

“TAMING THE SEXUAL TEMPEST”: SEXUAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN  
PROTESTANT YOUTH GROUPS, 1960-1980

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **“TAMING THE SEXUAL TEMPEST”: SEXUAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN PROTESTANT YOUTH GROUPS, 1960-1980**

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My dissertation makes a contribution to four fields of historical scholarship: the history of youth ministry, baby boom generation, the social and cultural history of the 1960s and 1970s, and the history of the sexual revolution. Set in the context of the 1960s and 1970s, I examine the formal and informal sexual education literature and programming designed and used by two Protestant youth groups during this period: Liberal Religious Youth, a youth run denominational group supported by the Unitarian Universalist Association and Youth For Christ an evangelical para-church organization for high school students. Protestant religious groups, evangelicals in particular, were at the center of debates over comprehensive sexual education in American high schools in the 1960s. However what often gets lost in the discussion of liberal support for and evangelical objections to sex education in schools are the alternative and/or supplemental programs designed and utilized by those working within the youth ministry. The content and the tone of these programs changed significantly between 1960 and 1980, coinciding with changes in youth culture happening among three cohorts of baby boomers. However, the strategies the groups used to reach teenagers were remarkably similar. The history of sexual education in YFC and LRY during the 1960s and 1970s indicates both conservative and liberal religious adults moved away from impersonal and overt efforts to control and monitor teen sexuality to a strategy which allowed them to manage teen sexuality by teaching teens to monitor themselves. I argue that the changing sexual culture in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s prompted Youth for Christ and Liberal Religious Youth to employ similar strategies to deliver very different

messages about gender, love, relationships, and sexuality. Both groups employed three separate strategies over the course of these two decades each targeted at a specific wave of the baby boomer generation. I divide these strategies/cohorts into three rough periods. The first period encompasses 1960-1966. The second period runs from 1967-1972. The third period is from 1973 to 1980. I have divided the baby boomers into these cohorts because of the nature of the high school experience. Typically, scholarship focusing on youth culture privileges college students. In my study, I focus on high school students who have a much shorter and more contained youth experience.

For C-A-R-T-E-R,  
mama's little star

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My deepest gratitude is reserved for my husband, Dan. He has photocopied, hauled books, listened to ideas, read drafts, and held my hand through every minute of this process. Most importantly, he has made me laugh every single day. His humor and comic relief have

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## INTRODUCTION

1971, Billy Graham published a book entitled *The Jesus Generation*. His audience was a generation of young people that seemed, by all media accounts, to be moving further and further away from religion towards a secular standard of living. Graham was concerned about the state of youth culture. He felt that young people were confused and in need of guidance. He wanted to urge young people to steer clear of Satan's grip, which he warned, was often difficult to see. He was concerned about many aspects of young people's lives, but especially about the lack of sexual morality he perceived among young people. He declared that young people needed help, "taming the sexual tempest." The statement reflects his concern with the sexual culture in America, but it also recognition of the natural sexual development of young men and women in their teen years. Graham, like other evangelical ministers serving youth, committed themselves to helping young people navigate this tumultuous stage.<sup>1</sup>

My dissertation examines the formal and informal sexual education efforts within two Protestant youth groups, Youth for Christ and Liberal Religious Youth, between 1960 and 1980. In the pages that follow, I explore how religiously based youth organizations handled the topic of sex with three distinct groups of baby boomers during America's second sexual revolution. I am interested in both the content of the advice as well as the methods of delivery adult advisors and group leaders used when discussing sexual matters with teenagers. What follows is primarily an exploration of adult responses to the simultaneous changes in American sexual culture and youth culture during this period. Young people figure prominently in the story, but I am most

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<sup>1</sup> Billy Graham, *The Jesus Generation*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971).

concerned with the strategies adults used to manage the massive, unpredictable, diverse generation of baby boomers as they came of age in the 1960s and 1970s.

The groups I focus on are Liberal Religious Youth (LRY), a youth run group affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association; and Youth for Christ (YFC), an evangelical parachurch organization, created by adults for teenagers. I chose these two groups for several reasons: First, both YFC and LRY catered to high school aged teenagers. Second, both organizations were voluntary and outside of the direct control of leaders in a specific church or congregation (i.e. they were not Sunday school programs) Third, both YFC and LRY attracted teens from a broad range of specific faith traditions. Fourth, YFC and LRY were national organizations, with formal structures, stated missions, and regular meeting schedules. Finally, although the religious beliefs and faith traditions of those affiliated with the groups were very different, the imagined audience and type of teenager participated in each group was fairly homogeneous. Both groups catered to and were dominated by white, middle-class, college-bound, teenagers. YFC and LRY were therefore targeting a group of teens that for all of their religious differences had been raised in the same neighborhoods, went to the same public schools, shopped at the same stores, and shared a similar worldview based on having grown up in middle-class homes. Given the demographic similarities of their target audiences, Liberal Religious Youth and Youth for Christ's success depended on their ability to adapt to changes in the larger middle class youth culture. By designing their programs around the needs and interests of young people in a specific historical context and social location, both groups were able to create relevant programs and educational materials, albeit with wildly different bottom lines. Their ability to remain relevant helped them appeal to the young people they hoped to serve.

Since their inception, both denominational and parachurch groups designed for religious youth have been more than holding pens for young church goers and religiously inclined youth.<sup>2</sup> The primary function of many of these groups was to serve the needs of teenagers through a carefully designed program directed aimed at self-management through spiritual development. According to adult advisors and organizers, developing programs that appealed to teens while maintaining religious integrity was a difficult but important task. Adults affiliated with both YFC and LRY expressed a desire to help teens transition through what, by all accounts, was a difficult and developmental stage. In 1955 Robert A. Cook, President of Youth for Christ, published, “It’s Hard to Be a Teenager” where he articulated his sympathy for the difficulties young men and women faced trying to navigate through adolescence. The title of the work was inspired by a speech delivered by the President of Wheaton College, Dr. V. Raymond Edman, (1940-1965). In this speech, Edman articulated the rationale for youth ministry based on his understanding of the developmental needs and experiences of teenagers. He stated,

Teenagers do not understand themselves, and they are sure no one comprehends or really cares for them. They are not little children nor are they mature men and women. They are bewildered by the inner conflicts and complications that arise out of the physical and emotional changes that are transpiring within themselves. They are in the process of being detached from home with a view to establishing in time a home of their own. In the interval of teenage years they are inclined to be more concerned about belonging to a gang, of conforming to the pattern, of what “everybody else does,” than of remaining a part of the home, Sunday School and church. It is tough to be a teenager; and to help them in their transition from childhood to adulthood, God had raised up Youth for Christ, a fellowship designed especially for them.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For a comprehensive overview of youth ministry in the United States since the 19<sup>th</sup> century see: Mark H. Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Robert A. Cook “It’s Tough To be a Teenager” Wheaton Miracles Unlimited, 1955. p.9

Edman's sentiments, although directed at an evangelical crowd, were similar to those expressed in the adult training literature and lectures given by adults involved with Liberal Religious Youth. The LRY Advisor's Handbook, published by Liberal Religious Youth in 1955, and used (with minor revisions) throughout the 1960s, listed a number of characteristics of youth "in general." According to the handbook, "youth are unsettled," "rebellious," "often irresponsible but capable of responsibility," "responsive to challenges," "energetic, pressured, oft-confused, interested in the world around them, and still developing physically, emotionally, and socially."<sup>4</sup> Speaking on this last point the handbook states,

...youth, let us remember, is attempting to find a satisfactory norm in living with his own and others age groups. Within the limitations and drives of his own mind and body, personality and emotional makeup. The open friendly adult can be of great help to the young person.<sup>5</sup>

According to LRY, the youth group, and the adult advisors, played an important role in the development of young people's "ethical thinking, their basic attitudes toward life, their feeling toward worship, their relationship to other people, their ability to stand as self-thinking, growing individuals – in short, in their religion."<sup>6</sup>

The fact that we see two groups with very different religious orientations and missions expressing similar sentiments with regard to their role in the youth organization suggests a broader familiarity and engagement with more secular understanding of youth. The success of groups such as Liberal Religious Youth and Youth for Christ depended on their ability to adapt

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<sup>4</sup> "LRY Advisors Handbook" (Liberal Religious Youth, 1955), bMS 1156/1(4), Andover Harvard Theological Library, 9.

<sup>5</sup> "LRY Advisors Handbook" (Liberal Religious Youth, 1955), bMS 1156/1(4), Andover Harvard Theological Library, 9.

<sup>6</sup> "LRY Advisors Handbook" (Liberal Religious Youth, 1955), bMS 1156/1(4), Andover Harvard Theological Library, 9.

to changes in youth culture, which required an understanding of the developmental needs and the social and cultural world of American teenagers. Therefore, organizers looked to several sources to help them understand and anticipate the needs of youth and develop their programs accordingly. Several important sources provided a foundation for their understanding of adolescent development and teen culture: developmental theory from experts in the fields of developmental psychology, sociology, and education; the teenagers themselves, and the media and popular culture. Designing their youth program around the information gleaned from these sources allowed them to create materials that were relevant and therefore appealing to the young people they served. The following is a discussion of the philosophical and methodological foundations of youth ministry as approached by Youth for Christ and Liberal Religious Youth.

The exact origins of Youth for Christ are difficult to trace due to the decentralized nature of the movement in the early years. In the 1930s and early 1940s, working independently of one another, and outside the purview of specific denominations, several young men throughout the United States and Canada began looking for ways to reach the unchurched youth in their communities. In cities and small towns, these men, formed parachurch groups for high school students, aired radio broadcasts and organized large Saturday night rallies, all intended to bring youth to Christ.<sup>7</sup> The formal organization of Youth for Christ International came in July 1945 at the Winona Lake Convention in Indiana. At this meeting, several youth pastors and rally participants met to bring the movement under the banner of a single organizational structure.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Jon Pahl, *Youth Ministry in Modern America : 1930 to the Present* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000); Mark Senter, *The Coming Revolution in Youth Ministry*, Sonpower Youth Sources (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1992); Mark Senter, *When God Shows Up : A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*, Youth, Family, and Culture Series (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Johnson was the pastor of the Midwest Bible Church in Chicago and is often credited with establishing the Bible Club Movement in the Midwest. Senter, *When God Shows Up : A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*. Youth, Family, and Culture Series (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2010).

At this meeting, keynote speaker Torrey Johnson, pointed out that, “The youth movement has grown and spread so rapidly that it is no longer possible for cities to isolate themselves from one another, but that we must ‘sink or swim’ together.”<sup>9</sup> Speaking to the popularity and media attention the movement had gained over the years, Johnson made an impassioned plea for members to do all they could to make the movement a success:

The eyes of the whole country are on us...Fundamentalism is looking to YOUTH FOR CHRIST with hope, Modernism with apprehension; the vast majority of people are not in either one of those classes but are ‘in between’. They have no definite view one way or another but follow the band-wagon. Right now WE are carrying the ball.<sup>10</sup>

The group elected Torrey Johnson president and set an initial budget of \$200,000 for the first year.<sup>11</sup> Members and leaders of the newly formed organization also took the time to draw up a formal list of goals at this 1945 convention. They were:

1. To promote and help Youth for Christ everywhere.
2. To encourage world evangelism among youth.
3. To emphasize radiant, victorious living.
4. To foster service international of youth through existing agencies.

To accomplish these goals, YFC leaders developed an approach to teen ministry that was partially revealed in the group’s motto: “Geared to the times but anchored to the Rock.” Those in charge of developing the Youth for Christ program felt that “teenagers must be met on their own ground and given an understanding that will fit their needs in a way that will attract sufficient

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<sup>9</sup> Minutes of the first annual convention of youth for Christ International July 22-29. 1945, 3. Box 9, Folder 4, Collection 48 YFCI, BGC Archives.

<sup>10</sup> Minutes of the first annual convention of youth for Christ International July 22-29. 1945, 3. Box 9, Folder 4, Collection 48 YFCI, BGC Archives.

<sup>11</sup> Minutes of the first annual convention of youth for Christ International July 22-29. 1945, 3. Box 9, Folder 4, Collection 48 YFCI, BGC Archives.

attention to get them to listen.”<sup>12</sup> Organizers understood that teens were being bombarded with new forms of media such as television during this period and that they would need to continue to offer teens the message using all available media and entertainment resources.

The foundation of the YFC program was the seven point “Statement of Faith” which was written to reflect the goals and mission of the National Association of Evangelicals. It included the following points:

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative word of God.
2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in his vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in his personal return in power and glory.
4. We believe that for the salvation of the lost and sinful man regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
5. We believe in the present ministry of the holy spirit by whose dwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
6. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; that they are saved unto the resurrection of life and that they are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
7. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in Christ.<sup>13</sup>

YFC further stressed these beliefs in a formal Policy of Belief drafted in 1950, which stated that YFC was an “inter-church, non-political, and non-sectarian” organization.<sup>14</sup> In essence, YFC was a parachurch organization within the evangelical movement. As such, leaders within the organization resolved to “avoid any conflict with...established worship services.”<sup>15</sup> Youth for

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<sup>12</sup> Joseph N. Bell “God’s Teenage Commandos” *Coronet* November 1957 p. 82

<sup>13</sup> Constitution of Youth for Christ, 1945. BGC Archives.

<sup>14</sup> “Youth for Christ Policy” *Youth For Christ Magazine* (December 1951), 4.

<sup>15</sup> “Youth for Christ Policy” *Youth For Christ Magazine* (December 1951), 4.

Christ was not interested in competing with denominations for young men's and women's attentions. As a parachurch organization they acted as a supplement to the programs already happening in existing churches. More importantly, as a parachurch organization they had a bit more freedom to change the direction of the program according to young people's needs, desires, and interests.

Youth for Christ worked on developing a philosophy of adult-youth relations that would foster adult legitimacy with the teenagers they were trying to reach. Historian Mark Senter has argued that because YFC was not connected to a specific church, it had to "earn a hearing within adolescent culture."<sup>16</sup> They did this by developing an "incarnational theology" based on the teachings of John 1:14: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." YFC believed that to reach young people they needed to "become flesh" among them, which meant spending time with teenagers in their educational and social environments and learning to speak their language. With the permission of school authorities, YFC adult volunteers made themselves a fixture at high school and public community events. In these settings volunteers had the opportunity to learn about what youth wanted and how they operated. This strategy, also sometimes referred to as "relational youth ministry," was not intended, nor was it supposed to appear as manipulation. Adult advisors were warned that students were both savvy and suspicious and would see right through insincerity and manipulation. Rather, adults were supposed to work on "building bridges of friendship, identifying with students where they are in their daily struggles, understanding their culture and becoming part of it and finally

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<sup>16</sup> Mark H. Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 329.

demonstrating God's love for each of them as individuals."<sup>17</sup> In the early years, under Johnson's leadership, YFC focused on rallies and radio programs in cities like Chicago and Detroit as well as reaching out to more rural areas and small towns – areas that had been neglected during the early years of the movement.

In 1948 Robert Andrew Cook followed Johnson as president of YFC. Under Cook's leadership, rallies and radio programs continued to serve as the main focus of the organization but he also introduced several new programs. Cook believed that in order to accomplish its goals YFC had to expand its program. "The rally idea," he said, "is sound but in most places...the rally is just the show window. Let's get something on the counters the rest of the week."<sup>18</sup> In part, Cook was responding to skeptics who believed that YFC had stopped growing and had begun to lose its effectiveness and appeal with teens. Cook answered this charge in an article entitled "What Happens Next" published in the July 1949 issue of Youth for Christ Magazine:

Certainly Youth for Christ swept everything before it like a prairie fire in those first months...It would be a tragedy if Youth for Christ were only a grass-fire, however. Some of us like to think that a better comparison is that of the process of getting up steam in a boiler. First, the kindling and the hot flash of flame that ignite the coal. Later, and better and more lasting, is the quite burning that gives off heat and power. It is the steady heat that pulls the load.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Senter points out that incarnational theology was a description created by organizers of another religious youth group, Young Life. He states that YL came up with the idea because they realized that as a para-church group nobody was going to make the kids go to the meeting so they had to "earn the right to be heard by high school students." For discussions of how this ministry style worked in YFC and other groups see: Senter, "The Youth For Christ Movement as an Educational Agency and Its Impact upon Protestant Churches: 1931-1979," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Loyola University of Chicago, 1989); 330; Bergler, "Winning America: Christian Youth Groups and the Middle Class Culture of Crisis, 1930-1965," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 2000); Jon Pahl, *Youth Ministry in Modern America, 1930-Present* (Hendrickson Publishers Incorporated), 2000. (Mark H. Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Cited in James Hefly, *God Goes to High School* (Waco, Texas: Word, 1970), 47.

<sup>19</sup> Bob Cook. "What Happens Next," *Youth For Christ Magazine*, (July 1949), 5.

Taking a cue from the work of Jim Rayburn's Young Life club programs, Youth for Christ leaders began organizing high school bible clubs. By the early 1950s, successful bible clubs been established by YFC leaders across the country. Jack Hamilton and his wife Mary Jeanne of Kansas City had had particular success with the new club format which was an attempt to bring the Bible back into young people's lives after a 1948 Supreme Court decision (*Mccollum vs. Board of Education*) removed the Bible from public schools. Hamilton said, "The Court is taking the Bible out of the high schools. With Bible clubs we can put it back in through the lives of young people on fire for God."<sup>20</sup> Additionally, the Hamilton's developed a series of bible quizzes to help young people learn the teachings of the New Testament in a format that was a fun popular entertainment in America at the time. Buoyed by success stories of the bible club and quiz show formats, in 1949 YFC set up an International Bible Club Department charged with the task of concentrated intra-school evangelism.<sup>21</sup> With the new format, teens were able to take more leadership roles in the group. The organization put out a manual entitled, "Here's How" that helped teenagers think about innovative and effective ways to make "the Christian talk 'walk' in the lives of teenagers."<sup>22</sup> These resources, along with the organization's publication, *Youth for Christ Magazine*, provided teenagers with the means and materials to set up a Bible club in their own schools.

In addition to bible clubs and quizzes, Cook created the Youth Guidance Program, designed to reach juvenile delinquents and at-risk teens in inner city neighborhoods like Oakland, CA, and Los Angeles, CA. Cook believed that a program for at-risk teens would help

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<sup>20</sup> Hefly, *High School*, 49.

<sup>21</sup> "Report form Winona Lake." *Youth For Christ Magazine*, Vol VII No. 6, (September 1949), 52.

<sup>22</sup> "Here's How" Box 2 Folder 3 Collection 48 YFCI, BGC Archives.

YFC achieve their goal of bringing youth to Christ “So much of our advertising and programming” Cook said “is slanted to happy Christian youngsters. Let’s do something to reach the teens outside.”<sup>23</sup> Cook makes a number of assumptions about “at-risk” teens in this assessment that reveal the generally white middle class suburban position YFC participants. “At risk” teens, including poor and working-class individuals in urban areas, were inherently unhappy, without religion, and devoid of adequate spiritual leadership in their own communities. The programs, which were often directed at African American communities in major metropolitan centers on the west coast, became part of YFC official program in 1952 with the appointment of Gordon McLean as the first Youth Guidance Director.

Along with these major changes Cook also introduced other programs during his tenure as president including, Youth Times, Youth Films, Youth Literatures, Youth World Congress, Teen Summer and Holiday Camp Programs, High School Assembly Program, Teen Preacher and Talent Contests, Basketball Teams and even the “Boltin’ Bishop Car Club”. With the creation of these programs in the 1950s, YFC answered critics who suggested that the teen evangelism movement was simply a fad and would not be able to maintain youth interest in the long run.<sup>24</sup> Historian John G. Turner, in his study on Campus Crusade for Christ has pointed out that adaptability has been a key component and a mean of survival for many nondenominational evangelical parachurch organizations in postwar America.<sup>25</sup> Mark Senter explores a similar theme of adaptability within youth ministry in his recent work, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*, which traces the history of youth ministry in America

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<sup>23</sup> Cited in Hefly, *High School*, 70.

<sup>24</sup> Moore, “Youth For Christ Yesterday, Today -- and Tomorrow? (A Critical Study),” 53-61.

<sup>25</sup> John G. Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ: The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>26</sup> By establishing a precedent of adaptability and innovation within the movement, Cook created a culture within YFC that allowed the group to adjust to changes within youth culture. In the decades to follow, YFC leaders continued to adapt their program in the effort to attract more teens to the movement.

In 1957, Theodore Wilhelm Engstrom became the president of YFC, a position he held until 1963. In 1962, under Engstrom's leadership, YFC created a new constitution that better reflected the changing program offerings and growth of the organization that had occurred under Cook's leadership. By the time Engstrom left the organization in 1965, rallies, bible quizzes, and talent contests, which had been the pillars of the movement and organization for two decades, were being phased out in favor of a program focused on small groups.<sup>27</sup> Engstrom was the first of a new generation of leaders to take the helm of YFC. His tenure was followed by two others between 1965 and 1980 - Samuel Wogelmuth (1965-1973) and Jay Lewis Kessler (1973-1980), both men searched for ways to reach more unsaved teens.

YFC, since its inception, had been committed to the goal of reaching both saved and unsaved youth. By the 1960s, group organizers realized that the majority of YFC's teens identified as "saved" before they entered the group. In effect, YFC realized that they were, quite literally, preaching to the converted. To remedy this, leaders in the organization sought ways to attract a broader teen audience of both saved and unsaved youth. In the first year of his tenure as YFC president Samuel Wogelmuth reformatted and renamed the organization's main publication, *Youth for Christ Magazine*. Previously, the magazine served as a means of reporting

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<sup>26</sup> Mark H. Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010).

<sup>27</sup> Pahl, *Youth Ministry in Modern America*, 56-72; Senter, "The Youth For Christ Movement as an Educational Agency and Its Impact upon Protestant Churches: 1931-1979," 220-260.

on the organization's activities and circulating news about what was going on in local groups. In the early years, YFCM also functioned as a prescriptive text, offering tips, tricks, advice, and insight about how to live a model Christian life, in 1965; YFC replaced *Youth for Christ Magazine* with *Campus Life*. Along with a new name, the magazine was restyled in a format and design similar to secular teen magazines in the era, including glossy pages, more advertising, more human interest stories, and advice columns. After the redesign, the magazine retained and expanded the prescriptive content and dropped most of the organization's news reports. By retooling the magazine in this way, YFC, hoped to attract a broader teen audience and by extension help bring more teens to Christ.

Under Wolgelmuth's tenure YFC also introduced a new Campus Life Club Program which became the anchor of group's program through the 1960s and 1970s. YFC introduced Campus Life Clubs in 1968. They were different from early bible clubs in that they brought saved and unsaved together through a carefully designed program. They were more structured and offered adults and teens more formal direction and materials to help them in their teen-to-teen campus ministries where "the Christian teenager could properly and successfully communicate in action and words his personal faith in Jesus Christ to his friends, his campus and his world."<sup>28</sup> The centerpiece of the Campus Life Club Program was the Insight/Impact meeting format. Saved teens would invite and bring their unsaved friends to the Impact meetings where they would have an opportunity to listen to other teens and adult leaders testify to the benefits they had received after being saved and accepting Jesus into their lives. These meetings were an introduction to Christianity and an invitation for unchurched youth to hear the word of God and become saved. The Insight meetings were designed to help deepen the faith and knowledge of

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<sup>28</sup> Mark Houston Senter III. "The Youth For Christ Movement as an Educational Agency and Its Impact Upon Protestant churches: 1931-1979." Ph.D. Dissertation Loyola University of Chicago, 1989, 257.

teens who had already accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior. These Insight meetings were an opportunity to learn more about one's faith and how to live a Christian life.

Jay Lewis Kessler inherited a well established Campus Life Program in 1973 when he stepped into the role of President of YFC. Under his leadership Youth for Christ experienced a tremendous boom in the early 1970s. However, this initial boom was followed by a decline in teen interest and participation as the 1970s wound to a close. The core of the program remained unchanged during Kessler's terms. One of Kessler's biggest contributions in this era was the expansion of the Youth Guidance Program in low income inner city areas. His goal was to bring some diversity to the institution that, for most of its history, had been dominated by white middle class leaders and membership. Kessler also helped facilitated the growth of several new activity programs such as stress camping and family counseling programs, which were all in line with what was happening in the larger evangelical community and the youth ministry movement at large.

Unlike Youth for Christ, which was entirely a twentieth century invention, Liberal Religious Youth had roots in the 19th century. At the end of the 19th century young people within two liberal Protestant denominations began expressing interest in organizing youth groups within their local churches. The Universalists in Lynn, Massachusetts formed the Young People's Christian Union in 1889. This was followed by a similar effort by the Universalists who created the Young People's Religious Union in Boston in 1896.<sup>29</sup> Initially the age limits in

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<sup>29</sup> The secondary literature on the formation and functioning of these two organizations is scant. Most of the information about the early years of these organizations was taken from summaries of the institutional history laid out by members of the organization. Francis Bradley Morris, *The Young People's Christian Union of Massachusetts and Rhode Island A Complete History of That Organization in Massachusetts and Rhode Island from June, 1889 to March, 1939* (Norwood, Mass: Mass. and Rhode Island Young People's Christian Union, 1980). The following history of LRY was also helpful in illuminating the history of the original Unitarian and Universalist youth

both groups were much broader than their 20th century counterparts. In some cases both the Young People's Christian Union and the Young People's Religious Union allowed those up to age 35 to maintain group membership.<sup>30</sup> The Young People's Religious Union was an adult sponsored organization for the young people in the church, while the Young People's Christian Union was almost entirely controlled by youth – they raised their own money, hired their own executive secretary and took complete responsibility for all programs and activities. In 1894, the YPCU formed the "Junior Union Department" to serve high school students and those under the age of 20. That move eventually resulted in the decision to officially lower the age limit to 13-25. At this time the name was also changed to Universalist Youth Fellowship. A few years later Alice Harrison was hired as the first Director of Youth Education, a position she held from 1947-1953. Around the same time, the Young People's Religious Union appointed Stephen Fritchman Director of Youth Activities. In the 1940s, Fritchman expanded the organization into the American Unitarian Youth in order to reflect the geographical breadth the organization had achieved.<sup>31</sup>

Liberal Religious Youth made its debut in 1953 when members of the American Unitarian Youth and Universalist Youth Fellowship decided to merge into a single organization. The merger was brought on by the increasing cooperation between the Unitarian and Universalist churches. When American Unitarian Youth and Universalist Youth Fellowship decided to merge in 1953, they were anticipating a move that adults in both churches were discussing but

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organizations Wayne B. Arnason, and Rebecca Scott. *We Would Be One A History of Unitarian Universalist Youth Movements* (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2005).

<sup>30</sup> "LRY Structure and Organization," January 1966, 2, bMS 1156/2(11), Andover Harvard Theological Library.

<sup>31</sup> "LRY Structure and Organization," January 1966, 3, bMS 1156/2(11), Andover Harvard Theological Library.

not yet ready to make. In 1956, three years after the merger, LRY was incorporated as an independent but affiliated organization.<sup>32</sup>

When the Unitarians and the Universalists officially merged in 1961, to form the Unitarian Universalist Association, LRY took that opportunity to reorganize and restructure. The group, which had previously served pre-teens, teens, and young adults, restricted its membership to 14-19 year olds. This prompted the creation of Student Religious Liberals for college age youth and eventually a third organization for junior high-schoolers. As a result of this change, after 1961 LRY became a teen run organization. It was structured and run by 14-19 year olds with the help and supervision of an adult advisor who served as Executive Director of the organization and was appointed by the Unitarian Universalist Association. In addition to receiving help from the Executive Director, Unitarian Universalist Association also appointed a few adult staff members to help with administrative tasks. On a local level, adults served as supervisors at meetings and liaisons to local churches. Despite all of this adult involvement, LRY was by and large a group for youth by youth. Young people were involved at all levels of the organization and staunchly clung to the principle of youth autonomy as the guiding force in adult youth relations in LRY. For the most part, adults respected their autonomy and believed in the importance of supporting this principle though they obviously held a rarely used veto power.

The stated purposes of LRY, as laid out in Article II Section 1, of the by-laws were:

1. To unite religious youth.
2. To build understanding and cooperation between youth and adults in the liberal religious movement.
3. To provide for the effective implementation of these purposes through local and regional organizations and activities.
4. To help individual young people grow in:

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<sup>32</sup> Senter, "The Youth For Christ Movement as an Educational Agency and Its Impact upon Protestant Churches: 1931-1979," 3.

Dealing creatively and imaginatively with religion as the most exalted quality and spirit of living. Nurturing the distinctively liberal tradition in religion: freedom and responsibility of belief, the free and questioning mind, the use of reason and scientific method in religion and the respect for the individual integrity and dignity of everyman. Achieving a responsible and durable personal faith through personal and group experiences of learning, service and worship.

5. Understanding and practicing the privileges and responsibilities of the democratic spirit and method. Becoming creative and realistic contributors to the achievement of a just, peaceful and united world community.<sup>33</sup>

The stated purposes and missions laid out in the by-laws served as a guide for group relations, youth programming, and adult-youth relations.

In a paper entitled “On possibility in Liberal Religion: Toward a working philosophy of an LRY advisor,” adult advisor Maggie Kahin defined the guiding philosophy of adult-youth relations in LRY as “coequality.”<sup>34</sup> In this piece, which also took the form of several lectures and speeches at advisor training conferences and in speaking engagements at UUA congregations throughout the country, Kahin described adult youth relations in LRY as “playing the game on the basis of confrontation wherein the rules are coequality. As coequals we thrash out where we are going and why.”<sup>35</sup> By this she meant that adults needed to strive to meet young people on equal footing. To recognize that while they are trying to help young people negotiate their “process of becoming” they need to recognize that they are also always growing as individuals. Therefore, rather than impose their existing beliefs upon youth the need to open themselves up to further growth, to look forward to who they can become and what they can learn rather than backwards to the knowledge they have acquired. True understanding between adults and youth can only come when adults “become once more and remain always a partial

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<sup>33</sup> “Permanent By-Laws Liberal Religious Youth,” 1.

<sup>34</sup> Maggie Kahin, “On Possibility in Liberal Religion,” n.d , 6, bMS 10009/2(2), Andover Harvard Theological Library.

<sup>35</sup> Maggie Kahin, “On Possibility in Liberal Religion,” n.d , 6, bMS 10009/2(2), Andover Harvard Theological Library.

beginner” because “to sense this within oneself, to see oneself as a beginner is to assume a willingness to see what is immediate, new and important for this particular individual or this particular group.”<sup>36</sup> Adult legitimacy among the LRYers they were advising depended on the maintenance of this stance in local meetings and at regional and national conferences.

LRY maintained ties to the adult congregation at the local level through adult advisors.<sup>37</sup> Adult advisors were generally sympathetic and supportive of the young people's desire to make their own decisions and structure their programs, meetings, and conferences according to their own desires. In address to adult advisors, UUA Youth Program Director, Dick Kossow stated:

I don't have any statistics, but it my observation that church schools and most of the parents in our denomination are striving through their educational process to instill a free, open-minded questioning attitude in their children. One that does not accept values just because they have been stated to them, but questions those values, works out their own answers and develops their own sense of worth...LRY [is] a forum- a place where our young people can meet with other young people of their own general age and challenge the ideas that are expressed to them search out new answers and have complete openness and honesty with their peer group, and also arouse interest in adults – sensitive adults – who are more or less practiced in keeping their mouths shut. That is, acting as sounding board rather than loudspeakers. I think this is the best of LRY.<sup>38</sup>

Adult's rationale for supporting LRY as an autonomous youth organization affiliated with the UUA was based on their understanding of the needs and desires of young people as they transitioned from childhood to adulthood. If LRY was going to be successful it had to be more than a “youth holding corporation,” a way to keep youth connected to the church until they were

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<sup>36</sup> Maggie Kahin, “On Possibility in Liberal Religion,” n.d , 6, bMS 10009/2(2), Andover Harvard Theological Library.

<sup>37</sup> “LRY Advisors Handbook” (Liberal Religious Youth, 1955), bMS 1156/1(4), Andover Harvard Theological Library.

<sup>38</sup> “LRY Advisors Handbook” (Liberal Religious Youth, 1955), bMS 1156/1(4), Andover Harvard Theological Library, 9.

old enough to make the decision to stay on their own. In this context, adult advisors had to be more than chaperones; they needed to serve a specific function in terms of youth moral development. Adults needed to act as mentors helping young people develop “in their ethical thinking, their basic attitudes towards life, their feeling toward worship, their relationship to other people, their ability to stand as self thinking individuals – in short their religion.”<sup>39</sup> Above all else LRY adult advisors were religious advisors committed to helping young people sort through the ideas, information, and opinions bombarding them from all sides.

Given the role of the adult in young people’s lives, the Religious Education Committee of the UUA, in cooperation with members of LRY, developed a code of conduct for adult advisors that is best summarized by a statement printed in the LRY Advisor’s Handbook, “The word ‘advisor’ summarized well the relation of the adult to the youth group. The word is not supervisor, director, chaperone, manager, or any other term denoting a position of command. The advisor gives advice; but the youth themselves make the decisions.”<sup>40</sup> LRY advisors were expected to befriend the young people of the group while being careful not to insert themselves as “one of the gang.” Walking the line of over-familiarity and domination was one of the biggest challenges for these advisors. Being able to maintain a balance was crucial to successful advising because it encouraged youth to develop relationships with adults that were based on mutual respect and trust. According to the handbook, “once [youth] feel that the advisor does

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<sup>39</sup> “LRY Advisors Handbook” (Liberal Religious Youth, 1955), bMS 1156/1(4), Andover Harvard Theological Library, 9.

<sup>40</sup> “LRY Advisors Handbook” (Liberal Religious Youth, 1955), bMS 1156/1(4), Andover Harvard Theological Library, 1.

not wish to control them, they will seek what is their basic need and desire, a relationship with an adult based on friendship.”<sup>41</sup>

Adults’ role in LRY remained a contentious issue throughout the 1960s. After 1967, tensions between adults and youth escalated. Reported drug use at the 1967 Continental Convention set off a controversy about the relationships between LRY, the national UUA and individual congregations, who were starting to complain about LRYers drug use, sexual activity at group meetings, and general lack of respect for adults.<sup>42</sup> As it turned out, supporting youth autonomy was much easier in theory than in practice. Youth pushed the envelope much farther than adults in the local congregation were comfortable with, making the adult advisors job more difficult. However, sympathetic advisors often saw these struggles as part of teenagers’ developmental process. One advisor summed up her position on young people’s, sometimes difficult, attitudes and actions in this way,

They are ...people who are becoming adult, who are assuming identities, trying to find out how they fit and how they are going to fit into society, trying to make satisfactory adjustments to their sexuality, their morality, and with the constantly changing strains of where they have been and where they are going, and trying to gain the skills they will need. These are serious problems...I certainly don’t envy them their situation. They have unbelievable resiliency, adaptability, energy, stamina, capacity to learn, physical reflexes: they need them all. It’s tough to be young...We forget the desperate uncertainties and insecurities, the apparent complete lack of understanding from adults [they] come in contact with, the frustrations of wanting tact but not daring to, of wanting to please everybody and somehow so often seeming to please nobody. It has been said often enough but I should say it once more, no matter how cool the façade, they are usually uncertain and insecure.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> “LRY Advisors Handbook” (Liberal Religious Youth, 1955), bMS 1156/1(4), Andover Harvard Theological Library, 1.

<sup>42</sup> Wayne Arnason and Rebecca Scott, *We Would Be One: A History of Unitarian Universalist Youth Movements*. (Boston: Skinner House Books), 2005, 137-139.

<sup>43</sup> “Confessions of an L.R.Y. Advisor,” n.d , 2, bMS 1149/11(20), Andover Harvard Theological Library.

This particular advisor's assessment of youth needs was typical of many LRY adult advisors. They tried to understand what teens were going through and assess their behavior based on this understanding. However, it could still be difficult to contend with parents and less than sympathetic adults in the UUA and individual congregations. Adults and young people went through constant negotiations trying to broker understandings and compromises.<sup>44</sup>

The historical narratives of Youth for Christ and Liberal Religious Youth tell dramatically different stories. However, the common thread running through both groups during the 1960s and 1970s is helping young men and women negotiate the tumultuous teen years. One of the most important aspects of this was helping teens navigate their way through their first romantic relationships, which necessitated discussion about the related issues of gender, love, and sexuality. During these two decades, the debate regarding what teens should and should not be told about sex escalated dramatically. In recent years several historians and sociologists have offered detailed accounts of the conflicts over the introduction of sexual education programs in American public schools since the 1960s. Most agree that conservative Christian objections to and mobilization against such programs are a large part of the story.<sup>45</sup> However, these scholars rarely discuss the alternative formal and informal programs conservative religious groups offered teens in place of a public school curriculum. The story of sexual education efforts in the United States does not end with conservative Christian mobilization against the push for comprehensive

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<sup>44</sup> Wayne Arnason and Rebecca Scott, *We Would Be One: A History of Unitarian Universalist Youth Movements*. (Boston: Skinner House Books), 2005. 129-168.

<sup>45</sup> Janice M. Irvine, *Talk About Sex: The Battles over Sex Education in the United States* (University of California Press, 2004); Kristin Luker, *When Sex Goes to School: Warring Views on Sex--and Sex Education--Since the Sixties* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2007); Jeffrey Moran, *Teaching sex : the shaping of adolescence in the 20th century* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000); Claudia Nelson, *Sexual pedagogies : sex education in Britain, Australia, and America, 1879-2000* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Susan Freeman, *Sex goes to school : girls and sex education before the 1960s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

sex education in public schools. Conservative Christians, especially those engaged in teen ministry, did not object to sexuality education, per se. They objected to a curriculum that they believed lacked an appropriate moral context. The programs and information they produced for teens were aimed at helping evangelical Christian teenagers construct sexual identities that were compatible with their religious worldview. The emergence of abstinence only sexual education programs in the last 20 years has a much longer history.<sup>46</sup> Conservative Christian youth-serving institutions and organizations, including Youth for Christ, provided formal and informal education about sexuality within a Christian framework.

The Unitarian Universalist Association, through their work with Liberal Religious Youth, also took on sex education. Rather than focusing entirely on the basics of reproduction and sexual function, which was what adolescents were receiving in school courses, they also discussed sexuality in terms of morals and ethics. Their focus was on “situational ethics.”<sup>47</sup> Like their conservative Christian counterparts, they were not content to leave the question of sexual education up to the schools or to teenagers themselves. Adults associated with LRY wanted to provide teens with a moral context for their choices and urged them to focus their attentions on what they were doing and how it affected themselves and others.

I argue that young people’s response to, and participation in, the changing sexual culture in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s pushed Youth for Christ and Liberal Religious Youth to participate in the sexual revolution by engaging in increasingly open talk about sex over the course of two decades. Between 1960 and 1980 both groups published materials, designed

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<sup>46</sup> Dagmar Herzog, *Sex in Crisis: The New Sexual Revolution and the Future of American Politics* (Basic Books, 2008).

<sup>47</sup> Joseph F. Fletcher, *Situation Ethics; the New Morality* (Philadelphia,: Westminster Press, 1966); Daniel Yankelovich, *The New Morality; a Profile of American Youth in the 70's*, McGraw-Hill Paperbacks (New York,: McGraw-Hill, 1974).

programs and structured discussions that were increasingly frank, explicit, and teen directed. The gradual emancipation of sexual language and topics in both groups was remarkably similar. In fact, the strategies they employed in opening up discussions and delivering their messages about gender, love, dating, and sexuality were nearly identical. Both groups employed three separate strategies over the course of these two decades each targeted at a specific wave of the baby boomer generation.<sup>48</sup>

In the early period (1960-1966) YFC and LRY employed a strategy of talking at teenagers, telling them what they should be feeling, what was appropriate to do, believe, and feel, and how to handle their budding sexual feelings in an acceptable manner. The groups relied on experts to convey this information. YFC and LRY often employed widely different experts. YFC employed the knowledge and wisdom of role models, devout Christians, ministers, and the occasional sociologist or psychologist. LRY relied more heavily on scholars, psychologists, and scientists during this and later periods. This adult centered approach was common among youth

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<sup>48</sup> In 1980, Landon Y. Jones identified the years 1946-1964 as the parameters of the baby boom. Since Jones' study in 1980, there has been some debate regarding the accuracy of the time frame and whether all of the children born between these years can be considered a single generation. Scholars and cultural commentators now distinguish between two separate cohorts, the early boomers, born between 1946 and 1955, and a second cohort born between 1956 and 1964. In a 2004 study, Steven M. Gillon referred to those born in the second cohort as "shadow boomers." More recently, Jonathan Pontell has coined the term Generation Jones to refer to those born between 1954 and 1965.<sup>48</sup> If we focus on the formative teen years, we can see that social and cultural context of boomers experiences should be divided into three, not two eras. The world each of these cohorts of teenagers were navigating while negotiating that liminal space between childhood and adulthood were vastly different. Adults dealt with teenagers in very different ways during each of these periods which suggests that teens were the primary motivation for the changes. The scholarship on the baby boom generation is vast and encompasses work from historians, demographers, economists, sociologists, and cultural critics. The following is a selection of some of the most influential and/or recent work on the baby boom in North America: John Gillion, *Boomer Nation: The Largest and Richest Generation and How It Changed America*. (Free Press, 2004), Landon Jones, *Great Expectations: America and the Baby Boom Generation*. (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1980), Macunovich, Diane J. *Macunovich Birth Quake: The Baby Boom and Its Aftershocks*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), Victor Brooks, *Boomers: The Cold-War Generation Grows Up*. (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2009). Jessica Weiss, *To Have and to Hold: Marriage, the Baby Boom, and Social Change*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). Some other works that help illuminate some of the issues related to the baby boomer generation are: Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*. (New York: Basic Books, 1999). and, Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*. (New York, NY: BasicBooks, 2000) which both discuss family life in the cold war era. Both of these works have a decidedly white middle class focus.

serving institutions during this time period, especially those dealing with issues of gender and sexuality.<sup>49</sup>

As Cold War youth culture gave way to a more radicalized population of young people, providing teens with a point by point bulletin of how they should be feeling became less effective. Consequently, adults devised strategies that would allow them to reach young people on a more egalitarian footing. In the middle period (1967-1972), the groups transitioned to a new model that combined prescriptive advice with adult-teen discussion sessions about how teens were feeling and what they were doing. There was still a prescriptive element to what adults told youth, but rather than begin with the assumption that teens acted according to preconceived notions, adults asked them about their behaviors. Rather than talking *at* teens, they talked *with* them.

In the last period (1973-1980), the focus moved away from trying to figure out what teenagers were doing and feeling as a group. Throughout these years, LRY and YFC shifted to an emphasis on individual situations and individualized solutions. The answers in advice columns were longer, and the topics in newsletters more varied. When pieced together the surviving records of both Liberal Religious Youth and Youth for Christ indicate that negotiation, compromise, and adaptation were the means they used to have productive and educational discussions on the topic of sexuality and how it fit within the matrix of an individual's total personality or whole person.

Given their different orientation to the multiple and related cultural and social currents of these decades, one can see why the content of the sexual education in YFC and LRY was so

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<sup>49</sup> Jeffrey P. Moran, *Teaching Sex : The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20th Century* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Harvard University Press, 2000); Grace Palladino, *Teenagers : An American History* (New York: BasicBooks, 1996); John Modell, *Into One's Own : From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

different. Despite these differences, there are also some significant similarities in the way adults in both groups viewed their relationships with and responsibility to provide young people with truthful, useful and spiritually sound sexual guidance. Adult leaders, administrators, and advisors in both groups recognized that young people were sexual beings and needed some guidance in the matter. To facilitate this, adults devised programs and offered advice to manage teen sexuality from within the group. They knew that they could not directly control what the teens did, but they could provide them with information about how their choices would affect their current relationships and their futures.

My dissertation makes a contribution to several fields of historical scholarship: the history of youth ministry, baby boom generation, the social and cultural history of the 1960s and 1970s, and the history of the sexual revolution. I contribute to the historical conversation on youth ministry through my focused attention on how YFC and LRY handled sexuality and sexual education among the teens they mentored. Some of the most important studies of youth ministry in this time period touch on the issue of sex education and the effects of the sexual revolution, but none of the studies focus entirely on sexuality education. Many of these histories trace the development of the idea of youth ministry in modern America and discuss how changes in the social and cultural landscape of America affected how the groups functioned and their purpose, but sexuality in the period I am considering, discussions of sexuality education in the groups usually get pushed aside in favor of discussions of social justice linked to the civil rights movement. For example Jon Pahl, a noted historian of youth ministry in America, argues that during the 1960s, even YFC moved from a focus on purity to practice, from a focus on

individual moral purity to good deeds.<sup>50</sup> Thomas Bergler comes close to focusing on sexuality in his discussion of YFC's preoccupation with young men and women's bodies in the post WWII era, but his study does not examine sexuality at length and stops after 1965.<sup>51</sup> In many ways, my study picks up where Bergler leaves off, by discussing adult concern over teens' gender and sexuality during the Cold War 1960s as well as The Sixties and 1970s, which witnessed some of the most dramatic changes in American sexual mores.

My work also contributes to the scholarship and knowledge the phenomenon historians refer to as America's Second Sexual Revolution. Many studies of this time period focus on the ways religious leaders fought against the shifting tide in America's moral values during these decades, how religious leaders, especially Evangelicals, attempted to combat the New Morality which favored situational ethics over hard and fast rules about what was right and wrong. This is certainly an important part of the story. However, as I have demonstrated, the relationship between religious folks and the sexual revolution is a bit more complicated.<sup>52</sup> The Sexual Revolution was not to simply something they fought against, it was something they participated in and contributed to in their own ways. We can see this in the ways their discussions with teenagers shifted during these three periods. YFC's approach to sexuality education changed during this decade. They became more open and talked more frankly about sexual matters. The change may seem insignificant when compared to some of the more radical advocates of open marriage, universal birth control, and free speech (pornography), but they did constitute major

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<sup>50</sup> Jon Pahl. *Youth Ministry in Modern America : 1930 to the Present*. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000.)

<sup>51</sup> Thomas Berglar, "Winning America: Christian Youth Groups and the Middle Class Culture of Crisis, 1930-1965." (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Notre Dame), 2001.

<sup>52</sup> DeRogatis discusses how evangelicals helped to remake the Sexual Revolution through their production of sex manuals for Christian couples in this article: Amy DeRogatis, "What Would Jesus Do? Sexuality and Salvation in Protestant Evangelical Sex Manuals, 1950s-Present", *Church History*, March 2005 Volume 75, Issue 1, 97-138.

changes in the way religious leaders dealt with sexuality, especially teen sexuality. So while their stance on things like cohabitation, premarital sex, and masturbation did not change the fact that they engaged young people in open and public discussion about these topics indicates that there was a significant shift in how they dealt with matters of sexuality. Religious participation in the shifting sexual culture of the United States at this time period adds more nuance to the discussion of the Sexual Revolution and the baby boomers moral universe.

My work also adds to our discussion of the youth culture of those born to the baby boomer generation. At this point, most scholars agree that it is nearly impossible to talk about the baby boomers as a single cohort. They are most often divided into two groups. The initial boomers are those who came of age in the 1960s and are most often associated with the campus unrest and social movements of The Sixties. The second group, the shadow boomers, or generation Jones, came of age in the 1970s, a period marked by widespread disillusionment, economic difficulty and the search for self fulfillment. My work suggests that a more practical, accurate and effective way to examine the baby boom generation is to divide it into three cohorts. If we look at the teenage experience, which is a formative age as puberty and moral development are said to take place during these years, our vision of the dividing points of this generational change. Coming of age in the early 1960s was a completely different experience than coming of age between 1967 and 1972. The first baby boomers were the ones who led the charge on college campuses; the second cohort witnessed and participated in the events as minors from the halls of their local high school. Their relationship to the changes that were happening in America was simply different. The most dramatic example of this is the draft. Boys in the first cohort did not spend their high school years staring down the possibility that

they would be drafted to Vietnam. This is just one example of how the experiences of the “first wave” were dramatically different if we examine them from a high school perspective.

My work also contributes to our understanding of the social and cultural history of America in the 1960s and 1970s, both in terms as a period of social unrest and as a prelude to the culture wars of the 1980s. By highlighting two different Protestant groups, conservative and liberal, my work contributes to the discussion of America’s divided generation. In my discussion of both conservative and liberal Protestant groups I have been able to demonstrate how Americans from different political and religious worldviews created and responded to the same events and movements, often using similar strategies, but coming up with very different interpretations of the meaning and significance of those events. In this way, provides some insight into the conservative and radical 1960s. In terms of the 1970s, my study illuminates some of the ways that the women’s and gay liberation movements, which picked up speed in the early 1970s made their way into the everyday conversations of American teenagers. My discussion of LRYers’ interpretation of feminism and gay rights through the lens of the youth liberation movement, begins to help us understand how these movements were introduced and received by a younger generation of Americans, whose job it would be to turn the ideas into a long lasting reality. It is a discussion that needs more attention, in and outside of religious settings, but I have made some modest inroads into beginning the conversation in my work.

Understanding how conservative and liberal religious groups contributed to the changing sexual culture in America through their sexual education efforts with teens, is important for several reasons, which contribute to the significance of my study. First, it demonstrates that America’s second sexual revolution constituted concrete change not only in American sexual belief and behavior, but also in the way Americans talked about sex. My study shows that at the

very least, the second sexual revolution opened up the conversation on sex, not just for liberal and radical individuals or the secular mainstream, but also for staunchly conservative Evangelical Christians. The notion that adults within a liberal denomination like Unitarian-Universalist discussed sexuality on an intimate level with teenagers may not be a surprising conclusion. However, the idea that conservative Evangelicals began discussing the intimate details of sexuality with teenagers, not married adults, offers a new perspective on how traditionalist beliefs were transmitted and maintained across generations. Conservatives did not make any changes in their bottom lines. They remained staunchly committed to complementary gender roles, premarital chastity, and heterosexual marriage. But they did concede to open up discussions about sexuality, a wide range of controversial topics including virginity, masturbation, oral sex and abortion. In some ways, this was born of necessity. Conservative Christians simply could not afford to remain silent during this era. America's sexual culture was changing fast, and conversations happen more quickly than publishers of handbook and manuals could keep up and maintaining relevance was central to YFC's success. Taking a different perspective adult advisors and mentors for LRY, left the decision about these things in the hands of youth, but made themselves available for advice and discussion. Many advisors, sometimes to the chagrin of parents and ministers, but often in cooperation with them, were content to let young people determine the course of their own relationships and make their own decisions about sex. However, they did provide guidance and advice rather than by official policy or a set of concrete moral guidelines. The messages were different but the strategies were the same.

Accessing the voices of both adults and the youth in these groups has been difficult. Each group presented a different challenge. My primary sources of information for Youth for Christ are the programming materials used in the clubs and advice columns in the organization's

major publications. Adults created both the programs and generated the articles for the magazines. The program materials helped group leaders lead teens through discussions about sex and morality and consisted of suggested conversation topics and responses to common teen questions. These materials illustrate the organization's position on sexuality and the methods they used to guide teenagers in making the "right" choices. However, these program materials do not reveal much about how youth responded to the sessions. In fact, a lack of youth voice in matters related to sexuality was a persistent problem within Youth for Christ Records. To get some idea about how evangelical teens responded to Youth for Christ's moral code, I have turned to the organization's magazine, *Youth for Christ Magazine*, later renamed *Campus Life*. I have paid particular attention to the editorial columns, which often featured reader questions and dealt with a myriad of issues related to teen sexuality including, gender norms, dating practices, relationships, love, and sex. These columns offer some evidence of the efforts teens made to bring their behaviors in line with their morality. YFC printed many articles aimed at convincing their readers that chastity was the only acceptable option for Christian youth. As teens wrote in trying to come up with a scenario that would provide them with answers, YFC columnists found ways to reiterate their bottom line. In the end, these question and answer sessions reveal quite a bit about the negotiations between YFC leaders and evangelical teens.

The nature of the sources for Liberal Religious Youth is very different. Whereas there is a dearth of teen voices in the Youth for Christ records, I was faced with the opposite problem when examining the Liberal Religious Youth Files. The vast majority of the material was produced by the young people themselves. This was primarily because of the nature of the organization. It was created and run by youth as an affiliate organization of the Unitarian Universalist Association. There were adult advisors at all levels - national, regional and local –

but for the most part, they handled correspondence with churches and filled in as guest speakers and advisors. Despite the relative lack of sources coming from adults, which may have also been a function of what the young people chose to save; there is some evidence about how the adults functioned within the groups. Transcripts and reports from formal and informal talks, speaker series advertisements and correspondence between the advisors and the UUA help us to see the adult position in matters related to the sexual education of the group. For their part the teens seemed remarkably devoted to educating themselves on such matters. They provided reading lists and organized conferences around sex education, wrote articles for the organizations publications, and conducted surveys, both large and small within their groups. In 1967, former president of LRY, Bill Sinkford, conducted a survey for his honor's thesis at Harvard that delved into the sexual beliefs, values and behaviors of LRYers, the survey, was dubbed the "Sinkford Sex Survey" and the raw data was circulated among local groups and reproduced for use at the continental convention that same year. The convention records also give us some indication about the types of questions teens were asking and the literature they deemed appropriate sources of information given their ethical positions. In addition to the Sinkford Sex Survey, I also looked at the newsletters from local groups, correspondence between teens within the group, programming materials and manuals, transcripts from talks given by adults to try and piece together the nature of sex education within these groups. Additionally, and perhaps most revealing, were the national newsletters compiled by continental LRY and circulated to local groups throughout North America.

Finding the points at which adults' and young people's conversations and motivations with regard to sexual education has been a central component of my work. In these moments we see that the sexual education for young people within these groups was characterized by

exchange and interaction. Adults quickly learned that, as a group, young people were becoming increasingly intolerant of preaching and finger wagging talks about the wages of sexual sin.

One of the significant aspects of my work is that it helps us understand how adults gained hearing with young people on matters of sex and helps us begin to understand the method adults employed when discussing the intimate world of young people. I hope to provide a link between the lack of open talk about sex between adults and young people before the sexual revolution and the increased involvement of adults in young people's sexual lives demonstrated by the virginity movement and turn towards youthful sexual conservatism in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Adults in both groups were able to enter into the intimate world of young people by positioning themselves as trusted mentors who would listen and offer counsel based on their own experiences with similar struggles. The history of sexual education in YFC and LRY during the 1960s and 1970s indicates both conservative and liberal religious adults moved away from impersonal and overt efforts to control and monitor teen sexuality to a strategy which allowed them to manage teen sexuality by teaching teens to monitor themselves.

## **PART 1: CONSULTING THE EXPERTS, 1960-1966**

Adults in both groups approached the task of imparting knowledge to young people in a manner that was congruent with American Cold war culture, when the aim was to reinforce “normal” behavior. Adults, when speaking to a generation on the cusp of what some referred to as the “decade of destiny,” believed young people needed to be armed with the information and tools to succeed as individuals and as future leaders of the nation. As young people’s cultural importance grew, some adults feared that young people were being given more cultural power than was healthy for individuals who had not yet reached full maturity. The sheer size of this first baby boomer generation, combined with their cultural power, prompted some adults working in youth serving institutions to seek out ways to reach young people by meeting them where they were and treating them as individuals capable of understanding the weight of the decisions they were making. Frank and honest talk about what they were feeling seemed the best method for helping teens manage their sexual selves in a new age where advertisers, the media, and cultural icons were telling youth what was best for them. Calling upon the experts and demonstrating to teens that they knew what young men and women were experiencing, was one method adults used hoping to reign in the youthful arrogance they felt teens exhibited at the time.

## **CHAPTER 1: LEADERS AND LOVELIES: CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN VISIONS OF GENDER ROLES, LOVE RELATIONSHIPS, AND SEXUAL RESPONSIBILITY, 1960-1966**

Throughout the early 1960s, Youth for Christ employed a very measured and calculated approach to offering teens information about sex, dating, and relationships. While the 1950s had been a period of relative silence for YFC on the topic, the 1960s brought new challenges which brought issues of teen dating, physical contact, and relationships into focus. The shifting sexual culture in the early 1960s and made it impossible for YFC to simply repress conversations about sex and dating in the pages of *Youth for Christ Magazine* – the group’s official organ.

Despite the fact that Youth for Christ relented and began to speak to kids regarding sex and relationships in the early 1960s, they did so on their own terms. YFC leadership was not about to engage youth on their own terms in frank conversations about physical intimacy, the body, and going steady. The conversations between the YFC leadership and the general membership of the group were very one sided in this early period. While the group loosened up the list of topics, the negotiations between the two sides were very one sided.

The primary strategy employed by Youth for Christ in breaking the silence about these explosive topics was one of employing experts, role models, and mentors to offer teens valuable information that they could use to arm themselves against making bad choices in the heat of the moment. These experts were drawn from a variety of fields, some of them were respected (and “lovely”) women who appealed to girls, and others were sports stars meant to appeal to boys. Whatever their appeal, these experts were meant to talk at teens rather than engage in dialogue. Youth for Christ’s materials during this period read like instructional manuals more than fruitful exchanges between teens and adults. While the Youth for Christ leadership relented in

beginning to talk to young people about these issues in the early 1960s, they were very controlled about who was speaking and what they were saying.

Youth for Christ mentors issued a number of implicit and explicit instructions about proper gender performances to the young men and women in their groups. They ushered teens down a path toward conservative Christian manhood and womanhood by infusing contemporary gender norms with Christian meaning and purpose. YFC advocated gender roles that were reflective of the late 1950s and early 1960s by providing teens with advice about how to act, dress, and spend their leisure time. The articles, advertisements, features, and advice columns in the pages of *Youth for Christ Magazine* offered a portrait of the ideal young Christian man and woman and a blueprint for how to construct a similar identity and persona.

In the early 1960s, YFC's image of proper male and female gender roles mirrored the portrait of masculine and feminine norms that predominated in the Cold War American imagination.<sup>1</sup> As evangelical Christians committed to the nuclear family ideal, YFC supported a strict division of labor in the home and believed that it was their role to prepare young people to take up their separate familial duties. YFC advice writers offered boys and girls advice and guidance that would assist them in finding a good mate and prepare them to accept the role God

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<sup>1</sup> Joanne Meyerowitz, *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Temple University Press, 1994); Elaine May, *Homeward bound : American families in the Cold War era*, Rev. and updated ed. ([New York]: Basic Books, 1999); Wini Breines, *Young, White, and Miserable: Growing Up Female in the Fifties* (University Of Chicago Press, 2001); Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (Basic Books, 2000); Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, a History: How Love Conquered Marriage* (Penguin (Non-Classics), 2006); Jessica Weiss, *To Have and to Hold: Marriage, the Baby Boom, and Social Change*, 1st ed. (University Of Chicago Press, 2000); Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (Three Rivers Press, 1995); Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment*, 1st ed. (Anchor, 1987); Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, 1st ed. (Free Press, 1997); Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good: Two Centuries of the Experts Advice to Women* (Anchor, 2005); Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America, Revised Edition*, Revised. (Penguin (Non-Classics), 2006); Margaret L. Bendroth, *Growing Up Protestant: Parents, Children and Mainline Churches* (Rutgers University Press, 2002); Margaret Bendroth and Virginia Brereton, *Women and Twentieth-Century Protestantism* (University of Illinois Press, 2001).

meant them to fulfill.<sup>2</sup> Gender identity and religious identity were inextricably linked. They encouraged boys to cultivate leadership qualities that would benefit them in their future careers and roles as the primary breadwinners and head of their households. YFC counseled girls on the art of loveliness, the art of socializing and attracting the right kind of boy. In these early years, YFC concerned themselves with saving teens from the ill effects of popular youth culture by encouraging teens to curb excess participation in secular activities and seek out alternatives that contributed to their growth as Christians. Along the way, they competed with and tried to combat the social and cultural changes that were threatening the stability of traditional gender roles and the nuclear family structure. As far as YFC officials were concerned, both teen boys and girls were supposed to be looking toward a future defined by their complimentary roles within the nuclear family. Boys would become breadwinners and leaders in their homes, and girls would become homemakers, performing an essential, but supporting, role within the family.<sup>3</sup> YFC believed preparing for these roles was one of the most important activities in a teenager's life. Failure to adequately prepare oneself to be a good husband or wife could stall the maturation process and prevent a person from fulfilling God's ultimate purpose. By using readiness for marriage as a marker of maturity and Christian piety, YFC officials tied teens' gender and sexual identities to their religious identities as evangelical Christians.

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<sup>2</sup> Between 1957 and 1966, there was at least one feature article on a male athlete in each issue. At times there were two or more. In this time period, there were no featured articles on female athletes or any other female role model. The magazine, which was intended for a mixed sex readership exhibited a male bias in these years. They tried to remedy this in later years by introducing a column for girls, "Letters on Loveliness," which I discuss at length later in this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Although the breadwinner ethic and the image of corporate manhood that accompanied it had come under harsh criticism from scholars and social commentators by the early 1960s, YFC still used these as the basis for discussions of proper gender roles. See: William Deal, "Start now to be a good husband," *YFCM* (Feb 1962) 41; William Deal, "Mait Bait" *YFCM* (February 1961) 15.

As Youth for Christ boys were coming of age in the early 1960s, they were navigating a complex and ever changing set of ideals that prescribed the desired direction they should travel in order to become Godly and proper men. In his 1963 work, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, sociologist Erving Goffman defined the limits of acceptable American manhood.

In an important sense there is only one complete unblushing male in America: a young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual, Protestant, father, of college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight and height, and a recent record in sports...any male who fails to qualify in any one of these ways is likely to view himself – during moments at least – as unworthy, incomplete, inferior.<sup>4</sup>

Goffman's portrait is particular to the early 1960s. Many historians have pointed out that masculine ideals are unstable, constantly shifting in light of historical circumstances.<sup>5</sup> Far from

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<sup>4</sup> Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (NY: Prentice- Hall, 1963) 128. Cited in Micheal Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) 5.

<sup>5</sup> The scholarship on this point is significant. Some important works with respect to the United States were: G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Horrors of the Half Known Life: Male Attitudes Toward Women and Sexuality in Nineteenth Century America* (London & New York: Harper & Row, 1976); Ava Baron, ed., *Work Engendered: Towards a New History of American Labor* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); Mark Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (Yale University Press, 1989); Clyde Griffen, *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Ted Ownby, *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920* (University of North Carolina Press, 1990); E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Present Era* (Basic Books, 1993); George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Darlene Clark Hine, ed., *A Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men's History and Masculinity, Volume 1: 'Manhood Rights': The Construction of Black Male History, 1750-1870* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999); James V. Catano, *Ragged Dicks: Masculinity, Steel, and the Rhetoric of the Self-Made Man* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2001); Milette Shamir and Jennifer Travis, eds., *Boys Don't Cry?: Rethinking Narratives of Masculinity and Emotion in the U.S.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Michael S. Kimmel, *The History of Men: Essays on the History of American and British Masculinities* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005); and Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Works dealing specifically with

stable or singular, “masculinities are historically constructed, mutable, and contingent.”<sup>6</sup> The definition of masculinity has changed over time, as have the activities men engaged in order to prove their masculinity. Changing visions of masculinity are complicated by factors such as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, region, and religion. Age is also an important consideration in discussions of masculinity. In *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, historian Michael Kimmel argues that “the quest for manhood - the effort to achieve, to demonstrate, to prove our masculinity has been one of the formative and persistent experiences of men’s lives.”<sup>7</sup> Proving one’s masculinity was a central component of the transition from adolescence to adulthood and therefore an important aspect of young men’s personal development.<sup>8</sup> For teenage boys, their

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post WWII US include: Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight From Commitment*, (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1983); Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); Susan Faludi, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1999); K. A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005); James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); and Judith Lowder Newton, *From Panthers to Promise Keepers: Rethinking the Men’s Movement*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Rachel Adams and David Savran, eds., *The Masculinities Studies Reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002) 2.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 4.

<sup>8</sup> Some important works about boyhood, adolescence and gender include: G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education* (New York and London, 1915). For work about Hall’s theories, see Dorothy Ross, *G. Stanley Hall: The Psychologist as Prophet* (Chicago, 1972); and Steven L. Schlossman, "G. Stanley Hall and the Boys' Club: Conservative Applications of Recapitulation Theory," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 9 (1973): 140-147; Joseph F. Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); David I. Mcleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, Y.M.C.A., and their forerunners, 1870-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983); John Modell, *Into One’s Own: From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); E. Anthony Rotundo, “Chapter 2: Boy Culture,” “Chapter 3: Male Youth culture,” and “Chapter 4: youth and Male Intimacy,” in *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Present Era* (Basic Books, 1993); Jay Mechling, *On My Honor: Boy Scouts and the Making of American Youth* (Chicago & London:

age produced the sense of unworthiness, incompleteness, and inferiority in Goffman's definition. Teenage boys were in the process of becoming men, but had not acquired the wisdom or life experience necessary to lay full claim to their masculinity. Advice writers calmed teenage boys' gender anxieties by assuring them that the proper preparation would help them lay a foundation for achieving the full measure of manhood in the future.<sup>9</sup>

In the terms defined by YFC, one key to the successful transition from boys to men was maturity. However, unlike secular standards for maturity, accepting Jesus as Savior was *the* measure of maturity for evangelical Christians and therefore a necessary component of mature manhood.<sup>10</sup> Despite this, measuring one's maturity by the depth of one's piety did not exclude other measures of manhood during the early 1960s. According to advice columnists and YFC officials, one's relationship with Christ made other masculine achievements more attainable. They told teenage boys that without the Lord on their side, they could not realize their full potential as men; and without living in a way that honored Christ, they would be unable to demonstrate their achievement of the masculine ideal to the outside world and thus gain favor as a leader among his peers.

Seeing it as their goal to usher young men into adulthood, the writers of *Youth for Christ Magazine* constructed a narrative of male adulthood that closely mirrored Goffman's portrait. The predominant male image in YFC magazine was a WASP All American – white, middle class, athletes on their way to college, dating or engaged to a nice Christian girl from their youth

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University of Chicago Press, 2001); Julia Grant "A "Real Boy" and Not a Sissy: Gender, childhood, and masculinity, 1890-1940" *Journal of Social History* Vol. 37, No. 4 (Summer 2004) 829-851.

<sup>9</sup> Lowell Rottup, "Do Fashions Make a Man?" *YFCM* (April 1962) 35; Bill Eakin, "Be Dateable Not Debatable," *YFCM* (February 1962) 7; "So you want to be a Leader" *YFCM* (August 1960) 16; Don W. Hillis, "How do You Measure a Man," *YFCM* (June 1963) 36.

<sup>10</sup> Don W. Hillis, "How do You Measure a Man," *YFCM* (June 1963) 36.

group, and preparing to take on their roles as future breadwinners and community leaders.<sup>11</sup> The magazines and programming materials were filled with images of attractive, clean cut, athletic boys in sports coats and letterman jackets with close cropped hair, clear skin and beaming smiles.<sup>12</sup>

The preference for a clean-cut appearance was directly related to YFC's insistence that clean living equaled right living. Clean living meant maintaining a clean appearance and clean habits for a clean conscience. Articles expounding upon the important connection between external appearance and inward feeling appeared frequently in the magazine's feature articles and advice columns. In the February 1962 issue of *Youth for Christ Magazine*, Bill Eakin, an YFC Club Director, discussed the importance of self presentation. He stated, "*personal appearance* foretells a lot. The cut of your hair and the clothes you put on are clues to the real you."<sup>13</sup> Later that year, YFC clubber, Lowell Rottup, echoed Eakin's statement in the article, "Do Fashions Make a Man?" After conceding that "fashions are not the most important things in life," Rottup went on to stress that first impression were still very important: "...the way I look on the outside helps me to share with other people what has happened in my heart....You see, our external appearance is all that others see of our internal experience with Jesus Christ."<sup>14</sup> Maintaining a neat appearance helped a teenager live a clean life by attracting the right kind of people into their social circle. Having the right kind of friends led to the right kind of activities -

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<sup>11</sup> These images were ubiquitous in the magazines – on each cover, in advertisements, photo essays, and accompanying artwork to stories. In each issue between 1957-1966, there are dozens of visual and literary references to this archetype.

<sup>12</sup> In the late 1960s and 1970s, the images of teens in the magazine become much more diverse, featuring African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans. Still, white teenager dominated the pages.

<sup>13</sup> Bill Eakin, "Be Dateable Not Debatable," *YFCM* (February 1962) 7.

<sup>14</sup> Lowell Rottup, "Do Fashions Make a Man?" *YFCM* (April 1962) 35.

those that did not tempt teenagers down questionable and spiritually damaging roads. According to Bill Eakin, “Actions indicate attitudes and attitudes go hand in hand with appearance! If the appearance is right and the attitudes are right, then the actions will be right.”<sup>15</sup>

Even more important than presenting a clean appearance, practicing clean living in one’s actions, was crucial to ensuring future success.<sup>16</sup> Advice columns in the magazine were filled with letters from teenagers asking for clarification on the prohibitions against parties, dancing, rock music, smoking cigarettes, drinking beer, drugs, petting, and sexual intercourse.<sup>17</sup> YFC organizers stress that a misstep in school, at home, socially, or even in a boy’s private thoughts could jeopardize his future success, the ability to get into a good Christian college, find a suitable wife, and a job to provide for his family. Planning for the future was an important part of a teenager’s life. In fact, the very rationalization for clean living and making wise and informed decisions as a teen was to ensure a stable and healthy future.<sup>18</sup>

Boys were encouraged to think about the type of men they wanted to become and begin working on developing those qualities in their youth. In the 1960s, preparing for manhood was

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<sup>15</sup> Bill Eakin, “Be Dateable Not Debatable,” *YFCM* (February 1962) 7.

<sup>16</sup> Like many concerned adults in the era, YFC officials were highly aware that the emergence of teen culture could lead an individual down the path towards delinquency. In many ways, the concern for juvenile delinquency and rebellion that many historians have associated with the 1950s, remained a concern for some adults, including those working with YFC, well into the 1960s and 1970s. See: Grace Palladino, *Teenagers: An American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1996); Peter N. Stearns, *Anxious Parents: a history of Modern Childrearing in America*, 2003); and Steven Mintz, *Huck’s Raft: A history of American Childhood* (Cambridge, Mass. : Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004)

<sup>17</sup> Throughout the 1960s and 1970s a number of advice columns appeared in Youth for Christ magazine and Campus Life. These columns were often written by the President of the organization. The name of the columns changed often. General advice columns for girls and boys during this period included: Just Between Us, Confidentially, Yours Truly Kelly, TAMI, Disneyland, and Love Sex and the Whole Person. There were also advice columns directed at girls specifically. These included: For Girls Only, Letters on Loveliness, and the Girl Whirl. Boys interest features in the magazines did not offer advice in response to letters but featured short info bites on sports, adventure, science and humor. The reason for the lack of advice to boys was likely due to the lack of boys writing into the magazine seeking advice. When they did write, their issues were often tackled in the general columns. Even then, the majority of letters seeking advice were from girls.

<sup>18</sup> Dave Burnham, “Is the Clean Teen Obsolete,” *YFCM* (Feb 1965) 36-39.

synonymous with becoming a good husband. In a 1963 article entitled, “Start Now to Become a Good Husband,” boys were offered a bulleted list of the qualities required to step into this role, which included: strong personality, dependability, the cultivation of high ideals, a correct sense of values, moral, economic, and spiritual stability.<sup>19</sup> To build a strong personality, the author advised boys to, “develop clean thinking, noble acting, and genuine sincerity early in life to become a real man.” In order to become a man, a boy would have to, “establish ideals above the average,” “resist temptations to mediocrity,” “strive to become manly in life and in actions.”<sup>20</sup> Boys should be thoughtful, courteous, and kind. Authors also cited dependability as an important quality of a good husband (and by extension the mark of manhood). This meant being punctual, maintaining steady employment, being truthful and keeping all engagements: “*You must become dependable. Men are no more useful than their dependability.*” High ideals were the third marker of manhood, because “we rise or fall with our goals. High ideals are basic to successful living... Low goals come out in daily habits as well as high ones.”<sup>21</sup> Combined, the above qualities reflect the type of manhood authors thought young men in this era should be striving for. From this composite picture, we can see that adults affiliated with the organization was more interested in preparing these young men for their futures, rather than helping them negotiate their present. They were encouraging young men to be forward looking and focused on their roles in the future. Each personal decision they made in the present had a direct bearing on their future success.

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<sup>19</sup> William Deal, “Start now to be a good husband,” *YFCM* (Feb 1962) 41.

<sup>20</sup> William Deal, “Start now to be a good husband,” *YFCM* (Feb 1962) 41.

<sup>21</sup> William Deal, “Start now to be a good husband,” *YFCM* (Feb 1962) 41.

A correct sense of values was listed as another essential quality. This included “aesthetic values” and “romantic values” such as kindness, courtesy, truthfulness, thoughtfulness and the sense of care for others. Additionally, “fellows must also have a keen sense of moral values, good principles, and an appreciation of the true, the good and the beautiful in life to become good husbands. Merely being a provider is not enough.”<sup>22</sup> Moral stability was also listed as one of the keys to manhood. Moral stability in this context pertained mostly to sex. Boys were encouraged to cultivate a strong moral foundation in youth because, “careless sex conduct in youth tends to relapse in later life,” but “those who are careful in youth are much less vulnerable later on.”<sup>23</sup> This speaks to the idea that adolescence is a formational time period where ideals are set and futures determined. By managing oneself in youth, a boy could lay the foundation for a good life. The notion that young people needed to set themselves up for the future while they were still young was echoed in the recommendation that young men make a plan for economic stability in the future: “Economic security is a ‘must’ for marriage. Couples cannot ‘live on love’ however glamorous. Husbands should supply the necessities in life, plus a little for pleasure, and something for the proverbial ‘rainy day’ which always comes.”<sup>24</sup> This list of qualities coincides strongly with the breadwinner ethic that many scholars have pointed to as the measure of manhood in this era and also illustrates the tendency during this early era to offer teens instructions for dealing with difficult situations and the maturation process.<sup>25</sup> This article

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<sup>22</sup> William Deal, “Start now to be a good husband,” *YFCM* (Feb 1962) 41.

<sup>23</sup> William Deal, “Start now to be a good husband,” *YFCM* (Feb 1962) 41.

<sup>24</sup> William Deal, “Start now to be a good husband,” *YFCM* (Feb 1962) 41.

<sup>25</sup> Although the breadwinner ethic is most often associated with the 1950s, for conservative Christians it remained the default marker of manhood well past this time. The early 1960s were a holdover from the 1950s, but even into the later 1960s and early 1970s, YFC used this as the model for ideal manhood. For an extended discussion of the “breadwinner” as well as gradual drift away from this as the norm in mainstream America see: Barbara Ehrenreich.

is a strong representation of the strategy employed during this era – adults were not asking for teen feedback or dealing with specific situations as they did later, they were offering a series of articles that adults ultimately hoped would lead teens to a productive, happy, and Christian life.

The notion that a young man would and could only reach full maturity in marriage was, in part, due to the role sexuality played in the mature male's development. Marriage remained a goal for young men (as for young women) because it was the only sanctioned venue for Christians to explore and express their sexuality. Sexuality being an integral part of one's gender identity meant that manhood was, for these boys at least, always out of reach until they married. Even if they disregarded abstinence requirements and engaged in sexual acts, it did not prove their manhood. In fact, it had the opposite effect because it showed that they lacked the conviction required of fully mature Christians. Giving into temptation was a marker of immaturity and youthful folly and therefore in direct opposition to their claim to manhood. If they were following the Christian code as outlined by YFC mentors, boys could not find an acceptable outlet in the playboy ethic that seemed to take over mainstream culture in the 1960s, because to engage in this culture meant that they were not living a Christian life.<sup>26</sup> Under these circumstances, sublimation of one's sexual urges and the exercise of self-control over temptation were the traits of "real men." YFC officials reminded boys that, "no one is ready for marriage

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*The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and Flight from Commitment* (Garden city, NY: Anchor Press, 1984); Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: a social history of American Family Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989); John Modell, *Into One's Own: From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988, 1999) Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

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Several scholars have discussed the prevalence of the playboy ethic in this era: Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men*, 42-51; E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations In Masculinity From The Revolution To The Modern Era* (Basic Books, 1994), 286.

until he has *well conquered himself*, he will often hurt his wife by lack of self-control.”<sup>27</sup>

Proving one’s ability to abstain was manlier than proving oneself in the sexual arena. Boys who pressured their girlfriends to have sex with them were characterized as childish and selfish; boys who masturbated were seen as immature, boys who gave into the temptations of their girlfriends were weak. Writers acknowledged the difficulty involved in resisting temptation but promised teenagers that resisting their sexual urges would help them develop the qualities required to stand up to the challenges of adulthood. An immature, weak, and selfish individual ever could never expect to become a leader in this family, at work, or in the world if he did not respect himself and God enough to stand by his convictions and controlling his passions for a few years.

Adult mentors in YFC encouraged boys to become leaders in their youth as preparation for future leadership roles in their homes, careers, churches, communities and the world (not necessarily in that order). They provided boys with numerous examples of male leadership and instructed these teens to look to the Bible for examples of good leadership. In a 1963 article entitled “How Do You Measure a Man?” author Don W. Hillis, told boys to look beyond contemporary and popular measures of manhood including the size of one’s body, bank account and brain. He insisted,

You can measure your height and weight, your scholastic and social achievements and your sports records against men who have tapped the power of God for their lives. But if you haven’t tapped that same power for yourself, you come far short of what they are...Christianity makes men, and the best men of history have been followers of the best Man of history. The Lord Jesus offers you the same guidance and the same power He gave to Paul and Daniel. All you need to do is be man enough to recognize your own limitations and look to Him, first for forgiveness of sins, then for the power to live like a genuine Christian.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> William Deal, “Start now to be a good husband,” *YFCM*, (February 1962), 40.

<sup>28</sup> Don W. Hillis, “How do You Measure a Man,” *YFCM*, (June 1963), 36.

Ambition, thought to be one the markers of masculinity for much of the twentieth century as it could propel ordinary men to greatness, was treated carefully by those writing for young Christian men. Advice columnists and feature writers urged young men to beware of the pitfalls of blind ambition, which could lead a man down a path of unrighteousness and eventually into an early grave. Blind ambition was dangerous because it encouraged rebellion and an attitude of individualism that was contrary to a reliance on, acceptance of, and obedience to Jesus Christ as the primary authority in one's life. According to one author, teenagers growing up in the 1960s were in a unique position because "the world presents, from your wondering feet out to the very horizon, a broad vista of opportunity *such as has never been offered teen-agers in all the history of the world.*"<sup>29</sup> To make the most out of these opportunities, it was essential that young men must not rebel from submission to Christ, but embrace it. The unnamed author warned boys that, rebellion created a "*confused mind*," incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong; it lead to an "*undisciplined life*," which stunted personal development, and ultimately caused the "*progressive degeneration*" of the whole person. Submission to the authority of God was the only way teen boys could demonstrate their maturity and set themselves up for success as Christian leaders among their peers: "Submission to the will of God is a cohesive force that brings your whole personality together; but rebellion against God will make you 'go to pieces' before life is done."<sup>30</sup> Therefore, to realize his full potential as Christian man, to become a success, a boy had to become, "second in command of his own life, and accept that Jesus wants

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<sup>29</sup> "So you want to be a Leader" *YFCM*, (August 1960), 16.

<sup>30</sup> "So you want to be a Leader" *YFCM*, (August 1960), 16.

to be the Supreme commander in your life. When he takes over you are on the road to bigger things than you could have ever accomplished by yourself.”<sup>31</sup>

The above passages demonstrate that even though the images presented in the magazines seem to coincide with hegemonic standards of masculinity in these decades, in many ways they went against the standard interpretations of these images. The portrayal of college professional athletes in the magazines provides another good example. From the very beginning, YFC called upon popular Christian athletes to serve as role models for young men. They appeared as guest speakers at rallies and were often profiled in YFC publications. They were the most common male role model (with the exception of Jesus) in the magazines throughout the 1960s. In fact, in September 1965 Youth for Christ dedicated an entire issue of the magazine to football coaches and players.<sup>32</sup>

Significantly, these athletes were not valued and admired for their physique, fame, or riches, but rather for the intangible qualities they possessed – strength, courage, wisdom, determination, patience, trust, humility, self discipline, and purity of character. Teenage boys were provided with countless examples of popular athletes, who credited their successes on and off the field to their belief in and surrender to Jesus Christ. YFC editors explained the correlation between strong faith and athletic success: “the marks of a spiritual pacesetter are like those of a victorious athlete.”<sup>33</sup> In story after story, the featured athletes pointed to their faith as the determining factor in their success. For these young men, manhood was directly tied to the strength of their faith. Using a sports metaphor as the introduction to the monthly prayer guide,

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<sup>31</sup> “So you want to be a leader?” *YFCM*, (August 1960), 17.

<sup>32</sup> “Go Team Go!” *YFCM*, (September 1965), 8-9. “Golden Boy of the Chargers” *YFCM*, (September 1965), 10-11, 15; “The Crimson Tide’s Mr. Clutch” *YFCM*, (September 1965), 16-18; “The Well-Feathered Cardinal” *YFCM*, (September 1965), 19-21;

<sup>33</sup> Rendezvous, *Campus Life*, (September 1965), 31.

magazine editors stated: “A Christian teen can be a winner every time – on the ball field, in the classroom and at home – as long as he runs every play for Christ. Even if he fumbles, and if he loses a game, he can be a winner in having done his best *and knowing the results were what God wanted.*”<sup>34</sup> Success on the ball field or in one’s dating life was determined by attitude.

Outcomes, writers assured young men, were not as important as a young man’s attitude about them. Understanding that one was not always in control was an essential component of maturity. Understanding that all outcomes were the will of God was the mark of a mature Christian man.

For teenage girls, one essential ingredient in reaching adulthood, and thus womanhood, was the same as for teen boys – submission. However, in addition to submitting to God, girls were also learning how to become submissive wives.

For women, submission to God was a prelude to submission within marriage. The principles of equal but different applied in this context. Wives were not expected to be servile, but they were supposed to let their husbands lead. As breadwinners, this was a man’s privilege and responsibility. The ideal relationship between men and women was to be complementary. In the early 1960s, the idea that wives should let their husbands lead was not out of step with mainstream notions about marriage. There is ample evidence from both scholars and contemporary commentators that speaks to the complimentary roles of women and men in marriage.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Rendezvous, *Campus Life* (September 1965) 31.

<sup>35</sup> Nancy F. Cott, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (Harvard University Press, 2002); Weiss, *To Have and to Hold*; Christina Simmons, *Making Marriage Modern: Women's Sexuality from the Progressive Era to World War II* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2009); Kristin Celello, *Making Marriage Work: A History of Marriage and Divorce in the Twentieth-Century United States* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Coontz, *Marriage, a History*; Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History Of American Family Life* (Free Press, 1989).

Like boys, girls were expected to start preparing for marriage in their youth. Advice writers offered teen girls a road map to make their journey to womanhood a smooth one. The advice centered on how teen girls could make themselves attractive prospects for dating and ultimately marriage.<sup>36</sup> YFC gave girls similar advice as they gave the boys, but girl's roles were more limited than their male counterparts. Whereas boys prepared themselves to take on their roles in the workplace, politics, and the family, young women prepared themselves to perform the role of dedicated wife and mother. A girl reached mature womanhood through accepting Jesus as her Savior and living a life that honored her commitment to God. The primary way a girl did this was working on her "charm" in order to transform herself into an attractive marriage prospect. Charm, or "loveliness," included a combination of etiquette, personality and body work. Whereas the advice relayed to boys was centered on character, the advice columnists and magazine editors offered girls in the early 1960s emphasized self-presentation and management of the body as a method for expressing one's inner self. YFC reinforced feminine norms by focusing almost exclusively on the cultivation of "loveliness." In both the magazine and in YFC clubs, teen girls received one overriding message - A mature Christian young woman knew how to present herself in a way that reflected the inner light of Jesus Christ in her soul. If she did this, she would soon be capable of meeting a good Christian boy and fulfilling the ultimate feminine role as wife and mother. In this formulation, a young Christian woman's piety was tied up

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<sup>36</sup> Historians have well documented the emphasis on dating and marriage in young women's lives in America. Much of this literature has focused on the 1950s, but it is still useful to this discussion as YFC was promoting ideas that harkened back to an idealized 1950s vision. See: Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988, 1999); Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: a social history of American Family Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989); John Modell, *Into One's Own: From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Wini Breines, *Young, White and Miserable: Growing up Female in the 1950s* (Boston: Beacon Books, 1992); Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); and Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, a history: How Love Conquered Marriage* (New York: Viking, 2005). For a discussion of gender, religion, marriage and the family see: Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender, 1875 to the present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) and Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Growing Up Protestant : Parents, Children and Mainline Churches* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002).

primarily with her physical self. Historian Joan Jacob Brumberg has argued that throughout the 20th century young women's sense of self-worth has been wrapped up in these kinds of "body projects" where girls' bodies became an all-consuming project for girls as an important means of self-definition, a way to visibly announce who you are to the world."<sup>37</sup> The YFC vision of utilizing the body as an arena for demonstrating one's Christian piety and as a vehicle for marriage and gateway to a Christian life fits strongly within this framework. While boys were being told to work on character and strong Christian qualities such as leadership and piety, the message to girls focused both on Christian qualities as well as physical attractiveness.

In a February 1961 article in *Youth for Christ Magazine*, Dr. William Deal outlined the best methods for landing a *good* husband. He argued that any girl could get married, but to find a good husband and lasting marriage a girl had to follow five rules: make yourself worthy of a good husband, do not be in a hurry to get married, avoid early promises of marriage, do not go steady too soon, and finally, "prepare in youth to make yourself indispensable to some good man."<sup>38</sup> To be worthy a girl had to know the Lord as her personal Savior. This was the first and most obvious requirement. However, she also had to prove her worthiness in other ways. She had learn to be industrious and neat, to demonstrate to potential mates that she could make a real contribution to a future home by practicing thrift and keeping the house clean. Additionally,

A good future wife should be mentally alert, morally pure, psychologically and socially well adjusted, an physically healthy...and to this add trustworthiness, honesty, freedom from deceitfulness and selfishness, along with genuine interest in life and all it has to offer, and one has a pretty good picture of a truly worthy girl.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls*, 1st ed. (Vintage, 1998), 97.

<sup>38</sup> William Deal, "Mait Bait" *YFCM*, (February 1961), 14.

<sup>39</sup> William Deal, "Mait Bait" *YFCM*, (February 1961), 15.

Deal reminded girls that these qualities took time to develop and therefore, “All of these qualities the teen-age girl must be developing *as she grows up*.” Making oneself worthy of a good husband was a formidable task and one that required constant self-monitoring from adolescence onward: “To become a truly successful and good wife, a girl needs all of her teen years in preparation! Work hard to develop those qualities which will make you a most desirable person when old enough to really set out to ‘capture your man.’”<sup>40</sup>

In addition to honing personal qualities, a girl could also ensure a happy future marriage to a good husband by monitoring the pace of her relationships. Deal advised girls not to be in hurry to get married. He warned, “Lots of gals have been in a hurry and picked the second best when their hero was just around the corner. Nothing hurts much worse than to find yourself in a cheap bargain only to discover that you could have had far more.” Being patient would help a girl avoid making early promises of marriage to someone she may not be compatible with. Deal argued that one of the best ways to do this was to hold off on going steady. According to Deal, it was unwise to go steady because it cut girls off from opportunities to meet other “fine fellows who may have more to offer”, it tied girls up for social events where they could meet other boys, it limited girls’ social circle and narrowed their horizons, which led to limited personality development. For these reasons, Deal suggested that teen girls “go out with many fellows and thus have a better opportunity to size up the fellows. It is a good way to “shop around,” and see what there is to offer in the great field of ‘marriageables’”.<sup>41</sup> Deal’s column further illustrates the strategies being employed by YFC during this period. His article speaks at teen girls and tells them exactly what they should do to become desired marriage prospects. His advice is

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<sup>40</sup> William Deal, “Mait Bait” *YFCM*, (February 1961), 15.

<sup>41</sup> William Deal, “Mait Bait” *YFCM*, (February 1961), 15.

intended as a manual for girls to follow, does not ask for their feedback, and provides a series of warnings for girls who question his wisdom.

Another way that teen girls specifically were being addressed in the early 1960s was through advice columns. The girl's column that appeared in *Youth for Christ* in the 1960s was called *Letters on Loveliness*. The column, which first appeared in April 1962, was written in a conversational tone and used an essay format to impart feminine wisdom to the magazine's female readers. Each month columnist Charlene Johnson focused on a different aspect of girls' beauty regime, tying it into a larger message about the connection between inward and outward beauty. Editors hoped that Johnson's background as a charm school instructor, modeling coach, and author, combined with her "winsome approach to Christian loveliness – both inside and out" would be "a welcome addition to our oftentimes masculine pages."<sup>42</sup>

From the perspective of *Youth for Christ* editors, Johnson was an ideal choice for ministering to teen girls. She was the author of two books, *Altogether Lovely* and *Beautiful Homemaking*, as well as a committed Christian wife and mother. The combination of beauty advice and Christian morality in her columns was intended to serve as a guidebook for the self-improvement projects of the magazine's young Christian female readers. In her inaugural column Johnson wrote, "I wish that when I was a teen-ager...someone had written such letters to me, for many questions popped into my mind regarding hair styles, diets, good grooming, good taste in clothes, colors, complexion care, poise, grace and exercise." She also pointed out the difficulty of finding advice that reflected Christian morality, she stated "How I wished I knew a

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<sup>42</sup> "Attention: Jeunes Filles" *YFCM*, (April 1962), 16. A quick look through the table of contents in *Youth for Christ* reveals an orientation towards male readership. In particular, I think the editors are commenting on the tendency to feature male roles models, particularly athletes, in the feature articles. A boys column, for Guys Only, appeared concurrently with *Letters on Loveliness*. The focus of this column was activities such as rodeo, skydiving, and similar adventure sports and activities. The different focus of these columns reflects a belief that girls are more interested in being while boys are more interested in doing – an assumption that is later explicitly articulated in programming materials for *Youth for Christ Clubs*.

Christian woman who was familiar with the field of fashion and good grooming and yet – far more important one that was interested in my spiritual welfare, too.”<sup>43</sup> After discussing the importance of and providing specific instructions on how to achieve and practice the habit of good posture, Johnson signed off with the following statement, “ Live lives that are altogether lovely for Christ Jesus, our Lord, the only One Who is truly “altogether lovely.”<sup>44</sup>

The concept of loveliness appeared in more than the monthly girls’ column. Charlene Johnson and others penned several feature articles for the magazine that folded the concept of loveliness into Christian ethics. In a 1965 article simply titled “Beauty,” Johnson discussed the correlation between inner and outer “loveliness.”<sup>45</sup> The qualities she described in this article reflect the overall message regarding femininity that appeared in the magazine during the early 1960s. The article is premised on the notion that girls were primarily interested in improving their looks in order to get more dates. Johnson points out that while “good looks” are important, they were not the only key to attracting the right kind of male attention. According to Johnson, “a fellow enjoys dating a girl who is happy, vivacious, intelligent, interesting, well-mannered and feminine.” She encouraged girls to think of beauty in terms of attitude as well as personal appearance. Johnson’s basic definition of true beauty is drawn from the Webster’s dictionary, which she said defined beauty as “the qualities of a person or thing that give pleasure to the eye or ear: a quality that delights the mind: loveliness.” The key to achieving true beauty, or loveliness, Johnson argued, was love for the Lord. Girls who lacked natural good looks could work with what they had and have stunning results because, “The love of Christ will overshadow

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<sup>43</sup> “Letters on Loveliness” *YFCM*, (April 1962), 17.

<sup>44</sup> “Letters on Loveliness” *YFCM*, (April 1962), 17.

<sup>45</sup> Charlene Johnson, “Beauty,” *YFCM*, (February 1965), 34-35.

any physical inadequacy you may have.” Since “only Christ is ‘altogether lovely,’ ...all real and lasting beauty must come from a living, happy, vital, relationship with the beautiful Saviour.”

According to Johnson, all girls were capable of achieving some measure of beauty. She insisted that, “Every girl can be well-groomed and attractive in appearance and beautiful in her personality, her words, her thoughts, her attitudes, and her way of life,” if she followed the “magic formula for beautiful living: The Lord first, others second, self last.”<sup>46</sup>

In addition to providing girls with a formula for beautiful living, Johnson also outlined the personal qualities that would achieve the opposite effect. Pride, vanity, jealousy and gossiping could detract from one’s inward beauty and render even the most conventionally beautiful girls ugly. To guard against this, girls were encouraged to be “humbly confident” and avoid obsessing over their looks. Obsession over one’s looks was a marker of worldliness, and worldliness was to be avoided at all costs. It damaged one’s relationship with the Lord because it took up time and mental energy that could be spent alone with Christ. In the early 1960s, as in previous decades, YFC listed a host of activities and actions that fell under the category of dangerous worldly activities including, dancing, music, television, movies, fashion, and make-up. All of these things were a large part of the teen culture that had emerged in the decades since WWII. Eventually, YFC had to come to terms with the ubiquity of these activities and work on helping teens manage them rather than prohibit them altogether. By the mid-1960s, specific restrictions were being replaced with warnings to avoid the excesses of these activities. Obsession with, rather than participation in, these activities became the dividing line between what was acceptable and unacceptable.

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<sup>46</sup> Charlene Johnson, “Beauty,” *YFCM*, (February 1965), 34-35.

The appearance of Johnson's column in the 1960s illustrates the ways YFC tried to use teen culture for its own purposes, a way to stay "anchored to the rock but geared to the times." This explains the new emphasis on beauty and body projects in the magazine during the period.<sup>47</sup> Johnson tackled girls' fashion and beauty questions by drawing an explicit connection between outer beauty and girls' inner life, spiritual development and interpersonal relationships. In May 1965 Johnson took on the "explosive" issue of make-up in her column. She assured her female readers that, "times have changed. Many people who considered it scandalous for a young lady to use even a trace of 'powder 'n' paint' now realize that using make-up in moderation and good taste adds as much to a young women's appearance as the styling of her hair." She tells the girls to let "Your conscience be your guide" on the subject before outlining a long list of possible products for them to try. As always, Johnson ends her column with a note about the connection to one's inner self. She was always careful to point out the secondary nature of girls' beautification projects: "No matter how many creams and moisturizers and 'dew drops' we use to make our faces glow, we can never escape the act that the glow we are striving for can only come from within." A girl could achieve inner beauty and therefore true loveliness only through her love of Christ. A girl's inner life was most important, but expressing this to the outside world could be made easier by cultivating outer loveliness.

In addition to guiding boys and girls through the developmental process, Youth for Christ also explored how the sexes should relate to one another. During this early period, YFC acknowledged that love was a powerful thing and as such it could lead to incredibly good

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<sup>47</sup> Joan Jacob Brumberg discussed the centrality of girls' "body projects" in American history in, Joan Jacob Brumberg, *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls* (New York: Random House, 1997). Also see: Susan J. Douglas, *Where the girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Times Books, 1994, 1993); and Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: the Making of America's Beauty Culture* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998).

feelings or disaster. If teens did not have their minds right about love and put love in its proper context and express it in a wholesome manner, “love” could be a destructive force. The destructive power of love often came from confusion over its true meaning. YFC offered teens a guidebook for managing their love lives in a way that could lead to a happy and healthy relationship inspired by God’s love for them rather than the whims of youthful desire and emotion often reflected in secular popular culture. This required both an intimate knowledge of popular portrayals of love as well as a few deft moves, which transformed popular concepts of romantic love into Christ affirming love. The promise to teens was this: if you learn to love Christ first and seek out relationships with those who also love Christ, and work together to grow into love over time, you will find the lasting love that will one day lead, after marriage, to the beautiful physical expression God intended for man and wife. However, rushing towards love or allowing oneself to fall into love would end in disaster.

Youth for Christ was actively concerned that teens could mistake fleeting romantic encounters for true Christian love and they affirmed the idea that true love came from accepting and surrendering to Christ rather than through physical or emotional connections with peers. YFC officials reinforced this idea in the articles they wrote for the group’s official organ: *YFC Magazine*. In 1963, YFCI President Jay Kesler stressed the qualities of love found in the example of Jesus Christ. According to Kessler, true love, the kind Jesus exhibited, was unselfish, patient, responsible, and loyal. He explained, “In the life and example of Jesus Christ, we see the perfection of love. Our greatest personal experience of love is having Christ in our lives and sharing His life in us with another Christian person.”<sup>48</sup> Kesler described love as “a triangular relationship” where “Christ is the base, and the sides are two lovers complete in Him,

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<sup>48</sup> Jay Kesler, “The Counterfeit Love” *YFCM*, (February 1965). 8-9.

pointing upward toward God.” Since Jesus provided the ultimate model of true love, “in any search for real love, the only beginning point is a proper understanding of Christ’s love for us.”<sup>49</sup> This idea is repeated again and again in both programming materials and in the magazine and was the most common explanation offered to teens seeking love advice. For all their talk of the importance of God, YFC did not de-romanticize the process socially in their talk to teen girls. In “Letters on Loveliness”, Johnson stated, “Love is what puts a shine in a woman’s eyes and spring in her walk; as a flower needs sunshine, a woman needs love. If I had to limit myself to only one beauty prescription, I would say, “Just fall in love.” Every woman looks beautiful when she is in love. She walks in a soft and radiant mist; love makes a woman kind, gentle, generous and tender.”<sup>50</sup> This description is not too far off from similar descriptions of love found in popular songs from the era. However, if we look a little closer at the context in which Johnson was writing this, we see that the “shine” and “spring” come from a girl who is in love under particular circumstances. Consider the quote Johnson concludes this same column with. Johnson quotes a passage from the late Dr. Peter Marshall that she feels are “some of the most beautiful words on love ever spoken.” She advised her readers to “Please cut out this paragraph – tuck it away in your jewelry box and read it often in the years ahead.” The passage reads as follows:

‘We are souls living in bodies. Therefore, when we really fall in love, it isn’t just physical attraction. If it’s that, it won’t last. Ideally, it’s also a spiritual attraction. God has opened our eyes and let us see into someone’s soul. We have fallen in love with the inner person, *the person who is going to live forever*. That’s why God is the greatest asset to romance. He thought it up in the first place. Include Him in every part of your

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<sup>49</sup> Jay Kesler, “The Counterfeit Love” *YFCM*, (February 1965). 8-9.

<sup>50</sup> “Letters on Loveliness” *YFCM*, (June 1965), 36.

marriage, and He will lift it above the level of the mundane to something rare and beautiful and lasting.<sup>51</sup>

YFC spokespeople drew a clear line between love and physical attraction through their informative articles. YFC spokespeople argued that while physical attraction was a part of love (if put in its proper place within marriage), it certainly should not be the driving force or the most powerful connection between individuals. God was the most powerful connection, without him, true love could not exist.

YFC did not always articulate love in positive terms. When trying to distinguish between Christian love and secular conceptions of love that highlighted the physical, YFC officials often spoke of love in negative terms, portraying love as a destructive force, capable of destroying the emotional, social, physical and spiritual lives of teens. In 1963, Jack Daniels, YFCI Administrative Vice President penned an article entitled “Love is a Bomb,” in which he discussed the destructive capacity of “love”. In this article Daniels compared teenage love to a “grenade bomb” and a “multimegaton monster.”<sup>52</sup> YFC leaders such as Daniels argued that love could spiral quickly out of control and that teens’ unchecked emotions could lead them down hasty and dangerous paths. While minor explosions of emotion were not necessarily problematic in and of themselves, they could lead to unhealthy social patterns that, when coupled with physical freedom, frustration and guilt, created ideal conditions for a major “emotional explosion.”<sup>53</sup> “The problem,” he explained,

is there’s no automatic control built into you and when the pressure get to a certain level, there is no device that flashes a light , rings a bell, or calls for

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<sup>51</sup> “Letters on Loveliness” *YFCM*, (June 1965), 37.

<sup>52</sup> Daniel, Jack “Love is a Bomb”, *YFCM*, (February 1963), 8-10.

<sup>53</sup> Daniel, Jack “Love is a Bomb”, *YFCM*, (February 1963), 8-10.

mother...your desires will have only the brains that you have. If there is any control over you it will come because your brain sends the impulses to your body to do one thing or stop another. Right here is where a lot of young people forget that they can choose between several courses of action but they cannot choose the result when they make the wrong choice...You light the fuse of that bomb when you spend time only with her or him, when you run out of words and find only action left, and when the physical side of your being begins to overrun the limits set by parents, society and your own desires to do right. This is where training and discipline come in.<sup>54</sup>

The notion that “love is a bomb,” causing physical and emotional explosions in the lives of teenagers was not unique to Youth for Christ.<sup>55</sup> Historian Elaine Tyler wrote about the militaristic language associated with heterosexual romance in her work, *Homeward Bound*.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, the explosive nature of teen’s emotions and physical desires was, by the early 1960s, considered common knowledge among experts as well as the general public.<sup>57</sup>

YFC leadership cautioned teens that love, true love, was a very normal experience. It should not produce feelings of unease, or anxiety. In fact, according to YFC standards, true love did not cause much of an emotional stir at all. It was calm, even, and comforting. This was in

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<sup>54</sup> Daniel, Jack “Love is a Bomb”, *YFCM*, (February 1963), 8-10.

<sup>55</sup> For images of teen emotions and love as bombs as well as historians’ portrayals of the imagery of atomic weapons see: Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988, 1999). Paul Boyer also explores the Cold War Era’s fascination with the imagery of atomic weapons in: Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985).

<sup>56</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, 20th ed. (Basic Books, 2008), 80-118.

<sup>57</sup> Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality*, 1st ed. (University of Toronto Press, 1997); Beth Bailey, *Sex in the heartland*, 1st ed. (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002); Julian B. Carter, “Birds, Bees, and Venereal Disease: Toward an Intellectual History of Sex Education,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10, no. 2 (April 2001): 213-249; Susan Freeman, *Sex goes to school : girls and sex education before the 1960s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Janice M. Irvine, *Talk About Sex: The Battles over Sex Education in the United States* (University of California Press, 2004); Kristin Luker, *When Sex Goes to School: Warring Views on Sex--and Sex Education--Since the Sixties* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2007); Jeffrey Moran, *Teaching sex : the shaping of adolescence in the 20th century* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000); Beth L. Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); John Modell, *Into One's Own: From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975* (University of California Press, 1991).

direct opposition to popular notions and proclamations of what love was. Love was seen as exciting, fraught with emotional highs and lows, and destabilizing. This was exactly the notion that YFC wanted to get away from. They wanted young people to see love in a different light. “When you see love as a warm, wonderful –normal – experience, during which you can keep your equilibrium and your sanity, then you are on your way to maturity emotionally, socially, physically and spiritually.”<sup>58</sup> The key here is the emphasis on “normal”. True love was not a disruptive force in an individual’s life causing strife, grief and emotional instability. True love came easily and fit within the context of the individual’s whole life. It did not throw the teen off balance. It enriched their loves but it was not all-consuming. If it caused these disruptions it was counterfeit love.

According to Youth for Christ leader Jay Kesler, “Counterfeit love masquerades as the real thing....Love’s counterfeit is...deceitful. It produces some of the same sensations, yet the two are diametrically opposed – the one leading to bitterness and the other to a joy and happiness that lasts for a lifetime...The word lust maybe a good term to describe the counterfeit – not lust in the limited sense of evil passion, but as a total combination of thoughts, feelings and desires which are often considered love.”<sup>59</sup> YFC outlined a number of circumstances or types of love that they considered unhealthy and tried to help teens recognize the signs of these types of relationships as well as provide them with strategies for avoiding falling into this type of love.

Some of the unhealthy love relationships YFC tried to alert teens to included: conditional love, possessive love, overly romanticized love, false and deceitful love, two against the world love, insecure and devaluing love, mutually destructive love.

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<sup>58</sup> Daniel, Jack “Love is a Bomb”, *YFCM*, (February 1963), 8-10.

<sup>59</sup> Jay Kesler, “The Counterfeit Love”, *YFCM*, (February 1965), 8-9.

The main reason teens often mistake counterfeit love for real love is because of the strong emotions attached. It was these strong emotions that YFC realized were difficult but necessary for teens to keep in check. Without the help of God this was very difficult. Therefore, it was important to make sure that relationships were enriched by a mutual acceptance of Christ and mirrored the love Jesus demonstrated. When Jesus made his way into the equation, love could be a positive expression of deep emotion and of one's Christian faith. Failure to do this could create a dangerous imbalance in a teen's physical, emotional, social, and spiritually self. Because these relationships were imbalanced, they were likely to cause an imbalance in the individual and have a negative impact on other aspects of his/her life, affecting his/her relationship with self, others and ultimately God.

In addition to providing an explanation of what constituted love, YFC also spent a great deal of time helping young people establish a code of conduct for dating. YFC often described dating in terms of friendship. Dating was an opportunity to meet people and figure out with whom youth were compatible and the qualities one might desire in a mate. YFC leadership encouraged young people to date many individuals, and was highly suspicious of steady relationships. YFC officials felt that it was inappropriate for young people to tie themselves to one person while still a teenager. Because they advocated abstinence, dating around was not seen as a path to promiscuity. In fact, the brand of dating that YFC endorsed was touted as a method for avoiding the physical temptations that often accompanied boy-girl relationships. They argued that by dating several individuals, either serially or simultaneously, teenagers could avoid the strong emotional connections that often led to physical intimacy allowing them to maintain a rational mind about their romantic lives. The benefits of dating several individuals could be seen in all areas of a teenager life: social emotional, physical, and spiritual. Establishing healthy

dating patterns helped teens keep their life in balance. If they dated several individuals they would have a robust social life because they would not be spending all of their time with one individual but would be getting to know a wide range of personalities. Emotionally, dating several individuals prevented the emotional explosions cited above. The emotional and social benefits also helped them maintain their physical purity as they were not caught spending a lot of alone time with an individual whom they had strong feelings for. Finally, the spiritual benefits were that they did not become so wrapped up in the other individual that they put that persona and their relationship with that person above their relationship with God.

Of course, YFC officials were not naïve to teen hormones and recognized that even the most casual dating could lead to physical temptations. It is important to note how managing one's dating life was of the utmost importance and YFC provided teens with a number of strategies for having some good clean fun on dates. In the Feb 1961 issue of *Youth for Christ Magazine*, Ted Engstrom, then president of the YFCI wrote an article entitled, "Formula for fun on your dates," where he outlined the characteristics of a successful date. The basic formula was based on the three P's: People, Places and Purpose. He began the article with a statement about what constitutes a successful date: "A successful date is a date that terminates with both the fellow and the girl saying, "Man, this was really fun.!" This left the question – what constitutes "fun". According to Engstrom, fun involved three things: a sense of accomplishment, mutual enjoyment, and being right.<sup>60</sup> After establishing the criteria for fun he goes on to discuss the three Ps. "When you get right down to it, there are three ingredients to this formula for fun on a date – the right people, sharing the right plans for the right purpose." Although he goes into each at great length, his message can be summarized pretty quickly. The right people are those with,

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<sup>60</sup> Ted Engstrom, "Formula for Fun on Your Dates", *YFCM*, (February 1961), 6.

“mutual interests, age, religious background, personality, and sincerity.”<sup>61</sup> While he does not specifically say that Christian teens should only date Christian teens, it is implied that the only safe choice is to date a fellow Christian. Congruency of belief was of the utmost importance and directly related to what YFC leaders felt the purpose of dating should be. Christians would understand and expect similar outcomes from dating. It was difficult to know (but probably easy to guess) what non-Christians would expect. Not only did teens have to think about the person they brought on their date but they were advised to bring along a third as well. In an article that suggests teens take an opportunity to pray before dates as a way of ensuring a good time, the author, Warren Wiersbe, Editor of YFC magazine, stated, “Christ is interested in your dates, so invite him to go along. He knows that your future is wrapped up in your dates and that one of the girls (or fellows) you date will finally become your life’s mate. He knows how important dating is, and how many temptations there are to battle. Best of all, He knows how to add life and true pleasure to your dates.”<sup>62</sup>

The second pillar of a successful date was the planning. According to Engstrom, “You won’t have much fun on a date unless you plan the date. In fact, this is half the fun! ...Needless to say, most of the difficulties that stem from dates are caused by lack of planning. When you have time on your hands, money in your pocket, and a car to take any place you care to go, it’s easy to find yourself thrown into temptation...Keep your parents in mind as you plan your dates....Use your imagination!...Variety, of course, means a lot in your date life. To do the same thing and go to the same places with the same people becomes boring and as a consequence you find yourself wanting to do something a little bit extra. This is where some

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<sup>61</sup> Ted Engstrom, “Formula for Fun on Your Dates”, *YFCM*, (February 1961), 6.

<sup>62</sup> Warren Wiersbe, “1 2 3 is not a Crowd” *YFCM*, (October 1960), 27.

of the moral problems come in – “a dull date is an invitation for trouble!”<sup>63</sup> This argument comes up again and again in the YFC literature. What one did was second only to who one did it with. Being alone with an individual with little to do could, and by most accounts would, lead down the path to physical temptation. The key was to make sure they were doing something.

There were additional benefits to a well-planned date as well, and this was the third pillar – purpose. “You should want to come home from your date with that glow of achievement down inside that says, “This was really worth while.” ...the kind of fellowship that you have on a date, involving carrying on a good conversation and doing things together, will help build up your own personality”<sup>64</sup> Dating was also an opportunity to witness for Christ and the activities one engaged in were one way to do this. “In your dating, keep in mind that you are witnessing for Jesus Christ one way or another. What you say, where you go, and how you act, all have their impact on your date. You can lead him or her closer to the Lord or farther away.”<sup>65</sup>

Despite YFC attempts to keep teens busy creating numerous superficial relationships, YFC could never really convince their teens that “going steady” was not acceptable and that there was wisdom in holding off on this type of commitment. By the early 1960s it had become accepted practice in teen culture.<sup>66</sup> Teens continued to write into the magazine seeking advice about how to handle relationships with their “steadies.” As such, YFC had to make some concessions and provide teens with some guidance for how to navigate these relationships in a way that would help them maintain as much balance as possible and enrich their Christian lives.

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<sup>63</sup> Ted Engstrom, “Formula for Fun on Your Dates”, *YFCM* (February 1961), 6.

<sup>64</sup> Ted Engstrom, “Formula for Fun on Your Dates”, *YFCM* (February 1961), 6.

<sup>65</sup> Ted Engstrom, “Formula for Fun on Your Dates”, *YFCM* (February 1961), 6.

<sup>66</sup> Beth Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in 20<sup>th</sup> Century America*. (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

The main issue was that the young men and women they were talking to were Christians but they were also teenagers and the values of these two subcultures were often at odds. This is why it was so important for YFC to be straightforward and transparent about what was and was not acceptable Christian behavior. For the most part it appears that teens did not really buy into the notion that going steady could do them social harm. Girls especially collected a certain amount of social currency in having an established mate. YFC did their best to frame their arguments in a way that teens could understand. In fact, going steady was treated a very serious step and presented to teens as a stop on the road to a lifetime of romantic commitment.

The concern over going steady was most certainly about the close intimate emotional relationships and the possibility that it could lead to sex. Discussions of sex and the physical side of dating relationships among teens appeared in the organization's publication, *Youth for Christ Magazine*, but they were not integrated into the Youth for Christ Clubs in a formal way. Additionally, the advice administered to teens during the early 1960s was primarily focused on the importance of avoiding that situations increased the temptation to push the boundaries of Christian morality by petting and/or "going all the way." Additionally, these conversations, which were relayed in a very authoritarian fashion, often used non-specific and euphemistic language to talk about the subject of sex. They were, however, very clear about standards – absolute and unwavering chastity; and the devastating consequences of sexual sin – moral decay being the most noteworthy.

Given these warnings about sex, Christian teens must have been left wondering how far Christians could go on the physical level. YFC wasted no time in laying ground rules for teens in these matters. In response to letters from teens regarding the appropriateness of petting, YFC had plenty to say. In 1956, the magazine featured an article by Warren W. Wiersbe entitled

“How far can Christians Go?” Wiersbe promised to provide teens with some “lucid light and straight talk” on the issue of physical intimacy between boys and girls. However, Wiersbe’s brand of “straight talk” was probably not what most teens who turned to the article were expecting. He acknowledged that teens could become easily confused about the issue given the variety of opinions on the subject. He also acknowledged that most Christian teens were sincerely confused about the guidelines and were not simply looking “for someone to approve their sinful conduct.”<sup>67</sup> However he advised teens that “If you’re reading this article in hopes that you’ll be told how far you can get from Christ and still be safe, and yet how close you can get to world and be popular – well, you’d better get on your knees and come clean with God.”<sup>68</sup> He reminded them that “the truly consecrated Christian is not looking for some neutral zone where he can mix the spiritual and the carnal.”<sup>69</sup> After admonishing his teen readers, Wiersbe encouraged them to seek the answer to this puzzling question by asking themselves a series of related questions:

“How far can a Christian go? What are the limits – the boundaries – to the Christian’s walk? Here they are, clear as crystal:  
Will this lead to freedom or slavery?  
Will this make me a stumbling block or a stepping stone?  
Will this build me up or tear me down?  
Will this bring Christ honor or dishonor?  
Stay within this fence and your decisions will be safe. Get “off-limits” and trouble will come sooner or later.”<sup>70</sup>

Together the set of questions asked teens to interrogate whether or not the actions they were contemplating led them closer or further away from the Christian they wanted to be. If they

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<sup>67</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, “How Far Can A Christian Go?”, *YFCM*, (August 1956), 7.

<sup>68</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, “How Far Can A Christian Go?”, *YFCM*, (August 1956), 7.

<sup>69</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, “How Far Can A Christian Go?”, *YFCM*, (August 1956), 7.

<sup>70</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, “How Far Can A Christian Go?” *YFCM*, (August 1956), 7.

answered the questions honestly, Wiersbe believed, they would find the answer to their questions about the appropriateness of physical contact. He assumed that if teens looked within themselves they would find the answers they were seeking. This was clearly not the type of answers many teens were looking for. Teens were, as Wiersbe stated, interested in a clear answer. Unfortunately, he did not do much to give them that.

YFC was forced to raise the issue of “petting” more frequently and candidly as the 1950s came to a close. In April 1957, less than a year after Wiersbe issued his obtuse advice about how far a teen could take their sexual experimentation without sacrificing their moral values, *Youth For Christ Magazine* published a brief article entitled “Parkin’ and Pettin.”<sup>71</sup> The author, Jack Hamilton, relayed the story of a newly saved boy named Bill who found himself confused about what is and is not acceptable behavior for dating Christians. Bill was surprised when his date suggests they “take the long way home.” He obliged, but was shocked when after parking the car, “she snuggled up to him.”<sup>72</sup> He asked her why she approved of this behavior and not others. Bill’s date Carol responded: “I guess you’re right, but nobody talks about this, so we sort of figure it’s not on the ‘don’t’ list.”<sup>73</sup> Her answer, combined with Hamilton’s analysis of this story, suggests that YFC was becoming increasingly interested in discussing the matter with teens. Whereas, Wiersbe’s response to the question “how far can a Christian go” basically amounted one big don’t, Hamilton suggested that teens needed a more direct and affirming response. He acknowledged that Bill’s situation was not uncommon for newly converted teens. According to Hamilton, this type of confusion not only led to personal tragedy for those involved

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<sup>71</sup> Jack Hamilton, “Parkin and Pettin” *YFCM*, (April 1957). 16

<sup>72</sup> Jack Hamilton, “Parkin and Pettin” *YFCM*, (April 1957). 16

<sup>73</sup> Jack Hamilton, “Parkin and Pettin” *YFCM*, (April 1957), 16.

but it also prevented some conversions because individuals were turned off by the inconsistencies in Christian standards. He also asked adults to reconsider their methods when dealing with the issue, stating, “all the ‘don’t’ teaching in the world will never accomplish it. A standard of conduct that majors on the negative holds no appeal. Some will conform but it will be out of obedience rather than conviction.”<sup>74</sup> Hamilton offered an alternative program based on “the challenge of what God offers one who will follow him and the joy connected with it, plus a tangible program of doing, [that] will capture the imagination, hold the interest and challenge them for more.”<sup>75</sup> With this advice YFC began a program, albeit informal, of responding to teens questions about petting with a higher level of candor and a slightly more positive spin.

YFC attempted to help teens manage their dating lives so as to avoid running into situations similar to Bill and Carol’s, including choosing to date Christians only, bringing Jesus as a “third” and avoiding situations where temptations were more likely to arise. But these suggestions, while more practical than following a list of “don’ts,” did not necessarily help teens when they were sitting in a parked car on a moonlit Saturday night. “parkin’ and pettin’” had, by the 1960s, become a commonplace activity for American teenagers. Physical intimacies on a date were an expected part of the dating ritual at the time.<sup>76</sup> Holding hands was a given, as was kissing after a few dates, and petting was considered acceptable between steadies, if not between casual dating partners. Regulating sexual intimacy was being handled more and more within the peer group. Teens were not free to do as they pleased for fear that their stock would fall and their popularity would suffer. This meant that both guys and girls were carefully managing their

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<sup>74</sup> Jack Hamilton, “Parkin and Pettin” *YFCM*, (April 1957). 16

<sup>75</sup> Jack Hamilton, “Parkin and Pettin” *YFCM*, (April 1957). 16

<sup>76</sup> Beth Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in 20<sup>th</sup> Century America*. (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

behavior so that they conformed to the group. The pressures were great for most teens, but they could be especially difficult for Christian teenagers whose religious commitment often clashed with their participation in the teen culture of the time. Christian teens struggled to strike a balance that would allow them to join in without sacrificing their values. The countless letters that YFC received on the issue attest to the fact that it was not an easy fit. This is why YFC reminded Christian teens that clinging to worldly treasures and engaging in worldly activities was a slippery slope they were best not to travel down.

As YFC became more candid about the issue of petting, they also became more specific about the consequences of such behavior. The September 1958 issue of YFC Magazine featured an article called, “The High Cost of Petting.”<sup>77</sup> The article makes a case for the damaging emotional, social and spiritual effect of petting. The author acknowledged that petting was pleasurable, but he also argued that it was much more. Far from harmless entertainment, Small argued that, “petting, like all sexual experiences, penetrates to the very depths of a person’s being, and for that reason it can lead to sublime heights of joy as a function within marriage, or drag one down the depths of impurity and misery when practiced outside the commitment of marriage.”<sup>78</sup> Small described petting as “a process of physical and emotional involvement, sexually exciting and stimulating.” The problem with this, as far as he was concerned, was that teens treated it as an end in itself and contributed to a relationship where individuals were treating each other as a means to an end – as things. To YFC leaders, it was this tendency to treat the other as a means of sexual gratification that inhibited the growth of love between individuals. He rejected the argument that petting is a “necessary support for a romantic

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<sup>77</sup> Dwight Small, “The High Cost of Petting”, *YFCM*, (September 1958), 6.

<sup>78</sup> Dwight Small, “The High Cost of Petting”, *YFCM*, (September 1958), 6.

relationship!” He also scoffed at the notion that petting lead to sexual satisfaction stating that it was stimulation only and thus inevitably lead to “a feeling of frustration, disappointment, loss of self-respect, and guilt.”<sup>79</sup> In addition to, and to some extent because of these feelings, petting often led to heightened physical activity. According to Small, “petting demands an ever-increasing intensity.” He continues his point using a common cold war metaphor: “the point of containment is moved farther and farther, the demands becoming more difficult to resist as the progression goes on. Knowing what is beyond makes it hard to be satisfied with less.”<sup>80</sup> YFC leaders such as Small argued that petting led down a road to escalation and that petting could ultimately lead to more serious sexual experimentation. Additionally, YFC leaders argued that instead of bringing youth together, petting could reduce respect youth had for one another and weaken their bonds leading to break ups and potential promiscuous behavior.<sup>81</sup>

While YFC adult leaders gave teens strict and hard rules for governing their emotional and physical relationships, they understood that teens were at the center of their own lives and that they ultimately decided what decisions to make and risks to take. YFC did not try to control sex, dating, and boy girl relations directly by closely monitoring behavior and advising complete separation of the sexes. Rather they promoted a strategy that they felt would help them manage teen sexuality by teaching teens to manage their own sexuality while simultaneously strengthening their relationship with God. YFC did not tell teens that sex was bad, only that sex in the wrong context could have bad results. They did not focus on feelings but behaviors. In this way they avoided making teens feel shameful about their desires. It was normal and

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<sup>79</sup> Dwight Small, “The High Cost of Petting”, *YFCM*, (September 1958), 6.

<sup>80</sup> Dwight Small, “The High Cost of Petting”, *YFCM*, (September 1958), 6.

<sup>81</sup> Dwight Small, “The High Cost of Petting”, *YFCM*, (September 1958), 6.

acceptable to feel sexually attracted to someone of the opposite sex, but it was equally important to exercise self control because if teens were not careful to control sex, it would control them.<sup>82</sup>

Youth for Christ employed a Bible-centered vision of morality. For the organizers and youth of YFC, moral questions could be resolved through self examination and consultation with the Bible. The moral compass was strict and involved absolutes based on scriptural truths. The experts employed by YFC were often pious youth, respectable adults, and religious experts. These experts were utilized by the leadership of Youth for Christ to offer teens a blueprint for their future and illustrate how correct choices would result in a productive life in tune with the goal of marriage and material prosperity consistent with the American ideal in the 1950s and early 1960s. While the content of the message varied a great deal, however, the strategy they employed was congruent. YFC experts were different people with different views from LRY experts, but both groups still expected that youth would listen to the advice offered by people in positions of power and use the advice to help guide them through the tumultuous teen years.

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<sup>82</sup> “Desperate”. *YFCM*, (June 1959), 12.

## CHAPTER 2: AVOIDING “VAGUE PLATITUDES”: SEX EDUCATION FOR LIBERAL RELIGIOUS YOUTH, 1960-1966

While Liberal Religious Youth (LRY) and Youth for Christ offered very different messages throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, there were similarities in the ways that they approached youth based on changing attitudes about sex and sex education among youth developing in the late 1950s and early 1960s. As historians have pointed out, American sexual culture was changing rapidly during this period. Sexual imagery appeared more explicitly in advertising and in mainstream media. Talk about sexuality, especially female sexuality was opening up as well.<sup>1</sup> Given the changing sexual culture in the United States at the time, adults working with youth serving organizations such as Youth For Christ and Liberal Religious Youth, were bound to come across questions and concerns about sex.

These groups were obviously very far apart in the content of their messages. Youth for Christ preached a message of restraint and purity, while strongly discouraging serious relationships (or “steadies”) among teens. Adult mentors for Liberal Religious Youth’s sex education materials highlighted personal choice, rational decision making, education.. The leaders of Youth for Christ often looked to the Bible for answers, the leaders of LRY were much more likely to attempt to convince youth through the use of academic and scientific experts in the fields of youth development, biology, psychology, and sexology.

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<sup>1</sup> Beth L. Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999); David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War : The Sexual Revolution, an Unfettered History* (New York: Routledge, 2001). Ira L. Reiss and Albert Ellis, *At the Dawn of the Sexual Revolution : Reflections on a Dialogue* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2002); Hilary Radner and Moya Lockett, *Swinging Single : Representing Sexuality in the 1960s* (Minneapolis, MN ; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Mary P. Ryan, *Mysteries of Sex : Tracing Women and Men through American History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Sheila Jeffreys, *Anticlimax : A Feminist Perspective on the Sexual Revolution* (London: Women's Press, 1990); Linda Grant, *Sexing the Millennium : Women and the Sexual Revolution*, 1st ed. (New York: Grove Press, 1994); John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters : A History of Sexuality in America*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1988); Jeffrey Escoffier, *Sexual Revolution* (New York: Thunder Mouth Press, 2003).

The content of the groups' advice was very different, but both groups agreed that those teens should turn to adults and experts for knowledge about sexual development and practical advice about sexual decision making. While Youth for Christ offered mentoring and advice in *Youth for Christ Magazine*, LRYers largely relied on one seminal text: *Boy-Girl Relations*. Throughout this early period, neither group solicited input from teens. The teens were expected to read, absorb, and apply the lessons published in these guides by adults. While Youth for Christ members employed religious and moral experts in their quest to influence youth choices about sex, Liberal Religious Youth embraced secular scientific experts to encourage youth to make informed decisions. Again, the content of the message was very different but the strategy being utilized to reach and appeal to youth is almost identical.

*Boy Girl Relations* was the only sexual education text for LRY members in the early 1960s. It was heavily influenced by the latest research of the day involving everything from child psychology to biology and also demonstrated tremendous staying power by staying relevant from the 1950s through the late 1960s. In 1950, Rev. William B. Rice, Minister of the First Unitarian Church in Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts wrote *Boy-Girl Relations: A Manual For Leaders of High School Youth* as "an aid to understanding the simple physical, mental, and emotional changes which occur between puberty and maturity in boys and girls."<sup>2</sup> Rice never intended the young members of LRY to read the manual or use it without the guidance of the adult advisor. The manual went through several printings and enjoyed some regular use as a

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<sup>2</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth* (Boston, Mass: Liberal Religious Youth, 1958), 1. The manual went through numerous printings throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s. William B. Rice was heavily involved in the Unitarian Universalist Church and its youth groups from a young age. As a teenager, Rice served as treasurer and director the Unitarian youth organization, Young People's Religious Union (YPRU). Later he was the chair of the Universalist and Unitarian Joint Merger Commission of the Universalist Church of America (UCA) and the American Unitarian Association (AUA) from 1956-1960. He is often thought of as one of the principle architects of the UUA. He ran for President of the UUA in 1961, but lost a close race to Dana McLean Greely.

conversation starter for national, regional, and local groups well into the 1960s. Despite Rice's intent that adults only use the manual, by the 1960s teenagers in local groups had started using it themselves, with and without the guidance of adult advisors. This manual represents the primary text available to LRY members from 1955 to the mid 1960s.<sup>3</sup> More crucial to this discussion, however, is the fact that *Boy Girl Relations* was the only publication dealing with sex and sexual education widely available to teenagers from LRY throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>4</sup>

Rice stressed that the manual was not an instructional course on sex. Rather, he created it as "an aid to understanding the simple physical, mental and emotional changes which occur between puberty and maturity in boys and girls."<sup>5</sup> The purpose of the manual was to assist leaders in helping teenagers "come out at a level of appreciation of how normal, healthy, happy, and secure relationships can be established."<sup>6</sup> Rice advised that the information contained in the manual should be presented to teens by a "competent adult" who was "correctly informed in the fundamentals," and/or in cooperation with "adequate professional guidance and help from doctors, teachers, and those experienced in guiding discussion."<sup>7</sup> Additionally, he suggested that the individual presenting the information should be of good character because, "the physical,

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<sup>3</sup> We know that LRY was still circulating *Boy Girl Relations* in 1964-1965 because it appears on an order form for high school LRY materials that was circulated to local groups by the Unitarian Universalist Association. The manual cost 20 cents. Liberal Religious Youth, Revised 1964-65 Order Form for High School LRY Materials. *Andover Harvard Theological Library* Collection 1151 Box 1 Folder 3.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed list of some of the other publications available during this period, see: Liberal Religious Youth, Revised 1964-65 Order Form for High School LRY Materials. *Andover Harvard Theological Library* Collection 1151 Box 1 Folder 3. Some of the titles included: *Introducing LRY, Handbook for High School Groups, Group Participation Methods, Youth-Adult Relations, Advisor's Handbook, Ideas on Creative Worship, The Promethean, Racial Prejudice*. UUA and LRY produced many of these publications in the 1950s. Edited, updated and revised editions of these guides appeared throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A Manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A Manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A Manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 1.

mental and moral stability of young people depends largely upon the attitude and character of those who advise and guide them.”<sup>8</sup>

Rice also offered advisors some practical advice about how to handle the discussions. Advisors, he stated, should avoid, “vague platitudes,” “know the right words and use them in perfectly natural manner,” “do not preach and try to put the moral compulsion on an abstract theological plane.”<sup>9</sup> He also encouraged leaders to approach the subject in an organized fashion outlining the specific topic for each discussion, providing an outline and to plan each session carefully so that discussions “can be kept fairly close to the immediate material” and “do not ...wander off in to unimportant bypaths.”<sup>10</sup> Rice suggested sessions last between 45 minutes and one hour, including time for discussion at the end.<sup>11</sup> He also stated that the material should be presented to co-ed audiences. “It is unwise,” he stated, “to separate an established group in to boys and girls to talk to them. They already have considerable common information and misinformation.”<sup>12</sup> Rice, like sex educators of his time, felt that it was healthier to discuss sexuality in mixed groups because it “will counteract any tendency to think of the subject as ‘smutty’ or surreptitious...for in this way the matter is not made a subject for erotic interest and morbid self-concern.”<sup>13</sup> Rice stressed that boys and girls should be in mixed groups of the same age cohort. Adults, however, should not be in attendance at the meetings. Other than the advisor, Rice advised leaders not to have adults sit in on the meetings. He warned advisors that

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<sup>8</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A Manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A Manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 2-3.

<sup>10</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A Manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 3-4.

<sup>11</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A Manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 3-4.

<sup>12</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A Manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A Manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 2.

the opinion of adults in the community, church or even parents could be a hazard to an effective program because they inhibited discussion. "It would be difficult, probably impossible, "he warned, "for discussion to develop and flow in a normal and healthy fashion with an observer's gallery of adults anywhere about."<sup>14</sup>

Despite Rice's argument that parents should not be present, his manual's outline of how sex education should take place in the group is surprisingly congruent to some of the methodology that YFC leadership employed in passing information and tips to their membership. Rice is very clear in his manual that youth needed to be guided through these difficult topics and he is very careful to outline just the right type of authority who should be given the responsibility to speak to youth on these topics. He cautions against someone of weak moral character and is hoping that by employing the right kind of expert to talk to teenagers that sex education programming can reach teens and help them make better informed decisions about their bodies and relationships.

When Rice barred parents from sex education meetings, he was right to expect resistance from some LRY parents. Although there were a considerable number of sexual education programs in public schools at the time, parental apprehension about sexual education was still common in the 1950s and early 1960s. Historians have documented the sometimes bitter fight over sex education in this period, which pitted educators against parents and clergy.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A Manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 4.

<sup>15</sup> Jeffrey P. Moran, *Teaching Sex : The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20th Century* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Harvard University Press, 2000); Lois Weis and Michelle Fine, *Beyond Silenced Voices : Class, Race, and Gender in United States Schools*, Rev. ed. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005); Kristin Luker, *When Sex Goes to School : Warring Views on Sex--and Sex Education--since the Sixties*, 1st ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006); Janice M. Irvine, *Talk About Sex : The Battles over Sex Education in the United States* (Berkeley, Calif. ; London: University of California Press, 2002); Susan Kathleen Freeman, *Sex Goes to School : Girls and Sex Education before the 1960s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008). James R. Cook, "The Evolution of Sex Education in the Public Schools of the United States, 1900-1970" (Dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 1971);

However, since Rice designed and distributed the program for youth groups within the church, it is probable that parents were more concerned with finding the right individual to teach the material rather than banning the program altogether. Public school programs were a different matter as they were dealing with mixed faith groups and therefore did not present the material with specific religious prohibitions and moral codes in mind. Rice's model was heavily based on both religious and secular morality. He believed that it was not enough to offer teens "just the facts." For Rice and other LRY leaders, the facts of life were just one aspect of a well-rounded sexual education. He believed that teens "want to know what is best to believe and do about the facts." He stressed that advisors should "be certain to go on to the reasons society has set up standards and codes of behavior."<sup>16</sup> He cautioned adult leaders not to veer too far from established moral codes: "In discussing the moral code the leader must not interject some bizarre to even unusual personal opinion, enlightened as it may be in his own mind."<sup>17</sup> In writing this, it is possible that Rice was thinking of parental concerns about the information their teens encountered in group sessions.

Rice was primarily concerned about how the teens would be affected by the information. He reminded leaders, "that those with whom you are dealing are young men and women subject to the social forces about them, and liable to suffer considerably from violations, even overtly condoned by our world, which go against the best standards we know."<sup>18</sup> Rice tried to set up a program that would help teens protect themselves from the consequences of violating social

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Patricia J. Campbell, *Sex Education Books for Young Adults, 1892-1979* (New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1979); Julian B. Carter, "Birds, Bees, and Venereal Disease: Toward an Intellectual History of Sex Education," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10, no. 2 (April 2001); Claudia Nelson and Michelle H. Martin, *Sexual Pedagogies : Sex Education in Britain, Australia, and America 1879-2000* (New York ; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

<sup>16</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A Manual for Leaders of High School Youth*.

<sup>17</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A Manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 4.

<sup>18</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A Manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 3.

taboos. He believed that one of the best ways to do this was to provide teens with accurate information about their bodies and their psychology, so that they could approach their relationships from the proper ethical and moral standpoint.

The program Rice proposed in *Boy Girl Relations* was a departure from the standard sexual education programs found in American high schools during this period. Historian Jeffery Moran, has pointed out that in the 1950s and 1960s, high school sexual education programs were based on a family life model. That is, they were primarily focused on teaching young people how to function in a family setting. They discussed household management, childcare, entertaining, family relations, and other topics relevant to the day to day functioning of a young couple. Family life educators in this period focused primarily on the issue of sex roles. Family life programs in public schools were designed to help teens achieve proper sex roles.<sup>19</sup> Rice's plan went beyond the issue of sex role socialization and tackling sexual development from a broader perspective. He suggested advisors divide the local group sexual education program into four parts: physiology, emotion and psychology, adolescent relationships, and moral codes.<sup>20</sup> The physiology segment was the least robust of the four thematic sections. In lieu of providing specific biological information in the manual, he suggested advisors use a film called *Human Growth* to cover this portion of the program. Utilizing scientific experts was consistent with the way that religious teens were receiving sexual education during this period – relying on a film produced by scientists instead of exploring teen feelings and having dialogue. *Human Growth*, was a 20 minute, 16mm “total concept film” that covered the “whole story of ovulation,

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<sup>19</sup> Moran, *Teaching Sex : The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20th Century.*, 144.

<sup>20</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A Manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 4.

fertilization, menstruation, birth and growth.”<sup>21</sup> The film was produced by E.C. Brown Trust in cooperation with the University of Oregon and was the brainchild of University of Oregon Psychology professor Lester F. Beck. Before his death in 1939, VD specialist Dr. E.C. Brown gave the University of Oregon \$500,000 for sex education research. Researchers spent the next several years developing materials – pamphlets, slides, and lectures for sex education programs in Oregon schools, but found that these materials left too much room for error on the part of teachers who were often too embarrassed to be straight forward with students about the topic. In 1946 Dr. Beck developed a sex education film script as an alternative to the inadequate existing junior and high school materials. According to Beck, "The love life of the worm is an evasion of the human problem. Human sex should be taught honestly and scientifically.”<sup>22</sup> E.C Brown Trust described the content of the film as such:

*Human Growth* is an educational film which creates an instructional atmosphere that permits the facts of human sex to be discussed without embarrassment or tension. The film achieves three cardinal objectives: It demonstrates for parents how sex education can be handled smoothly, intelligently and in a socially acceptable manner in schools; it provides the classroom teacher with a suitable instructional aid for presenting the biological facts about sex as a part of human growth and development; and it establishes, through identification, an exemplary teacher-pupil relationship which is conducive to easy classroom discussion.<sup>23</sup>

Included with the film was an instructional guide for teachers and a set of slides to be used during the question period with students. Rice urged the leaders to read the guide and preview the film prior to showing it to the students. He also suggested that it might be a good idea to let

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<sup>21</sup> Curtis E. Avery, "Single Concept Films for Sex Education," *The Family Life Coordinator* 13, no. 1 (January 1964): 17-20.

<sup>22</sup> "Sex in the Schoolroom," *Time*, March 22, 1948,.

<sup>23</sup> "Southside Will Show Film on Human Growth," *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, June 1, 1948.

parents attend the preview “if they are in any way in doubt of the wisdom of using the film.”<sup>24</sup>

However, Rice was sure that most parents would “endorse it and ask to have it shown to younger groups.”<sup>25</sup> Rice endorsed the use of this film because he felt that it presented a simple, yet complete story about human sexual anatomy, puberty and reproduction. He recognized that some teens would have already encountered the information, but felt that the film was useful for filling in the gaps in teens’ knowledge. He stated: “Remember that some young people will have been well grounded at home, some have picked up information at random. But few, will admit that their information is incomplete. Almost all will assume an air of sophistication to show that they are ‘in the know.’”<sup>26</sup>

Rice divided the unit on emotional growth into five parts which traced human psychological development through infancy, early childhood, childhood, early adolescence, and later adolescence. He suggested the best course of action would be to have a competent psychologist or psychiatrist guide young people through these steps, but also recognized that this was not practical for most groups. For the advisors who would deal with this section themselves, he provided a basic outline of the various stages of emotional growth. He also asked leaders to make sure they reminded teens that emotional growth process did not center on “sex.” Adolescence was a difficult time because of both internal and external strains and stresses. He believed it was important to help teens successfully navigate these forces so that they could

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<sup>24</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 8.

<sup>25</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 8.

<sup>26</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 8.

develop into “a very full maturity.” Rice believed teens needed to learn that their psychological development had important bearing the “quality of their adolescent relationships.”<sup>27</sup>

Rice’s portrayal of adolescence as period of conflict with self and others was a common way to look at youth development in this era and illustrates the LRY strategy of employing experts and academic research to back their methodology of informing teen decision making. Specifically, he used a storm and stress model of adolescent development first postulated by psychologist G. Stanley Hall at the turn of the century refined, modified, and revised by subsequent researchers throughout the twentieth century.<sup>28</sup>

Rice defined infancy as the period of “100% Individualism – (or Selfishness).” Rice’s conception of the connection between infancy and adolescent sexual development was heavily influenced by Freud.<sup>29</sup> Given Rice’s attention to family dynamics and children’s psychological needs, it is also likely that he was influenced by American Pediatrician Benjamin Spock whose widely popular book *Baby and Childcare* was published in 1946.<sup>30</sup> Rice described infancy as a

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<sup>27</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 10.

<sup>28</sup> Hall is often credited with “discovering” adolescence and developing the storm and stress development model. G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence* (New York: D. Appleton and company, 1904). For an extended discussion of scientific thought on adolescence in the twentieth century see: John Modell, *Into One's Own : From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Sarah E. Chinn, *Inventing Modern Adolescence : The Children of Immigrants in Turn-of-the-Century America*, The Rutgers Series in Childhood Studies (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2009). Crista DeLuzio, *Female Adolescence in American Scientific Thought, 1830-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); Joseph F. Kett, *Rites of Passage : Adolescence in America 1790 to the Present / Joseph F. Kett* (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1977).

<sup>29</sup> He does not cite Freud in his work, but there are traces of Freudian psychology in his explanations. See: Sigmund Freud and James Strachey, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

<sup>30</sup> Benjamin Spock, *Baby and Childcare*. (New York: Meredith Press, 1968). For discussions of Spock’s child-rearing advice in the context of parenting see: Rima Dombrow Apple, *Perfect Motherhood: Science and Child-rearing in America*. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006); Rebecca Jo Plant, *Mom: The Transformation of Motherhood in Modern America*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). Robert Griswold, *Fatherhood in America: A History*. (New York: Basic Books, 1993); Rachel Devlin, *Relative Intimacy: Fathers, Adolescent Daughters, and Postwar American Culture*. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s*. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Jessica Weiss, “Making Room for Fathers: Men, Women, and Parenting in the United States,

time when the individual becomes attached to the mother which “has much to do with later maturation.”<sup>31</sup> He also states that in infancy, “the mouth becomes fixed as the first center of sexual satisfaction.” Infants, he points out, also start to experience discipline through parental training and thus started to experience some of the limits the world placed on individuals. He argued that how individuals deal with changing life circumstances had a lot to do with early training. However, he wanted leaders to stress that early experiences shape but do not fix emotional patterns later in life. In doing this, he sets up a later discussion of personal responsibility that formed the core of his later discussion on morality.

When discussing the connection between infant emotional development and sexuality, Rice began with a criticism of how some parents dealt with young children’s bodily explorations. He pointed out that parents sometimes instilled fear and distaste in their children over anything to do with sex or bodily functions – scolding them for potty training mishaps and slapping their hands for exploring their genital regions. He viewed this as a community wide practice based on a wrongheaded sense of what was moral. He stated, “Oftentimes adolescent and childish “exploration” trips in sex being down community and parental wrath when, particularly at an early age, they are neither inherently immoral nor indecent.”<sup>32</sup> Even though he felt the prohibitions were uncalled for, he stressed that they were part of social expectation and that teens needed to learn to abide by established community standards or suffer the consequences. He wrote, “We must accept the fact that we live in a society which imposes certain rigid rules upon us which we break at peril and expense of our inner peace. Therefore it is well for parents to

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1945-1980,” in *A Shared Experience: Men, Women and the History of Gender*, ed. Laura McCall and Donald Yacovone. (New York: New York University Press, 1998, 349-368.

<sup>31</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 10.

<sup>32</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 12.

prepare us for this regulation carefully or to teach us to control and guide ourselves.”<sup>33</sup> In these statements, Rice is criticizing overly harsh social standards and taboos, while at the same time reinforcing the role of the parent in teaching teens how to navigate and function in the world, no matter how misguided the regulations and restrictions.

According to Rice, as individuals passed from infancy to early childhood, they started to become aware of the differences between boys and girls. He stated that around age two or three children recognize fathers as masculine figures with a status of their own derived from their specific family and social function. At this stage, a boy will become jealous of his father and feel rivalry with him as well as his siblings. The desire to be the center of attention results in tantrums, bedwetting, and general hostility. A boy’s relationship with his father had immediate consequences. However, Rice’s portrayal of what happened to girls who had problematic relationships with their fathers, had consequences well into adulthood. “If father is aloof a girl may often develop a deep feeling against men which comes out directly as “man-hater” or indirectly as a flirt, punishing and teasing men.”<sup>34</sup>

After singling out female children for future sexual dysfunction, Rice brought the discussion of future maladjustment back to both sexes. He argued growing up in an unhappy or poorly adjusted family could trigger a lifetime of infantile behavior, causing the individual to “retreat into the earliest possible stage where we were ‘secure.’” For this reason, Rice stated, leaders should not to judge teens that seemed not to fit the “regular pattern,” and should encourage young people to avoid passing judgment on others. Family maladjustment was a

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<sup>33</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 12.

<sup>34</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 13.

particular concern for family life educators at the time<sup>35</sup> Family life educators and those working with youth serving institutions believed a maladjusted family not only contributed to the degradation of an individual's behavior and psychological well being, but also damaged their ability to conform to proper gender roles behavior. Maladjustment led to delinquency of all kinds, including sexual delinquency in young women.<sup>36</sup>

Rice cited childhood proper, beginning around age six and lasting until twelve, as the stage when young people began to deal with difficult social situations. How one dealt with conflict at this stage, he argued, laid the foundations for social adjustment and peer interaction in high school. For Rice, this was also the time where boys and girls started to separate. He stated, "There is a certain sexless battle of the sexes as anyone can see who goes by a school yard at recess time. We begin an almost lifelong opposition to male and female which shows in primitive and in sophisticated societies."<sup>37</sup> Rice viewed this separation as both natural and good, as a boy learned "to live happily among men and boys, and a girl to get along with women and other girls." Rice mentioned the benefits for both boys and girls, however the examples he uses to make his point were all male. He pointed to the development of leadership skills through

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<sup>35</sup> Moran, *Teaching Sex : The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20th Century*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

<sup>36</sup> Scholars have produced a considerable amount of literature on the topic of female sexual delinquency in the twentieth century. See: Ruth M. Alexander, *The Girl Problem : Female Sexual Delinquency in New York, 1900-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Anne Meis Knupfer, *Reform and Resistance : Gender, Delinquency, and America's First Juvenile Court* (New York ; London: Routledge, 2001); Mary E. Odem, *Delinquent Daughters : Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920*, Gender & American Culture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); DeLuzio, *Female Adolescence in American Scientific Thought, 1830-1930*; Sherrie A. Inness, *Delinquents and Debutantes : Twentieth-Century American Girls' Cultures* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem : The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930*, Studies in Gender and History (Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal : Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality*, Studies in Gender and History (Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1997); Regina G. Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls : Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890-1945*, Yale Historical Publications (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

<sup>37</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 14.

involvement with group activities, which taught individuals to adapt to a group and experience team spirit and solidarity. The places where these skills could be developed, included Cubs, Scouts, and Fraternities that would prepare an individual for Varsity Clubs and Masons. He did not offer comparable examples for girls, which suggests that he was directing his comments about, leadership and teamwork primarily to boys.<sup>38</sup>

Even though Rice sees this period of single-sex devotion as a critical and normal developmental stage, he also states that if carried on through adolescence, for him, it was a sign of immaturity. He stated, “It is a sign of immaturity...to devote one’s self exclusively to one’s own sex and never learns to find added enjoyment in the company of opposites and finally one’s closest and highest delight in a mate.”<sup>39</sup> The notion that a close friendship with a member of the same sex was a sign of emotional immaturity was common in this era. The fear of course, was that an individual would become fixated on the same sex and develop an “unnatural” attachment to members of the same sex. The underlying fear was that the individual was not “normal,” which was code for heterosexual.<sup>40</sup>

For LRYers, it was equally important not to rush into early dating patterns. “Going steady” at an early age, Rice stated, would hamper the couple’s individual emotional growth. “Going Steady” was a hot topic among scholars, teens, and parents during the early 1960s. Rice’s work draws heavily on this literature in illustrating some of the problems with entering

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<sup>38</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 14.

<sup>39</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 14.

<sup>40</sup> Adams, *The Trouble with Normal : Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality*; Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers : A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America*, Between Men--between Women (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991). Allan Bérubé, *Coming out under Fire : The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (New York: Free Press, 1990); Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold : The History of a Lesbian Community* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

serious relationships too young in life.<sup>41</sup> Both the boy and girl would suffer. “A boy, still very attached to his mother, may never find himself enjoying the companionship of a date, sweetheart and wife quite different than mother. A girl might, at an early age, fix on a small copy of her father.”<sup>42</sup> Rice stated that searching for mates with the same qualities as mother or father was not necessarily a bad thing, but it would limit the individual’s ability to appreciate many different kinds of people.

Rice divided the period of adolescence, his main concern in the manual, into two phases. Early adolescence, the period between age thirteen and sixteen, was marked by physical changes and further separation of the sexes. Girls matured ahead of boys their age who tended to cling, and even intensify their clannishness and devotion to male peers. At this age, Rice stated, girls tended to become more aware of sex than their male counterparts. Emotionally, both boys and girls are maturing but they also experienced a tension between independence and dependence. Both boys and girls resent their fathers and mothers, respectively as young teenager’s desire independence but also recognize that they need parental support. Rice suggested that leaders ask teens to elaborate on when they started feeling the need for more freedom and when they thought they were capable of independence.

As for the relationships between boys and girls, Rice marked the stage of early adolescence as a period when teens took their first real steps towards mature heterosexual relationships. Once again, he refers to relationships between girls and boys as one of conflict. “The general battle narrows down into duels between two, and then dates, as enjoyable and novel

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<sup>41</sup> Beth L. Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat : Courtship in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988); Joseph F. Kett, *Rites of Passage : Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

<sup>42</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 14.

experiences come into view.”<sup>43</sup> Rice was careful to state that although young people were beginning to date during this time period, it is not in the same manner or with the same level of commitment in adult relationships. Helping teens navigate this period of physical maturity and emotional and social childhood was one of the chief concerns for adult leaders. To help themselves navigate this period, teenagers had to learn to work with both sexes effectively in outside extracurricular activities, in school, and part time jobs. These activities would teach them responsibility and help them earn a measure of independence from their parents.

Rice stated that later adolescence occurred for most between the ages of seventeen and twenty-one. This period included high school and college age students, who were still financially dependent on their parents. According to Rice, this period was characterized by more intense relationships with the opposite sex, more heated power struggles with parents over curfews and car privileges. Rice’s description of these conflicts centered on the issue of sexual tensions and sexual control. In his description, teenagers had an almost singular focus on sex and faced a myriad of obstacles to sexual fulfillment, including parental control, long schooling and career training. Here, Rice assumed that what stood between responsible young people and the fulfillment of their sexual desire was the social expectation that young people should ideally wait to have sex after marriage, and before marriage, one must accomplish a certain level of economic stability. According to Rice, “The mature adolescent learns to set up goals and long range objectives.” If they managed to avoid “extravagant behaviors,” Rice promised that young men and women would “learn to form a lasting love relationship with a member of the opposite sex.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 15.

<sup>44</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 17.

The rest of Rice's manual focused on adolescent relationships and moral codes. He divided the section of adolescent relationships into seven sections: physical factors, family relationships, popularity, special recognition, emotional signposts, and two others labeled, dangerously drastic and it's great to face life. His focus on relationships was not only about male-female dating relationships, but on how all of the relationships a teenager had – with parents, teachers, community members and friends, had a significant impact on the individual and would also have an impact on their primary relationships with a mate later in life. His focus was on the relationships boys and girls developed within the last three years of high school. He saw these as the most important for future relationships.

Rice provided a brief outline of physical development at this stage, characterized by a general settling of physical patterns and the development of more masculine and feminine physical features. He stated that both boys and girls experienced important physical changes during this period, but once again his discussion was unbalanced. He spent much more time focusing on boys' physical development. He devoted nearly the entire section devoted to advice advisors should give young men regarding their physical development, including physical fitness regimes, nutrition, and skin troubles, and readiness for "adult relationships," and the need to "learn a new control."

In comparison to his extended and somewhat detailed discussion of boys, Rice's account of girls physical development is very brief, summing up young women's physical development in one short paragraph, quoted in entirety below:

Girls become less tubby adolescents, and they take on more obvious womanhood. Marriage and maturity will again change them considerably in the future, but physically they are reaching the attractiveness of young womanhood. They too need a sound physical education program. They too cannot afford late hours,

strange diets, and strains of any sort. Fads and extravagances hurt them now and carry a bad debt into adulthood.<sup>45</sup>

In theory, Rice saw that adolescents of both sexes needed advice about setting limits and finding balance, but his lack of detail in how this could be achieved for girls' highlights, once again, a gender asymmetry in the program as a whole.<sup>46</sup> When it came to girls, Rice seemed less inclined to dole out advice about their particular problems. The lack of information reflected a tendency for scientists and scholars to generalize all adolescent experience based on young men, despite a considerable amount of research on girls' specific problems and experiences. This lack of detail with regard to young women illustrates some of the obvious weaknesses inherent in the LRY strategy of employing experts in disseminating their sex education programs. In this particular case, relying on Rice left the girls in the program wanting and left the adults leading these discussions with little to offer an inquiring teenage girl.

Teenager's relationships with parents were a central feature in Rice's advice for teens. He suggested that advisors highlight the qualities of good teen-parent relations for the members of their groups. The ideal parent-teen relationship, according to Rice, was marked by responsibility and cooperation. Parents had a responsibility to take care of the basic needs of teenager through college, and teens had a responsibility to work within the guidelines their behavior and do well in school so that they could set themselves up for future success.

In his account of the adolescent's need to feel popular, he outlined the social differences between boys and girls. "Boys" he stated, "like a fellow who tries. They like a good sport.

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<sup>45</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 21.

<sup>46</sup> For a discussion of the historical development of gender asymmetry see: Ryan, *Mysteries of Sex : Tracing Women and Men through American History*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Caroline Press, 2006).

They don't like cheats, gossips, vendors of filth, Lotharios, alcoholics." Writing about girls' popularity needs he stated,

Girls like boys who are genuine...the same things that older women look for in eligible bachelors go over best with girls too. Girls like cars, they appreciate a good time but they are genuine enough to meet a chap half way when he is getting along on a modest budget. This all works in reverse too -- girls look for fair play and openness in other girls. Girls look for healthy cleanliness in other girls more than they look for the latest styles. At least they do if they are maturing in a sensible background.<sup>47</sup>

Rice believed that boys' identity formations were constructed primarily in relation to other boys, while girls constructed their identities and viewed their social lives in relation to both boys and other girls. This perspective on adolescent identity formation was later confirmed in 1967 when the Religious Education Department at West Shore Unitarian Church in Cincinnati Ohio compiled a guide for curriculum construction that revealed a similar understanding of adolescent self-assessment in relation to peers. After conducting informal interviews and taking note of young people's statements for from 1960-1967, the group concluded:

For boys, self-evaluation is related to athletic ability, social skills, and social status. Some of the boys have low opinions of themselves for failure to make a team. The social veneration accorded athletes by neighborhood adults, classmates and teachers seems to make it difficult for non-participants to consider themselves manly. Girls tend to evaluate themselves and each other on their ability to rate dates, belong to a "potluck" (teenage clique), personal appearance and good clothes.<sup>48</sup>

In the above example, boys and girls expressed different concerns about their relationships with peers. Boys were concerned about athletic performance. It is clear that they picked up on the

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<sup>47</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 23-24.

<sup>48</sup> West Shore Unitarian Church, "A Guide to Curriculum Construction," 1967, 1, bMS 1152/1 (3), Andover Harvard Theological Library. The study was published in 1967, but it is relevant for the earlier period because the findings are based on interviews with young people earlier in the decade and therefore reflects the standards of this earlier period more than after the publication date.

importance of physical prowess to manhood and felt deep anxiety when they failed to excel in this area. Girls worried about popularity, physical appearance, and the ability to garner male attention. The gender divide in male and female concerns makes sense given larger context of gender norms in the cold war era when youth serving institutions socialized boys to enter the competitive workforce and become breadwinners and focused on preparing girls to land a husband so they could fulfill their ultimate role as wives and mothers.<sup>49</sup>

Rice identified later adolescence as a time when boys and girls started looking for “special recognition” from peers, in particular attention from the opposite sex. He stated that up until this stage, teens were content to look to parents for this special recognition, but at this stage in development they looked outside of their families for “mothering” or “fathering.” Rice stated that this was not necessarily a problem as long as the need was not too pronounced. He considered the search for a mate with similar qualities as the parent of the opposite sex to be a healthy part of development. Implicit in this statement is the belief that boys and girls needed and looked for different things in a mate. They sought out that which they could not provide for themselves.

Rice wanted advisors to acknowledge teenagers’ need to find someone special to serve this need, but he also wanted them to advise teens from developing extreme relationships with members of the opposite sex. He thought it was best that teens did not rush into romantic

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<sup>49</sup> Elaine May, *Homeward bound : American families in the Cold War era*, Rev. and updated ed. ([New York]: Basic Books, 1999); Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (Three Rivers Press, 1995); Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality*, 1st ed. (University of Toronto Press, 1997); Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls*, 1st ed. (Vintage, 1998); Wini Breines, *Young, White, and Miserable: Growing Up Female in the Fifties* (University Of Chicago Press, 2001); Ilana Nash, *American Sweethearts: Teenage Girls in Twentieth-Century Popular Culture*, illustrated edition. (Indiana University Press, 2005); E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations In Masculinity From The Revolution To The Modern Era* (Basic Books, 1994); John Modell, *Into One's Own: From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975* (University of California Press, 1991).

relationships, “either by your emotions, drives, and desires, or by some special pressure, where you go too deeply too soon.”<sup>50</sup> He wanted advisors to warn teens that both fickleness and “slavish ‘steadiness’ could be dangerous as they prevented a teenager for getting to know many different kinds of people. He admitted that multiple “crushes” were a normal part of going up, but it was not “wise to kiss and fondle several persons of the opposite sex” because it could lead to regrets and prevent teens from developing deep loyalties and friendships with members of the opposite sex.

Rice acknowledged it was difficult for teens to deal with the “tears and heartaches” that often accompanied young love, but felt that it was an important part of growing up. Teens learned from their mistakes and use these moments as opportunities to evaluate themselves and what they wanted out of a relationships. Rice also pointed out that it was important that teens learn to deal with conflicts in their relationships, not just with parents and friends, but also with their mates. Teens, he believed, should be reassured that the storm of emotions they felt were perfectly normal because, “there is literally a revolution going on inside of you both physically and emotionally.”<sup>51</sup> Teens needed to find healthy outlets for their emotions and learn to “live above your moods.” He suggested that teens find some type of work, either through a part time job or participation in school activities, “where you have to take responsibility, and even be industrious and cooperative when you don’t want to.” He even suggested finding a “violent outlet” such as football, wood working, or some other physical activity as a means to getting their emotions control so they did not get in the way of their schoolwork and relationships. As

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<sup>50</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 24.

<sup>51</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 24.

an alternative to physical outlets, Rice suggested quiet and creative outlets such as music, art, reading, small appliance repair, or coin collection.

If young people could not find an appropriate means to work out their emotions, Rice warned they ran the risk of falling into destructive behaviors and unhealthy relationships. Some of the pitfalls teens might encounter if they failed to deal with their moods included: retreating into a fantasy world, acting out sexually, developing unhealthy relationships with same sex friends, excessive masturbation, regression to infantile behaviors, and overeating. Rice was particularly concerned with unhealthy sexual outlets, which he believed needed immediate intervention, especially in the case of those who were overly demonstrative with members of their own sex. A devotion to same sex friends in early adolescence was normal, but in the later teen years, it “hints at something that needs correcting.”<sup>52</sup> Rice did not explicitly state that he was referring to same sex sexual relationships, but his meaning was clear.

Rice devoted the final section of his manual to a discussion of morality. He began with a comment about modesty and the body. He stated that the social imperative to cover one’s body, the use of “rather silly” euphemisms for body parts and functions, often reached levels of prudishness and caused undue reprimands for simple bodily exploration in young children. He did not object to modesty per se, but to the over-emphasis on certain codes. He stated, “it can well lead us to be more curious than we would be if were brought into line less sharply. We begin to feel that the moral code is a negative thing and humans tend to react against negations.”<sup>53</sup> As an alternative, Rice believed “the best moral code is affirmative, giving reasons

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<sup>52</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 26-28.

<sup>53</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 26-28.

why you do certain things rather than punishment if you do differently.”<sup>54</sup> Rice was not advocating abdication from rules altogether; he was simply concerned that censure was the least effective method for convincing teens that the “rules” of society were a necessary and good. He criticized extreme enforcement of rules, not the rules themselves. Awareness of the rules of sex and relationships was an essential lesson teens needed to learn to function in the world. Unlike Youth for Christ, LRY leaders and the youth themselves did not cling to a moral code that emphasized absolutes. Rice did not argue that modesty and polite talk about sexual body parts was necessarily the way that God would have wanted it – he and other LRY leaders simply wanted youth to understand that experimenting too far outside of social norms could have disproportionately damaging effects on youth if taken too far or among the wrong crowd.

Rice outlined several sources of “the moral code,” each with their own special form of enforcement: the state with laws, the church with commandments, society with taboos, and community with gossip. Rice’s discussion revolved around social taboos and to some extent gossip. In each of these arenas, Rice pointed out, there were “many severe, repressive and negative rules for [sex], and yet if you listen to the way some people talk, and know anything about the Kinsey report, many seem to be doing their best to break the rules.”<sup>55</sup> Once again, Rice is following a strong LRY tradition of utilizing relativism to examine social norms. While YFC demanded that their membership adhere to a strict and unyielding set of moral codes, LRY admitted that moral codes were subject to change based on surroundings, context, and peers.

Much like YFC, LRY organizers focused on the experience of love and its joys and perils. LRY organizers represented love was a transformative experience. Individuals who had a

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<sup>54</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 30.

<sup>55</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 33.

difficult home life or problems at school could “get a new lease on life through the potentialities and promises of love. Others use love to make up for their failures. You can climb and you can sink through love more reality than any other known way.”<sup>56</sup> Love was powerful because it “reveals how much we are dependent on others for our sense of well being, our challenge to achievement, and our failures and heartaches.”<sup>57</sup> Handling this complex experience when individuals were young helped youth to develop into healthy functioning adults. If it was not handled well in youth, the damage could last well into adulthood and affect all of an individual’s future relationships. Rice believed it was “healthy for individuals to fall in and out of love several times” and could “be very unhealthy for us to let love carry us too far too soon.”<sup>58</sup> LRY organizers cautioned youth about utilizing love to cover up problems in other arenas of life. They advocated for a methodical and thoughtful relationship, not because it was mandated by a higher power, but because it was in step with the biological and psychological development of human beings.

Falling in love was not, according to Rice, a good enough measure for making a decision to become physically intimate or not. If an individual chose to engage in physical intimacy with each and every individual they fell in love with through the course of their life, they ran the risk of subverting the moral code and gaining an unfavorable reputation. Getting a “reputation” at a young age could have several negative and long lasting effects on an individual. Rice stated, “Reputations are powerful, they affect our standing in the community and in our own eyes. Sometimes they hurt and shame us. Sometimes they are undeserved and we perversely try to

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<sup>56</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 34.

<sup>57</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 34.

<sup>58</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 34.

live them down.”<sup>59</sup> According to Rice, people needed to be well regarded by others in order to grow as an emotionally healthy person. The consequences for subverting social norms were not worth the fleeting pleasure gained from casual sexual dalliances. “Or society may not be perfect, lots of people may not be well behaved, but there are ideals and we suffer a very real pain when we fail to live up to the best we know.”<sup>60</sup> Once again, LRY organizers and advisors frequently found themselves in the position of avoiding absolutes but warning against the dangers or crossing societal norms and running afoul of the moral majority. While they did not encourage youth to “bring Jesus on dates” as Youth for Christ mentors did, LRY organizers cautioned their membership to avoid flaunting an unpopular set of morals in the wrong company. Interestingly, the currency of reputation was gained and lost in radically different ways for boys and girls.

Boys gained reputations among peers for being insincere, but girls gained a reputation by “kissing too much.” Teenagers may think that kissing was just a harmless physical pleasure, but Rice explained that kissing had several personal and social meanings. He explained, “Kissing is a way of showing affection, it is...a continuation of our infantile exploration of the world. It can be an innocent gesture, it can be something deep and significant between mature loving people, it can be a sad pretense and a sorry overture to an unhappy business. It gets us into the area of meaning, of control, of fulfillment.”<sup>61</sup>

Kissing, in Rice’s definition, had several dimensions: physical, social, and aesthetic. It was, in his words, “a curiously mixed experience.” On a physical level, kissing produced a sensuous feeling. He preferred not to use the word lust because of the negative connotation of the word.

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<sup>59</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 36.

<sup>60</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 36.

<sup>61</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 36.

Kissing was a social experience because it was a way to express that you enjoy the company of the other individual. It was an aesthetic experience because, “it is touched with beauty and romance and tender self-forgetfulness.” Rice thought that all of these meanings meant that kissing was a special experience, and therefore should not be treated lightly or given freely and without thought. “It is very important for your inner health that this newfound delight grow finer and richer. You may later experience it with others, but it is such a delicate matter that you have to handle it and control it wisely.”<sup>62</sup>

Rice framed his discussion of petting in terms of an essential conflict between nature and the moral code. Teens must learn to guide nature so that they could participate in society’s ultimate good – the family. The implicit message here is that if you disregard the moral code, you run the risk of losing access to this American dream. Whether an individual should pet or not, Rice advised, was a question each individual had to decide for themselves. The task was not easy, as natural urges were strong and social norms could be exacting. “Nature is never content with halfway measures. The moral code has a lot to say about what measures we shall take and when. Nature land the adolescent squarely into physical maturity...Nature urges us into a situation which society says we must be married to enjoy. The first steps of exploration [kissing and petting] do not content nature. She says go on! Wisdom, experience, say wait!” In this conflict Rice acknowledged the difficult tension teens felt. The period of prolonged adolescence typical in American at this time made it nearly impossible for young people to wait until marriage, especially for the middle class teenagers who were his imaginary audience. So why should teen bother to follow the moral code when it seems almost impossible to uphold. The rewards, Rice urged, were worth the wait – a happy family, a good career, a house filled with top

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<sup>62</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 37.

of the line appliances, cars, vacations. The American Dream was attainable for those who did not jeopardize their futures with unwise choices and potentially dangerous distractions in youth.

Additionally, the “private delights” available to married couples were without measure. He argued, “The relationship between husband and wife who love each other and appreciate their common life can be about the most perfect sex relationship known. All sorts of things beyond physical sex contribute to a happy and rewarding harmony. It is one of the noblest and most perfect fellowships possible for men and women.”<sup>63</sup> Individuals who seek happiness in alternative relationships would be sadly disappointed. The sexual wanderer of Hollywood fame may have been sexually satisfied, but he was essentially unhappy and angry. Promiscuity side tracked individuals and could have lasting effects, even worse than a tarnished reputation – sexually transmitted disease, pregnancy.

Rice’s essential message to teens was acting on every natural desire could be harmful. The sexual acts that brought a husband and wife closer together did not have the same meaning for “reckless young lovers” because “the latter is surreptitious, it is subject to discovery and constant fear, and it often creates guilt feelings and a sense of revulsion which has much to do with unhappiness and mismating later on in marriage.” Rice conceded that the act itself may not be harmful. The harm came from the emotional atmosphere in which the act takes place. He warned, “The possible physical harm of disease and pregnancy does not anywhere approach the more invisible and illusive, but actually more real by-product, guilt, fear and social disapproval.”<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, those who fail to wait develop unhealthy attitudes about sex, often viewing it as cheap, easy and distasteful and it irreparably damaged one’s view of himself or

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<sup>63</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 39.

<sup>64</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 40.

herself and others. This would make it difficult to form any lasting and valuable and nurturing relationships in the future. “You may forget consciously what you have done but you can’t ever forget unconsciously a certain scorn, and certain terror, at what was done.”<sup>65</sup> To avoid these pitfall, Rice wanted to encourage teens to establish an attitude will help them wait until marriage avoid situation that allow nature to take over. Rice’s final words of advice were: “We can have fun every day. We can enjoy all of life, but it’s wise to control the present, enjoying only that which contributes most to tomorrow, and mastering that which cheats the future.”

Rice’s manual may have been the foundational text for LRY members throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s when it came to sex and dating, but it was not the only example of adults employing the strategy of cutting youth off from making decisions about appropriate ways to handle sex, love, and dating. Perhaps one of the most striking examples of this strategy in action occurred in December 1964 at a LRY conference of adults discussing the capabilities of adolescents in the realm of love.

A panel of noted LRY adult leaders considered the question: “Is the adolescent capable of genuine love?” To this question, the keynote speaker, Karel F. Botermans, Minister of the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Marin California, stated that he believed adolescents were in fact capable of love but, like adults, they had to learn to love. And this lesson was a difficult one because of the breadth of what it meant to love another human being. He summarized the meaning of love in this way: “To truly love another person, or other people, that is to respect them, to affirm them as individuals, to fully communicate with them, to rejoice in their growth, in their fortune, to share and fell with them in their sorrow and misfortune; is a very difficult

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<sup>65</sup> Rev. William B. Rice, *Boy-Girl Relations, A manual for Leaders of High School Youth*, 41.

thing which does not come automatically and which most of us have to learn.”<sup>66</sup> He argued that ethics in human relationships should not be partitioned off into special areas. That is, one should not have different ethical standards for different types of relationship. According to Botermans, “An ethic, to be effective should exist for all of life, for an ethic has to do with what is right or what is wrong, with what is desirable or undesirable, with what is constructive or destructive in human relationships, all human relationships.”<sup>67</sup> He went on to point out that American society in the 1960s lacked a coherent and consistent ethic for treating other human beings. As a result, people often chose to act according to the situation, picking and choosing convenient standards as the moment allowed. Others chose to conform, acting according to other’s actions and/or words. He saw these as undesirable options and pointed out that there was a better way. He wanted individuals to try, either by themselves or with their friends, “to actively construct a working ethic according to which we want to control and guide our relationships with other people.”<sup>68</sup> He offered his own “improved golden rule” as an example of a consistent ethical framework for relationships: “Any judgment, norm, value, or way of conduct is right provided that it does not deny nor breakdown, but preferably strengthens and affirms, the inherent worth of each and every human individual involved, whether be now or in the future.”<sup>69</sup> According to

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<sup>66</sup> “Love and the Adolescent” A Talk given at the Liberal Religious Youth Conference in December 1964 by Karel F. Botermans, Minister, Unitarian-Universalist Church of Marin. Andover Harvard Theological Library 1157 Box 2 Folder 5) 4.

<sup>67</sup> “Love and the Adolescent” A Talk given at the Liberal Religious Youth Conference in December 1964 by Karel F. Botermans, Minister, Unitarian-Universalist Church of Marin. Andover Harvard Theological Library 1157 Box 2 Folder 5) 4.

<sup>68</sup> “Love and the Adolescent” A Talk given at the Liberal Religious Youth Conference in December 1964 by Karel F. Botermans, Minister, Unitarian-Universalist Church of Marin. Andover Harvard Theological Library bMS 1157/2 (5) 4.

<sup>69</sup> “Love and the Adolescent” A Talk given at the Liberal Religious Youth Conference in December 1964 by Karel F. Botermans, Minister, Unitarian-Universalist Church of Marin. Andover Harvard Theological Library 1157 Box 2 Folder 5) 4-5.

Botermans' definition, an individual always made an ethical choice in their relationships, whether conscious or not. These choices were made not only in relation to themselves and their partners, but also the myriad other individuals who are affected by their decisions. Choices made between individuals in a romantic relationship have repercussions for themselves, their friends, families and even the unborn child that may be born of their intimacy. Botermans challenged teens to think about these satellite relationships when making decisions with potential sex partners, but also in the context of "all aspect of living." According to Botermans, "the question of sex, and of what should and should not be done, when, where, and how" should be asked as part of a larger question about the direction a young person wanted to go in their lives, the kind of person he or she wanted to become, and how they were going to act in their relationships with people generally. The connection between one's personal life and their other relationships were, according to Botermans, directly related to a young person's growth as mature individuals who "realize that most choices that you make affect other lives as well as your own."

The content of Botermans' message and the document produced by Reverend Rice are strong representations of the ethics commonly represented among LRY youth, adult leaders, and adult advisors. LRY, unlike Youth for Christ, did not advocate for strong and unyielding moral absolutes. Referring to God's love or Jesus as a role model were rarely if ever means to persuade youth to make correct choices surround relationships, love, and sex. In LRY youth were encouraged to use their own reasoning skills to make productive choices.

## **PART 2: OPENING A DIALOGUE, 1967-1973**

As youth across the nation - in colleges and in high schools, expressed more distrust of adults, relying on expert advice and hard and fast rules developed by the over thirty set became an outmoded method of reaching young people. By 1966, the first cohort of baby boomers entered college and were beginning to make their voices heard on a national level. The seemingly widespread dissatisfaction of youth during this period was visible on college campuses. Less-well publicized was the effect these, sometimes fringe, college youth movements had on younger teenagers. Young people in high school were certainly aware of the rumblings on college campuses and identified with the struggles their college-aged brothers and sisters faced, particularly when it came to issues involving adult control over young peoples' futures. Thanks to the media and the efforts of the college students themselves, high school boys and girls during this middle period had a model of radical youth protest that the first set of baby boomers did not. Faced with the prospect of being drafted after high school graduation, many teenage men, developed a distrust for authority. Of course, radical student protest and protest against the Vietnam War did not always translate into anti-Vietnam war protest. For conservative evangelical Christian teens, many of whom did not object to the war or feel a connection to the radical left on college campuses, membership in youth culture was always filtered through their conservative worldview. The climate of the 1960s and rhetoric of a growing "generation gap" challenged adult leaders in both YFC and LRY to stay connected to issues that were important to youth in their organizations. This not only helped them to entice and retain youth in their organizations, but also to help them develop more effective programs and better answer to teenagers' concerns, especially those about sex. Youth for Christ focused

on defining love within a Biblical context and emphasized the importance of mature (married) love as the only acceptable basis for sexual intimacy. Discussions with young people in YFC revolved around how to strengthen one's relationship with God to prepare oneself for the long term commitment of marriage. Conversely, discussions with teenagers within LRY were more focused on understanding how young people themselves defined love. LRY did not point teens in the direction of the Bible, but instead sought to gather information from their membership about how love was defined in the teen world and what was and was not acceptable in that context. Both groups opened conversations, but the content of those discussions were very different.

### **CHAPTER 3: “SEX AND THE SINGLE TEEN”: YOUTH FOR CHRIST, 1967-1972**

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Youth for Christ supplemented the articles and advice they gave teens through the organizations magazine, with face to face discussion sessions at weekly Campus Life meetings. The topics covered at the weekly meetings covered a wide range of teen related topics, including love and sex. Covering these topics in face to face meetings represented a departure from YFC's earlier strategy of offering solicited and unsolicited advice through magazine articles. Instead of simply offering information from experts to help teens navigate their tumultuous teen years, YFC organizers engaged in a dialogue with teenagers about love and sex. Whereas the early period was dominated by adult authored prescriptive advice via feature articles and advice columns, the second cohort of baby boomers engaged in the conversation with adults through structured group discussions. The contrast from the early 1960s to the late 1960s is striking - the late 1960s model indicates that YFC adult leadership made a much more concerted effort to treat teens as rational, thoughtful, and mature young adults who were ultimately capable of making their own decisions.

YFC's new approach to dealing with issues related to sexuality, was part of larger structural changes within the group during these years, specifically the shift away from large rallies in favor of smaller weekly meetings with both saved and unsaved youth.<sup>70</sup> YFC leaders devised this new format in order to appeal to a new cohort of baby boomers, who were becoming increasingly suspicious of adults and their motivations. Empowered by the protests and activities of their older brothers and sisters on college campuses, young people were becoming

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<sup>70</sup> I discussed this shift in greater detail in the Introduction.

more vocal about their distrust of adults.<sup>71</sup> Actually, the rift between adults and teens had been growing for some time. Adults began noting a shift in middle class youth culture in the mid 1960s. From the adult perspective, teenagers, even middle class college bound teenagers, were becoming unruly, less interested in adult guidance, and more concerned with rebellion than conformity. Some social commentators attributed this shift to permissive parenting and educational philosophies of the 1950s and 1960s; some blamed the shift on the influence of popular musicians and the media who glamorized youthful rebellion and self-indulgence, and the adults who were too busy replacing a self-disciplined work ethic with a fun ethic to notice a generation in crisis. As historian Grace Palladino has pointed out, the unprecedented size of the baby boomer generation made what was actually an evolutionary change in generational relations seem like an immediate and unprecedented revolution.<sup>72</sup> Revolution or no revolution, by the mid 1960s, adults had begun to lose their influence over teens.<sup>73</sup>

This situation could spell disaster for a youth serving institution like YFC. The last thing YFC organizers wanted was to lose their influence over teens' moral decision making process, especially during an era when traditional family values and Christian moral frameworks seemed to be giving way to a new morality based on situational ethics. So, beginning in the mid 1960s, YFC overhauled the program. By the late 1960s, YFC was ready to introduce a new program format, designed to recruit teens to Christianity and reinforce the Christian values of existing

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<sup>71</sup> Gael Graham, *Young Activists : American High School Students in the Age of Protest* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006).

<sup>72</sup> Grace Palladino, *Teenagers : An American History* (New York: BasicBooks, 1996).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid; Graham, *Young Activists : American High School Students in the Age of Protest*; Thomas Hine, *The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager*, 1st ed. (New York: Bard, 1999); Jon Savage, *Teenage : The Creation of Youth Culture* (New York: Viking, 2007); Kelly Schrum, *Some Wore Bobby Sox : The Emergence of Teenage Girls' Culture, 1920-1945*, 1st ed., Girls' History & Culture Book Series (New York ; Houndmills, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Ilana Nash, *American Sweethearts : Teenage Girls in Twentieth-Century Popular Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); Wini Breines, *Young, White, and Miserable : Growing up Female in the Fifties* (Boston: Beacon Books, 1992).

members of the group. The program was based around two types of meetings - Impact and Insight. Organizers designed Impact meetings to be an introduction to Christian life and ethics. Insight meetings featured in depth discussions for those who already identified as Christians. Meetings, which were most often led by adults, followed a guided discussion format based on pre-constructed materials that included an introductory script followed by discussion questions and some suggested activities. An example of this new approach is evident in the tone of the suggested introductory script for those leading the “Sex and Single Student” discussions:

First, let me say that I have worked with high school men and women long enough to know that you are going to live your life the way that you want to live it...and nothing that I say is really going to make a difference. However, if I can say something that will be of help to even one individual, my time will be well spent. I also want to say that if I should mention something within the next few minutes that you disagree with, I am not trying to put you down or make you feel bad. I am simply trying to share some of the things that have helped me personally. I hope that they will help you too.<sup>74</sup>

The difference in tone from the early period is obvious. Instead of employing expertise and offering condescending advice, this introductory speech invites leaders to treat teens as equals who are capable of making rational decisions.

Campus Life Clubs were an important development during this period, offering youth girls the opportunity to define their gender through Youth for Christ activities as well as emphasize traditional Christian values. Campus Life Clubs offered a wide variety of activities specifically aimed at girls throughout the 1970s. The types of activities that were suggested for

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<sup>74</sup> Campus Life Impact Insight Director’s Manual, IV 1971, 55 BGC Archives, Box 10 Folder 11. The choice of “Sex and the Single Student: for this particular talk is an obvious reference to Helen Gurley Brown, *Sex and the Single Girl* (New York: B. Geis Associates; distributed by Random House, 1962).

girls included slumber parties, fashion shows, mini- pageants, and charm schools.<sup>75</sup> These activities features a two pronged approach to helping young girls develop into strong Christian women. In addition to helping girls work on their spiritual selves by building a relationship with Jesus Christ, the “girls only” activities also focused on helping girls work on their appearances and their charm, as essential elements of their personal growth. Each activity served a specific purpose in the program – Evangelism, Christian Growth, Image Building, Fellowship, or Fundraising. The first three were the most important and therefore involved more elaborate planning. Significantly, the most elaborate activities in each were those that incorporated gender specific growth activities. Slumber parties were opportunities for evangelism geared to girls’ interests, Miss Campus Life Contests, and fashion shows an opportunity for image building, and charm schools a place for Christian growth.

Of these “girls only,” activities, the charm schools were the most elaborate. The philosophy behind Campus Life sponsored charm schools was, “to provide professional training on the “art of being a woman” with a uniquely Christian emphasis on inner beauty.”<sup>76</sup> The emphasis on charm and self-improvement was first and foremost an exercise in individual growth, but it was also a means to becoming a better witness for Christ and increasing the number of souls she brought to Christ. A girl had to look and act her best because, “Others will never be drawn to Christ unless they are first drawn to His representative.”<sup>77</sup> The message here was clear, in order to attract followers to Christ, a girl had to be as attractive as she could be. Charm school classes were geared towards helping girls achieve “balance in [their] daily living”

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<sup>75</sup> “Campus Life Girls Staff Manual”, n.d BGC 48 Box 10 Folder 5.

<sup>76</sup> Campus Life Girls Staff Manual n.d BGC 48 Box 10 Folder 5.

<sup>77</sup> Campus Life Girls Staff Manual n.d BGC 48 Box 10 Folder 5 pg 71.

by focusing four areas of life, the mental, physical, social, and spiritual.<sup>78</sup> However, the schools were overwhelmingly focused on self-presentation and dating.

The charm schools were patterned after sororities and given the name Delta Kappa (DK), meaning Daughters of the King. Girls enrolled in the school, paid a fee and met for brunch on two Saturdays a month for five months. Each meeting focused on a specific topic. Local experts, usually Christian women, were brought in to instruct the girls. Individual clubs could choose their own program but the suggested weekly topics included:

- 1) That's Me! - - attitudes, discipline, being intellectually alert, recognizing beauty in people and things...
- 2) The King's Daughter -- ...being the total you, qualifications for a princess...
- 3) Winning the Battle of the Bulge - - from dumpling to darling.
- 4) The Magic of Posture and Poise - - walking, standing, sitting, getting in and out of cars, modeling, stage presence, voice tone and quality.
- 5) Your Crowning Glory - - hair care, styling, and wigs
- 6) Social Confidence - - etiquette of dating, dining, letter writing, phone, gratitude, family respect, girl leadership as related to Campus Life club.
- 7) Wardrobe Wisdom - - fads; developing good taste; coordinating clothes, personality, and accessories; planning a clothes budget.
- 8) "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall..." - - skin care, diet, make-up, general body care, S-M-I-L-E.
- 9) The Male Animal: What a guy looks for in a girl - - taught by YFC director: covers femininity, standards, steady relationships, common sense re: girl watchers.
- 10) Sex and Gal Talk - - taught by Christian lady gynecologist.<sup>79</sup>

It is clear from the list of course themes that body management accounted for at least half of a girl's charm project, followed by dating, etiquette, and social skills. The required reading material for the course also reflected this emphasis. Enrollees were required to read all or part of five books; *Facts of Life and Love* by Evelyn Millis Duvall, *Why Wait Till Marriage*, also by Duvall, *The Art of Dating* by Duvall and Charlene Johnson, *That Girl in Your Mirror* by Vonda

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<sup>78</sup> Campus Life Girls Staff Manual n.d BGC 48 Box 10 Folder 5 pg 71.

<sup>79</sup> Campus Life Girls Staff Manual n.d BGC 48 Box 10 Folder 5 pg 73.

Kay Van Dyke, and Charlene Johnson's *Altogether Lovely*.<sup>80</sup> Two of these five books were dedicated to dating and sexual morality; the other two were primarily beauty manuals.<sup>81</sup> Girls were tested on materials twice during the semester and received a final grade based partially on the outcome of these tests and their regularly submitted reading reports. The final 50% of the grade was based on "Personal improvement" which could take into account everything from weight loss to enhanced physical appearance.<sup>82</sup>

The presumed appeal and usefulness of these activities for girls was based on a gendered understanding of adolescent development and psychology. According to the Girls Staff Training Manual, "a girl's "role" or identity is determined by her sexual role, that of wife and mother or preparing to be a wife and mother. Girls' ultimate role in life was seen as holding the standard for being "feminine" or "womanly."<sup>83</sup> Because young women's identity was determined by her sex, which was a matter of nature rather than accomplishment, "girls are concerned more with "being" than "doing" which accounts for that fact that there are more male achievers in our society than female. Women are motivated by society to "be" while men are motivated to "do".<sup>84</sup> This understanding of gender difference reinforced the gender divisions and expectations found in mainstream society where boys and girls often strived to achieve different goals. Club staff members were advised to keep these differences in mind while assisting club

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<sup>80</sup> Evelyn Ruth Mills Duvall, *Love and the Facts of Life; Replacing Her Facts of Life and Love for Teen-Agers* (New York,: Association Press, 1963); Evelyn Ruth Duvall and Joy Johnson, *The Art of Dating*, [Rev. ed. (New York,: Association Press, 1967); Evelyn Ruth Duvall, *Why Wait Till Marriage?* (London,: Hodder & Stoughton, 1966). Vonda Kay Van Dyke, *That Girl in Your Mirror* (Westwood, N.J.,: F.H. Revell Co., 1966). Char Crawford and Ray Johnson, *Altogether Lovely; a Book for Teen-Age Girls* (Rock Island, Ill.,: Augustana Press, 1960).

<sup>81</sup> Campus Life Girls Staff Manual n.d BGC 48 Box 10 Folder 5 pg 73.

<sup>82</sup> Campus Life Girls Staff Manual n.d BGC 48 Box 10 Folder 5 pg 76.

<sup>83</sup> Campus Life Girls Staff Manual n.d BGC 48 Box 10 Folder 5 pg 39 – 40.

<sup>84</sup> Campus Life Girls Staff Manual n.d BGC 48 Box 10 Folder 5 pg 40.

members in their search for self-identity and in preparation for their future roles as wives and mothers.

In addition to planning girls-only activities and helping teen girls navigate the physical and emotional changes they were experiencing, a female staff member acted as a role model for teen girls by modeling good behavior. She accomplished this in two ways; first through modeling appropriate behavior in her ministry with teen girls and in her interactions with fellow staff members, and second, through the execution of her staff duties. Female staff members were advised that, “Girls are very impressionable. If they like you they will copy you. Make sure that your life is one that would make a good pattern.”<sup>85</sup> According to training materials, the ideal female staff member was genuine, sincere, a good listener, aggressively friendly, flexible, dependable, and emotionally and spiritually mature. She had good communication skills, a strong sense of self-identity, was self-motivated, intelligent (capable of recognizing and problem and finding a solution), and demonstrated attitudes that were in line with the methods and values of Youth for Christ/Campus Life. As for appearance, she was well groomed and dressed appropriately. In her interactions with students, her role was to be the “mother/sister image, spiritual leader, and above all friend” to the girls and “to the guys she [was] a sister image, spiritual leader, a friend.”<sup>86</sup> The difference in her duties to young woman and young men is significant. Unlike her responsibilities with girls, she was not instructed to take on a motherly role with the boys in the group. This can be attributed to the fact that female staff members, on the whole, did not serve in positions of authority within the group, except in their interactions with female students.

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<sup>85</sup> Campus Life Girls Staff Manual n.d BGC 48 Box 10 Folder 5 pg 40.

<sup>86</sup> Campus Life Girls Staff Manual n.d BGC 48 Box 10 Folder 5 pg 21.

Outside of their work with teen girls, female staff were expected take on a supporting role by performing “traditional” female tasks and acting as the Club Director’s “Girl Friday” - making and taking phone calls and doing errands for the club such as picking materials for games, and making and serving club refreshments during club meetings. In general, a girls’ staff member was advised ‘not [to] be a clinging vine and monopolize the Club director’s time with a host of unimportant tasks.’<sup>87</sup> She should instead, “be alert to do all you can to relieve the Club Director of responsibility and ‘small tasks’”.<sup>88</sup> Additionally, she was to “Act toward the club director as you would to a brother whom you want to be a success.”<sup>89</sup> In “matters of disagreement” with the club director, a girls’ staff member was to “realize that girls get emotionally involved in the decision to be made” and therefore should remember that, “Usually the man is right.”<sup>90</sup> Given this supporting role and the rationale behind it, it is clear that teen girls and adult women could take on some leadership responsibilities, but the levels they could practically reach were limited. Adult women were offered very few opportunities to serve in the highest positions in both local groups and the national leadership. While some women did rise in the ranks, their numbers were relatively few compared to their male counterparts. At all levels of the organization, women were expected to perform supportive tasks that did not compete with or contradict the wishes or activities of the male leadership.

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<sup>87</sup> Campus Life Girls Staff Manual n.d BGC 48 Box 10 Folder 5 pg 21.

<sup>88</sup> “The Role of Girls Staff” Campus Life Insight/Impact: Director’s Manual IV (1971) page 122 BGC 48 Box 10 Folder 11

<sup>89</sup> “The Role of Girls Staff” Campus Life Insight/Impact: Director’s Manual IV (1971) page 122 BGC 48 Box 10 Folder 11.

<sup>90</sup> “The Role of Girls Staff” Campus Life Insight/Impact: Director’s Manual IV (1971) page 122 BGC 48 Box 10 Folder 11.

Youth for Christ recognized that barring women from authority positions altogether would alienate an evolving population of teenage girls. However, they clung to their unwavering sense of right and wrong and traditional gender roles by limiting women's authority and by clearly assigning them support tasks. By offering women limited positions of authority in the group, Youth for Christ modeled the ideal family for members of the group. Women should have authority in the home as partners to their husbands, but should not have the ability to mount serious resistance to the husband's wishes. In short, women could be in positions of authority over other women, but they should not be disobedient to the wishes of men under any circumstances.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s program materials, YFC conceptualized and explained love in three ways – love for self, others, and God. The language they used to explain the three types of love varied slightly over the years but the meanings and relationship between the three remained essentially unchanged. The concepts were couched in the larger context of Christian morality, intra- and inner-relationships, and whole person ideology. YFC broke down relationships into three categories: horizontal (toward god), vertical (toward others), and inner (toward one's self) relationships.<sup>91</sup> At the heart of each relationship was a particular type of love. Different types of love were not, however, mutually exclusive but depended on each of the others. For a teen to know and discover true love s/he had to first know God's love. S/he had to discover how these three types of love fit together – to put them in their proper place in the context of their whole life. Ideally, a young person would learn to accept a hierarchy of

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<sup>91</sup> Campus Life Insight Manual BGC Archives Box 10, Folder 12.

relationships - God first, others second, self last. This hierarchy of relationships acted as a benchmark for teens seeking true love.<sup>92</sup>

Christian morality was based upon a concern, or love, for self, others, and God, as outlined in the Bible. When explaining ethics, YFC broke down Christian ethics/morality into three basic categories: authority, motivations, and duty or responsibility. The authority of the word of God as a guide for human behavior was paramount. Responsibility, described as “morality with a mission,” was a second, and equally important, element of Christian ethics, including both personal responsibility to be the best human you can be, as well as one’s responsibility to treat others well and help them realize their best human potential. Within the matrix of Christian morality, love fell under the category of motivation. YFC reminded teens that, “Love holds the supreme place in the Christian moral ideal” as outlined in the Bible in Luke 10:27: “Thou shall love the lord thy God, with all thy heart, soul, mind....love thy neighbor as thyself.”<sup>93</sup> Looking once again to the Bible for definition, in particular I Corinthians 13 (Phillips) they outlined the qualities of love as: patient, constructive, gracious, realistic, mannerly, unselfish, positive, enduring, trusting. These elements of Christian morality were to serve as the backdrop for all relationships. Love was at the heart of Christian morality. Cultivating the above qualities was mandated by the Bible, the core motivation of all action, and an essential part of their responsibility to self and others.

As far as YFC officials were concerned, establishing healthy relationships in one category depended on the maintenance of healthy relationships in the others. Once again, we see influence of total person ideology at work. The interrelated nature of these relationships came

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<sup>92</sup> Campus Life Insight Manual BGC Archives Box 10, Folder 12.

<sup>93</sup> Campus Life Insight Manual BGC Archives Box 10, Folder 12.

from the fact that humans are social beings and therefore a conflict in one area would affect all of the others. Additionally, a conflict with one human being had the potential to cause dissonance in the whole. They explained it like this:

...any conflict in these three basic areas of a relationship automatically affect other individuals. Example: if a teenager is full of inner conflict (inward relationships), it usually affects how he behaves towards other people. If he is at odds with God, then he probably can't stand himself either. Jesus said it was impossible to pray to God (maintain a right relationship with God) unless man was also right with his fellowman. In the Lord's prayer we ask forgiveness of God EVEN AS WE FORGIVE OTHERS.<sup>94</sup>

Examining this explanation it becomes clear how central building a relationship with God was to the establishment of healthy relationships with individuals and the importance it had for the healthy functioning and future prospects of individual Christian teens. In this passage, YFC leaders are essentially setting up the patterns that informed their more practical advice about dating. Understanding the proper place of love in relationships as they played out in terms of Christian ethics was a key point to "getting" what they would say about dating. Successful navigation of the dating scene and successful management of one's romantic life was part of a larger management of one's relationships. Finding true love and establishing a romantic relationship sanctified by God depended on getting right with the Lord.

The vertical relationship towards God was the most important and took priority over all other relationships. From this perspective, an individual was incapable of building good relations with others without having established a good relationship with God. "Vertical

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<sup>94</sup> Campus Life Insight Manual BGC Archives Box 10, Folder 12.

relationships must be established before horizontal relationships can be made right.”<sup>95</sup> The supreme relationship for all Christians was their relationship to God. According to programming materials, it was important that teenagers were aware of the three types of vertical relationships s/he maintained “heavenward” corresponding to the three aspects of the holy trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each of these three relationships required a different type of maintenance. To the Holy Spirit the relationship was defined by justification, prayer and sin; to the father it was defined by sanctification, Bible study and disobedience. To Jesus, heirship, fellowship (I John 1: 3, 6, 7) and unbelief.<sup>96</sup> Getting all of these straight was an important part of spiritual maturity and the first step in creating a basis for right relationships with others, to self and in their friendships as well as their romantic life.

Teens seeking love advice were, of course, most concerned about love for others. After establishing the supremacy of Jesus’ love, YFC officials moved onto the business of human relationships. The lesson here was that the same rules still applied. Teens were told to be a mirror of Jesus’ love. In this area they were concerned with providing teens with a sort of guidebook for understanding their relationships with others, tying the relationship between vertical and horizontal together as a way to establish “a new practical relationship with others.”<sup>97</sup> They were not only concerned with what teens thought about these things but were ultimately interested in giving them some advice about how to practically manage the challenge of developing relationships with others. The relationships they tackled included those with the adult world and the peer world. Adult-teen relationships included parents, teachers and other

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<sup>95</sup> Campus Life Insight Manual BGC Archives Box 10 Folder 12.

<sup>96</sup> Campus Life Insight Manual BGC Archives Box 10 Folder 12.

<sup>97</sup> Campus Life Insight Manual BGC Archives Box 10, Folder 12.

authority figures in their lives; teen world included those they counted as friends as well as classmates and peers. Pointing to the Biblical verse (John 2: 9-11). Teens were encouraged to explore how these connections could work in their own lives in their relationships with the adult world as well as the teen world. The outcome, they were reminded, also depended on establishing a balanced life. Balanced in this case meant that one's physical, spiritual, mental and social worlds were in proper balance.

Inner relationships involved self-dignity, worth, acceptance, and identity and their relationship to his/her acceptance of God. Using Psalm 8: 4-9 as a starting point, YFC discussed the inner relationship based on "questions that have plagued man since time began." Specifically, they were concerned with the questions: Who am I? (self-identity), what am I? (self acceptance), Why am I? (self worth), and where did I come from (Self dignity).<sup>98</sup> The primary goal in these discussions was to get teens to adopt a healthy relationship with self and distinguish between harmful self-talk and belief and productive image building. This meant discovering and reflecting upon the difference between acceptance and pride, self worth and self centeredness, identity and selfishness as well as understanding what it meant to be made in God's image and how that was connected to self worth and dignity. It also meant that teens had to come to terms with the destructive power of sin for individuals' sense of self worth and dignity. Sin damaged one's relationship with God but it had even more dire consequences for an individual's relationship and opinion on him/herself. Failure to accept oneself could damage one's relationship with God, lead them down a dangerous path of sin destroying one's inward relationships as well as one's ability to create and maintain healthy relationships with others.

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<sup>98</sup> Campus Life Insight Manual BGC Archives Box 10, Folder 12.

In addition to theological arguments, YFC also used modern sociological understanding to talk about the connectedness of self and others. However, they infused it with religious meaning. YFC highlighted man's need for security, status, acceptance (being loved) and fulfillment as areas where one could see the interrelatedness of the vertical, inward and horizontal relationships at work.<sup>99</sup> In reference to the self, YFC was concerned with distinguishing their brand of self-love and acceptance from some of the more mainstream articulations of self-love. In particular they focused on drawing distinctions between Christian ethics and two contemporary approaches to morality that were getting a lot of press in the era: the playboy philosophy and situational ethics.

YFC's discussion of love was much more expansive than a focus on the romantic type of love many teens were thinking of as they wrote into the magazine and attended weekly meetings. In some ways this is by design. Youth for Christ organizers were careful to include discussions of mainstream portrayals of love in their weekly meeting and in the magazine but they also did quite a bit to distance themselves from these popular notions that seemed to place physical intimacy and the physical expression of love above other expressions and understandings. But, what about romance? When it came to issues of love, Christian teens writing into the magazines, like most of their peers, were primarily concerned with romantic love and heterosexual dating practices. They often wrote asking for advice about how to reconcile their romantic feelings with the type of love discussed in Christian ethics. They were looking for ways to draw the two together. They knew that the types of love being advertised and promoted in popular culture were not necessarily the types of love being discussed in their churches and their weekly youth meetings. But they struggled to come to terms with the points of intersection and divergence

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<sup>99</sup> Campus Life Insight Manual BGC Archives. Box 10, Folder 12.

between the two. Although the teens that had involved themselves in YFC were undoubtedly committed to their faith, they were also inundated with popular expressions of love on a daily basis. The convergence of these two understandings of love could cause further confusion over the meaning of love and its proper place in a teenager's spiritual and social life. Of course, the answer was tied to finding balance. YFC's use of the whole person ideology as a method for explaining and working through some of the contradictions that inevitably arose, was key. In this way they were able to attend to teens spiritual needs as Christians as well as their social needs as Christian teenagers on the dating scene. The bulk of teenager questions about dating and love revolved around two topics: proper dating etiquette - the practical side of finding love and growing heterosexual relationships, and more metaphysical questions such as how do I know this is true love? How do I know this is "the one" God meant for me?

To some degree the answer to the question what is true love was answered in the more general discussion of Christian ethics. But this is not what the teenagers meant. They meant to learn how to distinguish between friendship, infatuation, lust and true love. The first step to true love was surrender, first to God and then to each other. Following the "God first" principle articulated in the categorization of Christian relationships, teenagers were advised that the only path to finding one's true love was through God.

Much of this advice was very similar to the advice being given out in the early 1960s period and indeed, the basic message of the advice rarely changed. However, what characterizes the late 1960s and early 1970s was the number and variety of questions being entertained by YFC. Questions that had been out of bounds just a few years earlier were being given full attention by organizers and leaders. With the more widespread availability of the pill and the increasingly open attitude towards sexuality throughout the decade, YFC changed their tactics to

stay relevant to teens.<sup>100</sup> The old explanations, reasoning, and warnings about petting, or “making out” remained, but they also began addressing a wider range of teens' sexual questions as well. With the introduction of the Campus Life Impact/Insight meetings, YFC began a more direct and open dialogue about sex. The bottom line was the same: abstinence was the only option that fit within Christian morality, but they began a more open and explicit dialogue about sexuality and Christianity. Teens were encouraged to ask questions about previously unmentionable topics beyond petting and intercourse, including, masturbation, oral sex, and homosexuality (anonymously of course).<sup>101</sup> The decision to move to a more open dialogue with teens about sex was prompted by YFC's desire to reach out to more teens.

The primary forum for these discussions was the Impact meetings, which were designed to reach non-Christians or Christian leaning students who had not been born again. In order to reach the new breed of sexually savvy and knowledgeable teens they were recruiting, they had to adopt a new strategy for talking to teens about sex. The 1968 Impact Manual included a template for a “Discussion on Sex and Morality.” A similar but more detailed and varied format was presented in subsequent years under the title “Sex and the Single Student.” The 1968 introduction to the teaching materials contained an explanation of the reasoning behind the

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<sup>100</sup> Elizabeth Siegel Watkins, *On the Pill : A Social History of Oral Contraceptives, 1950-1970* (Baltimore, Md. ; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Linda Gordon, *The Moral Property of Women : A History of Birth Control Politics in America* (Urbana Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2002); Andrea Tone, *Controlling Reproduction : An American History* (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 1997); Elizabeth Reis, *American Sexual Histories*, Blackwell Readers in American Social and Cultural History (Malden, Mass. ; Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001); Elaine Tyler May, *America and the Pill : A History of Promise, Peril, and Liberation* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2010); Hilary Radner and Moya Luckett, *Swinging Single : Representing Sexuality in the 1960s* (Minneapolis, MN ; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Jeffrey Escoffier, *Sexual Revolution* (New York: Thunder Mouth Press, 2003); Linda Grant, *Sexing the Millennium : Women and the Sexual Revolution*, 1st ed. (New York: Grove Press, 1994); Mary P. Ryan, *Mysteries of Sex : Tracing Women and Men through American History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War : The Sexual Revolution, an Unfettered History* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Sheila Jeffreys, *Anticlimax : A Feminist Perspective on the Sexual Revolution* (London: Women's Press, 1990).

<sup>101</sup> Campus Life Impact Manual 1968 page 64 BGC Archives. Box 10, Folder 8.

discussion. Having been asked by parents about the difference between contemporary high school men and women and those of the past, the author stated that “the most notable change ...is that today’s young people are not afraid to say what they think or believe. Never have high school students been so honest [with adults].”<sup>102</sup> Teens were encouraged to be honest about their feelings about sex and give others a chance to be honest. The format for the meeting called for a few ice-breaker games, followed by a discussion based on three questions: “Who sets the standards on a date...the guy, the girl, or her other?” “What determines how far you go on a date?” and “is pre-marital sex right or wrong?” In 1969, Campus Life introduced a modified format based on a new set of questions, which included questions about the purpose of sex, the meaning of “total fulfillment,” and the reasoning behind keeping sex within the bounds of marriage. In 1971, discussion leaders chose between the two formats, depending on the level of Christian commitment in the group. In this third incarnation of the discussion, teens would also be encouraged to submit anonymous questions “related to guys’ and girls’ relationships” but not “questions of a medical nature.”<sup>103</sup>

The exclusion of “medical questions” provided leaders with an opportunity to discuss the meaning of sex (for Christians) without having to discuss the physical details of intercourse and other sex acts. Still, leaders using the open question format were advised to be ready to handle other issues besides premarital sex and abstinence including “the difference between male and female sexuality, masturbation, practical guidelines in controlling one’s sexual desires, or

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<sup>102</sup> Campus Life Impact Manual 1968 page 64 BGC Archives. Box 10, Folder 8.

<sup>103</sup> Campus Life Impact Manual 1968 page 64 BGC Archives. Box 10, Folder 8. In contrast to youth ministers’ aversion to discussing the medical and physical aspects of sexuality with teenagers, evangelicals often took a very detailed approach to sex and pleasure when addressing adult married couples. This is detailed in: Amy DeRogatis, “What Would Jesus Do? Sexuality and Salvation in Protestant Evangelical Sex Manuals, 1950s-Present”, *Church History*, March 2005 Volume 75, Issue 1, 97-138.

perversion such as homosexuality.”<sup>104</sup> The likely reasons for YFC's trepidation regarding medical inquiries were twofold: first, one of the primary goals of the talk was to deal with the issue of premarital sex and to build a case for abstinence before marriage. Providing teens with explanations of the biological aspects of the sex act was beyond the scope of the discussion and in some cases outside of the comfort zone of both the adults and teens present. Second, there was a presumption that the teens attending the meetings “know a lot about the plumbing, but not much about the meaning.”<sup>105</sup> Their job was to provide an explanation of why teens should abstain from sex, not a blueprint for how to engage in sex acts. YFC were also likely also trying to sidestep the issues of birth control and abortion which had become a hot topic in American society, due in large part to the efforts of feminists to expand access to birth control and legalize abortion.<sup>106</sup> In fact, throughout the 1970s, I only found 2 articles focusing on abortion in *Campus Life*, one in 1977 and another in 1978. Both articles were anti abortion, one was a cautionary tale about the dangers of abortion while the other was a general explanation about why abortion was wrong.<sup>107</sup> Opening up a discussion of the biological aspects of sex would have left room for questions about these topics which may have led to more teen questions why they were wrong. Group leaders, who were not medical professionals, may have feared that they would find themselves fielding questions they were not qualified to answer from a medical

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<sup>104</sup> Campus Life Impact Insight Directors Manual IV 1970, 55. BGC Archives, Box 10, Folder 11.

<sup>105</sup> Campus Life Impact Insight Directors Manual IV 1970, 55. BGC Archives, Box 10, Folder 11.

<sup>106</sup> Laura Kaplan. *The Story of Jane: The Legendary Underground Feminist Abortion Service*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1995); Kristin Luker. *Dubious Conceptions: The Politics of Teenage Pregnancy*. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996); Leslie J Reagan *When Abortion Was a Crime: Women, Medicine, and Law in the United States, 1867-1973*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Rickie Solinger. *Abortion Wars: A Half Century of Struggle, 1950-2000*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). Andrea Tone. *Devices and Desires: A History of Contraceptives in America*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001).

<sup>107</sup> “I Never Promised You Disneyland”, *Campus Life*, (August/September 1977), 31; “The Abortion”, *Campus Life*, (April 1978), 78.

perspective. Their focus on chastity certainly included a warning about teen pregnancy, but they did not include information about how to prevent pregnancy through birth control, or terminate an unwanted pregnancy. From the perspective of those trying to encourage teenagers to remain virgins until marriage, it would have seemed like a mixed message.

Youth for Christ certainly had reason to believe that their teen audiences had a working knowledge of the mechanics of sex. However, while YFC was quick to attribute this knowledge to “latrine walls,” it is much more likely that teens received their information about sex through much more mainstream and sanitized sources, namely mainstream American culture and media and the public school system. The impetus behind many of these changes regarding frank talk to conservative Christian teens can partially be traced back to the value free sexual education movement in the United States. Beginning in the early 1960s, a group of educational reformers and medical professionals launched a campaign to establish a value-free sexual education curriculum in public schools.<sup>108</sup> The response to efforts varied from region to region and often split along religious lines. Evangelicals believed the public school system was an inappropriate venue for such discussions, while more liberal segments of the population were more apt to see the possible benefits of handing these discussions over to professional educators. In the end, the conflict played itself out in individual school boards throughout the nation. While sex education programs were nonexistent in some parts of the country, in many others publicly funded sex

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<sup>108</sup> Kristin Luker, *When Sex Goes to School : Warring Views on Sex--and Sex Education--since the Sixties*, 1st ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006); Janice M. Irvine, *Talk About Sex : The Battles over Sex Education in the United States* (Berkeley, Calif. ; London: University of California Press, 2002); Claudia Nelson and Michelle H. Martin, *Sexual Pedagogies : Sex Education in Britain, Australia, and America 1879-2000* (New York ; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Susan Kathleen Freeman, *Sex Goes to School : Girls and Sex Education before the 1960s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008); James R. Cook, "The Evolution of Sex Education in the Public Schools of the United States, 1900-1970" (Dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 1971); Julian B. Carter, "Birds, Bees, and Venereal Disease: Toward an Intellectual History of Sex Education," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10, no. 2 (April 2001); Jeffrey P. Moran, *Teaching Sex : The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20th Century* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Harvard University Press, 2000).

education in schools became common place.

Even if teens did not participate in a sex education program in school, it would have been difficult to completely avoid exposure to sexual information in this decade. As many scholars have pointed out, there was a proliferation of sex related materials and a gradual opening up of sexuality at this time, so much so that even mainstream media outlets felt compelled to comment.<sup>109</sup> Mainstream commentary on changing American mores regarding sex, combined with a and increasingly sexualized popular culture meant that teens were becoming more and more free to ask questions and get answers about sex. Whether or not the information they received was accurate is another matter.

The major thread that runs through this period is a changing methodology in having the same discussions with the same basic points to teens. Whether in the early 1960s or early 1970s, as far as YFC was concerned the bottom line was quite simple: abstinence before marriage was the only acceptable option within Christian morality. However, the reasoning behind the call for abstinence was not as simple as “because God said so in the Bible.” That was certainly part of the answer, a big part. However, by the late 1960s and early 70s, YFC was less interested in articulating this well-known point, and more interested in explaining the purpose of sex as envisioned by God, God’s reasoning behind establishing guidelines for human sexual fulfillment, and finally, the benefits of premarital abstinence for both the individual and couple.

YFC followed a pretty tight script when explaining the importance of choosing chastity. First, they acknowledged the naturalness of sex and sexual desire. Sex was, after all, invented by God: “did you know that God invented sex? He knows all about it! Sex was not only created

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<sup>109</sup> "The Second Sexual Revolution," *Time*, January 24 1964.

to propagate the race, but to express love in a way that words cannot express.”<sup>110</sup> Not only did God invent sex, he intended sex to be enjoyable. It was not dirty or vulgar but rather a “beautiful experience that can be shared by two people who are joined together physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually...He made it for the ultimate expression of a deep and permanent love relationship.”<sup>111</sup> Despite the fact that God created sex and intended it to be a beautiful experience, YFC warned teens that “many people would never experience the full meaning of sex because they are willing to settle for a lesser experience on an animalistic level.”

<sup>112</sup> These individuals cheapened the experience by refusing to follow the guidelines God set in the Bible with regard to this facet of life – guidelines that were set because “He wants you to have the most beautiful and exciting sex life possible.... However, this gift comes with some instructions, and to play around without following the rules is to cheat yourself out of life’s most beautiful experience”<sup>113</sup> YFC anticipated that teens would wonder why God would make something so wonderful that everyone would like but then tell them that they were not allowed to do it. To this they answered: “God made some suggestions for sex, not because He’s bigger than we are and He can make all of the rules, but because he wants us to get the most out of it. God gave us the unique human experience so that two people could be one, with Him. This is to be shared in the fullest love...not in fear, driven by selfish passion in the backseat of a car!”<sup>114</sup>

YFC was left wondering why teens would give up the possibility of enjoying the fantastic sex life God wanted them to have in favor of cheap experimentation. They believed that main

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<sup>110</sup> Campus Life Impact Manual, 1969 page 56 BGC Archives Box 10 folder 9.

<sup>111</sup> Campus Life Impact Insight Directors Manual IV 1971, 55. BGC Archives Box 10, Folder 11.

<sup>112</sup> Campus Life Impact Insight Directors Manual IV 1971, 55. BGC Archives Box 10, Folder 11.

<sup>113</sup> Campus Life Impact Insight Directors Manual IV 1971, 55. BGC Archives Box 10, Folder 11.

<sup>114</sup> Campus Life Impact Manual, 1968, 30. BGC Archives, Box, 10 Folder 8.

reason was that teens (and other unmarried and sexually active individuals) were confused about the difference between lust and love. The reasons for this were understandable. In the social and cultural climate of the United States it was near impossible to see examples of true love in the popular media. Bombarded by a “free love,” doctrine in the media and popular culture, how could teens be expected to know the difference? YFC advisors took it upon themselves to set the record straight: “Lust is selfish and demanding...it cannot wait. It seeks its own gratification, it is guilty. Real love is patient, it is understanding, it has respect and responsibility. It CAN stand the test of time.”<sup>115</sup> Love was also seen as something that required commitment and maturity and this is why it found its truest fulfillment in the marriage between two individuals. YFC rightly anticipated some questions and challenges from teens regarding the nature of marriage and meaning of commitment. “What is marriage ? Why can’t two people just make a commitment to each other some night, go to bed together ...and be married?” The response: “But commitment implies responsibility.” Being responsible meant that people were able to make mature decisions based not on selfish desire and impatience. “Sexual intercourse should be reserved for marriage foremost because of the responsibility. Responsibility was also partially defined as understanding the fact that teens would never feel right having sexual intercourse outside of marriage. Outside of marriage you cannot give yourself to anybody completely without feeling guilt. The value and the virtue of this act were not in the function but for the right person.”<sup>116</sup> The theme of responsibility in matters of love and sex was one that YFC had been pressing for at least a decade. In a 1958 article in YFC Magazine, the editors maintained that dating was not tied in with responsibility. In this article, as in many others to

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<sup>115</sup> Campus Life Impact Manual II 1969, 57. BGC Archives Box 10, Folder 9.

<sup>116</sup> Campus Life Impact Manual II 1969, 57. BGC Archives Box 10, Folder 9.

follow, they were referring to the responsibility to steer clear of temptation and maintain their self-control. The implication was that both boys and girls were to act responsibly, but as we shall see later in this chapter, the burden of self-control and the consequences for irresponsible behavior had explicit and implicit gender expectations.

YFC acknowledged that temptations and pressures existed and that they could be a challenge for teens to manage. But managing them was of the utmost importance. The advisor script offered some suggestions about how to express their understanding to teens: “I am aware that there are tremendous pressures on you. Some kids have the idea that sex is just so much recreation. Some people bowl...others play football...others make out! But sex has power in it. It can either help to make your life beautiful, or it can make it a hell on earth.”<sup>117</sup> Sex was not like other activities and should not be treated as such. Sex, as viewed in a Christian context was more than just a physical act; it was a union of two individuals. In this view “sex is more than the physical completion of the sex act.”<sup>118</sup> YFC put this Christian conception of sex up against the male centered Playboy philosophy which saw sex primarily as a physical act when the “talk about women, comparing them to no-deposit, no-return coke bottles; when you get through using them, you throw them away.”<sup>119</sup> By pointing out the element of using other individuals for sex they were drawing on another important aspect of Christian morality – worldliness and the notion that “the greatest immorality in our world today is that people love things. They use people rather than using things and loving people. That is what makes marriage than just a piece of paper. It is a commitment between two people to love each other, rather than just to use each

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<sup>117</sup> Campus Life Impact Manual II 1969. BGC Archives Box 10, Folder 9.

<sup>118</sup> Campus Life Impact Manual II 1969, BGC Archives Box 10, Folder 9.

<sup>119</sup> Campus Life Impact Insight Manual 1969, 56. BGC Archives Box 10, Folder 9. Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men : American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment*, 1st ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1983).

other.”<sup>120</sup> Abstaining from sexual intercourse before marriage was an act of love – for self and other.

This is why Youth For Christ believed it was so important for teens to take responsibility for their decisions and call on God for strength to help them act responsibly, to resist the pressures for peers, and perhaps more importantly, refrain from pressuring their dates. Advisors reminded teens that pursuing sexual gratification was often a selfish act, not born of the love for the other person but of a desire to fulfill oneself despite the consequences. This, YFC argued, indicated deeper moral insufficiencies. Choosing to put oneself in spiritual, physical, emotional and psychological danger was one thing, but pressuring another into making this leap was even more damaging.

YFC also tackled teens' fears that if they did not experiment with sex before marriage, they may be unsatisfied with their sex life after marriage: “You may say, ‘Well, I don’t want my wedding night to be amateur night,’ or ‘How will we know we will be compatible unless we experiment?’” YFC did little to entertain these ideas stating that “cheap experimentation in the back seat of the car [was not] a prerequisite for marriage.”<sup>121</sup> Calling on unknown and un-cited “marriage counselors”, they informed teens that those who experimented with sex before marriage continued to feel the need to experiment after marriage because; “It is difficult to make a permanent commitment after several relationships...simply because of the nature of sex.”<sup>122</sup> YFC conceived of sex as “a growing experience,” which seemed to mean that the more you do it the less powerful it becomes. “the first time you touch the hand of someone you groove on, you

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<sup>120</sup> Campus Life Impact Insight Director’s Manual 1971, 56. BGC Archives, Box 10, Folder 11.

<sup>121</sup> Campus Life Impact Insight Director’s Manual 1971, 56. BGC Archives, Box 10, Folder 11.

<sup>122</sup> Campus Life Impact Insight Director’s Manual 1971, 56. BGC Archives, Box 10, Folder 11.

get tingle. But after you have held hands with her 485 times, what do you got? Right! Sweaty Hands!”<sup>123</sup> The implication here is that once the novelty of holding hands wears off you want to go further and maybe kiss. Once kissing fails to illicit the initial spark, maybe petting and so on. Furthermore, when one partner is more experienced than the other at marriage they will always be waiting for the other to catch up which can put a damper on the sexual relationship. So it was best to marry a Christian who is also a virgin and their sexual appetites will grow together rather than one person, presumably the female, always being behind the other in sexual appetite and experience. The message is that lack of experience will not ruin a marriage but the premarital sexual experiences of one or both partners may. Just to reassure teens that they would not bungle their way through sex for the entire marriage if they did not experiment beforehand, advisors assured teens that no one really needs to teach them about how to make love because “these things just come naturally.” “Of course, they also improve with experience. But how much more beautiful for these experiences to grow when they are with person you really love.”<sup>124</sup>

YFC acknowledged that the pressures could be intense. YFC did not attribute all of the youthful sexual indiscretions to ignorance or confusion. Sometimes it was just plain old peer pressure and the desire to appear masculine or popular that was getting in the way of doing right. In these discussions we can see that there was a difference in the way that YFC conceived of the pressures teen men and women felt to have sex in this era. When discussing the identity issues involved in pursuing sex, they believed that young men felt pressure to prove their manliness: “In the locker room, after you have been out on a heavy date, all the guys want to know whether

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<sup>123</sup> Campus Life Impact Insight Director’s Manual 1971, 56. BGC Archives, Box 10, Folder 11.

<sup>124</sup> Campus Life Impact Insight Director’s Manual 1971, 56. BGC Archives, Box 10, Folder 11.

or not you scored. I guess it's supposed to be some kind of a sign of manliness. However, I have discovered that it doesn't really take much muscle to unzip your pants! Nor is it a sign of manliness to be able to crawl in and out of bed. I believe it takes a real man to be able to discipline and control his desires, rather than to *be* controlled by them." In contrast to the pressures young men felt among their male counterparts, young women were thought to be most concerned about what the boys thought of them, they were primarily "afraid that they won't be popular unless they do what the guys want." Demonstrating this point YFC the example of a letter a young woman wrote into Ann Landers requesting some advice about how to handle the pressure she was feeling from her boyfriend to go further than she was comfortable. "I have gone as far physically as my convictions will allow. But he keeps pressuring me. He says 'How will you know how it feels if you have never tried it?'"<sup>125</sup> The response that she received from Lander was "tell him to stick his head in a cement mixer. How does he know how it will feel if he's never tried it?" There are several interesting things about the fact that these two stories were put in contrast to each other, the least of which is that the girls concerns of popularity are never really addressed directly. Basically, the advice for girls boils down to "just keep putting on the brakes, honey." It was her job to hold to her standards. Her femininity was upheld by her ability to control her own desires based on her convictions but also by being able to put the brakes on her boyfriend's advances. In contrast, a young man's masculinity was not in jeopardy if he failed to maintain control. In fact, popular opinion at the time held that, once ignited, it was exceedingly difficult for a young man to control his passions. Certainly, adult mentors urged and expected a young man to control himself and refrain from pressuring his partner into sex. But, he could only be expected to control himself for so long. It was, in the end, up to the young

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<sup>125</sup> Campus Life Impact Insight Director's Manual 1971, 56. BGC Archives, Box 10, Folder 11.

woman to make sure she did not tempt the boy beyond his earthly ability to control himself. In the end, if a young couple did give into temptation and engage in sexual intercourse, it was the young woman's fault for making it too hard on her partner to hold himself back. This is a common duality we see in YFC discussions but also other Christian teen sex guides and dating advice literature at the time.<sup>126</sup>

By in large, the increased dialogue between teens and YFC leadership during this period had interesting and almost certainly undesirable and unintended consequences (from the perspective of the leadership) for YFC as a teen youth group. The first of these consequences was that by opening the floor to teens, YFC leaders were forced to do a much better job of backing up their arguments. Because the discussion was no longer one sided, the leadership of Youth for Christ had to field questions and plug holes in their argument just as quickly as the teens could think of them. Instead of putting out regular information that was never questioned, Impact meetings and other forums gave teens the opportunity to push the leadership further and further. These questions forced the discussion to a much deeper level.

Additionally, these discussions with teens made the group a much more liberal sexual environment. The very act of having these conversations brought the group closer to the secular world they hoped to avoid and by the early 1970s the Youth for Christ materials included topics that would have shocked organizers just a decade prior. The sexual revolution changed the terms of engagement for YFC organizers and teens and even as organizers tried to run damage control on the new information and refine their arguments for new and more dangerous times, they slipped closer to the sexually free, open, and casual culture they sought to avoid and discredit.

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<sup>126</sup> Henry Brandt. *When a teenager Falls in Love*. (Wheaton, IL: Scripture Press, 1965); Walter Reiss. *The Teenager You're Dating: A Christian View of Sex About Boys for Girls and About Girls for Boys*. (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1964).

## **CHAPTER 4: TALKIN' BOUT YOUR SEXUALITY: LIBERAL RELIGIOUS YOUTH, 1967-1972**

The late 1960s period for LRYers offered both a wildly different perspective on the sexual revolution and gender roles from YFC as well as some surprising similarities. The content of the discussions the groups were having during this period could not have been more different. As was the rule throughout the 1960s and 1970s, LRY was embracing the expanding conversation about sex, while YFC organizers were trying to find a way to control the conversation while simultaneously prevent the discussions from spinning out of control. However, both groups turn to the same strategy to cope with the context of the late 1960s: dialogue. As previously discussed, YFC members were having impact meetings while LRYers were having conferences dedicated to topics closely related to topics such as sex, dating, and relationships.

In 1967, former LRY President Bill Sinkford designed and distributed a sex survey to LRYers across the nation. In the introductory letter that accompanied the survey Sinkford defined sex as “a broad range of activity.” As a former LRYer, Sinkford was well acquainted with his peers’ attitudes towards sex, but he wanted to capture these attitudes and thoughts. One goal was for LRYers to use the results of the survey as a starting point for more structured discussions of sexual behavior, morality and politics. Sinkford knew that the members of LRY would be open to a candid discussion on the topic. The timing of the survey was perfect as LRY was planning the next Continental Conference around the theme “Chimes of Care”, where they planned to explore issues related to gender roles, relationships, and sex. The Sinkford Sex Survey, as it came to be known, was the first nationwide survey of its kind in LRY and opened up discussions on sexuality and gender relations in the group.

Sinkford's survey and the Chimes of Care Conference were the first serious and organized discussions LRY had about sex and relationships in this period. Up until this point the group had concerned itself with discussions about self-identity and politics and activism outside of the realm of gender relations and sexuality. This survey represents a crucial jumping off point for the transition between the early 1960s and the late 1960s. The Sinkford survey began a phase of increased conversation about sex between adults and teens. At the 1967 conference, LRYers began a serious and sustained discussion about gender and sexuality, as they experienced them. Sinkford's survey, coupled with the Chimes of Care conference opened the way for a more in depth conversation about gender roles and gender inequalities that simply did not exist in the earlier period. By asking teenage boys and girl what they thought about some of the double standards for boys and girls and how they played themselves out in relationships, Sinkford's survey served as an introduction to some of the same issues the feminists were beginning to articulate during this same period.

By the late 1960s, LRYers were questioning the logic of the gender norms they inherited from parents, schools, and the media and began exploring gender roles and relations in more detail. The theme of that year's Continental Conference was "Chimes of Care," and focused on relationships.<sup>127</sup> In addition to discussing relationships, LRY devoted a portion of the program to the issue of existing sex roles and gender relations. LRY included a list of discussion questions in the conference theme statement:

What does it mean to be a girl today? How does the girl cope with the woman's changing role? Must she live a dual role? What does a boy think it is like to be a girl? What does it mean to be a boy

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<sup>127</sup> "Continental Conference Theme Statement, 1967," March 1967, Collection 48: Liberal Religious Youth Box 1150-2 Folder 38, Andover Harvard Theological Library.

today? Is the man's role changing in response to the woman's emerging role? What does a girl think it is like to be a boy?<sup>128</sup>

Conference organizers planned theme talks and discussions around these questions and encouraged boys and girls to think more deeply about sex roles and how they influenced their relationships. Conference attendees also watched several films to stimulate informal discussions among group members. Additionally, LRYers participated in role-reversal activities designed to encourage empathy between the sexes.<sup>129</sup> Unfortunately, we do not have a record of how teens responded to these questions at the conference. However, LRY did test some of the discussion topics and activities at a smaller conference the previous summer. Adult leaders recorded and summarized the results of those discussions.<sup>130</sup> Overall, teenagers felt that boys "had a better deal" in American society. However, some boys and girls felt that men had bigger burdens because they "work all of their lives, and are drafted, and die 8 years earlier."<sup>131</sup> Boys and girls agreed that in the current state of affairs, women were dependent, while men were depended upon, which they attributed to gender role expectations in adulthood. Both boys and girls reported that in the end the question was not really relevant because, "there is nothing you can do about it."<sup>132</sup> The teenagers' belief that nothing could be done demonstrates that young people understood on some level how deeply ingrained the sexual division of labor was in American society.

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<sup>128</sup> "Continental Conference Theme Statement, 1967," March 1967, Collection 48: Liberal Religious Youth Box 1150-2 Folder 38, Andover Harvard Theological Library.

<sup>129</sup> "Liberal Religious Youth Continental Conference, 1967 Program Outline."

<sup>130</sup> "Liberal Religious Youth Continental Conference, 1967 Program Outline."

<sup>131</sup> "LRY Boy-Girl Plandome, Blue Ridge Summer Institute," July 14, 1966, Collection 48: Liberal Religious Youth Box 1156-4 Folder 15, Andover Harvard Theological Library.

<sup>132</sup> "LRY Boy-Girl Plandome, Blue Ridge Summer Institute," July 14, 1966, Collection 48: Liberal Religious Youth Box 1156-4 Folder 15, Andover Harvard Theological Library.

The Sinkford Sex survey was a radical departure from how the group had dealt with issues of sexuality in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Instead of treating youth sexuality as a problem adults needed to solve, the late 1960s ushered in a period wherein adults started to focus on managing young people's sexuality by teaching them to manage it themselves. As adults become more and more distanced from young people's worlds, it became increasingly difficult for them to exercise control over the sexual culture of the group. On a daily basis the media, popular culture, and advertisers inundated American teens with ideas of sexual liberation.<sup>133</sup> In this environment, adults realized that they had very little control over what young people did when they were on their own. At best, they could help teens set their moral compass and develop a set of ethical principals young people could rely on when making decisions.

Although flawed, the initial results, which were circulated to group as raw data, are revealing.<sup>134</sup> The survey asked 14-19 year old LRYers to address a number of topics including the source and breadth of their sex education, their attitudes about dating, and their attitudes about the nature of sex and its place within heterosexual relationships. Sinkford distributed the survey to federations across the nation. The overwhelming majority of the surveys came back from the northeast (51.5%) followed by the mid west (28.4%), the west (11%) and the south (9.1%). This reflected the concentration of LRY groups in the northeast and Midwest. The final number of respondents used for the calculations was 521. Of these 295 (56.6%) were female and 216 (41.5%) were male. The age breakdown was as follows: 7.9 percent 13-14 year olds, 53.5%

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<sup>133</sup> David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War : The Sexual Revolution, an Unfettered History* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

<sup>134</sup> The major flaw in the data that was distributed to LRY groups is that it did not divide results into male and female responses. There are some questions and results that would be more revealing if we knew the sex of the respondents. "Sinkford Sex Survey Results", BMS 1156/5 (6) Andover Harvard Theological Library Archives.

15-16 year olds, and 38.6 % 17-19 year olds.<sup>135</sup> The majority of respondents had been involved in LRY for one year or more and nearly half had attended between one and three conferences while the other half attended 4 or more. The ratio of federation officers and non-officers was nearly equal. These numbers indicate that those who answered the survey were a fairly good representation of LRYers, even if they do not represent a true cross-section of American teens. Those who submitted surveys were active in LRY circles having attended conferences and many holding leadership positions.

LRY distributed the results of the survey prior to the 1967 conference so that those who would not be attending the conference would have a chance to discuss the results as well. Generally, parents and adults in UU congregations responded favorably. According to a letter written by Raymond C. Hopkins, the Acting Director of the UUA Division of Education, to an individual who expressed extreme concern over the questionnaire, the UUA had received “a volume of correspondence favorably commenting upon the questionnaire and the useful discussions and study programs that it has stimulated in both local groups and Federation meetings.”<sup>136</sup> He informed the concerned individual, “Yours is one of two letters that we have received to date objecting to the candor of the questionnaire.”<sup>137</sup> Hopkins also declared his support for the survey. He stated: “Personally, I see nothing in the survey that I find either offensive or beyond the pale for even a fourteen year old Unitarian Universalist... I am sorry that you have found the questionnaire offensive or disturbing.”<sup>138</sup> In fact, the UUA fully supported

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<sup>135</sup> “Sinkford Sex Survey Results”, BMS 1156/5 (6) Andover Harvard Theological Library Archives.

<sup>136</sup> Raymond C Hopkins to Richard H. Harris, February 2, 1968, 2, bMS 1156/5(6), Andover Harvard Theological Library.

<sup>137</sup> Hopkins to Harris, February 2, 1968.

<sup>138</sup> Hopkins to Harris, February 2, 1968.

the distribution of the survey. After preparing the survey under the guidance of his advisor, George Gothels in Harvard University's Department of Social Relations, reviewed and approved by the LRY executive committee and the Department of Education of the UUA. Prior to final approval by the LRY executive, Sinkford tested his survey in several smaller groups and refined it based on the results in the test groups.<sup>139</sup> In the end, the survey was "sent with the full knowledge and support of the continental LRY organization and the Department of Religious Education of the Association."<sup>140</sup>

It makes sense that the survey should come out at this time and LRYers would choose to create a conference around the theme of gender relations and sexuality. In 1964, "Time" magazine's cover declared that America was in the midst of the "Second Sexual Revolution."<sup>141</sup> The article argued that American culture was becoming more and more saturated with sex and Americans themselves were demonstrating more open attitudes towards sexuality.<sup>142</sup> Sexual education debates were reaching their height in this period as parents, educators, religious leaders, and mental health and medical experts tried to come to an agreement over the content of public school sex education curriculum. Over the past decade, several Supreme Court decisions on obscenity cases removed some of the legal restrictions on the dissemination of sexually explicit materials. In 1960 the FDA approved oral contraceptives. The following year they were made available to the public on a limited basis. In 1966, the Supreme Court *Griswold vs. Connecticut*, the Supreme Court struck down the one remaining

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<sup>139</sup> Richard E. Kossow to Department of Education Staff, n.d., bMS 1156/5(6), Andover Harvard theological Library; Hopkins to Harris, February 2, 1968; Bill Sinkford to Ruth Wahtera, February 20, 1967, Andover Harvard theological Library.

<sup>140</sup> Hopkins to Harris, February 2, 1968, 1.

<sup>141</sup> "Morals: The Second Sexual Revolution," *Time*, January 24, 1964,

<sup>142</sup> "Morals: The Second Sexual Revolution," *Time*, January 24, 1964,

state prohibiting the use of contraceptives reinvigorating public debates about the proper use and distribution of “the pill.”<sup>143</sup> During these same years, the media covered more sexually explicit themes in both their news and entertainment programming, which opened up discussions of sexuality. Public talk about sexuality helped to remove the shroud of euphemism and secrecy around formally taboo words and topics. One observer noted, “Words like coitus, orgasm, penis, vagina, erection, ejaculation are used fairly freely – to be sure sometimes with the intent of shock...formerly taboo topics like homosexuality, masturbation, contraception, and abortion are discussed at public forums, in newspapers, and in popular magazines.”<sup>144</sup> In 1966, Masters and Johnson published *Human Sexual Response*. Their study, which looked at the physiological aspects of sexual response rather than psychological or social factors, received a lot of attention from academics, media, and the general public. In this book, Masters and Johnson argued that human sexual response went through four stages, excitement, plateau, orgasm and resolution. As we can from these examples, gender relations and sexuality, were on Americans minds. LRYs interest in exploring these topics was likely an outgrowth of all the talk about sex happening in America at the same time.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *America and the Pill : A History of Promise, Peril, and Liberation* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2010).

<sup>144</sup> cited in Jeffrey P. Moran, *Teaching Sex: The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20th Century* (Harvard University Press, 2002), 167.

<sup>145</sup> Several works have covered all or some of these topics related to the sexual revolution. This is a sample of some of the most important general studies and some specific works related to birth control and sexual education: Beth Bailey, *Sex in the heartland*, 1st ed. (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002); David Allyn, *Make love, not war : the sexual revolution, an unfettered history*, 1st ed. (Boston Mass: Little Brown, 2000); Jane Gerhard, *Desiring Revolution: Second-wave Feminism and the Rewriting of American Sexual Thought, 1920 to 1982* (Columbia University Press, 2001); Jeffrey Escoffier, *Sexual revolution* (New York: Thunder Mouth Press, 2003); John Heidenry, *What wild ecstasy : the rise and fall of the sexual revolution* (New York NY: Simon & Schuster, 1997); “Morals”; Elizabeth Siegel Watkins, *On the Pill: A Social History of Oral Contraceptives, 1950-1970* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Dr. Lara V. Marks, *Sexual Chemistry: A History of the Contraceptive Pill*, 1st ed. (Yale University Press, 2001); Andrea Tone, *Devices and Desires: A History of Contraceptives in America*, 1st ed. (Hill and Wang, 2002); Kristin Luker, *When Sex Goes to School: Warring Views on Sex--and Sex Education--*

The survey touched on a number of topics that can be divided into two categories: behavior and attitudes. Questions regarding the sexual behavior of LRYers asked about dating practices, and levels of sexual experience. These made up a small but significant portion of the survey. The questions about sexual behavior can be divided into three categories: sexual experiences, openness to sexual relationships, and reflections on sexual experiences. The majority of questions were geared towards collecting data about what LRYers thought about sex and where they looked for information and guidance about sexuality and sexual morality. The topics covered by that portion of the survey included: sex education at home and in LRY, standards for conduct, purpose of sexual relationships, perceived gender differences in sexual relationships, emotional aspects, consequences of sexual activity, virginity, premarital sex, adultery, birth control, abortion, and homosexuality.

The demographic portion of the survey included a number of questions intended to determine the number of respondents who were actively engaged in the dating scene. Of the 521 respondents, 426 (81.8%) reported that they were “dating.”<sup>146</sup> Most of these reported dating for at least one year (83.5%) with nearly half of these dating for over two years. Thirty-two percent of LRYers who reported an active dating agenda said they went on dates twice a month. Nearly an equal amount of those remaining reported dating either infrequently or four times a month. When asked about whether they were currently in a “steady relationship, 293 respondents left the question blank, 101 stated that they were going steady and 127 said they were not. When asked if they had gone steady in the past, 195 left the question blank, 260 reported that they had gone steady and 66 said that they had not. When asked about their future

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-*Since the Sixties* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2007); Janice M. Irvine, *Talk About Sex: The Battles over Sex Education in the United States* (University of California Press, 2004); Moran, *Teaching Sex*.

<sup>146</sup> “Sinkford Sex Survey Results”, BMS 1156/5 (6) Andover Harvard Theological Library Archives.

marriage plans, the overwhelming majority reported that they intended to marry (83.7%) and the average age that they intended to get married was 20-25. Only 12% of respondents indicated that they were currently dating the person they intended to marry.<sup>147</sup>

Based on these numbers it is safe to say that LRYers were pretty typical teenagers. They participated in the teen dating scene. The questionnaire does not reveal what it meant to go on a date at this time. The fact that so few reported being in “steady” relationships suggests that the dates they were going on were either casual and multiple dates with the same person, or casual dates with many different people. Historians have pointed out that this was common practice during this period. “Going steady” no longer held the same power for teens in this era. As attitudes about sexuality opened up, the stigma attached to sexual experimentation with more than one partner was starting to wane. Therefore, the need to establish oneself as part of a committed couple before engaging in physical intimacy was declining, although it had not disappeared. Teenagers were not as marriage minded as their counterparts a generation earlier and they expected that they would have more than one partner before settling down. Therefore, establishing a “steady” relationship in high school as a prerequisite to engagement and later marriage did not coincide with the futures many teens envisioned for themselves. Finally, teen culture was becoming much more co-ed in this period and teen boys and girls had more opportunities to socialize as part of a group. Group dating was becoming more and more common as separate boys’ and girls’ teen cultures merged into a common teen culture.<sup>148</sup> By

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<sup>147</sup> “Sinkford Sex Survey Results”, BMS 1156/5 (6) Andover Harvard Theological Library Archives.

<sup>148</sup> Beth L. Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); John Modell, *Into One's Own: From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975* (University of California Press, 1991); Grace Palladino, *Teenagers : an American history* (New York: BasicBooks, 1996).

1967, these trends, which would continue into the 1970s, were starting to appear within teen dating culture. However, many LRYers still reserved physical intimacy for steady relationships.

When LRYers reported on their sexual behaviors, only 8.3 % reported they had no sexual experience. The majority, 47% had participated in petting, 23.4% had experienced necking, and 19% had had intercourse.<sup>149</sup> When asked about which activities they engage in on “ordinary dates,” 42% reported that they normally went as far as necking, 23% said they did not engage in any sexual activity, 17% engaged in light petting and 3.6% in heavy petting. Only 1.1 percent answered that they engaged in intercourse in casual dating scenarios. The numbers change slightly when we look at those who reported sexual activity in steady relationships. Only 1.7 percent reported having no sexual contact at all on dates. A relatively small 4% stated that they engaged in intercourse when on dates with their steadies. 17.5 % participated in necking. The majority, 47.4 % stated that they engaged in light to heavy petting.

As far as the location for sexual activity, teens were asked whether or not LRY conferences and group meetings provided a more comfortable environment for sexual activity. When asked whether they allowed themselves more sexual intimacy at these functions, most (65.3%) said that they did not. This could be related to the fact that when asked if they usually date LRYers, 62% said that they did not. Since many of the teens had previously indicated that they did not engage in much sexual activity outside of steady relationships, these numbers make sense. Respondents were also asked about what, if any limits should be set for intimacy during the conferences and 56.1 % said that there should be limits for organizations sake, the sensibilities of others, privacy, and “no intercourse.” When asked how far they thought it was okay to go at conferences most felt that necking and light petting were acceptable (26.4% and

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<sup>149</sup> “Sinkford Sex Survey Results”, BMS 1156/5 (6) Andover Harvard Theological Library Archives.

28.9%) followed by heavy petting (12.3%), intercourse (10.9%), arms around each other (7.9%) and holding hands (1.9%). In an open-ended question LRYers were asked to list some of the places they would go to engage in sexual activity. At home was the most common answer (27.6%) followed by car (17.9%), outside (15.9%), other (15.9%), don't know (6.9 %), motel (1.7%), LRY meeting (1.5%), and LRY conference (0.9%).<sup>150</sup>

In addition to inquiring about level of sexual intimacy and locations of sexual activity, Sinkford also asked sexually active teens to report on the amount of discussion they had with their partners about their physical relationship as well as how they felt about their activities. When asked about whether or not they felt guilty about the things that they did sexually, a majority, 57.7%, said that they did not, 33% said that they did feel guilty and 9.2% were uncertain. When asked to discuss their comfort level with sexual activity, 47.5 % stated that they were interested in doing more sexually than they were comfortable doing. These answers indicated that teens felt that they should be doing more, but could not bring themselves to make the jump when they were given the opportunity. On the issue of comfort with sexual activity, LRYers were asked whether or not they were more comfortable about going farther when they cared about the person they were with. Not surprisingly given the previous answers regarding sexual activity in casual versus steady relationships, 69.6% agreed with that statement. Another important factor for teens comfort level was the experience, expectations and perceptions of their partners. On this matter, 62.6% reported that their sexual behavior depended on the sexual expectations and experiences of their partners and 25.7% answered that this did not factor into their decisions.<sup>151</sup> These last numbers (those who did not base their decisions on partners'

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<sup>150</sup> "Sinkford Sex Survey Results", BMS 1156/5 (6) Andover Harvard Theological Library Archives.

<sup>151</sup> "Sinkford Sex Survey Results", BMS 1156/5 (6) Andover Harvard Theological Library Archives.

expectations) can be read in two ways. The numbers may indicate that teens felt pressure to engage in sexual activity from their partners. But they may also demonstrate that teens made decisions about how far they were comfortable going sexually despite the pressures. It is really difficult to tell from these numbers alone. However, put in context we can perhaps determine what was more likely given their moral framework. When asked if they were “afraid to be as sexually responsive as they would like to be because of what my partner would think of me,” 45.5 percent said they disagreed with this statement and 40.9 % said they agreed, and 13.5 % were uncertain.<sup>152</sup> A couple of different explanations are possible for these results. There could be a gender divide in the number of boys and girls who took their partners perceptions into account. If this was the case and it followed trends in the general teen population, it could be that some girls did not want to seem too interested in sex because of their reputation. Communicating with one’s partner about sex seemed to happen quite regularly, but the number of individuals who reported that they did not talk *enough* about sex with their partners was equal (34.6% for both) to those that felt they had discussed the topic adequately. Only a small percent stated that they did little or no talking with their partners about sex (12.5%).

Communicating with parents about sex was mixed for LRYers. A slight majority (53%) of respondents reported that their parents had discussed sex with them openly. Still a large number (40.4%) felt that their parents had not been open with them. The numbers for whether or not they wished their parents had discussed sex with them more openly, which were the inverse of the previous question; 38.4 agreed and 45.3 disagreed. This suggests that most of those whose parents had been open with them felt that the level of conversation with their parents had been adequate, while those who did not have open conversations, wished that they had. When asked

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<sup>152</sup> “Sinkford Sex Survey Results”, BMS 1156/5 (6) Andover Harvard Theological Library Archives.

about their parents' attitudes towards sex, 44.2% felt that their parents had liberal attitudes towards sex, 31.95 said that their parents were not liberal about sex and 23.9 percent stated that they did not know either way. When asked about parental understanding about the importance of dating 55.5% of teen felt that their parents did not realize how important it was to teens, 22.85 felt their parents did realize its importance and 21.7% were uncertain how much importance their parents ascribed to dating.

In an open ended question at the end of the survey teens were asked to discuss what they wished their parents understood more about their teenagers dating practices. 24.8% believed that their parents needed to trust them more, 15.4 % wanted their parent to "keep out" of their dating life, and 12.1% wanted parents to accept that teens needed to set their own limits.<sup>153</sup> 15.9% reported that they had a good relationship with their parents regarding the subject and presumably did not think their parents needed to improve in these areas. These numbers suggest that dating could be a source of conflict between LRYers and their parents. The source of the conflict was likely due to the parents' lack of understanding about the nature of teen dating practices and also teens desire for autonomy. Over the course of the 1960s, the divide between adults and teens was widening.

Sinkford asked teens how they would treat the subject of sex with their own children. Only 1.9% said they would handle it the same way their parents did, 40.5% said they would practice complete honesty about their own feelings and not make sex sound dirty all of the time, 14.6% said they would offer their children reading material. Very few respondents said that they would set strong limits (1.3%) or tell them what was best for them. At the same time, however,

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<sup>153</sup> "Sinkford Sex Survey Results", BMS 1156/5 (6) Andover Harvard Theological Library Archives.

few respondents said that they would give their own children permission to do what they wanted.<sup>154</sup>

Despite LRYers clear desire to keep their parents out of their dating life, the teenagers reported that they were receiving some sexual education at home. Not surprisingly, however, parents were not the teens' only source of sex education. When asked where the bulk of their knowledge about sex was coming from, many teens (44.3%) indicated that a multiple of sources including parents, friends, books, school, and personal experience were responsible for their sex education. Of those who indicated a dominant source of information, friends ranked the highest (19.4%), followed by personal experience (13.6%), parents (10.2%), books (8%), and school (2.5%).<sup>155</sup> The fact that such a small number of students credited school with providing them with knowledge about sex is interesting given the heated debates regarding sex education and the push for this curriculum in public schools at the time.<sup>156</sup> It could be that these teens were in school districts that did not teach the subject, but it is also likely that by the time teens were introduced to what was likely a pretty conservative curriculum they had received the information from other sources. Sociologist Kristin Luker has pointed out that despite the push for sexual education in school; it was fairly common that teenagers in the 1960s encountered silence and reticence on the part of most of the adults in their lives. The men and women she talked to

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<sup>154</sup> "Sinkford Sex Survey Results", BMS 1156/5 (6) Andover Harvard Theological Library Archives.

<sup>155</sup> "Sinkford Sex Survey Results", BMS 1156/5 (6) Andover Harvard Theological Library Archives.

<sup>156</sup> Janice M. Irvine, *Talk About Sex : The Battles over Sex Education in the United States* (Berkeley, Calif. ; London: University of California Press, 2004).

reported that the adults in their lives took a fairly conservative approach to their sex education, providing them with some information, but not a comprehensive education.<sup>157</sup>

Despite their reported lack of formal sexual education, an overwhelming majority (77%) of LRY teens felt that they had adequate sex education for their present needs. Clearly, they felt that the information they were able to get on their own was enough to help them deal with the issues they were encountering on a regular basis. However, they were also open to more seminars and discussions about sexuality in LRY contexts. The vast majority (89.1%) felt that LRY was “a logical place for sex education seminars and/or discussions to be held”.<sup>158</sup> I think the wording of this question is important. The emphasis on seminars and discussions is important because they denote an active role for the teens in the discussions. Teens did not value, pay attention, or find much use in the sexual education they received in schools and from other parents because they felt that they were being preached at. They wanted to be treated as autonomous and mature individuals, rather than children who needed constant instruction and supervision. The last thing these teens wanted was to be lectured at about sex. Ideally, LRY meetings and conventions would provide a more youth centered approach to the study of human sexuality. Educators were trying to provide these kinds of environments in school programs, but it is clear that many teens still did not feel comfortable talking about these subjects in a formal schools setting. Historian Jeffrey Moran has discussed the turn towards more “dialogue centered” sex education programs in schools. He points out that sexual education in this period followed trends in educational philosophy more generally, which sought to de-center the teacher and create more student centered learning environments where communication and open

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<sup>157</sup> Kristin Luker, *When Sex Goes to School : Warring Views on Sex--and Sex Education--since the Sixties*, 1st ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006).

<sup>158</sup> “Sinkford Sex Survey Results”, BMS 1156/5 (6) Andover Harvard Theological Library Archives.

dialogue replaced lecturing to a passive crowd. Sally Williams, a consultant for SIECUS pioneered this approach to sexual education in her work with public schools in Anaheim, California. Williams designed a co-ed, dialogue-centered sex education program that she hoped would help boys and girls understand each other better. She wanted to give students an opportunity “to decide on a set of values that they choose for themselves,” and “an opportunity to question adult beliefs about what is moral, to examine the reality of adult behavior, and to discuss their own beliefs with peers.”<sup>159</sup> The style of the program Williams designed for Anaheim schools was exactly the type of program LRYers sought in their own group. Sinkford’s survey revealed that they were open to more information about sexuality, but were not interested in traditional approaches. Eugene Navais, a worker with the UUA Department of Education, reported that LRYers wanted to learn more than just the basic physiology of sex. He stated:

The young people I talked to were very much wanting to know “what it all means”. “You can learn about the plumbing from books or in health class, but that’s just the beginning.” Said a boy from Framingham. “What do your sexual feelings mean? How do you get along with your experiences? What should you do? What do other people do?” “These are the important things you to talk about.” “Where do you get a chance to talk about the important things!” I asked this 16 year old. “My LRY Group.” Not your parent or your school,” I queried. “No, only at LRY. That’s the only place in my life where I can talk about things that really matter, the only place where people are open. “How did it get that way, “ I asked. “Well, out R.E. Director helped us have this great discussion series on sex and other things, and it just got so we could talk about anything we felt like talking about.”<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Cited in Jeffrey P. Moran, *Teaching Sex : The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20th Century* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Harvard University Press, 2000).

<sup>160</sup> Eugene Navais to Raymond C Hopkins, January 18, 1968, 1, bMS156/4(15), Andover Harvard Theological Library.

In addition to discussing where their ideas and information about sex came from, LRYers were also asked to share their own views on sex, sexual relationships, and morality. The topics can be roughly divided into: the purpose of sex, prerequisites for sexual relationships, emotional aspects of sexual relationships, consequences of premarital sex, gender differences in expectations and responses, and the effects of sexual involvement on relationships, and virginity.

Several questions on the survey invited teens to share their beliefs about the purpose of sex. 49.3% of respondents said that they agreed that a developing a sexual relationship was essential to the development of the overall relationship between a boy and a girl and 50.1 percent said they saw sex as a symbol of intimacy in their relationship and 30.8 percent said they disagreed with the sentiment. When asked if they thought that sex was an essential part of love, 68.45 agreed. Teens were asked if sex for the sake of gratification was valid. Only 35.4% agreed, 19.3% were unsure and 43.5% disagreed. A little over half (50.9%) percent felt that sexual contact was a means of breaking down barriers between individuals.<sup>161</sup> From these numbers we can see that LRYers believed that sex was an essential part of an intimate and loving relationship between a boy and girl. However, these numbers do not indicate whether love and intimacy were the catalysts for a sexual relationship or the results of physical intimacy. In an open-ended question, teens were asked to list the type of relations that a couple should have when intercourse is involved. The most popular response was love (39.7%). Marriage and or plans to marry was the second most popular answer (26.5%). The third significant answer was “both agree” at 10.6%. The remainder were divided between affection (6.9%), doesn’t matter (0.9%), going steady (0.6%), no emotional hurt or abuse (0.6%) and other (8.5%). Teen were asked if in their experience increasing sexual activity tended to open it up or close off the

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<sup>161</sup> “Sinkford Sex Survey Results”, BMS 1156/5 (6) Andover Harvard Theological Library Archives.

relationship, 39.9% said that it opened it up and 25.9% said it closed it off. In another question teens were asked to respond to the prompt: “you don’t have to be in love to go all the way” 42.1% agreed, and 44.15 disagreed.<sup>162</sup>

Although teens felt that individuals did not have to be in love to go all the way, the majority (65.3%) agreed that emotions can take over while petting; making them do things they would not if they were in a “rational” state of mind. An almost equal number of respondents felt that girls became more emotionally involved in sexual relationships than boys. Sinkford also asked teens if they thought they had a responsibility for the other person in a relationship that involved sex. 83.5% said yes. When asked to list the nature of this responsibility teens cited: prevent emotional hurt of the other person (33.4%) prevent pregnancy (17.1%), and emotional and physical hurt (8.6%) and honesty (7.3%).

The majority of answers with regard to responsibility focused on emotional responsibility, but some also stated that prevention of pregnancy was important as well. Not surprisingly, LRYers were overwhelmingly in favor of liberal birth control laws; 73.2% agreed with the statement: “a person should be able to buy birth control devices without any questions being asked.”<sup>163</sup> LRYers opinions about abortion were based on situational factors. Almost all agreed that abortion was valid if there was a strong chance of birth defects, is a woman’s health was in danger; the pregnancy was a result of rape. The numbers of those who said if yes started to decline when circumstances such as low family income, family limitation, out of wedlock pregnancy, and desire not to have a child were taken into consideration.

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<sup>162</sup> “Sinkford Sex Survey Results”, BMS 1156/5 (6) Andover Harvard Theological Library Archives.

<sup>163</sup> “Sinkford Sex Survey Results”, BMS 1156/5 (6) Andover Harvard Theological Library Archives.

Sinkford also included several questions in the survey that asked teen to consider the differences between boys' and girls' views of sexual initiation and motivation. Sixty-Eight percent felt that girls expected boys to initiate sexual experiences. Later in the survey teens responded to the statement "all boys want to pet" and 27.9 agreed, 21.7 were uncertain, and 50.4 disagree. This statistic went against conventional wisdom at the time and the perception was that boys were highly motivated by sex. When asked directly if they thought boys really were more motivated by sex, 54.4 agreed, 27.6 were uncertain and 18.1% disagreed. When it came to girls and sexuality, most respondents felt girls' primary role was to set limits on sexual behavior (73.4%) On the topic of setting limits, teens were asked how they would let their partners know that they did not want to go any further. 69.1 said they would simply tell the other person, 15.6 said they would stop responding. 1.5 said it was hard to let him/her know. 2.95 said they would resort to physical violence.

Perhaps the most revealing, yet not surprising statistics on gender differences came out of questions about virginity. Teens were asked to comment on the importance of virginity at the time of marriage for both boys and girls and 81.9 % said that it was not important for a boy to be a virgin when he got married, 64% stated that it was not important for a girl to be a virgin when she got married. The number who thought that it was more important for a boy than a girl were split almost down the middle, 45.1% responded yes and 49.55 said no. When asked whether they thought it was important for themselves to be virgins when they married, most (54.6%) said that it was not, 26.9% said that it was, and 18.5% were uncertain. They were also asked if they expected their partner to be a virgin when they married. 56.7 said that they did not, 26.4 were uncertain and 16.85 said that they did have this expectation.<sup>164</sup> Sinkford went a step further in

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<sup>164</sup> "Sinkford Sex Survey Results", BMS 1156/5 (6) Andover Harvard Theological Library Archives.

his question about virginity by asking teens to reflect on the effects their virginity status would have on future marital relationships. When asked about the effects of premarital sex on later marital relations most teens felt that having sex before marriage did not negatively affect the relationship (43.7 %). However, there was a significant number who felt that it did or were uncertain. Another question asked if it was all right to go all the way with a person they expected to marry and 47.9% said yes, which was in line with the earlier statistic. Later in the survey teens responded to the following statement: “It is all right to go all the way whether or not you plan to marry, if there is mutual agreement and precautions are taken” and 51.4 percent agreed, 33.7 percent disagreed. Future marital discord was only one of many possible consequences Sinkford asked the teens to respond to. When asked if there were dangers associated with having premarital sex (besides pregnancy or disease) 73.2 % answered yes. They were then given a list of 9 possible dangers. The answers broke down as follows: emotional hurt to both (16.1%), guilt (14.6%), emotional hurt to the other person (14.2%), loss of respect (9.9%), other (7.9%), emotional hurt to self (6.3%) moral decay (2.7%). Physical hurt (1.7%) and misinformation (0.3%). Here we see that very few teens felt that engaging in premarital sex would cause “moral decay.” They were primarily concerned with the emotional effects on themselves and others.

As the above discussion details, the Sinkford Sex Survey was primarily concerned with assessing LRYers attitudes towards heterosexual relationships. The only opportunity teens had to weigh in on homosexuality came at the end of the survey in the form of a vague multiple choice question that asked teens to choose to “encourage or discourage” homosexuality. The choices and results were as follows: homosexuality should be: discouraged by law (4.9% agreed), discouraged by education not law (65.8%), discouraged by neither education nor law

(26.1%), or encouraged (0.8%). These numbers reveal LRYers conservative attitude towards same-sex relationships. Even allowing for the strange wording of the question, over 70% believed that it should be discouraged in some form or another.<sup>165</sup>

Given the support adults in the Department of Religious Education of the UUA showed towards the survey, it is clear that they believed sex education was an important part of their role as advisors. They supported discussions, but they did express some concern over how teens were handling the discussions. Many advisors believed adults needed to be part of the process. Because LRY was a youth run organization and the young people had quite a bit of control over the content of weekly meetings and leading of discussion, some parents thought that the discussions would not be as productive or positive as they might be if a sympathetic and educated adult were leading the way. Adult advisors were in attendance at meetings and at conferences and had a great deal of involvement in the activities and discussions. The organization and the meetings and conferences may have been “run” by the youth, but adults were present as discussion leaders, guest speakers, and advisors.

In the early 1970s, the youth driven movement to define masculinity and femininity within their own ranks helped to prompt the adult leadership to repackage the sexual education program. As youth battled to take control of their own masculinity and femininity old models of sex education simply did not apply anymore and were quickly falling out of favor with teens that identified with liberation movements and remaking gender norms. Therefore, Unitarian Universalist leadership decided to adopt programs that were cutting edge, frequently updated, and addressed a wide range of issues that were typically seen as taboo by sexual education educators in earlier eras – masturbation, homosexuality, and birth control.

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<sup>165</sup> “Sinkford Sex Survey Results”, BMS 1156/5 (6) Andover Harvard Theological Library Archives.

The move toward more straightforward sexual education in LRY began in 1970 when the UUA Department of Religious Education and Social Concern (DRE) put out their sexual education curriculum called *About Your Sexuality*.<sup>166</sup> The DRE designed this sex education program for mixed groups of junior high students aged 12-14, which were to be presented to them by the Religious Education Director or some other sensitive adult in their individual congregations. Deryck Calderwood, a prominent sex education scholar and advocate of comprehensive sex education programs, designed the original program.<sup>167</sup> Calderwood's original program was then tested in several Unitarian Universalist churches and fellowships. After receiving responses from these test groups, the program was retooled and published as a kit in 1973.<sup>168</sup> In addition to a handbook for leaders suggesting possible units of study including Anatomy, Masturbation, Birth Control, Love Making, Conception and Childbirth, Homosexual Life Styles and Same Sex Relationships the kit also included materials for games to play with students, films to accompany each of the suggested units, and supplementary reading material written by several noted sex education experts, academics and social commentators.<sup>169</sup> The program went far beyond existing sex education programs in schools. Calderwood believed that

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<sup>166</sup> Unitarian Universalist Association, Department of Religious Education and Social Concern. *About Your Sexuality*. Records, 1970-1983. Andover Harvard Theological Library. BMS 1290 Box 1-10. Mark Oppenheimer, *Knocking on Heaven's Door : American Religion in the Age of Counterculture* (New Haven Conn. ; London: Yale University Press, 2003).

<sup>167</sup> Calderwood was a prolific writer and central figure in the sex education movement beginning in the mid 1960s. He wrote primarily about adolescent sexuality and sex ed within the family and school. Isadore Rubin, Deryck Calderwood, and Copyright Paperback Collection (Library of Congress), *A Family Guide to Sex*, A Signet Book (New York: New American Library, 1973); Deryck Calderwood, "Adolescent's Views on Sex Education," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 27, no. 2 (1965); Deryck Calderwood, "Differences in the Sex Questions of Adolescent Boys and Girls," *Marriage and Family Living* 25, no. 4 (1963).

<sup>168</sup> The program was revised again in 1978 and 1983. The goal was to keep the material as up to date as possible.

<sup>169</sup> Herant A. Katchadourian and Donald T. Lunde, *Fundamentals of Human Sexuality* (New York,: Holt, 1972); Wardell Baxter Pomeroy, *Boys and Sex*, Rev. ed. (New York: Delacorte Press, 1981); Wardell Baxter Pomeroy, *Girls and Sex*, [1st ed. (New York: Delacorte Press, 1970); George H. Weinberg, *Society and the Healthy Homosexual* (New York,: St. Martin's Press, 1972); Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman* (San Francisco,: Glide Publications, 1972).

sexual education was only effective when stripped of all euphemisms and silences. The program he designed reflected this commitment to openness and honesty. The materials he designed reflected this and were in fact criticized for their explicitness, especially the films which featured human genitalia and sexual acts.<sup>170</sup> Calderwood was also a strong advocate of gay rights and worked to open up UU attitudes about homosexuality.<sup>171</sup>

In the late 1960s, LRYers developed a High School Liberation Program to work in concert with the local high school liberation groups cropping up in American high schools. They believed young people needed support in this area because the American educational system did not “effectively allow for the control of one’s life.”<sup>172</sup> LRY was closely associated with the organization Youth Liberation, founded in 1969 by 15-year-old Keith Hefner in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Youth Liberation of Ann Arbor served as the organizing force for similar movements across the country. YL created a list of wants that expressed their purpose and goals. These included: the power to determine our own destiny, the immediate end of adult chauvinism, full civil and human rights, student control of education, freedom to form communal families, the end of male chauvinism and sexism, the opportunity to create authentic culture within institutions of our own making, sexual self-determination, the end of class antagonism among youth, the end of racism and colonialism in the United States and the world, freedom for all unjustly imprisoned people, economic freedom from adults, the right to live in harmony with nature, to rehumanize existence, “to develop communication and solidarity with the young

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<sup>170</sup> Carolyn Cocca, *Adolescent Sexuality: A Historical Handbook and Guide* (Praeger Publishers, 2006), 57.

<sup>171</sup> Mark Oppenheimer, *Knocking on Heaven's Door: American Religion in the Age of Counterculture* (Yale University Press, 2003), 29-61; Mark Oppenheimer, ““The Inherent Worth and Dignity”: Gay Unitarians and the Birth of Sexual Tolerance in Liberal Religion,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 7, no. 1 (July 1996): 73-101.

<sup>172</sup> “Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees Liberal Religious Youth July 200-27, 1969 The First Parish Church Concord, Massachusetts.”

people of the world in our common struggle for freedom and peace.”<sup>173</sup> The youth liberation movement grew informally through underground newspapers written by high school students.<sup>174</sup> The movement also spawned a national publication service, the Youth Liberation Press, which published FPS, later renamed Magazine of Young People’s Liberation. FPS put out several pamphlets including, *How to Start a High School Underground Newspaper*, *Youth Liberation: News Politics and Survival Information*, *High School Women's Liberation*, *A Youth Liberation Pamphlet*, *Growing Up Gay*, and *Children’s Right’s Handbook*.<sup>175</sup>

LRY was very much inspired by the youth liberation movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The goals and purpose of the movement reflected concerns teenagers within LRY had been focusing on for many years. LRY styled their major news publication, *People Soup*, in the same fashion as the newspapers coming out of the high school underground press and they frequently reviewed and advertised Youth Liberation publications in *People Soup* (PS). The rhetoric of youth liberation saturated *People Soup*. On May 3, 1969, LRY past president, Larry Ladd, delivered a sermon at the First Unitarian Church in Brooklyn, NY. In his sermon, he talked passionately about the youth liberation movement, stating “Our schools are youth ghettos training us to fit into existing culture rather than educating us to be individual men and women.

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<sup>173</sup> Beatrice and Ronald Gross, ed., *The Children's Rights Movement: Overcoming the Oppression of Young People* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1977), 329-33.

<sup>174</sup> Keith Hefner, “The Movement For Youth Rights: 1945-2000,” *Social Policy*; Mike Mosher, “Youth Liberation of Ann Arbor: Young, Gifted and Media Savvy,” *Bad Subjects*, no. 47 (2000); Gael Graham, *Young Activists: American High School Students in the Age of Protest* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2006).

<sup>175</sup> *A Youth Liberation Pamphlet* (Ann Arbor, MI: Youth Liberation Press); Keith Hefner, *Children's Rights Handbook* (Ann Arbor, MI: Youth Liberation Press, 1979); *Growing Up Gay* (Boston, MA: Carrier Pigeon); *High School Women's Liberation* (Ann Arbor, MI: Youth Liberation Press); *How to Start a High School Underground Newspaper* (Chicago, IL: High School Independent Press); *Youth Liberation: News, Politics, and Survival Information* (Washington, NJ: Times Change Press).

We are taught that conformity, in word and deed, is a virtue.”<sup>176</sup> He continued by criticizing schools for robbing teenagers of their autonomy and dignity. “The keynote of the youth liberation movement,” Ladd stated, “is youth self-determination and empowerment. We are demanding the personal liberties and responsibilities inherent in our humanity.”<sup>177</sup> Ladd used the metaphor of an exploding bomb to describe the coming of youth rebellion. In doing so, he mirrored the revolutionary rhetoric of the New Left and Black Power Movement.<sup>178</sup> Talk of revolution and rebellion was commonplace in LRY publications.

The revolutionary tone of LRY in the late 1960s and 1970s suggests that LRY boys looked to the young college aged men in these movements for new models of manhood. Historians have pointed to these movements as sources for new definitions of manhood during this period. Judith Newton has pointed out that as leaders of the New Left aligned themselves with the Black Power Movement, they took on new ways to express masculinity based on a “heroic masculine ideal.” She argues, “the identifications of white anti-war movement leaders with revolutionary struggles throughout the globe imaginatively positioned them alongside their black counterparts as co-leaders of “the revolution.” The new “heroic masculine ideal” prized adventure, danger, and sacrifice. LRYers identified with the struggles of these groups because they felt, as youth, that they had also been oppressed. Unfortunately, in identifying with these revolutionary groups, they also replicated some of the same problematic gender politics within the group. The very same publication that hosted Ladd’s passionate letter featured a mock

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<sup>176</sup> “Ladd’s Bitter Brooklyn,” *The Peacepipe*, 1969, 5th edition.

<sup>177</sup> “Ladd’s Bitter Brooklyn,” *The Peacepipe*, 1969, 5th edition.

<sup>178</sup> Judith Lowder Newton, *From Panthers to Promise Keepers : Rethinking the Men’s Movement*, New Social Formations (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

advice letter reprinted from another LRY publication that spoke volumes about the sexual politics in LRY.

Dear G&G:

Recently, I went to bed with my boy friend (who is in LRY) and we made love for a majority of the night. Now, I find that he has dropped me. What can I do?

Worried

Dear WORRIED:

Trust the male LRYers to invent new positions when making love. Please send us detailed diagrams of how he dropped you, at what angle you hit the floor and other good stuff.

Jokes, comics, and comments like these appeared often in LRY publications, often just pages away from advertisements, book reviews and articles calling for an end to sexism within the organization. The general state of sexual relations within LRY mirrored some of the same problems that caused many white women to leave the New Left movements at the end of the 1960s.<sup>179</sup> Some young women in LRY criticized their male counterparts for perpetuating gender inequalities by engaging in sexist relationships games and perpetuating gender inequalities.

In 1972 Holly Horn, LRY's Social Actions Rep, put together a packet designed for local groups and regional conference planners who wanted to host a "consciousness-raising" session.<sup>180</sup> In her introduction to the packet, Horn highlighted the importance of initiating a program designed to fight sexism: "It is necessary that we make ourselves aware of our limitations in these predetermined roles, that we become cognizant of how we are oppressed in

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<sup>179</sup> Evans, *Personal Politics*; Rosen, *The World Split Open*. (New York: Viking, 2000) ; Echols, *Daring To Be Bad*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

<sup>180</sup> Holly Horn, Cover Letter for "Sexism: A Social Actions Program Packet," September 27, 1972.

them and how we oppress others.”<sup>181</sup> Suggested activities included guided meditations, one-on-one interviews, personal narratives, and role playing games.<sup>182</sup> These activities were intended to help young women see the ways women were oppressed and to help young men realize that their own gender ideals and practices contributed to the oppression of women and men. Still, for all of LRYers’ talk of women's oppression and the need to eradicate it, they initiated very few discussions about the specific objections they had to mainstream gender roles for women. LRYers discussions of women's liberation and sex roles were very general. Young men seemed to dominate the discussion of identity politics within the group, speaking most often about youth liberation, individuality, and autonomy in general terms or in reference to their own young men’s gender projects.

The Sinkford Sex Survey and the Chimes of Care Conference were LRYers first forays into the world of gender politics. Sinkford conducted the survey in order to understand some of the dating practices among this group of liberal teens as well as to try and understand where these ideas were coming from. At the Chimes of Care Conference, group members were given an opportunity to discuss the significance of the results as well as examine more closely the nature of relationships between men and women and the gender dynamics at play in heterosexual relationships. In this period the idea that men and women inhabited a world wracked by gender hierarchies, asymmetrical expectations, and unequal treatment was beginning to make its way into the mainstream. LRYers joined in this conversation in these early years and would continue to explore and refine the implications of feminist politics throughout the 1970s.

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<sup>181</sup> Horn, Cover Letter for “Sexism: A Social Actions Program Packet,” September 27, 1972.

<sup>182</sup> Holly Horn, Cover Letter for “Sexism: A Social Actions Program Packet,” September 27, 1972.

### **PART 3: QUESTIONS ANSWERED, 1974-1980**

Girls and boys entering high school in this period experienced the world very differently from previous baby boomer cohorts. The American economy was in trouble, unemployment was high. Divorce rates were climbing, family life was becoming more disconnected, and youth culture was becoming more fragmented. Youthful rebellion and mass protest gave way to disillusionment, apathy and self concern. Essayist and novelist Tom Wolf famously dubbed this period as the “Me decade.” Individuals from all age groups were preoccupied with self fulfillment. Individuals looked for answers to life questions through popular psychology and self awareness exercises. Young people were not immune to the mood of the decade. Young people also turned inward, searching for happiness by finding solutions to their problems, which they increasingly viewed as unique to their own circumstances, rather than particular to their generation. Social awareness, generally, took a backseat to figuring out what made one happy and cultivating a lifestyle designed to bring out that happiness. Young people were aware of the existence of feminism and gay rights, but their greater concern was how these liberation movements tied into their own concerns about oppression, repression, individual happiness.

Youth For Christ was drawn into participating in the sexual revolution by the teens they had pledged to serve. Faced with questions, concerns, and challenges by young people, they could do little to avoid taking on the topic of sex, dating, love, and gender expectations. However, YFC was limited by their convictions in what they could and would say regarding sex, especially in the programming and prescriptive literature they produced for teens. However, if we look closely we do see that there was some considerable change in their approach in the 1970s. Discussions of masturbation, oral sex, and intercourse were shrouded in euphemism or

ignored altogether in the early 1960s. By the end of the 1970s, these topics had become somewhat more normalized and treated with candor and care in the pages of *Campus Life*. This represented a major shift in position and one that signals that Youth For Christ did not stand outside the sexual revolution of the period, but were pushed, probably quite willingly, into participating and contributing to in the revolution in sexual mores taking place in America. Opening up the conversation about what was permissible to say, the words one could use, in an evangelical setting was key to maintaining and gaining the teen audience they were seeking. In the end, no matter how open or willing to discuss previously taboo topics YFC leaders were, the message remained unchanged throughout the period I have considered here. YFC never wavered from preaching against the inevitable ills of sexual permissiveness and pre-marital sexuality. The important thing was that they were part of the conversation and provided teens with a space to ask question and receive clarification.

Adults in LRY supported teens in exploring the connections between feminism, gay rights, and youth liberation in the pages of the groups newsletter, *People Soup*. The pages of *People Soup* were filled with letters, articles, and advertisements that promoted youth autonomy in all matters. Teens in the group researched and wrote about the connections between social movements and sexual politics within the group and within American society. LRYers used the paper as a forum for airing their grievances with the sex gender system in America and the manifestation of these inequalities and prejudices within their own group. LRYers exhibited an open attitude to sexual expression as a matter of principle, but did not always succeed in creating a comfortable environment. These middle class teens had difficulty turning their intellectual principles into a reality at group meetings and conferences. Throughout the period, LRYers expressed their desire, and right, to express their sexuality in accordance with their liberation

principles. However, they did not always create an environment where that was possible for others. During the 1970s young straight women, gay men, and lesbians within LRY continued to point to the subtle discrimination within the group. The discrepancy between belief and action for these teenagers did not signal an ambivalence towards the ideas or a lack of serious commitment to the ideas, but they do give us some indication about how difficult it was for young people to step outside of their cultural upbringing and create personal relationships that coincided with their sense of themselves as liberated individuals.

## CHAPTER 5: WHEN “DON’T” IS NOT ENOUGH” SEX ADVICE FOR TEENS IN YOUTH FOR CHRIST, 1973-1980

The sexual liberation movement’s challenge to monogamous heterosexual pairing, feminist’s challenge to gender asymmetry, and young people’s growing desire to forge a new path for their futures represented important shifts in the context of young people lives in the late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>1</sup> These shifting contexts meant that leaders of youth groups needed to be agile in their approach to young people. What had worked even 5 years prior might seem extremely tired and dated to a teen of the mid 1970s. In many ways, the gay liberation movement, the rise of feminism, and youth’s assertion of their own independence made them a much different group of people than even the previous cohort active in the late 1960s. This third cohort of boomers called for a shift in the way they were approached.

Youth for Christ had a long history of shifting strategies to account for the fast moving world of youth culture.<sup>2</sup> By the 1970s, YFC leaders were becoming increasingly concerned that they could not stay relevant to youth given these forces and reinvented their approach to teens.

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<sup>1</sup> David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War : The Sexual Revolution, an Unfettered History* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Hera Cook, *The Long Sexual Revolution : English Women, Sex, and Contraception, 1800-1975* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Jeffrey Escoffier, *Sexual Revolution* (New York: Thunder Mouth Press, 2003). Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad : Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975*, American Culture (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989); Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open : How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Viking, 2000); Sara M. Evans, *Personal Politics : The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf : distributed by Random House, 1979); Jo Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation : A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and Its Relation to the Policy Process* (New York: McKay, 1975); Susan Brownmiller, *In Our Time : Memoir of a Revolution* (New York: Dial Press, 1999); Grace Palladino, *Teenagers : An American History* (New York: BasicBooks, 1996); John Modell, *Into One's Own : From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Gael Graham, *Young Activists : American High School Students in the Age of Protest* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006); Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning Back : The History of Feminism and the Future of Women*, 1st ed. (New York: Ballantine, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Joel A. Carpenter, *The Youth for Christ Movement and Its Pioneers*, Fundamentalism in American Religion, 1880-1950 (New York: Garland, 1988); Jon Pahl, *Youth Ministry in Modern America : 1930 to the Present* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000). Mel Larson, *Youth for Christ, Twentieth Century Wonder* (Grand Rapids,: Zondervan Pub. House, 1947); Thomas Berglar, "Winning America: Christian Youth Groups and the Middle-Class Culture of Crisis, 1930-1965" (Notre Dame, 2000).

They maintained their essential belief that young people should be preparing themselves for their future roles within the family, but they scaled back their overt discussions of what constituted a good boy or a good girl. Whereas in the early period, Youth for Christ leaders were content to overtly preach to teens, by the 1970s, they found more subtle ways to get their message across beyond the direct talking at teens approach. We can see the change clearly in how advice writers handled teens' questions and concerns throughout the mid to late 1970s.

The message remained largely the same, but the strategy called for less pointed and authoritarian delivery. The group was, in many ways, a product of its context. As teen life changed dramatically from the early 1960s to the late 1970s, the focus of the group shifted along with it. As more and more teens, both boys and girls, planned for post secondary education throughout the 1970s, Youth for Christ folded these experiences into what they viewed as healthy development for teens on their way to respectable conservative Christian family units. YFC assured teens that developing themselves as individuals would strengthen their relationship with God and prepare them to assume the ultimate roles God wanted for them. In 1974 Youth for Christ introduced Tim Stafford's "Love, Sex, and the Whole Person" column to *Campus Life* Magazine. Reflecting on the positive response from teens a year later, columnist Tim Stafford wrote "churches and parents aren't answering the questions kids are asking, they're just giving no-nos. If there're (sic) no 'why's' behind the rules there're (sic) often ignored. 'Love Sex and the Whole Person is trying to give some 'whys'. Its' popularity is explained, I think, by the fact that there isn't much competition. I wish there were."<sup>3</sup> Stafford also indicated that initially letters from teenagers focused on petting but over the course of the column's first year teen letters focused more and more on individual concerns such as masturbation, homosexuality,

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<sup>3</sup> "Love, Sex, and Tim Stafford", *Campus Life*. November 1975, 5.

shyness, loneliness, and pointed questions about sexual choices.<sup>4</sup> I attribute the increasingly personal nature of the teen questions to the open sexual culture of the 1970s as well as the therapeutic culture on the rise during this period. Social commentators and historians have documented the tendency to focus inward among Americans during the 1970s.<sup>5</sup>

YFC concern about the state of teen relationships as a step on the path towards marriage continued throughout the 1970s. However, the tone of the conversation changed. Additionally, the amount of attention devoted to the topic of dating in “Campus Life” magazine was significantly reduced. Rather than discuss in the ins and outs of the dating scene within the pages of the magazine, YFC focused on enhancing teens understanding of relationships as a whole, the romantic kind being just one of a number of important relationships in their lives. In contrast to earlier incarnations of Youth for Christ magazines and materials, the *Campus Life* magazine was a two way street fostering communication between adults and youth. The magazine had two major purposes. The first was to offer teens frameworks with which to deal with major world changing events that were changing the way that they saw the world such as feminism, gay liberation, and youth liberation. The magazine helped teenagers to reconcile their faith with a changing world. Youth did not want a tired and stagnant Cold War informed view on dating, Christianity, college education, and marriage. They wanted personal responses that they could use to reconcile their Christianity with some of the exciting changes happening in

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<sup>4</sup> “Love, Sex, and Tim Stafford”, *Campus Life*. November 1975, 5.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Cohen et al., *The Me Decade Narcissism in America* (Washington, D.C.: National Public Radio., 1979), sound recording; Tom Wolfe, "The Me Decade and the Third Great Awakening," *New York* 1976; Beth L. Bailey and David R. Farber, *America in the Seventies*, Cultureamerica (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004); Edward D. Berkowitz, *Something Happened : A Political and Cultural Overview of the Seventies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Peter N. Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened : The Tragedy and Promise of America in the 1970s*, 1st ed. (New York, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982); Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies : The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (New York: Free Press, 2001); David Frum, *How We Got Here : The 70's, the Decade That Brought You Modern Life (for Better or Worse)*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000).

their lives in the 1970s. In short, they wanted the magazine to affirm that they were not being left out or left behind as Christians. *Campus Life* offered youth a mechanism to operate in the world of 1970s and not be ostracized from unchurched youth.

The second and equally important role of *Campus Life* in this era was to offer an opportunity for dialogue between teens and adults. Whereas teens in the early 1960s were left with only lists of do's and do nots and questions to ask oneself while out on a date to answer their relationship questions, the teens of the 1970s demanded more. They wanted a publication that would speak to their specific needs and not to some larger standard that did not fit the specifics of their lives. Again and again teens wrote in with very specific stories and very similar questions about love, sex, and dating. In December 1974, teens wrote in asking about issues such as pornography, sex, petting and virginity.<sup>6</sup> One year later, in December 1975, Tim Stafford fielded questions focusing on masturbation, Biblical passages about sex, and why sex was wrong for engaged couples.<sup>7</sup> By 1976, even the subject of oral sex was breached in the Love, Sex, and the Whole Person column.<sup>8</sup> These examples represent a general trend during this period of teens writing in about their specific problems and situations. Teens were no longer content to follow manuals; they felt that their individual circumstances could not be confined by general advice. While teens in the early 1960s accepted, or were forced to accept, a general summary and apply it to their lives, the new *Campus Life* driven Youth for Christ organization gave teens an outlet to offer up their specific situations.

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<sup>6</sup> *Campus Life Magazine*, December 1974.

<sup>7</sup> Tim Stafford, "Love, Sex, and the Whole Person", *Campus Life Magazine*, December 1975.

<sup>8</sup> Tim Stafford, "Love, Sex, and the Whole Person", *Campus Life Magazine*, June/July 1976.

This new strategy might have been more in step with what teens wanted in the 1970s, but it did not clarify the YFC position on issues of gender as the manuals and experts of the 1960s had. In fact, YFC definitions of proper womanhood became less concerned with the creation and maintenance of physical beauty and more on individual self expression. YFC widened the discussion on young womanhood by including a much wider range of topics including going to college, playing sports, and maintaining friendships with both boys and girls.

They replaced the earlier focus on “loveliness” with discussions of girls’ education, sports, travel, careers, and character building activities that did not necessarily involve lipstick and posture. They also expanded their definition of femininity. In the late 1960s, the monthly column “Letters on Loveliness,” was replaced by Girl Whirl. In addition to covering the typical girl’s content – beauty and dating, *Girl Whirl* also tackled issues such as education, career, sports, overseas travel, financial planning, relationships (with parents, friends, and teachers), and self-esteem. In February 1974, the Girl Whirl column featured topics ranging from competitiveness to summer jobs.<sup>9</sup> In April 1974, the column responded to girls’ concerns regarding divorce.<sup>10</sup> Still another column in March 1974 focused on acne, friendship, and whether the teen should “be more of a woman” and confront a “bossy” boyfriend.<sup>11</sup> Partially in response to the women’s movement of the 1960s and 1970s, YFC was forced to retreat from its earlier stance that girls should focus on finding a mate and settling down as their only life goal and even employed the term “revolutionary” to describe female athletes in October 1975.<sup>12</sup>

While YFC continued to promote marriage as the ultimate goal for girls in the 1970s, they

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<sup>9</sup> “Girl Whirl”, *Campus Life Magazine*, February 1974.

<sup>10</sup> “Girl Whirl”, *Campus Life Magazine*, April 1974.

<sup>11</sup> “Girl Whirl”, *Campus Life Magazine*, March 1974.

<sup>12</sup> *Campus Life Magazine*, October 1975.

opened the door for girls to accomplish a variety of goals prior to settling down as part of a Christian family. This turn reflected the expanded opportunities for girls and women and changing notions of women's role in American society. Due in large part to the efforts of women's rights and women's liberationist advocates in this era, there was a greater acceptance of girls' participation in sports, academics, and careers.<sup>13</sup> From the perspective of Youth for Christ, these activities were a way for young women to build strong characters and develop self-esteem, which would aid in their development as mature Christians.<sup>14</sup>

Even though the rhetoric and content of the magazines suggests a recognition that girls' interests and needs were expanding, the programming materials for Campus Life Clubs from the same era indicated a sustained belief in the fundamental difference between girls and boys both in terms of their biological and psychological makeup as well as the roles they were expected to grow into as adults.<sup>15</sup> Even though YFC seemed willing to concede that participation in these activities was not contrary to femininity, they were looked at as steps on the way marriage. Marriage was still viewed as women's ultimate goal. The fulfillment of their roles as wives and mothers could be enhanced by their growth in other areas, but their achievements were not supposed to replace or become more important than this role. The emphasis on a wider range of options for girls combined with the continued reverence for marriage suggested that while marriage may not be the only option for a young Christian woman, it was the most fulfilling.

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<sup>13</sup> Echols, *Daring to Be Bad : Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975*; Susan Ware, *Title IX : A Brief History with Documents*, The Bedford Series in History and Culture (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2007); Nancy Hogshead-Makar and Andrew S. Zimbalist, *Equal Play : Title IX and Social Change* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> See: Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender, 1875 to the present* (New Have: Yale University Press, 1993) 118-127; David Harrington Watt, *A Transforming Faith: Explorations of Twentieth century American Evangelicalism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991) 93-136.

<sup>15</sup> "Love, Sex and the Whole Person", *Campus Life Magazine*, August 1977; "Love, Sex and the Whole Person", *Campus Life Magazine*, February 1980.

This pro-family position, which was advocated by noted conservative Phyllis Schlafly, who despite her own career in law and politics, was a vocal and popular advocate of a pro-family position that emphasized women's primary roles as wives and mothers.<sup>16</sup> Like Schlafly, YFC conceded, supported, and even encouraged increased options for young women, so long as it did not get in the way of their proper place within the family, home, and society. Their shift in emphasis away from beauty and personality advice for girls was recognition that things were shifting, but certainly not a vote in support for feminist efforts like the Equal Rights Amendment, which due to the strong lobbying of women like Schlafly, was defeated.<sup>17</sup>

The dual emphasis on independence outside of marriage and submission to husbands within marriage accounts for some of the contradictory messages regarding feminism within the publication. Girls received a mixed message from magazine editors regarding gender roles and gender politics.<sup>18</sup> In June 1973 *Campus Life* featured an article entitled "Marriage: American Style" that outlined some trivia about marriage around the world. In this article, the author cautioned girls to guard against being domineering and controlling in their marriages.<sup>19</sup> Less than 1 year later, in February 1974 in an article entitled "The Trophy Case" the author speaks

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<sup>16</sup> Donald T. Critchlow. *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); Carol Felsenthal. *The Biography of Phyllis Schlafly: The Sweetheart of the Silent Majority*. (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1982).

<sup>17</sup> Mary Frances Berry. *Why ERA Failed: Politics, Women's Rights, and the Amending Process of the Constitution*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); Jane J. Mansbridge. *Why We Lost the ERA*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Donald G. Mathews and Jane Sherron De Hart. *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of ERA: A State and the Nation*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Catherine E. Rymph. *Republican Women: Feminism and Conservatism from Suffrage Through the Rise of the New Right*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> An extended discussion about YFC perception on marriage and dating can be found in the following articles: "Marriage American Style", *Campus Life Magazine*, June 1973. "The Trophy Case", *Campus Life Magazine*, February 1974. "Love and All That Stuff", *Campus Life Magazine*, February 1977.

<sup>19</sup> "Marriage American Style", *Campus Life Magazine*, June 1973.

favorably about the equality of the sexes.<sup>20</sup> Evangelicals' perception of feminist politics colored the discussions of gender and sex in the magazine.

Even though the magazine did not attack women's liberationists head-on, some of the cartoons and humor in the magazine reveal the extent of evangelical fears about feminism, especially with regard to marital roles. There was a palpable distaste for "women's libbers."<sup>21</sup> In a humor piece entitled "The In Crowd, The Out Crowd", profiling high school archetypes featured in *Campus Life* in April 1975 "Bertha Liber" is featured. She was portrayed as unattractive, obnoxious, loud, androgynous, overweight, and muscular.<sup>22</sup> She was wearing camouflage pants, army boots, a tank top sans bra, and is sporting a pin emblazoned with the slogan "kill". She was also holding a placard reading "we want power now, or else".<sup>23</sup> She was holding her fists in the air in a clear reference to the women's liberation movement. In the piece Bertha Liber said, "AND FROM NOW ON, 'MANKIND' WILL BECOME **PERSONKIND** AND 'MANHOLES' WILL BE **PERSONHOLES** AND..." (emphasis in original) Interestingly, Ms. Bertha Liber is cited in the article as a member of the in crowd; however, her position in that group was not based on her popularity. The caption underneath this figure stated "it's not that Bertha is popular, she got in the in crowd by force, wants to be president (of the United States). She is already accepting campaign contributions and claiming she is responsible for no wrong-doing. You know, she may make it!"<sup>24</sup> On its own, this cartoon indicates the negative associations Youth for Christ attributed to participants in the women's right movement.

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<sup>20</sup> "The Trophy Case", *Campus Life Magazine*, February 1974.

<sup>21</sup> "Ms. Betty Liber", *Campus Life Magazine*, April 1975, 40.

<sup>22</sup> "Ms. Betty Liber", *Campus Life Magazine*, April 1975, 40.

<sup>23</sup> "Ms. Betty Liber", *Campus Life Magazine*, April 1975, 40.

<sup>24</sup> "Ms. Betty Liber", *Campus Life Magazine*, April 1975, 40.

However, when viewed in light of other content in the same issue, the picture becomes more complicated. In the same April 1975 issue, there was an article entitled “Confused?

Male/Female: The Truth About Sex Stereotypes”.<sup>25</sup> Citing an article published in *Psychology Today*, author Lois Breiner attempted to dispel some of the commonly believed myths about the supposed natural differences between young men and women.<sup>26</sup> She reported that the following beliefs were proven to be myths: guys are less people centered, girls are gullible, guys like themselves and girls like guys, girls don’t want to succeed, and guys analyze better. However, she went on to document “validly established” differences: males are more aggressive, girls speak better, guys have super space-sight, guys are better mathematicians.<sup>27</sup> The fact that *Campus Life* featured an article that one might have encountered in any consciousness raising group during the era illustrates the mixed reception YFC gave feminism. YFC was much more open to talking about natural differences between men and women as opposed to addressing the social realities of gender inequality.

Despite the obvious distaste for women’s libbers, the magazine did promote a modified women’s liberation agenda. The February 1974 edition of the *Campus Life* column girl Whirl featured a poem entitled, “Kathy’s Cry for Freedom,”

“Sugar and spice  
and everything nice.  
That’s what little girls are made of.”  
We’ve been told that so often  
we almost believe it.  
When I was a kid I wanted Tinker Toys  
Not dainty dolls or nurse kits..  
I wanted to be a doctor,

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<sup>25</sup> Lois Breiner, “Confused? Male/Female: The Truth About Sex Stereotypes”, *Campus Life Magazine*, April 1975.

<sup>26</sup> Lois Breiner, “Confused? Male/Female: The Truth About Sex Stereotypes”, *Campus Life Magazine*, April 1975.

<sup>27</sup> Lois Breiner, “Confused? Male/Female: The Truth About Sex Stereotypes”, *Campus Life Magazine*, April 1975.

but they suggested I clean bedpans.  
 I wanted to study history and math,  
 but they suggested art and typing.  
 I wanted to play baseball,  
 But they suggested playing house.  
 So I sat home with my acne,  
 Watching the Miss America Pagenat.  
 I was surrounded by “everything nice,”  
 Sex and the Single Girl,  
 The Joys of Motherhood,  
 Playboy centerfolds,  
 TV soap wives,  
 Raquel Welsh, Tricia Nixon  
 And hundreds of pretty faces  
 That weren’t anything like me.  
 Why should I be a woman  
 If I have to giggle to be noticed,  
 Wiggle to be wanted  
 Man made-up to the eyelashes  
 To make my way up the ladder  
 For a job that will pay  
 Half what any man would get?  
 Why can’t I be a woman  
 Who is really a woman,  
 A woman who is me,  
 A woman who is a person  
 And not a “nice girl.”  
 A woman who is free  
 To speak and live and laugh  
 Like any man.  
 What can’t be treated as a person  
 Whose worth is myself, not my sex,  
 Whose power is me as me.  
 Lord, wasn’t I created free  
 Instead of mice,  
 Me instead of mud?  
 Liberate me, Lord.  
 Free me from the old Adam  
 And create a new Eve within me.<sup>28</sup>

By featuring this feminist inspired poem in the girls’ column, magazine editors aligned themselves with some of the feminist rhetoric of the era. The poem speaks to the importance of

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<sup>28</sup> “The Girl Whirl” CLM (Feb. 1974) 73.

importance of “personhood” as the standard for treatment for women as well as men.<sup>29</sup>

Focusing on personhood as the standard for treatment had a dual effect. First, it highlighted the fundamental similarities of women and men that is they are both persons and should be treated with the same level of respect. But it also left room for discussions of the gender differences that were fundamental to the Christian concept of marriage, with the emphasis on complimentary roles. By emphasizing “personhood,” *Campus Life* editors were able to engage in contemporary critiques of the sex gender-system without fully supporting a women’s liberationist agenda, which they believed threatened the gender role balance that was a necessary part of a happy Christian marriage. Still, the inclusion of this poem in the magazines pages demonstrates that there was a perceptible change in the content of the magazine. Although not attributed to feminists, the word is curiously absent from all discussions of equality in the magazine, it does suggest feminists were having an effect, even within evangelical circles.

At the same time, definitions of appropriate manhood also expanded. In addition to leadership, achievement, and healthy competition, teen boys were also encouraged to make themselves vulnerable by opening up about their feelings and exploring their emotions. The Campus Life program was designed to help teens build and/or strengthen their relationship with God. Engaging in open discussion about self-esteem, vulnerabilities, personal feelings, and worries was part of the weekly program. Additionally, magazine editors and columnists routinely encouraged teen boys to write to them for advice. Although the majority of the letters written to the magazine were from girls, many boys heeded the advice writing in asking for help working

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<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of the emergence of the new “personhood” ideal in this period see: Judith Newton, *From Panthers to Promise Keepers: Rethinking the Men’s Movement* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005). Newton discusses the origins of “personhood” ideal in the Civil Rights Movement and later taken up in the New Left, anti-war and student rights movements, as well as the women’s, gay, and men’s liberation movements. It is notable that YFC would adopt this language while simultaneously distancing themselves from most of the above movements.

through questions of faith, self-esteem, body image, and relationships with parents, friends, and girls. Some letters written by boys to *Campus Life* during this period addressed issues of vulnerability, difficulty opening up, pain for boys in breaking up, body image, and loneliness.<sup>30</sup>

An anonymous letter written to the “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person Column” in January 1976 addressed some of the difficulties Christian boys faced in requesting help with problems:

Guys do have problems – the Christian guys even more than non-Christians I believe, because they are trying to live up to some standards. But guys, even more than girls, feel very uncomfortable talking to other guys or writing for advice. They’re afraid of what people will think, even though almost everyone else is having the same kind of problems. They care, but they’re afraid so they don’t open up. They hope the problem will pass. It doesn’t work, sorry to say.<sup>31</sup>

The concerns expressed by this teen parallel some of the same issues brought up by the members of the burgeoning men’s movement in the 1970s.<sup>32</sup>

In contrast to the earlier periods, when the correct choices were praised and explored and role model articles featured only the most decorated and beloved heroes, the 1970s ushered in a time for the redemption of fallen heroes. Youth for Christ diversified some of their examples by the mid 1970s to include cautionary tales. Terry Bradshaw, star quarterback for the Pittsburgh

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<sup>30</sup> “It Hurts, Boys and Vulnerability”, *Campus Life Magazine*, August/September 1976; “Disneyland: When a Guy Doesn’t Fit the Macho Norm” *Campus Life Magazine*, August/September 1978; Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person” *Campus Life Magazine*, October 1976; Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person” *Campus Life Magazine*, January 1976; Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person” *Campus Life Magazine*, April 1976.

<sup>31</sup> Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person” *Campus Life Magazine*, January 1976

<sup>32</sup> For a contemporary look at the challenges to male gender roles see: Jack Sawyer, “On Male Liberation,” *Liberation* 1971., Warren Farrell, *The Liberated Man: Beyond Masculinity; Freeing Men and Their Relationships with Women*, [1st ed. (New York,: Random House, 1974).], Jack Nichols, *Men's Liberation : A New Definition of Masculinity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1975)., Marc Feigen Fasteau, *The Male Machine* (New York,: McGraw-Hill, 1974). For scholarly work on the men’s movement see: Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men : American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment*, 1st ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1983)., Michael A Messner, “The Limits of ‘the Male Sex Role’: An Analysis of the Men’s Liberation and Men’s Rights Movements’ Discourse,” *Gender & Society* 12, no. 3 (1998); Michael A. Messner, *Politics of Masculinities : Men in Movements*, Gender Lens Series in Sociology (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1997)., Judith Lowder Newton, *From Panthers to Promise Keepers : Rethinking the Men's Movement*, New Social Formations (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

Steelers in the 1970s, was offered up as an example of the perils of falling away from Christ and the possibilities for success when one submitted to Christ's will.<sup>33</sup> In an interview with *Campus Life* in 1979, Bradshaw recounted the failures of his early career.<sup>34</sup> He portrayed himself as less than a man. He remembers that he lacked the strength and courage to lead his team to victory. He threw tantrums and acted out, both on the field and off. During this time he was a self-professed loser – both in the game and in life. He strayed from his wife and followed a path of unrighteousness. Bradshaw said that he had lost touch with God and therefore lost touch with himself. Without the power of his faith behind him, he was weak and lost. When he finally surrendered himself to God, he was able to turn his career around and gain the respect of his team and fans by leading the Steelers to victory and eventually the Super Bowl.<sup>35</sup> According to Bradshaw, his success on the field (a measure of manhood by most American male's standards), his ability to win, was put in jeopardy because he did not rely on God to provide him with a strong foundation. Up until this point the media, fans and Bradshaw himself portrayed him as a wuss, a crybaby, and a loser.<sup>36</sup> His manliness depended on his maturity, which only came as a result of returning to his faith and to his reliance on God for strength. His surrender or submission was the key to his masculinity.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Campus Life Magazine*, December 1979.

<sup>34</sup> *Campus Life Magazine*, December 1979.

<sup>35</sup> *Campus Life Magazine*, December 1979.

<sup>36</sup> *Campus Life Magazine*, December 1979.

<sup>37</sup> There is a well developed literature focusing on Christianity and Masculinity. For further reading see: Tony Ladd and James A. Mathisen, *Muscular Christianity : Evangelical Protestants and the Development of American Sport* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1999); Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity : Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001); Donald L. Deardorff and John White, *The Image of God in the Human Body : Essays on Christianity and Sports* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2008); Robert J. Higgs, *God in the Stadium : Sports and Religion in America* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1995); William J. Baker, *Playing with God : Religion and Modern Sport* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard

When examining the images of masculinity and femininity promoted by Youth for Christ throughout the mid to late 1970s, it is quite clear that images of both the masculine and the feminine were undergoing significant changes. Images of masculinity were clearly expanding, despite the fact that the goals of purity, strength, excellence, leadership, and competition remained at the center of strong masculinity into the late 1970s. The Youth for Christ image of femininity was also undergoing a complete overhaul. While projects such as Charm School clearly indicate that being feminine, glamorous, and “lovely” remained partially at the center of femininity, Youth for Christ had to find a way to insert women’s individual goals, expanding activities, and later marriage into their agenda.

*Campus Life Magazine* in the 1970s was filled with mixed messages with regard to gender. Of course, the teenagers reading YFC publications did not live in a vacuum. Over the course of the late 1960s and 1970s, women's rights advocates and women's liberationists had complicated the discussion of gender roles, identities, and politics in American society. YFC could not avoid dealing with the feminist critiques of sexual politics in America.<sup>38</sup> Marriage, the institution evangelicals held in such high regard, was under harsh criticism from many feminists, who viewed it as a method for reinforcing gender inequality.<sup>39</sup> YFC had little patience for attacks on the institution of marriage, but they could not ignore the fact that women and girls

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University Press, 2007); Shirl J. Hoffman, *Good Game : Christianity and the Culture of Sports* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2010).

<sup>38</sup> Echols, *Daring to Be Bad : Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975*; Rosen, *The World Split Open : How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*; Brownmiller, *In Our Time : Memoir of a Revolution*.

<sup>39</sup> For a discussion of primarily white middle class feminist politics in this period see: Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980, 1979); Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989); Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America Since 1960* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991); Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Viking, 2000); Judith Ezekiel, *Feminism in the Heartland* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2002); Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (New York: Ballentine Books, 2002); and Sara M. Evans, *Tidal Wave: How Women changed America at Century's End* (New York: Free Press, 2003).

were discriminated against and objectified in American society. Since YFC had pledged to say “anchored to the rock but geared to the times,” they had to address the issues that would surely be on their female readers’ minds. YFC supported some contemporary feminist critiques of the sex-gender system, such as the treatment of women as sex objects and unfair and exclusionary practices in education and sports; but they did not fully embrace feminist ideology.

Why such a dramatic change? What accounts for the mixed messages of the 1970s? As a youth serving organization, YFC, had committed themselves to dealing with the contemporary problems of youth. To maintain their relevance among teens growing up during the women's rights era, they could not afford to simply ignore feminism altogether. Rather than leave the issue unanswered, YFC officials stepped in to provide alternative interpretations of feminism that were consistent with their positions on marriage. To do so, they had to negotiate a middle ground between feminist agendas and hegemonic feminine norms. It was impossible for evangelicals to completely throw in with feminists because feminist critiques of the institution of marriage did not coincide with evangelical Christian concepts of marriage. YFC conceded that inequality, discrimination, objectification, and abuse were wrong. However, they could not promote a radical feminist agenda without undermining their core values and morality. Feminism’s close association with abortion rights, gay liberation, and their critique of religion, Christianity in particular, meant that Evangelicals would never be able support the movement entirely. So, they borrowed what worked while simultaneously distancing themselves from the movement as a whole.<sup>40</sup> They did this by adopting the language of “personhood” in place of feminism. In this way, they were able to promote equality while reinforcing existing Christian ethics.

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<sup>40</sup> Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. March 1979. “Disneyland”, *Campus Life*. April 1975. Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. March 1979.

It is clear from the letters that flowed in from teens that they found it difficult to apply all of these lessons. As much as they knew they should keep their emotions in check and exercise good judgment, they found it incredibly difficult to live up to Christian standards.<sup>41</sup> Christian teens faltered. However, this did not mean that they lacked commitment to the goals and ideas they were reading about. They did try. The fact that they tried and did not simply disregard the advice indicates the importance of their religion to their identity. They were Christian teens and wanted to act accordingly. This is the only explanation for the inundation of letters for teens trying to find ways to make their teen culture, hormones, and emotions correspond to their Christian ethics. Teenagers demanded explanation and clarification, reinforcement, and justification for why the physical expression of their emotions was wrong. They also demanded that the experts address their particular situations and not simply give them a list of examples or a generalized text. In the mid to late 1970s teens persistently felt the need to explain the specifics of their situations to the editors of *Campus Life*.

Many teens confessed that they had faltered, but tried, sometimes successfully and sometimes unsuccessfully, to get back on the right path.<sup>42</sup> Still, it was a struggle. In many of the letters teens tried to justify their actions – to find a loophole in the “rules”. Christian teens struggled with the notion that they had to refrain from physical expressions of love. They had a

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<sup>41</sup> What follows is a few examples from a litany of teens expressing difficulty living up to Christian standards from 1974-1980. In nearly every column from 1974 until 1980 there are letters from teens dealing with temptation, falling short, virginity, etc.: Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. May 1975; Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. June/July 1975; Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. June/July 1976; Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. February 1977; Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. April 1977; Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. June/July 1978; Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. December 1979.

<sup>42</sup> Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. June/July 1975; Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. June/July 1976; Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. February 1977; Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. April 1977; Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. June/July 1978; Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. December 1979.

difficult time rejecting secular social values. They constantly tried to find a way to merge the two aspects of their identity – teenager and Christian. The two cultures were often at odds, especially in the realm of dating and love. In October 1975, a young woman wrote in to “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person” asking for advice about how to stop having sex once one had started. In the same issue, another reader asked for advice about how to talk to non-Christian friends about not having sex. In January 1976 another teenager wrote in stating that they had no willpower to say no to sex and needed advice about controlling their urges.<sup>43</sup> Later that year, in May 1976, one reader asked for advice about how to stop having premarital sex, and still another asked how to stem homosexual urges.<sup>44</sup> A third reader in the same column wanted to know about what to do about non-Christians misinterpreting friendliness as sexual advances.<sup>45</sup> In all of these cases, teens were dealing with temptation and trying to find ways to fit various transgressions into the framework of their Christian lives.

For YFC, conversations about physical contact and dating ultimately led to discussions of engagement and marriage. Youth for Christ actively discouraged early engagements.<sup>46</sup> Each February *Campus Life* featured a Valentine’s issue dedicated to the issue of love and commitment. In these issues they frequently emphasized that even if a young couple was prepared to wait for the marriage ceremony, YFC leadership thought that it was not a good idea to get engaged too early and have a long engagement because the promise given could be broken before the covenant had been signed and sanctioned by God. This could be a big mistake if they

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<sup>43</sup> Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. January 1976.

<sup>44</sup> Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. May 1976

<sup>45</sup> Tim Stafford, “Love, Sex, and the Whole Person”, *Campus Life*. May 1976

<sup>46</sup> “Love, Marriage, and the Valentine Month” *Campus Life*. February 1977; “Love and All That Stuff”. *Campus Life*. February 1980; “Will Love Last?”, *Campus Life*, February 1980.

did not get married. Letters written to the advice columnists suggest that YFC officials' concerns were warranted. In letters written to Stafford's "Love, Sex, and the Whole Person" column, teens repeatedly brought up the fact that they were engaged or planning to marry as explanations for their physical intimacy with their mates.<sup>47</sup> For example, in February 1975 a young woman wrote in asking if people could live together and have sex while engaged to be married but not yet married.<sup>48</sup> In December of that same year, a young man wrote in asking why it was wrong to have sex if a couple was engaged.<sup>49</sup>

It seems odd that a youth centered organization devoted so much attention to marriage. However, as far as YFC was concerned there were enough teen marriages occurring, and on the rise, to sound the alarm bells. YFC, contrary to what one might think, was not pro-early marriage. In fact, despite the fact that they saw marriage as a part of God's plan for an individual, they did not want teens to get married, not even at 18-19. They preferred individuals wait until at least after college to make the kind of commitment necessary to sustain a marriage. They felt that teens lacked the maturity, wisdom and strength of faith to commit to marriage vows. They wanted young men and women to be sure of their love and this took time. They seemed particularly concerned with the fact that teens may rush to the altar as a way to legitimate or sanction their physical desires. This, they warned, was a mistake. They were profoundly concerned with the state of marriage in the United States in the 1970s, especially since they saw it as a major building block of a Christian life. Outside of one's relationship with God, the relationship with one's eventual spouse was seen as foundational. Family was the central

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<sup>47</sup> Tim Stafford, "Love, Sex, and the Whole Person", *Campus Life*. May 1978; Tim Stafford, "Love, Sex, and the Whole Person", *Campus Life*. December 1978.

<sup>48</sup> Tim Stafford, "Love, Sex, and the Whole Person", *Campus Life*. February 1975.

<sup>49</sup> Tim Stafford, "Love, Sex, and the Whole Person", *Campus Life*. December, 1975.

institution for evangelicals and strong marriages were at the center of this. The relationship one developed with one's future spouse was therefore of paramount importance.

YFC spokesmen tried to steer teens away from the endless search for true love at such an early age. In fact, advice writers and mentors advised against falling in love altogether. In an article entitled "Never Fall in Love," author Harold Myra argued against the prudence or even the possibility of falling in love.<sup>50</sup> Using expert research from sociologists and psychologists, Myra pointed out that most experts believe the initial feelings of love are not lasting. He wrote, love is good and all of that but you must not base your future on the initial sparks when you "fall in love."<sup>51</sup> True lasting love, he says, comes from a much deeper understanding of the individual." He went on to accuse popular culture of misleading teens about the nature of true love: "Every day you hum tunes, see headlines and listen to songs about it. Love – that mystifying, delightful, indefinable emotion – is all around you. But don't ever fall in love!"<sup>52</sup> He advised teens to rethink their concepts of love and heed expert advice on the subject and make rational decisions. "Much as love sounds like an euphoric entrance into utopia that should involve you just as soon as possible, experts say it's well to think through where you got your ideas on the subject and whether their built on fantasy or fact..." Myra used the evidence presented by experts in the fields of sociology, psychology and biology to help strengthen his case against the type of love found in popular culture. "In every other area of life, you make rational decisions. You choose a college, choose clothes, choose a career. But in love you

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<sup>50</sup> Harold Myra, "Never Fall in Love" *Campus Life*, Feb 1975 pg. 48-50.

<sup>51</sup> Harold Myra, "Never Fall in Love" *Campus Life*, Feb 1975 pg. 48-50.

<sup>52</sup> Harold Myra, "Never Fall in Love" *Campus Life*, Feb 1975 pg. 48-50.

fall.”<sup>53</sup> He wanted young people to really think and make rational decisions about love. He wanted teens to think about the future and not let their emotions guide them in such an important decision. “True, the spark of romance should be part of any lasting relationship. Rational love doesn’t take away the glow and delight of emotions. But God made our wills to link to His.”<sup>54</sup> He encourages teens to seek out a balance between the emotional and the rational self when it came to relationships. Letting emotions get the better of what one knew to be right could cause chaos. “Love is mystical and magical – and should be. The initial emotions of it may hit you many times, and it can happen more than once. But don’t let emotion enter your life as a master. Let it come as a delightful experience, one which will enrich your life, but not one which compels you to fall into chaos.”<sup>55</sup> Essentially the message for teens here is that love can be a good and wonderful thing is taken in the right context and viewed from the right perspective. Letting one’s emotions (and hormones) take control was the first step down a dangerous path into personal chaos. If they lived by their emotions only they ran the risk of damaging their relationships with God, with others and themselves.

One of the cultural and statistical realities YFC advisors used to convince teens to take a rational approach to love and relationships was rising divorce rates. Like many conservatives in the era, they blamed the sexual revolution, and in some cases feminists for the increase in divorce during the era. And to some degree they were not wrong. Divorce rates were up. This was a piece of statistical reality that did not impress the evangelical set. The ease with which people seemed to be dissolving their marriages was a cause of great concern for YFC. The fact

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<sup>53</sup> Harold Myra, “Never Fall in Love” *Campus Life*, Feb 1975 pg. 48-50.

<sup>54</sup> Harold Myra, “Never Fall in Love” *Campus Life*, Feb 1975 pg. 48-50.

<sup>55</sup> Harold Myra, “Never Fall in Love” *Campus Life*, Feb 1975 pg. 48-50.

that divorce seemed like a more and more viable option for Americans meant that the institution of marriage was not being given its proper weight by individuals and/or partners. Part of the problem, they believed, was early marriage. This provided them with more fodder for the anti-teen marriage mill. They tried to provide teens with adequate evidence why it was important to wait and pointed to the divorce rate as proof that true love could only come with maturity and that a wedding was not a solution for teens who could not bear or were trying to make up for the fact that they had engaged in sexual activity before marriage. Marriage was serious and God sanctioned union that should be treated as such. Dissolving a marriage was not like breaking up a relationship – even a long term one. Dissolving a marriage had serious repercussions for individuals and families and their relationships with self, God, and others.

This is not to say that breaking up with an individual before marriage was easy. But it was definitely preferable to waiting to find out that they were incompatible once they were married. As far as YFC was concerned, teens and young people had a duty to themselves and others not to push the issue and end up in relationships that were not working for both individuals before they reached the altar. In addition to spending time talking about how to get into relationships, YFC also tackled how to handle breakups. They discussed the situation from both perspectives, that of the person who wanted to let someone down easy and the person who was trying to deal with the fact that someone had broken up with him/her.

Additionally, YFC discussed the topic of third party involvement, namely parents. The bottom line of the advice was: breakups happen, they are part of dating life, and ultimately they are part of God's plan for an individual. "Most important of all – linked to both logic and emotions – is God's guidance...When love hits you, a good thing to be saying to God is, "Don't

let me goof. Break it up if it's not just what You want. Lord, make it Your choice. It's gotta be! I can't see 50 years ahead, but You can.'",<sup>56</sup>

Among the circumstances YFC listed as good reasons for breaking up were: incongruent religious beliefs, social incompatibility, dishonesty, mistreatment, moving too fast, being too close (physically and emotionally). YFC looked at a number of ways that dating could be hazardous to youth and they pointed out that under these circumstances the preservation of the individual's balance in life necessitated ending the relationship.

So how were teens to deal with the sadness that often accompanied breaking up, especially on the part of the one who had not ended the relationships? YFC advised young men and women to think of the relationship as a learning experience and, as always, look to God for guidance on how to find a better match next time around. In terms of the individual who was doing the breaking up, it was important that one do it in a way that did the least emotional harm to the other individual. Several letters from teens to the magazine suggest that teens were concerned with how to let someone down easy. However, these letters were most often written from young women who were interested in letting a guy down easy. Girls had a harder time trying to figure out how to tell someone they were not interested than boys did.

The final topic of great interest to teens that were of dating age was what do I do if I can't find someone? How do I handle loneliness and being single when it seems that everyone can find someone? The answer was, as always, that one as never alone with Jesus and to trust the fact that God's plan would be revealed to them in time. Even if they stayed single forever, this was not the end of the world. Additionally, they were asked to look at themselves and see what improvements they could make to themselves to attract more attention from friends and romantic

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<sup>56</sup> Harold Myra, "Never Fall in Love" *Campus Life*, Feb 1975 pg. 48-50.

prospects. But ultimately, they were told that being single could have its benefits as well. Being single removed the physical temptations that went along with dating. It allowed an individual to focus more attention on the things that mattered and cultivate a closer relationship with God, themselves and their friends. Eventually, they were assured, they would find someone that fit into their lives. YFC advisors did not always console teens about the lamentable fact that they were single. On occasion, they reassured them that they would find someone one day.

Sometimes teens wrote into the magazine talking about the benefits that could be gained from being single. This was particularly the case with girls and the frequency of the articles seemed to increase as the decades wore on. Being single or an extended period of time did not have to mean the end of one's life. In fact, it could mean a greater sense of independence and adventure. This was especially true for girls who were faced with increasing opportunities with every decade that passed. As young women found more and more opportunities in the job market and in other areas of life, being single could actually be a benefit rather than a hindrance to personal development. Once a woman got married there were expectations on what she would do, these were still very conservative circles, this was especially true after she had children. Being single for an extended period of time could allow her to experience things that her married counterparts could not.

Being single did not have to mean that one was lonely.<sup>57</sup> There were a number of ways to make contact with individuals and have a good time without having to engage in a romantic courtship with a member of the opposite sex. Ultimately, staying single and out of the dating game for as long as one could, was a good thing because it allowed the individual to develop as a whole person in their own right. By doing this they could develop a closer and more solid bond

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<sup>57</sup> "Tis a Gift to Be Single", *Campus Life*, November 1975; "Tis a Blessing to be Single", *Campus Life*, November 1975; "Disneyland", *Campus Life*, February 1976.

with Jesus that they could bring to their relationship with another Christian individual. Remaining single was made easier by the transformation of intimacy between young men and young women happening in the 1970s. Historian Beth Bailey alludes to this transformation stating that mixed sex friendship groups were becoming more common during this era.<sup>58</sup> These friendships allowed teens to cultivate close emotional relationships with members of the opposite sex without entering into exclusive relationships.<sup>59</sup>

This should not be confused with an opportunity to justify a variety of transgressions against traditional conservative Christian morality. While teens wrote in over and over with countless variants on the themes of love and physical contact, the answers were still pretty universal. Develop yourself as a healthy individual utilizing the group's moral codes, find a long term partner in your late teens, and finally get married and enjoy the fruits of marriage correctly pursued at the right age – sometime after college graduation. The strategy here was mostly window dressing, teens felt like they had options and opportunity for YFC to hear their complaints and cases, but the reality was that the group was still grounded as tightly as ever to the rock of absolute conservative Christian values.

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<sup>58</sup> Beth L. Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat : Courtship in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 1.

<sup>59</sup> Beth L. Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat : Courtship in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 1.

## **CHAPTER 6: JOE TACO AND SUZY CREAM CHEESE GET LIBERATED: LRY, LIBERATION POLITICS, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY, 1973-1980**

LRYers in the late 1970s were strongly influenced and inspired by the women's and gay liberation movements. As Youth for Christ leadership sought ways to remain grounded to the rock of conservative Christianity while adapting to changing gender roles in the 1970s, LRY members embraced the new moral framework and the possibilities it seemed to present for human relationships. While YFC was on damage control, cherry picking the least desirable elements of feminism out of their program, LRYers immersed themselves in the rhetoric and philosophies of liberation movements. The process of adaptation and refitting YFC and LRY were very different, the goal was the same – to stay relevant to their target audiences. While Youth for Christ looked for ways to keep their moral compass pointed northward, LRY embraced feminism and gay liberation.

In the 1970s, girls in LRY became more vocal about the sexism they saw within the organization and encouraged members to reexamine their relationships and actions from a feminist perspective.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the 1970s, many young women in LRY criticized their male counterparts for sexist behavior.<sup>2</sup> For young men, the real value of feminism was that it provided them with a language and method for examining their relationship to dominant masculine ideals. In November 1973, LRY published its first issue of the national newsletter, *People Soup*. In this issue, Continental LRY announced a contest to redesign the group's logo because "It is our feeling that the symbol is dull, unimaginative, not particularly beautiful and

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<sup>1</sup> Holly Horn, Cover Letter for "Sexism: A Social Actions Program Packet," September 27, 1972.

<sup>2</sup> References to unfair or sexist treatment appear regularly throughout the entire run of *People Soup* from the first issue in December 1973. During the same time period, *People Soup* featured regular articles in support of feminist causes including abortion rights, and the ERA, along with general support for feminists.

more than a little sexist.”<sup>3</sup> The MICHINDOH Federation’s 1964-1965 Directory contained the following description of the symbol: “the two triangles of the LRY Symbol represent the unity of Unitarians and Universalists. The semicircle with the letters LRY represents the unity of men in all nations. The man in the center of the symbol represents the individual dignity and integrity of each and every man.”<sup>4</sup> Nearly a decade later LRYers wanted to change the symbol because they believed it did not reflect their commitment to diversity and gender equality. LRYers from across the nation responded positively to the proposal and the Continental office received several entries, all of them devoid of gendered symbolism. The Executive Committee asked readers to pick their three favorite, which would be voted on at the Board of Trustee Meeting in August 1974.<sup>5</sup>

In the fall issue of *People Soup*, the LRY Executive informed members that the search had been narrowed to three options, but a final choice had not been made. The Executive Committee provided readers with a ballot and asked them to vote on the final three designs or vote to do away with an official group symbol altogether.<sup>6</sup> Two opinion pieces appeared on the same page. The first was written by Alan Trachtenberg under the title “Diversity Has No Symbol.” Even Dresel wrote the second piece titled “Free Symbols.”<sup>7</sup> Trachtenberg, who had been present at the Board Meeting in August, reported that the issue of choosing an official LRY symbol to unite the group caused “more controversy ...than...many apparently more complex

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<sup>3</sup> *People Soup*, December 1973, 3.

<sup>4</sup> “MICHINDOH Federation of LRY Directory, 1964-65,” Collection 48: Liberal Religious Youth Box 1115-1 Folder 18, Andover Harvard Theological Library.

<sup>5</sup> “New LRY Symbol,” *People Soup*, May 1974, 6.

<sup>6</sup> “An LRY Symbol?,” *People Soup*, Fall 1974, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Alan Trachtenberg, “Diversity Has No Symbol,” *People Soup*, Fall 1974, 5; Even Dresel, “Free Symbols,” *People Soup*, Fall 1974, 5.

issues.” Trachtenberg went on to state that he believed LRY should not commit itself to one symbol because having “an official symbol was against the very concept of liberal religion (two thirds of LRY’s name). Liberal religion means that you think about what you believe in.” He stated, “I do not want my way of life to be represented by a symbol that can be misinterpreted, or worse, used to replace the thought and spiritual effort that had gone into each LRYers search for meaning.” Trachtenberg argued that the varied and ever changing symbols used in LRY locals and federations were more authentic representations of LRY because they represented what it meant to those particular groups.<sup>8</sup> Drexel followed the same line of argument put forth by Trachtenberg. He argued, “If...there was no official symbol, people could use what ever represented their idea of LRY at the time. The symbols could change easily and freely as LRY changes.”<sup>9</sup> In the end, Continental LRY decided not to create an official symbol, leaving the matter up to the local groups. The Central Midwest Federation produced one of the most popular symbols. It was one of the three finalists and was already being printed on t-shirts and sold to LRYers across the nation. The CMF’s symbol, like many of the others submissions, addressed the sexist issues that prompted the contest and controversy in the first place by removing gender from the equation. They described it as follows: “Tax your imaginations and you will notice the resemblance of two human forms. The joining of the two figures formed by the chalice shows the interaction of people which is constant in LRY and essential for its existence. The cathedral effect in the center symbolizes the church origins of LRY. The chalice is the symbol of the Unitarian faith in which LRY had its beginnings, and is still very much a part of.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Alan Trachtenberg, “Diversity Has No Symbol,” *People Soup*, Fall 1974, 5

<sup>9</sup> Even Dresel, “Free Symbols,” *People Soup*, Fall 1974, 5.

<sup>10</sup> “New LRY Symbol,” *People Soup*, May 1974, 6.

The controversy over changing the LRY logo is a useful starting point for discussing gender relations in LRY during this period because it reflects several issues that arose within the group as members struggled to define themselves and the meaning and purpose of LRY. The original symbol, and its description, used the male figure and pronoun as a universal marker of humanity – a fact that went unnoticed for years. The lack of a discussion about topics such as gender asymmetry, relations and hierarchies was common in LRY during the early 1960s. The early material about boys and girls in the group reflects a very traditional view of sex role and relations. Group organizers did not question the idea that men and women were meant to fill different roles in society. The programming materials do not contain a discussion of the inherent inequalities in this sex-gender system. In the early 1960s, LRY did not promote inequality, but it did not actively question the existing sex-gender system. However, all of this was changing by the 1970s. The rise of radical feminism at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s, and the men's movement of the early 1970s, inspired LRYers to look deeper at the source of their gender identifications. Many young women and men committed themselves to understanding how these roles affected their relationships and to rooting out sexism within the organization. They encountered difficulties along the way as culturally embedded gender biases continued to show themselves in the way boys and girls interacted with each other. LRYers had a difficult time turning rhetoric into reality. Yet, despite these difficulties, many young women and men continued to push for gender equality and liberation for both young women and men in the group and society. LRYers' defined themselves in relation to liberation politics - youth liberation, gender liberation, gay liberation, sexual liberation.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> In Chapter 4, I discussed LRYers involvement in the Youth Liberation/High School Liberation Movement of the late 1960s. For an extended discussion of this movement see: Gael Graham, *Young Activists : American High School Students in the Age of Protest* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006). For a discussion of

The young men in LRY used the feminist movement as a point of entry into issues of masculinity. Inspired by young women's commitment to feminism and their challenges to dominant gender norms, as well as the burgeoning men's liberation movement, boys in LRY organized a Men's Group to, "Share and reflect on issues involved with being male."<sup>12</sup> Some of the topics up for discussion included "authority and control, stereotypes and expectations, strength and gentleness."<sup>13</sup> In 1978, LRY member, Ed Inman wrote an editorial entitled, "Sexual Politics from the Male Perspective." In this letter he expressed his belief that, "While it is undeniably true that sexual "norms" in this society are inexcusably repressive to women, it is my firm belief that these norms are equally repressive to men."<sup>14</sup> Inman went on to cite several reasons why he felt repressed by these norms including prohibitions on his "right to emotion, my ability to be vulnerable, my ability to cry. I've been told to remain 'strong' in all situations."<sup>15</sup> Young men in LRY resented the cultural expectation that they should be strong and hold back their emotions.

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the specific connection between youth liberation and gay liberation see: Stephan L. Cohen, *The Gay Liberation Youth Movement in New York : "An Army of Lovers Cannot Fail"* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> Flyer "Men's Group" Bill Connet and Wayne Arnason, circa 1972. For a contemporary look at the challenges to male gender roles see: Jack Sawyer, "On Male Liberation," *Liberation* 1971., Warren Farrell, *The Liberated Man: Beyond Masculinity; Freeing Men and Their Relationships with Women*, [1st ed. (New York,: Random House, 1974).], Jack Nichols, *Men's Liberation : A New Definition of Masculinity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1975)., Marc Feigen Fasteau, *The Male Machine* (New York,: McGraw-Hill, 1974). For scholarly work on the men's movement see: Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men : American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment*, 1st ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1983)., Michael A Messner, "The Limits of 'the Male Sex Role': An Analysis of the Men's Liberation and Men's Rights Movements' Discourse," *Gender & Society* 12, no. 3 (1998); Michael A. Messner, *Politics of Masculinities : Men in Movements*, Gender Lens Series in Sociology (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1997)., Judith Lowder Newton, *From Panthers to Promise Keepers : Rethinking the Men's Movement*, New Social Formations (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).,

<sup>13</sup> Flyer "Men's Group" Bill Connet and Wayne Arnason, circa 1972.

<sup>14</sup> Ed Inman, "Sexual Politics From a Male Perspective" *People Soup* (Summer 1978) 3.

<sup>15</sup> Ed Inman, "Sexual Politics From a Male Perspective" *People Soup* (Summer 1978) 3. Similar examples can be found in many forms, including poems, editorials, articles, cartoons, and advertisements, in nearly every issue of *People Soup* from the first issue released in December 1973 – the final issue printed in 1982.

Male LRYers were searching for an alternative to the breadwinner model of middle class manhood, which despite faces challenges by men in the early 1960s, proved remarkably resilient. As young men, in LRY searched for alternatives, they borrowed feminist arguments and began to see themselves as equally oppressed by the existing sex-gender system. Historian Judith Newton has argued that the early men's liberation movement acknowledged the existence of sexism in American culture and supported efforts to combat it, "but they also focused on inventing different modes of being men, on personal growth, and on the costs of dominant masculine ideals."<sup>16</sup> LRY boys' engagement with feminism certainly followed this trajectory, and in the process, women's liberation became primarily a girl's concern while the young white middle class males worked to liberate themselves from masculine ideals that were at once a source of oppression and privilege. One young man described the dualism inherent in middle class masculine ideal in the December 1975 issue of *People Soup*.

I see that it is useful to employers to have workers who are obedient and don't get angry, which I have learned at school and at home... And I see that I am bribed with small privileges so that I don't step out of place. Being middle class, I am able to get a better job than someone who hasn't been taught to speak as articulately as I. Being male, I am able to walk down the street without fear of being raped, and I can marry if I wish, and come home to a clean house, or I can talk more than most women in a serious conversation, because I have been taught to dominate and be in the center, while women have been taught to take care of my ego. Being white and heterosexual I can be relatively without fear of the police. I can hitchhike. I can go just about anywhere. And it is tempting to settle for these and other privileges because social change is so far away....I see how race, sex, class, and age have been used to divide us, giving small privileges to one half so the other half fights with the first half to get the privileges and he first half fight to defend them. That way, no one is strong or united enough to challenge the people who control the wealth and

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<sup>16</sup> Judith Newton, *From Panthers to Promise Keepers: Rethinking the Men's Movement* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004), 118.

institutions of the country: the banks, the corporations, and the  
handful of rich white men.<sup>17</sup>

This young man attempted to point to the powerful institutional and economic forces that shape the course of American's lives and pit one segment of society against another. In the course of his discussion he speaks of the "small privileges" middle class white men have been given in exchange for their compliance with the system, including educational and employment opportunities, gender dominance, freedom from sexual violence and police harassment. The very fact that he labeled these basic human rights "small privileges" speaks to his inward focus. As young, white and middle class, most of the groups with whom he identified would have viewed his situation very differently. On one level his argument is sophisticated because he sees how the entire structure functions to keep each individual in a specific place. But at the same time, he minimized the struggles of black, women, and gay men and lesbians by characterizing the very things they were fighting for as "small privileges." This type of minimizing of middle class white privilege was reminiscent of critiques that the feminist movement often leveled against men.<sup>18</sup> He was not wrong to take on the big corporations, institutions and powerful few, but his assessment of his own position within the structure was perhaps out of step with the struggles of these other groups. However, his comments were representative of how many LRY boys felt.

This inward looking focus was also a function of the me decade. The inward focus of the young man who wrote this article can also be attributed to his generational position. As a member of the third cohort of baby boomers this young man fits squarely within the framework

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<sup>17</sup> liv, "Let the Flame Spread," *People Soup*, December 1975, 1.

<sup>18</sup> Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad : Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975*, American Culture (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989); Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open : How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Viking, 2000).

of most teens growing up in the “me decade”. In 1976, novelist Tom Wolfe writing in New York magazine called attention to the self-centered focus of Americans in this decade. He pointed to the proliferation of self-help literature, a pre-occupation with self actualization, human potential movement, and group therapy.<sup>19</sup>

It is clear that male LRYers rejected dominant forms of masculinity and tried to find another way to express their manhood. For LRYers, masculinity incorporated a certain level of self-reflection, sensitivity, and compassion – qualities not typically reinforced in mainstream society. A more open attitude towards expanded gender roles and expectations was an essential component of male LRY mindset – at least in theory. For many of the boys in LRY this meant freedom from the emotional restriction they experienced in the outside world. There was a culture of emotional connection that required boys move beyond the mainstream expressions of masculinity. Like the girls in the group, young men constantly monitored their behavior, adjusting it to fit the model of liberated white middle class manhood. However, the standards they used were different from the breadwinner ethic hailed in YFC circles. Their adjustment to this new type of manhood was not easy. The young boys in the group found it difficult to let go of culturally ingrained notions of male privilege and superiority. They paid lip service to female equality within the group, their actions and words often contradicted the rhetoric of equality. Their verbal commitments to expanded gender roles were not always echoed in their individual attitudes and behavior towards female members of the group. There was a large gap between the rhetoric of equality and expanded gender roles and the reality of gender expressions in the group.

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<sup>19</sup> Tom Wolfe, "The Me Decade and the Third Great Awakening," *New York* 1976. This theme was also taken up by contemporary critics and historians. See: Christopher Lasch in Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism : American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: Norton, 1978). Beth L. Bailey and David R. Farber, *America in the Seventies*, Cultureamerica (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004); Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies : The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (New York: Free Press, 2001); Edward D. Berkowitz, *Something Happened : A Political and Cultural Overview of the Seventies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

By the 1970s, LRYers started seriously questioning the inevitability of existing gender roles and started promoting ideas that were less restrictive than “traditional” male and female roles. They explored alternative gender constructions and tried to educate themselves on feminist issues. Boys also began interrogating social restrictions on males. LRYers focused on restrictive gender expectations and archetypes within institutions and tried to avoid recreating similarly restrictive roles within their own group. They believed their gender politics were progressive, especially the young men who considered themselves well-versed on and supportive of feminist goals. However, young women felt that despite the rhetoric of gender equality, sexism was still a problem in the group. They challenged their male counterparts’ commitment to feminism and stepped up their efforts to educate the group.

LRYers used two fictional characters, Joe Taco and Suzy Creamcheese, to represent the sexes. They were the LRY version of John and Jane Doe. Initially, both characters functioned as stand-ins for all LRYers regardless of gender. LRY President Greg Sweigart started using the pen name Suzy Creamcheese. He borrowed the name from musician Frank Zappa who featured Suzy as a character on some of his albums. We can trace the origin of Joe Taco to 1970 when LRY began renting an apartment for the Executive Committee members in Cambridge, MA. Because the members of the committee changed annually, the apartment was rented in Joe Taco’s name.<sup>20</sup> Gradually, these two fictional characters were associated with the two sexes.

LRYers often used Joe and Suzy as generic names for the average LRYer, but they also insisted that these figures were different from other institutional or organizational archetypes. Discussing this difference in 1973, President Larry Ladd wrote, ““Since these organizations have as their purpose the molding of us to fit their own image (for example, G.I. Joe, Johnny Scout),

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<sup>20</sup> Wayne B Arnason, *Follow the gleam: A history of the liberal religious youth movements* (Boston: Skinner House, 1980).

their leaders pass down ‘the right way’ and their structures exist so that we can ‘rehearse’ the roles and organizational methods that they hope to train us to believe in.”<sup>21</sup> According to both Ladd and Adam Auster, the author of the piece this quote appeared in, Joe and Suzy were not images one was expected to imitate. They were fictional characters used for general reference purposes as a way to distinguish LRYers from “the perfect typicalness” of “the ideal boy and girl whose image can be found not only in movies and books but in our own midst.”<sup>22</sup> Auster continued the point in the remainder of the letter:

LRY should be an experience of change and growth, no one least of all poor innocuous Joe Taco, is pointing to the ‘right’ way to be... LRYers, after all, come in all shapes and sizes, valuing diversity as much as common unity. The only exceptions to this are the “average” LRYers – Joe Taco and Suzy Creamcheese – who only hold this dubious honor by virtue of the fact that they, unlike the rest of us, do not really exist.<sup>23</sup>

Auster and Ladd’s comments reveal two significant aspects of LRYers identity formations. First, Auster made a clear distinction between the typical LRYer and the average teenager one might have found in a typical American high school or popular culture depiction of his generation. Auster and his fellow LRYers viewed themselves as a minority of individualists standing apart from the mass of compliant conformists in their age cohort. He was not just referring to the images of the ideal teen. He was also referring to those who tried to mould themselves in the image of the perfect teen through unquestioned absorption of ideals found in mass culture, youth organizations, and institutions. Within these groups, teens were asked to perform in accordance with preconceived notions of what was normal that were passed down

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<sup>21</sup> Adam Auster “The Joe Taco Syndrome” People Soup Volume 1 Issue 1 (December 1973), 5.

<sup>22</sup> Adam Auster “The Joe Taco Syndrome” People Soup Volume 1 Issue 1 (December 1973), 5.

<sup>23</sup> Adam Auster “The Joe Taco Syndrome” People Soup Volume 1 Issue 1 (December 1973), 5.

from adults to youth within institutional settings. For Auster and Ladd, the teenagers who were products of these institutions were less authentic individuals for participating in the performance and learning how to act ‘the right way’.

The second significant aspect of the “Joe Taco Syndrome,” was Auster failed to distinguish between male and female institutional archetypes. When Ladd listed the types of organizations and institutional figures he objected to, they were all male. When Auster expanded further on Ladd’s comments, he also referred only to single sex organizations and archetypes – scouts, All-American athletes, and military men. Given that Auster wrote the article to address a question relevant to both male and female group members, his omission of equally restrictive female archetypes is glaring and suggests young men considered their concerns representative of the entire youth experience.

Young men in LRY based their gender identity formations on the rejection of three main institutional archetypes: the Johnny Scout, All American Boy, and GI Joe. Each of these archetypes corresponded to a particular stage in male adolescence. Johnny Scout was a type most associated with prepubescent and early adolescent boys, the All American boy was the quintessential high school archetype, and the GI Joe figure was associated with late adolescence and early manhood. Although these archetypes were predominant at different stages, boys felt their weight and significance throughout adolescence. The high school boy, finding himself at the crossroads between boyhood and manhood, developed his own gender identity in reference to all three archetypes. The symbolic power of these archetypes was as powerful a force as those influencing their female counterparts. Although the boys rejected these archetypes as unfavorable ideals, they still had to contend with their existence. The young men who became members of LRY searched for an alternative to these paths to manhood.

What was it about these figures that struck such a negative chord in the LRYers? On the most basic level, they represented a way of life and a value system that the LRY boys did not value. Each required a level of conformity and acceptance of specific core values that, in the eyes of LRYers, seemed to rob one of his individuality and autonomy. In order to fit into these groups a young man had to relinquish some, if not all, of his personal thoughts feelings and values and go along with the group. LRY was established to provide young people with a safe space to come to their own conclusions and set their own moral compass.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, accepting a preconceived set of values that had been established by adults for the purpose of molding compliant citizens was in direct opposition to their identities as free-thinking, rebellious and revolutionary individuals. In the revolutionary climate of the late 1960s and 1970s, there seemed to be a multitude of paths to manhood, none of which required relinquishing one's individuality or principles. Furthermore, the common set of values these three archetypes embodied did not fit the typical LRYer's interpretation of what is as to be an American man.

The Johnny Scout figure was a direct reference to both the image and the actual members who passed through the Boy Scouts of America on their way to adolescence. Based on the unequivocal objection to this figure in the letter cited above, it is clear that LRYers were not interested in being shaped into the type of boys, or men, the Boys Scouts of America tried to build. The BSA's emphasis on the unity of patriotism, religion and masculinity was a post-war version of turn of the century Muscular Christianity that did not fit LRYers commitment to the separation of church and state.<sup>25</sup> The BSA's vision of manhood as rugged, outdoorsy,

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<sup>24</sup> Wayne B. Arnason and Rebecca Scott, *We Would Be One: A History Of Unitarian Universalist Youth Movements* (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2005).

<sup>25</sup> Jay Mechling, *On my honor : Boy Scouts and the making of American youth* (Chicago ;London: University of Chicago Press, 2001); David Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Their Forerunners, 1870-1920*, 1st ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

adventurous, physical, reverent, and duty bound, did not coincide with LRYers identifications as young intellectuals.<sup>26</sup>

LRYers' objections to the All American archetype stemmed from some of the same critiques of the "Johnny Scout" figure. As an archetype, the All American boy was the quintessential white middle-class male teenager. What he lacked in intellectual capability, he made up for in charisma, charm, physical prowess and popularity. In the American imagination, the All American boy was Christian, clean cut, good-looking, muscular, good at sports, competitive, and popular. He was a hometown hero who typified the American spirit.<sup>27</sup>

One of LRYers main objections to the typical All American teen was that he participated in and perpetuated a system of social hierarchy that, as a matter of principle, was at odds with some of LRYers core beliefs. LRYers often mentioned the importance of equality within the group and prided themselves on the fact that all were welcome and all were accepted in the group regardless of their social status in high school. In fact, some LRYers took respite in the group and saw it an antidote to their lack of status or popularity in their high schools. The high school popularity game was something that LRYers were trying to escape. For some it was because their interests and their history with the peer group put them perpetually on the outside – there really was no hope of them being invited to socialize with the popular crowd. In some

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<sup>26</sup> Adam Auster "The Joe Taco Syndrome" People Soup Volume 1 Issue 1 (December 1973), 5. For a contemporary look at the Boy Scout principles see: Boy Scouts of America, *Boy Scout handbook : a handbook of training for citizenship through Scouting.*, 7th ed., 1965.

<sup>27</sup> Several scholars have studied the connections between masculinity, sports, Christianity, and citizenship in modern America. See: Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Harvard University Press, 2003); Tony Ladd and James A. Mathisen, *Muscular Christianity: Evangelical Protestants and the Development of American Sport* (Baker Books, 1999); Robert J. Higgs, *God In The Stadium: Sports and Religion in America* (The University Press of Kentucky, 1995); William J. Baker, *Playing with God: Religion and Modern Sport* (Harvard University Press, 2007); Shirl James Hoffman, *Good Game: Christianity and the Culture of Sports* (Baylor University Press, 2010); Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (University Of Chicago Press, 1996).

cases they were actively picked on or ostracized from the groups and had a difficult time finding friends in their school.

LRYers saw themselves as nonconformists and rebellious youth who were going against the grain of mainstream middle class values and creating their own standards rather than molding themselves to existing standards of masculinity. Discussing his own transformation, one LRYer stated: "I've done a lot of growth. I have been re-examining my male roles, and rejecting the macho in me."<sup>28</sup> They believed they were in the vanguard of social progress, forging their own way and independent from approval from peers. They rejected unachievable standards set by parents, schools, churches, organizations, and the government. Touching on the more liberated and open environment one LRY member stated:

I was slowly being suffocated and I needed place to turn. Because LRY as clearly part of this revolutionary spirit, I turned there. LRY was urging me to become more aware of myself and my surroundings. Not only was this urging there, but also given freely was the love that I needed to let down my defenses LRY offered a different kind of criticism than I had been used to...I was expected to be sensitive rather than successful; it was an attitude that allowed me to test my skills without so much fear of failure.<sup>29</sup>

The third archetype that LRY boys objected to was the GI Joe figure. GI Joe represented a militarized manhood that equated masculinity and honor with military might and success of the battlefield.<sup>30</sup> LRY rejected the idea that the highest form of patriotism was serving one's country in war. These objections to the GI Joe figure were related to their feelings about the Vietnam War and the draft. LRYers made it a point to inform themselves about the conflict.

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<sup>28</sup> liv, "Why I Changed My Name," *People Soup*, December 1975, 10.

<sup>29</sup> Timmer Feldhousen, "A Fool's Reflection on the LRY Experience," *People Soup*, August 1975, 6.

<sup>30</sup> Andrew Huebner, *The warrior image : soldiers in American culture from the Second World War to the Vietnam era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

The group devoted the entire March 1966 issue of the “Promethean”, a magazine produced by LRY the 1960s, to Vietnam. Promethean Editor, Henry Koch, called upon LRYers to inform themselves about the Vietnam War. In his opening comments, he stated: LRY has a moral responsibility to abandon the assumption that the pattern of international politics will continue unchanged. We must...begin the process of education and deliberation which will lend force to the direction of our voice in the management of the affairs of state.”<sup>31</sup> In April of 1967, a year after this call, LRYers opinions about U.S involvement Vietnam were mixed, but the majority did not support it. Dan Akron, LRY Social Responsibility Director, conducted an opinion poll among LRYers to assess their position on Vietnam. Nearly 60% felt that the US should withdraw, scale back military actions and focus on negotiation.<sup>32</sup> Akron included some representative comments from those polled. Larry Ladd’s comments reflect the mixed attitudes reported by the group in 1967:

I am completely bewildered by the whole mess. There is a real conflict going on within myself over the war. It is a conflict between my sense of realism and my sense of idealism. My sense of idealism sees this war as none of America’s damn business. But my sense of realism sees that this war, as bloody, confusing, and agonizing as it may be, is still a very necessary war. Although I don’t think that we should have gotten involved there in the first place, I think that now that we are there, there is no choice but to stick it out...We are certainly in a very touchy situation.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to publishing the results of his survey, Akron also included a four page informational paper about conscientious objection outlining the beliefs and procedures necessary to claim conscientious objector status. Two years after Akron published these results, LRYers opinions

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<sup>31</sup> “LRY and Viet Nam,” *The Promethean*, March 1966, 3.

<sup>32</sup> Dan Akron, “LRY Poll: Vietnam - Results,” April 1967, 3.

<sup>33</sup> Dan Akron, “LRY Poll: Vietnam - Results,” April 1967, 4.

about the war in Vietnam were shifting more and more in favor of ending the conflict. But they were even more concerned about escalation and the increasing number of young men being drafted. In 1968, LRY published a letter drafted by the Unitarian Universalist Association declaring their intent to “to make our church available as a place of ‘symbolic sanctuary’” for those resisting the draft.<sup>34</sup> Accompanying the letter was a copy of the UUA’s resolution on the Right of Dissent passed by the UUA General Assembly on October 24, 1968.<sup>35</sup> The following summer, at the July 20-17, 1969 Board of Trustees Meeting, LRY announced the creation of the selective Service Resistance Program. The Board offered the following commentary regarding the need for such a program:

LRY is not taking a stand against all military systems, however, it is impossible for us to ignore the obligation we have to oppose a system which forces Americans to serve in an armed force leaving no real alternatives. The concept of freedom of belief is on the first page of the LRY by-laws, it is the foundation of our organizations and it is the foundation of Selective Service Resistance.<sup>36</sup>

LRY’s increasing objection to the Vietnam War, particularly the draft, mirrored many young American’s growing opposition to the war after 1968.<sup>37</sup> Viewed within the context of escalating

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<sup>34</sup> “LRY and Viet Nam,” *The Promethean*, March 1966, 3.

<sup>35</sup> “A Letter on Sanctuary,” *The Nameless Newsprint*, 1968, 11-12.

<sup>36</sup> “Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees Liberal Religious Youth July 20-27, 1969 at the First Parish Church Concord, Massachusetts,” Collection 48: Box 1152-4 Folder F7, Andover Harvard Theological Library.

<sup>37</sup> Charles Kaiser, *1968 in America: Music, Politics, Chaos, Counterculture, and the Shaping of a Generation* (Grove Press, 1997); Charles DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era* (Syracuse University Press, 1990); Michael S. Foley, *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance during the Vietnam War* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Terry Anderson, *The movement and the sixties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Kenneth Heineman, *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement At American State Universities in the Vietnam Era* (NYU Press, 1994); Ronald Fraser, *1968: A Student Generation in Revolt* (Pantheon, 1988); Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year That Rocked the World* (Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2005); Melvin Small, *Covering Dissent: The Media and the Anti-Vietnam War Movement*, illustrated edition. (Rutgers University Press, 1994).

opposition to the War and the draft, Auster's 1973 objection to GI Joe as a representative masculine archetype makes sense. He was not pointing to actual soldiers as objectionable. Rather, I think his comments were more directed at the notion that those who went to war willingly were patriotic, while those who dodged the draft were not.

Girls criticized the boys for their chauvinism and some were not shy about voicing their concerns about the increasing pressure they felt to perform their femininity on a sexual playing field. They were also unhappy with the pressure they felt (from boys and girls in the group) to conform to an archetype which did not exist except as an ideal - they very type that was not supposed to exist in LRY. Although echoing the sentiment that Suzy was only a stereotype and not a reflection of the real girls in LRY, the following letter written by an anonymous LRYer using the pseudonym Suzy, does reveal the pressures many girls felt to conform to a male defined liberal ideal within LRY circles.

Dear People Soup,  
Allow me to re-introduce myself, My name is Suzy Creamcheese. I am a stereotype LRY woman. , I have long hair, wear Levi's, a workshirt or leotard, and workboots, Clark's, or Earthshoes. I am a liberal agnostic. I am thinking about becoming a vegetarian and I am learning to play the guitar. I support the United Farmworkers cause by attending rallies with my local group, and I support the desegregation of schools. I believe in "free sex"; in other words going to be with someone I met just a few hours earlier, after all I've been on the pill long enough. I write poetry and draw pictures that show how I feel. I smoke dope but not at conferences, I have done LSD once or twice, and I drink beer. Everyone likes me, I am mellow and friendly, aggressive and occasionally obnoxious, but all is in a friendly manner. It is impossible for people in LRY not to like me, because they design me and further my existence. Believe me, I'm glad I only have to be a stereotype. It would be hard to be an individual in LRY. I would be faced with pressure to like me. I pity the woman who does not believe in the UFW cause, or who likes to wear skirts and platform shoes. People who are too friendly or aggressive have my sympathy because other people won't see them for their good points, only the loud and aggressive image they put on in an attempt to make friends. My heart breaks

for the women who do not believe in my sexual ideals. The woman who only want to sleep with a guy and not make love to him for one reason or another is shunned. I am afraid of being bi-sexual, but my liberal instincts say I should be, so I guess some day I will find a woman who attracts me and make love to her. After all, in LRY it has almost become groovy to be bi-sexual hasn't it? No, I guess when it is O.K. to be that way I will be. I am in everywoman LRYer. Whether she thinks so or not. I am not bad because I am a stereotype, what is bad about me is the pressure I place on people who are not like me. No, fortunately there is no one in LRY exactly like me, but I wonder how many of those ingredients that make me exist truly exist in the people that I am a composite of.

Love and Happiness,  
 Suzy<sup>38</sup>

It is clear by both the tone and content of this letter that the young woman who wrote it was frustrated by the pressures she felt to be a certain type of girl to gain acceptance. She made it clear this was an ideal rather than a set of qualities embodied in real LRY girls. Still, her disappointment with the pressure to perform all of these qualities suggested a certain level of ostracism for those who did not at least try to live up to the ideal. This belies the point that Auster made that there was not a 'right' way to be in LRY. Suzy's letter argued not only was there a right way to dress and carry oneself, but also a right set of beliefs to subscribe to and put into practice.

Suzy's suggestion that she pitied the woman who liked to wear skirts and platform shoes suggests that mainstream expressions of style and beauty were not the standard. These girls did not feel pressure to dress like the girls in Seventeen magazine and they certainly did not attend the charm schools organized for their YFC counterparts.<sup>39</sup> In fact, the ideal look for girls was

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<sup>38</sup> "Suzy's Letter," *People Soup*, May 1975, 4.

<sup>39</sup> For a discussion of a variety of representations of women in the 1970s see: Sherrie A. Inness, *Disco Divas : Women and Popular Culture in the 1970s* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

much more androgynous featuring, as Suzy pointed out, “Levi’s, a workshirt or leotard, and workboots, Clark’s, or Earthshoes.” Group pictures from the era provide proof that this was indeed the accepted uniform of girls in the group. Even though LRY style may have seemed less oppressive to those who felt that their dress represented a rejection of conventional women's attire, for some it was clearly confining. LRYers’ general expectations that girls in the group dress in a certain way limited their ability to express themselves as individuals and ultimately called in to question the commitment to non-conformity within the group.

While the girls’ clothes may have been less sexualized than what was appearing in contemporary women's and girls’ magazine, LRY girls were no less sexualized than in the mainstream world the group so openly criticized. As “Suzy” suggested, having an open mind about sexual encounters was not enough, girls in LRY (and boys for that matter) were expected to practice what they preached. “Free love” was looked at as more than just a slogan; “making love” (with multiple partners) was one way that a girl could prove that she was not uptight and truly believed in the free expression of self and others, that she was open to close connections with other individuals, and she was not hung up on society’s taboos and arbitrary restrictions. The proof of this – she was on the pill and not shy about sharing the information. Much like feminist criticism of the sexual double standard emerging as a result of the sexual revolution taking place in this era, Suzy is critical of the pressures put on young women to express themselves physically or risk censure for boys, and girls, in the group. This is further illustrated by Suzy’s sarcastic reflections on the popularity of the idea of bisexuality within the group (at least for girls).

Based on Suzy’s discussion of women’s physical appearance and sexuality we can isolate two gender expectations for girls in LRY; the ideal girl was self reflective enough not to

become hung up on mainstream standards of beauty, which suggests that she was a liberated woman. Further evidence of her liberation from the mainstream norms was her willingness and desire to express her love for fellow humans through sexual openness. But Suzy's letter reveals several other expectations for girls. A "good girl" by LRY standards was in touch with her feelings and shared them openly with the group through song, poetry, and artwork. Evidence of this is all over the pages of People Soup and countless other newsletters and publications produced by the group. Page after page of these publications are filled with group members' emotional outpourings.

Members of LRY also expected girls to be activists, supporting not some but all of the of the popular rights movements of the time.<sup>40</sup> As Suzy points out, this was a non-negotiable expectation if one wanted to find acceptance within the group. And while Suzy points to the expectation to participate in rallies and protests, she does not mention leadership roles for women in these groups. An example that is conspicuously absent from her list of causes she supports is feminism. This is not because girls and boys in the group did not support feminism. There is plenty of evidence that by the 1970s, feminism was a major concern for the group. Girls' and boys' support of the feminist cause showed up in advertisements, articles, and editorials about the importance of feminism were prominent features in the group's records. It was not a problem of rhetoric or commitment, but of action. Most of the charges of sexism within the group had to do with how girls were treated in their interactions with young men and the popularity of a certain types of girls within the group.

As Suzy points out the LRY girl was mellow, friendly, aggressive and occasionally obnoxious "but all in a friendly manner". Later, she indicated that the group frowned upon loud

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<sup>40</sup> For a look at women's involvement in several radical protest movements not specifically committed to women's rights as the main goal see: Kathleen Blee, *No Middle Ground: Women and Radical Protest* (NYU Press, 1997).

and aggressive behavior in girls, especially if it was perceived as an attempt to win friends or stand out. She does not mention which behaviors were considered too aggressive but the issue is really that girls had to find a balance. Weak personalities did not make much headway in the group – they tended to fade into the background and remain on the margins. As Suzy suggested, finding the perfect balance of these contradictory qualities could be very difficult and isolating for those who failed to come up with the winning combination.

Suzy's letter to the editor indicates a deep dissatisfaction not only with "traditional" gender roles such as the lovely girls celebrated within the pages of Youth for Christ Magazine, but also a dissatisfaction with the girls in LRY who rejected these images. LRY members sought to define their own gender ideals and break out of stereotypes on one side or the other. They demanded a sexual education program that provided them with information rather than euphemisms and censorship.

The combined emphasis on personal exploration, individual freedom, youth autonomy, and liberation created a welcoming environment for the liberation ethics of other movements in the 1970s. In particular, the women's and gay liberation movements served as models for these teens, providing them with a language and methodology for pursuing individual and collective liberation.<sup>41</sup> In the process of drawing parallels between ageism, sexism and heterosexism,

LRYers used the ethical principles of women's and gay liberation as a framework for their own

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<sup>41</sup> Martin Duberman, *Stonewall*, 1994; David Carter, *Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked the Gay Revolution* (St. Martin's Griffin, 2005); Eric Marcus, *Making Gay History: The Half Century Fight for Lesbian and Gay Equal Rights* (Harper Paperbacks, 2002); Dudley Clendinen, *Out for Good: The Struggle to Build a Gay Rights Movement in America* (Simon & Schuster, 1999); Neil Miller, *Out of the Past: Gay and Lesbian History from 1869 to the Present*, Rev Upd. (Advocate Books, 2008); Margaret Cruikshank, *The Gay and Lesbian Liberation Movement*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 1992); Adam Barry, *The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement, Revised Edition*, 1st ed. (Twayne Publishers, 1995); Karla Jay, *Tales Of The Lavender Menace: A Memoir Of Liberation*, 1st ed. (Basic Books, 2000); Alice Echols, *Daring To Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975*, 1st ed. (Univ Of Minnesota Press, 1989); Susan Brownmiller, *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution*, 1st ed. (The Dial Press, 1999); Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America, Revised Edition*, Revised. (Penguin (Non-Classics), 2006).

gender ideals and sexual morality. In a ten year span (regardless of the theme of the issue) there is at least one, and in many cases more than one, article, letter, advertisement, announcement, etc... dealing with the gender and sexual dynamics of the group and the moral/ethical implications of specific viewpoints and behaviors. The articulation of these concerns took many forms including: advertisements for publications about high school women's liberation and growing up gay, reviews featuring books about sexual politics, female orgasm, masturbation, and bisexuality, and poetry and prose about sexual intimacy, heterosexual norms, and gender expectations.

The tone of this material indicates that these teens were questioning social norms regarding gender and sexual morality. More significantly they were doing it in a very public fashion. Part of the motivation the teenagers in Liberal Religious Youth wanted to discuss these topics in public was to further their own liberation cause by rebelling against what they perceived as oppressive and very out of date ideals about what topics they should and should not be able to discuss. However, to say LRY teens were simply discussing these topics to anger their elders and mount their own liberation movement would be selling the teens short. There was also a genuine interest and desire to learn more, explore alternative viewpoints, and grow as individuals. LRY was a group that really encouraged teens to ask "Who am I" "What do I believe" – especially in the context of the 1970s "Me Decade".

Role playing, intimacy interviews, and other activities encouraged group members to understand themselves, explore their feelings and connect with members of both sexes. These conversations were intensely personal ranging from social pressure to conform to gender norms, to personal revelations about sexual experience, orientation, and masturbation. Many teens were relieved to open up and felt personally (if not politically) liberated after doing so. A female

contributor to People Soup shared the following experience: “During one discussion of masturbation, I was amazed to find I could be sitting there with a group of people I didn’t even know, calmly taking about ‘it.’ Every time I discovered that previously sensitive subjects actually could be discussed openly in a group something clicked in my head. I began to experience sexuality as a common human phenomenon instead of some mysterious force to be ignored whenever possible.”<sup>42</sup>

Emotions ran high at many of these meetings, especially at extended conferences. For some, the emotional intimacy and spirit of openness led to painful recollections or realizations about oneself and others. Many participants reached out for comfort through hugs, handholding, kissing, and cuddling from their fellow LRYers. In fact, physical intimacy between and between the sexes was worked into the overall program as an expression of platonic love and support and as a means of personal liberation. In 1976, a young man urged his fellow LRYers to “Reach Out. Touch.” He, like many others in the group, believed that social norms regulating touch harmed individuals, especially men, because they encouraged the “suppression of emotion, affection and love.”<sup>43</sup> Physical intimacy among the group was supposed to liberate teens from these taboos. According to LRY logic, this was the first step in exploring alternative modes of human interaction.

Physical touching was something that emerged in the group in the 1970s, and something that was strongly tied to the ideology of the “me decade”. Youth were sharing stories that were not about groups of people or about other people – they were personal. These stories led to a stronger connection between group members than those that had emerged during the earlier

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<sup>42</sup> Cathy C. Letter *People Soup* (April 1976), p.5.

<sup>43</sup> Eric Ellerson, “Touching”, *People Soup* (Fall 1976), p. 12

periods. Whereas conversations in the early or late 1960s had been from anonymous surveys or about general situations, these meetings were intensely personal. These meetings created an atmosphere of understanding, love, and intimacy among members of the group – not just from couples.

Some of this physical contact made adults nervous, but LRYers insisted that touching did not have to be sexual. Upon arriving at a conference, new members could expect to see a lot of physical intimacy. A sample worship service designed by four female LRYers described it this way: “the first thing you notice is that everyone is hugging everyone. Girls are hugging girls, girls are hugging guys, guys are hugging guys...guys are kissing guys... these demonstrations may cause a little ...mild surprise.”<sup>44</sup> Of course, all of this platonic physical intimacy also set the stage for sexual intimacy among group members. Many teens mentioned the sexually charged atmosphere of conferences, where LRYers developed their own informal rituals to initiate such contact. Sex, in its varied forms, had to be approached in the right way, framed within a specific context of mutual love and respect – and this was true for both boys and girls. But love was not always the guiding force behind these relationships- casual experimentation was also part of the LRY experience. One of the most cited “pick-ups” was dubbed the “cigarette- match–massage-sleeping bag” game – making reference to the sequence of events that often led to sexual experimentation. While some LRYers playfully mocked the ubiquitous practice through cartoons, poems and songs, others were offended by the casualness of these sexual encounters and the expectations for participation. These LRYers used the nature of sexual relationships at conferences as a starting point for discussing the politics of sexual games and

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<sup>44</sup> Judy, Barbara et al “Worship Service” *People Soup* (December 1974), p.6.

double standards within LRY.

Most sexual activity in LRY circles was limited to heterosexual contact. While same –sex partnerships were accepted in theory, many gay men and women noted that the opportunities for sexual intimacy between same sex couples were limited. The contradiction between the rhetoric of gay liberation, and the spoken and unspoken discomfort many straight teens expressed when confronted by same sex couples, opened the door to an extended discussion of gay rights and homosexuality. In 1974, with the help of the Unitarian Universalist Gay Caucus, LRY initiated a series of sex-role workshops. The stated purpose of these workshops was to, “MAKE LRY A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN EXPRESS THEIR LOVE AND/OR SEXUALITY WITHOUT PRESSURE TO CONFORM, PERFORM, or REFORM.”<sup>45</sup> In the process of creating an educational program based Gay Liberation philosophies, gay teens encouraged other members of the group to question their own sexuality. LRY offered teens a variety of educational materials to help them explore their sexual morality and sexual identities. In 1977, a young woman named Elissa contributed a program guide that included a series of philosophical and personal questions about sexuality. In her introductory letter she stated: “Each person’s sexuality is affected differently by his or her own experiences. It allows you to relate to yourself as a man or a woman... It is the essence of man and woman as a sexual being.”<sup>46</sup> What followed was a series of questions and sample answers such as: “What is my sexuality?” “How does my sexuality relate to being male? female?” and “Am I comfortable with my sexuality?”

In addition to suggested activities, LRY offered pamphlets, films, and other materials on the subjects of human sexuality, sex, and sexual politics. They also compiled extensive lists of

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<sup>45</sup> Patches “Gay Rap” *People Soup* (Fall 1974), p.1. (emphasis in the original)

<sup>46</sup> Elissa, “Sexuality” *People Soup* (February 1977), p. 3.

resources for further study and support. All of this information combined with the emotional support at local and national meetings, helped some teens learn to accept and welcome the variety of sexual orientations and possibilities for physical intimacy among their peers. In the fall 1974 issue of *People Soup*, a young man summed up his experience: “I learned that people of the same sex were not prohibited from showing affection to one another, within LRY society. I guess I picked up on the feeling that everyone is really ambisexual....and that anyone who withdrew from same-sex hugging or handholding was considered uptight. At the time my Gay awareness was very low...I did not even consider that the person who might become both friend and lover could have a body as familiar as my own.”<sup>47</sup>

For some gay LRYers conferences and meetings provided a venue for “coming out.” “Coming out” was both a personal and a political act that was encouraged by Gay Liberationists and supported by the liberation mentality of the group. One gay young man stated: “the principles I already felt about liberation from oppression concerning blacks, women and so on, became more complex and more focused as they took personal meaning.”<sup>48</sup> Although LRY’s liberation ethics supported an open attitude toward sexuality and sexual orientation, for some “coming out” was still a very difficult process. In a personal essay, one LRYer described the ambiguous feelings he had about “coming out” to fellow LRYers: “For all the decided advantages of what I think amounts to open radicalism – the freedom, the pride, the increased awareness of myself and others, it is a very scary thing to open up about homosexuality. Personally, although most of the people I have been in contact with are at least a little supportive,

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<sup>47</sup> Patches “Gay Rap” *People Soup* (Fall 1974), p.1.

<sup>48</sup> Andy Hansen, “Coming Out” *People Soup* (February 1977), p.16.

I know there are those who are alienated from me.”<sup>49</sup>

Gay LRYers sometimes felt that the intellectual discussions about sexual freedom and liberation outstripped straight LRYers ability to deal with actual sexual relationships between same sex couples. This is very similar to how many young women in the group felt about men’s participation in women’s liberation. While LRY teens were quick to say proclaim a liberal and accepting attitude, frequently actions did not follow their bold proclamations. Writing a column for the Sexuality Issue of *People Soup* in February 1977, a young man named Wesley railed against what he called the “‘Okay, be Gay’ cover-up.” He wrote: “Maybe you’ve heard that being gay isn’t a ‘Big Deal;’ in LRY and maybe you believe it isn’t. We would all like to believe that LRY has thrown off the sex chains and games, but it hasn’t.”<sup>50</sup> A young bisexual woman pointed out that, “we are allowed to hug and kiss people of our own sex but not to make love.”<sup>51</sup> Other gay teens expressed their loneliness and alienation as a minority within the organization: Identifying himself as “Patches” one young man wrote: “As a gay LRYer, I would like to say that it isn’t as fun as most people would think. Sure, I’m accepted, but I am also frustrated and I feel alone a lot of the time, even though I’m surrounded with people I love. I have desires which are never fulfilled, and there’s nothing that can be done.”<sup>52</sup>

The discussions which arose from these personal stories challenged young men and women to explore the limits of their “liberalism” and their commitment to freedom of belief and action. Some straight teens recognized that their conflicted feelings about homosexuality were hypocritical and expressed an interest in working through these feelings. One teenager explained

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<sup>49</sup> Andy Hansen, “Coming Out” *People Soup* (February 1977), p.16.

<sup>50</sup> Wesley, “Look at All the Liberals” *People Soup* (February 1977), p.15.

<sup>51</sup> Emilie Blattman “Letter to the Editor” *People Soup* (December 1974), p.5.

<sup>52</sup> Patches “Patches” *People Soup* (December 1974), 5.

that having been raised in an environment where homosexuality was taboo, it was difficult for her “to fully accept people who are gay, on emotional level.”<sup>53</sup> And while she assured her fellow LRYers that she believed, “there is nothing wrong with being gay,” she also confessed that, “if I walked in on two friends of the same sex making love I would be totally freaked out.” She did not end here; the real purpose of her letter was to express her desire to change. She wrote: “I’d like to see some of the groups working with young gay people also work with people like myself to get rid of these types of feelings.”<sup>54</sup>

In personal reflections like these, as well as programming packets, organizational publications, newsletters, poetry, and artwork, LRYers expressed their commitment to personal and group liberation through intellectual and emotional growth. These commitments were reinforced through formal and informal activities, rituals, and programming at the local, regional, and national level. Group organizers encouraged platonic physical intimacy and accepted sexual intimacy between and among the sexes. The end result of this was supposed to be individual self-discovery and mutual respect among peers. In designing a program and articulating their desire to achieve these goals, LRYers used some of the language and methods of the women’s and gay liberation movements. In the process these movements also influenced the gender norms and sexual morality of the group. Not all young people in this era believed in the ethics and goals of the women’s or gay liberation movements. These teens were unique in that they were interested and made a conscious effort to frame their intellectual and emotional growth around conversations borrowed from these movements. They did so in a way that supported, reinforced,

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<sup>53</sup> Penny Waters “Letter: Biofeedback Monitor System” *People Soup* (December 1974), 5.

<sup>54</sup> Penny Waters “Letter: Biofeedback Monitor System” *People Soup* (December 1974), 5.

and confirmed their existing religious commitments and contributed to their development as gendered and sexual beings.

Interestingly, the strategy employed by LRY, was not dissimilar from what was happening in Youth for Christ. YFC leaders disseminated, selected, edited, and pondered the information coming in from liberation movements; LRY teens were doing the same thing. Youth for Christ worried how this new information would fit into their rigid sense of uncompromising morality, it fit in much more closely with the LRYers sense of situational ethics. While YFC was involved with the project of editing and fitting new information into old modes, LRYers were changing their ideas altogether to accommodate new ideas. Despite the differences in what was being done with the new information, both groups shared a commitment to using the new information and in catering to the individual. LRYers' meetings changed dramatically in the 1970s as they focused on individual stories, relationships, and experiences in the same way that YFC publications shifted to entertaining individual situations. While the results were very different, the strategies employed were the same.

In 1973, when LRYers proposed changing the group's logo they cited the sexism inherent in the symbol as the primary reason for redesigning it, which suggests they had become aware of the subtle ways that gender inequality worked its way into institutions. Inspired by the women's movement, they searched for a more inclusive symbol that would reflect their commitment to gender equality. LRYers eventually pushed the gender issues aside and the discussions of appropriate group symbols moved beyond the original challenge to make the symbol less sexist. In doing so, they lost an opportunity to have a meaningful discussion of gender relations within the group, which was a consistent problem in LRY. The discussion turned from one of gender equality to a philosophical discussion about the meaning and purpose of LRY. In the end, the

teenagers decided that any symbol, no matter how inclusive, could not reflect their commitment to individual thought and identity construction. The general discussion of identity formation in LRY revolved around the members' suspicion of institutional authority, symbols, and archetypes, particularly for young men. They searched for new ways to construct their gender identities. In the process, they struggled to live up to a new gender framework, while at times replicating some of the very inequalities feminists were fighting against. This was a particularly important issue for some young women in the group, who felt that even though group members talked about women's rights and women's liberation, gender relations within the group were still sexist at their core. In the final analysis, young people in LRY were trying to come to terms with a new way of thinking about gender roles, relations and hierarchies, but struggling to make them a reality. As they struggled to come into their own and define their own values, they were dealing with a lot of the unconscious gender beliefs they inherited from their families, and social and cultural role models.

## CONCLUSION

The story of the sharp divide between the Christian right and the left that contributed to the culture wars of the 1980s and 1990s has been told. Historians have pointed out that this divide can be traced to the 1950s.<sup>55</sup> The 1960s and 1970s were times of both radical and conservative mobilization.<sup>56</sup> The rise of the New Left and the New Right during these decades centered national defense policy, taxes, and domestic social welfare policies; however, the rise of the religious right in the 1970s helped center the public debate about America's future on morality – specifically sexual morality. Many evangelicals in the 1970s argued that the 1960s ushered in an era of declining moral standards and a loss of respect for authority. Evangelicals were particularly concerned that two decades of increasing sexual permissiveness in America had undermined the traditional family and promoted mass immorality, especially in America's young people. From the evangelical perspective, Americans needed to change course. This had to happen in the homes, in the courts, and in the schools. To this end, evangelical leaders worked tirelessly within the legislature to stop the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment they

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<sup>55</sup> Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors : The Origins of the New American Right*, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America (Princeton, N.J. ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>56</sup> Rebecca E. Klatch, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s*, 1st ed. (University of California Press, 1999); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban warriors : the origins of the new American Right* (Princeton [u.a.]: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001); Randall Balmer, *The Making of Evangelicalism: From Revivalism to Politics and Beyond* (Baylor University Press, 2010); Wade Clark Roof, Bruce Greer, and Mary Johnson, *A Generation of Seekers: The Spiritual Journeys of the Baby Boom Generation* (Harper San Francisco, 1994); Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s*, 3rd ed. (Oxford University Press, USA, 2007); Mark Lytle, *America's uncivil wars : the sixties era : from Elvis to the fall of Richard Nixon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Michael Flamm, *Debating the 1960s : liberal, conservative, and radical perspectives* (Lanham Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008); Paul Lyons, *New Left, new right, and the legacy of the sixties* (Philadelphia Pa.: Temple University Press, 1996); Natasha Zaretsky, *No Direction Home: The American Family and the Fear of National Decline, 1968-1980* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Bruce Schulman, *Rightward bound : making America conservative in the 1970s* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008); Wade Clark Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion*. (Princeton University Press, 2001); David Farber, *The conservative sixties* (New York: P. Lang, 2003); John Andrew, *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics* (Rutgers University Press, 1997); Robert S. Ellwood, *The Sixties Spiritual Awakening*, First Edition. (Rutgers University Press, 1994).

believed would irreparably damage “family values” by undermining traditional male and female roles, pitting man against wife in a competition for jobs, income, and authority within the home, while leaving children alone to drift into juvenile delinquency. Others worked within the court system in an attempt to reverse the Supreme Court decisions, they felt were aiding in the spread of American immorality by removing the Bible and prayer from schools, protecting pornography as free speech, and legalizing abortion.

While some Evangelical leaders worked to reverse the perceived damage to America’s moral fiber by trying to reverse landmark Supreme Court decisions, another wing of the movement worked to strengthen American’s moral character from the ground up. Youth serving institutions like Youth for Christ worked to maintain an audience with young people and serve as a source of information and support for those interested and in need of a message steeped in family values and traditional morality. From the beginning, Youth for Christ was committed to doing all they could to win the hearts and minds of young people as a means of ensuring a solid Christian family centered future for America. In the early 1960s, when the traditional nuclear family still dominated the American imagination as the ideal foundation for America’s future growth, YFC worked to reinforce these ideals by providing young people with practical advice supported by biblical principles for achieving the middle class dream of a nuclear family in the suburbs supported by the male breadwinner, and the happy supportive homemaker. Their advice in this early period focused on how to achieve the dream as much as how not to lose hold of it. The prescriptive literature does very little to justify why the dream is a good one, they simply took it for granted. However, this would not be the case as the 1960s wore on. As American culture in the 1960s and 1970s seemed to drift farther away from these biblical principles, and teens were bombarded by competing messages from the schools, the courts, media, popular

culture, their peers, and even their parents, YFC had to change course and develop new ways of getting young people's attention and new methods for talking to teens about sex while remaining true to their biblical principles and supporting the family values platform.

Adult leaders within Youth for Christ viewed many of the radical student protests, liberation movements, permissive sexual culture, and youthful rebellion of the era as a direct threat to their vision of morality and core values. They worried about the state of traditional gender roles, family structures, and morality. From their perspective, the media, popular culture, and public figures on the Left were leading young people down a path that not only threatened their souls but also the very future of America. Youth for Christ leaders wanted to rescue youth from the perceived threat of America's declining morality by providing a biblically based explanation of the importance of traditional gender norms and marriage. They did this by trying to teach young people how to read and understand their Bibles within a new cultural context. The Bible remained the primary source of authority for leaders and teens alike who were trying to make sense of and explain the connection between chastity, personal development, family values, and American culture. For leaders within YFC, like other evangelical leaders, the Bible laid out clear rules about what was and was not permissible under Christian code.

Using the Bible as the basis for establishing parameters for young Christian sexuality was certainly not new to this period, or even the twentieth century. What was new was the guided approach adults took towards helping teens see the connections between the strength of their faith, the quality of their relationship with God, and their romantic and physical relationships with others, and the candor with which adults were willing to discuss sex in an open and public format with teenagers. The small inroads Youth For Christ made in this area during the 1960s and 1970s set a precedent for future evangelical youth serving organizations regarding the

important role respected and sensitive Christian adults could play in assisting young people in the development of their sexual identities. Of course, in this framework, only a certain types of sexuality and sexual expression were validated as “normal” and within the bounds of appropriate conduct for Christian teens. Evangelicals imagined audience were heterosexual virgin who had a healthy interest in the opposite sex, but little to no experience to show for it. Gay teens, pregnant young women, and teen mothers and fathers were all ignored, pitied, or held up as a symbol of all that could go wrong in a young person’s life if they strayed too far from God’s ultimate plan for them.

Adults who served as mentors for LRYers did not subscribe to such a strict set of rules for their teen membership. Adult mentors encouraged teens to forge their own paths and determine their own futures. The principle of youth autonomy dominated adult thinking in LRY. Whereas YFC leadership often focused heavily on the future, LRY leaders allowed teens to live in the moment without pursuing a perfect plan for their lives. Such an open approach sometimes left the door open for some young people to take advantage of adult mentors by using drugs, engaging in alleged sexual activity, and exhibiting disrespectful behavior toward other adults in the congregations. The great minority of disrespectful LRY teens created tensions within UUA churches and the youth dominated vision of the LRY leaders and membership began to fade. By the late 1970s, the relationship between adults and youth had completely broken down, federations were shrinking, and many local groups were dissolving due to lack of financial, logistic, and philosophical support from congregations. In 1976, continental LRY submitted a proposal to the UUA requesting help remedying the lack of congregational support for local LRY groups. In April 1976, the UUA Board of Trustees voted to establish the Special Committee on Youth Programs " . . . to study the existing youth programs in the denomination,

including LRY, and to make proposals, including budget proposals, to the Board as to the best ways for the UUA to develop, offer and support programs for youth generally of high school age."<sup>57</sup> In 1980, LRY started making plans for a Youth Assembly meeting in 1981, where they would discuss the future of LRY and UU youth programs in general. In 1981 delegates met at the Common Ground conference to hash out the future of UU youth programs. Delegates included LRY federation members, unaffiliated UU youth, youth advisors, UU religious leaders (ministers, DRE's and Religious Education Directors), District Youth Adult Committee Members, and concerned lay leaders and members of individual UU congregations.<sup>58</sup> At this conference, the delegates began discussing the future direction of youth programs in the UUA. After a year of further planning, a second conference, Common Ground II, delegates met once again to finalize the newly conceived program. On July 2, 1982 Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU) became the successor organization to Liberal Religious Youth.<sup>59</sup> The new organization increased the leadership role for adults while maintaining the principle of youth autonomy.

In many ways the fate of Liberal Religious youth paralleled that of the New Left movement in general. As Van Gosse has pointed out in a recent study, many of the New Left movements reformed themselves in the late 1970s. While these movements might have scaled back their rhetoric, their essences remained intact. This adaptation often led the movements making up the New Left to reach broader audiences and move closer to achieving their goals.

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<sup>57</sup> *Report of the Special Committee on Youth Programs to the UUA Board of Trustees*, November 1977, <http://www.lryer.org/uuyouthhistory/scoyp/index.html>. accessed January 2011.

<sup>58</sup> *Continental Youth Assembly Planning Committee Minutes* (Boston Massachusetts: Unitarian Universalist Association, September 4, 1980), bMS 1149/4 (10), Andover Harvard Theological Library.

<sup>59</sup> *Common Ground II*, September 1, 1982, <http://www.lryer.org/uuyouthhistory/cg2/index.html>. accessed January 2011.

UUA Adults and young people were acting in this tradition when they formed the YRUU out of the fragments of LRY. While on the surface it may have seemed like teens were losing responsibility and decision making power to adults, this was really not a radical departure from how LRY had always been run. From the beginning, adults were always involved as mentors to help guide teens and to keep the group within certain guidelines. Therefore, while YRUU seemed to be restricting teens with new regulations, the reality was that these rules had always existed in the group.

While Youth for Christ clung to their collection of what they considered “family values” Liberal Religious Youth tended to incorporate or allow for change through the absorption of feminism, gay liberation, and sexual permissiveness, into their ethical framework. From the LRY perspective, the “new morality” was not to be feared, but celebrated, as it had the potential to liberate individuals from the oppression and inequality and that contributed to many of the social ills Americans faced in the post-war era. Whereas Youth for Christ tended to advocate living up to an ideal, LRY encouraged natural expression and free thinking. For LRY, a society made up of free thinkers and adherents to the new morality represented an ideal. In this situation, nobody would be oppressed by forcing to live up to ideals that they could not meet for one reason or another. Adult advisors in LRY attempted to create an environment where self expression could flourish. In that open environment teens often took things farther than adults might have hoped but by giving teens room to experiment with ideas, teens encountered and embraced bigger ideas such as feminism, gay liberation, and other crucial movements of the 1970s. In this open culture, LRY teens encountered some of the biggest challenges facing liberal ideas in the late 1970s. As teens attempted to apply feminism and gay liberation ideology in their own lives even within the small social LRY circle they encountered difficulty. Many LRY

girls felt pressured to have sex. Many gay teens (especially boys) felt marginalized and distanced from their peers. While LRY teens often spoke in very liberated terms, putting those words into practice was another matter entirely.

The constant between LRY and YFC was that teens were always questioning the tenets of the group. Whether it was LRYers questioning the implementation of Liberal ideology or Youth for Christ members asking how far was too far, teens remained passionate about finding answers to their critical questions. Teens never simply bought into rhetoric and were always complex historical actors. As the teens challenged, the adults were always there to meet these challenges regardless of the group's background. Strategies shifted and conversations changed in both groups as adults attempted to guide teens either explicitly or implicitly. Therefore, when we look at these groups it is clear that adults were not the engines of change, the teens themselves fostered change by constantly forcing the boundaries and changing the terms of conversations about sexuality.

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