Colonial Era to the early twentieth century to make the argument that the preponderance of women in the churches "cannot explain why feminization was suddenly described as a danger in the late nineteenth century." "'The Women Have Had Charge of the Church Work Long Enough': The Men and Religion Forward Movement of 1911-1912 and the Masculinization of Middle-Class Protestantism," *American Quarterly*, Vol.41 (Winter 1993) p. 436. These authors show that the question one must ask is not whether there was a gender imbalance in the church, but why this gender imbalance is perceived to be problematic at some times, and not at others. On the "feminization" of religion, see Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of Religion: 1800-1860," in ed., Lois Banner and Mary S. Hartman, *Clio's Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives on the History of Women* (New York: Octagon Books, 1974): 137-157; and Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York, Vintage,1977).

[4]Daniel Martin, "The United Presbyterian Church Policy on the Men's Movement--An Historical Overview," *Journal of Presbyterian History,* Vol.59 (Summer 1981) pp.10-11.

that "when you persuade them [the men] that coming to Christ is the most manly thing they can do, they will flock into the churches."[5]

Chicagoans were also beginning to respond to the feminization of the church, bringing their concerns about the needs of urban America to these more general discussions about gender and religion. At a conference on city evangelization held in Chicago in 1900, one of the participants expressed his fears about the feminization of the church when he proclaimed, "we are living in an age of sentimentalism and softness, fads and farces, which breed effeminacy of Christian character but poorly fitted to deal with the sturdy times in which we live." He charged that what the city needed was "men of sense, men of judgement--*men*, in all that the word implies. Anything and everything thing but a genuine sturdy gospel is being proclaimed."[6] Writing to the Chicago *Christian Cosmopolitan* this same year, a male Sunday School teacher explained the

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[5]*Record of Christian Work*, May, 1894.

[6]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, November, 1900. I should note here that in the late nineteenth century some members of the middle and upper classes feared what they called the growing effeminacy of American culture, a development they attributed to the growth of an overcivilized bourgeoisie. These fears weren't exclusively, or even mainly, about women, but more often than not had to do with concerns about race and class. As T.J. Jackson Lears points out, those in society who feared the effeminacy of culture believed "An overcivilized bourgeoisie was vulnerable to 'race suicide' on the one hand, revolution on the other." T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983) p. 28. *In Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*, Gail Bederman provides an important corrective to Jackson Lears by interrogating why early twentieth-century Americans drew on feminine images when talking about larger cultural concerns. She shows us that even though Theodore Roosevelt and many other members of the upper class weren't talking about women when they rallied against effeminacy, one must still interrogate why it was they drew on feminine images and discursive constructs to describe more amorphous concerns. In other words, one must ask why this gender discourse proved so powerful and, more importantly, seemed so natural.

danger of women teaching boys' Sunday school classes when he wrote: "What we need for teachers are virile, versatile men who have knowledge of boy nature. The boy now craves a hero, one who can do the things he tries to do better than he can and who will not immerse him in the slush of sentiment nor transfix him in the agony of personal appeal."[7] The fear that female Sunday school teachers would be unable to reach the city's young male population grew as the first decade of the twentieth century moved forward. Yet calls for men to participate in the church extended far beyond inviting them to teach Sunday school classes. Writing to the *Christian Cosmopolitan* a Chicago layman warned his fellow Protestants that Chicago's institutional churches would never succeed in forming Christian character, let alone saving souls, unless they were built "around the personality of some one man."[8] The writer emphasized that "the right man is not necessarily a great Preacher, but he should have a genius for the work. He must be a man of firmness, courage, and faith."[9]

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[7]*Christian Cosmopolitan,* November, *1900.*

[8]*Ibid.*, April, 1904.

[9]*Ibid.* When Protestant men talked about the feminized church, and the effeminacy of religion, these terms gained special meaning because of the preponderance of women in the nation's churches. On the masculinity crisis and religion, see Leonard Sweet, *The Minister's Wife: Her Role in Nineteenth-Century Evangelicalism* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1983) pp.220-236. Sweet describes how "an overwhelming fear of effeminacy and an exaggerated attention to masculinity marked this period." He notes in particular that religious forces were "at work to defeminize the church's constituency and transform the period into an age of aggressive male self-consciousness in religion." p.233. Betty Deberg provides an interesting examination of the masculinization of religion as it pertains to the rise of fundamentalism in *UNGODLY WOMEN: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990). She describes how "a close reading of the popular fundamentalist press indicates that at least one part of the fundamentalist agenda was to regain the church for men." Most importantly, she points out that these leaders questioned "women's influence and power," and "replaced femininzed Christianity with a language of virility, militarism, and Christian heroism." p. 76. However, not all evangelists who drew on masculine imagery questioned the place

Protestant laymen in Chicago, like laymen in big cities and small towns throughout the nation, responded to their fears about the feminization of religion by attempting to reclaim the church. They gathered in men's bible classes, formed denominational brotherhoods, and established Protestant clubs; they also encouraged each other to teach Sunday school classes and to become engaged in religious-based social service.[10] While some of these men were socially and theologically conservative,

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of women in the churches. For example, Billy Sunday used manly imagery, yet he seemed relatively unconcerned about the feminization of religion. On Billy Sunday, see Robert F. Martin, "Billy Sunday and Christian Manliness," *The Historian*, Vol. 58 (Summer 1996): 811-832 and Marty Nesselbush Green, "From Sainthood to Submission: Gender Images in Conservative Protestantism, 1900-1940," *The Historian*, Vol. 58 (Spring 1996): 539-556. For literary and theological discussions of mid-nineteenth century British concerns with manliness and Christianity, see Vance Norman, *The Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) and ed., David Hall, *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For discussions of changing notions of manliness and masculinity in the United States during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries, see Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); ed., Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffin, *Meanings of Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) and Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[10]In 1906, the United Presbyterian Church established the Presbyterian Brotherhood and invited over five hundred already established Presbyterian men's organizations operating in churches throughout the nation to join. See Daniel Martin, "The United Presbyterian Church Policy on the Men's Movement." p.412. The United Presbyterian church was not alone. Around the same time the Congregational Brotherhood of America was established and drew on an already large network of men's organizations. Other Protestant Brotherhoods active in the early years of the twentieth century include the Baptist Brotherhood, the Brotherhood of Andrew and Philip (Presbyterian), the Brotherhood of the Disciples of Christ, the Brotherhood of Saint Andrew (Episcopalian),the Lutheran Brotherhood, the Otterbein Brotherhood (United Brethren) and the Presbyterian Brotherhood of America. Cited in Gail Bederman, "The Women Have Had Charge of the Church Work Long Enough," p.459. In Chicago, men's Protestant organizations included, among others, the YMCA, the Chicago Assembly of the Brotherhood of Saint Andrew, the Young Men's Presbyterian Union of Chicago, the

and others actively supported the Social Gospel, they all shared the common objective of trying to pull men back into the churches, whether that be as parishioners, Sunday School teachers, or as social service activitists.

These mens' groups were especially vocal in the nation's cities where laymen were particularly conscious of the fact that laywomen had feminized the urban domain through participating in such institutions as Protestant settlements and institutional churches. Responding to the feminization of Chicago's religious domain, one prominent laymen explained, "The problem of the church is more men, and the great problem of our civic and political institutions is more church." To solve these problems he argued that Chicagoans must "replenish the church with men," they must "masculinize the church."[11] In Chicago one of the most notable of these men's Protestant organizations was the Chicago Sunday Evening Club (CSEC), a non-denominational Protestant club organized in 1908 by the city's wealthiest and most civically active businessmen.

Over thirty years ago in his book, *The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism*, Charles Hopkins made the claim that the Men and Religion Forward Movement was "the most comprehensive Evangelistic effort ever taken in the United States."[12] However, few historians have examined the Movement, or the men's brotherhoods and clubs that flocked to it, including the Chicago Sunday Evening Club. Even discussions of the YMCA, the Movement's biggest supporter, are far and few

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Presbyterian Brotherhood, and the Young Men's Methodist Union of Chicago. Samuel Reep, "The Organization of the Ecclesiastical Institutions of a Metropolitan Community," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1910).

[11]Francis W. Parker, *Men and Religion* (Men and Religion Forward Movement: YMCA Press, 1911) p.73.

[12]Charles Hopkins, *The Rise of the Social Gospel*, p. 296.

between.[13] Hopkin's brief discussion of the M&RFM is important but problematic because he tells about only a small part of the Movement. Hopkins was concerned with the Movement only as it expressed the goals of the Social Gospel. He did not comment on the fact that the M&RFM was a men's movement responding to the feminization of the church, or that it was a movement to which opponents of the Social Gospel also flocked.

Though the M&RFM has today still not received much attention, a few historians have examined the Movement by paying attention to the diverse theological and social perspectives of its participants, and by thinking critically about the Movement as a men's movement. Harry Lefever describes how the local supporters of the M&RFM in Atlanta became involved in the city's labor movement, supporting striking mill operatives during 1913 and 1914. Although Lefever also points out that the M&RFM's support for organized labor was short lived, lasting less than two years, he nonetheless shows that local conditions and needs determined the shape of the Men and Religion Forward Movement and the influence it wielded.[14] In "The Women have had the Charge of the Church Work Long Enough," Gail Bederman contributes significantly to our

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[13]In Howard Hopkin's book, *History of the YMCA in North America*, there is no discussion of the Men and Religion Forward Movement. (New York: Association Press, 1951) Emmett Dedmon also fails to discuss the Movement in his institutional history of Chicago's YMCA, *Great Enterprises: 100 Years of the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago* (New York: Rand McNally and Company, 1957).

[14]Harry Lefever, "The Involvement of the Men and Religion Forward Movement in the Cause of Labor Justice, Atlanta, Georgia, 1912-1916," *Labor History*, Vol. 14 (1973):521-535. Recognizing that the Men and Religion Forward Movement had gained wide-spread support and had received considerable publicity, the forces of organized labor organized their own Forward Movement called the Labor Forward Movement. See Ken Fones-Wolf, *Trade Union Gospel: Christianity and Labor in Industrial Philadelphia, 1865-1915* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

understanding of this movement by pointing out that not all of its participants supported the Social Gospel. Even more important, she focuses on the Movement as a men's movement, examining the Movement for what it can reveal about changing cultural and religious notions of manhood in the early twentieth century. Bederman explains the rise of the M&RFM, and the expansion of men's religious organizations more generally, by placing them within a larger historical context. Building on the works of historians Barbara Welter and Ann Douglas, Bederman looks back to the nineteenth century, to a time when she claims "American Protestants had adopted a feminized religion." Unlike Welter and Douglas who argue that religion was feminized because it was losing cultural influence, Bederman argues it was precisely because religion was valued that feminizing it was necessary. [15] According to Bederman "feminization provided a means of combining the benevolence of a Christian moral order with the untrammeled self-interest of laissez-faire capitalism." "In order to minimize the moral danger of the open market while maximizing its rewards, middle-class Americans used gender to marry morality and

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[15]Bederman, "The Woman Have Had Charge of the Church Work Long Enough," p.436. This insight of Bederman's is critically important, showing us that we need to recognize that the "feminization" of religion does not necessarily mean the devaluation of it. The assumption that the feminization of religion led to its devaluation is clearly evident in the works of Barbara Welter and Ann Douglas. For example, Welter states: "In the period following the American Revolution, political and economic activities were critically important and therefore more 'masculine'...Religion, along with the family and popular taste, was not very important, and so became the property of the ladies. Thus it entered a process of change whereby it became more domesticated, more emotional, more soft and accommodating–in a word, more 'feminine.'" p. 138. I should note here that Welter and Douglas are concerned not only with women's numerical dominance in the church, but with the ways religious images and messages had been feminized. For example, Welter talks about the ministers who increasingly spoke about "the feminized Christ."p. 141.

productivity–literally."[16] Bederman claims that this balance of the codification of religion as feminine, and productivity as masculine, was altered in the late nineteenth century "when the consolidation of a consumer-oriented, corporate capitalism made Protestant men feel that their identity as men was uncertain and their religion effeminate." According to Bederman, it was the fear middle class Protestant men had about their identities as men—a fear brought about by the rise of corporate consumer capitalism---that drove them "to recodify religion as especially manly."[17] Because both evangelicals and Social Gospelers were questioning the feminized church, the M&RFM appealed to men of almost every almost every theological, political, and social perspective.

This chapter examines men's growing interest in religion in the urban arena by closely examining one of Chicago's most important and widely known Protestant men's clubs, the Chicago Sunday Evening Club. I ask why the Chicago Sunday Evening Club played such a prominent role in the city's more general Protestant men's movement and explain how the M&RFM revival of April 1912 helped the city's Protestant men articulate their concerns to city-wide audiences. This section is thus primarily about the Chicago Sunday Evening Club and only secondarily about the Men and Religion Forward Movement; however, by focusing on the M&RFM's visit to Chicago, it will shed light on our understanding of this very important national revival. I argue that the businessmen of the Chicago Sunday Evening Club were attracted to the Club not only because they feared the feminized church, but also because they feared the working class. Driven by their

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[16]Bederman, "'The Women Have Had Charge of the Church Work Long Enough'". p. 436.

[17]Ibid., p. 438.

desire to control the working class, the men of the Chicago Sunday Evening Club called for a more masculine religion. They thus attempted to masculinize religion, not because they were uncertain about their identities as men, but because they were concerned about the place of the working class in Chicago. Having learned from the city's Protestant women that religion was a powerful civic force, a force that directly affected the public life of the city, the men of the Chicago Sunday Evening Club hoped to harness religion for their own agenda.[18] To do so they had to prove that religion was not effeminate but masculine; they had to prove that religion was as much a masculine affair as was business. Yet what's notable about the Club's members is not that they denounced women, but that they ignored them, describing their own religious endeavor as though there was no question but that the religious realm was theirs to claim.

THE CHICAGO SUNDAY EVENING CLUB

Speaking before the Chicago Sunday Evening Club in its first season William Spurgeon, an invited speaker from England, articulated the concerns about religion and women then occupying the attention of Chicago's men when he noted in exasperation, "women who do not have children are running the churches." For Spurgeon this was a serious problem because he believed, "No woman knows the true meaning of a woman's

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[18]As chapter one of this dissertation shows, the gender dynamics of religion in Chicago were more varied than current historiography describes. After Haymarket laymen flocked to the city missions, hoping to gain control over the shaping of the city's ever-changing public order. In Chicago, the "codification of religion" as feminine dated back to the late 1890s.

true nature until she becomes responsible for a young [one]."[19] Although Spurgeon did not tell the men of the CSEC that the religious domain was a man's domain, men listening to him might have taken this message from his talk considering the larger cultural context in which he spoke. As the earlier discussion points out, not only were Chicago's weekly denominational papers calling on men to take greater responsibility for the church, but the national press was also publishing articles on the threat the effeminate, or feminized, church posed to American society and Protestant religion.[20]

Fear about men having failed in their religious responsibilities was certainly foremost in the mind of Clifford Barnes, founder of the Chicago Sunday Evening Club. In the early twentieth century Barnes was one of Chicago's most prominent and civicly active citizens, and also one of its premier businessmen. He was, however, not your typical businessman for he had been ordained a minister early in life following his graduation from the Divinity School at the University of Chicago. After a short stint teaching at the University of Chicago in the early 1890s, Barnes served briefly as a minister at two missions supported by Chicago's City Missionary Society. These assignments led to the prestigious assignment as assistant Pastor for Chicago's Fourth Presbyterian Church where Barnes mobilized a "Young Men's Sunday Evening Club" that included two of Chicago' most prominent businessmen, Cryus McCormick Jr. and Henry P. Crowell. Not long thereafter, Barnes decided to devote his energies to the large grocery merchandising enterprise which his wife Alice Reid had brought into their

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[19]Chicago Sunday Evening Club, Publicity Scrapbook, Vol.1, 1908-1910, Chicago Sunday Evening Club Collection, (CSEC), Chicago Historical Society, (CHS).

[20]See Sweet, *The Ministers Wife* and Deberg, *UNGODLY WOMEN.*

marriage. His commitment to his role and identity as a businessman was reflected by the fact that after leaving the ministry he preferred to be known as a layman, and more importantly a capitalist, rather than a minister.[21] It was as a civic-minded businessman that he would make a place for himself in in Chicago's public life, becoming active during his lifetime in a myriad of organizations including the Religious Education Association, the Legislative Voters League, the Committee of Fifteen, and the Chicago Church Federation, to name just a few.[22]

Because Barnes was as strongly committed to his business adventures as he was to his many religious and civic activities, he was confounded by what he saw as the apathy of Chicago's business elite with respect to the religious life of the city. What concerned him most was the larger impact this apathy was having on the public life of the city. Believing that theaters, music halls, and saloons were well frequented on Sundays in Chicago's downtown Loop district because of the lack of religious services available there, he began making plans in 1907 to rectify this by calling on his fellow big business and professional men to "provide religious services."[23] At a meeting held at the Chicago Club to talk about the proposed Sunday Evening Club, Barnes described to his fellow businessmen how he planned to make the club "an organization of Christian business

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[21]Quoted in David Lewis, "The Efficient Crusade," p. 182.

[22]Barnes was involved in a wide range of civic clubs and organizations including the Chicago Community Trust, the Inter-Church World Movement, the Chicago Association of Commerce, and the Red Cross. For a discussion of Barnes's civic activities, see Lewis, "The Efficient Crusade," p. 182, and Paul Heidebrecht, *Faith and Economic Practice: Protestant Businessmen in Chicago, 1900-1920* (New York: Garland, 1989) pp.6-22.

[23]*Chicago Tribune*, February 5, 1908. CSEC Administration Correspondence, Box 3, CSEC Collection.

men to promote the moral and religious welfare of the city." Barnes envisioned the Chicago Sunday Evening Club as a forum that would draw the city's Protestant businessman together as religious leaders; however the religious message of the Club was intended not only for these men, but also for Chicago's "floating population." Barnes would later describe how the Chicago Sunday Evening Club was initially designed to bring businessmen back to religion but also to reach out to the "traveling man", to the "young men and women workers who live within the circle of the downtown section," and to "the great homeless army that lives in furnished rooms and takes its meals at downtown eating houses and hotels."[24] Members of the working class who lived in other areas of the city were also encouraged to attend. The Chicago Sunday Evening Club would thereby bring together the city's different classes and help to reconfigure the public life of downtown Chicago by replacing Sunday leisure with Sunday religion.

Barnes sold the idea of the club to his fellow businessmen by telling them, "in the upbuilding of a city there is nothing more essential to the progress of a city than high moral ideas."[25] He assured them that through their involvement in the Club they "would make Christianity the touchstone of politics, industry, trade, social service, [and] culture."[26] Barnes never doubted that the city's commercial leaders should also become its religious leaders. In one of the first talks Barnes gave to the Chicago Sunday Evening Club he described how it was in large part because the leading businessmen had ignored their responsibilities as religious leaders that Chicago had been host to intense class

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[24]*Chicago Evening American*, July 6, 1908. Administration 1908-1937, Box 3, CSEC Collection.

[25]Clifford Barnes. Scrapbook, Vol. 1, 1908-1910, CSEC Collection.

[26]Clifford Barnes. Administration, 1908-1937, Box 3, CSEC Collection.

conflict and hostility. "We [the city's businessmen] have left them [the city's laboring population] open to the propaganda of trouble makers, sowing the seeds of dissension to selfish labor leaders who have tried to use them as groups, misguided, mistreated, and abused [them] until their hearts have broken and they have become crushed." Barnes continued, "they have become angry, and can you wonder then that under the leadership of these false guides that they have joined parties which stand for the overthrow of the government."[27] The CSEC was intended to provide the city's leading businessmen with a forum in which they could reclaim religious leadership, even more importantly a forum in which they could integrate their new-found religious leadership with their roles as businessmen and civic leaders.

The city's leading businessmen responded to Barnes's call. Included among the Club's first executive committee were nationally recognized businessmen Henry Parsons Crowell (President of Quaker Oats), John G. Shedd (President of Marshall Field and Co.), David Forgan (President of National City Bank), and Cyrus McCormick Jr. (President of International Harvester.)[28] The twenty-four other founding members of the executive committee included twelve company presidents, eight vice presidents and other corporate leaders with varying titles, three lawyers, and one architect.[29] Bruce Barton, who would later become famous for penning the book, *The Man Nobody Knows*, was an early supporter of the club, noting that the businessmen drawn to the Club were those men who were "associated with huge enterprises during the week." Barton explained that

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[27]Clifford Barnes,"Informal Bible Talk," Box 3, CSEC Collection.

[28]See Heidebrecht, *Faith and Economic Practice*, for a complete list of the trustees for the period 1908-1920, pp. 249-270.

[29]*Ibid.*

these men "did not believe in running their religion on any little plan on Sunday."[30]

Barnes succeeded in making the Chicago Sunday Evening Club a reality because he was able to convince the city's business elite that they had a responsibility for the city's religious life precisely because they were the city's business elite. This was a message confirmed by Barnes as he began each week's Sunday evening service in Orchestra Hall with an informal Bible Talk. Standing before crowds ranging between 1,500 and 2,000, Barnes drew on his understanding of religion, business, and civic life to comment on contemporary issues. After Barnes had finished speaking a "business man," or a "professional man," would lead the crowd as "Scripture reader."[31] Before the invited main speaker delivered his talk, the audience made up mostly of businessmen dressed in their finest Sunday clothing was provided with a musical performance by the choir.

The preponderance of businessmen in the audience suggests that Barnes had begun the task of wedding business and religion, thereby questioning the larger cultural assumption that religion was a woman's domain, a domain too effeminate for men. In June of 1908, less than six months after the Club had begun offering Sunday evening services, an editorial for the *Chicago Evening Standard* explained the success of the Club in recruiting men to the religious domain: "The power of the layman in the upbuilding of the moral life of the community can not be doubted nor his ever present opportunity questioned."[32]

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[30]*Home Herald*, November 18, 1908, CSEC Scrapbook, Vol. 1, 1908-1910, CSEC Collection.

[31]CSEC pamphlet, Box 13, CSEC Collection.

[32]*Chicago Evening Standard*, June 3, 1908, CSEC Scrapbook, Vol. 1, 1908-1910, CSEC Collection.

Most important was the fact that this was a business man's club. The CSEC leaders celebrated the Club's first anniversary by holding a special service co-sponsored by the Chicago Association of Commerce. The *Chicago Examiner* reported that the speeches "dealt almost exclusively with the relationship of business and the church."[33] Before the President of the Chicago Association of Commerce spoke, Professor Edgar Hill of the McCormick Theological Seminary addressed the audience. He told the audience members that through the Club they would each be able to renew "their youthful lessons in theoretical virtue." He then asked them: "May not employer and employee meet here on terms of perfect equality, learn to know each other better, and thus contribute to the industrial peace of the country's welfare?" Next he spoke directly to the few laboring men in the audience, telling them how "through following Him [Jesus Christ] millions have been made strong and happy...and those that were poor have been made rich."[34] When Richard C. Hall, President of the Association of Commerce, assumed his position on stage he also commented on the importance of the Club, explaining that "in the club lay the germs of the solution of the problems of labor and capital and the ethics of industrialism."[35] Unlike the men Gail Bederman describes who were moved to masculinize religion because they were uncertain about their own identities as men, Chicago's businessmen were drawn to religion because they were sure of their identities as men, even more important they were sure of their civic and religious responsibilities as businessmen.

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[33]*Chicago Examiner*, May 4, 1908, CSEC Scrapbook, Vol .1, 1908-1910, CSEC Collection.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid.

The Chicago Sunday Evening Club sold itself to the larger public by publicizing the fact that the city's leading businessmen were involved in the Club. Promotional pamphlets often included such statements as the following: "The business men of Chicago are enthusiastic supporters of the Club. Its Officers and Trustees are representative of the city's most important business interests."[36] The Chicago Association of Commerce actively promoted the Club, describing the Club's members as "men who are identified as Chicago's best in matters ethical and commercial."[37] The city's papers, most notably the *Chicago Tribune*, helped articulate and circulate the propaganda of the Club: "Whatever Chicago possesses today of commercial strength and political integrity she owes to the fact that her best and strongest citizens have been able to 'get together.'" The article continued by explaining the Club has shown "that such unity is possible in a Religious organization" and as such "has exalted its work to the rank of a great civic movement."[38] When Bruce Barton commented on the Club he pointed out how the most prominent men in Chicago belonged: "When [William Jennings] Bryan and [President William Howard] Taft come to Chicago and sit down at the same table, it is the men who are backing the Sunday Evening Club who sit down at the table too." Barton added, "Their names signed to a prosperity bulletin would stop the spread of a panic." [39]

These public declarations surely helped confirm the belief of Chicago's

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[36]"I was a stranger," (1915), Box 13, CSEC pamphlets, CSEC Collection.

[37]*Chicago Commerce*, May 18, 1908, CSEC Scrapbook, Vol. 1, 1908-1910, CSEC Collection.

[38]CSEC Scrapbook, Vol.1, 1908-1910, CSEC Collection.

[39]*Home Herald*, November 19, 1908, CSEC Scrapbook, Vol.1 , 1908-1910, CSEC Collection.

businessmen that they were the ones really in control of the city, not just its commercial life but its civic and religious life as well. Yet to take control of religion, these men had to prove that religion was not effeminate but masculine, that religion was a man's domain. Among others, Reverend John Stone Smith of Chicago's Fourth Presbyterian Church helped the Club members see this by telling them the city's religious institutions needed men who were "gifted, talented, and trained," but most importantly men who knew that they must bring "manliness, courage, and adaptability to the work of God."[40] A writer for the *Chicago Commerce* explicitly tried to distance religion from its association with feminine emotionalism when he wrote, " A strong force is behind this Orchestra Hall movement, a sane force and not too perilously emotional." [41]

The Chicago Sunday Evening Club's goals and messages resembled the goals and messages then being articulated by the numerous denominational brotherhoods which were becoming popular in the nation's churches, including most notably the Congregational Brotherhood of America. Attempting to gain support for the Congregational Brotherhood of America its leaders stated emphatically, "It is no longer a question whether there is anything for men to do in the churches. The question that now confronts us is, will the men do the big jobs that are marked out for them?" The Brotherhood believed its central purpose was to bring religion "to all social, civic and political relations." Most importantly, the Congregational Brotherhood hoped that by pulling men into the church, the church itself would wield "more public force and

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[40]*Chicago Tribune*, March 17, 1912.

[41]*Chicago Commerce*, April 8, 1908, CSEC Scrapbook, Vol. 1. 1908-1910, CSEC Collection.

influence." The Brotherhood was especially eager to draw in businessmen, claiming that "men who work together in a town in business relations should naturally see the tremendous advantage of working together in the common interests of public righteousness and well being." The Brotherhood congratulated itself on the fact it was "upbuilding the masculine life of the church."[42]

The businessmen who gathered each week in Orchestra Hall for the Chicago Sunday Evening Club's Sunday service were motivated, in large part, by the same beliefs driving the Congregational Brotherhood: the belief that religion provided answers to the issues confronting modern businessmen and the belief that a manly religion could serve as a force for public righteousness. Just as the Congregational Brotherhood saw success of these quests dependent upon the men it could attract, the Chicago Sunday Evening Club members believed religion would become influential in the public life of the city only when men awakened to their religious responsibilities. Although women were invited to attend the Club's Sunday services, this was a man's club, a club devoted to making religion as much a masculine affair as politics and business already were. As one Club member put it: "the club teaches manhood and citizenship."[43] An examination of the invited speakers, and the topics they discussed, reveals this objective more clearly. All of the speakers from the period 1908-1920 were men, with the exception of Jane Addams who spoke before the Club five times. Most of these men were residents of Chicago, affiliated with the city's religious institutions and commercial enterprises.

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[42]Congregational Church, Material Concerning, 1907-1937, Graham Taylor Papers, Newberry Library.

[43]CSEC Scrapbook, Vol. 1, 1908-1910, CSEC Collection.

However, the Club members also drew on the political and social clout they wielded nationally to get some of the nation's most famous men to come to the Club including Walter Rauschenbusch, Jacob Riis, and President Taft.[44]

The Club is notable for the fact that the political and social views of the invited speakers spanned the political spectrum from the right to the left socially, theologically, and politically. Considering that the vast majority of the club members were conservative politically and socially, this shows that these men were not afraid to entertain ideas which challenged their own. There were, however, common themes running through a good number of the talks which most likely appealed to everyone. From 1908-1920, one of the most important themes was the masculinizing of religion. In 1911-1912 such talks included, The Call of Christ to the Modern Man, Successful Christian Businessmen, The Definition of a Man. Other titles in subsequent years included, The Heroic Note in the Religious Life, The Man Who Failed Who Might Have Won, and A Modern Man's Religion. 53.[45]

What place Christianity should play in urban civic life was also a dominant theme. Some of these talks explained how men could draw on their religion when confronting the perils of the city, and when attempting the making and remaking of the city's more general public order. These talks included such titles as The Christian City,[46] Christ

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[44]For a complete list of speakers, see Heidebrecht, *Faith and Economic Practice*, pp. 271-279.

[45]CSEC Minutes,1921, Box 1, CSEC Collection. Of the thirty talks delivered during the 1913-1914 season, nine had the work "man" in them. These include: A Man's Surprise at Himself, Making a Man, Value of a Man, A Man's Part, The Hidden Man of the Heart, Every Man, If a Man Lives, Shall He Die?, A Man's Beliefs."CSEC Minutes, 1913-1914, Box 1, CSEC Collection.

[46]CSEC Minutes, 1912, Box 1, CSEC Collection.

Facing the Problems of the City,[47] Christian Citizenship,[48] Democracy and Religion,[49] and What is a Layman.[50] What was needed to become a good citizen, and what were the responsibilities of the good citizen, were also popular topics. Such representative talks included Patriotism and Character building,[51] The Ideal Citizen,[52] and The Citizen and Social Reform.[53] Regardless of the specific topic being discussed, most of the talks combined current civic issues with religion, attempting to make the two one, whether from a conservative vantage point or a liberal one (although the conservative voices were always dominant).[54]

For how much the Chicago Sunday Evening Club members expressed concern about bringing religion to the public life of the city, it is significant that they made no effort to include women in this endeavor except as audience members and choir singers. Even the wives of the Club's trustees were not invited to assume any role in the Club, a striking fact considering how active some of these women were in the city's philanthropic and religious domains. What's more revealing, the Club members never described or

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[47]CSEC Scrapbook, Vol. 2, 1910-1911, CSEC Collection.

[48]Ibid.

[49]CSEC Minutes, 1913, Box 1, CSEC Collection.

[50]CSEC Scrapbook, Vol.2, 1910-1911, CSEC Collection.

[51]CSEC Minutes, 1913, Box 1, CSEC Collection.

[52]CSEC Scrapbook, Vol. 2, 1910-1911, CSEC Collection.

[53]Ibid.

[54]The talks often addressed the most pressing issues of the day. For example, during World War I, nineteen of the twenty-six talks during the 1918-1919 season addressed issues related directly to the war. CSEC Minutes, 1918-1919, Box 1, CSEC papers.

discussed the important roles women had already assumed in the religious life of the city. There was never any mention of the institutions in which women were active, including the city's Protestant settlements and institutional churches. The Club members talked about the religious domain as if it was an empty field waiting for the Chicago Sunday Evening Club. They talked about attracting men to religion, never discussing what role women were supposed to assume in the newly masculinized religious domain.

The few casual references Club members made about women were derogatory. For example, in one of his Bible Talks Barnes warned his listeners of "women who backbite, who are scandalmongers, women who will not be mothers and assume their rightful obligations."[55] To Barnes it was clear that the primary responsibility women had to the larger community was to serve as guardians over their own private families. Speaking directly to the few women sitting in the audience, Barnes cautioned them: "They [the children] have lost many things, but let us see to it that our children do not lose that which makes for all a home--the mother's love, the mother's care. There is a place for the afternoon teas, the church receptions, the opera, and all that sort of thing, but in God's name mothers do not let that take you away from your children."[56] Barnes questioned women's public activism by using the same maternalist rhetoric then popular among women attempting to claim public space in the city.

As confident as Barnes was that the city's women needed to serve as private guardians, he was sure that men's responsibilities included bringing religion to public life of the city, both its civic life and its business life. The Sunday evening services the

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[55]Clifford Barnes, "Informal Bible Talk," Box 3, CSEC Collection.

[56]Ibid.

Club conducted each week in Orchestra Hall were central to this endeavor. To further this larger goal, the Chicago Sunday Evening Club in April 1910 organized a city-wide meeting of men's church clubs. Recognizing that "men [are] getting together for all [kinds of] purposes," the Chicago Sunday Evening Club asked, "shall the church be the last to feel this mighty impulse?" The purpose of the meeting was to make religion "the greatest influence for civic righteousness." That this grand yet amorphous goal appealed to the city's religious men was demonstrated by the fact that over 1,200 men showed up representing more than 44 clubs. Equally significant, men noted for their commercial pursuits also attended. Claiming the name the "Chicago Citizenship Congress," these men described their new organization as a "citizen's congress of the religious societies of Chicago." They elected fifteen men to serve as commissioners. These men included ten laymen and five ministers, with the President of the Chicago Association of Commerce Edward Skinner serving as Chairman. They planned to meet at a later date to draw up a constitution and thereby formalize their club. For Barnes this meeting confirmed that he was right in making the claim: "There is nothing which cannot be accomplished in the way of bettering our citizenship if all religious men of our city come together."[57]

THE MEN AND RELIGION FORWARD MOVEMENT IN CHICAGO

In the spring of 1912, Chicago's businessmen and religious leaders again joined together, this time to participate in the eight day revival being led by the Men and

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[57]*Record-Herald*, May 10, 1910, CSEC Scrapbook, Vol 2, 1910-1911, CSEC Collection.

Religion Forward Movement. Since the fall of 1911, the M&RFM revivalists specialists had been traveling across the country, stopping in large cities as well as small towns to deliver their message that the nation needed "More Men For Religion: More Religion For Men." The leaders of the Movement hoped to challenge "the apathy of men and the indifference of the church."[58] That Movement leaders described Chicago as the "hardest city to reach" was no doubt influenced by the fact Chicago had a reputation for its crass materialism, and political corruption, and had been the host of much labor unrest.

The Men and Religion Forward Movement originated from a men's meeting similar to the Spring 1910 meeting of Chicago's Citizen Congress organized by the Chicago Sunday Evening Club. On May 18, 1910, leading members of the International YMCA and the nation's Protestant Brotherhoods gathered in New York City's Manhattan Hotel to discuss the problems facing the modern church, most notably the low attendance rates of men and the resulting effeminacy of the churches. They pointed to the thousands of men who belonged to the brotherhoods and men's clubs--men who had already been placing great emphasis upon "a virile, red-blooded expression of the program of the Cross"--as proof that masculine Christianity could thrive.[59] The Movement leaders were optimistic that they could prove to the nation's other men "that the religion of Christ is a man's religion, that there is a man's job for the biggest man somewhere in the organizations of the church." [60]

Believing that part of the reason "there are not more men in our churches is that

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[58]*The Official Bulletin of the YMCA of Chicago*, April 1912.

[59]Fayette L. Thompson, *Men and Religion*, p.6.

[60]Francis W. Parker, *Men and Religion*, p.77.

our churches have not stalwartly attacked vast problems and inaugurated at home as well as abroad magnificently manly enterprises," the M&RFM sought to do just that. The Movement set up six different departments including boys' work, Bible study, evangelism, community extension, social service, and missions. All of these departments were designed for the "harnessing of our manhood to the big problems of the church of Jesus Christ–a putting of our strong manhood back of the program of Jesus Christ."[61]

The Movement differed from most other revivals in that it sought to draw laymen in, both as participants and as leaders. One leader expressed this objective most bluntly when he proclaimed: "the revival must be conducted from the pew chiefly." He went on to state what was probably a truism among both the Movement's followers and leaders: "We shall succeed through the instrumentality of men, real men. Christian men are the leaders of American life, commercial, professional, educational, political; and the Christian men who are leading every where else must become the leaders of this movement, locally and at large." He concluded by noting, "Men love men, and men whom other men follow in business and elsewhere cannot afford to do less than lead their fellows to the foot of the Cross."[62] Believing that it was only by attracting the most prominent laymen that "a masculine note will be sounded in all our churches," the Movement reached out to the nation's leading business and civic leaders.[63] Eight Chicagoans sat on the executive committee including Chicago Sunday Evening Club trustees Henry P. Crowell and C.S. Holt.

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[61]Fayette L. Thompson, *Men and Religion*, p. 6.

[62]Ira Landrith, *Men and Religion*, p. 83.

[63]*Ibid.*

During the first week of April 1912, the Men and Religion Forward Movement was winding down its tour. With only Chicago yet left to visit, the men could congratulate themselves on the fact that they had already mobilized over a million men. If Chicago's men, known for their preoccupation with all things secular, could be drawn to the Movement then surely masculine religion had a place in America's future. What the Movement leaders probably didn't expect was that they would find resistance in Chicago, not from the commercial men or from the forces of "irreligion," but from the city's women. In Chicago the Movement clashed openly with the city's suffragists, a clash precipitated by the fact that the revival was scheduled for Chicago during election week. One of the many issues which Chicagoans were expected to vote on at the polls that Tuesday was women's suffrage.

Just days before the Men and Religion Forward Movement arrived in Chicago, women from Chicago's Equal Suffrage Headquarters contacted the executive secretary of the M&RFM, Reverend H.T. Williams, to tell him that they had heard that the Movement was "instructing members to vote against suffrage next Tuesday."[64] Williams quickly responded by assuring the women no such command had been made. Unaware of the political acumen of the city's suffragists, Williams failed to anticipate that his denial would not appease the women. Instead, the women saw Williams's denial as an opportunity, asking him if they could address the Movement on opening night which was also election eve.

The M&RFM had scheduled ten different meetings to be held in ten different churches located throughout the city. Knowing that thousands of civic-minded men were

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[64]*Chicago Tribune*, April 6, 1912.

sure to attend opening night of the M&RFM, the suffragists hoped to have the chance to speak to them about the imperative of voting for women's suffrage. When Mr. Williams responded to the suffragists' request by declining "with thanks" the women responded by making plans to confront the men of the M&RFM with "a votes for women delegation" as they arrived at the city's train station. Shortly before the Movement's train arrived in Chicago, women congregated at the station armed with banners. As the Movement's leaders descended from the trains the first thing they saw was a group of women charging toward them. Although the suffragists were angry that the Movement leaders, as a group, had refused to endorse suffrage, they were particularly incensed by the fact that not even the Social Gospel faction of the Movement interceded on their behalf. The protest these women mounted was directed in particular at the Social Gospel men including Reverend A. Herbert, head of the social service department.

The *Chicago Tribune* captured the mood of the moment with the caption "women in politics will not mix with men and religion." Though the M&RFM's leaders refused to allow Chicago's suffragists to speak at their meetings opening night, they did not refrain from commenting on the impending election. At the meetings held that Monday night, the Movement called upon "every Christian to be a good citizen."[65] H.F. Laflame, the M&RFM mission expert told a crowded church, "what we need in the politics of this country today are men with a world vision." After Laflame had finished outlining this vision, W.C. Pease, a Bible Study expert ended the meeting by urging every man in the audience to "express his good citizenship at the polls tomorrow morning." To encourage these men to exercise their civic duty he provided them with a list of "anti-jackpot

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[65] *Ibid.*, April 8, 1912.

legislators, approved by the Anti-Saloon League, the Chicago Christian Endeavor League, and the Legislative Voters League."[66] He said nothing about women's suffrage. Considering the very public clash which had taken place the day before between the Movement's leaders and the city's suffragists, it was probably impossible for anyone in the audience not to have noticed that the Movement refused to recognize, let alone support or denounce, the suffrage proposal.

Historian Gail Bederman notes that it is very difficult to find M&RFM official pronouncements which address the suffrage movement or the development of feminism, both of which were taking the country by storm. "Movement literature is surprisingly silent on those issues. To read M&RFM publications, one might assume that all Progressive Era women were either Sunday School teachers, mothers, or prostitutes."[67] Such was not the case in Chicago where M&RFM leaders were forced to confront the suffrage movement in a very public forum. Though still refusing to comment openly on the issue, the Movement's refusal to endorse suffrage was certainly in most voters' eyes a defacto denunciation.

Though we can never know what influence the public confrontation between the M&RFM leaders and Chicago's suffragists had on the city's voting population, it is nonetheless significant that the proposal failed. The day following the election the men who voted against suffrage probably felt some sense of affirmation when they heard from the Movement's leaders that what the city's churches needed was "less lemonade and

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[66]*Ibid.*, April 9, 1912.

[67]Bederman, The Women Have Had Charge of the Church Work Long Enough," p. 451. Bederman notes that in non-official literature many Men and Religion Forward Movement leaders openly asserted their opposition to suffrage.

Ladies' Aid and more business methods."[68] After having been refused entrance into the formal political sphere, women found one of the few public spaces that they had long occupied being questioned.

The revivalists leading the Men and Religion Forward Movement were certain that the key to Chicago's future religious state rested with "the men of Chicago [who] have unusual energy, more so, perhaps, than any other city." All that was needed according to the Movement's leaders was "to direct these energies for the social and religious improvement of the city."[69] A year before the Movement arrived in Chicago, local representatives of the Movement had begun directing these energies toward the task of designing the "Chicago Plan," a plan that described in some detail how the city's men were supposed to masculinize and revitalize the religious forces of the city.

On the final day of the revival, ministers across the city outlined the Chicago Plan to their congregations. They described to the men and women attending church that Sunday how the Chicago Plan called for "distinct order of a new manhood." At the very least, the man who represented this new manhood was expected to lead his family in private worship, be "helpful and useful in service," as well as to "regulate his business and conduct by Christian not by worldly standards." The M&RFM leaders hoped that these men would do even more, that they would reach out to the city's godless men by teaching Bible classes in factories, conducting open air meetings, securing "substitutes for the saloons," forming "bands for personal evangelism," and engaging in the kind of home and jail visiting that the city's women had for decades been carrying out. In addition to

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[68]*Chicago Tribune*, April 10, 1912.

[69]*Ibid.*, April 14, 1912.

reaching out to the men of the city, the M&RFM followers were also expected to help solve the "boy problem" by teaching Sunday school classes and leading boys' recreational activities. Explaining the importance of men assuming religious responsibility for the city's boys one participant explained: "Only as strong virile Christian men can be placed in charge of the Boys' Bible Classes will this growth through God's Word be secured."[70] Drawing on the wide-spread belief that the physical development of boys was central to their developing religious and civic identities, these men were expected to hike and play basketball with the city's boys. Finally, the Chicago Plan called for men to become more involved in religious-based social service.

The Chicago Plan detailed the many new religious responsibilities that the city's men were supposed to assume, but it did not expect them to create new institutions. The Movement explained: "It [the Movement] does not seek to supplant the church, or to create new organizations. It prefers to energize existing institutions."[71] This new manhood would thus be realized by "putting the men directly to work in and through the church and like institutions."[72] The Movement leaders believed that it was only by working through preexisting institutions that it could "substitute for the indifferent churchmen of the present a much larger body of praying, Bible-reading, God-fearing,

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[70]*The Official Bulletin of the YMCA of Chicago*, April, 1912. The Movement leaders always stressed that this was work that men were best suited to pursue. One Chicago M&RFM leader described this most clearly: "Finally, a boy's religion must be, like his whole nature, hero-worshiping....Give a boy the right hero, and you have done the greatest thing you can do for him. Bring him under the personal influence of an older man whom he can admire and follow, and he will grow like him as inevitably a flower grows toward the sun." *Men and Religion*, p. 64.

[71]*Chicago Tribune*, April 15, 1912.

[72]*The Official Bulletin of the YMCA of Chicago*, April 1912.

Christ-following socially and religiously active men."[73]

M&RFM leaders celebrated the unveiling of the Chicago Plan by making the rather extravagant claim that the Movement "has revealed the fact that the church is the moral dynamo from which the power for social service, philanthropy, and education must come."[74] That the church was a dynamo for social service, philanthropy, and education was no surprise to the city's Protestant women who had been using the churches, and the city's many Protestant settlements, to conduct the same kinds of programs that the Chicago Plan laid out for the city's men. The Plan is thus notable not for its originality, but for the fact that it drew so liberally on the programs women had been conducting without ever acknowledging the fact women were already engaged in this work. Even more important, the Plan never explained what role women were expected to play in the churches once this new "manhood" had found its place.

There were no proposals outlined in the Chicago Plan in which women were not already actively involved. Women from institutional churches and Protestant settlements had for years been conducting open air meetings, engaging in extensive visiting, teaching hundreds of Sunday school classes, and running Gospel shop meetings. For example, in 1907, women from Association House ran gospel shop meetings at four different factories with an attendance of over three hundred girls and women.[75] While the men of the M&RFM could have argued that they were trying to do for the city's boys and men what these women were doing for the city's girls and women, it is important to note that in the

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[73]*Ibid.*

[74]*Chicago Tribune,* April 15, 1912.

[75]Association House pamphlet, 1907, Box 20, Folder 7, Association House Collection, CHS.

first decade of the twentieth century Chicago's Protestant women had begun working actively to draw boys into their institutions, hoping to help solve the widely discussed "boy problem." The women who ran Association House's Sunday school classes began highlighting the "Heros of the Old Testament" in an explicit attempt to attract boys to their classes.[76] Marcy Center was also becoming increasingly concerned with boys, holding special open air meetings where they drew on popular entertainment forms such as the stereopticon to try to entice more boys into the Center.[77] Marcy Center and Association House were not alone. Most of the city's Protestant settlements and institutional churches drew on the examples set by the YMCA by adding more playgrounds, vacation Bible schools, and boys' clubs to their programs. The transition can be seen by looking at Association House's summer vacation Bible schools which in 1900 served women and young girls exclusively. By 1911, the women of Association House were making a concerted effort to attract young boys to its vacation Bible schools by telling the boys' parents the boys would "swim, play, hike, and learn manliness and citizenship."[78] There were no proposals outlined in the Chicago Plan that women weren't already active in, suggesting that the M&RFM leaders were concerned more with who offered the services than with whether the services were available.

Although we will probably never know exactly why the M&RFM leaders did not discuss what role women were supposed to assume in the churches once men had

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[76]Association House pamphlet, 1906, Box 20, Folder 7, Association House Collection, CHS. Also see *The Christian Cosmopolitan*, February, 1905.

[77]*Christian Cosmopolitan*, February, 1911.

[78]Publicity for summer programs, Box 20, Folder 6, Association House Collection, CHS.

masculinized them, their silence on this issue is in and of itself significant. Ignoring women, and the important role women played in the churches, might have been one way the men of the Movement tried to prove that the church was not effeminate; it might have been one way they tried to prove that the church was in fact "a most distinctly masculine thing." In other words, because the Movement leaders hoped to "appeal to everything virile and masculine in the men of our day," they might have been reluctant to discuss the women who already dominated this religious domain.[79]

It is possible that the Movement leaders refrained from talking about women because they themselves might have been uncertain about whether they could succeed in this endeavor, uncertain about whether they could mobilize enough support for their Plan. As discussed earlier, the Movement was composed of men from a wide array of theological perspectives, including a Social Gospel faction calling for extended social service, and an evangelical conservative faction committed to traditional evangelism. This split was especially prominent in Chicago where the Moody Bible Institute represented the conservative faction. For example, one of the Movement's participants Reverend Gray of the Moody Bible Institute noted approvingly, "The men and religion movement has done much to stir men to a sense of duty."[80] He then warned the men of the Moody Bible Institute: "To put social service before salvation is to put the fruit before the tree." He continued, "Social service should be the outcome of a true Christian life, but the life must come first through Christ or the social service is a lifeless thing."[81] Gray

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[79]*The Official Bulletin of the YMCA of Chicago,* April 1912.

[80]*Chicago Tribune*, April 15, 1912.

[81]*Ibid.*

found support from James Cannon, one of the Movement's executive committee members who believed that evangelism must be the center of the Movement. "Unless we stand firmly on this basis, we shall certainly fail in our effort." Cannon often reminded his fellow leaders that "Jesus Christ, when He was here among men, did not spend His life in inventing machinery to lighten labor, nor in discussing the laws behind the unexplained mystery of nature, nor in devising new institutions, nor in remodeling the civil government of the world." In traditional evangelical style, James Cannon stated: "He [Jesus Christ] came to cleanse the consciences of men, to remodel their wills, to purify their lives, to teach them how to throw off the burden of sin and how to be restored to God." [82] The fact that within this Movement there were also ministers like Reverend J. Hastle Odgers of Chicago's Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church who told his congregation that the "Men of the church ought also to work outside of the church in providing playgrounds and in community improvement and by being big brothers to those in need of sympathy" demonstrates the very broad nature of this movement.[83] What drew both of these factions together was the concern they both shared about the ever-pressing need to masculinize the church.

MAKING RELIGION A BUSINESS: THE CHICAGO SUNDAY EVENING CLUB

With Henry P. Crowell and C.S. Holt, two Chicago Sunday Evening Club trustees, serving on the executive committee of the M&RFM, it was inevitable that these

[82]James Cannon, *Men and Religion*, p. 89.

[83]*Chicago Tribune*, April 15, 1912.

two organizations would be directly connected. Considering that the businessmen who attended the Chicago Sunday Evening Club shared the M&RFM's commitment to pulling men into the religious domain, and to making religion more influential in public life, including the commercial arena, it is more than probable that Club members attended M&RFM meetings in high numbers. Further proof that Club members responded favorably to the Movement is demonstrated by the fact that national members of the M&RFM were regular speakers at the Club, with one leader delivering a total of eleven addresses during the period 1908-1920.[84] In many ways the most important similarity between the Chicago Sunday Evening Club and the Men and Religion Forward Movement was that members of both organizations debated amongst themselves over what place social service should play in their organizations. Yet whereas the M&RFM was divided between Social Gospelers and conservative evangelicals, the Chicago Sunday Evening Club found the conservative businessmen who constituted the majority of members challenging Clifford Barnes, President of the Club. When forming the Chicago Sunday Evening Club, Barnes had envisioned it as a business men's club; he probably could not have predicted how fully business objectives would define the club, overshadowing the social religious agenda he hoped to bring to it.

When Barnes founded the Chicago Sunday Evening Club he hoped that it would soon expand into a social service organization. As early as February 1908, he stated with great optimism that the Club was soon to establish "in the downtown district of this city a great civic center with clubrooms, committee rooms, assembly halls, and a large auditorium, where all those various activities which tend to uplift and ennoble a people

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[84]See Heidebrecht, *Faith and Economic Practice*, pp. 271-279.

may properly be provided."[85] To encourage support for this grand objective he formed within the Chicago Sunday Evening Club a Monday Council to which all men under forty were invited to join. The purpose of the Monday Council, as described in its constitution, was to "promote social service on behalf of the individual and the city and to assist in every way the work of the Sunday Evening Club."[86] In addition to sponsoring weekly dinner meetings and raising funds for the proposed civic center, Barnes expected that the men would become more active in all forms of public service. Barnes told the Monday Council members that their service in the city could be of a "religious, social, charitable, or civic nature" and he suggested that they consider, in addition to becoming more active in the city's churches, volunteering for such organizations as the YMCA, the Salvation Army, the Immigrant Protective League, the Infant Welfare Society, and the city's many settlements.[87]

By 1911, the League had over three hundred members.[88] To Barnes disappointment, however, these men were more interested in participating in the mock city councils the Club sponsored each week than volunteering for the city's many social service organizations. By 1914, the Monday Council had lost most of its members and almost all of its financial support.[89] Still hoping to gain support among Chicago Sunday Evening Club members for social service work, Barnes established in 1916 the Social

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[85]CSEC Scrapbook, Vol 1. 1908-1910, CSEC Collection.

[86]Monday Council Pamphlets, Box 13, CSEC Collection.

[87]"To the Young Men," Monday Council Pamphlet, Box 13, CSEC Collection.

[88]CSEC Annual Statement, 1911-1912, Box 13, CSEC Collection.

[89]1914 Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees, Box 1, Minutes, 1908-1926, CSEC Collection.

Service League. To Barnes's disappointment this league never attracted large numbers and his plan for "educational, friendly counsel, and outing" departments was never put into practice.[90] As was the case with the Monday Council, the weekly dinners the Social Service League sponsored were the most popular part of the program. [91]

The failure of the Social Service League shows that businessman were attracted to the Chicago Sunday Evening Club not because they hoped to duplicate the work women were doing in the city, but because they wanted to redefine the way in which religion influenced the city. Believing that the message one spouted could be as powerful as the social services others offered, the Club members rested content in the belief that they were helping Chicagoans realize the power of the Word of God by encouraging the building of character among those who attended the Club's Sunday services. One Club member explained this most aptly: "If you wish to feel that your philanthropy is invested with a due regard to efficiency and permanent values,–do you know any effort in Chicago that is yearly proving itself more practical or is directed to greater permanency than the character building of the Sunday Evening Club?"[92] E.B. Butler of Butler and Brother's Wholesale General Merchandising Company wrote to Barnes to tell him that the Club was providing a critical function to the city by "pointing out the dangers arising from the demoralizing influences of the usual Sunday evening Amusement" and by "entering into competition with the regular downtown Sunday night allurements." [93] Reverend Hill, an

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[90]1918 Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees, Box 1, Minutes, 1908-1926, CSEC Collection.

[91] Report of the Social Service League, Box 13, CSEC Collection.

[92]"I was a Stranger" (1915), Box 13, CSEC Collection.

[93]E.B. Butler to Clifford Barnes, February 17, 1909, Box 3, CSEC Collection.

invited speaker warned the Club's members that "the city is the heart of society and the future of the republic will largely depend on the way the problem of the city is solved." The Club's members probably felt some sense of affirmation when he then derided the "reformers [who] parade the streets and do things we think almost ridiculous in their efforts to better the city," suggesting instead that "the best gift to a city is a man's self."[94] Most of the Club supporters were pleased by the fact that "The Sunday Evening Club means an evening of uplift, a few hours snatched from the daily struggles of deadening and sordid influences, a boost towards higher aspirations."[95]

The benefit of the Club about which members spoke most often was that it ensures, "honest employees," and "means greater dividends."[96] For these men, therefore, reclaiming the church had as much to do with class as gender. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Chicago papers were filled with editorials like the following one from the *Chicago Evening Journal*: "Businessmen who know that the honesty of their employees is the touchstone of their success, who realize the guiding value of this influence, would do well to consider and aid this cause, for it spells dividends in finance and peace of mind for them apart from the good they are doing in helping fellow men to the higher life."[97] Even John G. Shedd described the Chicago

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[94]*Record Herald*, October 5, 1908, CSEC Scrapbook, Vol. 1, 1908-1910, CSEC Collection.

[95]CSEC Scrapbook, Vol 1. 1908-1910, CSEC Collection.

[96]*Chicago Evening American*, June 3, 1908, CSEC Scrapbook, Vol.1, 1908-1910,CSEC Collection.

[97]*Chicago Evening Journal*, July 6, 1908, Box 3, Administration Files, CSEC Collection.

Sunday Evening Club as "the biggest bargain in town."[98]

That businessmen talked about their contributions to the Club as investments yielding high returns should not have been surprising considering the fact Club leaders often told prospective donors, "we always expect to render a good account to our contributors." [99] Examining just what kind of payoff these investments were supposed to render is thus critical for understanding the wide-spread support the Club received from Chicago's business community. A few months after the CSEC began holding Sunday evening services a journalist surveyed some of the Club's supporters and reported: "A number of the business men interested freely admit that they consider the support of the Club a good investment from the results they have noted in the betterment of conditions and morals among their employees.[100] Using the same business rhetoric, a bank President wrote the Club, "The good influence and results of such work cannot be tabulated, but the evidences of their existence are plentiful, and constantly coming to light."[101] The Club received many letters from members of the city's business community similar to the ones quoted above. The Chicago Association of Commerce was thus probably right when it noted "many of the principal businessmen, and much of the inspiration and enthusiasm which has made the Chicago of today, is behind this movement." [102]

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[98]Letter from John G. Shedd to CSEC October 26, 1927, found in Minutes, Box 2, CSEC Collection.

[99]Minutes of the Board of Trustees, 1918, Box 1, CSEC Collection.

[100]CSEC Scrapbook, Volume 1, 1908-1910, CSEC Collection.

[101] "Sunday Evening Club Season, 1911-12," Promotional Pamphlet, Box 13, CSEC Collection.

[102]CSEC Scrapbook, Vol. 2, CSEC Collection.

The Chicago Sunday Evening Club's Sunday services reinforced the conservatism of Chicago's business community. For these businessmen, assuming religious leadership in the city seemed natural and had as much to do with their concerns about class as their fears about the feminization of the church. But because women were so active in the religious life of the city, to claim religious leadership was to question the religious domain as a woman's domain, although in this case it was more often an implicit rather than explicit questioning. In this way concerns about class and gender were intertwined .

The Chicago Sunday Evening Club was undoubtedly a businessman's club, with concerns about labor informing the participation of its members. What's equally interesting is the way in which modern business methods defined the very operation of the Club. The businessmen who belonged to the Club were encouraged to publicize the Club's meetings at their companies. Among others, International Harvester, Carson Pirie & Scott, and Bartlett & Company displayed announcements of the Club throughout their workplaces.[103] Although evidence suggests very few workers actually attended the club, it is nonetheless significant that such pressure was exerted on them to attend.

These announcements were only one small part of a much larger publicity campaign. The Club had what was probably one of the most active and sophisticated publicity departments of any religious organization of its day. The publicity department was led by two groups of men, the first recruited from the advertising world and the second from city's newspapers. In 1908, the members of the Chicago Sunday Evening Club's publicity department included James J. Stokes, advertising manager for Marshall

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[103]CSEC Minutes, May 1916, Minutes, 1908-26, Box 1, CSEC Collection.

Field & Company, seven other commercial men, as well as seven newspaper men, including H.M. Parker of the *Chicago Tribune*.[104] With Barnes presiding over them, these men met for lunch every Monday to devise "plans for enlisting the interest of the public in the Sunday evening service.[105]

The zeal of the Club's advertising was demonstrated by the fact that each year more money was spent on advertisements than rent.[106] Hoping that the Club would serve as a "rival of Sunday theater, music halls, and saloons," Barnes wanted all Chicagoans made aware of its Sunday services. Achieving this goal required extraordinary effort.[107] Yet however much Barnes described the Club as a rival of popular entertainment, he did not reject the images and forms of popular entertainment, but instead appropriated them, remaking them to fit his religious goals. Always the enterprising businessman, it should come as no surprise that Barnes saw nothing problematic with drawing on the methods of the entertainment business, including advertising. It was precisely because the business of entertainment was so firmly grounded in the world of advertising that making the Club a successful rival of Sunday leisure required nothing less than an advertising campaign designed to outshine those put forth by the theaters and music halls. Throughout Chicago the Club posted "attractively framed signs" designed to resemble the ones used to advertise the theater. In 1908, these signs or placards could be found in many of the same places theater signs would be located including "retail stores, wholesale houses,

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[104]CSEC Scrapbook, Vol 1. 1908-1910, CSEC Collection.

[105]Ibid.

[106]CSEC Minutes, 1908, Minutes, 1908-1926, Box 1, CSEC Collection.

[107]*Chicago Tribune*, February 5, 1908, Box 3, Administration 1908-1937, CSEC Collection.

railway stations, and hotels."[108] In addition to these signs, the Club distributed over 2,000 cards, or what were sometimes called tickets, in the loop district that detailed "information of the next meeting of the Club."[109] Although the Club required no admission fee, these cards resembled theater tickets. Hoping to draw in Chicago's laboring population with these tickets and signs, Barnes singled out the "cheaper hotels and boarding houses," placing placards in them and distributing hundreds of cards outside of them.[110] By 1922, the Club was distributing over 10,000 weekly announcement cards and displaying over 600 entertainment-like signs in over six hundred different locations throughout the city."[111]

In addition to distributing cards and posting signs, the Club purchased advertising space in almost all of the city's newspapers. In 1908, the first year of the Club, weekly advertisements were placed in the *Inter Ocean*, the *Chicago American*, the *Chicago Evening Post*, the *Chicago Daily News*, the *Chicago Journal*, the *Chicago Examiner*, the *Chicago Record-Herald*, and of course, the *Chicago Tribune*.[112] Each week the Club also sent to each of the city's papers a biographical sketch of the scheduled main speaker.[113] Following the talk on Sunday evening a copy of the address was sent to the

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[108]CSEC Minutes, Meeting June 1, 1908, Minutes, 1908-1926, Box 1, CSEC Collection.

[109]"I was a Stranger" (1915), Box 13, CSEC Collection.

[110]CSEC Minutes, Meeting December 8, 1910, Minutes, 1908-1926, Box 1 CSEC Collection.

[111]CSEC Minutes, Meeting May 30, 1922, Minutes, 1908-1926, Box 1, CSEC Collection.

[112]Advertising Receipts for 1908-1909, Box 13, CSEC Collection.

[113]CSEC Minutes, 1910-1913, Box 1, CSEC Collection.

city's Press Association.[114] In the Monday *Chicago Tribune* the talk was usually reprinted in full for all to read. Though it was not unusual for the city's papers, including the *Tribune*, to publish sermons in the Monday press during the nineteenth century, the CSEC was the only religious organization during the 1910s and 1920s to regularly have it addresses published each week. From the perspectives of the Club members this publicity served them well. One club member wrote to the *Tribune,* "I venture to say that the publicity given the club last Sunday by the Tribune added at least a thousand men to our audience."[115]

The city's newspapers responded favorably to the CSEC, in large part because of the financial power the Club members wielded in the city. There is evidence that Chicago Sunday Evening Club trustees exerted pressure on the city's newspapers to give the Club greater news coverage than its activities warranted. For example, prominent Club Trustee John T. Pirie of Carson Pirie & Scott Company regularly pressured the *Tribune* to feature the Chicago Sunday Evening Club in the Religious News Section. John Patterson of the *Tribune* responded to Scott's demands by writing Scott, "As I explained to you other religious institutions have considered that unfair; nor would it accord with my own sense of judgement."[116] Although the *Tribune* refused to made the CSEC its regular leading feature, it nevertheless continued into the 1920s to print biographical sketches of the Club's speakers and to print in the Monday paper copies of the addresses

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[114]CSEC Minutes, 1910-1913, Box 1, CSEC Collection.

[115]Letter to the *Chicago Tribune*, November 26, 1915, Box 13, Advertising Receipts, CSEC Collection.

[116]John Patterson of the *Chicago Tribune* to John T. Pirie, November 30, 1915, Box 3, CSEC Administration 1908-1937, CSEC Collection.

delivered each Sunday in Orchestra Hall.

CONCLUSION

In 1918, ten years after the Chicago Sunday Evening Club was formed, Clifford Barnes celebrated its anniversary with the claim: "If the Chicago Sunday Evening Club can quicken the interest of us business men in the eternal realities of life and religion, and if it can furnish us a new and convenient channel for the expression of that interest, it will have proved its right to be."[117] From the large audiences that congregated in Orchestra Hall each Sunday evening, and the many congratulatory letters businessmen sent to the Club, it seems for certain that the Club succeeded on both fronts, quickening the interest of businessmen in religion and furnishing a new and convenient channel for that interest. Into the 1930s and 1940s, the Club continued to attract some of the nation's most famous people, including President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Equally significant, just five years after the CSEC was founded, Sunday evening clubs were formed in Boston, Los Angeles, and Rochester, serving as further proof of the Club's success.[118]

Yet the grand irony of the CSEC is that it was the feminine church, not the masculine CSEC, which was most influential in the public life of Chicago. However much the businessmen of the Club spoke about making religion more important in the city, it is questionable how much the Club actually affected the larger public life of the city, especially the lives of the working-class and immigrant groups who constituted the

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[117]Pamphlet, Ten Years of Prepared News, CSEC Scrapbook, CSEC Collection.

[118]CSEC Scrapbook, Vol. 2, 1910-1911, CSEC Collection.

majority of the city's population. In contrast, the many women who labored in the city's institutional churches and Protestant settlements had daily contact with thousands of Chicagoans. Possessing the time and desire to work in these institutions, Chicago's Protestant women guaranteed that the religious domain was still a woman's domain. Even though Barnes had hoped that the CSEC men would emulate the work of these women, they offered few social services, choosing to stay within the comfortable and affluent confines of the Club. The religious leadership the Club members established in the city was mostly rhetorical.

CHAPTER 4

WHOSE CITY IS THIS?: PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS VERSUS PROTESTANT SETTLEMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH WOMEN, 1900-1929

In the winter of 1928, a professional social worker from Chicago's Council of Social Agencies visited Olivet Institute to evaluate its social and recreational programs. This was an important assignment because Olivet was one of the city's oldest institutional churches, having offered an extensive array of services from the late nineteenth century. After examining the day nursery, the playground, the English class, and the medical dispensary, the social worker wrote in her report, "this is a combined religious, social service, medical, and educational institution where everything is attempted and nothing is done well."[1] She suggested that Olivet hire a professional social worker who could draw on the most recent methods of professional social work, preferably one recommended by the Council of Social Agencies.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century Chicago's Protestant settlement and institutional church women had found themselves forced to defend their civic activism against two significant detractors: the secular settlement leaders who thought that the city's Protestant women had distorted the purpose and form of the settlement institution and Protestant businessmen who believed that what the city's churches needed was "less lemonade and Ladies' Aid and more business methods."[2]

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[1] "Review of Olivet Institute," December 1928, Box 387, Folder 2, Welfare Council of Chicago Records (Welfare Council), Chicago Historical Society, (CHS).

[2] *Chicago Tribune*, April 10, 1912.

Though these conflicts would continue into the 1920s a new and in many ways more formidable foe came onto the scene in this decade: the professional social worker based in Chicago's Council of Social Agencies. Founded in 1914 by social service providers hoping to rationalize and coordinate social services, the Council of Social Agencies quickly became a place where professional social workers seeking to establish social service as their exclusive domain, and to make that domain a thoroughly secular one, congregated. Getting the larger public to accept the notion that social work was not an extension of Protestant charitable endeavors, but instead was a real profession based in social science, the fields of psychiatry and sociology more specifically, was critical to making social work a respected profession.[3] However, because the women laboring in the city's Protestant settlements and institutional churches continued to embrace their Protestant faith and had by the 1920s established such a strong hold in the city's social-service field, offering extensive recreational and social welfare services including day nurseries, playgrounds, medical dispensaries, and personal counseling, the conflict that occurred between Olivet Institute and the professional social worker from the Council described above was not an unusual but rather a common occurrence.

Though Chicago's professional social workers articulated a rhetoric shaped by the discourse of the emerging discipline of social science--a discipline professional social workers were attracted to, in large part, because of the aura of objectivity and authority

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[3] In the 1910s and 1920s, the larger public often associated professional social work with charitable and philanthropic endeavors rather than the established professions, forcing professional social workers to discuss openly the foundation of their profession. On social work as a developing profession and its ties to psychiatry and sociology, see Roy Lubove, *The Professional Altruist: The Emergence of Social Work as a Profession, 1880-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

associated with it--their language masked the fact that the 1920s was a transitional time for professional social work. Professional social workers had not yet clearly defined their methods and it was not certain that those using the title "professional" would be able to claim social service as their exclusive domain. As historian Clark Chambers has pointed out, throughout the 1920s social work was "composed of tens of thousands of practitioners, both amateur and professional, in hundreds of different fields of activity, employing many varied techniques." Chambers concluded, "social work did not present a united front."[4] At a national conference of professional social work schools held in 1920, one of the participants commented on the problems facing professional social workers when he complained, "It only shows the chaotic condition of the concepts of social workers that casework was the only subject the members of the Association of Training Schools could agree to as necessary for the curricula of the schools."[5] What most frustrated Mary Wheeler, an outspoken professional social work advocate, was that "The whole field of social work is suffering from an influx of people, untrained, using our technical language terms loosely, taking positions for which they are not fitted, sharing our titles, and causing misunderstandings of the professionals and their standards."[6]

Given the fact that social work, as a profession, was still evolving it should come

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[4]Clarke Chambers, *Seedtime of Reform: American Social Welfare and Social Action, 1918-1933* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963) p.91.

[5]Minutes of the Conference of Training Schools of Social Work, June 12, 1920, Box 2, "School of Civics and Philanthropy," Graham Taylor Papers, Newberry Library.

[6]Mary Wheeler quoted in Regina Kunzel, "The Professionalization of Benevolence: Evangelicals and Social Workers in the Florence Crittenton Homes, 1915 to 1945," *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 22 (Fall 1988)p.29.

as no surprise that different groups laid claim to the title professional social worker, groups with varying ideas about what made one a professional. Historian John Ehrenreich has argued that professional social workers divided into two factions, one which held social reform dear to its heart and the other which sought to distance social work from any association with its charitable past.[7] Robyn Muncy has contributed to this discussion by examining more closely the relationship between gender, social work and social reform. Muncy argues that women found the professionalization of social work especially important because they had little opportunity to participate in the male-dominated professions. According to Muncy, female social workers carried with them a commitment to reform when creating the profession of social work. Muncy writes: "I believe that the female professions created during the Progressive era contained as part of their professional creeds many of the commitments of the Progressive reformers who gave them birth."[8]

Building on the work of Clark Chambers, Daniel Walkowitz has described how the professionalization of social work was complicated further by the fact that large

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[7]John Ehrenreich, *The Altruistic Imagination: A History of Social work and Social Policy in the United States* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

[8]Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). p, xiv. For other discussions of gender and professionalization, see Clarke A. Chambers, "Women in the Creation of the Profession of Social Work," *Social Service Review,* Vol. 60 (March 1986): 1-33; Joan Jacobs Brumberg and Nancy Tomes, "Women in the Professions: A Research Agenda for American Historians," *Reviews in American History,* Vol. 10 (June 1982): 273-296; Barbara Melosh, *The Physician's Hand: Work, Culture, and Conflict in American Nursing* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); Darlene Clark Hine, *Black Women in White: Racial Conflict in the Nursing Profession, 1890-1950* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); and Regina Morantz-Sanchez, *Sympathy and Science: Women Physicians in American Medicine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

numbers of volunteers who did not seek professional status "continued to work alongside paid staff members, doing work that differed little from that of professionals."[9] The fact that volunteers who viewed social work as an avocation, rather than a profession, could so easily use the methods of the professionals, including casework, caused great anxiety among social workers trying to prove to the larger public that social work was in fact a profession grounded in specialized skills.[10] In recent years historians have paid very little attention to the interactions between professional and volunteer social workers, but in the social work journals of the 1920s and 1930s some of the most talked about topics were the hostile relations between these two groups of women and the bitterness professional workers felt toward the voluntary social service providers who used, or attempted to use, the methods of the professional social worker without being interested in being professionals themselves.[11]

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[9]Daniel J. Walkowitz, "The Making of a Female Professional Identity: Social Workers in the 1920s," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 95 (October 1990) p.1060.

[10]In *Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), Regina Kunzel also focuses on the relationship between volunteer and professional social workers. Unlike Walkowitz, who argues that non-professional volunteers could use the same methods as professionals, Kunzel argues it was the different assumptions and methods each group brought to their work that separated them.

[11]Mary Richards, Director of the Charity Organization Department of the Russell Sage Foundation, addressed the tensions underlying this issue when she responded to a statement by Abraham Flexner that social work was inherently unprofessional by stating: "We shall have a skill of our own, a point of view of our own, and shall act as middlemen to the extent that any professional worker who wants to do a good all-around job must so act, and no further." She continued, "Nor will the fact that our skill was first developed and first practiced in certain charities damn us utterly, either." National Conference of Social Work, *Proceedings*, (1917) p.113. Even professional social workers who hoped to include volunteers in social work struggled to differentiate between the two. For example, Virginia Robinson, nationally known social work theorist, wrote: "To differentiate social case treatment in the technical sense from the more or less haphazard,

Chicago's Protestant settlement and institutional church women resembled the social work volunteers described by Walkowitz in that most of them were volunteers who used many of methods touted by professional social workers while also opposing the goal of making social work a secular profession open only to those with formal training. These Protestant women believed that social work was their civic and religious duty. However, many full-time paid workers, and some professionally trained social workers, also labored at these Protestant institutions. What made these women and the Protestant institutions distinct is that neither the professionally trained women nor the institutions that hired them devalued the role of the volunteer or the importance of experience in preparing social workers, both trained and volunteer, to conduct social service work. There was little to no hostility reported between the professionally trained and the volunteer workers. I argue that it was because these women shared the belief that modern social work and their Christian faith could, and must, be interwoven that they found among them a common ground. They argued for a distinctly Christian form of social work which would be open to both the full-time staff member and the volunteer, to both the trained and the untrained. In doing so, they questioned the division separating the professional social worker from the volunteer, a division which most professional social workers perceived essential for making social work a respected profession. Equally

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unscientific, but kindly and often very helpful 'influencing,' 'guiding,' 'helping out' process which goes on wherever human beings associate is a task in which case workers must make some sound headway if casework is to take rank with the professions which are firmly grounded in scientific method." National Conference of Social Work, *Proceedings*, (1921) p. 253. Mary C. Goodwillie discusses the same issue in "Volunteers in Family Work," National Conference of Social Work," Proceedings, (1917) p.116. For an historical discussion of volunteers and professionals, see Dorothy Becker, "Exit Lady Bountiful: The Volunteer and the Professional Social Worker," *Social Service Review*, Vol. 34 (1964): 57-72.

significant, by incorporating religion into their social work, these Protestant women posed a threat to those professional social workers who saw distancing social work from any association with Protestantism necessary for making social work a respected profession.

This chapter discusses the debates and conflicts which occurred between Chicago's Protestant settlement and institutional church women and those in the city laying claim to the title professional social worker by first examining Chicago's first social work school, the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy.[12] When I first began researching the school it was to demonstrate how schooling helped determine the line dividing the professional from the volunteer. After analyzing the material I collected about the school, and drawing on the information other historians had already compiled, I realized that the school attracted two very different groups of women: the first, a group of women who sought the credentials and experience necessary to claim authority as professional social workers and the second, an even larger group of women who were concerned little with academic credentials but instead were attracted to the school for the opportunity it provided to better their skills as volunteers. The fact that the majority of women who attended the school prior to1920 were not concerned with making social work a profession, but rather hoped that social work would continue to be open to both volunteers and paid professionals, contrasts sharply with historical understanding that

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[12]I should note here that I use the term professional social worker to refer only to those women who hoped to make social work an exclusive profession, a profession disconnected from any association with the charitable Protestant past from which it had originated. Although, as I have already pointed out, there were women who had been trained as professional social workers laboring in Protestant institutions, I will refer to these women as Protestant social workers, not because they were any less professional but because they did not identify with the majority of social workers who were staking their claim to professional identity by distancing themselves from Protestant charities.

social work education was by definition a force helping make social work an exclusive profession.[13] This insight is important because it shows that the volunteer could and did make a distinction between professional skills and professional status, seeking the first and not the latter.

The second section of the chapter describes the social services Protestant women offered through their Protestant settlement houses and institutional churches from the turn of the century to 1930. I argue that these Protestant women stood not at the margins of the city, as traditional historiography on social welfare would have it, but rather at its center, providing services to their neighbors, interacting closely with the city's other social service organizations, and acting as intermediaries between their neighbors and the city's other social agencies, both public and private. It was in large part because of the central role these Protestant women played in the city's social service matrix--and the willingness of these women to draw on social work methods within an explicitly Protestant context--that they were attacked by the city's professional social workers based in Chicago's Council of Social Agencies. The third section discusses these conflicts. As will be shown, the professional social workers who congregated in the Council of Social Agencies labored diligently to establish public guardianship over the city's larger social service field. What role religion would play in social work, and what role the volunteer would be allowed to assume in this field, defined the contours of these debates. Though it was still not clear in the 1920s exactly what attributes made one a professional, the

[13]I should note here that I am making a distinction between professional skills and the identity one claims as a professional. Because social work methods, especially casework, could be used by women not claiming professional status for themselves, this is an important distinction to make.

professional social workers based in the Council challenged two important notions that the Protestant women held dear: 1) that social service providers gaining knowledge primarily from experience rather than formal social work education could conduct adequate social work; and 2) that there was a place for religion in social work. Chicago's professional social workers based in the Council became increasingly hostile to both voluntarism and religion, arguing that neither was reconcilable with their goal of making social work a profession legitimated by and based upon social scientific principles.

SOCIAL WORK AND THE CHICAGO SCHOOL OF CIVICS AND PHILANTHROPY, 1903-1920

Prior to the 1920s Americans tended to use the terms social work and social service interchangeably. According to historian Roy Lubove social work was defined broadly to include any and all work done for civic and social betterment: "In the early years of the twentieth century social work had no distinctive focus. It was a compound of casework, settlement work, institutional and agency administration, and social reform, and anyone, paid or volunteer who enlisted in the crusade to improve humanity's lot claimed the title of social worker."[14] What defined one as a "social worker" was not the education one had, or even the skills one possessed, but rather the work one did.

Because most of the labor for social work prior to 1920 was provided by volunteers who gained their knowledge from experience rather than formal education, it

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[14]Roy Lubove, *Professional Altruist*, p.119.

was generally accepted that this realm of service could be done best if open to any, and all, who had the time and fortitude to pursue it. Volunteering for organizations which were engaged in "social work" was a crucial way for people, especially women, to express their urban citizenship and Christian devotion. Prior to 1920, then, few would have questioned that Chicago's Protestant settlement and institutional church women were engaged in social work considering the extensive services they provided including day nurseries, kindergartens, employment bureaus, medical dispensaries, industrial schools, and citizenship classes.

Because social work was defined so broadly, including such a wide variety of activities and people, one of the central issues confronting historians who study the professionalization of social work is to locate when and how the line separating the professional from the non-professional social worker was established. Drawing on sociological definitions of professionalism which privilege specialized skills and educational credentials as essential to professionalization, many historians have focused on the nation's many social work theorists, schools, and associations, the assumption being as social work methods became more theoretically sophisticated, and schools and associations were established to teach these methods, the professionalization of social work "occurred." Though these historians argue that the social settlements which developed and refined many social work principles and methods, and the Charity Organization Society Movement which rationalized charity, were important antecedents upon which professional social work was based, they see the nation's social work associations and schools, including the Chicago school of Civics and Philanthropy, as

essential for allowing social work to become a real profession.[15]

While it is true that the nation's social work schools, including the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, were places where those striving to establish social work as a proper profession congregated, and where new social work theories and methods were developed, I find the focus on schools as a means for judging the professionalization of social work problematic for three reasons. First, most social workers claiming the title "professional" in the 1910s and 1920s had actually received little or no formal training, making it questionable how central formal training was to the professional identities of the majority of social workers. A study conducted by the American Association of Social Workers in 1922 revealed that only 40 percent of the nation's social workers were college graduates and less than 7 percent had completed more than one year at a social work school.[16]

Secondly, many students who went to social work schools did not care about becoming credentialed professionals. At least this was the case with the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy and several of the nation's Catholic social work schools in the period prior to 1920. The majority of the students at the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy took only a few classes, and very few had any intention of finishing a degree. Many of these students were volunteer social service providers who went to the

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[15]In explaining the rise of professional social work, these historians also emphasize the importance of what they call "professional subcultures." They explain that it was primarily at the association meetings, and at the schools, where these subcultures were developed. See Ehrenreich, *The Altruistic Imagination*; Lubove, *The Professional Altruist*; Chambers, *Seedtime of Reform*; and Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in Reform*. For a discussion of the Charity Organization Movement, See Michael Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse* (New York: Basic Books, 1986).

[16]Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls*, p.40.

school to prepare themselves better for their volunteer work, including women from Chicago's Protestant settlements and institutional churches. They were not concerned with making social work a profession but actually had a stake in keeping social work an avocation. In this way, the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy resembled some of the nation's Catholic social work schools where prior to World War I the "students were generally volunteer workers."[17]

Thirdly, well into the late 1920s, social work did not have a clearly defined set of skills upon which all social workers agreed; in fact, it was not clear what kind of education was necessary to make one a professional social worker. In this way, social work differed dramatically from the fields of law and medicine which by the twentieth century had what Walkowitz refers to as an "established specialized knowledge base" upon which all practitioners agreed.[18] Social workers debated amongst themselves about what methods and skills legitimated their claims to professionalism. Though most agreed that at the very least casework was the one method which could guarantee their status as professionals, even this was not accepted uniformly. Social reformer and social work advocate Julia Lathrop, member of the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, serving first as head of the research department and then as vice president, questioned whether caseworkers could claim professional status, arguing instead that they were mere "technicians."[19] Some critics of social work pushed the issue further, questioning

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[17]For a discussion of Catholic social work schools, see Dorothy Brown and Elizabeth McKeown, *The Poor Belong to Us: Catholic Charities and American Welfare* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.) pp. 72-73.

[18]Walkowitz, "The Making of a Female Professional Identity," p.1053.

[19]Muncy, *Creating A Female Dominion in American Reform*, pp.77-78.

whether there existed any methods which social workers could use to legitimate their quest for professional status. At the 1915 meeting of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections, Abraham Flexner caused a stir when he made the claim, "all the established and recognized professions have definite and specific ends: medicine, law, architecture, engineering–one can draw a clear line of demarcation about their respective fields." He then continued, "This is not true of social work. It appears not so much a definite field as an aspect of work in many fields."[20]

By closely examining the early years of the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy we can learn much about the professionalization of social work, not because it was a locale where only those aspiring to professional status congregated, but because it was a locale where the very issue and nature of professionalization, including the relationship of the professional and the volunteer, was debated. Prior to 1920 the school was divided into two camps: the first was led by Graham Taylor, the school's founder and first President, who believed that within the school there was room for both the aspiring professional and the traditional volunteer. Committed to the notion that social work was a civic duty and a practice that should be open to all, paid and volunteer, college-educated and those with only secondary schooling, Graham Taylor made sure during his tenure at the school from 1903 to 1920 that the school served the interests of all who sought to influence the public life of the city. The second camp was led by Sophonisba Breckinridge and Grace Abbott, the women who directed the school's research department, a department which offered, among other things, instruction on statistics and

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[20]Abraham Flexner, National Conference of Charities and Corrections, *Proceedings* (1915) p.585.

social research methods.[21] While these two women encouraged non-professional women to aid them in their endeavors to publicize and advocate for a wide range of reforms and legislation, from the Children's Bureau birth registration drives to the national Shepard Towner Maternity and Infancy Act, they hoped that the school would be reserved for only those women who wanted to become professionals.[22] While they saw a place for the volunteer in their reform agenda, Breckinridge and Abbott nevertheless wanted there to be a clear line separating the professional woman from the non-professional, and they hoped school credentials would determine where this line was drawn. As Robyn Muncy has discussed in great detail, these women spent their first twelve years at the school from 1908-1920 trying to make it a place where only those women seeking educational credentials as professional social workers prepared to take on policy-making positions would congregate.

By recounting the early years of the school from the perspectives of Taylor and the majority of female students who attended the school, I hope to shed light on those who sought to keep social work education available to a wide array of women.[23] Though neither Taylor nor the majority of the school's students opposed the development of social

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[21]See Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform*. Breckinridge and Abbott viewed these skills as necessary for collecting "a body of authoritative data upon which programs for social reform and recommendations for social legislation may be based." p.76.

[22]For discussions of the Children's Bureau and the Shepard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Act, see Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform*; and Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Women, Children, and the State, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

[23]It is fair to refer to these students as women because the vast majority of the students were women. For example, in 1914, 101 women were enrolled at the school compared to only 11 men. School Records, "Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy," Box 2, Graham Taylor Papers.

work as a profession, they nevertheless believed that social work training should be open to those who did not seek professional status, to those who hoped to practice social work as an avocation. The question whether social work education at the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy should be reserved for those seeking professional status, or remain open to volunteers, was the central one dividing Breckinridge and Abbott from Taylor.

In 1903, when Graham Taylor decided to establish the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, he expressed little interest in making social work an exclusive profession. Even though he often spoke of the skills students would acquire as professional skills, his main concern was "to raise and maintain standards of efficiency in public service through the training of capable men and women for professional and volunteer social, civic, and philanthropic work."[24] Advertising the school's program in the *Charities and Commons*, Taylor highlighted the school as a place where both those seeking "paid positions and volunteer [positions]" could gain skills. He hoped that men and women already involved in the city's settlements, playgrounds, neighborhood centers, welfare agencies, and social service departments of the churches would attend.[25] Taylor never questioned that social work was a field that should be open to all, to the paid staff member and to the volunteer, to the highly educated and to those who had only a secondary school training. He had envisioned the school as a place where anyone involved in social service, including Protestant settlement and church social service

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[24]Graham Taylor quoted in Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform*, p.74.

[25]*Charities and Commons*, September 8, 1906.

providers, could receive some training.[26]

Graham Taylor wanted to keep volunteers active in social work because he assumed that only those persons motivated by higher principles, including Christian faith and social justice, could serve the public good. Because many Chicagoans who were engaged in social service work did so on a volunteer basis, to exclude them from the school would have contravened his notions of citizenship and his understanding of public service. His focus on those individuals with an interest in the "public good" was reflected by the fact that he expected only those who were already engaged in social service to attend the school. Not surprisingly, the school's first class in 1903 was made up almost exclusively of women "actively engaged in social work."[27]

Taylor's focus on the relationship between voluntarism and the larger public good affected the kinds of classes he offered at the school. Students could choose from a wide variety of classes including Introduction to Social and Philanthropic Work, The Principles and Practices of Social Philanthropy, The Labor Problem, Social Reform Movements, Health and Housing, Municipal Problems, and Recreation for Volunteer Settlement and Playground Workers.[28] In addition to attending classes at the school, the students were

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[26]I should note here that Taylor was highly critical of Chicago's Protestant settlements and institutional churches which were openly and aggressively evangelistic. As discussed in chapter two, Taylor believed that evangelism and social service should be kept separate. Taylor was committed to the notion that the only proper social settlement was the non-sectarian and non-evangelical settlement. This did not mean, however, that Taylor believed that churches should provide no social services; Taylor felt strongly that churches should provide social services, but that these services should be kept completely separate from the religious programs and services. For a more complete discussion of Taylor, see chapter two of this dissertation.

[27]Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, Box 2, Graham Taylor Papers.

[28]See Yearbooks and Bulletins, 1914-1915 and 1918-1919, in Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy," Box 1, Graham Taylor Papers.

expected to spend a significant amount of time in the "field." For example, students who enrolled in the very popular playground training class spent more time visiting the city's many social settlements than listening to lectures in the classroom.[29] As Robyn Muncy points out, Taylor privileged the work in the field because he, like most other progressive reformers, "believed that the only knowledge worth having derived from experience."[30] From Taylor's perspective, what one learned in the classroom gained meaning and legitimacy only when practiced in the field.

Although historians usually point to the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy as proof that professional social workers were gaining influence in Chicago, the school actually did very little in its early years to challenge the prominent role of the volunteer in social work. Prior to 1920 a majority of the school's students attended on a part-time basis; most did not have undergraduate college degrees, and most were not concerned with gaining for themselves professional status as credentialed social workers. In 1918, one of the most popular programs at the school was the playground course for volunteer settlement workers; only 16% of these students had undergraduate degrees.[31] Even more important, only a very small percentage of the aggregate student body ever graduated. The school year 1918-1919 saw 683 students enrolled, but only 27 graduated.[32] Other years saw similar low rates. In 1917-1918, 32 students graduated,

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[29]Ibid.

[30]Muncy, *Creating A Female Dominion in American Reform*, p.74.

[31]Enrollment and graduation figures, "Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy," Box 2, Graham Taylor Papers.

[32]Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform*, p.79.

and in 1929-1920 only 23.[33] The graduation rates were especially low for the students enrolled in the recreational courses, with only 8 women graduating in 1918, and 5 in 1920.[34] Even more revealing, less than 100 women graduated during the entire period 1906-1912.[35] The low graduation rates of the students, especially among those enrolled in the recreation courses, suggests that the school attracted large numbers of women who were interested in gaining professional skills but had little interest in gaining the professional status that certificates from the school would confer.

While historians have often described the divide separating voluntary social service workers from professional social workers by the latter's commitment to education and the former's resistance to it, the large number of volunteers who enrolled in classes at the Chicago School of Civic and Philanthropy suggests otherwise. Volunteer settlement workers flocked to the school's classes, hoping to gain training in such things as "folk, social, and aesthetic dancing, in children's games and story hour, in gymnastics for young women, in handiwork, singing, and dramatics as well as supervision on citizenship and dramatic and social clubs." During World War I the playground classes for volunteers became especially popular as the number of women interested in volunteering at playgrounds as part of their civic duty increased. [36] The volunteers social service providers who labored in Chicago's Protestant settlement and institutional churches could

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[33]Enrollment and graduation figures, "Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy," Box 2, Graham Taylor Papers.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform*, p.79.

[36]1918 Year Book and Bulletins, "Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, Box 1, Graham Taylor Papers.

further develop their skills by attending the classes on the "social work of churches" and "vacation bible schools."[37] Graham Taylor's more general concern with reaching as many Chicagoans as possible was reflected by the fact that the school offered extension courses at the city's various "church training schools."[38] In 1914-1915, 190 students attended these extension classes.

While Graham Taylor prioritized practical learning and paid considerable attention to the volunteer, he was not opposed to either teaching theoretical-based education or refining social work methods. Taylor had envisioned the school as a place where practice and theory came together, with the one always informing the other. That Taylor accepted money from the Russell Sage Foundation soon after opening the school to establish a research department for "social investigation" shows that he actively sought to expand the knowledge base of social work.

Taylor's vision of the school as a place where both those seeking the skills and accreditation necessary to be recognized as professional social workers, and those hoping to hone their skills as volunteer social workers, could receive an education contrasted sharply with the vision of the school held by the women Taylor asked to head the school's social research department, Sophonisba Breckinridge and Grace Abbott. Robyn Muncy argues convincingly that Breckinridge and Abbott hoped to use their positions at the school to define social work as a proper profession, to make social work a woman's

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[37]School Year Book and Bulletins, 1911-1913, "Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy," Box 1, Graham Taylor Papers.

[38]In 1914-1915, 190 students attended lectures, including men from theological seminaries and women from lay training schools. School Year Book, 1914-1915, "Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy," Box 2, Graham Taylor Papers.

profession with the authority and status usually reserved for the male-dominated professions. As Muncy points out, Abbott and Breckinridge were highly educated, both had received Ph.Ds. from the University of Chicago, yet neither was "able to obtain employment commensurate with her training, ability, or expectations."[39] Craving the prestige and influence which would come with being recognized as members of a well respected profession, Breckinridge and Abbott saw their positions at the school as an opportunity to "transform social work into a discipline that would underlie a profession equal to law or medicine."[40] Standing at the helm of the research department, they strove to make social work a field which would be led by professionals rather than a field dominated by volunteers for whom social work was above all else an avocation.

From the perspectives of Breckinridge and Abbott, the only valuable part of the school was the research department which they led. Neither Breckinridge nor Abbott cared much for the majority of the school's students who enrolled in the many recreational programs the school offered. Expressing her contempt, Breckinridge claimed these students were appealing only to those "agencies whose funds are limited and whose work has not been raised to a high level of professional efficiency." Breckinridge believed that most of the school's classes, including the volunteer playground class, could be eliminated "without great social loss."[41]

For over ten years these two forces, the research team led by Breckinridge and

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[39]Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform*, p.70. I should note here that Breckinridge received a Ph.D. in political science, and Abbott a Ph.D.in economics.

[40]*Ibid.*, p.76.

[41]*Ibid.*, p.80.

Abbott, and the majority of the female students led by Graham Taylor, existed side by side, fulfilling the hopes of both groups and giving the school a unique, although somewhat inconsistent, character. That is, during the second decade of the twentieth century when Breckinridge and Abbott were attempting to establish social work as a profession with refined and specific research methods, Graham Taylor continued to advance his concept of social work as a field open to all. Taylor's original vision of the school as a training ground for paid workers and volunteers, and as a place where practical and theoretical training would come together, was in 1918 still dominant.

Even though Taylor, Breckinridge, and Abbott shared a broad-based commitment to social justice and social reform, their competing visions of the school drove a wedge between them. In the late 1910s Breckinridge and Abbott sought to make their vision of the school the dominant one by affiliating the school with one of the city's universities. Abbott and Breckinridge began a full-fledged campaign to join the school with the University of Chicago. Concerned more with expanding the influence of the school over public policy-making than with providing Chicago's many part-time volunteer social service workers a place for training, Breckinridge and Abbott saw this move as necessary for expanding their reform agenda beyond Chicago to the national scene. Even more important, affiliating the school with the University of Chicago would provide these women with the opportunity to develop more fully their research department and to make social work a university credentialed profession similar to medicine and law.

Graham Taylor, who privileged the practical and focused on Chicago rather than the national scene, was trepid about the affiliation, agreeing to it only because of the staggering financial woes facing the school. When the school's board of trustees was

deciding whether or not to formally join the University of Chicago, Taylor still held out hope that through his influence the program would retain its practical focus. When he resigned as president in April 1918, he expressed hope that he would "be able to continue with it [the school] as a staff lecturer."[42]

When the affiliation was finalized in 1920, the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy became part of the University of Chicago and was renamed the School of Social Service Administration. The change in the name was itself significant, indicative of both the new direction in which the school was moving and larger changes occurring in the field of social work. In the 1920s social work professionals at the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy labored diligently to distance this field from the philanthropic endeavors relying on volunteers. This was true of social work schools across the nation. Dropping the words Civics and Philanthropy from the school's name represented this effort symbolically. Though Breckinridge and Abbott were no less concerned with civic issues than Taylor, they expected to help deal with society's many ills and injustices not as citizens but as trained experts. In a society where one's right to participate in the solving of societal problems was becoming closely tied to one's ability to stake claim as an expert practicing a profession, Breckinridge and Abbott made sure that they were able to influence society by making social work a profession.

Breckinridge and Abbott were more than pleased with this new affiliation because as leading members of the new school they finally had the power to shape their former school in a manner which they saw fit. They encouraged the university to drop many of

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[42]Graham Taylor to the Board of Trustees, April 1, 1918, "Outgoing Letters," Graham Taylor Papers.

the school's older programs including the playground course. Dropping these courses would allow Breckinridge and Abbott to concentrate on maintaining high standards in developing their social science research. In conjunction with the school's administrators, Breckinridge and Abbott agreed that the program should be made a graduate rather than an undergraduate one; only those men and women who had already successfully completed an undergraduate program at a respected institution were invited to apply, making it impossible for the majority of students to continue their studies at the school.

Not surprisingly many of the students, as well as Taylor, were upset by the decisions that were being made by Breckinridge and Abbott. When the announcement was first made that the recreational program was going to be dropped, some of the female students responded by saying that this decision was made because Breckinridge and Abbott wanted to rid the school of the many women who did not have undergraduate degrees.[43] That they made such a claim shows that they were well aware of the disdain Breckinridge and Abbott had for them. In a letter to Julia Lathrop written in July 1920, Barnes also expressed his disappointment, questioning the decision to make the program a graduate one and expressing concern that dropping the playground course would have a deleterious affect on the quality of social services in Chicago. Taylor was undoubtedly worried that volunteer social service providers would have no place to receive training and that the city as a whole would suffer. In the letter he expressed regret for having ever agreed to the affiliation, claiming he would have challenged the affiliation and insisted the school

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[43]School Material, "Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy," Box 2, Graham Taylor Papers.

remain "independent" if he had been aware of what was to happen.[44] How far Taylor had misjudged the changes taking place at the school was reflected by the fact he was not even invited to assume a position as a staff lecturer.

Robyn Muncy explains Taylor's resistance to the changes occurring at the school by arguing he could afford to be cavalier about the professional status of social work because he had the status of "professional" granted to him by his title as minister. She contends that he had nothing to gain by advancing the professionalization of social work, claiming that "he was free not even to try to make social work compete with medicine, law, or the ministry because he already belonged to those more respected professions."[45] Muncy argues that Breckinridge and Abbott, in contrast, had few professional channels to pursue, making the professionalization of social work critical for allowing them to expand their influence over society, critical for allowing them to have any authority and stature in the larger public. While I agree with Muncy about the motivations of Breckinridge and Abbott, I think that she fails to explore either Taylor's or the student's positions fully. Muncy does not explain why, if gender was so critical, the majority of the female students embraced Taylor's vision of the school. I suggest that by considering this issue primarily from the perspective of Taylor and the students, the divide at the school will appear to have been defined by different ideas about professionalism and volunteerism, ideas that were informed by gender but which cannot be explained by gender alone. I believe that Taylor was opposed to making social work the exclusive

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[44]Graham Taylor to Julia Lathrop, July 10, 1920, "Outgoing Letters," Graham Taylor Papers.

[45]Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform,* p .76.

preserve of professionals not because he had already attained professional status for himself, but because his first concern lie with providing social work education to as broad a group as possible, to both the women seeking professional status and to the women working as volunteers.

As Taylor had feared, the number of students attending the newly established School of Social Service Administration was considerably less than that which had attended the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy. However, Abbott and Breckinridge's hope of transforming the school into a social policy institution with a very productive and respected social research department was successful. As Muncy describes, many of the graduates of the new school assumed positions as administrators of public agencies at both the state and federal level. She also notes that the student body of the school was very different from the School of Civics and Philanthropy, restricted only to those who had the undergraduate degree, time, and money to pursue full-time graduate work. The School of Social Service Administration did not welcome the volunteer social service provider committed to social work as an avocation.[46] That the school became by the mid 1920s a bastion of professionalism, and a center where the most advanced social research methods were developed and applied, does not make its early history any less significant, or the voices of Taylor and the students any less

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[46]Muncy writes: "In a painful irony born of their own peculiarly female need for a route to professional advancement, Breckinridge and Abbott deprived the majority of female students at the old Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy of their opportunity to earn certificates of social work training." I would suggest that the irony lay less in the fact that women could no longer receive certificates than in the fact that they could receive no training at all at the school. As Muncy's figures reveal, very few women earned certificates. I would argue that this fact is important, suggesting that it was the volunteer social service provider and those concerned with professional skills and not professional status that lost out.

meaningful. Instead it helps to clarify the fact that educational training was not in these early years the preserve of only professionals. Recognizing the fact that volunteer social service providers so eagerly sought out training at the school in its early years can help us understand why volunteer social service providers continued to play such an important role in the social service field of Chicago in the 1920s.

PROTESTANT SOCIAL SERVICE, 1900-1929

In the first three decades of the twentieth century, when the issue of professionalism was being debated at the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, Protestant women based in the city's Protestant settlement houses and institutional churches were among the many different groups of women actively working in Chicago's social service field. Although these Protestant women are not typically featured as key leaders in histories of social welfare, they played a central role in the development of the city's social welfare matrix. Beginning at the turn-of-the century, and continuing through the 1920s, women working in Chicago's Protestant settlement houses and institutional churches stood at the center of the city's emerging social service matrix, providing services to their neighbors, directing their neighbors to the city's other social agencies, and acting as interlocutors between their neighbors and those other agencies. There were few public or private social welfare institutions with which these Protestant women did not have contact, and few areas of service within which they were not involved. Without such action of the part of these Protestant women, and other like-minded women in the city's other social service organizations, it is questionable how

influential the city's larger social service matrix would have been.

The field of public health was one area Protestant women had long been active in. Years before the professionalization of social work became an objective of social service providers, Protestant women based in the city's Protestant settlements and institutional churches carved out a place for themselves in the public health movement. Women were especially essential to the 1894 founding of Epworth center, a Methodist community center which sponsored one of the city's early medical dispensaries.[47] Other Protestant dispensaries soon followed. In 1907, two of the city's busiest medical dispensaries were sponsored by Protestant institutions that relied heavily upon the labor of women, Olivet Institute and Marcy Center. At Marcy center, the city's most openly evangelical community center, the dispensary was overseen by Dr. Mary White who had working under her in 1907 a "corp of physicians and nurses who provided care to over 3600 patients.[48] During these same years Olivet saw a comparable number of patients. Considering that in 1905 the twenty-six nurses employed by the Visiting Nurses Association had a total of 6,710 patients, the significance of these Protestant dispensaries as central to the city's early public health movement is undeniable.[49]

When unable to run their own dispensaries, the city's Protestant settlement and institutional church women participated in the city's public health movement by facilitating contact between their neighbors and the city's other privately sponsored

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[47]"Settlements," "General Material Concerning 1895-1924," Graham Taylor Papers.

[48]Rock River, *Annual Report,* 1907-8. In 1911, Marcy Center increased its services, seeing an average of 500 patients per month. Rock River, *Annual Report,* 1911-12.

[49]*Charities and Commons,* April 7, 1906.

public health organizations. For example, Erie Neighborhood House's kindergarten had a nurse visit three times a week, and a doctor once a week.[50] Association House also had a visiting nurse from the Visiting Nurses Association visit each week.[51] The women of Association House assumed that they were an integral part of the Visiting Nurse's Association because they provided to the nurses information about their neighbors and they expected that would help oversee the nurses' home visits.

How extensive Protestant women were involved in the public health movement during the first three decades of the twentieth century is demonstrated by the fact that in addition to offering free medical care, and providing a meeting ground for the Visiting Nurses Association, they were also actively involved in the city's other major public health projects, including most notably the Infant Welfare Society. The Infant Welfare Society, a privately sponsored program which provided milk to the city's poorer mothers, and basic health care to babies, established Infant Welfare stations throughout the city. In the early years of the program, when there were less than ten Infant Welfare stations, Association House and Marcy Center each housed a station. In 1906, Association House distributed over 51,000 bottles of milk.[52]

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[50]Erie Neighborhood House, Annual Report, 1915-1916, Box 1, Folder 1, Erie Neighborhood House Collection, CHS. In addition to sponsoring the Visiting Nurses Association and independent doctors and nurses, some Protestant settlements and institutional churches sought out more extensive medical care for their neighbors. For example, in 1910 Lincoln institutional church procured free medical care for a "number of persons [including] more than half a dozen surgical operations." *The Christian Cosmopolitan*, February 1911.

[51]Association House Scrapbook, Box 22, Association House Collection, CHS.

[52]Association House, *Annual Report*, 1906, Box 20, Association House Collection, CHS. For Marcy Center, see "Elizabeth E. Marcy Center," Box 382, Folder 3, Welfare Council.

The public health movement was only one of the many sectors of the social service field in which Protestant women were active. The Protestant women based in the settlements and institutional churches worked closely with almost all of Chicago's social welfare institutions. Most important in this regard was the United Charities. In the early years of the twentieth century, the United Charities was Chicago's largest private social service center, an outgrowth of the Chicago Relief and Aid society established in 1857. Controlled by men and women who were part of the Charity Organization Society Movement, the United Charities saw its purpose as discouraging indiscriminate giving and deterring the duplication of relief. The United Charities had three primary functions: it provided direct relief to the poor, it referred some of those seeking aid to other institutions, and it kept an extensive record system of the city's families who had received relief or had asked for relief.[53] Almost all of the city's Protestant settlements and institutional churches drew on the resources of the United Charities, meeting with the organization regularly to receive information about their neighbors and to give information about their neighbors to the United Charities. Typical in this regard were the women of Association House who in 1923 had weekly meetings with the United Charities to "discuss especially difficult cases and to avoid duplication of relief."[54] Describing why they cooperated with the United Charities, the women of Erie House explained how they attempted to "cooperate whenever and wherever possible with the

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[53]For a general history of the United Charities, see *Sixty-Six Years of Service: An Account of the United Charities* (Chicago: United Charities, 1922).

[54]Association House Minutes, 1913, Box 2, Folder 3, Association House Collection.

social and philanthropic agencies of the city whether they be public or private."[55] The fact that the city's Protestant social service providers collaborated with United Charities suggests that they were responding to the larger changes occurring in charity and social work, hoping to be a part of the emerging social service matrix.

The most important way Protestant women assumed a place in the city's larger social service matrix was by acting as intermediaries between their neighbors and the city's other social service organizations, both public and private. Protestant women from settlements and institutional churches commonly referred their neighbors, as well as accompanied them, to such places as the Juvenile Protective Association, the Court of Domestic Relations, the United Charities, the county agent, and the legal aid society. In 1915 Erie women made over 150 visits to various public and private agencies.[56] Included among these places was the Court of Domestic Relations where they helped women file petitions for support from estranged husbands.

The support these Protestant women provided their neighbors as intermediaries was often essential for the material well-being of the families. Considering that less than 30% of those seeking material aid from United Charities received anything, the intervention of a Protestant woman could the be difference between receiving goods and receiving nothing. [57] The following story shows how high the stakes could be. When it was discovered by an investigator for the United Charities that the United Charities had

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[55]Erie House Annual Report, 1915-1916, Box 1, Folder 1, Erie Neighborhood House Collection.

[56]Ibid.

[57]In 1922, 11,589 families applied for aid, but only 3,2ll were approved to receive any aid. *Sixty-Six Years of Service*, p.8.

been supporting a woman with children who was falsely claiming to have been "widowed," the United Charities authorities decided to rescind her support and send her back to New York where her husband was living. Only after intervention by women from Erie did the United Charities agree to continue supporting this woman instead of forcing her to go back to New York.[58]

That the city's many public and private social welfare organizations recognized the important role Protestant women played as intermediaries in the larger social service field in the 1910s and 1920s is demonstrated by the fact that the Visiting Nurses Association and Infant Welfare Society had initially decided to use these Protestant institutions as a gateway to the city's working-class population. The Juvenile Protection Association, which helped oversee the city's juvenile court system, was another organization especially eager to work with the city's Protestant churches. Not only did women from Chicago's Protestant institutions, including the Church Women United, work as probation officers before public monies were appropriated for these tasks, but the Juvenile Protective Association noted that it "is seeking to cooperate with all religious bodies, clubs, and associations that will give some place to the object for which the association exists." In recognition of how central the churches were to the public life of the city, the Juvenile Protective Association argued, "It is desirable to have a JPA committee in the proper department of every church and club."[59]

We can see, then, that the women laboring in Chicago's churches and settlements

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[58]See Florence Towne, *Sheep of the Outer Fold: Stories of Neighborhood House Work in a Great City* (Fleming H. Revell, 1929) pp.79-81.

[59]Juvenile Protective Association, *Annual Report*, 1910-1911, "Juvenile Protective Association," Box 1, Folder 1, Graham Taylor Papers.

played an important role in the city's social service matrix, providing services, hosting other agencies, and acting as intermediaries between their neighbors and the city's other social welfare organizations. These activities confirm the recent observation made by Kathleen Conzen that "church based service provision has been an important facet of city-building."[60] She points out that religiously sponsored health care and social services more generally, have often "preceded and supplemented public provision."[61] This is certainly the case in Chicago, a city which provided only meager public resources for social services in the pre-Great Depression Era. By cooperating closely with Chicago's other social service organizations, the Protestant women discussed here helped create a social welfare matrix which while never fully adequate or responsive to the needs of the city's poor at least began to address issues which the city authorities refused to confront.

The public significance of the health services Protestant women offered in collaboration with the city's other private social service organizations became especially apparent in 1921 when the state legislature of Illinois voted not to accept the federal monies which had been allocated by the federal government for the Shepard-Towner Maternal and Infancy Act. The act provided federal matching grants to the states that were intended to be used to educate women about their own health needs as well as the health needs of their young babies. Among other things, the states used this money to set up clinics for pregnant women and babies; they also hired public nurses to do home

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[60]Kathleen Conzen, "The Place of Religion in Urban and Community Studies," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*," Vol. 6 (Summer 1996) p.113.

[61]Ibid.

visits.[62] Illinois was one of only three states which refused to participate in the program. Historian Lynn Curie attributes the defeat of this act in the Illinois state legislature to the conservative Illinois Physicians Association which lobbied against this bill because the doctors who belonged to the Association feared it would threaten their own "professional prerogatives."[63] Most importantly, the doctors feared that this bill would empower public health workers, most of whom were women. Because Illinois did not participate in the program, Chicago's public health department was not able to offer the kinds of programs and services that public health departments in other states and cities did. Across the country 2,978 new health clinics were established, 22,030,489 pieces of literature distributed, and 3,131,996 homes visited by visiting nurses.[64] The public health department of Chicago provided only meager services for women and children. In 1918, the city Health Department offered only four Infant Welfare Stations. The city's privately sponsored Infant Welfare Stations totaled twenty-four.[65] That the city government of Chicago was not responding to the health needs of its residents made the privately sponsored health programs offered by the Visiting Nurses Association, the Infant Welfare Society, and the city's Protestant settlements and institutional churches all the more important.

Even as the Progressive Era came to a close, and many civic-minded women left Chicago's public life, the women laboring in the city's Protestant settlements and

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[62]Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work*, p. 169.

[63]Lynne Curie, "Modern Mothers in the Heartland: Maternal and Child Health Reform in Illinois, 1900-1930," (Ph.D Dissertation, University of Illinois), 1995. p. 26.

[64]Figures from Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work*, p. 177.

[65]Department of Public Welfare, *Social Service Directory* (Chicago, 1918) p. 132.

institutional churches continued to offer important health services. In 1918, there were 31 medical dispensaries in the city, including ones sponsored by Olivet, Marcy, and Halsted.[66] Into the 1920s, these medical dispensaries continued to be active. At Marcy Center in 1922 one of the heath care providers reported that "there have been 1215 more cases in the dispensary than last year." Marcy center employed an ear, eye, and throat specialist: they also had a child specialist whom the center proudly stated "has given not only professional service, but love and material help to many."[67] In a similar manner, Olivet expanded its medical dispensary services in the 1920s, adding a dental division and a hospice for the aged and infirm.[68] In 1928, the doctors and nurses of Olivet recorded just under 10,000 dispensary and in-home visits.[69] In the early 1920s, Association House added its own medical dispensary and was soon thereafter recognized for its "large amount of public health work."[70] Howell house, formerly known as Bohemian house, was also known as a place where those seeking "physical exams and free medical care" could go.[71]

In helping build the city's social welfare matrix, Chicago's Protestant settlement and institutional church women carved out a special niche for Protestant social service work. Although less evangelical than the city missionaries who preceded them, these

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[66]*Ibid.*, pp. 141-142.

[67]Rock River, *Annual Report*, 1922-1923.

[68]Olivet Institute, Box 1, Folder 1, Olivet Institute Collection, CHS.

[69]H. Paul Douglass, *The Church in the Changing City* (New York: George Doran Co., 1929) p. 427.

[70]Study of Association House," 1922, Box 294, Welfare Council.

[71]Howell House, Box 330, Folder 1, Welfare Council.

Protestant women continued to combine religion and social services. Howell house, which provided free medical care and physical exams in addition to offering an extensive recreational and educational program, prided itself on its religious work. Especially important to the women of Howell were the young children who they encouraged to "come to chapel."[72] Referring to their work as "Christian social work," the women of Howell celebrated the fact that they knew "no artificial division between sacred and secular things."[73] Similarly, the women of Marcy Center offered an extensive array of medical services, a day nursery, and recreational activities but they saw their daily chapel exercises, their daily vacation Bible school, and their evening religious services as the heart of their institution.[74] The center attracted women like Superintendent Miss Heisted, a nurse with extensive experience in public health, who celebrated the fact that Marcy Center was an "agency with the dual function of serving their needs--physical and social--and of converting them to Christianity."[75] The women of Beacon House articulated a sentiment not unlike the one expressed by the women of Marcy. "Christian evangelism, community organization, and rehabilitation, and special services are all legitimate aspects of the work of a Christian neighborhood house."[76]

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[72]Ibid.

[73]Ibid.

[74]Rock River, *Annual Report*, 1922-1923.

[75]Marcy Center and Its Community, Box 369, Folder 7, Welfare Council.

[76]Beacon House, "Philosophy and Purpose," Box 251, Folder 13, Welfare Council.

THE COUNCIL OF SOCIAL AGENCIES

Exasperated by the fact that large numbers of untrained social workers engaged in social work, using the methods professionals were attempting to claim as their own, and dominating the social service field which professional social workers believed was theirs to claim, a participant at a national conference of social workers in 1920 said: "I think the need of arriving at some understanding of what our twenty years experience signify, what has been achieved and what can be laid down as a platform for future developments is imperative."[77] Professional social workers laboring in Chicago knew all too well how difficult it was to control the ever-expanding social service field. Not only did Protestant-based institutions offer many social services, but Catholic and Jewish Charities were also both active, each having carved out their own niche in the social service field. Concerned that the city's social service organizations operated independently, each choosing its own staffs, methods, and programs, professional social workers founded the Council of Social Agencies in 1914 with the objective of coordinating services and encouraging high standards of service. By the early 1920s, the Council of Social Agencies had become a place where social workers seeking to make social work a respected profession congregated. The concerns of professionalism–in particular the need to make the larger public realize social work was a profession based in social science and not religious benevolence–tempered the Council's view of social services and dominated the Council's agenda.

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[77]Minutes of the Conference of Training Schools of Social Work, June 12, 1920, Box 2, "School of Civics and Philanthropy," Graham Taylor Papers.

The Council stated in 1924 that its main objective was "to use its influence in every possible way to enlarge the development of the right agencies at the right time and the right methods."[78] What were the "right" agencies, and what were the "right" methods, was not always clear. That even the National Association of professional social work schools disagreed about these issues, embracing casework as the only common method, shows the still undetermined nature of professional social work well into the 1920s. This did not stop the Council from helping to articulate and to construct these standards. The professional social workers belonging to the Council were sure of at least two things: the "right methods" did not include religion and the volunteer social worker should always be in a subordinate position to the professional social worker.[79] Distancing the professional social worker, and social services more generally, from the Protestant charitable past with which it had been associated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was perceived by the professional social workers as necessary for the task of making social work a respected profession based in social science. For most professional social workers nothing was worse than to be viewed by the larger public as lady bountiful, the Protestant volunteer who was recognized by her religious moralism and maternal sympathies. In this way, questions concerning religion and voluntarism became

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[78]The Council of Social Agencies *The Financing of Social Agencies: A Fact Finding Report, With Special Reference to Raising Annual Operating Budgets*, (Chicago: Council of Social Agencies, 1924.)

[79]Even though many professional social workers were forced to accept the involvement of volunteers in social service agencies because many of these agencies lacked the money to hire only trained personnel, they did so begrudgingly. Professional social workers sought to carefully monitor all volunteers, giving them very little responsibility or freedom in their work. In contrast, Protestant social service providers celebrated the volunteer as an integral component of social work both because of the spirit she brought to the work and the labor she provided.

central to the professionalization of social work because these were the concepts against which a professional judged oneself.[80] Though historians of social work have paid scant attention to religion, this section of the chapter will show that religion figured centrally into the construction of social work as a profession, both ideologically and institutionally.

Concerned about providing a sound scientific footing for their newly established yet continually evolving profession, the professional social workers who gravitated to the Council questioned the city's Protestant social service providers, arguing that religion was incompatible with the methods of modern social work. The continued presence of religious social services spurred the secular leaders of the Council to complain constantly about the Protestant women who allowed the social service and religious programs of their institution to overlap. For example, the Council complained that the head of Lincoln Street Institutional church "has no clear conception of the recreational part of the program and vaguely has it confused with the religious work of the church."[81] South Chicago Community center which provided, among other things, a day nursery,

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[80]The question of the relationship between the church and social work–and the general hostility existing between the two–was a topic widely discussed in the 1920s. For example, see the group discussion, "The Relations of the Church to Social Work." National Conference of Social Work, *Proceedings*, (1920) pp.47-57. For an excellent discussion of the relationship between Protestant social service providers and professional social workers in the nation's maternity homes, see Regina Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890-1945*. The one lacunae in this otherwise groundbreaking book is that Kunzel views evangelism almost exclusively as an expression of feminine morality rather than a force in its own right. Kunzel thus falls victim to the trap urban historians often find themselves in, the trap of seeing religion as merely standing for something else, usually class, race, or gender. Kathleen Conzen explains that urban historians, herself included, have too often viewed religion and religious conflict "as little more than complicating factors in the construction of ethnic identity." Kathleen Conzen, "*The Place of Religion in Urban and Community Studies*" p.108.

[81]Lincoln Street Institutional Church, Box 366, Folder 5, Welfare Council.

kindergarten, and playground was questioned by the Council which feared that "the confusion of the religious and social phases of the work is hampering a clear cut interpretation."[82] Though Marcy Center's attendance rates suggests its program was popular among the local population, the Council criticized the women of Marcy, arguing that they " think they are successful in proportion to the amount of opposition they create."[83] That it was not so much fears about the quality of social services being delivered as the presence of religion in these institutions that bothered the Council most was demonstrated by the fact that the comment the Council made most frequently with respect to the Protestant social service institutions was that "the chief decorations on the walls consist of Bible verses or religious mottos."[84]

The Council objected to the religious focus of these institutions in part because it feared that these programs would alienate clients. Equally important, the professional social workers who worked in the Council believed that religious social work was antithetical to their newly developing ideas about social work as a profession based in "scientific knowledge."[85] As other historians have described, getting the larger public to accept the notion that social work was not a charitable endeavor was critical for

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[82]Review of South Chicago Community Center, Box 402, Folder 1, Welfare Council.

[83]Marcy Center, Box 369, Folder 7, Welfare Council

[84]Beacon House, Box 251, Folder 13, Welfare Council. The Council remarked in its review of Halsted that "the decorations consist entirely of prints and religious pictures." Box 325, Folder 8, Welfare Council.

[85]Lubove, *Professional Altruist*, p. 107.

professional social workers seeking status and authority among the other professions.[86]

The Council's concern with religion is revealed most clearly by the fact that even when the Council was reviewing institutions which did suffer from the lack of adequate personnel, it was the religious component of these institutions that bothered it most. This was true of Beacon House, a Presbyterian settlement that opened in 1927. Unlike most houses which had a handful of full-time workers, some of them with extensive training, Beacon House had only one full-time worker. The Council expressed concern that she had studied at the Moody Bible Institute and as such "her past experience has been entirely with churches and religious organization and her training under seminary auspices."[87] What was especially disconcerting to the Council was that the house depended on the labor of a large volunteer staff of 29, 15 of whom were students from the Moody Bible Institute. The Council explained its trepidation about the quality of work by pointing out that of these 29 "only two have completed college" and the rest mostly had "'preparations' or experience in craft classes, YMCA leaders courses and [the] teaching of Sunday school."[88] The Council explained how the backgrounds of these workers and "the lack of professional trained group workers has given the work of the house an amateur character." "The volunteers who must be relied upon for a good share of the activities are decidedly limited in ability, for the most part have a religious and not recreational training and, in order to do efficient work, require a better grade of

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[86]On the "Lady Bountiful," see Dorothy G. Becker, "Exit Lady Bountiful: the Volunteer and the Professional Social Worker," *Social Service Review* Vol. 34 (1964): 57-72.

[87]Review of Beacon House, Box 251, Folder 13, Welfare Council.

[88]Ibid.

supervision than they are getting."[89] The Council suggested that this work would be improved if the House dropped its evangelical focus and initiated "regular and frequent contact with 'professional social workers."[90]

While Beacon's workers probably did have limited skills, it is interesting that religion figured so prominently in the Council's evaluation. To prove that a house was religious was to prove defacto that it was unprofessional. This assumption of the Council's blinded it to the fact that there were many Protestant social service institutions that employed and drew on professional social workers. Of the houses studied here in the 1920s, eight had at least one trained social worker on its staff and three had two or more. Included among these institutions are Association house, Christopher House, Howell House, Laird House, Olivet Institute, Onward House, Newberry Center, South Chicago Community Center, and South Chicago Neighborhood House. Equally significant, many of the untrained workers at these houses were sympathetic to the new methods of professional social work, especially casework. The conflicts between the Council and the city's Protestant settlements and institutional churches were so intense because the two groups coexisted, each trying to expand into the others domain: professional social workers wanted to secularize and professionalize social work whereas Protestant women sought to employ social work methods within explicitly Protestant frameworks.

Typical of these institutions which sought to use the most recent social work methods in an explicitly Protestant context was Howell House. In the 1920s, the women

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[89]Ibid.

[90]Ibid.

of Howell House prided themselves on providing "physical, material, and spiritual relief."[91] These objectives did not stop them from hiring a trained caseworker to oversee the care of the children, Among other things, the caseworker reviewed each child entering the day nursery program to "decide whether the case is a nursery school case or not." Like all other professionally trained social workers she worked closely with the city's other social welfare institutions, including the Infant Welfare Society. After a child had been admitted the caseworker continued to do "follow up work." If the child was not receiving the nutrition she or he needed the caseworker would call on an infant welfare worker from the Infant Welfare Society."[92] While the Council believed that this kind of casework could not, and should not, be practiced in a religious context, the women of Howell were not afraid to let other women know that they encourage children "to come to chapel."[93] The women of Howell were proud that in their house "the social program and religious are one."[94]

Howell House was not the only Protestant social service institution to hire a professional social worker who practiced her profession in an explicitly Protestant context. The Newberry Center hired two case workers who, like the Howell caseworker, collaborated closely with the city's other social welfare institutions including the Infant Welfare Society nurses.[95] The training these women had as professional social workers

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[91] Howell House, Box 330, Folder 1, Welfare Council.

[92]Ibid.

[93]Ibid.

[94]Ibid.

[95]Newberry Avenue Center, Box 282, Folder 3, Welfare Council.

did not stop them from sharing the commitment of the Newberry center that the grandest goal one could achieve was to establish with their neighbors "the finest Christian relationship" and to lead them to the "development of Christian character."[96]

In a similar manner, Onward House had an extensive religious program including vespers services, Bible study classes, and Sunday worship, but this did not stop the institution from hiring a social worker who did "casework consultation." She was engaged in a wide variety of pursuits including providing advice on domestic "difficulties, health programs, and vocational guidance." In addition, she was noted for "following them [her clients or neighbors] to courts [and] clinics, and contacting relief agencies."[97] In the late 1920s, the number of Protestant settlements and institutional churches employing professional social workers was on the rise. For example, Olivet hired a professional social worker in 1929 who had graduate training in group work and case work. The influence she had at the institute was demonstrated by the fact that the institute kept "identifying data for each participant in the program and is experimenting with group records."[98]

The ability of the women working in these Protestant institutions to combine religion and professional social work did not escape the view of one contemporary theological student writing a masters thesis who noted, "many of them [Protestant settlements, community centers, and institutional churches) developed social service

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[96]Ibid.

[97]Onward Neighborhood House, Box 387, Folder 6, Welfare Council.

[98]"Olivet Institute," Miscellaneous Report, box 1, Folder 1, Olivet Institute Collection.

departments and borrowed from the social work methods and techniques."[99] This was certainly true of Laird Neighborhood House residents who described the purpose of their institution: "to develop Christian character, to be good neighbors to all class and national groups; to present the Christian view of live, to carry on social welfare work."[100] The workers at Garibaldi described their settlement as one that "endeavors to do the best social work on one hand; it also endeavors to do the best work in religious education."[101]

Protestant social workers weren't the only women seeking to combine professional social work and religion. This was also true of professionally trained Catholic social workers. Dorothy Brown and Elizabeth McKeown describe how professionally trained Catholic social workers were often "instructed to avail themselves of the sacramental resources of their religion and to seek the guidance of confessors and spiritual directors on a regular basis in order to navigate the rough waters of their vocation." Brown and McKeown also point out that Catholic social worker educators drew on the ideas of Mary Richardson, social work theorist and creator of the social diagnosis, "by grafting the theological doctrines of sin and grace and the sacramental practices of the church onto her social diagnosis."[102] A Catholic social worker speaking at a Catholic social work conference explained how Catholic social work treatment plans must be "based directly on our own religious training–that we are all sinners." She

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[99]Elizabeth Margaret Bond, "Factors in the Shift from the Evangelical Approach to the Educational and Recreational Approach in the Program of Bethlehem Community Center," (M.A. Chicago Theological Seminary), 1940. p. 70.

[100]Laird Community House, Box 326, Folder 6, Welfare Council.

[101]Garibaldi Institute, Box 320, Folder 5, Welfare Council.

[102]Dorothy Brown, *The Poor Belong to Us*, p. 77

continued, "when we do treat these women as fellow-sinners...we are on the way to a real constructive solution to the problem."[103]

While the very presence of the trained social workers in the city's Protestant settlements and institutional churches is in and of itself important, what is even more significant is that even those women who had no formal social work training were eager to learn about, and draw upon, the rapidly developing field of professional social work. For example, Head resident of Christopher House had no formal social work training, yet she was noted by the Chicago Seminary for being "keenly alive to the community situation and is partaking of every possible opportunity to read and work in the social work to improve his method at the house."[104]

Although Florence Towne, head resident of Erie House, never attended a social work school, she set up what was called the friendly room so that she could come to a fuller understanding of her neighbors problems and respond to them appropriately. The way in which she interviewed her neighbors allowed her to assemble the kind of information that would have been garnered by an official caseworker. Her familiarity with the neighborhood might have led to an even greater awareness of her neighbors' problems. Most importantly, she took many of the same kinds of avenues to solve her neighbors' problems as professional social workers would have including speaking and collaborating with other social agencies (including United Charities), securing material aid when necessary, and acting as their advocates in the city's courts. Towne was known widely for her work among battered women, discouraging them from reentering violent

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[103]*Ibid.*, p. 91.

[104]Christopher House, Box 290, Folder 4, Welfare Council.

homes and helping them with their legal battles. In response to the criticism that her evangelical commitments impeded her social service work, she responded, "It has always been the firm conviction of all those who have guided the destiny of Erie that Christian teaching must go hand in hand with the practical and successful social agency."[105] Institutional church leaders agreed that their main goal was to "attempt to deal realistically with individual problems, giving counsel and guidance, and when necessary arranging for the services of other persons and agencies skilled to deal effectively with those problems."[106] Again, there is a parallel in the Catholic world, where the *Catholic Review* noted, "the sisters were increasingly open to new casework methods."[107] Using casework methods did not require nuns to reject or ignore their faith. Instead they were reported to have blended "social work and salvation."[108]

The fact that Protestant women drew on the methods and ideas being touted by professional social workers in the 1910s and 1920s should not be surprising considering how active they had been in the social service field from at least the turn of the century, and how willing they had always been to draw on the knowledge of the larger social service community. Beginning at the turn of the century Protestant women had consulted regularly with United Charities, housed stations of the Infant Welfare Society and the Visiting Nurses Association, and had, most importantly, served as intermediaries between their neighbors and the city's other social welfare organizations, both public and private.

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[105]Erie Neighborhood House, Box 2, Folder 6, Erie Neighborhood House Collection.

[106]Quoted in Bond, "Factors," p. 84.

[107]Brown., *The Poor Belong to Us*, p. 116.

[108]*Ibid.*, p. 117.

Starting in the late 1910s and early 1920s, many Protestant social service agencies became members of the Council of Social Agencies, seeking the skills the Council's social workers were developing and hoping to gain from the larger community the respect such membership would bring. These Protestant women expected to continue their roles in the city's social service field by hiring professional social workers and adjusting to changes in the field of social service work. They did not expect, however, to drop their religious commitments and thus these organizations were often engaged in heated conflict with the leadership of the Council.

It was in response to the large number of Protestant settlement houses and institutional churches offering social services that the Executive Committee of the Council of Social Agencies reported rather disappointedly in 1928, "The church is extensively engaged in social work. We meet in constantly and in every field which the council occupies." Most disturbing to the Council was that, "It is carrying on neighborhood activities, it is giving service and relief to individuals and families, it is conducting camps and outings, it is projecting child welfare programs, it is providing recreation for boys and girls [and] it is sheltering the aged." Using the term "church" to refer to all religious-based social service providers, the Council admitted that many social workers are "resentful of what they consider the unwarranted interference of the church."[109]

In the 1920s and 1930s the hostilities which often existed between professional social workers and Protestant social service providers was an important topic discussed

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[109]Elizabeth Webster at Board of Directors Meeting, November 21, 1928, Box 229, Folder 8, Welfare Council.

nationally. The *Social Service Review* summed up these relations when it reported in 1929 that there existed a strong "antagonism between the forces of organized religion and the profession of social work."[110] The *Social Work Year Book* also commented on these relations, noting that "social workers have frequently criticized religious organizations because their social work is not in skilled hands...and because they feel that religious workers have little comprehension of the complicated, technical factors in social work."[111] Ignoring the fact that Protestant institutions were using social work methods, Chicago's Council of Social Agencies attributed these harsh feelings to the Protestant-based social services which they claimed were impeded by their"ignorance of [the] social service resources of the city and even [their] bitterness toward organized social work."[112] Resentful of the Council's professional social workers who so easily dismissed and denounced Protestant social service providers, the Chicago Church Federation, a city-wide Protestant organization, complained that "many social workers are not using the church and the ministers as vigorously as they might in making plans for their clients."[113] The fact that Protestant social service providers and professional social workers were competing for turf, with the Protestants social service providers willing and able to borrow social work methods fueled this fire.

It was in response to these hostilities, and in recognition of the fact that church-based social service work was not going to wither away, that the Council decided in the

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[110]*Social Service Review*, 1929.

[111]*Social Work Year Book*, 1929, p. 334-335.

[112]Board of Director Meeting, November 21, 1928, Box 229, Folder 8, Welfare Council.

[113]Chicago Church Federation, Box 291, Folder 2, Welfare Council.

late 1920s to sponsor a series of lectures on the "church and social work." The Council stated publicly that the conference was designed to better the relations between the city's religious-based organizations and the Council. The Council even invited the Church Federation in as a co-sponsor, hoping that the larger religious community would see this lecture series as a truly collaborative and cooperative endeavor.

Though the public pronouncements concerning the lecture series made by both the Council and the Church Federation emphasized that the lecture series was a forum where each group could learn about the resources of the other, the lectures proved to be yet another forum in which each group jockeyed for position. This is revealed in the private correspondence and meetings, not the public pronouncements. In meetings to arrange the lecture series, the Council admitted that most professional social workers were "cool" to the idea of the conference, reluctant to cooperate with religious-based social service organizations.[114] The fact that most of the lectures were given by social workers, rather than the religious leaders, shows that the Council was more concerned with introducing ministers and church workers to its ideas of social work than with taking religion seriously. The Council admitted in private meetings that it was little interested in learning more about religion but hoped that the lecture series would impress upon religious-based social service providers the imperatives of hiring trained social workers and the imperative of secular social work.[115]

The Church Federation cosponsored the conference because it was hoping to

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[114]See minutes of the meetings of the Committee to arrange lectures for social work, Box 229, Folder 8, Welfare Council.

[115]Ibid.

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"orientate the thinking and practice of the social worker towards making use of religion, the church and the minister, as a resource in the treatment of his clients." Knowing that many professional social workers were hostile to religion, the Church Federation explained the importance of religion to social work by appropriating the language of professional social workers: "There is a belief on the part of many persons today that religious aid with a technique as intelligently scientific and skillful as that used by other agencies can be brought to the help of person's in trouble." More generally, the Church Federation participants "wanted social workers made aware of the need for some kind of religious experience on the part of their clients."[116]

Although the conference was cosponsored by the Council and the Church Federation, the participants came primarily from Chicago's Protestant social service agencies. At the lecture "the place of the church in social work"--a lecture designed to introduce professional social workers to the resources of religion and church-based social service providers to the resources of the social work establishment–210 of the 317 registered participants were affiliated with Chicago's Protestant organizations. Of this 210, 101 were women, 21 were laymen, and the remaining 79 were ordained ministers.

While initially the Council hoped that the large attendance rates of Protestant ministers and laywomen would allow it to convince the city's Protestant social service providers of the necessity of hiring trained social workers, and of reshaping their work in a secular manner, it is more likely that the ministers and laywomen who attended had their own agendas. Considering the hostile relations which existed between the Council and the city's Protestant social service providers, these Protestant women might have

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[116]Ibid.

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attended to sharpen their skills as social service providers and to justify their work to their critics who said they were not practicing real social work. As the earlier discussion demonstrates, Protestant women and men were becoming increasingly willing and eager to borrow social work methods and draw on the rhetoric of professional social workers to justify their own Christian social service work. Many Protestant women and men from Chicago's Protestant institutions probably attended the meetings, much like they had gone to the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, not because they thought social work should be professionalized, or all social services made secular, but because they believed that one could integrate the skills of professional social work with their own Protestant programs and goals.

The Chicago Presbytery was so confident that its neighborhood houses could combine religious devotion with modern social work methods that it claimed, "The steady and successful growth of our Christian social service program as carried on in our Neighborhood Houses in not accidental. It is due to a careful and intelligent study of the needs of the people, an application of the best methods of social work by a devoted and trained leadership, both volunteer and employed, and the loyal support of friends in our churches."[117] Recognizing that most professional social workers challenged these kinds of assertions, many Protestants providing social services differentiated between two "schools of thought" of social work: the first, they referred to as the "exclusively humanistic scientific welfare group, which frowns upon any work centered about a spiritual or religious background and has not room in its schedule of social welfare for a

[117]One Hundred Twenty to Twelve," *Chicago Presbyterian* (October, 1940) p.1.

worship program as a base foundation to welfare work."[118] According to the perspective of the Protestant social service providers, the Council clearly fell into this school. In contrast they saw their own work in the neighborhood houses and institutional churches as "the Christian welfare group, which insists upon centering its welfare work about spiritual rebirth and reformation of the individual as the basis of his rehabilitation and in turn bases this spiritual rebirth about a Christian axis."[119] In defense of the religious focus of Chicago's Protestant neighborhood houses, one worker stated, "we simply maintain that religion occupies a very important place in human life and plays a determining role in it and that, due to its significance, is entitled to a place in a well balanced educational program of Church neighborhood house."[120]

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[118] "Interim Report of the Layman's Committee of Six of the Chicago Presbytery, 1938," Box 290, Folder 6, Welfare Council.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Fox quoted in Bond, "Factors," p. 80.

EPILOGUE

From 1886 to 1929, Protestant civic activism flourished in Chicago. The various actors discussed in this dissertation include the city missionaries of the CMS and CHMS; the Protestant businessmen of the Chicago Sunday Evening Club and the Men and Religion Forward Movement; and, most importantly, the women who labored in the city's Protestant settlements and institutional churches. The women were the most prominent of all the above actors, using their Protestant settlements and institutional churches to carve a place in the city's ever-evolving social welfare matrix. By way of conclusion this epilogue will discuss briefly how the Great Depression and the Community Fund affected the relationship between the Council of Social Agencies and the city's Protestant settlement and institutional church workers. I will then reflect more generally on the place of religion in the making and remaking of Chicago's public life from 1886 to 1929.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND CHICAGO'S COMMUNITY FUND

In the winter of 1931, Herbert Hoover responded to the deepening depression by assuring the public, "the basis of successful relief in national distress is to mobilize and organize the infinite number of agencies of self-help in the community. That has been the American way of relieving distress...and the country is successfully meeting its problem in the American way today." Later in the speech he again reassured the American public that "our people have the resources, the initiative, the courage, the stamina, and

kindliness of spirit to meet this situation."[1]

For the women and the few men working in Chicago's Protestant settlements houses and institutional churches, the task of providing relief to their many unemployed neighbors proved to be more complicated than Hoover could have anticipated. Located in many of the city's neighborhoods where the needs of the unemployed were greatest, these women and men reported frequently, "Never have we had such a large number of families appeal for help."[2] Yet as the demand for relief increased, the ability of Chicago's settlement and institutional church workers to respond to it declined proportionally. Like most other private voluntary organizations in the city, the Protestant settlements and institutional churches were ill-prepared for the devastation brought about by the depression.

Nevertheless, Chicago's institutional churches and Protestant settlements sought to expand the relief they offered to the city's unemployed workers, providing those who came to their institutions such necessities as food, clothing, and fuel. For example, Florence Towne, head resident of Erie Neighborhood House, converted her house's Friendly Room into a relief room where she and her coworkers gave small amounts of groceries and clothing to the families in their neighborhood.[3] Because providing food was especially important, the Bohemian Community center distributed over 20,000

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[1]Herbert Hoover quoted in Robert Sobel, *Herbert Hoover at the Onset of the Great Depression* (J.B. Lippincott, 1975) pp.101-102.

[2]Halsted Institutional Church, Box 325, Folder 8, Welfare Council.

[3]Erie Neighborhood House, Folder 2, Box 1, Erie Neighborhood House Collection.

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loaves of bread during the winter of 1933[4]. However, relief was not limited to food, fuel, and clothing. Halsted gave out, in addition to food and clothing, "a large outlay of cash."[5]

However well intentioned, these efforts at relief were hampered by the financial woes facing the city's Protestant voluntary organizations. Most of the city's Protestant social service institutions struggled merely to meet basic operating expenses, making it impossible to offer any extended relief. Historian Lizabeth Cohen found that this was the case with the majority of the city's ethnic and religious organizations: "At the same time that the depression increased the demand for welfare services, it also undermined the financial resources of many religious and ethnic agencies."[6] This was true even of the city's larger institutional churches, including Halsted Institutional Church and Olivet Institute. Both churches provided some relief but found their institutions continually behind on their mortgage payments. As a result, a Halsted worker noted, "we have had to do some relief work--but our main approach to the problem has been to try and help contact and bring these cases into contact with the proper agency of relief work."[7] Recognizing their own inabilities to respond fully to the needs of the unemployed, they referred many of the unemployed to the city's other relief organizations which had much greater financial resources. Even Olivet Institute, which had its own relief department, commonly urged its working-class neighbors to search out public relief.[8]

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[4]Bond, "Factors in the Shift," p. 67.

[5]Halsted Institutional Church, Folder 8, Box 325, Welfare Council.

[6]Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) p.222.

[7]Halsted Institutional Church, Folder 8, Box 325, Welfare Council.

[8]Olivet Institute, Folder 2, Box 387, Welfare Council.

It was because of the financial woes facing the city's Protestant settlement and institutional churches that they supported the development of Chicago's Community Fund. In the early months of 1931, civic-minded Chicagoans from across the city responded to the financial constraints that the city's private social service organizations were experiencing by establishing the Community Fund. The Fund was modeled on the community chests that had been popular in many American cities since the 1920s. Yet in contrast to the chests which centralized all fund raising, providing complete budgetary support to their member agencies, the Fund provided financial support for only the deficits which the social service agencies incurred. Hoping to avoid the centralization of power that often accompanied community chests, Chicago's Community Fund developers believed that keeping the Fund's financial support limited to deficits, not operating budgets, was necessary.[9] The success of this venture was demonstrated by the fact that throughout the 1930s the Fund raised and distributed millions of dollars to the city's private social service agencies.[10]

Though the Fund's developers hoped to avoid the centralization of power which often accompanied the implementation of community chests, they nevertheless wanted to guarantee high standards of service from the organizations they funded. To guarantee these high standards, the Community Fund leaders asked the Council of Social Agencies to evaluate the programs of those institutions seeking aid and to determine the amount of

[9]Judith Trolander providers an extensive discussion of settlement houses and Community Chests and Funds in *Settlement Houses and the Great Depression* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975).

[10]For a detailed analysis of the Fund's allocations during its first year of operation, see Clorinne Brandenburg, "Chicago Relief and Service Statistics, 1928-1931." (M.A. University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration), 1932.

support those organizations should receive.

The professional social workers staffing the Council suddenly found themselves with the power to begin to shape the city's social welfare institutions in a manner they saw fit. As the previous chapter discusses, for years the Council had waged battle with the city's Protestant social service providers, discouraging them from relying too heavily on volunteers and criticizing them for combining religion and social service. The Council used the power it gained from the Community Fund to do what its lecture series had failed to do, to pressure Protestant social service providers to secularize their work and to hire professional social workers recommended by the Council.

To receive money from the Fund, an organization had to become a member of the Council of Social Agencies, and have its program approved by the Council. Soon after assuming responsibility for overseeing the dispersal of the Fund's money, the Council placed more stringent demands on the city's social service organization. The city's Protestant social service organizations felt this pressure acutely. For example, Samaritan House was warned by the Council that it would lose Fund appropriations if it associated too closely with the Presbyterian church.[11] Upon application for Fund membership in 1936, the South Chicago Community Center was told by the Council that it was allowed only "probationary membership." Permanent membership would be granted only if and when the center separated its religious and social programs.[12] Likewise, Lincoln Institutional Church was also told by the Council that it must separate its religious and recreational work more clearly, and hire a trained professional social worker, if it hoped

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[11]Samaritan House, Folder 5, Box 399, Welfare Council.

[12]South Chicago Community Center, Folder 1, Box 402, Welfare Council.

to receive Fund support. While the head resident of Lincoln was "quite agitated about the action the Council was trying to force on the agency," telling the Council that "he had felt frequently in his work that professional workers lost the fine balance between over-sentimentality and too much objectivity and efficiency," he finally did agree to hire a professionally trained social worker recommended by the Council. He couldn't receive any money without doing so.[13]

Under similar demands, Firman House hired its first trained social worker in 1937. The Council referred to Firman a woman who had graduated from Columbia University with an M.A. and who had worked in the New York School of Social Work. The Council hoped that through her influence "a competent personnel may be developed." Firman's workers' reasons for hiring her were in large part financial; the Community Fund told them that if they hired her "there is a possibility that [their] allocation will be increased as rapidly as the agency demonstrated its ability to do sound work."[14]

Although the South Chicago Neighborhood House, under the same pressure as Lincoln and Halsted to secularize its work and to professionalize its staff, stated that it "would prefer to forfeit community fund money and be refused endorsement... rather than change their religious aims," few institutions could be so cavalier.[15] Rejection of the Fund would have ended, or at least seriously impaired, the work of most neighborhood houses and institutional churches. Of the ten Presbyterian and Congregational

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[13]Lincoln Street Institutional Church, Folder 5, Box 366, Welfare Council.

[14]Firman House, Folder 1, Box 318, Welfare Council.

[15]South Chicago Neighborhood House, Folder 3, Box 402, Welfare Council.

neighborhood houses and institutional churches receiving Community Fund money in 1937, six received between 32 to 50 percent of their operating budget from the Fund and the remaining three received somewhere in the range of 21 to 22 percent.[16]

While it was difficult for individual settlement houses and institutional churches to refuse the Council's recommendations without risking the loss of important financial support, these institutions could nevertheless undermine the labor of the Council. For example, the Council complained of Halsted which in 1935 agreed to hire a professional social worker but refused to follow his suggestions, pushing him into a peripheral position. The Council reported that most staff members were hostile to the professional social worker, making it impossible for him to have any influence at the church.[17]

Responding to complaints from individual settlement houses that the Fund was attempting to control their work, lay Presbyterians from across the city formed the Committee of Six, a committee devoted to investigating the relationship between the Fund and the houses. After interviewing the staffs of the city's various Presbyterian and Congregational settlement houses, the Committee concluded that the Council , which was responsible for approving applications to the Fund, was using its power "to discourage Protestant welfare work."[18] Echoing the grievances of the city's settlement house workers, the Committee claimed that the Council was "engaged in a very definite program seeking to change those activities which had been dedicated from their inception

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[16]Church Extension Board of the Presbytery of Chicago, Folder 6, Box 290, Welfare Council.

[17]Halsted Institutional Church, Folder 8, Box 325, Welfare Council.

[18]Interim Report of the Laymen's Committee of Six of the Chicago Presbytery, 1938, Folder 6, Box 290, Welfare Council.

to the basic principles of Christian spiritual welfare work, and sponsored by Protestant churches, over into non-Christian, non-spiritual, non-religious humanistic welfare work."[19]

While the professional social workers staffing the Council denied that they were engaged in any organized effort to "discourage" Protestant welfare work, they did admit that they used their power, and saw it as their responsibility, to influence organizations in the use of "right methods." That they believed religion was not included among the "right methods" had been established years before in the early 1920s. The only difference between the 1920s and the 1930s was that in the 1930s the Council had the power to enforce its vision of social service work on the city's many Protestant institutions.

It was in large part because of the Council's desire to shape the methods and practices of the agencies receiving Fund money that Chicago's Catholic Charities and the Jewish Charities associations refused to allow the Council to review their social welfare organizations individually. Instead, both charity associations worked out an agreement with the Fund whereby a lump sum would be given to each association; Catholic Charities and Jewish Charities would then distribute the Fund money they received among their many social service agencies. Explaining the need to keep Chicago's Catholic Charities independent from any outside force questioning its religious focus, one prominent Catholic Charity member said: "Catholic agencies believe that the treatment cannot be separated from the spiritual in family life. They believe that any type of case

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[19]Ibid.

that fails to reckon with the spiritual problems of human life is doomed to failure."[20] Because Catholic Charities was heavily dependent on volunteers, sustaining independence was important and avoiding the Council's grasp imperative. The Council of Social Agencies was forced to accept these arrangements with Catholic Charities and Jewish Charities because of the power both organizations wielded. However, the Council lamented the fact, "no real analysis of their service is made by the Fund."[21]

As one might expect, it was noted by Council supporters that Protestant social service agencies were "very jealous of their [the Catholic and Jewish Charities'] autonomy."[22] This was certainly true of the Committee of Six. Yet for how much the Committee of Six was frustrated by the fact that the Council wielded such power, it was limited in what it could do. It discouraged Presbyterians from contributing to the Fund, telling them instead to give directly to the houses. The Committee also attempted to consolidate Protestant fund-raising on a city-wide basis by forming the Associated Church Charities. Yet it was impossible to federate Protestant charities in Chicago because the denominations were only loosely related. In contrast, Chicago's Catholic and Jewish communities both had well-established federated charity structures in place long before the Great Depression. Finally, that most settlement houses chose to hire professional social workers recommended by the Council of Social Agencies rather than forsake Community Fund money shows that the Committee of Six was vocal but not very

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[20]John O'Grady quoted in Dorothy Brown and Elizabeth Mckeown, *The Poor Belong to Us*, p. 169.

[21]Wayne McMillan, "Joint Financing of Social Work in Chicago," *Social Service Review* (1937) p. 50.

[22]Ibid., p. 51.

powerful. Ironically, then, the heated religious and ideological battles the Council of Social Agencies had been waging with the Protestant social service providers since the early 1920s were resolved not by the persuasiveness of argument but by the power of the purse.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS: PROTESTANT CIVIC ACTIVISM, 1886-1929

The 1930s was not the first time Protestant settlement and institutional church women had found their work and their ideas challenged, although never before was their detractor so well organized or so powerful. In fact, the larger story of Protestant civic activism covering the years 1886 to 1929 is riddled with conflict as Protestant men and women jockeyed for religious authority; equally important, both groups faced opposition from other societal forces as they claimed a place in the public life of the city.

In the mid-1880s Protestant laymen had responded to the influx of immigrants and rising labor conflict by establishing missions in Chicago's immigrant working-class neighborhoods. Believing that the processes of becoming American and converting to Protestant were intertwined, these men envisioned their evangelistic work in explicitly civic terms. Because evangelism had such significant civic import, these men naturally saw evangelistic work as men's work. Most importantly, because speaking on the Americanization question was a way to claim the right to shape the city's ever-changing public order, to claim the city as one's own, these city missionary endeavors can tell us much about the making of the public life of the city.

As women assumed greater responsibility within these city missions, they used

their experiences to break out on their own, establishing Protestant settlement houses and becoming active in the institutional church movement. By seeking their own institutional base within the city, they found for themselves a place from which the could begin to redefine the religious urban realm as a woman's one. They drew on both religious and maternalist rhetoric to claim that they alone had the moral means to shape Chicago's public order in a Christian fashion. By combining the goals of the traditional evangelical mission with the objectives and methods of the secular settlement house, they were able to meld their social, civic, and religious concerns. Even more significant, by using their institutional base to enlarge the social welfare services of the Protestant community, these women expanded the public role of religion as they feminized it.

The public role these women assumed in the city did not go unquestioned. Almost from the beginning they were challenged by secular settlement leaders who argued that there was no place for religion in the settlement movement and conservative businessmen who sought to make religion a masculine affair. Yet because these battles were mostly rhetorical, Chicago's Protestant women were able to maintain and even expand their role in the city's public life during the 1910s and 1920s. In fact, after the settlement movement faded in the late 1910s, Protestant women continued to be active, expanding their houses and services in the supposedly torpid decade of the 1920s.

In the 1920s when the professional social workers staffing the Council of Social Agencies sought to establish public guardianship over the city's emerging social-service field, they found that Chicago's Protestant women stood at the center of this field. These Protestant women provided services to their neighbors, interacted closely with the city's other social agencies, and acted as intermediaries between their neighbors and those other

agencies. Concerned about providing a sound social scientific footing for their newly established yet ever-evolving profession, the professional social workers who gravitated to the Council questioned the city's Protestant social service providers, arguing that religion was incompatible with the methods of professional social work. The Council labored diligently to disassociate professional social work from any association with Protestant charitable endeavors. However, the rhetoric of the Council belies the fact that Protestant settlement and institutional church women employed professionally trained social workers and drew on the most recent methods of social work, although in an explicitly Protestant framework.

Though religious and urban historians have been slow to recognize religion as an important factor in city life, this dissertation has attempted to show that Protestant institutions helped to construct the public life of the city. Starting with the city missionaries, Protestant laymen claimed that they had both a religious and a civic duty to help shape the city's ever-evolving public order. The belief that the public city was theirs to claim was even more pronounced among the Protestant women laboring in the city's Protestant settlements and institutional churches. The extensive social, health, and recreational services they offered provided an important link in the city's larger social service matrix. Through their various endeavors, Chicago's civic-minded laymen and laywomen helped build the public life of the city.

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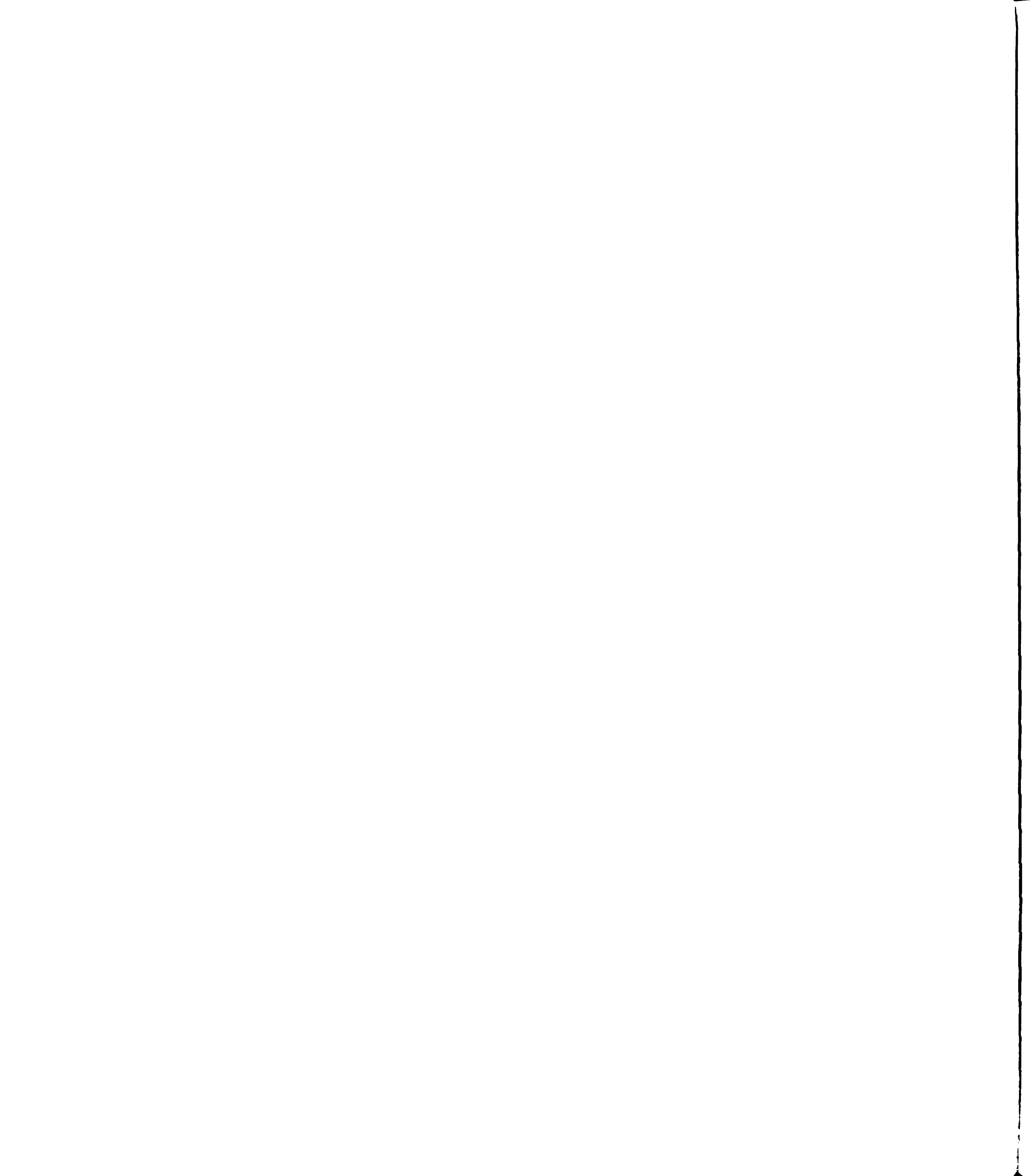

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