

Making Babies

Social Conservatism and Abortion Politics in the Four Corners States, 1967-2000

By

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For Adam

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Introduction

He who molds public sentiment ... makes statutes and decisions
possible or impossible to execute.

Joan Poulin, Arizona pro-life activist paraphrasing Abraham Lincoln

In 1985, the director of the Family Planning Institute in Tempe, Arizona said she felt like her clinic was under siege.¹ A freestanding clinic on a busy street that provided abortions along with other reproductive healthcare, the Family Planning Institute had been the focus of sustained and escalating anti-abortion protests since 1983. A few local anti-abortion groups along with a handful of churches had decided to maintain a near constant presence at the clinic during the hours that it provided abortions. Because the clinic shared a building with other offices, local courts determined the parking lot, complex grounds, and sidewalk were public property.² Thus, activists could protest right up to the clinic door. Day after day, activists prayed, and sang, and marched.³ Some days, they set up a television monitor to show moving images of abortions.⁴ When cars drove into the parking lot, crowds of activists pressed pictures of aborted fetuses to the car windows and wrote down license plate numbers.⁵ Once outside their cars, patients walked a gauntlet of protesters, often guided by pro-choice escorts, as pro-life activists took

¹ Susan Reed, "The Abortion Clinic: What Goes On," *People Magazine*, August 26, 1985.

² Tonia Twichell, "Abortion Clinic Land Subject of Dispute," *Tempe Daily News*, July 17, 1983; Kim Sue Lia Perkes, "Taking Sides: Protesters Confront Patients at Family Planning Institute," *Scottsdale Daily Progress*, August 22, 1984.

³ Simon Fisher, "Pro-Lifers Rally on Anniversary of Ruling," *Tempe Daily News*, January 23, 1985.

⁴ Interview with John Jakubcysk, March 16, 2010.

⁵ "Clinic to Ask New Ruling to Limit Protest Activity," *Tempe Daily News*, January 4, 1985.

pictures of the women and handed them literature as well as small, cream-colored, plastic fetuses.⁶ Many who walked that gauntlet remembered being told that, once they went into the clinic, their uteruses would be ripped out, their “babies’ legs and arms” would be ripped off, and there would be lots of blood, all as their “babies” were murdered.⁷ The director of the clinic recounted stories of women who arrived at the clinic door sobbing. Employees of the clinic said they had been called “Hitler,” “Nazis,” and “pro-death.”⁸ One of the pro-choice escorts told a local newspaper that little children were following her around asking if she wanted to die.⁹

Protesters denied that they were harassing patients or clinic employees.¹⁰ Jim Mooney, one of the leaders of the protest, argued that activists were simply there to educate. “We believe,” he told a local reporter, “that we have the right to stand here and help talk the women out of an abortion and help save lives. We have personally saved 60 babies.” He added that any trauma women experienced was a result of unplanned pregnancy and potential abortion, not the responsibility of the protesters.¹¹ Mooney had given up his retail business a few years earlier to become a full-time activist.¹² He and his wife had been arrested many times in the course of protest. Eventually, using a large donation from a local businessman, the Mooneys and their

⁶ Perkes, “Taking Sides.”

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Tonia Twichell, “Plaintiffs Testify in Abortion Clinic Case,” *Tempe Daily News*, July 13, 1984.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Protesters were arrested and charged with harassment on a number of occasions. See *ibid*; “3 Pickets Arrested at Clinic,” *Phoenix Gazette*, September 19, 1984; “5 Abortion Foes Are Barred from Two Valley Clinics,” *Arizona Republic*, September 8, 1984; Fisher, “Pro-Lifers Rally.”

¹¹ Glen Creno, “Abortion Clinics in Valley Increase Security Measures,” *Phoenix Gazette*, January 5, 1985.

¹² Reed, “The Abortion Clinic.”

group set up an anti-abortion “crisis pregnancy center” in the same office complex to offer “alternatives to abortion.”¹³

The protests drew local and national attention because of their intensity and the legal cases associated with them. Local courts had to decide where activists had a right to use their free speech and whether their actions counted as harassment, as activists tested the legal bounds of sidewalk protest. This extended action was also a part of a nationwide escalation and radicalization of clinic protests. Arizona activists had worked in conjunction with a radical anti-abortion group out of Chicago, the Pro-Life Action League, to bring attention to the clinic and work to close it.¹⁴ For all the media attention, legal cases, and traumatized patients, what was most important about this form of protest was its ubiquity. Many features had been tried and tested in preceding years: the organizing (through religious coalitions), the slogans, the tools (gory photos, videos, and fetus dolls), “sidewalk counseling,” and the “alternatives.” What is so extraordinary about these protests is how ordinary they had become by the late twentieth century.

The quotidian drama of clinic protests as well as the ongoing legislative battles that dominated many state governments were predicated on another type of pro-life organizing: the more quiet struggle for hearts and minds. This activism built on ecumenical organizing in religious communities, where the devout recited prayers against abortion, heard pro-life sermons, and read about local anti-abortion efforts. It built on the activism done in crisis pregnancy centers, which beckoned unfortunately pregnant women to their doors, implicitly offering abortion referrals but only providing pro-life counseling. It built on the “educational activism” anti-abortion activists did with young children in schools, churches, and homes. And it built on

¹³ Fisher, “Pro-Lifers Rally”; Jakubcysk interview.

¹⁴ Joseph M. Scheidler, head of the Pro-Life Action League, put this type of protesting—special clinic closing programs—and the story of the Tempe clinic in his book *Closed: 99 Ways To Stop Abortion*, rev. ed (1985; Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, 1993), pp. 320-25.

“family values” politics, which infiltrated many public and private spaces at the end of the century, from self-help groups to more formal state and national political forums. This dissertation tells the stories and evolution of those everyday pro-life politics.

I examine this quotidian activism in four very distinct but interconnected places: Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado, often called the Four Corners states. By exploring the practices of various pro-life groups in these states from the 1970s to the 1990s, this study uncovers the dynamic process of making a political movement across disparate locales, racial identifications, and religious affiliations. The political, economic, racial, and religious diversity of the Southwest and Intermountain West make this area ripe for an analysis of New Right coalition building. I examine how white evangelical Christians and Anglo-American Catholics and Mormons, in these diverse states and with diverse outcomes, mediated their religious and cultural differences to find common political ground on issues of abortion and the politicized (nuclear, heterosexual) family.

I argue that the pro-life movement’s everyday politics created a broad anti-abortion public in the Four Corners states specifically and the U.S. more broadly. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, this movement was a small one, populated mostly by Catholics with a handful of other religious people. In the late 1960s, a few states around the country began liberalizing their stringent abortion laws, from reform to full-blown repeal. Though anti-abortion activists began to make some gains in the early 1970s, most Americans seemed to be slowly embracing liberalized abortion laws. Between 1967 and 2000, pro-life activists built a movement that would reverse that trend. In these years, activists developed and fostered a constituency of Americans for whom anti-abortion politics became essential to their political affiliation and their sense of self. Activists did more than develop rhetoric; they developed identities. By the end of

the century, activists had made fetal “personhood” central to how many a conservative, and many an American, thought about being a woman, a child, a Christian, and a member of a family.

I argue that activists developed this public using a very particular worldview, “the political imaginary of life.” A political imaginary identifies the creative and dynamic relationship among subject, symbol, and society. In the 1970s, pro-life activists created a symbolic world of fetal imagery that became inextricably wed to their evolving ideology. In this imaginary, activists contended that legal abortion was evidence of the perversion of modern science, a genocide akin to the Jewish Holocaust, and a product of eugenic, racist, or hierarchical thinking that privileged some lives over others. Activists ultimately claimed that only through the protection of the fetus—the racially unmarked and de-gendered subject—could Americans successfully combat racism, sexism, and social injustice. Between the late 1960s and the turn of the century, activists successfully co-opted and adapted elements of science, feminism, and anti-racism into their socially conservative worldview. This imaginary was expressed and maintained through essential visual and physical ephemera. Activists employed gory photos of aborted fetuses, fetus dolls, embalmed fetuses, videos of abortions, and symbolic funerals and cemeteries as tools of their trade. These materials became core expressions of pro-life politics while seeming to speak for themselves. They supposedly offered clear evidence that abortion was murder.

In addition, I show how anti-abortion activists reincarnated the politics of the universal subject in a world irrevocably changed by civil rights, feminist, and other social justice movements. This was more than the color-blind conservatism championed by suburban white conservatives convinced that their social privilege was entirely a product of economic and

cultural meritocracy rather than racial discrimination. This was, in activists' formulation, a color-blind justice movement. The fetus was an innocent victim of the worst kind of discrimination and genocide. All other social justice movements were simply misdirecting their resources or worse, especially in the case of the feminist movement, perpetrating the crime of abortion. In the fetus, activists found a whiteness—a constructed universality—made safe from accusations of racism that plagued conservatives in post-civil rights America. In the fetus, activists found a defense of “natural” gender roles and “natural” reproduction in an era marked forever by a feminist movement that had taken those ideas apart. This was a conservatism that attempted to wear the emotional mantle of racial and gender equality while silencing broader conversations about the racism and sexism endemic to American society. Such conversations were national in scope, but they also had place-specific variations, and this was nowhere more true than in the Four Corners states. In their quest to protect the fetus, pro-life activists worked to redeem the morality of the Right, while establishing a deracialized and degendered victim at the heart of American politics. They did this throughout the United States producing a national movement, but their activism was also rooted in the quotidian social interactions of particular places like Tucson and Tempe, Albuquerque and Los Alamos, Provo and Salt Lake City, Denver and Colorado Springs.

Finally, I contend that activists successfully integrated pro-life politics into the heart of American conservatism and, by extension, American politics. In the last three decades of the century, social conservatives focused on the Equal Rights Amendment, gay teachers, arts funding, and a multitude of other issues. Almost all of these issues had their moment in the political sun, and then faded from the spotlight. But not abortion: anti-abortion politics has been a constant in the modern social conservative movement. If anything, it has grown in importance

in American politics. That is in large part because of the imagining and organizing done by pro-life activists during the last three decades of the twentieth century. In those years, pro-life activists organized social conservatism in a new way around the social, religious, and medical body of the fetus—but called it tradition. In those years, too, activists remade political genealogies of conservatism, the nation, and in some instances the world, placing themselves and their imagined victim—the fetus—at the ideological cores of each. Ultimately, activists combined claims to history and tradition with a very modern reaction to social justice movements and to the de-centering of white manhood and the de-naturalizing of its associated privilege. This dissertation explains how abortion became one of the defining characteristics of American conservatism and the moral imperative of the New Right.¹⁵

To study the ideologies of race and gender in the development and evolution of anti-abortion activism, I focus on Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado. I do so in part because of their religious, racial, and political diversity, and also because of their decisive, but partial and differential, conservative turn in the late twentieth century. Religious historians Mark Silk and Andrew Walsh describe this region as constituted by “sacred landscapes in tension.” Having no single dominant religious or racial demographic meant the region had no single dominant culture. Arizona and New Mexico, in Silk and Walsh’s formulation, composed the “Catholic heartland,” defined by a variety of American Indian communities and early Spanish Catholic

¹⁵ The New Right is a somewhat vague term to distinguish the conservative movement that had its origins in the 1950s and 1960s but came to social and political prominence in the 1970s. The term distinguishes that movement from the “Old Right,” which dominated conservative spheres in the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s. The New Right was a grassroots conservative movement with a variety of sometimes opposing interests: “social issues,” libertarianism, law and order politics, taxes, defunding the welfare state, and intervention abroad. The Old Right also subsumed sometimes contradictory issues with elements that were more isolationist and others that were virulently anti-communist. The Old Right, unlike the New, was generally less interested in social issues and more comfortable with a sizeable welfare state; they worked to shrink federal budgets and generally agreed that the federal government had broad responsibilities to the American public. The “old”/“new” monikers, however, tend to obscure the ideological similarities between the two movements.

colonization. Even after annexation by the United States in the 1840s and subsequent waves of Anglo American migration, the region maintained its distinctive forms of Roman Catholicism and Indigenous faiths. Utah was a part of the “Mormon corridor,” an area culturally and politically dominated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). In the 1840s, Mormons arrived in the region to create “Zion,” a land where believers could escape religious persecution and set up a government that would fully reflect the church’s economic, political and moral order. And Colorado was unlike Utah, New Mexico, or Arizona, because, according to Silk and Walsh, it had no “religious center of gravity.” Through much of the twentieth century, Colorado was home to people of Catholic, Protestant, Mormon, Jewish, and a variety of American Indian faiths. These residents were joined, in the waning decades of the century, by a contingent of people dedicated to New Age spiritualities.¹⁶

Each of these states also has a different history of racialization and developed a different racial demography. For example, beginning in the sixteenth century, the Spanish empire, bent on religious conversion and resource extraction, established a string of settlements in the drainage of the Rio Grande in what is now northern New Mexico, eventually creating a complex racial hierarchy including Navajo, Apache, and Pueblo peoples, Spanish settlers, various enslaved and free detribalized Indians, and *mestizos*.¹⁷ As the Santa Fe Trail, beginning in the 1820s, and the railroad, beginning in the 1880s, brought increasing numbers of Anglo Americans to the area, the racial landscape shifted. Some elite hispanos were able to retain a modicum of social privilege,

¹⁶ Mark Silk and Andrew Walsh, *One Nation, Divisible: How Regional Religious Differences Shape American Politics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), pp. 157-80 (quote on p. 169).

¹⁷ See, e.g., Ramón Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991); James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2002); Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

while most neuvomexicanos struggled to preserve the lands and economies upon which they depended. In the first half of the twentieth century, New Mexico attracted new Anglo migrants, often drawn by the tourist industry, and Mexican immigrants, pushed by the catastrophic land policy of Mexican president Porfirio Diaz and drawn by economic opportunity (though New Mexico attracted fewer immigrants than the neighboring state of Arizona), even as essential New Mexican industries like ranching began to fail.

Unlike New Mexico, what would become Arizona was more sparsely populated, largely by Indian peoples and Spaniards until the late nineteenth century. Then, the railroad brought Anglos and immigrants from around the world to work in the territory's copper and silver mines, joining the Apache and the Akimel and Tohono O'odham peoples and small numbers of Anglo and Mexican Americans living in the region. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Mormons also began establishing settlements in Arizona, eventually making up a sizeable minority in the state. In the twentieth century, Arizona, too, drew tourists and immigrants, as well as health seekers and white and black southern migrants displaced by the Great Depression. In the first half of the twentieth century, Arizona's ethnic Mexican population, smaller than New Mexico's and with a greater proportion of recent immigrants, had very little clout and suffered Jim Crow-like segregation along with the state's African Americans, especially in Phoenix.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, in what would become Utah, Mormon migrants from the eastern U.S. and Europe met Paiute and Shoshone peoples, long impoverished by Ute raiding and enslavement. In the Great Basin, then, Paiutes, Utes, and Shoshones faced white migrants bent on settling Zion and on the religious conversion of Indian peoples.¹⁸ All the

¹⁸ See, e.g., Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land*; Leonard Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958).

Indian peoples of the Great Basin faced individual and state-sanctioned onslaught in this period, while, as historian Ned Blackhawk explains, “fur traders, Mormon legions, and U.S. Army forces ... systemically deployed violence” against the equestrian Utes, eventually breaking their power in the region.¹⁹ In the twentieth century, Utah would maintain an overwhelming Mormon majority with small numbers of Utes, Paiutes, and Shoshones, plus small Greek, Italian, Japanese, and Chinese immigrant populations.

On the western Plains in the 1850s and 1860s, in what would become eastern Colorado, gold seekers and Anglo settlers faced a Native world made over by the arrival of Cheyennes and Arapahos, nomads at the height of their power. Earlier in the nineteenth century, Cheyennes and Arapahos migrated to the region in search of bison, displaced by more powerful Indian groups, like the Lakotas and the Comanches. As two expanding groups—Anglo settlers and Indian peoples—fought over land and other resources, the territorial government worked to eliminate all Indian claims to Colorado. Though Cheyennes wanted to avoid war with the U.S., the governor of Colorado and the commander of the Colorado militia instigated one in 1864 when they murdered Lean Bear, a Cheyenne chief, and in a separate incident, massacred 133 peace-seeking Cheyenne people, mostly women and children.²⁰ The U.S. army was not particularly adept at plains warfare, but soldiers eventually subjugated Colorado’s Indian peoples and moved them to reservations. By the turn of century, Denver was a regional hub, becoming the second largest city in the West after San Francisco. In the twentieth century, Colorado drew laborers of many stripes, health seekers, and tourists to the state, leading to a polyglot population of ethnic

¹⁹ Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land*, p. 227.

²⁰ See, for example, Elliott West, *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998).

Mexicans, African Americans, Anglo Americans, Japanese Americans, and European immigrants.

In the post-World War II period, these four states, unified until then largely by their interconnected landscapes and histories of settler colonialism, began to become a more coherent region. The Four Corners states were a part of a massive political and economic realignment in the postwar period. The geography of the U.S. economy gradually created a new region: the Sunbelt, a region stretching from southern California to Florida.²¹ Previously prosperous eastern industries declined and business boomed in warmer southern climates. Business, though, tells only part of the story. Although companies such as Motorola did relocate to Sunbelt cities, it was military bases and corporations associated with the military-industrial complex that built the Sunbelt economy. In the postwar period, the West offered the military-industrial complex relatively cheap land, open spaces, sunshine, and temperate climates, all elements aggressively promoted by western boosters.²² Between 1946 and 1965, the federal government spent 62 percent of its budget on defense, making the military-industrial complex the nation's largest business.²³ This financial infusion fundamentally altered the West's colonial relationship with the East; now much of the West was industrialized and economically independent. Historian

²¹ In 1975, journalist Kirpatrick Sale argued that that political power had shifted from the "eastern establishment" to the Sunbelt. He also argued this region's politics was dominated by the three Rs: rightism, racism, and repression. See Kirpatrick Sale, *Power Shift: The Rise of the Southern Rim and its Challenge to the Eastern Establishment* (New York: Random House, 1975).

²² Gerald D. Nash, *The Federal Landscape: An Economic History of the Twentieth Century West* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999), pp. 77-100. For additional explanations of the West's postwar development, see Carl Abbott, *The New Urban America: Growth and Politics in Sunbelt Cities* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987); John Findlay, *Magic Lands: Western Cityscapes and American Culture After 1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Kevin Fernlund, ed., *The Cold War American West, 1945-1989* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998); Bruce Hevly and John Findlay, eds., *The Atomic West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998).

²³ Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 26.

Arthur Gómez argues, however, that postwar spending instituted an intraregional colonialism where western cities exploited resource-rich western hinterlands. This was nowhere more true than in the Four Corners states, where regional cities benefited from the oil-, petroleum-, and uranium-rich Colorado Plateau.²⁴

Because of this economic explosion, the Sunbelt West subsequently drew scores of new migrants from the U.S. North and South. Chronicling the importance of the massive migration of white evangelical southerners to the West, historian Darren Dochuk contends that these migrants brought with them commitments to unregulated capitalism, local governance, and the sanctity of the individual all “wrapped in a package of Christian, plain-folk Americanism.”²⁵ In this era, Colorado and Arizona, especially, developed large southern evangelical populations. But New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, and Arizona were all changed by large migrations in this period, as defense industries drew Americans to the Four Corners states. For example, the state of Utah, alone, had ten military bases by the 1940s. Denver’s population tripled between 1940 and 1970, Phoenix’s increased five times over in the same period, and Albuquerque’s grew sevenfold. Outside urban areas, the military-industrial complex drew migrants to smaller cities like Los Alamos, New Mexico, and Colorado Springs, Colorado.

²⁴ Arthur R. Gómez, *Quest for the Golden Circle: The Four Corners and the Metropolitan West, 1945-1970* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994), pp. 31-46.

²⁵ Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011), p. xx. While Dochuk focuses on how these new migrants recalibrated the demographics and politics of southern California, they also affected the Four Corners states. See, e.g., Findlay, *Magic Lands*; Ferlund, *The Cold War American West*; Hevly and Findlay, *The Atomic West*; Bradford Luckingham, *Phoenix: The History of a Southwestern Metropolis* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), pp. 136-220, and *The Urban Southwest: A Profile History of Albuquerque, El Paso, Phoenix and Tucson* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1982); Jon Hunner, *Inventing Los Alamos: The Growth of an Atomic Community* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004); Elizabeth Tandy Shermer, *Sunbelt Capitalism: Phoenix and the Transformation of American Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

As the demographics and economies of these places began to change, their politics changed as well. And that is where the pro-life movement comes in. This new population of northern and southern migrants joined hands with local conservatives (Mormons, Catholics, and Protestants) to staff an emerging movement. The pro-life movement was not a transplant from the Northeast or Southeast, but it was made possible by the presence and ferocity of new migrants. Growing numbers of white conservative Catholics, Protestants, and Mormons worked together to develop political momentum and pro-life constituencies.

In the era of mass migration and mass communication, the pro-life movement in each of the Four Corners states had a form and function similar to pro-life movements in other states. An anti-abortion group in Ohio, say, would compile material collected from groups in Minnesota or California, and then produce a single source that all pro-lifers nationwide could use. In addition, groups like National Right to Life held conferences, generated and distributed educational resources, and helped mobilize membership. This meant that the movement had elements of standardization across regions. Some state groups, like those in Colorado, considered themselves more radical because they promoted solutions that banned abortion rather than curtailing it. But this political variance was across a limited spectrum. The political arguments used to condemn abortion; the educational tools; the politicization of religious, domestic, medical and educational spaces; and the new targets for mobilization were similar state to state.

So in the last three decades of the century, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado all had similar anti-abortion bills placed before them each year. All four states had their fair share of clinic protests and crisis pregnancy centers. All four states developed conservative religious coalitions, containing some combination of conservative Catholic, evangelical, and Mormon

people, all mobilized to end abortion. All four states developed significant pro-life constituencies with fetal rights as one of their core political concerns. In many ways, this shift was a kind of political incorporation of the region. Like the economic and cultural incorporation of western places earlier in the century, this political incorporation erased many local and state differences in reproductive politics and brought these places into a kind of national reproductive logic.²⁶

While the movement worked to erase local political differences, the demographics and histories of these states meant that differences remained. Arizona and Colorado had the strongest pro-life movements of the four states, as they had the largest constituencies of those most likely politicized: evangelical and Catholic whites. Each state had large white Catholic populations and, by the late 1990s, Arizona and Colorado were home to some of the largest evangelical congregations, corporations, and conservative non-profits in the U.S. In Utah, the movement was much smaller, though the one that existed was a religious coalition primarily of Catholics and Mormons. The movement remained small because the state's Mormon majority was never as galvanized on the issue of abortion as they were on other late twentieth-century social issues, like the Equal Rights Amendment and gay marriage. Most Mormons in Utah probably considered themselves pro-life, voted for pro-life candidates and issues, but did not feel the need to join the movement. New Mexico also had a relatively small movement, and that

²⁶ In the first half of the twentieth century, much of this region had unique reproductive challenges. Because these states contained vast rural areas with relatively small populations and many poor people, they had negligible access to contraception or reproductive healthcare. Around the turn of the century, Utah and New Mexico had some of the highest birth rates in the country. In the 1920s and 1930s, because of poverty, a lack of sanitation, and inadequate prenatal care, Arizona and New Mexico had the highest infant mortality rates in the country. Infant mortality affected marginalized people in these states most, especially ethnic Mexican people and Native Americans. Utah, because of the culture and programs of the LDS church, had relatively low infant mortality rates. See Mary S. Melcher, *Pregnancy, Motherhood, and Choice in 20th Century Arizona* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012), pp. 3-4, 38-55.

movement made very little headway with the state's legislature in the last three decades of the century. The movement's narrative of itself as the ultimate civil rights campaign never played well to the state's ethnic Mexican and Indian populations. The pro-life movement, because of its homogenization, was not able to adapt successfully in a place where people of color had relatively significant political power. White Catholics and evangelicals secured brief political victories but never swayed the politics of the state.

The pro-life publics that did develop in these four states helped swing the partisan character of the Four Corners states. Earlier in the century, this region had largely voted Democrat. All four states had joined Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal coalition. The electorate in all but Arizona (home to Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater) voted for Lyndon Johnson in the 1964 presidential election. Beginning in the late 1960s, however, alongside the birth of the pro-life movement, the Republican Party began to gain ground in the region. Political scientists Theresa Merchant-Shapiro and Kelly Peterson argue that once the Republican Party added opposition to abortion to its party platform in 1980, the region swung firmly into the Republican camp. Beginning in 1983, they argue, the Four Corners became much more pro-life and residents began to place more political import on the issue. Weighing abortion alongside Sunbelt migrations and a host of political issues in the 1980s, Merchant-Shapiro and Peterson conclude that the rise in pro-life sentiment "account[ed] for the increased Republicanism of the region during the Reagan years."²⁷ In the end, not one of these four states went for a Democratic presidential candidate between 1968 and 1992. At some point in the 1992, 1996, and 2000 elections, New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado each favored the Democratic candidate, often by very small margins. Even in these years, however, Republicans gained many national

²⁷ Theresa Merchant-Shapiro and Kelly D. Peterson, "Partisan Change in the Mountain West," *Political Behavior* 17, no. 4 (1995): 359-78 (quote on pp. 369-70).

congressional seats from these four states.²⁸ By the end of the century, the Four Corners states had a consolidated conservative movement with social issues at its core.

By turning towards the local and regional, this dissertation helps to explain a national movement. The pro-life coalitions that changed the politics of the Four Corners states were similar to the coalitions that changed the politics of the nation. Conservative Catholics and Protestants worked with small numbers of pro-life Mormons across the country, building more powerful movements where those constituencies were strongest. Groups like those in the Four Corners states helped to make the social conservatism of the late twentieth century and to build the Religious Right, the religiously-motivated part of the New Right.²⁹

²⁸ Silk and Walsh, *One Nation, Divisible*, p. 178. For more on partisan change in this region in the late twentieth century, see Calvin Brant Short, *Democratic Demise, Republican Ascendancy: Politics in the Intermountain West* (Pocatello: Idaho State University Press, 1988); Eric R.A.N. Smith and P. Squire, "State and National Politics in the Intermountain West," in *The Politics of Realignment: Party Change in the Mountain West*, ed. Peter F. Galderisi, Michael S. Lyons, Randy T. Simmons, and John G. Francis (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987). This area has become more of a swing region in the 2000s and 2010s, which probably has a lot to do with the changing demographics of the region. The Latino population has been growing in all four states, and 71 percent of this population nationally, at in the 2012 election, voted for Barack Obama. This is in large part because the Republican Party (and its socially conservative wing) focused much more on saving fetuses, cutting taxes, and increasing immigration restrictions, and overshadowed or shouted down the issues that most concern this growing population. For the voting statistics of Latinos nationally and in swing state in the 2012 election, see Mark Hugo Lopez and Paul Taylor, "Latino Voters in the 2012 Election," Pew Hispanic Center, November 7, 2012, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/11/07/latino-voters-in-the-2012-election/> (accessed July 27, 2013).

²⁹ For a sample of the literature on the Religious Right, see James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991); William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996); Linda Kintz and Julia Lesage, eds., *Media, Culture, and the Religious Right* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Paul Apostolidis, *Stations of the Cross: Adorno and Christian Right Radio* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Susan Friend Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Michael Standaert, *Skipping towards Armageddon: The Politics and Propaganda of the Left Behind Novels and the LaHaye Empire* (Brooklyn, NY: SoftSkull Press, 2006); Michelle Goldberg, *Kingdom Coming: The Rise of Christian Nationalism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007); Clyde Wilcox, *Onward Christian Soldiers? The Religious Right in American Politics*, 4th ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2011); Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012); Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Despite its clear importance, no historian has written a book on the twentieth-century pro-life movement, whereas sociologists, anthropologists, journalists, and public intellectuals have all thrown their hat in the ring, attempting to parse out and explain the politics of this divisive issue.³⁰ Here is the composite history previous scholars have offered. They begin in the late 1960s, with a story of provincial Catholic activists and Catholic officials who by 1973 had begun to turn the tide against abortion reform at the state level.³¹ *Roe v. Wade* reversed pro-life gains, but also stymied the momentum of the pro-choice movement, as many feminist activists believed their work was done. In the 1970s, anti-abortion groups focused much of their efforts on state and national legislatures, especially on passing an amendment to the U.S. Constitution (the Human Life Amendment) that would ban abortion. In these years and onward, activists debated among themselves whether to promote laws that would limit abortion or only those that would ban it outright. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, evangelicals joined pro-life coalitions. Some of these new activists redirected the movement away from legislative change towards civil

³⁰ Scholars have done extensive work on the nineteenth-century anti-abortion movement. Most who have studied it argue that, in the mid-nineteenth century, doctors, a previously unregulated group, advocated restrictive state laws on abortion in order to claim superior medical and legal authority over a variety of other healers. By 1900, all states had laws forbidding abortion at any stage of pregnancy, with the exception that doctors could perform therapeutic abortions at their discretion as long as they in some way preserved the life of the mother. See James C. Mohr, *Abortion in America: The Origins and Evolutions of National Policy, 1800-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Kristen Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 12-37; Carol Smith-Rosenberg, "The Abortion Movement and the AMA, 1850-1880," in *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Knopf, 1985), pp. 217-45; Brian Stormer, *Articulating Life's Memory: U.S. Medical Rhetoric about Abortion in the Nineteenth Century* (Lanham, MA: Lexington Books, 2002); Nicola Beisel and Tamara Kay, "Abortion, Race and Gender in Nineteenth-Century America," *American Sociological Review* 69, no. 4 (2004): 498-518.

³¹ Linda Greenhouse and Riva Siegel have recently (and convincingly) overturned common wisdom that pro-life activists had little success slowing abortion liberalization before *Roe*. Previous lines of academic and public thought argued that *Roe*'s radical change motivated an anti-abortion backlash that would not have existed if liberalization had proceeded on the state level. See Linda Greenhouse and Riva B. Siegel, *Before Roe v. Wade: The Voices that Shaped the Abortion Debate Before the Supreme Court's Ruling* (New York: Kaplan Publishing, 2010).

disobedience, especially clinic blockades. Certain elements of this radical movement went further in the 1980s and early 1990s, embracing vandalism, arson, assault, and even murder of abortion providers. Between the early 1980s and the 2000s, there were 153 assaults, 383 death threats, 3 kidnappings, 18 attempted murders, and 9 murders related to abortion providers. Eight of the murders happened between 1993 and 1998.³² Some scholars argue that specific individuals led the movement into increasingly radical action, such as Randall Terry of Operation Rescue, who advocated “by-any-means necessary” activism.³³ Others claim that apocalyptic narratives had dominated pro-life politics since the mid-1960s, leading activists to see themselves as God’s messengers and motivating more radical and violent political action.³⁴ This tidal wave of radical action began to slow in 1994, when Congress passed the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, which imposed criminal and civil penalties on those blocking access to abortion clinics. While FACE did not stop anti-abortion protest, it largely ended the massive civil disobedience that was the most public and contentious expression of the movement at the end of the century.

I do not take issue with this narrative. In fact, it is a story line that is an essential referent for my own. By limiting ourselves to radical activists and legislative change, however, we miss

³² National Abortion Federation, “NAF Violence and Disruption Statistics: Incidents of Violence and Disruption Against Abortion Providers in U.S. & Canada,” 2009, http://www.prochoice.org/pubs_research/publications/downloads/about_abortion/violence_stats.pdf (accessed June 7, 2012).

³³ James Risen and Judy L. Thomas, *Wrath of Angels: The American Abortion War* (New York: BasicBooks, 1998).

³⁴ Carol Mason, *Killing for Life: The Apocalyptic Narrative of Pro-Life Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002). Dallas Blanchard and Terry Prewitt, in their book on the murders of abortion doctors in Pensacola, Florida, offer a more psychological argument, suggesting that anti-abortion radicals, like many others who perpetuate violence, have a rigid worldview and a deep personal insecurity. See Dallas A. Blanchard and Terry J. Prewitt, *Religious Violence and Abortion: The Gideon Project* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), p. 274.

all the activism that was the necessary precursor to the pro-life successes of the 1990s and 2000s. We miss how the pro-life movement changed almost every urban area (and many rural areas to boot) in the United States, not just Pensacola, Florida, or Wichita, Kansas, cities most known for radical anti-abortion violence.³⁵ We miss the logic and context for the uprising of many white Americans in the late twentieth century around the protection of all fetuses. And we miss how that dedication translated into a litmus test for conservatives and the Republican Party. Moving away from the radical action that looks deceptively like the national story, this dissertation pays attention to the everyday intimacies of local activism to understand the development a broad, national pro-life public.

Of course, other scholars have been concerned with the motivations of anti-abortion activists, but these scholars, mostly sociologists, have focused on irreconcilable ideological frameworks at the expense of historical change. In many of their narratives, history simply acts as a precursor to a static late twentieth century. Sociologist Kristen Luker pioneered this approach with *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*, in which she argues that “the abortion issue is emotionally charged because new political constituencies—primarily women—have

³⁵ Abortion clinics in Pensacola, Florida, were the targets of anti-abortion violence in the 1980s and 1990s. In the 1980s, at least three abortion clinics there were bombed. In 1993, an abortion protester shot and killed abortion provider Dr. David Gunn. In 1994, a radical pro-life activist shot and killed Dr. John Britton, an abortion provider, and his escort, James Barrett. Wichita, Kansas, was the target of Operation Rescue Summer of Mercy in 1991, when thousands of activists blockaded Dr. George Tiller’s abortion clinic over the course of six weeks. Tiller’s clinic had been firebombed in 1986 and, in 1993, he was shot in both arms by a radical activist. He went back to work the next day. In 2009, Tiller was murdered in his church by an anti-abortion activist. For books that focus at least in part on one of these two places, see Thomas Frank, *What’s the Matter with Kansas?: How Conservatives Won the Heart of America* (New York: MacMillian, 2005); Blanchard and Prewitt, *Religious Violence and Abortion*; Mason, *Killing for Life*; Risen and Thomas, *Wrath of Angels*; Patricia Baird-Windle and Eleanor J. Bader, *Targets of Hatred: Anti-Abortion Terrorism* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); Jennifer Jeffris, *Armed for Life: The Army of God and Anti-Abortion Terror in the United States* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011); Stephen Singular, *The Wichita Divide: The Murder of Dr. George Tiller and the Battle Over Abortion* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2011).

vested social interests in whether the embryo is defined as a baby or as a fetus.”³⁶ She argues that the abortion debate in the late twentieth century was characterized by a dichotomy of worldviews. For Luker, pro-lifers believed that women and men were intrinsically different and that abortion degraded women, severing them from their sacred procreative function.³⁷ In other words: the pro-life worldview was diametrically and irreconcilably opposed to the pro-choice worldview.³⁸ James Davison Hunter, a sociologist and religious studies scholar, defines these two polarized worldviews in a different way. In *The Culture Wars*, he argues that throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Americans divided themselves by two competing political impulses: one toward orthodoxy and one towards progressivism.³⁹ What was new about the divisions of the late twentieth century, Hunter argues, is the way that many religious people crossed doctrinal lines for political purposes. While Hunter accurately portrays the shifts in political and religious affiliations, the impulses for conservatism and liberalism are inherent and static in his framework. In many ways, the frameworks that both Hunter and Luker offer are socially, religiously, and politically deterministic. They offer little insight into the work of activism, the development of a political philosophy, or the dynamism of modern conservatism.

I bring the tools of social and cultural history to the subject matter. This dissertation is attuned to the evolutions, developments, and circuitous political routes of this late twentieth-century political movement. It does not take for granted the coalitions or power of this

³⁶ Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*, p. 7.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 159-64.

³⁸ Faye D. Ginsburg uses a similar formulation of polar and static worldviews in her study on local abortion activism in Fargo, North Dakota. See *Contested Lives: The Abortion Debate Within an American Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 6-14.

³⁹ Hunter, *Culture Wars*, pp. 43-44.

movement. Building on the insights of many historians and feminist scholars before, it asks historical questions of a movement that claimed to be ahistorical. Instead of accepting conservatives as relics or defenders of a patriarchal past, I argue that activists created a simplified American past, and in so doing remade popular definitions of woman, child, family, values, and “life,” rendering their new definitions as timeless absolutes. Rather than focusing on diametrically opposed worldviews that explain the seemingly entrenched nature of abortion politics, this dissertation chronicles the ongoing process of making political knowledge about abortion by those within the movement.⁴⁰

Other scholars have dismissed social conservatism and especially anti-abortion politics as little more than political wool pulled over the eyes of white working-class people. Because many scholars see conservatism, at its heart, as an ideology that replicates class, gender, and racial hierarchies, the conservative political participation of any relatively disadvantaged person makes little sense. Or, as one author described the movement, the New Right is “like the French Revolution in reverse—one in which the sans-culottes pour down the streets demanding more power for the aristocracy.”⁴¹ Proponents of this argument have resorted to a pseudo-Marxist, false consciousness analysis of much conservative activism. Journalist Thomas Frank most famously articulates this line of thought in *What’s the Matter with Kansas?* Frank argues that

⁴⁰ This argument builds on work about abortion in cultural studies of the body, science, and medicine. In recent years, many scholars have questioned the ways in which obstetrical, embryological, legal, and cultural knowledge has produced the fetus as a human subject and how, in turn, fetal representations have changed the shape of legal, medical, and popular cultural practices. See, e.g., Donna Haraway, “Fetus: The Virtual Speculum for the New World Order,” in *Modest-Witness@Second_Millennium_FemaleMan_Meets_OncoMouse* (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 173-213; Lynn M. Morgan and Meredith W. Michaels, “Introduction: The Fetal Imperative,” in *Fetal Subjects, Feminist Positions*, ed. Morgan and Michaels (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); Barbara Duden, *Disembodying Woman: Perspectives on Pregnancy and the Unborn*, trans. Lee Hoinacki (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Karen Newman, *Fetal Positions: Individualism, Science, Visuality* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996).

⁴¹ Frank, *What’s the Matter with Kansas?*, p. 8.

working-class whites abandoned their class interests for “wedges issues” like guns and abortion, motivated by a sense of martyrdom that has continued, into the early twenty-first century, to bring working-class people to the polls for the Republican Party.⁴² Some of the most recent explanations of social conservatism from historians have followed Frank’s line of thought, albeit with more nuance. Matthew Lassiter, in “Inventing Family Values,” contends that the media offered a cultural explanation rather than an economic one for the many social changes of the 1970s, such as an increase in the divorce rate, high inflation, and the disappearance of a family wage. Without a coherent economic narrative for social change, many Americans saw a “placid image of a middle-class suburban home abruptly [give] way to a montage of headlines about divorce, child abuse, photographs of aborted fetuses, ... and demonstrators with signs reading ‘Thank God I’m Gay’ and ‘Lesbian Mothers.’”⁴³ Distracted from the real (economic) transformations of the 1970s, the media and conservative leaders led many Americans to blame feminists, gays and lesbians, radical people of color, and the “liberal elite” for the social and moral devolution of American society. Rather than assume economics and class identification should logically supersede all other political concerns, this dissertation explains why social issues motivated so many to join the pro-life movement and often, by extension, the Republican Party.

I contend that a process of knowledge production generated and policed anti-abortion opinion within the movement and stimulated those outside the movement to join. As sociologist Ziad Munson argues, many activists developed clear and rigorous pro-life beliefs only after they

⁴² Ibid., pp. 6, 215. For other explanations for white working-class disaffection, see below.

⁴³ Matthew D. Lassiter, “Inventing Family Values,” in *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, ed. Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 13-28 (quote on p. 13).

joined the movement.⁴⁴ This dissertation looks to the intimate spaces of activism to understand that knowledge production. Significantly, it also shows that the kinds of thought the pro-life movement produced changed over time. Anti-abortion knowledge began in the late 1960s as almost entirely fetus-focused but, by the 1980s and 1990s, had transformed to include an emphasis on the rights of women, on children at risk, and on family values. This dissertation chronicles the process and evolution of pro-life common sense.

The development of this common sense is particularly important to understanding the intersections between the racial and gender politics of the New Right in the United States. In the past decade, a new generation of historians has shed new light on these politics by examining grassroots conservative movements of the 1950s and 1960s and the politics of the changing postwar urban landscape. Before this upsurge in the study of conservatism, scholars narrated the trajectory of the New Right either as a top-down movement orchestrated by a few wealthy, powerful men or an irrational, paranoid, marginal politics rooted in anxiety about social status.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ziad W. Munson, *The Making of Pro-Life Activists: How Social Movement Mobilization Works* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

⁴⁵ Richard Hofstadter, in a 1964 article, famously prefigured the narrative of paranoid politics by arguing that in times of prosperity, certain groups, anxious about their declining (or tenuously increasing) social status, embraced a “pseudo-conservatism.” Hofstadter believed these segments of the upwardly mobile working class and the angst-ridden middle class had a psychological problem, deeply rooted in economic anxiety. See Richard Hofstadter, “The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt—1955,” in *The Radical Right*, ed. Daniel Bell (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), pp. 69-72. See also Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (New York: Knopf, 1965). The top-down narrative of the New Right’s rise came from many historians of the New Left in general and 1970s feminism in particular. In that narrative, powerful men, such as William F. Buckley, Richard Viguerie, and Jerry Falwell, manipulated the political system and the media to their own ends, producing and disseminating a political ideology that benefited socially privileged people. Media outlets then wooed voters into a social false consciousness, leading them to act and vote against their own interests. See, for example, Kevin Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (New York: Arlington House, 1969); Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York: Crown, 1991); John D’Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 348-9; Susan Douglas, “The ERA as Catfight,” in *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1995), pp. 221-45.

While scholars have increasingly filled out the narrative of the New Right, much of this new work has sidelined gender politics from the story or, alternatively, separated the New Right's gender politics from its racial politics. A recent crop of histories have argued that the New Right was a grassroots movement with origins in the changing geography of the postwar metropolis, born out of the relationship between the suburbs and the city.⁴⁶ Though each historian has his or her own interpretation of how this relationship functioned, many agree that because federal economic stimulation gave corporations and also white people more generally incentives to move to the suburbs, white suburbanites came to see their neighborhoods as products of economic and cultural meritocracy rather than racial discrimination. Kevin Kruse, Robert Self, Matthew Lassiter, Eric Avila, and Lisa McGirr have made this a rich and growing field in the study of postwar politics. While these historians have fleshed out early conservative activism and the repercussions of liberalism on the postwar city, almost all of them have left the gender politics of the New Right and the 1970s largely unexplored until very recently.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ For the grassroots activism of the New Right, see Gregory L. Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); John A. Andrew, *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997); Rebecca E. Klatch, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Farber and Roche, eds., *The Conservative Sixties*. For the New Right's relationship to the suburbs, see Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*. All these works on the city and suburbs build on Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), and Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

⁴⁷ Robert O. Self's new work, *All in the Family*, explores the gender politics of the 1970s and 1980s alongside the transformations of the 1960s. The seventies and gender politics have also been partially addressed in older or overview histories of the New Right. See, for example, William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996),

By finding the “origins” of the New Right in the early postwar period, many of these historians have allowed the conservatism of the 1960s to stand in for the next forty years of politics.⁴⁸ In all but a handful of works, this omission has erased the politics of gender from the New Right historiography.⁴⁹ Scholars have sidelined conservative gender politics from the story of the New Right in two ways. For one, most historians of the New Right have neglected the study of gender politics in 1950s and 1960s conservatism, so that antifeminism seems to come out of the political blue when it arises in the 1970s. Second, in these origin narratives, there is little space for later political reorganization. The “social conservatism” of the 1970s, in this view, had not much to do with the “true” character of postwar conservatism. The racial, spatial, and political seeds of the New Right had long been sown and the conservative ascendancy of the 1980s was inevitable, just a matter of time.

The strength of the scholarship focusing on 1950s and 1960s conservatism and an emerging multi-disciplinary scholarship on social conservatism in the 1980s and 1990s has served to sever racial and gender analyses of the New Right. Racial politics seem the domain of white suburban libertarians and segregationists. Gender politics seem the domain of

and Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁴⁸ Many historians have looked at later struggles in the 1970s and 1980s and seen the same dynamics as those of the 1960s, claiming, for instance, that the problems of integration in the South just happened later for the North but looked the same. See Ronald P. Formisano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); and Thomas Sugrue, “Crab-grass Roots Politics: Race, Rights, and the Reaction Against Liberalism in the Urban North,” *Journal of American History* 82, no. 1 (September 1995): 551-86.

⁴⁹ For treatments of gender in the origins of the New Right, see McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*; Self, *All in the Family*; and Michelle M. Nickerson, *Mothers of Conservatism: Women and the Postwar Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012). There have been a few books on anti-feminism and the New Right. See 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); Faludi, *Backlash*; Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

traditionalists and the late-twentieth-century evangelical resurgence. “Making Babies” looks at a movement that should be firmly in the province of gender politics, but excavates the deeply intertwined nature of the movement’s racial and gendered ideologies. It helps explain how central whiteness was to social conservatism. It shows a movement framed in the language of human rights and civil rights was a counter-reaction to the changes wrought by 1960s social justice movements. And it shows how that movement imagined the degendered and deracialized fetus as an entity that would unify all Americans in era many white Americans saw as unnecessarily divisive.

In previous scholarship and popular culture, the place of people of color in late twentieth-century conservatism has been little understood. Scholarly frameworks for understanding conservative political action leave little room for people of color to embrace New Right politics. Popular narratives have assumed that while black evangelicals and ethnic Mexican Catholics were natural constituencies of the socially conservative movement, they maintained deep loyalty to the Democratic Party.⁵⁰ Few have reckoned with why members of these groups have not

⁵⁰ One example of such popular assumptions is the reaction to the 2008 election when Proposition 8 passed in California. Proposition 8 would have added an amendment to the California constitution banning gay marriage. After the proposition passed, many accused African Americans in the state for overwhelmingly and disproportionately supporting the ban while voting for Democratic candidate Barack Obama for president. (Though most media narratives focused on Africans Americans, many also added that Latinos in the state had provided key support for the ban.) While the rates of African American support for Prop. 8 turned out to be overstated, the early exit polls ignited an acrimonious and sometimes racist debate over the place of homophobia and social conservatism in communities of color. For discussions of homophobia among African Americans and Prop. 8, see Andrew Sullivan, “Young Evangelicals and Gay Couples,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 30, 2008, “Overgeneralizing,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, October 2, 2008, and “The Grim Truth,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, November 5, 2008; Ladoris Cordell, “Proposition 8 v. Black Homophobia,” *Salon*, October 30, 2008, http://www.salon.com/2008/10/30/proposition_8_2/ (accessed July 28, 2013); Dan Savage, “Black Homophobia,” *The Stranger*, November 5, 2008. For one example of racist action in response to exit polls (in addition to endless racist responses in blog comment sections), see “N-Word Hurlled at Blacks During Westwood Prop. 8 Protest,” Rod 2.0, November 7, 2008, <http://rodonline.typepad.com/rodonline/2008/11/n-word-and-raci.html> (accessed July 28, 2013). For the overstatement impact of African American votes, see David Kaufman, “The Root: The Misjudged Black Vote on Gay Marriage,” *NPR*, March 4, 2011; John Wildermuth, “Black Support for Prop. 8 Called

joined the pro-life movement in significant numbers. This dissertation explores the racialized gender ideologies at the heart the movement and helps to explain the ambivalent relationship potential conservatives of color have had with the pro-life movement. The movement co-opted anti-racist language and multiracial imagery to authenticate itself, while simultaneously ignoring, silencing, or working against most other social and racial justice concerns. Ideologically, the movement made it very difficult for even the most pro-life person of color to join.

“Making Babies” offers a deeper look at the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, helping to explain how fundamental white, anti-feminist organizing was to creating a culture of conservatism in America. Thus, it draws historical connections between the states rights conservatism of the 1950s and 1960s and the family values politics of the late twentieth century. It finds links among the imagined victim of the civil rights movement, the white child forced into an integrated school, and the imagined victim of the feminist movement, the white fetus denied “the right to life.” And it helps to make sense of the easy coalitions among social, libertarian, and neo-conservatives that dominated late twentieth-century U.S. politics.

In order to illuminate the everyday politics of the pro-life movement, I use a variety of sources. Because pro-life groups have been slow or hesitant to donate their papers to archives, I have relied in part on oral histories. Between 2010 and 2012, I conducted twenty-four interviews with anti-abortion activists, two with pro-choice activists, and one with an abortion provider. Almost all were long-term, committed activists. They provided many of the most passionate voices in this dissertation. I supplemented these voices with newspaper accounts, government documents, letters to congresspeople, pro-choice and gay equality group records, pro-life newsletters, and conservative business records and ephemera. Together these sources offer

Exaggeration,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 7, 2009; Vincent Rossmeier, “Don’t Blame Proposition 8 on African Americans,” *Salon*, January 9, 2009, http://www.salon.com/2009/01/09/race_prop8/ (accessed July 28, 2013).

insight into the quiet moments of activist education and individual revelation, and the broader history of this campaign for American hearts and minds.

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first focuses on the fetal imagery and the pro-life discourses on science, nationalism, racism, and human rights that activists developed in the late 1960s and 1970s. It argues that activists, most of them white, developed a fetal politics that they hoped would unify Americans. The “miracle of life” would help people see beyond what many conservatives regarded as the overstated impact of conquest and colonialism, racism and sexism, structural inequality and cultural oppression. True, there were also a handful of ethnic Mexican Catholics and Black evangelicals, but they served most often as symbolic actors: for the pro-life movement ultimately created a conservative philosophy with the fetus—the racially unmarked and de-gendered subject—at its center. Chapter Two argues that most activists who emerged from various churches were responding as much to liberalization within their denominations as liberalization in the larger society. In these states, pro-life coalitions were almost entirely made up of white religious westerners: Catholics, evangelicals, Mormons, and mainstream Protestants. The chapter shows how activists politicized religious spaces and made abortion central to how many thought about being a Christian in America.

The next three chapters of the dissertation follow pro-life activists into the 1980s and 1990s, and show how they used pro-life politics to remake the identities of women, children, and families. Chapter Three contends that activists in crisis pregnancy centers, located in Sunbelt cities and college towns with populations they considered “susceptible” to abortion, remade women who chose to terminate their pregnancies into victims of the feminist movement and “secular humanism.” Though these centers catered primarily to young women and women of color, they ultimately developed an alternative women’s rights movement among white

conservative women. In the fourth chapter, I trace the ways that the movement refocused on children as potential constituencies. In the 1980s and 1990s, many young Mormons, Catholics, and evangelicals were faced with abortion in intimate and daily ways. Children of conservative parents began to leave public schools for homeschooling in “traditional values,” and they began to watch pro-life, “pro-family” movies in Sunday schools. In a myriad of ways, pro-life activists attempted to make young people into representatives of aborted fetuses. Finally, in Chapter Five, I discuss how pro-life politics became central to a movement for “family values.”

Examining a pro-life self-help group for single parents in Arizona, the 1980 Conference on the Family in New Mexico, and James Dobson’s non-profit Focus on the Family based in Colorado, I argue that pro-life and other socially conservative activists recreated the logic of the family, focusing first and foremost on uninterrupted reproduction, personal responsibility, and the “naturalness” of gender roles within the family. In so doing, they often shouted down or overshadowed the familial concerns of feminists, poor people, people of color, LGBT people, and a host of others. In the late twentieth century, social conservatives ultimately made the fetus a primary member of the “traditional” family.

From the late 1960s to the late 1990s, pro-life activists changed the meanings of life, reproduction, and abortion. The ways that a variety of activists created that knowledge locally is the subject of this dissertation. It also explains the importance of social conservatism to the conservative ascendancy in the late twentieth century, and thus demonstrates how Americans of many descriptions redefined gender, the family, religion, human and civil rights, life and death. An examination of how pro-life activists produced knowledge in their homes and in their churches, in crisis pregnancy centers and on sidewalks, in wealthy suburbs, working-class barrios, and sovereign Indigenous nations, is more than a single case study of postwar activism.

Rather it sheds light on some of the most pressing cultural and political questions of the late twentieth century.

Chapter One

The Political Imaginary of Life

In 1974, a seasoned conservative activist and staunch Catholic, Californian Virginia Evers, caught a glimpse of a pro-life ad in her local newspaper. It was a photograph of a Washington doctor holding the feet of a 10-12 week fetus. Evers already ran a small business, Heritage House, that sold nationalist paraphernalia for the U.S. bicentennial, but in the following years, she began manufacturing and selling her most famous item: “Precious Feet,” a metal pin of fetal feet inspired by the pro-life ad. (Figure 1.) Evers and her family moved to a small town in Arizona and began focusing almost exclusively on the Precious Feet and other pro-life paraphernalia. Heritage House marketed Precious Feet as an item that “breaks the ice and helps you speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.”¹ One satisfied pro-life customer wrote about the Precious Feet, “Clerks in stores, bank tellers, people in any crowd ... inevitably ask what they are and it gives me a chance to impress a visual image on their minds that they will never forget.”² Evers described the national and international response to her product: the tiny feet “were greeted with such tremendous enthusiasm that the following year during a meeting of worldwide meeting of pro-life leaders in Dublin, Ireland, they were officially proclaimed the ‘International Pro-Life Symbol.’”³ By the late 1970s and early 1980s, this replica of fetal feet—

¹ Saving Lives and Serving Families, January 1999, p. 4, folder 3, box 1-3, HH1421, Heritage House ’76, Inc/Precious Feet People, Hall Hoag Collection, John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, RI (hereafter Hall Hoag Collection). See also interview with Virginia Evers, March 19, 2010.

² The Precious Feet People Catalog, September 1981, p. 2, folder 1, box 1-3, HH1421, Heritage House ’76, Inc/Precious Feet People, Hall Hoag Collection.

³ “The Story of Heritage House ’76,” folder 1, box 1-3, HH1421, Heritage House ’76, Inc/Precious Feet People, Hall Hoag Collection. For national and international reactions to the Precious

the perfect embodiment of the universal subject—was just the right symbol for the movement.

Virginia Evers, and many pro-life activists before her, saw the racially unmarked and degendered fetus as the ultimate victim of post-1960s American culture and the image of the fetus as the primary path to conservative renewal.



Figure 1. The Precious Feet People Catalog, September 1981, folder 1, box 1-3, HH1421, Heritage House '76, Inc/Precious Feet People, Hall Hoag Collection.

From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, pro-life activists—almost all of whom were white—developed a repertoire of fetal imagery to convey the humanity of the fetus and this

Feet, see, for example, *Viva Life* newsletter, January 1986, folder 1, box 1-8, HH120, Right to Life, New Mexico, Hall Hoag Collection; Heritage House, 76 Inc., "Getting Out the Word," Heritage House Newsletter, Spring 1988, folder 1, box 1-3, HH1421, Heritage House '76, Inc/Precious Feet People, Hall Hoag Collection.

alternative vision of American communities and their histories. Fetuses were babies through their bodies; their limbs, their heartbeats, their toes and eyes evidenced their “human” status. Human did not mean breathing or independent or cognizant. It meant a bodily connection to the rest of the species. Activists often categorized this argument as of the strictly biological variety, self-evident and natural. But it was also a political and social stance, very much a reaction to feminist and especially anti-racist politics of the 1960s and 1970s. In these years, feminist and anti-racist activists had been vocally naming racial and gender oppression, exposing the hierarchies and social systems that stratified society into those with social power and those without it. From the late 1960s onward, pro-life activists offered an alternative to these politics. Liberals had led Americans to become too focused on what divided them, they argued, and lost sight of the things that mattered, the things that unified people. They offered the fetus in its many forms as an emblem for this political vision.

I argue in this chapter that in the late 1960s and 1970s, activists articulated a political imaginary of life. Many scholars who have studied abortion politics or the culture wars have defined the opposing camps by their static, oppositional worldviews. Whether committed to intrinsic gender difference or general social orthodoxy, pro-life activists, in these narratives, stand still in history.⁴ In this chapter, I respectfully take issue with this characterization. I contend that pro-life activists actively and gradually made a political imaginary. I do so drawing on philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis’s definition of a social imaginary as the capacity to “see in

⁴ See Kristen Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Faye D. Ginsburg, *Contested Lives: The Abortion Debate in an American Community*, 2d ed. (1989; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Rickie Solinger, ed., *Abortion Wars: A Half Century of Struggle, 1950-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

a thing what it is not, to see it other than it is.”⁵ To put it another way, a social (or, in my formulation, political) imaginary identifies the creative and dynamic relationship among subject, symbol, and society. In the 1970s, pro-life activists created a symbolic world of fetal imagery that became inextricably wed to their evolving ideology. Fetuses served not simply as images but also as visual shorthands for a broad and developing pro-life political consciousness. Over the course of the 1970s, activists used fetal images to “tell the truth” about the boundaries of humanity, the contours of genocide and human rights, and the racial and religious shape of the movement. I trace arguments about science and biology through Colorado’s 1967 abortion debates, arguments about history and genocide through 1973 Utah pro-life activism, and arguments about race and civil rights through 1976 New Mexico pro-life memorials. In each case, fetal representations helped mold pro-life arguments and translate those arguments to their audiences. Together the episodes show how the dynamic, unstable process of developing an ideology created the illusion of a stable, static pro-life worldview. They also show that this “unifying” ideology resonated more among certain constituencies in certain states than others. Mormons in Utah were much more sympathetic to this initially white Catholic movement than

⁵ Quoted in Henrietta L. Moore, *The Subject of Anthropology: Gender, Symbolism, and Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2007), p. 60. Castoriadis was not the first philosopher to articulate the idea of the imaginary. In fact he was entering into a long philosophical conversation about the creation of the self. Philosopher John-Paul Sartre first noted the idea of the imaginary in his book, *The Imaginary: The Phenomenology Psychology of the Imagination*, 3d ed. (1940; New York: Routledge, 2004). In this work, Sartre narrates the relationship between imagination and human consciousness, contending that people (and their consciousnesses) are not passive recipients of images but actively and creatively involved in perception and imagination. Philosopher Jacques Lacan articulated the notion that the imaginary was one of three orders of psychoanalysis, joining the symbolic and the real. He contended that the imaginary was the realm beyond language where the self confronted its alter ego, and that only by breaking through this realm could one get to the symbolic, where language existed and dialogue could occur. Castoriadis refines and critiques Lacan, suggesting that in the imaginary, ideology is conjoined with signification, and that the imaginary has wider social and political implications. For description of Sartre’s theory of imaginary, see David Detmer, *Sartre Explained: From Bad Faith to Authenticity* (Peru, IL: Carus Publishing Company, 2008), pp. 47-48; and for Lacan’s theory, see Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (London, UK: Routledge, 1996), pp. 84-85; Jane Gallop, *Reading Lacan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 59-60.

ethnic Mexican Catholics in New Mexico. Despite their uneven results, these episodes in Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah show how white pro-life activists began to articulate political principles that they believed could galvanize opponents of legalized abortion, and hopefully change the direction of modern politics.

Illusions of Racial Harmony

In the aftermath of World War II, white Americans and many of the country's political and media outlets clung fiercely to idea that the United States was a place of racial harmony. Faced with growing outrage from veterans of color at home and criticism from friends and foes abroad, many white Americans argued that the United States historically had been a "melting pot" of diverse peoples, a place where, largely, people now got along.⁶ Perhaps many white Americans experienced their lives as racially harmonious, but that "harmony" was structured and enabled by formal and informal codes of segregation and inequality. White people often believed themselves to be friends with people of color who worked for them or waited on them, but could not live near them, go to their colleges, or join their organizations. Of course, people of color resisted racism in intimate and epic ways, but such resistance was rarely incorporated into white people's larger racial narrative. That racial narrative was more often influenced by larger notions of white benevolence, meritocracy, and American freedom and equality. This illusion of racial harmony began to break on a national level in the mid-1950s. At that moment, the national media focused on African Americans openly protesting Jim Crow segregation in the South and on white supremacists who responded with deadly force. But this was only one part

⁶ Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 238-67; Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

of a political revolution going on around the country, where people of color in many different movements exposed the individual, cultural, and structural racism endemic to American society.

Over the next twenty years, movements for racial equality in Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico attempted to intervene in the illusion of racial harmony, what one historian called “one of our [nation’s] most valued myths.”⁷ Building on almost a century of labor, mutual aid, and political activism by Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans (as well as more recent legal struggles and veteran agitation), the Chicano Movement energized ethnic Mexicans, especially youth, around the region.⁸ For example, in Colorado, Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales

⁷ Eugenia Kaledin, *Daily Life in the United States, 1940-1959: Shifting Worlds* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), p. 22.

⁸ For ethnic Mexican labor activism, see Vicki L. Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987); George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 227-52; Camille Guérin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation, and California Farm Labor, 1900-1939* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994); Devra Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold: California Farm Workers, Cotton, and the New Deal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Katherine Benton-Cohen, *Borderline Americans: Racial Division and Labor War in the Arizona Borderlands* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); Monica Perales, *Smeltertown: Making and Remembering a Southwest Border Community* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). For political and *mutualista* activism, see Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, pp. 253-69; David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican American, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 117-51; Vicki L. Ruiz, *Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 72-98; Benjamin Marquez, *LULAC: The Evolution of a Mexican American Political Organization* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993) and *Constructing Identities in Mexican American Political Organizations* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003); Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold*, pp. 61-62. For legal activism, see Micheal A. Olivas, *Colored Men and Hombres Aquí: Hernandez v. Texas and the Emergence of Mexican American Lawyering* (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 2006); Thomas A. Guglielmo, “Fight for Caucasian Rights: Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and the Transnational Struggle for Civil Rights in World War II Texas,” *Journal of American History* 92 (March 2006): 1212-37; Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., *Brown, Not White: School Integration and the Chicano Movement in Houston* (Houston, TX: University of Houston Press, 2001); Richard R. Valencia, *Chicano Students and the Courts: The Mexican American Legal Struggle for Educational Equality* (New York: New York University Press, 2008). For veteran activism, see Henry A. J. Ramos, *The American GI Forum: In Pursuit of the Dream, 1948-1983* (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 1998); Patrick Carroll, *Felix Longoria’s Wake: Bereavement, Racism, and the Rise of Mexican American Activism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003); Steven Rosales, “Fight the Peace at Home: Mexican American Veterans and the 1944 GI Bill of Rights,” *Pacific Historical Review* 80 (November 2011): 597-627.

mobilized many Coloradoans and young activists from around the Southwest to confront anti-Mexican racism, pursue self-determination, and embrace cultural nationalism. Faced with a local Democratic Party that ignored them and a police department that targeted them, Chicanos—a new unifying term for those of Mexican descent—joined Gonzales’s group Crusade for Justice to remake Denver’s racial landscape and stimulate a broader social change in the region.⁹ In New Mexico, a state marketed as the land of racial harmony, members of the Chicano movement demanded the return of all Spanish and Mexican land grants lost since 1848, engaged in intense labor struggles, opposed the racism of the Vietnam War, and agitated for Chicano history programs.¹⁰

African Americans in the West, too, joined the groundswell for social justice in the postwar period. They were a part of a African American civil rights movement that historian Quintard Taylor calls “a national transformation, an energizing of small and large African American communities around the country, inspired by national goals and leadership but which pursued distinctly local agendas.”¹¹ In Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico, African

These varied movements often had different strategies and political goals and Chicanos both built on and critiqued previous movements. See, e.g., Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, pp. 179-205.

⁹ Ernesto B. Vigil, *The Crusade for Justice: Chicano Militancy and the Government’s War on Dissent* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999). For more on the Chicano Movement, see Carlos Muñoz, Jr., *Youth, Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement* (New York: Verso, 1989); Carlos G. Vélez-Ibañez, *Border Visions: Mexican Cultures of the Southwest United States* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997), pp. 91-136; F. Arturo Rosales, *Chicano!: The History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (Houston: Arte Público, 1996); Ernesto Chávez, “¡Mi Raza Primero!” (*My People First!*): *Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Lorena Oropeza, *¡Raza Sí ¡Guerra No!: Chicano Protest and Patriotism during the Viet Nam War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

¹⁰ David R. Maciel and Juan José Peña, “La Reconquista: The Chicano Movement in New Mexico,” in *The Contested Homeland: A Chicano History of New Mexico*, ed. Erlinda Gonzales-Berry and David R. Maciel (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), pp. 269-301.

¹¹ Quintard Taylor, “The Civil Rights Movement in the American West: Black Protest in Seattle, 1960-1970,” *Journal of Negro History* 80, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 1-14 (quote on p. 1). For more on

Americans openly organized against housing discrimination, anti-miscegenation laws, segregation, and job discrimination.¹² Western African Americans campaigned for equality within their churches as well. Beginning in the early 1970s, Black Mormons in Salt Lake City lobbied the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) to reconsider the policy that prohibited Black men from holding the priesthood, the power given to worthy men to act in God's name.¹³

Indigenous people also challenged non-Indians in the Four Corners states to address structural and cultural racism in an aim to re-establish sovereignty for Indian nations. Faced with crushing poverty both on and off reservations and the federal government's attempts to both assimilate Indigenous people and "terminate" their treaty rights, many took inspiration from concurrent justice movements and engaged in civil disobedience, legal activism, and cultural

western civil rights and Black Power movements, see Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West* (New York: Norton, 1998), pp. 278-310; Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Mathew C. Whittaker, *Race Work: The Rise of Civil Rights in the Urban West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); Donna Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Shana Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Mark Brilliant, *The Color of America Has Changed: How Racial Diversity Shaped Civil Rights Reform in California, 1941-1978* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Alondra Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

¹² Whittaker, *Race Work*; Carl Abbott, Stephen J. Leonard, and Thomas J. Noel, *Colorado: A History of the Centennial State*, 4th ed. (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2004); Thomas G. Alexander, *Utah: The Right Place: The Official Centennial History*, rev. ed. (Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith, 1996), p. 389.

¹³ For Black Mormon political organizing through the Genesis Group, see Anthony B. Pinn, *African American Religious Cultures*, vol. 1 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009), p. 236. See also Lester E. Bush and Armand L. Mauss, *Neither White nor Black: Mormon Scholars Confront the Race Issue in a Universal Church* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1984); Newell G. Bringhurst and Darron T. Smith, eds., *Black and Mormon* (Bloomington: University of Illinois, 2004).

renewal.¹⁴ Indigenous people in rural parts of Utah and New Mexico resisted termination, claimed their ancestral homelands and demanded that states acknowledge their claims.¹⁵ Urban dwellers, in cities like Phoenix, campaigned for fair housing, educational reform, and an end to job discrimination, joining a variety of political groups including the often militant American Indian Movement (AIM).¹⁶

All these movements demanded that white Americans rethink the place of race in America. They said that white privilege was maintained in the U.S. not through consensus or on the basis of merit, but rather through cultural racism, legal discrimination, and often violence. They said that American history, and western history, was defined not by valiant settlers spreading democracy and freedom, but rather by European and American colonists enslaving people and enacting violent conquest. To be short, they contended that racial injustice and inequality, rather than racial harmony, defined American society. It was in this social world that the fledgling pro-life movement articulated its opposing vision for political change and human unity.

¹⁴ For more on Indigenous activism in the postwar U.S., see Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz and Wounded Knee* (New York: New Press, 1996); Joane Nagel, *American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Red Power and the Resurgence of Identity and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Charles Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle: The Rise of Modern Indian Nations* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005); Daniel M. Cobb and Loretta Fowler, eds., *Beyond Red Power: American Indian Politics and Activism since 1900* (Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press, 2007); Daniel M. Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for Sovereignty* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008); Bradley R. Schreve, *Red Power Rising: The National Indian Youth Council and the Origins of Native Activism* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011); Nicolas G. Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration and Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

¹⁵ For the Taos Pueblo campaign for the return of Blue Lake, see Marcia Keegan, *Taos Pueblo and Its Sacred Blue Lake* (Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers, 1991); Troy Johnson, *Red Power: The Native American Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007), p. 42. For Paiute opposition to termination, see Alexander, *Utah*, p. 384.

¹⁶ For Phoenix activism, see Stephen Kent Amerman, “‘Let’s Get In and Fight!’: American Indian Political Activism in an Urban Public School System, 1973,” *American Indian Quarterly* 27, no. 3-4 (2003): 607-38.

Colorado, 1967

In 1967, the pro-life movement was practically non-existent. Before 1967, all states in the United States had restrictive abortion laws dating back to the nineteenth century, most only allowing abortions when a woman's life was in danger. In the early to mid-1960s, activists from around the country began calling for the reform of abortion laws, arguing that the law and public morality were at odds. They agreed that doctors were risking legal action, as many bent the law or broke it entirely to terminate women's pregnancies. They agreed that women were dying in huge numbers from self-induced abortions or back-alley abortionists. But they disagreed on the solutions. Most at this time simply wanted reform: Abortions should be legal in cases of incest or rape or if the physical or mental health of the woman was at risk. Or, abortions should be legal with the consent of a woman's husband and doctor. A smaller number called for women's liberation from their "bodily slavery" and for "abortion on demand."¹⁷ This group of activists in the early to mid-1960s was made up of doctors, nurses, legislators, ministers, and social workers, with a small handful of outspoken non-professionals. But these activists were motivated and sustained by an increasingly vociferous law-breaking public. Arizona newscaster Sherri Finkbine made national news when she flew to Sweden for an abortion of her severely deformed fetus after her local hospital refused her.¹⁸ A small Oklahoma town held a community-wide

¹⁷ For "bodily slavery" quote, see David J. Garrow, *Liberty and Sexuality: The Right to Privacy and the Making of Roe v. Wade* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1994), p. 314. For the wide range of reformers' opinions between the mid-1950s and 1967, see pp. 270-335.

¹⁸ Finkbine had realized the sleeping pills her husband had brought home from Europe were the same ones causing birth defects in Europe (thalidomide). She told a journalist friend about her ordeal to raise awareness of this problem in the United States. Quickly, though, Finkbine and her local hospital were flooded with letters and phone calls condemning her planned abortion. The hospital caved to the public pressure and Finkbine and her husband had to fly to Sweden for the abortion. Finkbine both suffered from the anti-abortion sentiment of her state and the country and became one of a growing number of white, middle-class faces of tragic motherhood. Leslie Reagan argues that the 1960s German measles epidemic paired with an awareness of thalidomide (and the white, middle-class women who were

thank you and going away party for their longtime (illegal) abortion provider before he was sent to prison.¹⁹ Women from around the country began demanding contraception and detailing their experiences with illegal abortions. Abortion reformers took this public momentum into state capitol buildings, but they did not have any success until rookie state representative Richard Lamm proposed an abortion liberalization bill to the Colorado legislature in 1967.

A liberal Democrat and a lawyer, Lamm was new to legislating but had a clear vision that change was possible. Lamm's concern for issues of overpopulation, women's degradation, and environmental decay brought him to abortion reform.²⁰ So in his first year as a Colorado representative, he proposed a bill that would allow a legal abortion if the woman's mental or physical health was endangered, if there was a high probability of a damaged or deformed fetus, or when the pregnancy was a result of rape or incest.²¹ Lamm contended this law would allow

its most visible victims) made legalized abortion more palatable to many Americans. See Leslie J. Reagan, *Dangerous Pregnancies: Mothers, Disabilities, and Abortion in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), p. 57. For more on Finkbine, see Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*, pp. 62-65; Kerry N. Jacoby, *Souls, Bodies, and Spirits: The Drive to Abolish Abortion Since 1973* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), p. 4; Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith: A Frontline History of the Abortion Wars* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), pp. 40-51; Barbara Clow, "'An Illness of Nine Months' Duration": Pregnancy and Thalidomide Use in the United States and Canada," in *Women, Health, and Nation: Canada and the United States since 1945*, ed. Georgina D. Feldberg (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2003), pp. 45-47; Rickie Solinger, *Pregnancy and Power: A Short History of Reproductive Politics in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), pp. 179-81.

¹⁹ Garrow, *Liberty and Sexuality*, p. 284. The number of people, especially feminists, making this critique and calling abortion "a right" would grow exponentially after 1967.

²⁰ For Lamm's early environmental concerns, see "High School-Produced Film Slated Here 'Earth Night,'" *Greeley Tribune* (CO), November 30, 1970; "Lamm Sees Reformed Capitalism as Necessary to Save Environment," *Greeley Tribune*, December 3, 1970; Carl Hillard, "Lamm to Continue His Fight for Environment Improvement," *Greeley Tribune*, January 7, 1971.

²¹ Pressure from social workers, doctors, and groups concerned with "mentally retarded children" pressed for the liberalization of these laws in the late 60s. See Martin Moran, "Changes Urged in Colorado's Abortion Laws," *Rocky Mountain News*, December 25, 1965; "Social Workers Favor Liberalized Abortion Law," *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, November 19, 1967. Others working with unwed mothers, such as pediatrician and child psychiatrist Edith Banfield Jackson, also advocated legalized abortion. See Edith Jackson, "Study of Illegitimately Pregnant Women Under Care at Colorado

women to be more than “brood animals,” forced to birth babies they did not want into an already overpopulated world.²² If the law passed, Lamm believed, “Colorado could become the nation’s conscience center, where potential tragedy could end.”²³ As such, Colorado could be the place with no more back alleys, no more wire hangers or knitting needles, and no more legal shame.

Lamm was not connected to the growing national network of abortion reformers, and his state had been largely removed from the main centers of abortion controversy. So even Lamm was surprised by how much support his bill received. At a public meeting the year before, Lamm had told the audience that he thought a liberalized abortion bill had very little chance of passing. He was worried that the bill would not get even five sponsors.²⁴ Once proposed, the bill immediately had many more than that; it eventually gained forty-six recorded sponsors, nearly half of the Colorado legislature.²⁵ With the exception of a handful of staunch Catholics, few legislators seemed to worry that they might be legalizing a form of murder, or at least that was not their primary concern. The dearth of murder rhetoric in the 1967 legislative debate speaks volumes about abortion in America before the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision.

Rather than murder, most holdouts in the legislature that year were concerned that Colorado would become “a mecca for abortions,” because it would be the first state in the

General Hospital From January 1, 1962 to January 1, 1963,” folder 75, box 4, Edith Banfield Jackson Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (hereafter Jackson Collection); Edith Jackson to Brenda, November 27, 1967, folder 92, box 4, Jackson Collection.

²² While Lamm made his arguments using feminist language, his long-term commitment to abortion rights was motivated mostly by his concern with overpopulation. For Lamm’s comments on women as “brood animals,” see “Social Workers Favor Liberalized Abortion Law.”

²³ Olga Curtis, “How Colorado Changed Its Abortion Law,” *Denver Post* (Empire Magazine), May 18, 1967.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Garrow, *Liberty and Sexuality*, p. 324.

country to change its laws.²⁶ Even one Irish Catholic assemblyman who opposed the bill told a panel a year later that what he feared most was not that the bill would legalize murder but that it would make the state into “a mecca” for abortion-seekers.²⁷ Many worried that young women from around the country who had “gotten themselves in trouble” would swamp the state. Opponents in 1967 argued unsuccessfully that only Colorado residents should be able to apply for abortions under the new law.²⁸ They worried that abortion would be Colorado’s new boom commodity, but attracting the wrong kind of entrepreneurs and consumers.

This was not the first time locals worried that Denver would become a haven for the wayward girl and her trusty sidekick, the abortionist. In 1903, when abortion was almost completely illegal in the state, Colorado doctors met for a conference to discuss the state’s abortion problem. One doctor contended that the “church-going woman” and “dance-hall girl” alike “resort to hair-pin and catheter, jump down stairs, and fall from ladders.”²⁹ While this was a point of interest, the symposium’s attendees were most outraged at the brazen activities of those who helped women avoid the hair-pin. One presenter showed his audience the many advertisements in local newspapers for abortion services.³⁰ A local attorney blamed the attendees themselves, the doctors, for the pervasiveness of abortion, suggesting that local law

²⁶ For the “mecca” argument, see, for example, “Brown Speaks of Pressures on Abortion Bill Vote,” *Denver Post*, April 7, 1967; “Senate Dem Leader Urges Abortion Veto,” *Denver Post*, April 8, 1967; “House Okays Abortion Bill’s Final Version,” *Denver Post*, April 9, 1967.

²⁷ “Social Workers Favor Liberalized Abortion Law.”

²⁸ Loudon Kelly, “No ‘Mecca’ for Abortion in Colorado,” *St. Petersburg Times* (FL), February 10, 1968.

²⁹ Robert H. Shikes, *Rocky Mountain Medicine: Doctors, Drugs and Disease in Early Colorado* (Boulder, CO: Johnson Books, 1986), p. 141.

³⁰ H.N. Hawkins, “The Practical Working of the Law Against Criminal Abortion,” *Colorado Medical Journal and Western Medical and Surgical Gazette*, no. 9 (1903): 153-56.

enforcement could not pursue abortionists if the medical establishment did not turn in women when they arrived with botched abortions. With a woman in such dire straits, she might confess who had performed the illegal abortion. Without the help of local doctors, the attorney claimed, Colorado had prosecuted only five abortionists in thirty-five years, with one serving as little as a day in jail, making Denver “a Mecca for abortionists.”³¹ Forty years later, in the 1940s, Colorado’s district attorney would again try to clean up the “abortion capital of the nation.”³² These doctors’ concerns and the district attorney’s sweeps testify to the prevalence of abortion in Colorado and the continued anxiety that Denver was a refuge for irresponsible women and medical quacks.³³

Perhaps most revealing was Lamm’s repeated assurance to Coloradoans and national observers in 1967 that Colorado would not become an “obstetrical Las Vegas.”³⁴ Of course, Las Vegas was known for legalized gambling, legalized prostitution, excessive drinking, easy marriages, and quickie divorces. It was “Sin City.” But these were sins of excess, sins of

³¹ Ibid., p. 154. Of course, this attorney and many presenters in the room assumed no attending doctors might also be the “abortionists.”

³² Frances Melrose, “Smashing Denver’s Abortion Racket!” *Rocky Mountain News*, January 26, 1947. The timing of these attempts to find and prosecute people who performed abortions corresponds with Leslie Reagan’s chronology in *When Abortion was a Crime: Women, Medicine, and Law in the United States, 1867-1973* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). She claims that while abortion was widespread throughout the 20th century, the most substantial crackdowns on abortion providers occurred between 1890 and 1930, and in the 1940s.

³³ Despite these intermittent abortion “panics,” procuring an abortion remained a low level offense, only a misdemeanor in the state. See C.J. McNeill, “What of Morals when Murder is a Misdemeanor?” *Denver Catholic Register*, August 21, 1941.

³⁴ Ralph Dighton, “High Fees, Red Tape Chief Legal Abortion Complaints,” unknown newspaper, September n.d., 1968, Laws, Abortion, 1960-1969 Clippings File, Western History and Genealogy Archives, Denver Public Library, Denver, CO. See also Loudon Kelley, “Legal, but Colorado Abortion Hard to Get, *Milwaukee Journal* (WI), February 9, 1968; Ralph Dighton, “Abortion Repeal: ‘Not a Poor Woman’s Law,’” *Miami News* (FL), September 19, 1968; “3000 Women Expected to Obtain Legal Abortions,” *Ellensburg Daily Record* (WA), September 23, 1968.

impulse, or sins of abandon—sins that existed quietly everywhere but were openly available and marketed to Americans in Las Vegas. These were not capital crimes in any state, and many Americans would not have considered them mortal sins. Abortion was akin to gambling or prostitution in this early debate, not to murder. Such discussions exposed the acceptance, by many, of quiet abortions as a necessary stopgap for the women who found themselves unfortunately pregnant. But Colorado legislators did not want the state to be defined by this common but private “transgression.”

Lamm attempted to overcome these concerns about abortion meccas and obstetrical boomtowns by arguing that legal, open abortions would improve the quality of life for many Coloradoans. As one reporter noted, Lamm and his supporters “lined up a parade of solid citizens—doctors, ministers, civic leaders—to testify in favor of abortion reform.” He had the support of some local Jewish and Protestant clergy, social workers who worked with abandoned children, doctors who regularly saw the aftermath of illegal abortions, and those who worked with mentally disabled children.³⁵ Each said legalized abortion would help solve a social ill. The bill itself suggested increased access to abortion would “preserv[e] peace, health, and safety” in the state.³⁶

If most Colorado congressmen were concerned with other matters, Lamm did address himself to those concerned with murder. He characterized this opposition as distinctly and provincially Catholic. During the house debates on the bill, Lamm argued that Colorado’s legislators should not genuflect to the Catholic Church’s moral stand against abortion. Rather

³⁵ Moran, “Changes Urged in Colorado’s Abortion Laws.”

³⁶ Abraham Heller, MD, and H.G. Whittington, MD, “The Colorado Story: Denver General Hospital Experience with the Change in the Law on Therapeutic Abortions,” *American Journal of Psychiatry* 125, no. 6 (December 1968): 121-28 (quote on 121).

than inerrant, the Catholic Church, he said, had been inconsistent with its abortion prohibition. As evidence, he offered legislators this little history lesson: until the late sixteenth century, the church had allowed abortion within forty days of conception for a male fetus and within eighty for a female one.³⁷ For a few years in the late sixteenth century, abortion was banned all together. But with a new pope came new rules, and then abortion was allowed until “quickening,” or the time when the woman felt the fetus move. This rule stood until the mid-nineteenth century, when Pius IX renewed the ban on abortion at any stage of pregnancy, for both “fetus animatus” and “fetus inanimatus.” With this speech, Lamm intimated that even the popes of the past, the Vicars of Christ, disagreed on the morality of abortion.

In the twentieth century, though, the Catholic Church was relatively steadfast in its opposition to artificial contraception and abortion. Historically, church teaching argued that sex and marriage were only in the service of procreation.³⁸ Any interruption of procreation (besides abstinence), Pope Pius XI wrote in 1930, “was an offense against the law of God and of nature.” God was supposed to choose which sexual acts resulted in children and which did not. In 1951, Pope Pius XII made a small addendum, allowing Catholics to use the rhythm method, which permitted couples to try to avoid conception by tracking a woman’s fertile and infertile periods.³⁹ The Vatican II Council in 1965 made a slight modification to the church’s reasoning for

³⁷“Gynecology: New Grounds for Abortion,” *Time Magazine*, May 5, 1967. See also Garrow, *Liberty and Sexuality*, p. 323.

³⁸ This does not mean that theological consistency always translated into pastoral work. It was not until 1919 that American bishops issued their first letter opposing birth control. See Leslie Woodcock Tentler, “‘The Abominable Crime of Onan’: Catholic Pastoral Practice and Family Limitation in the United States, 1875-1919,” *Church History* 71, no. 2 (2002): 307-41.

³⁹ Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950-1985* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 166-67 (quote on p. 166). Allitt describes the Pope’s concession to allow the rhythm method as “a foot in the door for Catholic advocates for contraception. If human ingenuity could be used to prevent contraception with the aid of thermometers, charts and mucus tests (all of which were tools of ‘rhythm’ devotees), why not the pill?” (p. 166).

marriage, saying that it was about procreation *and* about the communion of two people in love. This opened a small theological window for pro-contraception Catholics who now had a holy justification for sex without procreation. The church tried to shut this window in 1968 with its *Humanae Vitae* encyclical, which reaffirmed the church's opposition to contraception.⁴⁰ But for many Catholics, Vatican II had changed and modernized the church too much to close that window fully.

Increasing numbers of Catholics openly disobeyed the church's prohibition. Catholic intellectuals and those working within Catholic institutions were less likely to dissent openly from the church's firm prohibition on abortion; the church, of course, maintained that life began at conception and abortion was murder.⁴¹ This does not mean that all priests, nuns, and Catholic laypeople followed the hierarchy's lead. In 1984, twenty-four nuns, two brothers, and two priests along with sixty-nine Catholic laymen put an ad in the *New York Times* opposing the Catholic Church's stance.⁴² In addition, many Catholic politicians took openly pro-choice

⁴⁰ In the *Humane Vitae* encyclical, Pope Paul VI wrote, "The moment has not come for man to entrust to his reason and will, rather than to the biological rhythms of his organism, the task of regulating birth." The Pope reaffirmed church orthodoxy, though 80 percent of his advisors recommended reform. Allitt, *Catholic Intellectuals*, p. 174. For more on Catholic laypeople supporting birth control reform within the church, see Leslie Woodcock Tentler, "Drifting Towards Irrelevance?: The Laity, Sexual Ethics, and the Future of the Church," *American Catholic Studies* 118, no. 2 (2007): 1-20.

⁴¹ The best example of a reform-minded, pro-life Catholic intellectual is Catholic law professor John T. Noonan, Jr., who wrote the most influential book for contraception reform but later became one of the most important Catholic pro-life intellectuals. For his book on contraception, see John T. Noonan, Jr., *Contraception: A History of Its Treatment by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists* (New York: Mentor Omega, 1965). For a sample of his pro-life writings, see John T. Noonan, Jr., *The Morality of Abortion: Legal and Historical Perspectives* (New York: Free Press, 1970) and *A Private Choice: Abortion in America in the Seventies* (Fort Collins, CO: Life Cycle Books, 1979).

⁴² The ad supported legalized abortion, opposed the church's punishment of pro-choice politicians, and called on the church to open up a dialogue about abortion. The church eventually demanded that the nuns, brothers, and priests retract their signatures or face dismissal. The men did, but the women never officially did. For this episode and more on Catholic pro-choice dissent, see Rosemary Skinner Keller, Rosemary Radford Ruether, and Marie Cantion, eds., *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*, vol. 3 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 1103-9.

stances and voted liberal abortion bills into law from the late 1960s onward. The strongest condemnation of the church's stance, though, was largely silent and came from almost every parish in the country. Beginning in the early 1970s, even before the *Roe v. Wade* decision, newspapers began running statistics showing that Catholics disproportionately got abortions compared to other religious people.⁴³ These Catholic women who choose to terminate their pregnancies were either denying the authority of the church hierarchy to interpret God's will or they were willing to risk divine punishment. As the church recommitted again and again to its prohibition on abortion and contraception, the Catholic community became increasingly divided over whether the church truly had a monopoly on religious truth.

Even if the Catholic Church's teaching was consistent in the twentieth century, Representative Lamm told Colorado audiences that those beliefs were wrong for Colorado, wrong for the nation, and wrong for the world.⁴⁴ He said the law would not force any Catholics to have abortions, but neither should their beliefs limit others. He also increasingly noted the problems Catholic belief posed for what he saw as an overpopulated world. Lamm was a part of a growing, if not new, group of Americans in the 1960s who saw impending doom in the world's increasing population and sought to limit reproduction at home and abroad in developing countries.⁴⁵ Overpopulation ravaged women's bodies and ruined children's lives, as "excessive

⁴³ In 1970, *Life* magazine noted that 20 percent of all abortions were had by Roman Catholics. See "Abortion Comes Out," *Life*, February 27, 1970. See also "Liberal Abortion Bill Killed by House," *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, February 24, 1972; Malcolm Potts, Peter Diggary, and John Peel, *Abortion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 119-21. An even larger number of Catholics disobeyed the Church's prohibition on artificial birth control. See Leslie Woodcock Tentler, *Catholics and Contraception: An American History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), esp. ch. 6.

⁴⁴ Curtis, "How Colorado Changed Its Abortion Law."

⁴⁵ Mathew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 115-236. Of course, those worried about

reproduction” bred poverty, and abject poverty led to communism and authoritarianism, Lamm claimed.⁴⁶ While much of his writings focused on the “Third World,” a Cold War term for poor, formerly colonized countries unaligned with the U.S. or the Soviet Union, Lamm also wrote that overpopulation would worsen the U.S. economy, increase juvenile delinquency, “exacerbate already dangerous race relations,” “augment urban congestion,” and “further subvert the traditional American government system.” Coloradoans should move away from religious edicts that demanded people “be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth,” Lamm wrote. Only with a broad population control campaign, including liberalized abortion laws, could the state slow the “collective tragedy” of overpopulation. His new dictum was “be fruitful, but multiply cautiously.”⁴⁷ Lamm contended that allowing Catholic belief to dictate American law would not only subvert the separation of church and state, it could also undermine democracy and capitalism in America.

If Representative Lamm was wrong about the connection between communism and “fruitful multiplying,” he was correct about the identity of the majority of his opponents.

overpopulation in the 1960s and 1970s were much less concerned than feminists with issues of consent and choice, and more concerned with the “public good.” This led to coercive sterilizations of and reproductive experiments on people, primarily women, of color in United States and around the world. In Colorado, Lamm, along with a Republican representative, introduced a measure to the Colorado House in 1971 that would encourage women on welfare to have fewer children. In their bill, welfare mothers would get fifty dollars every three months that they did not get pregnant after their first two children. While this was not strictly coercive (like the quiet forced sterilizations going on around the country), the bill was unconcerned with individual women’s desires and terribly concerned with limiting certain undesirable or burdensome groups from reproducing. See “Bonus for Welfare Mothers Who Stop at Two, Proposed,” *Colorado Springs Gazette*, February 17, 1971.

⁴⁶ Richard D. Lamm, “Act Now on Population Explosion, Legislator Warns,” November 19, 1967, reprinted in “Overpopulation: The Ultimate Environmental Problem” pamphlet, 1970, folder Colorado (1), box 1, National Abortion Rights Action League, Printed Materials Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (hereafter NARAL Printed Materials Collection).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Catholics did make up the backbone of the anti-abortion movement. Catholic priests and bishops had been the most outspoken opponents of abortion reform every place it was raised throughout the 1960s. In 1970, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops had organized National Right to Life. Though within the next three years the group transitioned into lay organization, it had been run by Catholic priests, with Catholic resources, and had a largely Catholic membership.⁴⁸

In Colorado in 1967, the only organized opposition to legalized abortion was a group called the Colorado Catholic Conference, a semi-official lobbying organization affiliated with the Catholic Church.⁴⁹ The Colorado Catholic Conference and many other anti-abortion Coloradoans were surprised when the 1967 bill quickly and easily passed through the House. Roused to action, the Colorado Catholic Conference sent appeals to all parishes in the area. The Sunday before the Senate vote, all Catholics in Denver heard a plea from the pulpit to write their legislators to oppose the abortion bill.⁵⁰ They also probably learned that there would be a public hearing where constituents could talk to legislators about the bill.⁵¹ So in practice, though many other religious people opposed abortion reform, Catholics churches were the first institutions to help rally their congregations for anti-abortion activism in the state.

Jolted by their priests and perhaps their consciences, hundreds came to the public hearing, packing the room and the hall outside. One reporter described the meeting that followed

⁴⁸ Kevin Kruse, "Beyond the Southern Cross: The National Origins of the Religious Right," in *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, ed. Mathew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 300-1.

⁴⁹ "Church Joins Abortion Debate," *Denver Post*, April 1, 1967. Colorado was not alone in the proposal of abortion liberalization bills. In 1967, there were laws proposed in twenty-three states. Still, Colorado anti-abortion activists were surprised by the success of their state bill.

⁵⁰ "Catholics Hear Plea Against Abortion," *Denver Post*, April 3, 1967.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*; "Abortion Hearing," *Denver Post*, April 2, 1967.

as “pugnacious, quarrelsome” and “ill-tempered.”⁵² The meeting was supposed to consist of 5-minute speeches, alternating between those who supported the bill and those who opposed it.⁵³ The crowd, which largely opposed the bill, gradually got more and more unruly, eventually shouting at the legislators. One pro-life audience member remembered that many of the legislators did not seem to be listening to the speakers opposing the bill, but instead spent their time reading literature supporting abortion reform.⁵⁴ After one state senator shouted back angrily at the crowd, the audience quieted a bit, enough to hear one of the more provocative speeches of the day.

Dr. Robert Stewart, a Denver gynecologist and former president of the Catholic Physicians Guild, approached the podium with a small suitcase in hand.⁵⁵ He spent his five minutes discussing German measles or rubella. German measles was a relatively harmless disease for an adult woman, but by the early 1960s, many Americans knew that it could cause miscarriages, infant deaths, and many serious birth defects, including severe mental disability. At the time of this public hearing, the United States was at the tail end of a full-blown rubella epidemic, the largest in recent memory.⁵⁶ After reading newspaper accounts with accompanying graphic pictures, many Americans felt compelled by the tragedy of children born without arms,

⁵² Tom Gavin, “Crowd Jeers Bill to Revise Abortion Law,” *Denver Post*, April 4, 1967.

⁵³ Interview with Mary Rita Urbish, August 8, 2011.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ For Stewart’s profession and professional ties, see Mike Nolan, “Colorado Shuns Future as Mecca for Abortions,” *The Daily News* (Huntingdon and Mount Union, PA), May 2, 1967.

⁵⁶ Reagan, *Dangerous Pregnancies*, p. 57. This epidemic, much more so than all those previous, gained national attention. Historian Leslie Reagan argues that this was because the epidemic had followed closely on “the thalidomide tragedy.” In the early 1960s, thalidomide, a sleeping pill legalized and sold largely in West Germany and Great Britain, had caused massive birth defects in Europe. Americans watched from afar as American newspapers published pictures of deformed “thalidomide babies.”

legs or fully working heart, unable to see, hear, sit up, walk or touch. Children of German measles often had a number of these afflictions, combined with mental impairments. For the worst cases, many doctors saw death as “merciful.”⁵⁷ During this outbreak in the 1960s, about 30,000 babies were born dead or quickly died after birth, and another 20,000 had major abnormalities.⁵⁸ The heartbreak of these families captured the imaginations and parental fears of many Americans. The power of the German measles concern was that everyone interested in child-bearing, even the most privileged, felt susceptible, as the disease seemed to have no economic or racial boundaries. Those concerned with mentally disabled children, perhaps motivated by this epidemic, had been some of the first advocates of abortion reform in Colorado. A 1965 report by a state task force on mental disability recommended liberalizing the state’s abortion law to include situations where the child had a “high probability” of being “mentally retarded.”⁵⁹

In the heat of the early abortion debate in Colorado, Stewart took up this exact issue. He conceded that German measles could result in personal catastrophe. But he argued that of all the pregnant women with German measles, only one in six fetuses (or 16.7 percent) came out deformed. Why murder six for the sake of one tragic life, he suggested? In fact, a preeminent rubella researcher put the rate of congenital abnormalities at approximately 74.4 percent if the disease was contracted in the first four months of pregnancy, and from 11.1 to 29.9 percent if

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 47.

⁵⁸ Sara DuBow, *Ourselves Unborn: The History of the Fetus in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 65.

⁵⁹ Moran, “Changes Urged in Colorado’s Abortion Laws.” The task force also advocated for “comprehensive maternal and infant care, testing of mothers and babies and supervision and education for persons with mental problems.”

contracted in the last five months.⁶⁰ So Stewart vastly underestimated the effects of rubella, but more important, his statements displayed a very different moral understanding of the disease than most American audiences held at the time. Abortion reformers, and the birth control advocates who preceded them, argued that the promotion of “life” was not the highest goal but rather the “quality of life.” Or, as one abortion liberalization advocate wrote to the *Denver Post*, “The political state has no right to give aid to this ungodly promotion of quantity without regard to quality.”⁶¹

Stewart rejected this calculation. He rejected quality of life arguments (as would all pro-life activists after him) and he also disagreed that German measles threatened the American family. He said that the majority of pregnant women with German measles were not at risk. Of course, a few women would have babies with abnormalities, but these dangers should not be extrapolated to all. Stewart suggested the German measles hysteria was robbing five of six infected women of their healthy babies. The disease did not fundamentally undermine the dream of a middle-class white woman’s easy reproduction and it did not undermine the white American family, he implied. Abortion, rather than disease, interrupted the “natural” creation of ideal American families. Abortion was the true tragedy.

Stewart spent his allotted five minutes on this issue and then asked the senators for more speaking time. When they refused, the doctor opened his small briefcase and said, as one observer remembered, “Let’s see what we’re doing here.”⁶² On the senators’ desk, he placed two jars with preserved fetuses, supposedly at about ten weeks gestation. (Figure 2.) The same

⁶⁰ Reagan, *Dangerous Pregnancies*, pp. 45-6. The researcher, Dr. Charles Swan, was awarded a major prize by the British Medical Association for his work in 1949.

⁶¹ Hal Hall, letter to the editor, “Right to Be Born,” *Denver Post*, April 5, 1967.

⁶² Urbish interview.

observer recalled that the audience seemed stunned by the doctor's display and the chairman of the committee "came unglued." The observer, Mary Rita Urbish, would go on to become one of the most influential pro-life activists in the state. She remembered this moment as a turning point for her, moving her to tears almost forty-five years later: "I was mad because of... the reaction of the members of a legislative hearing committee over a real baby, a real human being. It affected me. I can see it to this day. God bless Robert Stewart."⁶³ For Urbish, these fetuses were the perfect rebuttal to the day's hearings.



Figure 2. Tom Gavin, "Crowd Jeers Bill to Revise Abortion Law," *Denver Post*, April 4, 1967.

While the preserved fetuses caused quite a stir at the hearing that day, many Americans were probably familiar with the sight of fetal bodies. Since the early twentieth century, preserved fetuses were common teaching tools in college science classrooms, medical schools,

⁶³ Ibid.

and scientific laboratories. Both teachers and scientists used normal and abnormal specimens to demonstrate and examine the process of human development.⁶⁴ Rather than anatomical models, fetuses either miscarried or aborted were passed around classrooms and displayed at museums.⁶⁵ They were evidence of a hidden process of “natural” reproduction.

But also, preserved fetuses were a part of an American obsession with the grotesque. In the first half of the twentieth century, preserved fetuses, especially abnormal ones, were common sideshow, fair, and museum spectacles. Exhibits of “the world’s strangest babies” titillated audiences with sensational congenital deformities. Sideshows connected these fetuses to bad behavior; abnormal fetuses were the physical punishments for premarital sex, drug use, and incest.⁶⁶ Such fetuses titillated and scared viewers. They reassured audiences of their own normality while threatening them with gestational retribution for secret sins. Preserved fetuses did not have to be abnormal to disturb viewers. The formaldehyde in which they were suspended and their shape made many viewers uncomfortable.⁶⁷ Thus, fetal bodies did not affect everyone the same way. They were not beautiful to everyone and they were not evidence of “life” to everyone.

Nonetheless, Robert Stewart used these preserved fetuses to make a very specific claim about abortion and about 1960s politics. He, like many anti-abortion activists after him, used

⁶⁴ DuBow, *Ourselves Unborn*, p. 43.

⁶⁵ Of course, this is in addition to the many women who more intimately viewed their miscarried or aborted fetuses. For a historical analysis of women’s experiences with miscarriage, see Shannon K. Withycombe, “Slipped Away: Pregnancy Loss in Nineteenth-Century America” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2010).

⁶⁶ Christine Quigley, *Modern Mummies: The Preservation of the Human Body in the Twentieth Century* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1998), p. 127.

⁶⁷ Lynn Marie Morgan, *Icons of Life: A Cultural History of Human Embryos* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

fetal bodies to argue that modern politics and modern science ignored the truths that science had proven long ago. Many later pro-life activists spoke of the preserved fetuses they saw in their classrooms growing up as evidence of the “natural” logic of their anti-abortion stance. They claimed that in the past, people had access to preserved fetuses, which clearly showed that fetuses “were babies.” They were the easy, self-evident teaching tools of the science of the past. To counter Lamm’s and others’ insistence that opposition was a simple Catholic belief, early pro-life activists argued that it was *science* (old, “true” science) that proved fetuses were human beings from conception, and thus deserving of the right to life that born humans have.

With the evidence of “old science,” the fetal body could unify Americans and a broader human community. Activists like Robert Stewart saw the fetus and its subjectivity as pre-social and transcendental, and its body was proof. They imagined a universalized personhood, a totalizing human story that began at conception and ended in death. In this universalized human story, differences and any discussion of social context were just a distraction or worse a rationalization. White activists generated this universal story—with the fetal body at its core—at the moment in American history when universalized truths were being most contested, first and foremost by social justice movements. In 1967 in Colorado, conservative activists worked to set the terms of debate around the fetal body and universalized personhood, an entity put at risk by activists, doctors, and governments who were paying attention to social context and social difference.

Once the hearing concluded, some opponents of the bill started forming Colorado’s first right to life group. The group was made up entirely of white Coloradoans, with women making up the majority. In this organization, it was not the group’s whiteness but their Catholic-ness that activists worried about. Early anti-abortion activists vocally denied that there was anything

distinctly Catholic about their movement. This was not particularly easy because reporters covering anti-abortion activities regularly asked attendees if they were Catholic. At one of the first anti-abortion protests, reporters claimed that most participants were Roman Catholic and asked at least one woman if this was a “Catholic movement.” Protestors pushed back against the characterization, carrying signs saying “Protestants against Abortion” and insisting that the movement was “primarily ... Protestant.”⁶⁸ At a later protest, when reporters asked protestors’ religious affiliation, almost all “refused to disclose their religion.”⁶⁹ In these shifting claims to Protestant, ecumenical, or even secular identities, activists maintained they represented a broader Colorado community or the mainstream, a status denied them if they were “just Catholics.” During the 1967 protests, Reverend Frank Freeman of St. James Catholic Church asked rhetorically in a letter to the editor, “Could this bill have been enacted without the contrivance of religious bigotry?”⁷⁰ The persistent focus of reporters on the Catholic character of the movement was probably born of residual anti-Catholicism and also a growing belief that religion should not influence public policy. And this posed an interesting problem for nascent pro-life activists: should they deny the role of religion in their movement or reinterpret the role of religion in society? In 1967, they focused on the former. But over the course of the decade, they expanded their vision to embrace the latter.

In 1967, pro-life activists in Colorado emphasized medical, scientific, and sociological arguments over religious ones. The name of their organization reflected this: the Colorado Joint Council on Medical and Social Legislation. One of their first pamphlets contained a graph

⁶⁸ Greg Pinney, “Women Stage Brief Anti-Abortion Protest,” *Denver Post*, April 6, 1967.

⁶⁹ “5 Women, 2 Children Picket at Mansion,” *Denver Post*, April 10, 1967.

⁷⁰ Rev. Frank Freeman, St. James Catholic Church, letter to the editor, *Denver Post*, April 12, 1967.

showing increasing abortions in Colorado alongside pledges to “preserv[e] and enhanc[e] the dignity of the individual person” and “to disseminate the most advanced scientific knowledge to help eliminate and treat the basic causes underlying the above problems.”⁷¹ Though the bulk of the group’s members and constituency were women, professional men occupied two of the three leadership positions. Mary Rita Urbish had initially been president but she explained that she was a “a housewife who knows how to make bread from scratch, but d[id]n’t know how to conduct a meeting or an interview” and so she called a lawyer she knew to represent the group.⁷² Having professional men at the helm helped give the group more social authority, than if they had been “just” housewives or all Catholics. In the group’s early promotional material and in their public presentations, the members of the Colorado Joint Council on Medical and Social Legislation portrayed themselves more like sociologists or biologists than activists or moralists.

As sociologists or biologists, they could expose the “distortions” of modern science in a way people of faith could not. Within the next few years, pro-life activists would sideline the sociological and scientific formality of these early groups and reengage the question of religion in society. But throughout the rest of the century, activists retained the core argument pioneered in these early years: modern scientists and social scientists had undermined “true science” out of a blind adherence to feminist, environmental, or just liberal ideology. One of the most important and longstanding claims in this vein was that modern scientists—and specifically Alan Guttmacher, preeminent obstetrician and gynecologist and former president of Planned Parenthood—had changed the language of reproduction. They argued Guttmacher (or an amorphous pro-choice intelligentsia) had created the word “fetus” to take the place of the

⁷¹ Colorado Joint Council on Medical and Social Legislation, “Abortion in Colorado” pamphlet, 1968 or 69, Laws, Abortion, 1960-1969 Clippings File, Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library, Denver, CO.

⁷² Urbish interview.

“unborn” or just “baby.” Activists from the late 1960s onward claimed that this was the first step in scientific dehumanization. One Arizona pro-life activist, Philip Seader, saw the most nefarious of motivations in this linguistic shift: “you know, we’re having a problem with abortion ‘cause babies are cute, babies is a cute sound. So [Guttmacher] said, ‘We’re going to have to stop calling ‘em babies if we want to kill ‘em.’ He said, ‘We’re going to call them fetuses.’”⁷³ For pro-life activists, modern doctors and social scientists had pulled the linguistic wool over the eyes of the American public.

While the official channels of Colorado’s pro-life movement did not talk about racism in 1967, at least one remembered its presence in hindsight. Mary Rita Urbish recalled that some days after the Senate hearing, activists—“a bunch of women in their silk hose and high heels”—marched around the capitol in protest. She recalled one encounter with a reporter at the event:

[He asked] what would I do if my daughter were raped by a big black nigger? This was of course much before politically correct speech was imposed upon us and he said it the way he thought about it. And I was so mad. I was banging my hand on the hood of a car.... I wouldn’t kill anybody. And by that time I was just so mad, I’ve never stopped being mad.⁷⁴

In this recollection, Urbish placed racism at the heart of the abortion liberalization movement. She envisioned herself and her pro-life compatriots as anti-racists, unwilling to kill. But she also more subtly aligned herself with this racist white reporter by mourning the time before “politically correct speech was imposed on us.” Even in the whitewash of memory, this was clearly an “anti-racism” made for white conservatives.

At least in 1967, the pro-life movement’s arguments found little traction among Colorado’s legislators, because the law passed easily, with sizeable majorities in both houses of Colorado’s legislature, with support from Democrats and Republicans and from rural and urban

⁷³ Interview with Phil and Helen Seader, March 18, 2010.

⁷⁴ Urbish interview.

legislators.⁷⁵ In the end, Lamm claimed that the day had been won for liberalized abortion using less than one hundred dollars in promotion money.⁷⁶ Concerns about Colorado becoming an abortion mecca or fears of legalizing murder did not stop the legislature from passing the law or Colorado Governor John Love from signing it.⁷⁷ So as the law relaxed its strictures on abortion, Governor Love asked those doctors and psychologists helping women access legal abortions to remain vigilant not for attacks on the integrity of “life” but, in the words of one reporter, for the “flood of gals to the abortion mecca of the world.”⁷⁸

Coloradoans would never see that “flood of gals”—strict enforcement meant that few Coloradoans, let alone those from out-of-state, could get abortions there—but important seeds had been sown for the pro-life movement. Many Americans in Colorado and elsewhere over the next forty years would encounter preserved fetuses outside abortion clinics, in crisis pregnancy centers, in churches, or in the news. They became common, if grisly, trade in pro-life arguments. But even more common were the scientific arguments the fetuses represented. “True science” affirmed that life began at conception; and certain bodily features (eyes, legs, toes) were the logical components that defined the human community.

⁷⁵ Interestingly, within a year, accounts of the debate would describe it inaccurately as “the most acrimonious debate that has bounced off the old marble walls in many years.” Perhaps this is evidence of the quick escalation and influence of the pro-life movement. See Kelly, “No ‘Mecca’ for Abortion in Colorado.” For the majority vote, see Garrow, *Liberty and Sexuality*, pp. 323-4.

⁷⁶ Gordon G. Gauss, “Changes Noted in Attitude about Abortion,” *Colorado Springs Gazette*, April 10, 1967.

⁷⁷ Olga Curtis, “How Many Abortions Are Too Many,” *Denver Post* (Empire Magazine), January 18, 1970.

⁷⁸ “Rush Seen: Abortions in Colorado,” *Hartford Courant* (CT), April 30, 1967.

Utah, 1973

As abortion reform swept the country in the late 1960s and early 1970s, pro-life activists expanded the terms of their debate. In 1967, they had begun to flesh out the icons and the biological narratives of their political imaginary. But in the late 1960s and early 1970s, they started to develop a historical and social cautionary tale about the hazards of restricting the boundaries of “humanity.” Here activists attempted to place themselves within a historical genealogy that included heroic abolitionists and Nazi fighters. At the heart of this genealogy were graphic photos, which activists used to create visual connections between abortion and historical violence. But even as anti-abortion activists claimed rhetorical solidarity with justice campaigns of the past, they claimed that gender and race were not legitimate or primary oppressions of society. The only true oppression was that enacted on the de-gendered, de-racialized fetus.

Of course, many more people joined the pro-life movement after January 1973, when the Supreme Court handed down the *Roe v. Wade* decision, ruling that state laws criminalizing abortion were unconstitutional.⁷⁹ The court decided that a woman in her first trimester of pregnancy (up to three months) had the right to terminate her pregnancy. In the second trimester (three to six months), the state could regulate abortion in ways that were reasonable to maternal

⁷⁹ In *Roe v. Wade*, Supreme Court justices ruled that state abortion bans were unconstitutional because they violated a woman’s right to privacy. *Griswold v. Connecticut*, the 1965 Supreme Court case that overturned state laws prohibiting the use of contraceptives, had been the first case to rule officially that the Constitution protected the right to privacy. This right, the justices contended, was implied in the Bill of Rights and applied to the states through the Due Process clause of the 14th Amendment. In *Roe*, however, this right was not absolute. The justices contended that it must be balanced by the state’s interest in promoting public health, which increased over the course of the pregnancy, leading to the trimester-based decision. See Marc Stein, *Sexual Injustice: Supreme Court Rulings from Griswold to Roe* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), pp. 50-51. For much longer discussions on the evolution of this decision, see Garrow, *Liberty and Sexuality*; Linda Greenhouse, *Becoming Justice Blackmun: Harry Blackmun’s Supreme Court Journey* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005); Linda Greenhouse and Reva Seigel, eds., *Before Roe v. Wade: The Voices that Shaped the Abortion Debate Supreme Court’s Ruling* (New York: Kaplan Publishing, 2010).

health. After six months, the court considered the fetus viable, which meant it could live outside the womb. The court decided that, at this point, states could prohibit abortion unless it was necessary to save the woman's life. No longer would the abortion debate be confined to left-leaning states.⁸⁰ Forty-six states had to revise their existing abortion laws.⁸¹

Legal abortion even came to states where some residents thought they would never see a liberalized abortion law. One such place was Utah, a state already wrestling with social change and modernization. Of course, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had long dominated social and political life in Utah, leading one modern Utah historian to call the state a "democratic theocracy," a political system dominated by the church but one that had to incorporate "non-Mormon power structures."⁸² In the early 1970s, the LDS Church was transitioning towards a global, modern church; the increased interest in international conversion had begun in the 1950s, but in the 1970s, the church sent more and more missionaries abroad and opened more temples. In 1951, the church's members numbered only a little more than 1 million concentrated in the American West; by the early 1980s, the international church alone numbered 1.5 million.⁸³

⁸⁰ In early 1967, North Carolina, Colorado, and California reformed their abortion laws. In the next two years, pro-choice efforts shifted from reform to repeal. By 1973, a third of American states had reformed or repealed their abortion laws. New York and California, which both repealed abortion laws and allowed non-residents to access their abortion services, became destinations for women from around the country who needed to terminate their pregnancies.

⁸¹ Garrow, *Liberty and Sexuality*, p. 598.

⁸² D. Michael Quinn, "Exporting Utah's Theocracy since 1975: Mormon Organizational Behavior and America's Culture Wars," in *God and Country: Politics in Utah*, ed. Jeffrey E. Sells (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005), pp. 129-68 (quote on p. 130).

⁸³ Robert Gottlieb and Peter Wiley, *America's Saints: The Rise of Mormon Power* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1984), p. 130. For more on the international church, see pp. 129-56.

As the church expanded, it confronted growing pains especially around issues of black men's access to the priesthood and the role of women in the church. Though the church eventually solved its priesthood problem in a 1978 revelation by the church's prophet allowing black men to participate fully, the church continued to wrestle with women's roles throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In 1972, when the proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the U.S. Constitution was sent to the states for consideration, Mormons began a decade-long, acrimonious debate over whether the Mormon tradition sanctioned equality for women or a "special," different place for women in families and in society. Was feminism indigenous to Mormons or an outside influence from "eastern" radicals?⁸⁴ For many Utahns, *Roe v. Wade* provided strong evidence of the latter argument. In fact, the Supreme Court decision likely had an immediate effect on feminist politics in Utah; Utah's House had a vote on the ERA the day after *Roe*, and even though a phone survey had shown strong support for the amendment not long before, the ERA went down in a major defeat.⁸⁵

Utah still had its abortion statutes from the late nineteenth century, and there had been little pro-choice or abortion reform presence in the state before the Supreme Court decision. In the days and months after the *Roe* decision, many Utahns expressed their outrage. They called

⁸⁴ For the ERA debate in Utah, see Jennifer L. Holland, "Salt Lake City is Our Selma: The Equal Rights Amendment and the Transformation of the Politics of Gender in Utah" (MA thesis, Utah State University, 2005); Martha Sonntag Bradley, *Pedestals and Podiums: Utah Women, Religious Authority, and Equal Rights* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 2005); D. Michael Quinn, "The LDS Church's Campaign Against the Equal Rights Amendment," *Journal of Mormon History* 20 (Fall 1994): 85-155, and "Exporting Utah's Theocracy since 1975," pp. 129-68; Gottlieb and Wiley, "The Priesthood and the Black Widow Spider: Women and the Church," in *America's Saints*, pp. 187-213.

⁸⁵ For survey, see Survey of Utah House and Senate members on the ERA, 1972-3, folder 2, box 4, Equal Rights Coalition of Utah, ca. 1970-1979 Collection, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, UT (hereafter ERCU Collection). For House vote and turnaround, see Common Cause, "Why the ERA Failed in Utah in 1973 And How It Can Succeed in 1975," folder 10, box 4, ERCU Collection; Clark Lobb, "Utah House Defeats Rights Bill," *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 25, 1973.

the ruling “legaliz[ed] murder” and “a vote against God.”⁸⁶ Some asked their legislators to pass an amendment to the U.S. Constitution banning abortion.⁸⁷ Most demanded their legislators use an obscure clause in the Constitution to overrule the Supreme Court.⁸⁸ A few maintained that regulating morality was a state’s right.⁸⁹ But the majority insisted that legalized abortion was a national tragedy.⁹⁰

Small right to life groups immediately formed to oppose the decision and their most potent tools were pictures. In March 1973, the Utah Right to Life League bought a full-page ad in the *Salt Lake Tribune*. (Figure 3.) The main attraction in this ad was a large photograph of a fetus supposedly at twenty weeks gestation. The headline read, “Do You Want Unrestricted

⁸⁶ Nancy Sluder to Rep. Owens, January 23, 1973, folder 10, box 23, Wayne Owens Papers, J. Willard Marriott Library Archives, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT (hereafter Owens Papers); and Mr. and Mrs. Albert Christian to Rep. Wayne Owens, February 14, 1973, folder 12, box 23, Owens Papers.

⁸⁷ Richard K. Jones to Congressman Owens, March 6, 1973, folder 12, box 23, Owens Papers; Clifford Allen Stephens, Jr., to Mr. Owens, February 12, 1973, folder 10, box 23, Owens Papers.

⁸⁸ The Utah Anti-Abortion League argued that Article III, Section II of the Constitution allowed Congress to restrict the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. See Freeman Institute, “Let States Decide,” *Rights of the Unborn*, April 1973. This was the most popular argument taken up by Utahns in the first year after the *Roe* decision. See Joan E. Christensen to Wayne Owens, April 4, 1973, folder 13, box 23, Owens Papers; “Petition to Congress Concerning Abortion,” undated, received May 29, 1973, folder 16, box 23, Owens Papers; Mrs. Hilda Wilson to Sir, May 30, 1973, folder 16, box 23, Owens Papers; Charles E. Fournier to Congressman, undated, received October 1, 1975, folder 3, box 36, Allan Turner Howe Collection, J. Willard Marriott Library Archives, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT (hereafter Howe Collection); Mr. and Mrs. Garth Pratt (City Councilman-Stake Presidency) to Rep. Wayne Owens, April 23, 1973, folder 15, box 23, Owens Papers.

⁸⁹ See, for example, Mrs. Dorthella Baker and Richard D. Baker, April 22, 1973, folder 12, box 23, Owens Papers; Ruth F. Stewart to Mr. Owens, April 3, 1973, folder 14, box 23, Owens Papers; Mrs. Robert S. Grover to Sir, May 6, 1973, folder 15, box 23, Owens Papers.

⁹⁰ See, for example, E.B. Carter to Honorable Wayne Owens, March 1, 1973, folder 12, box 23, Owens Papers; Mr. and Mrs. Albert Christian to Rep. Wayne Owens, February 14, 1973, folder 12, box 23, Owens Papers; Mrs. John Lyman to Wayne Owens, no date (probably Spring 1973), folder 12, box 23, Owens Papers; Laura G. Hendrick to Sirs, March 1, 1973, folder 12, box 23, Owens Papers; Gerald E. Dolan to Representative Wayne Owens, July 29, 1973, folder 17, box 23, Owens Papers.

Abortion at This Stage?” Another stylized image of a fetus at the bottom of the page had the caption, “Stop Abortion. I’m too young to die.”⁹¹ Though the ad also featured text discussing the history of abortion law, the linchpin was the photo. It was the referent in the title. It asked implicitly, doesn’t this body look close enough to a born baby’s? And then the fetus at the bottom of the page “responded,” asking not to be murdered. A local pro-choice lawyer, at the forefront of implementing the *Roe* decision in the state, said most of the letters he received were in response to this full-page ad.⁹²

⁹¹ Utah Right to Life League, “Do You Want Unrestricted Abortion at This Stage?” ad, *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 4, 1973.

⁹² David S. Dolowitz to Wayne Owens, March 26, 1973, folder 13, box 23, Owens Papers.

DO YOU WANT UNRESTRICTED ABORTION? AT THIS STAGE? EVEN TO BIRTH?

THE ABORTION DECISION OF THE U.S. SUPREME COURT SAYS THAT THIS UNBORN CHILD CANNOT BE PROTECTED BY LAW AND CAN BE DESTROYED AT THE WILL OF THE MOTHER AND HER DOCTOR.

WHAT THE COURT DECISION REQUIRES:

For the first three months of pregnancy "the abortion decision and its effectuation must be left to the medical judgment of the pregnant woman's attending physician."

"For 'approximately' the second three months of pregnancy, 'the State, in promoting its interest in the health of the mother, may, if it chooses regulate the abortion procedure in ways that are reasonably related to maternal health.'"

For the stage subsequent to viability (when the fetus may be able to survive outside the mother's body) "The State, in promoting its interest in the potentiality of human life, may, if it chooses, regulate, and even proscribe, abortion except where necessary, in appropriate medical judgment, for the preservation of the life or health of the mother." (emphasis added)

Note that the court does not prohibit abortion in the last 3 months.

BUT, MANY PEOPLE AGREE — INSTEAD — WITH THE DISSENTING OPINION OF JUSTICES WHITE AND REHNQUIST, WHICH SAYS, IN PART:

"At the heart of the controversy in these cases are those recurring pregnancies that pose no danger whatsoever

to the life or health of the mother but are nevertheless unwanted for any one or more of a variety of reasons — convenience, family planning, economics, dislike of children, the embarrassment of illegitimacy, etc. The common claim before us is that for any one of such reasons, or for no reason at all, and without asserting or claiming any threat to life or health, any woman is entitled to an abortion at her request if she is able to find a medical advisor willing to undertake the procedure.

"The Court for the most part sustains this position . . . With all due respect, I dissent. I find nothing in the language or history of the Constitution to support the Court's judgment. The Court simply fashions and announces a new constitutional right for pregnant mothers and, with scarcely any reason or authority for its action, invests that right with sufficient substance to override most existing state abortion statutes. The upshot is that the people and the legislatures of the 50 states are constitutionally disentitled to weigh the relative importance of the continued existence and development of the fetus on the one hand against a spectrum of possible impacts on the mother on the other hand." (emphasis added)



ACTUAL SIZE, UNBORN BABY
AGE: 20 WEEKS

THE COURT HAS BRUSHED ASIDE THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE!

Medical science established more than a century ago that there is no essential difference between the embryo of two months and the soon-to-be-born baby of six or seven months. Since that time, protection for the life of the unborn child at all stages of development has been part of American law — a reflection of the American will.

- Two thirds of the states have, in recent years, reviewed their abortion statutes and have refused to liberalize them.
- The people of Michigan and North Dakota turned down proposals to relax their abortion laws by overwhelming margins of 2 to 1 and 3 to 1 in statewide referenda last November.
- The Utah House of Representatives voted 66 to 0 last month and the Utah Senate 25 to 11 for a joint resolution asking "that the Congress of the U.S. take without delay such action as necessary, including a Constitutional amendment if needed, to preserve the right to life of unborn children and to forestall wholesale life-taking abortions that could result from the Court decision."
- The Utah Senate is considering a bill to place the upmost restrictions possible on abortion in Utah.

NOW THE PEOPLE, TOO, MUST SPEAK UP FOR THOSE WHO CAN NOT CRY OUT! WHAT CAN YOU DO TODAY!

Join the "Utah Right To Life League," a new volunteer, nonprofit pro-life organization working with other concerned citizens in a nationwide campaign for Congressional action to block a wave of life-taking abortions that could result from the court decision. There is evidence the wave is forming even here and now. You can also:

- Contact your Utah congressional delegation TODAY by mail, telephone or wire and urge immediate action, including the Constitutional amendment if necessary.
- Call or write your Utah state legislators THIS WEEK and express your deep concern in favor of laws that will protect as much as possible the lives of unborn children in our state.
- Write the League for free factual information on this vital subject; help save the unborn by becoming better acquainted with the facts of life before birth.
- Contribute whatever you can NOW in support of this important movement.

Complete and mail TODAY the membership form printed below.



STOP ABORTION
I'M TOO YOUNG TO DIE!

Figure 3. Utah Right to Life League, "Do You Want Unrestricted Abortion at This Stage?" ad, *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 4, 1973.

Imagery of this “victim” quickly became more graphic and more ubiquitous. The picture published in the *Salt Lake Tribune* had been relatively sterile; its origin is unclear, but it might have been a manipulation of an in-utero photograph. Though the fetus was separated from the woman, it bore no other visible signs of miscarriage or abortion. But very quickly, photos of aborted fetuses, bloody and dismembered, took center stage in Utah and around the country. Most of these came from one essential publication: John and Barbara Willke’s *Handbook on Abortion*.⁹³ Some would come to call this the “bible of the anti-abortion movement.”⁹⁴

John and Barbara Willke were a couple from Cincinnati, Ohio; he was a family practice doctor and she, a nurse. Journalist Cynthia Gorney describes Barbara Willke as “caring,” “small and vigorous,” while John Willke had “an air of collected certainty” and a precise and smooth voice “that made some of his debate opponents feel as though they had been patted on the head and sent to their rooms.”⁹⁵ By Barbara Willke’s account, the two began offering pre-marriage and marriage classes in their local Catholic church in the early 1960s, which expanded to lectures and books on sex education, and, finally, abortion.⁹⁶ In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Willkes became convinced that pictures were going to be their greatest tool in the fight against legalized abortion. So they went about collecting images from sympathetic doctors and

⁹³ Dr. and Mrs. J.C. Willke, *Handbook on Abortion* (Cincinnati, OH: Hiltz Publishing Co., 1972).

⁹⁴ “‘Baby Doe’ Dominates Convention,” *Tyrone Daily Herald* (PA), April 19, 1982; Marie Costa, *Abortion: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1996), p. 23; Deal W. Hudson, *Onward Christian Soldiers: The Growing Political Power of Catholics and Evangelicals in the United States* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2008), p. 139. Some Right to Life groups also bought exhibits of these photos from Cincinnati Right to Life, the Willkes’ home pro-life group. See, for example, Arizona Lifeline, February-March 1972, University of Arizona Library Special Collections, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

⁹⁵ Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, p. 100.

⁹⁶ Lisa Cornwell, “Retirement Won’t Slow Down Anti-Abortion Leader’s Struggle,” *Daily Sentinel* (Pomeroy and Middleport, OH), April 21, 1999.

pathologists around the country.⁹⁷ At first they only put four pictures in the *Handbook*. But as John Willke recounted, the book “went like wildfire because there was nothing out there.”⁹⁸ Between the *Handbook* and the other pro-life material he distributed through his publishing company (Hayes Publishing), John Willke generated some of the most important teaching aids of the pro-life movement. Or, as literary scholar Carol Stabile contends, Willke “put the fetus on the cultural map.”⁹⁹

The Willkes claimed that newspapers and magazines had publicized pro-choice arguments and “dismissed” opponents. Their handbook was to “present the other side,” answering each pro-choice argument with a concise pro-life answer. The answers used the language of science, medicine, and sociology, rather than religion, because, as the Willkes wrote, “we hope to present the facts in a way that can influence our pluralistic society.” This 150-page book, first published in 1971, translated an assortment of pro-life arguments generated by activists all over the country into a single, easily consumable political tract. The Willkes had high hopes for their book. “With this in his pocket or her purse may the legislator, doctor, clergyman, concerned layman, woman’s activist, and all who value human life make their voices heard,” they wrote.¹⁰⁰ While the Willkes’ words would become the theoretical backbone of the movement, their use of pictures would be their most profound legacy. Though activists would go on to refine or even openly disagree with the arguments and tactics set out in the *Handbook*,

⁹⁷ Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, pp. 100-5.

⁹⁸ Quoted in Hudson, *Onward Christian Soldiers*, p. 139.

⁹⁹ Carol A. Stabile, “The Traffic in Fetuses,” in *Fetal Subjects, Feminist Positions*, ed. Meredith M. Michaels and Lynn M. Morgan (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 133-59 (quote on p. 145).

¹⁰⁰ Willke, *Handbook on Abortion*, pp. iv-v.

the pictures remained a consistent, if not uncontested, presence in almost all corners of the movement.

In the early 1970s, the Willkes took their show on the road, visiting seventy cities in 1972 alone trying to convince people that abortion was murder.¹⁰¹ And they came repeatedly to Utah.¹⁰² Their presentation included a slide show of graphic photos and often a short video of an abortion. The video had been made for an alternative, probably medical, use, but the Willkes silenced the original soundtrack and supplied their own pro-life voiceover. Once people viewed the pictures, Barbara Willke said, “those who ask the question ‘who’ is being killed make a 180-turn from the usual ‘what.’”¹⁰³

The Willkes had an interested audience almost everywhere they went, but their reception in Utah is especially instructive. Based on the demography of the state, and on their presence at LDS Church events and at Brigham Young University, it is fair to assume that much of their audience was Mormon. The Willkes politicized many during their time in Utah, convincing them that abortion was murder. The First Presidency of the LDS Church, which include the church’s president and his top two counselors, had issued a statement on abortion that year calling abortion “one of the most revolting and sinful practices of the day,” though allowable when the woman’s health was at risk or in cases of rape. The sin of abortion was not, they

¹⁰¹ “Speakers Listed: Clergy Lunch on Schedule,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 29, 1973. Constitutional lawyer and law professor Laurence Tribe credited the Willkes’ pictures (in brochure form) with helping defeat liberalization referendums in Michigan and North Dakota in 1972. See Laurence H. Tribe, *Abortion: A Clash of Absolutes* (New York: Norton, 1992), p. 50.

¹⁰² Barbara Springer, “Family Physicians Meet in S.L., Hear Discussions on Abortion, Sex Education,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 18, 1972; “Anti-Abortion Speeches Set,” *Provo Herald*, October 7, 1973; “Topic of Abortion Sparks Inquiries,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 10, 1973; “Session to Air ‘Right to Life,’” *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 19, 1974.

¹⁰³ “Topic of Abortion Sparks Inquiries,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 10, 1973.

clarified, on par with the unpardonable sin of murder of an innocent person. A pro-choice Utahn pointed this exact issue out to her congressman: “Are you familiar with... the Mormon practice of doing no temple work [sacraments done for the dead] for full term children born still-born? According to Mormonism, the spirit enters the body of the child at birth.”¹⁰⁴ This Utahn pointed out that core Mormon practices demonstrated that those who died in the womb were to be treated differently, because they did not yet have a soul, than those who died after birth.¹⁰⁵ The church did treat abortion differently than murder.

So when Mormon Utahns claimed that abortion was murder, they willfully or naively disagreed with church teaching. In fact, a sociologist in the 1980s found that 61 percent of the Mormons he interviewed believed abortion was a form of murder and 53 percent believed the soul entered the body at conception.¹⁰⁶ This sociologist explained the divergence between official doctrine and public opinion as a remnant of Mormon folk-belief. It is just as likely, however, that many Mormons were compelled by non-Mormon pro-life activists. In the space between the church’s condemnation and the Willkes’ murder argument, many Mormons in Utah chose the more stringent “Catholic” stance on abortion.

For many Utahns, seeing the Willkes’ presentation was all the evidence they needed that abortion was murder. Margaret Fitzgerald wrote to her congressman that “after attending another Right to Life rally, I am more convinced than ever that the Supreme Court made a

¹⁰⁴ Ms. Lee Anne Walker to Congressman Howe, April 12, 1975, folder 1, box 19, Howe Collection.

¹⁰⁵ For a statement on this topic by David O. McKay, then a member of the First Presidency and later the church’s president, see David O. McKay to Tiena Nate, October 31, 1934, folder 1, box 26, Lester E. Bush Collection, J. Willard Marriott Library Archives, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT.

¹⁰⁶ Richley H. Crapo, “Grass-Roots Deviance from Official Doctrine: A Study of Latter-day Saint (Mormon) Folk-Beliefs,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 26, no. 4 (1987): 465-85 (statistics on p. 476).

horrendous mistake.... Every judge, senator, and congressman ... should be compelled to view the films presented by Doctor Willke ... showing these aborted babies.”¹⁰⁷ Mr. and Mrs. Ralph E. Keller were also compelled by the Willkes’ presentation: “I have just seen some appalling slides on abortions ... and I don’t believe there was a dry eye in the audience.”¹⁰⁸ Margaret McGuire emphasized (in capital letters, no less) how much these photos had personally affected her: “UNTIL I SEEN [sic] THESE PICTURES AND READ WHAT HORRIBLE THINGS ARE BEING DONE I DIDN’T REALIZE WHAT SUFFERING IS CAUSED BY THIS LAW.”¹⁰⁹ Judy Prince was so moved that she invested in literature and her own slide show so she could lead anti-abortion seminars in her home.¹¹⁰ People like Prince changed the Willkes’ presentation from a biannual speech by outsiders into an intimate presentation among friends, family, and neighbors. Whether through personal initiative or through the organizational channels of the fledging pro-life movement, the Willkes’ pictures circulated quickly and often in Utah’s abortion debate. These photos were both documentary evidence and dense sites of disgust, personal identification, and fascination for potential pro-life activists. For many, viewing these pictures marked an important political transformation, a moment when people became committed to the pro-life cause.

¹⁰⁷ Margaret Fitzgerald to Congressman McKay, February 13, 1974, folder 20, box 161, Papers of Congressman Gunn McKay, Merrill-Cazier Library Special Collections and Archives, Utah State University, Logan, UT (hereafter McKay Papers).

¹⁰⁸ Mr. and Mrs. Ralph E. Keller to Honorable Wayne Owens, undated (received March 11, 1974), folder 2, box 39, Owens Papers.

¹⁰⁹ Marguerite H. McGuire to Representatives of this Our America and Utah, January 23, 1976, folder 1, box 43, Howe Collection.

¹¹⁰ Mrs. Judy Prince to Rep. Wayne Owens, undated (recorded April 9, 1973), folder 14, box 23, Owens Papers.

The beauty of the images as a political tool was that they seemed to speak for themselves. But of course, they did not. Perhaps the appearance of blood (a common feature of these photos) immediately elicited revulsion, implied violence, and suggested death. But despite what pro-life activists repeatedly suggested, these pictures needed words. Utahns paired the pictures with very specific political arguments. While showing or discussing the photos, activists narrated a pro-life biological genealogy for the fetus and a socio-historical genealogy for abortion. Pro-life Utahns gave these pictures stories, and combined with the voices of pro-life activists around the country, these narratives became the refrain of the movement.

First, much like Colorado's Dr. Stewart and his preserved fetuses, pro-life Utahns connected the fetus and the baby through biological resemblance. To do so, they drew directly from *The Handbook on Abortion* and the Willkes' presentation. The couple often discussed bodily functions while showing the pictures. In their book, they wrote that all people have their chromosomal "uniqueness" at conception, their heartbeats start between 18 to 25 days, their brain waves begin at 43 days, and all their "bodily functions" work at 11 weeks.¹¹¹ So in practice, Willkes used the photos and a biological discussion in tandem, each confirming the human resemblance of the other. A discussion of heartbeats and brainwaves confirmed the humanity of the fetuses pictured and the pictures authenticated those biological similarities people could not see. Utahns took these arguments up. One 11-year-old wrote to her congressman, "Heartbeats and brainwaves can be detected very early. Abortion is just like murder since someone is legally alive until the heart stops or the brainwaves stop."¹¹² Another

¹¹¹ Willke, *Handbook for Abortion*, pp. 9, 15, 19.

¹¹² Joan M. Doty to Mr. Owens, undated (received June 11, 1974), folder 4, box 39, Owens Papers. For the Willkes' discussion of heartbeats and brainwaves, see Willke, *Handbook on Abortion*, pp. 16-19.

Utahn wrote, “After all, a heartbeat can be heard at 20 days and brainwaves can be detected at 43 days, so isn’t it logical to say that any baby aborted after this time has been murdered? ... That would make it pre-meditated murder, murder in the first degree!”¹¹³ So in the early 1970s, pro-life Utahns began the story of life with heartbeats and brainwaves. This biological story would continue to be a preoccupation of the movement, as activists delved deeper into the human body to create an origin for human life through narratives of resemblance.

Utahns also used photos to make an argument about where abortion fit in the history of oppression and justice. They placed abortion in a socio-historical genealogy with slavery and the Holocaust, contending that each atrocity was the outcome of the same “anti-life” worldview. They placed themselves, then, in an extended genealogy with abolitionists, Nazi fighters, and all those working in the long campaign for social justice. Many would have agreed with one Catholic writer who wrote that those who denied the truth of the fetus photos were akin to Germans who saw “pictures of Jewish corpses [smuggled] out of Nazi death camps” and did nothing.¹¹⁴ Pro-life activists used these historical analogies to connect themselves to freedom fighters, condemn pro-choice Americans, galvanize the silent, and humanize the fetus.

Invoking the Holocaust became one of the most common political tactics in arguments against abortion. Activists claimed that legal abortion, like Hitler’s “Final Solution,” was an example of state power run amok. While other conservatives in the 1970s worried about property rights and economic freedom, these social conservatives warned of a different, more insidious type of federal encroachment. They argued that with *Roe*, the government was not

¹¹³ Kristy Metcalfe to Mr. Owens, undated (received May 30, 1974), folder 4, box 39, Owens Papers.

¹¹⁴ Frank Morriss, “Doctor Faces Prosecution in Anti-Abortion Effort,” *The Wanderer*, December 27, 1973.

only infringing on individual states' rights to regulate morality, it was also infringing on people's right to life itself. They argued that once the government legalized what they saw as the murder of "the unborn," it was a slippery slope to killing the elderly, the disabled, and any people unwanted in society.¹¹⁵ One Utahn wrote, "I am very much afraid that [Roe] will lead to further atrocities, such as the putting away of our elderly, and could eventually destroy man's love for man, the binding force which holds any nation together."¹¹⁶ The Freeman Institute, a Utah-based right wing, free market group with links to the ultraconservative John Birch Society, placed this argument centrally when it covered abortion in its newsletter: "And let us look at recent world history, let us look at Nazi Germany. Where did they begin? They began with abortion."¹¹⁷

In fact, agitation for legalized abortion in Germany long preceded the rise of the Third Reich. German social reformers, radical feminists, socialists, and communists had pushed for reform since the beginning of the twentieth century, arguing that legalized abortion helped women control the conditions of their existence. When the Nazis came to power, they advocated abortion, but to a very different purpose. As sociologists Myra Marx Ferree, William Anthony Gamson, Jürgen Gerhards, and Dieter Rucht write, "Nazi abortion law sharply distinguished

¹¹⁵ For examples of this argument, see Christopher Smith, "Foes, Backers of Abortion Law Change Detail Views," *Denver Post*, March 7, 1971; "Abortion Ruling Called Threat to the Old and Infirm," *Arizona Republic*, January 30, 1973; "How Far Will It Go?" *Freemen Institute*, April 1973, folder 14, box 23, Owens Papers; "Anti-Abortion Group to Host Zoo Visitors," *Arizona Republic*, January 20, 1977; "Anti-Abortion Proposal Advances Over Outcry," *Phoenix Gazette*, March 5, 1980; Linda Perry, "Abortion Nightmare Update," Speech to the New Mexico Right to Life State Convention, April 1985, folder 1, Linda E.J. Perry Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA; New Mexico Right to Life, *Viva Life*, September 1986 and July 1986, folder 1, box 1-8, HH120, Right to Life, New Mexico, Hall Hoag Collection.

¹¹⁶ James J. Rotter to Congressman Owens, January 22, 1973, folder 1, box 39, Owens Papers.

¹¹⁷ Freeman Institute, "How Far Will It Go?" For more on the Freeman Institute, see O. Kendall White Jr., "A Review and Commentary on the Prospects of a Mormon New Christian Right Coalition," *Review of Religious Research* 28, no. 2 (December 1986): 180-88; Bradley, *Pedestals and Podiums*, p. 118.

between life that was worthy of life and ‘unworthy lives’ (*lebensunwertes Leben*), forbidding abortion in the former but demanding it in the latter case.”¹¹⁸ Germany’s earliest advocates for abortion reform had been virulently anti-Nazi and mandated birth policies were part and parcel of Nazi eugenics. Pro-life activists ignored all of this, and saw Nazi abortion policy as the origin point for mass murder.

If anyone questioned that abortion was mass murder, pro-lifers answered with graphic photos as evidence. (Figure 4.) One Utahn very clearly made the connection, directly referencing another of the Willkes’ most famous photographs:

To view the pictures of the perfect body and member conformation of children no more than one to two months old, ... to view these little human beings, some still alive, unconcernedly thrown into hospital garbage cans like pieces of trash convinced me we are without a doubt a nation of degenerate butchers....We have become Hitler. We are our enemy.¹¹⁹

In subsequent years, pro-choice activists would vigorously debate the proclaimed gestational age of the fetuses in these photos, arguing that pro-life truth claims depended on whether these bodies were similar to ones legally aborted in a first or second trimester or to near-term fetuses protected by federal law. But for most pro-life activists, fetal age was neither here nor there. These pictures were evidence that Americans, and especially pro-choice Americans, were engaging in what came to be known in activist circles as “the American Holocaust.”

¹¹⁸ Myra Marx Ferree, William Anthony Gamson, Jürgen Gerhards, and Dieter Rucht, *Shaping Abortion Discourse: Democracy and the Public Sphere in Germany and the United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 27. See also Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1987); Jill Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Germany* (New York: Longman, 2001); Cornelle Usborne, *Cultures of Abortion in Weimar Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007).

¹¹⁹ Robert A. Hill to Congressman Allan Howe, March 31, 1976, folder 1, box 29, Howe Collection.



Figure 4. Dr. and Mrs. J.C. Willke, *Handbook on Abortion* (Cincinnati, OH: Hiltz Publishing Co., 1972).

Utahns employed these comparisons, of course, with the help of the Willkes' book. The volume's epigraph was a quote from Albert Schweitzer, an early twentieth-century German philosopher, that would be repeated over and over again by pro-life activists: "If a man loses his reverence for any part of life, he will use his reverence for all life."¹²⁰ While Schweitzer wrote these words before the rise of Nazism in Germany, pro-life activists used the quote to connect the Holocaust and abortion ideologically. In the middle of their book, the Willkes linked abortion more explicitly with Nazis. They contended that quality of life arguments had been applied "only three decades ago...on a large scale by the German state." They argued there was no difference between the idea of "quality of life" and that of the "Master Race."¹²¹ They concluded this section with a short story by Catholic editor and journalist Dale Francis, "The

¹²⁰ Willke, *Handbook on Abortion*, inside front cover.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

Waiting Room, 2050,” about a place where doctors killed less healthy people at age 55 and all those who reached 75.¹²² The Willkes created a historical continuum between the Holocaust and abortion, with their photos providing the vital links. Utahns took up this torch, discussing the “genocide” of abortion with fervor, often describing *Roe* as a break with a fundamentally good American past. The common question was: How could this freedom-loving, civilized, Christian country become like barbarous Nazi Germany? One Utah letter writer put it this way: “Since when was this God-inspired nation legalizing murder! Our country was founded by God-fearing men—and now our judicial system’s saying ‘Thou shalt kill the unborn.’”¹²³ Another wrote that legalized abortion “would turn our nation... into a sterilized concentration camp that would make Adolph Hitler envious.”¹²⁴ In these dystopian visions, abortion led the United States towards fascism and genocide, bringing the future America closer and closer to the Nazism defeated only two decades before.

If early pro-life activists saw abortion as the origin of the Holocaust, they also argued that the same ideas underwrote the institution of slavery. In the *Handbook on Abortion*, the Willkes made the direct comparison between slavery and abortion, and more specifically the *Roe* decision and the 1857 *Dred Scott* decision, which ruled that black people—slave or free—were not U.S. citizens and thus not protected by the Constitution.¹²⁵ The Willkes argued that both

¹²² Ibid., pp. 93-96.

¹²³ Nancy Sluder to Rep. Owens, January 23, 1973, folder 10, box 23, Owens Papers.

¹²⁴ Rev. Robert L. Breunig, letter to the editor, *Denver Post*, March 7, 1971. See also Daniel Cummings to Wayne Owens, February 23, 1973, folder 11, box 23, Owens Papers.

¹²⁵ The Willkes were not the first to make this comparison. They drew on materials developed by a group called Women for the Unborn. See Willke, *Handbook on Abortion*, p. 115. Also in 1973, William F. Buckley wrote an article about the *Roe* decision called “The Dred Scott Decision of the Twentieth Century.” In February 1973, this article was discussed at an open forum in Salt Lake City. See “Abortion Issue,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 10, 1973.

cases made some groups “less than human” and both practices—slavery and abortion—degraded life. One Colorado activist compared pro-life political efforts to the nation that “mounted the bloodiest war in history to end slavery.”¹²⁶ Pro-life groups in Utah and elsewhere in the Four Corners states regularly invoked Dred Scott, slavery, and the Civil War.¹²⁷ Pro-life groups in Utah however did not invoke the history of nineteenth-century Mormons buying Indian children from their families and from slaveholders, for purposes of conversion and labor.¹²⁸ Slavery was erased from Utah’s past. And the southern chattel slavery activists acknowledged was not a part of the “intrinsic” character of American history in this formula; rather, it was an aberration. The Civil War was the last time good Americans in the U.S. had to defend against “anti-life” elements from within.

For these activists, though, abortion was not just similar to slavery and the Holocaust; it was worse. It was worse because the fetus was innocent and helpless, and thus the ultimate victim. In February of 1973, U.S. Representative Wayne Owens received the same form letter from many of his constituents saying, “We now implore that you work to eradicate the killing of

¹²⁶ Frank Morriss, “To End the Obscenity of Abortion,” *The Wanderer*, December 27, 1973.

¹²⁷ For Utah comparisons, see Mary Lee Walton, Gary Walton, Roberta Hackett, and Ted Hackett, letter to the editor, “Thing [sic] Must Change,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 27, 1973; “Law Giving Fetus Rights Supported,” *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, March 19, 1977; “Anti-Abortion Groups Eye Petition Drive,” *Provo Herald*, March 21, 1977. For other slavery, Dred Scott, or abolitionist comparisons, see “Physicians and Abortion,” letter to the editor, *Tucson Daily Citizen*, February 7, 1973; Morriss, “To End the Obscenity of Abortion”; Frank Morriss, “Doctor Faces Prosecution in Anti-Abortion Effort,” *The Wanderer*, December 27, 1973; Jack Crowe, “10,000 March to Protest Abortions,” *Arizona Republic*, January 28, 1974.

¹²⁸ See, for example, Sondra Jones, *The Trial of Don Pedro León Luján: The Attack Against Indian Slavery and Mexican Traders in Utah* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2000); Martha C. Knack, *Boundaries Between: The Southern Paiutes, 1775-1995* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), pp. 55-59; Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 239-42.

innocent and helpless humans.”¹²⁹ One Utah couple concluded their letter to Owens, “As far as I [am] concerned this is far more tragic than anything Hitler ever did, at least his victims weren’t completely helpless and could fight to a degree for themselves.”¹³⁰ Born humans “could fight for themselves” and thus were less “helpless and innocent.” Here conservative rhetoric about personal responsibility for one’s own circumstances merged with religious arguments about sin. Only fetuses could be truly “innocent” in a social and existential way.

Many anti-abortion letter writers were even more outraged at the injustice of “killing” the innocent because, as of 1972, the Supreme Court would not let states execute the guilty. That year the court had ruled all existing capital punishment laws unconstitutional because they violated the Eighth and Fourteenth amendments; the court opined that capital punishment was cruel and unusual because it was applied so “capriciously,” and disproportionately to people of color.¹³¹ Utah pro-lifers were indignant at this seeming injustice. Mrs. John Lyman wrote her congressman, “What do you think of a country where we abolish capital punishment for convicted murderers and yet slaughter thousands of unborn babies each year?”¹³² Similarly, Jon Robinson wrote,

How can that bunch of hypocrites on the Supreme Court allow convicted murders to go

¹²⁹ See, for example, Paul and Beverly Lombardi to Representative Owens, February 21, 1973, folder 11, box 23, Owens Papers.

¹³⁰ Keller to Owens, March 11, 1974.

¹³¹ Herbert A. Haines, *Against Capital Punishment: The Anti-Death Penalty Movement in America, 1972-1994* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 22, 39. The majority opinion of *Furman v. Georgia* did not claim that capital punishment was inherently cruel and unusual, though two justices who joined the majority did make that argument. Within few years of the decision, many states had adapted their laws to fit the guidelines put forth in the *Furman* decision. In 1976, because of these laws, the Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in their *Gregg v. Georgia* decision.

¹³² Mrs. John Lyman to Wayne Owens, no date (probably spring 1973), folder 12, box 23, Owens Papers.

free while at the same time murder innocent unborn children and it's constitutional? Who's [sic] constitution are they reading? Surely not the U.S. Constitution. It can only be the Communist Manifesto that they're reading.¹³³

Another Utahn contended that laws protected “coyotes and other predators” but not “the highest form of life, the little unborn human being.”¹³⁴ In these letters, “coyotes,” “predators,” and “convicted murderers,” while raceless terms, operated as racial code. As historian Michael Flamm has argued, urban crime and juvenile delinquency began to take a racial cast beginning in the late 1950s, prompting a full-blown campaign by many white Americans for “law and order” in the 1960s.¹³⁵ These pro-life activists combined the racialized politics of law and order with the right to life, but in so doing the “right to life” slipped from a right for all humanity to a “right” for the (universalized, white) “innocent.”

In this pro-life imaginary, abortion fit in a genealogy of oppressions and a genealogy of genocides even as it negated all others. The Abortion Holocaust was the most brutal in its execution, the most numerous its numbers of victims, and the most inhumane in its choice of victims. The fetus became a victim that no born-human could be. This logic reaffirmed the common conservative critique of New Left movements: individuals were partly or completely responsible for their own situation, not governments, institutions, racism, or sexism. Using the Holocaust and slavery, pro-life activists named themselves as defenders of freedom and social justice and ultimately sustained the rhetoric of individual responsibility even in the most dastardly circumstances. In practice, pro-lifers in Utah and elsewhere used Holocaust and

¹³³ Jon Robinson to Congressman Wayne Owens, January 19, 1974, folder 1, box 39, Owens Papers. For other discussion of the death penalty, see Nancy Sluder to Rep. Owens, January 23, 1973; E.B. Carter to Honorable Wayne Owens, March 1, 1973, folder 12, box 23, Owens Papers.

¹³⁴ Laura G. Hendrick to Sirs, March 1, 1973, folder 12, box 23, Owens Papers.

¹³⁵ Michael W. Flamm, *Law and Order: Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

slavery imagery to argue that fetuses were the only real innocents, the truly helpless. Everyone else was potentially culpable for their own oppression and, even, their own genocide. Pro-life activists made the argument that their campaign was the pure embodiment of all campaigns for justice and equality, while undermining some of those campaigns' core assertions. They implied if legal abortion could be stopped, it would be a victory for the political philosophy of "life," and all other rights would flow from there.

In Utah, where few white people joined movements opposing racial injustice, many more joined or saw themselves in solidarity with the pro-life movement.¹³⁶ Pro-life activists had created a social justice movement with reference to the histories of slavery and the Holocaust, but without committing themselves to anti-racism or the elimination of anti-Semitism. The main systemic problem with American society was a pseudo-fifth column promoting "anti-life" policies around the country. Thus, the primary victim in this modern world was the deracialized, degendered fetus. The only way to combat the influences of this fascist, communist, feminist worldview, pro-lifers argued, was for good Americans to defend the "unmarked" fetus. Here, the universal subject was resurrected to deliver Americans from their naïve liberalism. In a political world focused on difference and injustice, pro-life activists offered the absence of difference as salvation.

New Mexico, 1976

If pro-life activism was the ultimate campaign for justice, activists believed it had the possibility to create human unity. It had the possibility to unite people across race, religion, class, and gender. In the mid-1970s, pro-life activists in New Mexico and across the country

¹³⁶ For the civil rights movement in Utah, see Alton Hornsby, Jr., *Black America: A State by State Historical Encyclopedia*, vol. 2 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011), pp. 851-52.

began developing multiracial, ecumenical imageries to evoke this social reunion. Here race and religion stood in for all sorts of social divisions. Here pro-life activists drew on a re-purposed imagery of the civil rights movement to claim that it was in social conservatism where race was no longer important, where people could come together in support of a higher cause.

Narratives of racial harmony and human unity were not new to New Mexico. In fact, they were central to its recent history. After the U.S. seizure of New Mexico in 1846, many Americans were reluctant to see the territory gain statehood because they believed its large population of ethnic Mexicans and Indigenous people was “unfit” for citizenship.¹³⁷ Thus, Anglo proponents of statehood attempted to show that the territory had a racial system, one in which white people dominated and New Mexicans, especially ethnic Mexicans and Indians, could join the American social order.¹³⁸ Some elite hispanos resisted the marginalization of conquest by claiming a Spanish, or European, heritage, untainted by African or Indian

¹³⁷ I use the term “ethnic Mexican” here not to suggest that all these residents of New Mexico had a strong connection to the nation of Mexico. In fact, New Mexico was only a part of Mexico for twenty-five years. Rather I use the term to connote the diverse mix of people resulting from the Spanish colonization of Indian peoples in what became the northern part of New Spain. Before the late twentieth-century, *hispana/o* had been the preferred terms by many to suggest a connection to the land and a resistance to colonialism. By the late twentieth century, preferred terms became much more complicated as many, especially young people, adopted the term *Chicano*, to unify longstanding hispano residents and more recent Mexican immigrants. This term was inherently politicized and eventually fell from favor. Later in the century, many returned to regional terms like *neuvomexicana/o* and *hispana/o*. I use the term *ethnic Mexican* neither to disrespect these personal, political, and historical choices nor to suggest that recent immigrants and longstanding residents had the same history in New Mexico, political interests, or economic positions. Rather I use the term *ethnic Mexican* as an umbrella term at a moment when the naming of ethnic identities was in flux.

¹³⁸ Pablo Mitchell, *Coyote Nation: Sexuality, Race, and Conquest in Modernizing New Mexico, 1880-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 5. For more on American Anglos’ imposition of racial hierarchies, see Sarah Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Deena J. González, *Refusing the Favor: The Spanish-Mexican Women of Santa Fe, 1820-1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Maria Montoya, *Translating Property: The Maxwell Land Grant and the Conflict over Land in the American West, 1840-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

“blood.”¹³⁹ After New Mexico achieved statehood in 1912, boosters of the state turned Anglo Americans’ interest in racial difference into a tourist attraction for New Mexico. Many white people came to see the beautiful landscapes and the supposedly harmony among “Indian,” “Spanish,” and “American” people.¹⁴⁰

Tourists did come to New Mexico, but so too did new migrants, from other parts of the United States and other parts of the world, following work into the “Land of Enchantment.” Between 1940 and 1950, Albuquerque alone grew by more than 173 percent.¹⁴¹ By the late 1960s and early 1970s, New Mexico had a complex racial and religious mixture of a longstanding *nuevomexicano* population; Catholic, mainstream Protestant, Evangelical, Jewish, and secular Anglos; Catholic Mexican immigrants; a small Black population; and a diverse array of Indian peoples including Pueblo peoples, Navajos, Apaches, Utes, and Comanches.

In the 1960s and 1970s, New Mexicans read about the deterioration of “racial harmony” around the country. Newspaper stories recounted civil rights activists disrupting the South with their demonstrations, urban youth upsetting northern and southern cities with riots, and J. Edgar Hoover warning about a general upswing in racial disorder.¹⁴² Many of New Mexico’s

¹³⁹ John M. Neito-Phillips argues that between the 1880s and 1930s, *nuevomexicanos* “resurrect[ed] the archaic notions about the ‘purity of blood’ that dated to the [Spanish] conquest” in order to combat social marginalization. See *The Language of Blood: The Making of Spanish-American Identity in New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004). See also Mitchell, *Coyote Nation*; Charles Montgomery, *Spanish Redemption: Heritage, Power, and Loss in New Mexico’s Upper Rio Grande* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Chris Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).

¹⁴⁰ Wilson, pp. 156, 148.

¹⁴¹ Robert B. Fairbanks, “The Failure of Urban Renewal in the Southwest: From City Needs to Individual Rights,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 37 (Autumn 2006): 303-26 (statistic on p. 304).

¹⁴² See, for example, “Businessmen Agree to Abide by Bill,” *The New Mexican*, July 2, 1964; “Editors Visit Alabama on Governor’s Invitation,” *Clovis News-Journal*, June 16, 1965; “Nightriders Fire Churches in Louisiana,” *Albuquerque Tribune*, August 3, 1965; Marquis Childs, “It Can Happen Anywhere,” *The New Mexican*, July 31, 1967; “Fiery Talks Started Riots,” *Las Vegas Daily Optic*,

politicians assured the populace that their state was different. In 1971, the state's attorney general contended that New Mexicans were "fortunate to have achieved a degree of racial harmony and understanding. Extremes of intolerance and injustice are not nearly so prevalent here as in some of the states."¹⁴³ A few years later, U.S. Senator Pete Domenici argued that New Mexico should be exempt from certain parts of the revised Voting Rights Act because the state was harmonious, had no record of voter discrimination, and was "the leader in the nation in political and social equality for all cultures and all races."¹⁴⁴ In the midst of a national racial transformation, many Anglo New Mexicans reassured themselves that their state was unique. Their state could be the nation's model for racial harmony.

This narrative of racial concord was more than wishful thinking on the part of New Mexico's politicians. It was a political counter-narrative to the stories activists of color were telling within their own state. Inspired by the myriad movements for racial justice nationally, many New Mexican activists by the late 1960s were critiquing Anglo dominance and working to reform the state's institutions. Younger ethnic Mexicans increasingly identified as Chicanos, and both Chicano and Indigenous activists contended that U.S. conquest had been a cultural and physical dispossession. In 1967, twenty members of a militant Chicano group, La Alianza Federal de Mercedes, raided a northern New Mexican courthouse to oppose the theft of Mexican land by American colonizers, bringing national attention to racial discord and the civil rights

August 3, 1967; Bert Okuley, "Hit City Had Plan Ready," *Clovis News-Journal*, August 3, 1967; "Hoover Notes Racial Disharmony," *Las Cruces Sun-News*, January 7, 1971.

¹⁴³ David Norvell, "Norvell Generous with Praise for Staff," *The New Mexican*, June 25, 1971.

¹⁴⁴ Pete V. Domenici, U.S. Senator, "Voting Rights," letter to the editor, *Silver City Daily Press*, August 5, 1975.

movement in New Mexico.¹⁴⁵ Indigenous activists in New Mexico and elsewhere worked against such dispossession, by trying to reinforce tribal sovereignty and support self-determination. Chicanos and Indigenous activists argued that after losing both land and political power, they had been discriminated against in work, in law, and in educational institutions. As one *nuevomexicano* wrote in 1971, New Mexico's textbooks "are filled with despicable fallacies which purposely depict the beautiful Indian and Hispanic culture-history as inferior and in many cases non-existent."¹⁴⁶ Some activists worked to promote Chicano and Indian history in educational institutions and rewrite the history of New Mexico not as a land of racial harmony but as one of racial conquest and colonization.¹⁴⁷ Others took to streets to protest ongoing police

¹⁴⁵ Melina Vizcaíno-Alemán, "New Mexican Triptychs: Anglo Southwesternism, Chicano Nationalism, and Tri-Partite Cultural Critique of Fray Angélico Chávez's Fiction," in *Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage*, vol. 6, ed. Antonia I. Castañeda and A. Gabriel Meléndez (Houston, TX: Arte Publico Press, 2006). See also Rudy V. Busto, *King Tiger: The Religious Vision of Reies López Tijerina* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005); Reies López Tijerina, *They Called Me 'King Tiger': My Struggle for Land and Our Rights* (Houston, TX: Arte Publico Press, 2000); Peter Nabokov, *Tijerina and the Courthouse Raid* (Berkeley, CA: Ramparts Press, 1970). For a small sample of the news coverage of the raid and its aftermath, see "Courthouse Raid Brings Dispute Between Cargo, Sanchez," *Albuquerque Journal*, June 7, 1967; "Cargo Appeals to Fugitives to Surrender to Authorities," *The New Mexican*, June 7, 1967; "Leader of Militant Group Captured," *Farmington Daily Times*, June 11, 1967; "Police Vow: 'We Are Going to Get Guy' Who Killed Jailer," *Albuquerque Tribune*, January 4, 1968.

¹⁴⁶ Alberto O. Martinez, "Indian, Hispanic Studies Neglected," letter to the editor, *The New Mexican*, June 2, 1971.

¹⁴⁷ For a sampling of Chicano movement activities and arguments, see "UNM Ethnic Studies Program Offers New Dimension," *Albuquerque Journal*, August 16, 1970; "Meeting Held in Santa Fe," *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, February 29, 1970; "Chicano Studies Plan Awarded \$15,000 Grant," *The New Mexican*, October 11, 1970; "Chicano Studies Center Expands Offering at U.," *Albuquerque Journal*, November 17, 1971; Eric McCrossen, "Rally Mixup Explained," *Albuquerque Journal*, December 27, 1971; Jim Maldonado, "Brown Berets and Black Berets: There's a Difference," *The New Mexican*, February 20, 1972; Will Hoffman, "Chicano Students: Progress Report," *The New Mexican*, May 5, 1972; "Chicano Week Opens Monday," *Las Cruces Sun-News*, April 9, 1972; "Sweeping Changes Wanted in School," *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, May 11, 1972; Dean Whitten, "Alianza Universitaria: There is Dissent and that Dissidence is Jelling," *New Mexico Aggie*, June 1, 1972. For Indigenous activism, see David Brand, "Young Indian Activists Adopting Tactics of Blacks," *Gallup Independent*, May 5, 1969; Laurie McCord, "She's No Militant," *Albuquerque Tribune*, July 2, 1973; "350 Mourn Casuse Death in Gallup," *The New Mexican*, March 3, 1973; "1,000 Indians Hold Protest March Sunday in Gallup," *Hobbs Daily News-Sun*, April 2, 1973; "King Says Bar Closing No Good," *Las Cruces Sun-News*, July 5, 1974; Robert

harassment and judicial discrimination, establishing community patrols to follow police cars, marching to city hall, and meeting with city officials. In the summer of 1971, frustrations with the police department boiled over into a two-day riot in downtown Albuquerque.¹⁴⁸

In a state divided by racial oppression and historical memory, many individuals, political groups, and politicians offered solutions. Some Chicano, Anglo, Black, and Indigenous New Mexicans tried to reform the institutions and culture of the state. Many others, especially Anglo New Mexicans, refused to interrogate their state's racial mythology. Some denied racial oppression in the language of racial resentment, arguing that people of color wanted special treatment as opposed to equal treatment or in the language of religion, claiming that people of color were creating divisions where God had created equality.¹⁴⁹ In the midst of this racial uprising and the concurrent rising tide of feminism, pro-life activists attempted to harness the power of racial resentment and the language of religion towards anti-feminist ends. Protecting the fetus could be the ecumenical work that unified races and religions in the face of the social divisions that liberals and radicals had created.

Turner Wood, "The Transformation of Albuquerque, 1945-1972" (PhD diss., University of New Mexico, 1980), pp. 392-94, 396. There was also Black activism at this time in New Mexico; see Wood, "Transformation of Albuquerque," p. 500.

¹⁴⁸ Wood, "Transformation of Albuquerque," pp. 500-7.

¹⁴⁹ For an example of racial resentment rhetoric, see Jack Webb, "Minority Admission Haunts Schools," *Las Cruces Sun-News*, August 13, 1974. For an example of the religious rhetoric, see letters to the editor, *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, February 19, 1975. In these letters, Linda King of Las Vegas, New Mexico, argues that "there can be no differences more important than our common heritage and future when we say: All are created by God!" A respondent replied that such rhetoric "does nothing" to alleviate past and current injustices done to Chicanos. This is not to say religious rhetoric was inherently pro-life or anti-social justice. In the second half of the twentieth century, religious institutions, leaders, and rhetoric had buttressed many movements for racial justice. Protestant Black leadership during the civil rights movement constitutes the most famous example, but Catholics also provided support for the Chicano and other movements. See, e.g., Mario T. García, *Católicos: Resistance and Affirmation in Chicano Catholic History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), pp. 131-206.

In many ways, New Mexico's pro-life movement faced an uphill battle. New Mexico had legal abortion before 1919 and after 1969. Until 1919, New Mexico accepted the quickening doctrine, the common law principle that abortion was legal as long as it occurred before the time that a woman felt the fetus move.¹⁵⁰ After 1919, for the next fifty years, abortion was illegal in the state except when a woman's life was in danger. During that time, New Mexico's women broke the law to self-induce abortions or sought out midwives and doctors to help them.¹⁵¹ Then, in 1969, New Mexico's legislature passed a liberalization law, much like Colorado's 1967 law, allowing a legal abortion in cases of rape or incest, if the fetus was likely significantly deformed, or if the woman's mental or physical health was in danger. But because doctors in New Mexico interpreted this law more liberally than their counterparts in Colorado, abortion was much easier to access in New Mexico than in Colorado in the four years before the *Roe* decision.¹⁵²

After *Roe*, New Mexico continued its relatively pro-choice policies, despite having some very strong pro-life politicians in state and federal offices. Annually, state politicians brought pro-life bills to the legislature. Nevertheless, between 1973 and 2000, New Mexico's legislature

¹⁵⁰ Pablo Mitchell, "Abortion Law in New Mexico-Early 20th Century," New Mexico Office of the State Historian website, http://www.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails_docs.php?fileID=21333 (accessed September 19, 2012).

¹⁵¹ For example, in a single year during the Great Depression, a school nurse in the indigenous community of Nambe Pueblo just north of Santa Fe reported a number of abortions. See January 14-15, 1939, and February 15, 1939, entries, Maria Casias, School Nurse, 1938-39 Diary, diary 1, box 3, Nambe Community School Teachers' Diaries, 1935-1942 Collection, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM. For one woman's account of attempting to get an illegal abortion in New Mexico, see Carol Thorman to Senator Bayh and Members of the Senate Subcommittee, May 15, 1974, folder New Mexico, 1969-1975, carton 4, National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (hereafter NARAL Collection).

¹⁵² Laurie McCord, "Legal Abortion- Becoming Routine?" *Albuquerque Tribune*, November 24, 1973; Keith Easthouse, Coleman Cornellus, and Robert Mayer, "Abortion and New Mexico," *Santa Fe Reporter*, May 3-9, 1989. For more on the 1969 legislation, see Helen Parsons to Mr. Footlick, January 26, 1969, folder New Mexico 1969-75, carton 4, NARAL Collection.

passed no law requiring parental notification or consent for a minor's abortion; no "informed consent" law, requiring women to read pro-life-slanted medical information before an abortion; and no law requiring a waiting period or counseling before an abortion.¹⁵³ These types of laws, ruled constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court, passed in many states around the country in the 1980s and 1990s. As in almost every other state in the union, New Mexico's legislature did pass a conscience exemption allowing health care providers to refuse to provide or aid in abortions.¹⁵⁴ In 1998, the New Mexico Supreme Court ruled that the state's Equal Rights Amendment, passed in 1972, protected the right of women on state assistance to access abortion using state funds.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Because New Mexico's legislature never repealed its 1969 abortion law after *Roe v. Wade*, the state still technically has a parental consent law on the books. The 1969 law required the consent of a parent or guardian for a woman under the age of 18 seeking an abortion. *Roe* made most of this law unconstitutional. But in 1992, the U.S. Supreme Court legalized parental consent laws in their *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* decision, putting the parental consent part of New Mexico's moribund abortion law under scrutiny. The New Mexico attorney general decided the parental consent section would never pass constitutional muster because it did not allow minors to bypass the law with a judge's consent. Thus the state's parental consent law has not been used since 1973. New Mexico pro-life activists advocated constitutional parental consent and notification laws in the 1990s, but those bills never passed in the legislature. See Op. Attorney Gen. 17-1990 (October 3, 1990); Elizabeth Arndorfer, Jodi Micheal, Laura Moskowitz, Liza Siebel, Juli A. Grant, *Who Decides? A State-by-State Review of Abortion and Reproductive Rights, 1998* (New York: NARAL Foundation, 1998), p. 89; "NM Expects Abortion-Issue Debate," *The New Mexican*, August 24, 1992; "New Mexico, Restrictions on Young Women's Access to Abortion," NARAL Pro-Choice America, <http://www.prochoiceamerica.org/government-and-you/state-governments/state-profiles/new-mexico.html?templateName=template-161602701&issueID=6&ssumID=2735> (accessed October 15, 2012).

¹⁵⁴ Forty-four states have passed exemption clauses according to the Guttmacher Institute. See Guttmacher Institute, "State Policies in Brief, as of September 2012," www.guttmacher.org/pubs/spib_RPHS.pdf (accessed September 27, 2012).

¹⁵⁵ New Mexico is the only of the twenty-one states that have an equal rights amendment in their state constitution that interprets the amendment to include the right to abortion. For more on the court case, see Brief Amicus Curiae of the New Mexico Women's Bar Association and New Mexico Public Health Association in Support of Plaintiffs-Appellees, New Mexico Right to Choose, et al., vs. Dorothy Danfelter, Secretary of the New Mexico Human Services Department, Docket no. 23239 (1996), folder 19, box 1, Bruce Trigg Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM; "Supreme Court Considers Restrictions on Abortions in New Mexico," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, July 1, 1997; "State Must Pay for Abortions, High Court Rules," *Roswell Daily Record*, December 1, 1998; Mark Oswald, "High Court Rules Against State on Abortions for the Poor," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, December 1, 1998.

This court decision led experts on abortion policy to conclude, “New Mexico’s state constitution gives more protection than the federal constitution for a woman’s right to choose.”¹⁵⁶

Despite this uphill legislative battle, the pro-life movement still had a presence in the state, especially in the month of January. Every year, New Mexico’s pro-life groups marked the anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision with some kind of memorial.¹⁵⁷ From the late 1970s through the 1990s, these groups marched each January up to the state capitol and gave red roses to legislators to symbolize the “beauty of the preborn child,” following the ritual instituted by the national March for Life, an annual pro-life march in Washington, DC, begun in 1974.¹⁵⁸ But in the years after the *Roe* decision, New Mexican Right to Life created its own program. In 1974, the group marked the anniversary with what members called “a memorial service,” which included a panel discussion and the screening of two films at a local Knights of Columbus hall.¹⁵⁹ If the group held some kind of commemoration in 1975, it did not make the news. But in 1976, the New Mexico Right to Life Committee organized something a little more evocative,

¹⁵⁶ Michele C. Moore and Caroline M. de Costa, *Just the Facts: Abortion A to Z* (Victoria, Canada: Trafford, 2007), New Mexico entry. NARAL has also regularly given New Mexico high grades for its support of reproductive rights. See Moore and Costa, “New Mexico” entry; “New Mexico, Political Info, Laws in Brief,” NARAL Pro-Choice America, <http://www.prochoiceamerica.org/government-and-you/state-governments/state-profiles/new-mexico.html> (accessed October 15, 2012). Pro-life activists in the state acknowledged the state’s generally pro-choice legislature. See interview with Dauneen Dolce, March 23, 2010.

¹⁵⁷ These types of events were common around the country from the early 1970s onward, with annual memorial marches or ceremonies held in January of every year.

¹⁵⁸ For national march and quote, see Carol A. Emmens, *The Abortion Controversy* (New York: Julian Messner, 1987), p. 71. For marches in New Mexico, see, for example, John Robertson, “Abortion Issue Spurs Demonstration at Capitol,” *The New Mexican*, January 24, 1978; Dolce interview.

¹⁵⁹ “Abortion Ruling to Be Marked,” *Albuquerque Journal*, January 22, 1974; “Ruling Celebrated, Mourned,” *Albuquerque Journal*, January 24, 1974.

a little more sensational. The group decided to host an interdenominational, multiracial funeral service.¹⁶⁰

This service was a part of a “pro-life week” with a variety of activities and multiple chances for pro-life activists to display their commitment or to recommit themselves to the cause. New Mexico’s activists probably drew inspiration for their January Respect Life week from the Catholic Church, which held a Respect Life week in October of every year. To fill this week in January, activists planned a conference with many speakers. They held a “family life” hour at a local Lutheran church.¹⁶¹ They asked pro-lifers to skip a meal to protest abortion—“Miss-A-Meal for Life”—and to donate the savings from that meal to the organization for what they called “an educational program to arouse citizens against the increasing disdain and disregard for human life.”¹⁶² But the centerpiece that year was the mock funeral.

Right to Life advertised this pro-life week in the newspaper and in front of local businesses. The group ran an ad in the *Albuquerque Journal* featuring a now-famous picture of two adult fingers holding the feet of a 10-12 week fetus, the same picture that inspired Virginia Evers’s Precious Feet; the ad asked, “Is this a Blob or a Baby?”¹⁶³ The ad exemplified a growing consensus on the pro-life message: pro-choice activists and doctors had ignored the scientific

¹⁶⁰ “Pro-Life Week Held in State,” *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, January 23, 1976.

¹⁶¹ “Right to Life Plans Funeral,” *Albuquerque Tribune*, January 23, 1976. The Lutheran church in question, Redeemer Lutheran, was a part of the Missouri Synod, a politically conservative branch of the Lutheran denomination.

¹⁶² “Pro-Life Week Held in State,” *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, January 23, 1976. For quote, see “Committed for Life” ad, *Albuquerque Journal*, January 14, 1977.

¹⁶³ “A Blob or a Baby” ad, *Albuquerque Journal*, January 18, 1976.

truth of humanity and dehumanized the unborn fetus by seeing it as a “blob.”¹⁶⁴ This argument gained substance through the display of the fetal body. Then, the ad pitched the week’s events. Young people also passed out pamphlets advertising the events outside the local Piggly Wiggly grocery store and other businesses.¹⁶⁵

The funeral service was to be held at the Metropolitan Temple Church of God in Christ in Albuquerque. This parish was a part of the Church of God in Christ denomination, a predominantly African American sect of Pentecostalism.¹⁶⁶ Though the denomination began at the turn of the twentieth century in the U.S. South, much of its inspiration came from the U.S. West. One of its founders had been motivated by a Pentecostal revival in Los Angeles. In the early twentieth century, this southern church expanded into the North and West, especially in urban areas.¹⁶⁷ Albuquerque’s Metropolitan Temple had begun in 1957 in a living room under the leadership of the Reverend W.C. Griffin, a minister from Carlsbad, New Mexico. It was later organized through a Third Street beauty shop, near one of the well-established Black neighborhoods of Albuquerque.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ A long-time pro-choice activist in the state responded to the ad, saying the debate over whether it was a blob or baby was irrelevant. The real question was whether it had “superior rights to the woman.” See Nancy Ellefson, “A Step Backward,” letter to the editor, *Albuquerque Tribune*, January 26, 1976.

¹⁶⁵ “Pro-Life Week Held in State,” *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, January 23, 1976; “Right to Life Plans Funeral,” *Albuquerque Tribune*, January 23, 1976.

¹⁶⁶ See Anthea D. Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ: Making a Sanctified World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Lisa P. Stephenson, *Dismantling the Dualisms for American Pentecostal Women in Ministry: A Feminist-Pneumatological Approach* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2012), pp. 34-35.

¹⁶⁷ Elsie W. Mason, “Bishop C.H. Mason, Church of God in Christ,” in *African American Religious History: Documentary Witness*, ed. Milton C. Sernett, 2d ed. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 314.

¹⁶⁸ “To Honor Rev. Griffin,” *Albuquerque Tribune*, November 30, 1974. For Black neighborhoods, see Dick McAlipin, “South Broadway—Albuquerque Ghetto?” *Albuquerque Journal*,

The pro-life week funeral was billed as a “symbolic interdenominational service” in memory of the “10,000 aborted babies killed in New Mexico during 1975.”¹⁶⁹ The main focus of this service was a white casket used to symbolize all aborted fetuses; it was surely the subject of prayers and pleas from the pulpit, and it was visible to those sitting in the pews. This highly symbolic casket was to have highly symbolic couriers; the pallbearers were to be “children representing various cultural backgrounds.”¹⁷⁰ Mourners would be able to follow the casket with its child-pallbearers through the day’s events.

Once they left the assumedly multiracial funeral service in one of Albuquerque’s few Black churches, mourners were to move through one mile of the Santa Barbara-Martineztown neighborhood to a symbolic burial and graveside service at Mount Calvary Cemetery, a largely Catholic burial ground. Santa Barbara-Martineztown neighborhood had been a hispano village established around 1850 and annexed by the city in the post-1945 period. By the mid-1970s, the neighborhood was an impoverished urban barrio, but with a “stable close-knit community” that included residential and commercial buildings.¹⁷¹

May 12, 1968; “Team Policing South Broadway,” *Albuquerque Tribune*, October 28, 1977; Michael Ann Sullivan, “Albuquerque-East End Addition,” <http://www.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails.php?fileID=450> (accessed February 20, 2012)

¹⁶⁹ For first quote, see “Group Schedules Mock Funeral,” *Albuquerque Tribune*, January 21, 1976. For second quote, see “A Blob or a Baby” ad.

¹⁷⁰ “Group Schedules Mock Funeral,” *Albuquerque Tribune*, January 21, 1976.

¹⁷¹ Phillip P. Gonzales, “Historical Poverty, Restructuring Effects, and Integrative Ties: Mexican American Neighborhoods in a Peripheral Sunbelt Economy,” in *In the Barrios: Latinos and the Underclass Debate*, ed. Joan Moore and Raquel Pinderhughes (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1993), p. 158-59 (quote on p. 159). The neighborhood had also recently faced the challenges of urban renewal. The city had been working on a plan to renew downtown, which included a large educational complex that could accommodate 10-12,000 students slated to go into the Martineztown neighborhood. This complex would have required the demolition of many existing residences. The city eventually scaled down their plans just to replacing Albuquerque High School. Though the new plan was an improvement, some Martineztown residents still faced eviction to make way for the new school. Eventually those protesting the evictions won, and the city stopped buying land in the area and began looking for an

Jesuit priests had founded what would later become Mount Calvary Cemetery in the Santa Barbara neighborhood in 1869.¹⁷² Since then, it had not only been the place where Santa Barbara-Martineztown residents put their relatives to rest, it was also where they sent their children to play. Without a park in the neighborhood until the late 1970s, the cemetery had served as an informal playground.¹⁷³ So when pro-life activists made their funeral procession from Metropolitan Temple to Mount Calvary Cemetery, they did so through Albuquerque's segregated and impoverished urban landscape. They moved through the streets of the barrio towards the cemetery, where there was a headstone to memorialize "infants" killed by abortion.¹⁷⁴ Once there, in view of pro-life mourners and perhaps of a handful of children there to play, activists held "a symbolic burial of the hopes, ambitions—and life—of the 'unwanted' and unprotected."¹⁷⁵ Using the imagery of death and racial reunion, activists attempted to make abortion the origin of all oppression—all "unwantedness"—and the abandoned fetus the symbol for all injustice.

alternative location. See Wood, "The Transformation of Albuquerque," pp. 285, 429-30. See also Jaelyn deMaria Leary, "Urban Homeland: An Exploration of Albuquerque's Santa Barbara/Martineztown Neighborhood" (PhD diss., University of New Mexico, 2004); Aurelio Sanchez, "Martineztown Memories Linger in the City," *Albuquerque Journal*, December 24, 2005. For more on urban renewal in Albuquerque, see Fairbanks, "The Failure of Urban Renewal in the Southwest"; Michael F. Logan, *Fighting Sprawl and City Hall: Resistance to Urban Growth in the Southwest* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995), pp. 95-166.

¹⁷² "Mount Calvary Cemetery, Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, New Mexico," Interment Cemetery Records Online, www.interment.net/data/us/nm/bernalillo/mtcalvary/index.htm (accessed October 8, 2012).

¹⁷³ "Martineztown Park Wins OK," *Albuquerque Tribune*, November 3, 1977. For more on the lack of a public park, see Martha Buddecke, "Sta. Barbara-Martineztown Old City Area," *Albuquerque Journal*, December 23, 1968.

¹⁷⁴ "A Blob or a Baby," ad.

¹⁷⁵ "Committed for Life" ad, *Albuquerque Journal*, January 14, 1977.

Unlike the preserved fetuses and the graphic photos, the white casket at this funeral was a symbolic representation of fetuses rather than a literal one. It probably evoked for some their personal experiences with the funerals of their loved ones. But it also symbolized the death of many, in a manner similar to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Such tombs had been established after World War I, public memorials where people could come to the resting place of one anonymous body in order to mourn all those who died in war. The single tomb highlighted the missing bodies and the high numbers of those dead. Literary scholar Laura Wittman describes the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier as “at once a representation of the body of the nation and of the human body, both felt to be ruptured, perhaps permanently.”¹⁷⁶ It was “not so much about anonymous bodies,” she continues, “as anonymous people,” a condition of the modern world that cannot be reversed and must be confronted.¹⁷⁷ Pro-life activists used the gravesite for the unborn in similar ways but to different ends. Like the tombs, this pro-life memorial endowed an anonymous body with public meaning. Unlike what took place at the tombs, however, mourning at the grave of the unborn would not bind a nation through grief; it would bind a movement and prompt protest against what activists saw as a national genocide.

Another of the day’s intended symbolisms was the multiracial commitment to “life.” It was not happenstance that the funeral moved from a largely white Lutheran church for “Family Hour” to a largely Black Pentecostal church for the funeral to a Catholic, largely ethnic Mexican cemetery. The choice of pallbearers also betrayed this symbolic purpose: a group of children from “various cultural backgrounds” (probably a euphemism for different races). If the spaces through which the casket traveled were racially distinct, the casket’s primary witnesses, the

¹⁷⁶ Laura Wittman, *The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Modern Mourning, and the Reinvention of the Mystical Body* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), p. 3.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

pallbearers, were racially diverse. The tragedy of abortion and the mourning of those aborted would serve to join people across race and across religion. In that day's theater of racial harmony, Black, white, ethnic Mexican, Lutheran, Pentecostal, and Catholic were unified as "humanity protecting humanity."

The following year, in 1977, New Mexico Right to Life organized a similar week of memorials. It again included a symbolic funeral and graveside services and asked that pro-lifers miss a meal for life, but it added a candlelight vigil with a host of speakers. Organizers chose the Most Reverend Harold Trott, presiding Bishop of the American Episcopal Church; Elaine Gere, a "wife, teacher, mother"; Bishop W.C. Griffin of the Metropolitan Church; and Catholic Archbishop Robert Sánchez, among others, to speak.¹⁷⁸ This cast of characters both highlights the imaginary that the movement was trying to evoke but also the place of those they represented in the movement.

The two white panelists—Harold Trott and Elaine Gere—were members of New Mexico Right to Life. A minister in two different breakaway sects of the Episcopal Church, Trott had been a part of New Mexico Right to Life since its first public meeting. In the early to mid-1970s, Trott was often Right to Life's go-to Protestant, arguing that abortion was not just a Catholic issue.¹⁷⁹ Elaine Gere was also a prominent New Mexico Right to Life activist, speaking

¹⁷⁸ "Committed for Life" ad.

¹⁷⁹ From 1962 to the mid-1970s, Trott was a part of the Reformed Episcopal Church, a small evangelical sect which broke from the Episcopal Church in the 1870s. In 1976, he became consecrated in the American Episcopal Church, a small conservative group that broke away from the Episcopal Church of the United States (sometimes colloquially referred to as the American Episcopal Church) in 1968. See "Church Rector to Be Consecrated Missionary Bishop at Rites Here," *Albuquerque Journal*, June 12, 1971; "City Resident Named to Post," *Albuquerque Journal*, August 21, 1976. For Trott's work with New Mexico Right to Life, see "Moral Questions Enter Abortion Discussion," *Albuquerque Journal*, November 1, 1971; "Right to Life to Hear Rev. Trott," *Albuquerque Tribune*, April 19, 1972; "Black Monday Decision" ad, *Albuquerque Tribune*, February 13, 1973.

frequently on panels, writing letters to the editor, and heading committees.¹⁸⁰ The main focus of Trott's and Gere's political work (at least what made it into the newspapers) was on opposing legalized abortion.

The other two panelists of the day did not have such a singular focus. A Black New-Mexican born minister, W.C. Griffin seems to have limited his pro-life participation to these two memorials in 1976 and 1977. His primary focus was the spiritual and physical well-being of the African American community in Albuquerque. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Griffin brought in a number of travelling Black evangelists, at least one of whom advocated a "constructive, law abiding 'Black Power,'" in which Black people would "advance themselves intellectually, economically and politically" with "God's Power."¹⁸¹ Bishop Griffin put this theological rubber to Albuquerque's road in the early 1970s, when he joined with six other African American ministers to provide decent public housing for Black people in the city. Their plans came to fruition in 1971 when the city broke ground on a 140-unit complex that the ministers hoped would "keep [our] young people here." At the ground-breaking, New Mexico's first Black state representative, Lenton Malry, commended the ministers: "This is the first time to my knowledge that black people and other minorities have gotten together to provide some of the needs of people in this city."¹⁸² While this was not the first time people of color had joined

¹⁸⁰ Gere also spoke on the issue of euthanasia; she was especially worried that legalized abortion would lead to killing the elderly. See Elaine Gere, "Abortions Problem," letter to the editor, *Albuquerque Tribune*, January 16, 1976; Elaine Gere, "Deliver Us From Evil," letter to the editor, *Albuquerque Journal*, October 15, 1976; "Life Seminar Scheduled," *The New Mexican*, November 6, 1977.

¹⁸¹ "Evangelistic Services Set," *Albuquerque Tribune*, February 6, 1969. For other revivals, see "Current Crusade to Be Continued, Evangelist Says," *Albuquerque Journal*, April 15, 1971.

¹⁸² "Ground Broken for 140-Unit Apartment Complex in NE," *Albuquerque Journal*, December 20, 1971. See also Urith Lucas, "\$2.1 Million Apartments for Low Income Families," *Albuquerque Tribune*, December 14, 1971.

together in Albuquerque, Malry's words highlight how important this group of ministers was in the city's civil rights landscape.

Archbishop Robert Sánchez, as the head of the Catholic hierarchy in the region, was a more regular presence in pro-life politics in the state. But he was primarily known for his other commitments. Sánchez had "made history [in 1974] as the first Hispanic, the first Spanish-Speaking, and the first New-Mexican-born archbishop."¹⁸³ He had grown up in Sorcorro, New Mexico, to a hispano family that traced their ancestral roots back to the first Spanish residents.¹⁸⁴ When chosen as archbishop, Sánchez called himself a Chicano and said his position was important for the Chicano movement as a whole.¹⁸⁵ Sánchez used his first years in the position to support the Chicano movement, to fight discrimination, and to aid Mexican immigrants.¹⁸⁶ He was a well-loved, dynamic leader in New Mexico's Catholic community. During his tenure as archbishop, he continued to accumulate "firsts." He ordained the first Native American bishop and re-envisioned the church's relationship to Indigenous people in the state.¹⁸⁷ In the late 1980s and early 1990s, he opened the arms of the church to those suffering from HIV/AIDS; he started a Catholics AIDS task force and held masses for those who were ill as well as and their families

¹⁸³ Eduardo Tafoya, "Despite His Rise, Archbishop Still 'Father Sanchez,'" *The New Mexican*, April 19, 1987.

¹⁸⁴ Dennis Hevesi, "Archbishop Robert F. Sanchez, Who Fought Discrimination, Dies at 77," *New York Times*, January 23, 2012.

¹⁸⁵ Robert Locke, "Archbishop Sees Choice as Symbolic," *The New Mexican*, June 23, 1974.

¹⁸⁶ "Dramatic Chimayo Pilgrimage," *Albuquerque Tribune*, June 8, 1974; "Cinco de Mayo Fiesta to Start Sunday at HU," *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, April 25, 1975; "Chicano Week Opens Sunday," *Las Cruces Sun News*, February 10, 1976; "Bishops Ask Congress to Probe Discrimination," *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, February 1, 1977; "His Ambition to Serve Better," *Albuquerque Tribune*, July 23, 1977.

¹⁸⁷ "Indian Bishop Ordained," *The New Mexican*, May 7, 1986.

and friends.¹⁸⁸

Unfortunately, he was also first Archbishop of Santa Fe to leave in disgrace when, in the early 1990s, his twenty years of affairs with women in their late teens came to light. These charges broke alongside growing stories of child sex abuse among Catholic priests in New Mexico.¹⁸⁹ Archbishop Sánchez said he had known about roughly twenty cases of sex abuse during his nineteen years in charge and did nothing about them because he did not understand the long-term consequences of pedophilia, and because he considered “abortion and assaulting a priest worse violations theologically.”¹⁹⁰ While the church’s teaching on abortion limited Archbishop Sánchez’s response to pedophile priests, his vision of racial justice motivated much of his work as archbishop.

Like Griffin and Sánchez, New Mexico’s African Americans and ethnic Mexicans may have participated in a pro-life event now and then, but they did not fully join the movement. As in Utah and Colorado, pro-life groups in New Mexico were made up largely of white religious

¹⁸⁸ Peter Eichstaedt, “AIDS Activist Dies of Complications from Disease,” *The New Mexican*, February 12, 1990; Gussie Fauntleroy, “Cathedral Hosts Service for AIDS, HIV-Infected,” *The New Mexican*, April 11, 1992; Gussie Fauntleroy, “Church to Offer AIDS Service,” *The New Mexican*, April 4, 1992.

¹⁸⁹ “Archbishop- ‘I’m Sorry,’” *The New Mexican*, March 10, 1993; letters to the editor, *The New Mexican*, March 19, 1993; “Celibacy Issue,” *The New Mexican*, April 18, 1993; “The Priests—and the Stories—Behind the Charges,” *The New Mexican*, April 18, 1993; Ray Rivera, “Theologians: The Church will Survive This Crisis Too,” *The New Mexican*, September 19, 1996.

¹⁹⁰ Rivera, “Theologians: The Church will Survive This Crisis Too.” In the early to mid-1990s, abused children around the country were coming forward to speak against their abuser priests. The scandal in these cases was not only that the abuse had occurred but also that a church so concerned with families, sexual ethics, and celibacy knew about it and did little to stop it. Since the late 1940s, pedophiles in the priesthood from around the country had been sent to a New Mexico facility, the Servants of the Paraclete, to rehabilitate and often were quickly reincorporated into New Mexican parish life. For Servants of Paraclete, see David Kohn, “The Archbishop,” *60 Minutes*, February 11, 2009.

people.¹⁹¹ People of color may have prayed at memorial services or said the rosary in private or at a public event, but they were never the activists on whom pro-life groups could depend. One Anglo New Mexican pro-life activist even suggested there were no African Americans in New Mexico to recruit.¹⁹² When asked whether the pro-life movement in the state was racially diverse, the same activist replied that New Mexico's Indigenous and ethnic Mexican populations were personally pro-life but did not "vote it."¹⁹³ Her response, while not directly answering the question, made the larger point: she did not see people of color in her state taking public stands against abortion. Even if there were substantial numbers of Indigenous, ethnic Mexican, and Black pro-life people, they did not join New Mexico's pro-life groups. If this was a civil rights movement, it was a largely white one.

Despite the racial homogeneity of the movement, multiracial imagery was especially important to this white conservative civil rights movement. Having Black and ethnic Mexican people speak alongside white activists was an effective visual way for the movement to authenticate itself, claiming to be the ecumenical and multiracial inheritor of the Black civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1970s and 1980s, New Mexico pro-life activists

¹⁹¹ Dauneen Dolce remembered that the early pro-life groups in New Mexico were almost entirely Catholic. See Dolce interview. Dolce's assessment is born out in the letters to Governor David Cargo about the 1969 law; most letter writers opposing the bill wrote openly about or alluded to their Catholicism. See, for example, telegram from Father Donald Bean, San Miguel Church, Socorro, NM, to Governor David Cargo, no date, folder 241, box 6, Governor David F. Cargo Papers, New Mexico State Records Center, Santa Fe, NM (hereafter Cargo Papers); telegram from Mrs. Jerome Doherty to Governor Cargo, March 12, 1969, folder 241, box 6, Cargo Papers; telegram from Dave and Frances Holmes to Gov. David Cargo, March 13, 1969, folder 241, box 6, Cargo Papers; Rev. Edward M. Gallagher to Governor David Cargo, March 26, 1969, folder 241, box 6, Cargo Papers; Reverend Ralph Weishaar to Governor Cargo, April 1, 1969, folder 241, box 6, Cargo Papers; Eileen Durjer to Governor Cargo, February 23, 1969, folder 241, box 6, Cargo Papers.

¹⁹² Dolce interview, p. 11.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

repeatedly invoked civil rights, especially its most remembered leader, Martin Luther King, Jr. New Mexico Right to Life newsletters used King's words—"I fear the silence of the churches more than the shouts of the angry multitudes"—as rallying cries, set apart from any article or accompanying text.¹⁹⁴ At a Right to Life rally in Las Cruces in the 1980s, a pro-life leader told his audience, "If [King] were here today, he would say, 'Let freedom and justice ring for the born and the unborn.'"¹⁹⁵ By the 1980s, pro-lifers claimed King as one of their own, claiming that he endorsed their struggle as the inheritor of the Black civil rights movement.¹⁹⁶ When describing the gestalt of her movement, New Mexico pro-life activist Dauneen Dolce said

¹⁹⁴ *Viva Life* newsletter, February 1986, folder 1, box 1-8, HH120, Right to Life, New Mexico, Hall Hoag Collection.

¹⁹⁵ *Viva Life* newsletter, March 1986, folder 1, box 1-8, HH120, Right to Life, New Mexico, Hall Hoag Collection.

¹⁹⁶ Whether Martin Luther King would have supported the pro-life or pro-choice movement has been a topic of much debate. King's niece, Alveda King, has spoken on behalf of a number of pro-life groups, including Priests for Life, Silent No More Awareness Campaign, Heartbeat International, Georgia Right to Life, and the National Black Pro-Life Coalition. She has regularly claimed that her famous uncle was pro-life. On the other hand, Coretta Scott King, Martin Luther King's widow, has supported abortion rights and gay marriage and argued that her husband would have shared her beliefs. One central piece of evidence in Coretta Scott King's favor is that her husband had been a member of Planned Parenthood since the mid-1950s and, in 1966, he accepted Planned Parenthood Margaret Sanger Award. In his acceptance speech, King said, "Our sure beginning in the struggle for equality by non-violent direct action may not have been so resolute without the tradition established by Margaret Sanger and people like her." See Tom Davis, *Sacred Work: Planned Parenthood and Its Clergy Alliances* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005), p. 27. For Alveda King's activism and claims about Martin Luther King, see "King Niece Advocates Right-Wing Standards," *Austin American-Statesman*, January 18, 1998; "King's Niece Campaigns for the Unborn 'Life was Very Important to Him,' She Says," *Boston Globe*, January 17, 2000; Hilary White, "One Quarter of Black Population Missing from Abortion Genocide Says Dr. Alveda King," *LifeSiteNews*, August 24, 2007, at <http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/archive/ldn/2007/aug/07082406> (accessed October 5, 2012); Jessica Greene, "Life is a Civil Right, King Niece Says," *Ocala Star-Banner* (FL), January 12, 2008; Colleen Slevin, "Vigil Held at Planned Parenthood Clinic," *Fort Morgan Times* (CO), August 26, 2008; Julie Duin, "Alveda King Takes on LeRoy Carhart," *Washington Times*, June 9, 2009; Alveda C. King, *How Can the Dream Survive if We Murder Children?* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2008); Alveda King, "Foreword," in *Almost Wasn't: A Memoir of My Abortion and How God Used Me*, by Sonya Howard (Philadelphia, PA: Xlibris, 2011), pp. 9-10; Max Blumenthal, *Republican Gomorrah: Inside the Movement that Shattered the Party* (New York: Nation Books, 2009), pp. 147-49. For Coretta Scott King's support of abortion rights, see "Thousands Retrace King's March," *Times-News* (Burlington, NC), August 29, 1993.

succinctly: “It’s civil rights.”¹⁹⁷ In 2000, a pro-life publication in Arizona put the strategy more explicitly: “we must frame the issue so as to attract civil rights supporters because we will lose if the public concludes that abortion is a civil right.”¹⁹⁸

This ecumenical civil rights movement, though, had very clear boundaries. If one supported abortion rights, one could not be included. When people of color or Jews, from whose oppressions and genocides pro-lifers borrowed, linked social justice to reproductive rights, pro-life activists claimed that they betrayed themselves and a broader rights movement. For example, in 1989, pro-life activists in New Mexico picketed an Albuquerque synagogue during Yom Kippur, one of the High Holy Days in the Jewish year, with signs equating the Jews inside to Hitler. The synagogue’s rabbi, Paul Citrin, had been vocally pro-choice, and Jews in New Mexico, more generally, supported abortion rights.¹⁹⁹ For the picketers, who represented no particular organization, the Holocaust was a result of an “abortion-mentality,” an antagonism to “life,” rather than anti-Semitism or fascism. Jewish New Mexicans, then, were culpable for a modern Holocaust, and philosophically complicit in the Nazi Holocaust of the past. These pro-life activists attempted to make their point about abortion as a human rights issue by openly opposing those most closely associated with genocide in recent historical memory.²⁰⁰ While pro-life protests of synagogues were rare, this particular protest exposed the jagged edge of pro-life

¹⁹⁷ Dolce interview. For more civil rights rhetoric in the Four Corners states, see *Arizona Right to Life Newsletter*, April-May 1990, and *Arizona Right to Life Newsletter*, March 1983, both at University of Arizona Library Special Collections, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

¹⁹⁸ *Arizona Right to Life News*, August 2000, University of Arizona Library Special Collections, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

¹⁹⁹ Henry J. Tobias, *Jews in New Mexico since World War II* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), pp. 112-13.

²⁰⁰ This particular protest backfired, however. Fifty clergy from various denominations, including some staunchly pro-life ones, condemned the protest.

historical co-optation of the language and imagery of genocide and the Holocaust.

Pro-life activists' interest in racial reconciliation also had its limits. Notwithstanding their broad rhetoric of genocide, slavery, and civil rights, no pro-life activists in the Four Corners states joined in coalition with Chicano, Black, or American Indian civil rights groups in the region. They did not engage in, or even discuss, the campaign for fair housing, as Rev. W.C. Griffin had, or HIV/AIDS activism, the way Archbishop Robert Sánchez had. Even in rhetoric, pro-life activists' relationship to these social justice movements was at most ambivalent. Activists borrowed the language of these movements and sometimes their criticisms of abortion rights and birth control activists to discredit the pro-choice movement, rather than to wrestle seriously with modern racism.²⁰¹

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Despite these conflicts, local right to life groups continued to envision pro-life politics as a politics that could overcome social divisions. At the 1986 New Mexico state fair, pro-life volunteer Joan Van der Vlist saw many attendees connect in a personal way to the fetal models in her booth, from the adoration of a “blonde little boy” to an “Indian woman who gazed ... at the five month model, the age at which her daughter lost their only grandbaby.” Ultimately, Van der Vlist believed many related to these plastic fetuses in a way that transcended their personal and social differences: “the young school girls and old men and pregnant couples and proud grammas and chubby toddlers and shy teenaged boys who just wanted to ... look at something so

²⁰¹ Sometimes this ambivalence or co-optation slipped into open antagonism. As one pro-life Utahn wrote, “It appears that the Supreme Court is wishy-washy and sway[s] to any current tune being played by contemporary radicals. What about the civil rights of the unborn child—you know that they count, too!” In this calculation, activists for racial equality and second-wave feminists were “contemporary radicals” causing the social decay that so many pro-life activists saw looming on the horizon. See Nancy Sluder to Rep. Owens, January 23, 1973.

special, so beautiful, so mysterious... the common bond we all share—the miracle of life.”²⁰² In her recollection of the state fair, Van der Vlist was imagining an entity, and a politics, that would overcome human divisions of race, age, and class. In New Mexico, where racial, gender, class, and age identities structured politics and daily life, this was a conservative white woman’s dream of what her state could be, of what the United States could be.

By then the abortion debate had come a long way from Colorado’s 1967 discussion of abortion “meccas.” By 1986, largely because of the work of the pro-life movement, the discussion had shifted fully to what constituted murder and when life began. Pro-life activists in the Four Corners states, like Dr. Robert Stewart, and outside activists, like John and Barbara Wilke, had pushed the conversation toward questions of biological origins: chromosomes, heartbeats, toes and fingers. With preserved fetuses and grisly pictures, activists worked to make conception into the baseline for humanity and the fetus into the ultimate victim of modernity. To do so, activists co-opted the historical narratives of slavery and the Holocaust to prove that abortion was the worst genocide and human rights abuse of all time. Finally, activists used multiracial imagery—perhaps pioneered in New Mexico before it spread to other places—to claim the movement was a civil rights movement. Primarily white activists used the emotional power of the civil rights movement, while imagining the fetus as an entity that would unify all Americans.

In their vision, the “miracle of life” would help people see beyond what many conservatives regarded as the overstated impact of conquest and colonialism, racism and sexism, structural inequality and cultural oppression. Because this was the ideal outcome for white pro-life activists, few people of color fully joined the anti-abortion movement. A good number,

²⁰² “State Fair Follow Up,” *Viva Life*, October 1986, folder 1, box 1-8, HH120, Right to Life, New Mexico, Hall Hoag Collection.

especially in Catholic communities in New Mexico, surely believed abortion was murder, but the pro-life movement's cooption of genocide, slavery, and civil rights narratives and their disinterest in other racial justice issues probably made it very hard for many people of color to join the movement. Despite this absence, white pro-life activists remained hopeful that fetal models, preserved fetuses, fetal photographs, and memorials to the "unborn" had the potential to end abortion and reunite Americans, bringing back the imagined unity of the past.

Chapter Two

Beating the Rectory Door Down: Pro-Life Activism in Religious Communities and the Reorientation of “Judeo-Christian Values”

In pews all over the state of Arizona, in January 1975, Catholics heard about the problem of abortion.¹ If priests in the Diocese of Phoenix followed their bishop’s suggestions, they planned a regularly scheduled mass or a special evening mass on the “Christian concern for life” in order to “sensitize the congregation to the importance of the issue.” The week before, church bulletins told parishioners that *Roe v. Wade* gave “parents and their doctor the legal right to take the life of innocent unborn children at will” and that together Catholics could “arouse a consciousness in our country of the evil of abortion.” Many churchgoers certainly recited the suggested prayer that week: “That people of all faiths and religious convictions may join in the effort to obtain Constitutional protection for all human life, let us pray to the Lord.” The following Sunday, on the anniversary of *Roe*, many parishes rang their church bells for fifteen minutes as the bishop suggested. Others flew their flags at half-staff in “memory of thousands of innocent lives taken by abortion.” In the special mass, the bishop recommended priests draw from the ceremonies and prayers for other religious occasions, especially the funeral mass for unbaptized children and the Feast of the Holy Innocents, the December holiday commemorating King Herod’s killing, after Jesus’ birth, of all Bethlehem boys under the age of two. In writing their sermons, some priests probably drew from the bishop’s statement on abortion, which he attached with his other suggestions. From the pulpit, priests might have quoted rising abortion

¹ In 1969, when the Diocese of Phoenix was formed, it contained over 185,000 Catholics and 50 parishes. By 1975, those numbers had probably grown significantly. See “Cincinnati Man is Named Bishop,” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, September 3, 1969.

statistics and a growing “climate of social permissiveness,” as the bishop’s statement did. Priests might have mentioned women aborting out of “convenience,” cited allegedly scientific proof that life begins at conception, or made comparisons to the gas chambers of World War II. They might have argued that civil law was based on “Divine Law,” and worried aloud over how the two were now in conflict. They might have asked their flock for a “renew[ed] determination to reverse the Supreme Court’s abortion on demand decisions [and] to advocate the rights of the unborn in all our social and political processes.” Or priests might have written their pro-life sermon from scratch. Whatever the case, few parishioners would have left such services without encountering the political imaginary of life or without a clear understanding of their church’s belief that abortion was murder. Few would have missed that now, January 22 was “a day of mourning.”²

Arizona Catholics had experienced such pro-life services at least since 1967. That year, four state senators proposed an abortion liberalization bill, similar to the one passed in Colorado, to Arizona’s legislature. In response, the bishop of the primary Arizona diocese wrote a letter to the laity condemning the bill, which was printed in the diocesan newspaper.³ A pollster examined how the diocese’s priests responded to the letter. Following the instructions of the bishop, the letter was read in all parishes. The pollster also found that 82 percent of the diocese’s priests said they had offered some “commentary” on the letter to their congregations, 86 percent encouraged their congregants to write to their legislators about the bill, 63 percent gave their

² G.A. (Jack) Bradley to Reverend Monsignor Robert J. Donohoe, January 15, 1976, with attached statement from Bishop Edward A. McCarthy and recommendations, folder 4, box 22, Robert J. Donohoe Papers, Arizona Collection, Hayden Library, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ (hereafter Donohoe Papers).

³ Daniel J. O’Neil, *Church Lobbying in a Western State: A Case Study on Abortion Legislation* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1970), pp. 36-37. Because the Diocese of Phoenix had not been created in 1967, almost all of the state of Arizona would have been in the Diocese of Tucson, and thus the letter came from the bishop of that diocese.

congregations the names of their legislators, 47 percent suggested that the church's auxiliary groups work on the issue, 42 percent delivered a sermon on abortion, and 37 percent put some mention of the bill in their parish bulletin.⁴ Priestly efforts were probably lessened that year because parishes were supposed to be talking about the yearly diocesan financial drive that week. And as this was the beginning of pro-life political mobilization, it is likely that priestly participation in pro-life politics only grew in subsequent years. Such activism, in some form, occurred again and again throughout the end of the century, reminding the devout of their church's political and moral commitment to ending abortion.⁵

This religious activism was not solely a product of hierarchical mandate. Anti-abortion work within the Catholic Church was a combined effort by politicized bishops and priests and an energized segment of the laity. On the grassroots level, it was white activist parishioners who motivated many parish priests to prioritize abortion throughout the year. Bishops could only suggest a focus on abortion; lay activists pushed their priests to follow through. It was ordinary churchgoers along with priests who worked to convince their co-religionists to join the movement. These members of the laity were responding as much to liberalizing forces within their own church as they were to the liberal political climate nationally. In fact, in the 1960s, pro-life religious people watched as their liberal clergy and co-religionists joined abortion reform coalitions, putting forward a moral and religious argument for legal abortion. In the Southwest, white activists, especially in the Catholic Church, also faced the demands of their ethnic Mexican co-religionists that the church dedicate itself to anti-racism and poverty campaigns. In response to all of these developments, throughout the end of the century, white pro-life religious people

⁴ Ibid., pp. 38-39.

⁵ These services were a part of a Respect Life Week, initially conceived of by American bishops in 1972. See United States Catholic Conference, *Respect Life!: Respect Life Week, October 1-7, 1972* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1972).

pushed their leaders to make pro-life activism an essential part of Catholic, Protestant, and Mormon religious experience.

Catholic laypeople led most early anti-abortion groups in the Four Corners states, but they explicitly worked across denominational lines to create ecumenical coalitions. In order to counter the idea that this was a Christian or primarily Catholic movement, religious activists emphasized their developing secular ideology—the political imaginary where science and history proved abortion was a civil and human rights abuse. Gradually, however, activists developed a new way to talk about religious and civil morality that confronted the broader question about the role of religion and faith in American politics and law. Activists contended that the American system was based on a non-denominational, monotheistic, religious set of beliefs: Judeo-Christian values. In the redefinition of this term, pro-life activists denied the moral authority of liberal religious people and the moral importance of anti-racism and anti-poverty campaigns, while providing a political and theological umbrella under which many white Protestants, Mormons, and Catholics could comfortably stand. With Judeo-Christian values, activists claimed monotheistic religion as the domain of the Right while placing pro-life and Christian politics at the heart of American history.⁶

Religious Dissent on Abortion

In the 1960s and 1970s, religious Americans, and a broader national audience, witnessed the fracturing of religious unanimity on issues of gender, sexuality, and reproduction. Until the early 1960s, all religious traditions—Jewish, Catholic and Protestant—were unanimous, at least

⁶ Muslims played no part in the pro-life worldview. References to Islam in pro-life publications between 1967 and 2000 were rare.

in their official pronouncements, in their opposition to abortion.⁷ By the late 1960s, however, this united voice had splintered. In fact, religious leaders often took the lead in early abortion reform campaigns. In these years, religious Americans faced massive changes within their denominations and watched as liberal clergy offered moral arguments for social change.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, many Protestant and Jewish clergy put themselves right in the middle of the emerging abortion debate by openly helping women access safe abortions in the U.S. and abroad. Certainly, some clergy had been helping women access abortion quietly for years. A Unitarian minister in Denver had been counseling women on how and where to get safe abortions since 1964.⁸ By 1970, he claimed he had referred at least 750 Colorado women to safe abortion providers in Mexico. In 1969, this minister joined a group of clergymen interested in counseling women considering abortion. Their duty, this group said, was to “discuss all the alternatives—having the baby or keeping it, or giving it up for adoption, or interrupting the pregnancy.”⁹ They called themselves the Clergy Consultation Service on Abortion (CCS).

Originally begun in New York in 1967, the CCS was an ecumenical group, because, as one of the founding members recalled, “every clergyman I knew ... was bombarded with calls for help from pregnant women.” By 1969, there were CCS groups in at least eight major American cities. That year, Rabbi Lewis Bogage, one of the founding members in New York,

⁷ This was not the case with birth control, however. Some Protestant and Jewish clergy had supported the birth control movement since the 1930s. Some had also issued public statements supporting artificial birth control earlier in the century. See Tom Davis, *Sacred Work: Planned Parenthood and Its Clergy Alliances* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005).

⁸ Rykken Johnson, “Minister Calls State Law Repressive,” *Rocky Mountain News*, November 10, 1969.

⁹ Olga Curtis, “Clergymen Who Offer Abortion Aid,” *Denver Post*, January 25, 1970.

helped start the group in Denver.¹⁰ Episcopal minister Jerry Kolb remembered that the group began with only four members. Within their first year, however, they assembled at least twelve who were willing to identify publicly with the group, and by 1972, they had forty associated clergy.¹¹ The group believed that abortion was a difficult decision, Kolb said, and so provided women with someone “they could go to who would be non-judgmental who would be open to discuss the situation and to counsel with them and then who would help them in whatever decision that they made.”¹² Those involved in the Clergy Consultation Service attempted to remake their role in what had been a secretive, shameful, and dangerous process.

The group, by members’ own accounts, only sent women to abortion providers who were safe and reasonably priced. Kolb remembered a number of reliable providers in Mexico and he himself flew to New York City “to inspect [a clinic] and see what it was like.”¹³ In 1972, he explained to the *Rocky Mountain News* that CCS had doctors in New York and California, along with others in Mexico, Puerto Rico, England, and the “Far East.” He also told the newspaper that they worked to get women “the cheapest possible deal.” The group boycotted doctors and psychiatrists who charged exorbitant fees. “Commercial abortion outfits” had offered the group kickbacks to recommend their services, but the clergy never accepted.¹⁴ In 2011, Kolb recalled

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ For initial group, see interview with Rev. Jerry Kolb, November 7, 2011. For the size of the group in 1970, see Curtis, “Clergymen.” For the 1972 numbers, see Joan McCoy, “Abortion Group’s Name is a Misnomer,” *Rocky Mountain News*, July 10, 1972.

¹² Kolb interview.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ McCoy, “Abortion Group’s Name is a Misnomer.”

that if a woman came to the group and did not have enough money for the procedure, the clergy pushed the abortion providers to reduce their fees.¹⁵

Denver's Clergy Consultation Service included clergy from a variety of churches and synagogues. One of the primary functions of the group was to set up counseling between a pregnant woman and a clergyman from the woman's faith tradition, as Jerry Kolb explained, "so people could feel comfortable."¹⁶ In 1970, the group included men from Jewish, Methodist, Episcopalian, Baptist, Lutheran, Unitarian, Presbyterian, and United Church of Christ congregations.¹⁷ It secretly included some Catholic priests as well. Kolb remembered that the secretly-affiliated Roman Catholic clergy "necessarily weren't official but were ... willing to sit down and talk with people about it. And they were not probably real excited if [the women] made a decision to terminate but were empathetic to that and would send them over to the rest of us to find resources for them." These priests, Kolb amended, "were probably renegades in their own way. But we all have renegades."¹⁸ In 1972, the group claimed not only to have received referrals from Catholic priests but also requests for counseling from women in the Right to Life movement.¹⁹

¹⁵ Kolb interview.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Women ministers and rabbis were few and far between in these years. Women joined the clergy in increasing numbers beginning in the 1970s. See Mark Chaves, *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Institutions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Pamela S. Naddell, *Women Who Would Be Rabbis: A History of Women's Ordination, 1889-1985* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1998); Betty Bone Scheiss, *Why Me, Lord? One Woman's Ordination to the Priesthood with Commentary and Complaint* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003); Patricia Lloyd-Sidle, *Celebrating Our Call: Ordination Stories for Presbyterian Women* (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 2006).

¹⁸ Kolb interview.

¹⁹ McCoy, "Abortion Group's Name is a Misnomer."

The Clergy Consultation Service's primary moral argument was that abortion was a medical, not religious, issue. These clergymen mostly talked about medical access, the costs of health care, the problems and benefits of underground health services, maternal deaths from back-alley abortions, and the psychological trauma of carrying an unwanted pregnancy to term. As one member told the *Rocky Mountain News*, "It's a personal issue and a medical question. It has nothing to do with right and wrong. Good or bad."²⁰ Another told a reporter, "We wanted to bring some degree of respect to what we considered a medical problem. We wanted to stop the hush-hush talk."²¹ CCS believed that other clergy were abdicating their responsibilities by condemning abortion outright and turning a blind eye to women's suffering. "We help them get over their problem and start anew. That's what church should be about," one minister told a local newspaper.²²

Ultimately, the clergy of CCS placed moral decision-making with the pregnant woman, and confessed their own inability to determine whether the fetus was a life. As a Unitarian member put it: "I don't know when a person becomes a human... But [the fetus] certainly can't exist on its own."²³ They were certain of a woman's right to make her own decision regarding abortion. "In the Judeo-Christian tradition," one sympathetic Episcopal priest explained, "both man and woman are created by God in his own image, so why cannot women be a part of decisions that affect them?" He ruminated, "Why should the weirdness of masculinity dominate

²⁰ Johnson, "Minister Calls State Law Repressive."

²¹ McCoy, "Abortion Group's Name is a Misnomer."

²² Ibid.

²³ Johnson, "Minister Calls State Law Repressive."

everything?”²⁴ In the counseling sessions, CCS clergy probably gave women seeking abortions a variety of different recommendations depending upon the clergyman’s beliefs and the woman’s circumstances. But ultimately the clergy helped the woman no matter her decision. They simply provided a space where women could discuss the “theological, moral dimensions” of abortion. Jerry Kolb explained, “The anti-abortion people used to say ... that people [who got abortions] didn’t know what they were doing. And that was just as far from the truth as it could be. They know why they terminated the pregnancy.... It was a good, good thing for them.”²⁵ In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the CCS put forward an ecumenical moral vision in which individuals made the best decisions for themselves and clergy acted as ethical and medical shepherds, helping women avoid butchers and “start anew.”

Religious Americans around the country watched as outspoken priests, ministers, and rabbis—in Colorado and elsewhere—willfully skirted the law to help women access abortions.²⁶ The clergymen were willing to go to jail to help women avoid sterility, psychological trauma, and death from botched abortions.²⁷ They offered a woman “non-judgmental” religious

²⁴ Virginia Culver, “Eligibility Restrictions Held Slavery Hangover,” *Denver Post*, March 6, 1971.

²⁵ Kolb interview.

²⁶ There is a lot of evidence about CCS in Colorado because its members were particularly outspoken, but other Clergy Consultation Service groups probably existed quietly or completely underground in the other Four Corner states. For a single mention of a CCS in Arizona, see Eileen Hulse, “Abortion is a Fact,” folder 8, box 35, Planned Parenthood of Northern and Central Arizona Collection, Arizona Historical Foundation, Hayden Library, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ. One New York member of CCS moved to Utah and, after *Roe*, spoke to the *Salt Lake Tribune* about his experience. It is possible that this minister provided religious counseling and recommendations in Utah before it was legal as well. See Rev. Ronald E. Clark, “Sex Education or ... Abortion,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 11, 1973. An Episcopal rector in Salt Lake City also noted he sent women to Los Angeles for abortions before *Roe*. See Ferenc Morton Szasz, *Religion in the Modern American West* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000), p. 134.

²⁷ No member of Denver’s CCS was ever sent to jail. The group contended there was nothing illegal about providing a name and address of an abortion provider (especially out of state). They claimed

counseling and gave over the moral authority to her. And ultimately, they lobbied legislatures for change. In 1970, Rabbi Lewis Bogage told the *Denver Post* that “our real objective is to become a lobbying group that can fight for changing Colorado’s abortion law, so it becomes really liberal, or to have it repealed entirely.”²⁸ Implicitly, these clergymen offered an alternative moral schema, an alternative view of Jewish or Christian values, to the religious prohibition of abortion. And they used their own moral authority in legislatures around the country to help legalize abortion.

Many congregations joined their reform-minded clergy in the late 1960s and early 1970s to advocate for a change in abortion laws. Unitarian Universalists were the first Protestant denomination to support reform, when, in 1963, their general assembly called restrictive laws “an affront to human life and dignity.”²⁹ In fact, a Unitarian congregation had been the first group to push Representative Lamm to propose abortion reform legislation in Colorado.³⁰ In 1969, a national Unitarian women’s group voted to make abortion reform their first priority.³¹ Women led the way in the Episcopal Church, when, in 1970, their national council passed a resolution calling for repeal of all abortion laws that denied women the right to exercise their free conscience. Of this resolution, conservative Colorado Episcopal minister James Mote noted that

a clergyman did not necessarily know what went on at that address. Rev. Kolb remembered, “There was a possibility we could be sent to prison. I don’t think any of us did. We got threatened a couple of times.” See Kolb interview. See also Curtis, “Clergymen.”

²⁸ Curtis, “Clergymen.”

²⁹ Marian Faux, *Roe v. Wade: The Untold Story of the Landmark Supreme Court Decision that Made Abortion Legal* (New York: First Cooper Press, 2001), p. 103.

³⁰ Cal Queal, “How Colorado Changed Its Abortion Law,” *Denver Post*, June 18, 1967.

³¹ Faux, *Roe v. Wade*, p. 104.

that he knew “of no women competent to make such a decision.”³² In 1967, Reform Jewish leadership issued a statement commending states that had already passed “humane” reforms and urged other states to follow suit.³³ Even Protestant churches that would later oppose liberalized abortion laws, like the United Methodists and the Southern Baptists, cautiously supported abortion reform in these years.³⁴

Thus, Americans across the country, among them nascent social conservatives, watched as Protestant, Jewish, and Catholic clergy and institutions debated the morality of abortion. This was a radical change from the late 1950s and early 1960s. This shift on the issue of abortion was a part of a broader project of reform that touched almost all religious institutions in the 1960s and 1970s. The Catholic Church, along with Protestants, Jews, and Mormons, were wrestling with reform, especially in the arenas of gender and sexuality, and the implications of those reforms. Americans, no matter their political stripe, could no longer assume a religious consensus on abortion; religious institutions were changing. They were not traditionalist bulwarks against a modern age. While many pro-life activists spoke of their politics as response to liberalization in society, their movement was also a response to liberalization in their own

³² Virginia Culver, “Rector Says Women’s Liberty, License Confused,” *Denver Post*, March 6, 1971. This Episcopal support probably built on longstanding assistance in many of the state’s religious groups for the birth control movement. See Davis, *Sacred Work*, pp. 105-8.

³³ Linda Greenhouse and Reva B. Siegel, *Before Roe v. Wade: Voices that Shaped the Abortion Debate Before the Supreme Court Ruling* (New York: Kaplan, 2010), pp. 69-70.

³⁴ For United Methodist and Southern Baptist statements supporting abortion reform, see *ibid.*, pp. 70-72. Other national religious associations and organizations that supported abortion reform before *Roe v. Wade* include: American Baptist Convention, American Ethical Union, American Humanist Association, American Jewish Congress, American Protestant Hospital Association, B’nai B’rith Women, Church Women United (Board of Managers), Moravian Church (Northern Province Synod), National Council of Jewish Women, United Church of Canada (General Council), United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, United Presbyterian Church in the USA, Women’s Division of the United Methodist Church, and the Young Women’s Christian Association of the USA. See Raymond Tatalovich and Byron W. Daynes, *The Politics of Abortion: A Study of Community Conflict in Public Policymaking* (New York: Praeger, 1981), pp. 66-67.

faith communities and within a broader religious world in the United States. Pro-life activists worked to reassert their politically and theologically conservative vision within shifting, not static, religious institutions. To build their movement, activists worked to politicize faith communities and recapture religion as the domain of the right.

Building a Movement

Activists followed no single path in joining the pro-life movement. Some remembered being motivated by friends or neighbors. Others arrived through medical communities of like-minded doctors and nurses. Still others recalled coming to the movement on their own, through personal conviction. But many came to the movement through their churches. When reflecting on where most anti-abortion picketers were from, a Tucson pro-life activist said, “mostly churches, mostly churches.”³⁵ This was not by accident; nor was it because every religious person was naturally pro-life. The politicization of religious people was a product of institutional and grassroots activism. Houses of worship were essential sites of political transformation for many because pro-life activists appealed to congregations, ministers, and priests; injected pro-life materials into religious services and functions; and argued that abortion was evidence of a larger social decay.

These early pro-life activists did not just use the churches; they worked to change them. Surely, many priests, ministers, and bishops worked willfully and happily alongside pro-life laypeople to motivate congregations and create activists. Frequently, however, activists had to prod clergy into taking strong public stands against abortion; they often had to push hesitant ministers and priests to integrate pro-life issues into church services; and they had to insist in

³⁵ Interview with Phil and Helen Seader, March 18, 2010.

daily ways that the church become a bulwark against abortion. This was even true in the faith community arguably most committed to pro-life politics: the Roman Catholic Church.

While many Americans, especially in the 1970s, thought of abortion as a “Catholic issue,” Catholic activists, priests, and bishops did not always see eye to eye. Mary Rita Urbish, an early pro-life activist in Colorado, remembered that, in 1970, Catholic bishops in Colorado reached out to the group because they wanted “to have contact with the resistance.” The bishops sent a young priest to meet with the activists and, at some point in the meeting, the two parties disagreed about politics or strategy. Urbish, adept at turning a phrase, remembered telling the priest: “if he kept riding the fence like that he’d get splinters in his britches.”³⁶ Even in a meeting created for political alliance and aid, the Catholic hierarchy did not want to commit in the ways Urbish wanted. While it is unclear whether Urbish got the priest to stop riding the fence, it is clear that she and Colorado’s nascent pro-life movement were pushing the local Catholic hierarchy, rather than the other way around. One Catholic author complained in 1971 that clergy and the church hierarchy had not sufficiently supported the pro-life movement and thus “failed as moral leaders.”³⁷ In these early years especially, lay activists and church leaders disagreed not on the immorality of abortion but on how active the church should be in the movement against it.

At the parish level, activists often had to persuade priests to help them. Arizona pro-life activist John Jakubcysk remembered his activism in the 1970s: “We went to the churches. We’d have pro-life masses where we talked the priest into letting the pro-life group of singers play....

³⁶ Interview with Mary Rita Urbish, August 8, 2011.

³⁷ Virgil C. Blum, “Public Policy Making: Why the Churches Strike Out,” *America*, March 6, 1971. For an extended conversation about abortion arguments made in *America* magazine in the 1960s, see Tatalovich and Daynes, *The Politics of Abortion*, pp. 86-100.

And then I would talk the priest into giving a homily on the subject and ask him to pass the basket to raise money so we could buy materials.”³⁸ While Jakubcysk did not detail how much “talking” was needed to get the priest to acquiesce, his language suggests that some prodding, cajoling, or finesse was needed to bring the clergyman around.

Lay empowerment was not new to the region. In fact, historian Timothy Matovina argues that what marks western Catholicism from other regional forms was the role of the laity. He contends that in the nineteenth century, ethnic Mexican laypeople took charge of worship both within in church spaces and outside, often without input or oversight of clergy. In rural villages and border towns, ethnic Mexican laypeople often invited foreign clergy and Anglo Americans to join them in such rituals. He concludes, “Frontier conditions facilitated this inclusiveness by diminishing the restrictions on women and the laity.”³⁹ This inclusiveness does not mean that western Catholic parishes were racial utopias; they certainly were not. Many ethnic Mexicans in late twentieth century, especially those in the Chicano movement, openly criticized local Catholic hierarchies for maintaining racial segregation and upholding racial discrimination.⁴⁰ But it does suggest that western Catholics—both ethnic Mexican and Anglo—might have had a longer history of lay agency than other American Catholics.

³⁸ Interview with John Jakubcysk, March 16, 2010.

³⁹ Timothy M. Matovina, “Lay Initiatives in Worship on the Texas *Frontera*, 1830-1860,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 12, no. 4 (Fall 1994): 107-20 (quote on p. 120). While Matovina’s source material is from Texas, historian Ann Butler agrees with Matovina that the power of the laity marks western Catholicism more generally. See Anne M. Butler, “Western Spaces, Catholic Places,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 18, no. 4 (Fall 2000): 25-39, and *Across God’s Frontiers: Catholic Sisters in the American West, 1850-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

⁴⁰ See, for example, Roberto R. Treviño, “Faith and Justice: The Catholic Church and the Chicano Movement in Houston, 1965-72,” in *Catholicism in the American West: A Rosary of Hidden Voices*, ed. Roberto R. Treviño and Richard V. Francaviglia (Arlington: University of Texas at Arlington Press, 2007), pp. 140-70.

Though prodded by energized lay people, priests did not always respond to that prompting. Mike Berger, the Family Life Director for the Diocese of Tucson, explained, “I think some of the pastors did not give [abortion] the kind of importance that some of the people who were more active in the movement wanted it to be.”⁴¹ Some priests gave few or no sermons about abortion, Berger hypothesized, because “they were afraid of rubbing people the wrong way.”⁴² This Catholic official argued that some priests were less supportive of the pro-life movement simply because they were too busy with other facets of their jobs or because they did not want to insult more liberal parishioners.

In 1976, Robert N. Lynch, an employee of various state and national Catholic offices, offered a few explanations for Catholic hierarchical reticence in *America*, a national Catholic magazine. First, he advanced a partisan explanation. He wrote that many in the church, from middle management to priests to laity, “could never lend their weight to a cause, however just and right, headed by Ronald Reagan.” Catholics had long been a political stronghold for the Democratic Party, and it was only in the 1970s and 1980s that the Republican Party began to woo many devout (usually white) Catholic Democrats. Lynch then followed this with a local, grassroots explanation. “Parish priests,” he explained, “are turned off by the abortion issue in large part because of the cold fact that, too often, today’s pro-lifer is the same person who yesterday was beating the rectory door down on the sex-education program in the parish

⁴¹ Interview with Mike Berger, March 18, 2010. In the interview, Berger talks specifically about a major Tucson pro-life activist who was irritated that her parish did not do more with the pro-life movement.

⁴² Ibid.

school.”⁴³ Lynch argued that some parish priests were slow to help pro-life activists not because they were too busy or generally non-confrontational. Instead, he contended that some priests and pro-life activists were engaged in a broader disagreement about reform in the church.

The Catholic Church, perhaps more than any other, had experienced vast theological and structural change in the 1960s. At a local and regional level, many Chicano Catholics argued that the Catholic Church been complicit in their oppression and demanded redress and reform. Before World War II, especially in the Southwest, Anglos in the Catholic Church had simultaneously allowed racial segregation in many congregations and worked to “Americanize” ethnic Mexicans’ forms of religious expression. After World War II, the Anglo Catholic Church hierarchy began to reexamine these practices, but it was the Chicano movement that demanded the church take a more overt stance against racism and address the social and economic issues facing its ethnic Mexican congregants. As historian Mario García explains, Catholic Chicano groups “called on the Church to return to its roots as a Church for the poor and the oppressed

⁴³ Robert N. Lynch, “‘Abortion’ and 1976 Politics,” *America*, March 6, 1976. Monsignor Robert Donohoe, Dean of Maricopa County and ecumenical pro-life organizer for the diocese, kept this particular article. See folder 2, box 21, Donohoe Papers.

rather than continue to be [a] billion-dollar institution.”⁴⁴ Chicano priests and nuns joined this effort in the 1970s and 1980s to reform and redirect the politics of the church.⁴⁵

These regional reform movements were paired with worldwide change as a result of the Second Vatican Council, which one historian calls “the most important event in the history of Roman Catholicism since the Reformation.”⁴⁶ Pope John XXIII—when convening the council—spoke of *aggiornamento*, “today-ing,” or bringing up to date, a task especially important in a time of such global upheaval.⁴⁷ In four meetings in Rome between 1962 and 1965, three thousand theologians, bishops, and cardinals discussed how to move the Catholic Church into the modern world.⁴⁸ They covered a wide array of issues, from anti-Semitism to the way Catholics took communion, and the reforms were wide sweeping. The council empowered laity to become

⁴⁴ Mario T. García, *Católicos: Resistance and Affirmation in Chicano Catholic History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), p. 24. For broad overviews of ethnic Mexican Catholicism in the U.S., see Jay Dolan and Gilberto Hinojosa, *Mexican Americans and the Catholic Church, 1900-1965* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997); Moises Sandoval, *On the Move: A History of the Hispanic Church in the United States* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990); David A. Badillo, *Latinos and the New Immigrant Church* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Timothy Matovina, *Latino Catholicism: Transformation of America's Largest Church* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012). For studies focused on one city's ethnic Mexican Catholic community, see Roberto R. Treviño, *The Church in the Barrio: Mexican American Ethno-Catholicism in Houston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Timothy Matovina, *Guadalupe and Her Faithful: Latino Catholics in San Antonio, from Colonial Origins to the Present* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

⁴⁵ For more on Chicano groups of priests and nuns, see Lara Medina, *Las Hermanas: Chicana/Latina Religious-Political Activism in the U.S. Catholic Church* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2004); Richard Edward Martinez, *Padres: The National Chicano Priest Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).

⁴⁶ “Vatican Council II,” *Encyclopedia of American Religious History*, vol. 1, ed. Edward L. Queen II, Stephen F. Prothero, and Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr. (New York: Facts on File, 2009), p. 1021.

⁴⁷ Christopher M. Bellitto, *Renewing Christianity: A History of Church Reform from Day One to Vatican II* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2001), p. 206.

⁴⁸ David R. Maines and Michael J. McCallion, *Transforming Catholicism: Liturgical Change in the Vatican II Church* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), p. 1.

more involved in parish ministries, arguing that they were the theological core of the church. Vatican II redefined the church as the People of God (the church's millions of believers) rather than the hierarchy. The Vatican Council altered the church's historic opposition to religious liberty and the separation of church and state, while advocating dialogues between denominations and tolerance of all faiths. It changed the language of mass from Latin to the vernacular language of the individual parish. Many rituals of mass changed as well. For example, congregations were empowered with new prayers and the ability to read the scriptures, and the priest now faced the congregation during most of the mass.⁴⁹ As historian Leslie Woodcock Tentler puts it: "It was shocking ... for American Catholics to witness their allegedly unchanging Church changing, even confessing to past errors."⁵⁰

Together, Vatican II and the many social revolutions of the 1960s caused a tidal wave of change for American Catholics. For many ethnic Mexicans, Vatican II changed local parishes for the better. The move towards mass in the "vernacular" meant that many parishes now had to hold both Spanish and English services. Imbued by the spirit of Vatican II, American social justice movements, and Latin American liberation theology, many ethnic Mexicans called for more change in their local churches. They asked for respect of their religious culture, promotion of Spanish-speaking priests and Chicano bishops, and a reasonable division of resources between

⁴⁹ Chester Gillis, "Vatican II," in *Religion and American Cultures Encyclopedia: An Encyclopedia of Traditions, Diversity and Popular Expression*, vol. 1, ed. Gary Laderman and Luis León (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2003), pp. 94-96. For a sampling of the literature on the Vatican II reforms and their implications, see Colleen McDannell, *Spirit of Vatican II: A History of Catholic Reform in America* (New York: Basic Books, 2011); Massimo Faggioli, *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989); John W. O'Malley, *Tradition and Transition: Historical Perspectives on Vatican II* (Lima, OH: Academic Renewal Press, 2002); Mark S. Massa, *The American Catholic Revolution: How the Sixties Changed the Church Forever* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁵⁰ Leslie Woodcock Tentler, *Catholics and Contraception: An American History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 206.

parishes dominated by Anglos and those dominated by people of color.⁵¹ This increased empowerment within the church, along with other structural change, led to what one scholar has called a “Latino religious resurgence” in the late twentieth century.⁵²

Nationally, especially among Anglo Catholics, the Catholic Church experienced a countertrend. Priests, along with women and men religious, resigned in huge numbers after the Second Vatican Council, sometimes to marry, and fewer committed Catholics considered taking their places. Within parishes, fewer Catholics attended mass regularly or went to confession. Additionally, and perhaps most important, many American Catholics began to believe in their own ability to evaluate sin. Perhaps a celibate priest who did not understand the complex deliberations that went into personal decision-making was not the best person after all to judge a person’s sinful behavior and religious devotion, some considered. As one Catholic woman wrote in 1966, “Exploring the conscience, or rather forming it is a solitary experience—not for the confessional.” If the church was the People of God and if people of other faiths could go to heaven (as Vatican II proclaimed), why should lay Catholics submit to every Papal edict and church teaching? At least this was the question many Catholics, especially the young and well educated, asked publicly in the 1960s.⁵³

These questioning Catholics wrestled especially with the Church’s strict opposition to birth control. For many theologians and lay people, historian and theologian Mark Massa writes, “the timeless categories of natural law—categories which had served the Church so well in the

⁵¹ Matovina, *Guadalupe and Her Faithful*, pp. 136-37.

⁵² Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo, “The Latino Religious Resurgence,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 558 (July 1998): 163-77.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 208, 229-31 (quote on p. 229).

past now appeared dated (or even more troubling) implausible.”⁵⁴ Thus, when the Pope reaffirmed the church’s opposition to birth control in the 1968 *Humanae Vitae* encyclical, many lay Catholics simply began depending on their own moral judgment, fully participating in the rites of the church while using contraception. As Leslie Woodcock Tentler argues, an “untold number of Catholics had moral autonomy thrust upon them by a pope who had hoped to achieve just the opposite.”⁵⁵

For many Catholics, surely, their new moral autonomy helped ease the agonizing guilt of disobeying the laws of the church. But for others, the changes of the 1960s led to a sense of disjuncture—or, as social critic and Catholic intellectual Garry Wills wrote in 1972, “a form of personal crisis.” Before Vatican II, many lay Catholics believed the rules and rituals of their religious life were the same as those practiced by Catholics a thousand years ago. Wills wrote of pre-Vatican II Catholicism: “the gates of hell would not prevail against the church, and the gates of hell often looked like history, or the latest products of history, ‘modernism,’ science, rationalism. We did not deal with such fads.” Change, he wrote, was the church’s “dirty little secret.” The church, after Vatican II, was no longer static or timeless. Now many Catholics saw some of the basic rules of their faith—like the strict law requiring celibate, male priests—as “embarrassing presuppositions of cultural worlds gone forever.”⁵⁶ Of course, many lay Catholics and theologians responded to such disjuncture by focusing on the continuity in the church’s teachings throughout time. Some formed breakaway sects using the pre-Vatican II rules of Catholicism, but most stayed in the Roman Catholic Church, maintaining that Vatican II was not

⁵⁴ Massa, *The American Catholic Revolution*, p. 156.

⁵⁵ Tentler, *Catholics and Contraception*, p. 231.

⁵⁶ Massa, *The American Catholic Revolution*, postscript and p. 10. See also Garry Wills, *Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy, and Radical Religion* (New York: Doubleday, 1972).

a break with the Catholic past.⁵⁷ They insisted, rather, that change had not come to the Catholic Church.

From the 1960s onward, the contest between liberal and traditionalist Catholics would be played out most intensely on issues of gender and sexuality: priests' celibacy, contraception, women in the priesthood, divorce, homosexuality, and abortion. Many of these debates filtered into local parishes, where liberal and traditionalist Catholics often co-existed.⁵⁸ The traditionalists accepted and even promoted the church's steadfast dictums. The liberals, however—a group that included laity, priests, and men and women religious—broke the church's rules, sometimes openly, and demanded change. Some of the most public dissenters were excommunicated or removed from their posts. It was in this fractured environment that pro-life Catholics pushed their vision of life, gender, and Catholicism within individual parishes and other church spaces.

In a variety of ways, beginning in the late 1960s, pro-life activists integrated their movement into the daily rhythms of faith. Activists immediately used the channels of the Catholic Church and other sympathetic churches to spread pro-life ideology and the workings of the emerging movement. A Tucson activist recalled that, in 1972, she was one of five women who knew each other and began thinking about forming a group to oppose liberalized abortion law and Planned Parenthood. She recalled, “as soon as we heard about abortions in this country,

⁵⁷ For more on Catholic conservatism, see Mary Jo Weaver and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Being Right: Catholic Conservatives in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); Michael W. Cuneo, *The Smoke of Satan: Conservative and Traditionalist Dissent in Contemporary American Catholicism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁵⁸ Sociologist Christel J. Manning argues this was a condition unique to Catholics. Jews and Protestants could more easily than Catholics separate themselves into congregations of like-minded people. See Christel J. Manning, “Women in a Divided Church: Liberal and Conservative Catholic Women Negotiate Changing Gender Roles,” *Sociology of Religion* 58 (Winter 1997): 375-90.

we started having meetings in different churches.”⁵⁹ Then, she remembered, they put notices in local church bulletins around the city telling congregations about the growing availability of abortions.⁶⁰ Activists also shared their visual arguments against abortion. In 1973, the Diocese of Phoenix began showing a fifteen-minute slide show “of unborn children,” narrated by members of Arizona Right to Life, after Sunday mass.⁶¹ While activists used parish bulletins and slide shows to spread information to congregants, they also sent political tools to the hierarchy of the church. In 1976, a Catholic pro-life planning committee in Arizona commented that “since the 1973 Supreme Court decisions, everyone on the Church horizon, whether local, deanery, diocesan or national, has been inundated with printed materials and visual aids” from the pro-life movement.⁶² Activists hoped that priests, bishops, and laity together would educate people about the horror of abortion.

Beyond using church channels to dispense information, pro-life activists also asked congregations to get involved. Church bulletins gave details about pro-life meetings.⁶³ Churches connected activists to one another. One woman called her own Catholic church when she read about abortion liberalization laws and the office put her in contact with a local activist from another Catholic church.⁶⁴ Pro-life priests appealed to their congregations to sign petitions

⁵⁹ Seader interview.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “Catholics Shown Abortion Slides,” *Arizona Republic*, February 26, 1973.

⁶² Ad Hoc Planning Committee, Pastoral Plan for Pro Life Activities, to the Most Reverend Bishops, Board of Directors and Members of the Arizona Catholic Conference, February 9, 1976, folder 3, box 21, Donohoe Papers.

⁶³ Seader interview. For more on recruitment within Catholic Churches, see interview with Laurie Futch, March 16, 2010.

⁶⁴ Seader interview.

and vote for pro-life candidates. One Utah man wrote his congressman in 1974, “Yesterday at Mass we were urged to sign a prolife petition to be presented to you. Father stated you had not made a public statement against abortion.”⁶⁵ Pro-life activists also used the church as a source of letter writers. For example, in 1979 in New Mexico, Governor Bruce King received hundreds of letters against abortion with the same four talking points around the issues of informed consent and parental consent bills, laws banning third trimester abortions, and state funding for abortions. These letters were a part of a campaign organized by New Mexico Right to Life and promoted in the state’s churches. The prompt gave religious audiences the governor’s address, the talking points, and a message demanding they get involved because “GOD NEVER INTENDED US TO KILL OUR CHILDREN.” One woman sent the prompt to the governor with the explanation, “This letter was given to me in the Church. I think it’s time we do something about abortion.”⁶⁶ Catholic laity also worked some of these letter writing campaigns into Sunday school and other religious instruction.⁶⁷

From the beginning of the movement, many churches provided pro-life groups with space for meetings and rallies. In Tucson, local churches were the first to provide meeting rooms free

⁶⁵ James E. Palmer to Congressman Wayne Owens, March 4, 1974, folder 2, box 39, Wayne Owens Papers, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT (hereafter Owens Papers). For more on pro-life petitions in church, see Jane Kay, “City Council to Consider Anti-Abortion Proposal,” *Arizona Daily Star*, November 12, 1973.

⁶⁶ Mrs. Amalia L. Santallanes to Governor King, August 26, 1979, folder 3140, 3141, 3142, box 101, Governor Bruce King Papers (2nd Term), New Mexico State Records Center, Santa Fe, NM (hereafter 2nd Term King Papers). For hundreds of similar letters, see folder 3140, 3141, 3142, box 101, 2nd Term King Papers.

⁶⁷ For example, in the mid-1970s, children and young adults from a Catholic Church in Magna, Utah, all wrote Congressman Wayne Owens about their opposition to abortion. See letters from Gabriel Valdez, Richard Stanley, Paul Fratto, Gene Alberico, Frieda Vallejos, Rosalinsa Rocha, Mary Johnson, Fidel Giscumbo, Penny Lee Nichols, Pat Santistevan, Jaren Badovintz, Bobby Sandoval, Kathy Martinez, David Valdez, Gerald A. Kramer, Kelly Bailey, Julie Johnson, Diane Sandoval, Melody Fithen, Brenda Manganares, Trudy Miller, Stephanie Grochowski, and Liz Geay, all to Congressman Wayne Owens, folder 17, box 23, Owens Papers.

of charge to a nascent pro-life group.⁶⁸ In a small town in Utah in 1974, pro-life activists organized a large rally at “an out of the way Catholic Church.”⁶⁹ Before big picketing campaigns, local churches all over the Four Corners states held ecumenical services for activists.⁷⁰ Through church bulletins, they promoted local pro-life groups and asked congregations for help with their practical needs. A crisis pregnancy center in Tucson got donations through many congregations.⁷¹ Priests and ministers in Tucson also sent pregnant women to that center, helping volunteers there reach out to those potentially considering abortion.⁷² Early anti-abortion activists relied on local churches in myriad ways: as free spaces, for practical aid, and, most of all, as sources of future activists.

Lay activists also attempted to police the abortion politics of legislators who shared their faith. When, in 1969, the governor of New Mexico, David Cargo, had an abortion liberalization bill on his desk to sign, his fellow Catholics pleaded with him to veto it. Some wrote “as Catholics” to oppose the bill.⁷³ One New Mexican sent him a relic from Pope Pius XII so that the dead pope would intercede and offer the governor guidance. Another wrote, “I truly believe that God has placed you in the position of Governor principally in order that you would be able

⁶⁸ Seader interview.

⁶⁹ Mr. and Mrs. L.S. Kunz to Congressman Owens, (recorded) February 18, 1974, folder 1, box 39, Owens Papers.

⁷⁰ Seader interview; *Viva Life* newsletter, December-January 1994, folder 31, box 2, New Mexico Women’s Political Caucus Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM.

⁷¹ Seader interview.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ For example, see telegram from Dave and Frances Holmes, Albuquerque, to Gov. David Cargo, March 13, 1969, folder 241, box 6, Governor David F. Cargo Collection, New Mexico Records Center, Santa Fe, NM (hereafter Cargo Collection); Telegram from Mrs. Jerome Doherty, to Governor Cargo, March 12, 1969, folder 241, box 6, Cargo Collection.

to veto abortion legislation.”⁷⁴ Once Cargo allowed the legislation to pass, Catholic New Mexicans invoked their common faith to chastise him. One wrote: “New Mexico will go down in history as initiating these forms of mercy killings under a Catholic Governor.”⁷⁵ Another compared Cargo to Pontius Pilate, the Roman official who, according to the letter writer, “gave up Christ to his persecutors.” The activist beseeched: “As governor and as a Catholic you could have born true witness to the Church by vetoing the bill, but you neglected to do so; Why?”⁷⁶ Years later, in 1977, a New Mexico pro-life activist wrote another Catholic state governor with a similar condemnation:

How can you reconcile your conscience to permitting the slaughter of countless innocent unborn children in this State? How can you go to Mass? How can you go to the Sacraments? How can you sleep nights? Are you aware how many Catholics you have shocked and scandalized...?⁷⁷

These Catholic pro-life activists invoked Catholic officials as members of a common faith who were subject to strict church laws on abortion, murder, and sin. They pushed against liberal Catholics, who, using their own moral compass, supported or at least did not openly oppose liberalized abortion laws. Thus, lay pro-life activists worked not only to make pro-life politics integral to religious spaces but also to police their co-religionists outside those religious spaces.

By the mid-1970s, lay activists within the Catholic Church had successfully motivated the church hierarchy to take a stronger stand against abortion. In 1975, the National Conference

⁷⁴ Eileen Duryer to Governor Cargo, February 23, 1969, folder 241, box 6, Cargo Collection.

⁷⁵ Rev. Raymond Amiro to Governor Cargo, March 28, 1969, folder 241, box 6, Cargo Collection.

⁷⁶ Richard E. Villamana to Governor Cargo, March 24, 1969, folder 241, box 6, Cargo Collection. For another similar letter that compares the governor to Pilate, see Reverend Ralph Weishaar to Governor Cargo, April 1, 1969, folder 241, box 6, Cargo Collection.

⁷⁷ Aldona S. Jameson to Governor Apodaca, August 23, 1977, folder 2024, box 85, Governor Jerry Apodaca Papers, New Mexico Records Center, Santa Fe, NM.

of Catholic Bishops announced an official pro-life plan of action called the “Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities.” The bishops said that they hoped “to focus attention on the pervasive threat to human life arising from the present situation of permissive abortion.” Then they called on all church-sponsored or “identifiably Catholic national, regional, diocesan and parochial organizations” to pursue a three-point plan of action. They suggested a widespread educational campaign directed at the general public and, more intensively, at the Catholic community. “The primary purpose of the intensive educational program,” their statement read, “is the development of pro-life attitudes and the determined avoidance of abortion by each person.” The second goal of the Pastoral Plan was a broader effort directed at women seeking abortion and those who had abortions. They asked that this pastoral work provide moral guidance showing “that abortion is a violation of God’s law,” service to pregnant women (such as financial support for pre-natal care and crisis pregnancy centers), “special understanding” for rape victims, and, finally, potential reconciliation for women who had abortions. The third goal of the Pastoral Plan was the development of an extensive legislative and public policy campaign. The bishops argued that all law was based on Divine Law, and “a just system of law cannot be in conflict with the law of God.” They advocated a constitutional amendment banning abortion, federal and state laws restricting abortions, continued legal efforts to counter *Roe*, and legislative support for alternatives to abortion. Finally, they asked that states, dioceses, and parishes organize committees to execute the Pastoral Plan.⁷⁸

The Pastoral Plan was a reaction to both the shifting politics of abortion and the energized Catholic laity. Arizona’s Planning Committee for Pro-Life Activities told the state’s bishops that since *Roe*, there had been a “general spirit of discouragement,” but that “Catholic

⁷⁸ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, “Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities,” November 20, 1975, folder 3, box 21, Donohoe Papers.

and ecumenical laity” and hierarchical leadership would not admit defeat. They noted that all Catholic institutions had been flooded with information from pro-life activists in the previous years.⁷⁹ One activist explained the motivation behind the Pastoral Plan: “some people seem to think the clergy is pushing us. That’s backwards. We pressured the bishops to take a public stand.”⁸⁰ And so the bishops took a stand. By 1975, lay activists had successfully pushed their church to play a larger part in the pro-life movement.

In the second half of the 1970s, Catholic parishes not only in the Four Corners states but also around the country began developing state-wide coordinating committees, diocese-wide Respect Life offices, and parish level pro-life groups. But this pro-life activism stood apart from the church’s other ministries. Even as Chicano activists demanded that church focus on racism and poverty, Catholic pro-life activists pushed the church to commit its resources to the campaign for “life.” One undocumented Mexican women explained the tension in these religious politics, “They say the children in our womb are ‘innocent life,’ but the day they are born they call them ‘illegals’ and [tell them to] ‘go home.’”⁸¹ Even as feminist Catholics worked to reform the church’s stances on birth control, female priests, homosexuality, and abortion, Catholic pro-life activists insisted the church recommit to “age-old” prohibitions. And even as liberal Catholics urged the church to work on a wide range of social justice issues, Catholic pro-life activists asked the church to focus on legal abortion as its singular social issue.

The Catholic hierarchy committed more and more to the pro-life cause, but in the minds of many anti-abortion Catholic lay activists, it was too little, too late. Despite the Pastoral Plan,

⁷⁹ Ad Hoc Planning Committee to the Most Reverend Bishops, February 9, 1976.

⁸⁰ Paul J. Weber, “Bishops in Politics: The Big Plunge,” *America*, March 20, 1976.

⁸¹ Quoted in Matovina, *Latino Catholicism*, p. 212.

many activists remember this early period as one of failure in moral leadership. Arizona activist John Jakubcysk argued,

I look back and say gosh they were still so respectful of the system instead of just screaming, No! Can you imagine in 1973 if the Catholic Church had said any legislator who supports abortion is automatically excommunicated? ... And ... we are going to have the entire Catholic population sit down and not go to work until you think this thing through. We could have shut the country down. Could have woken everybody up... We should have been bolder in the earlier days.⁸²

Catholic leaders had failed Catholic activists and the country, Jakubcysk suggested. They had overestimated the power of the opposition and underestimated their power to motivate American Catholics and change American politics. Because of this failure to politicize Catholic people, Jakubcysk believed, abortion remained legal and the pro-life movement had to continue working for incremental change in parishes, at state capitols, and outside abortion clinics.

Right after the first abortion liberalization bills, Catholic pro-life activists worked to reassert their politically and theologically conservative vision within their changing religious institution. Beginning in the late 1960s, like pro-life activists from other faith traditions, Catholic activists used sympathetic church leaders to promote their politics and pushed the reticent to commit. Some were effective, others less so. But in many Catholic communities, activists successfully made pro-life politics a regular, if not central, component of religious life.

Conservative Ecumenism

Although Catholics predominated early pro-life activism, the activists almost always included people of other faiths. Early pro-life groups often contained people from a variety of mainstream and evangelical Protestant denominations, Mormons, and an occasional Orthodox Jew. Anti-abortion politics brought disparate religious persons together. Arizona pro-life

⁸² Jakubcysk interview.

activists Helen and Phil Seader contended that although Vatican II had argued for a reconciliation between faiths, this was not possible until people from different faiths found a common foe in legalized abortion. “The churches couldn’t do it on their own. Abortion did it. Abortion made the Ecumenical Council,” Helen Seader claimed. “It was ... abortion that brought us all together.”⁸³ Religious diversity existed in the movement from the 1960s into the twenty-first century, but the composition of faiths in these religious coalitions changed significantly in the 1980s and 1990s. This diversity was not only a demographic fact, but also a political tactic. When activists were not trying to obscure the religious character of their movement, they regularly emphasized that theirs was a broad religious coalition opposed to abortion.

In the very first issue of the Arizona Right to Life newsletter in 1971, Vice President Wallace McWhirter asked the question, “Is Abortion a Religious Issue?” He contended that liberal elements in society had promoted the idea that anti-abortion sentiment was a product of religious belief. He believed “religion” in the abortion debate had become a code word for “Catholic” and that anti-Catholic bigotry spurred media narratives about the pro-life movement. As a Protestant and a doctor, this Right to Life official proved that abortion was not a Catholic issue—perhaps not even a religious issue. He contended that arguments about the separation of church and state were covers for “blatant anti-Catholicism.”⁸⁴ In 1974, McWhirter made this point again to a Tucson newspaper: “We are accused of being entirely Catholic... but we aren’t. This is a misconception, a deliberate misconception, which is promoted to divide Catholics from

⁸³ Seader interview.

⁸⁴ This article was discussed in an obituary for Wallace McWhirter, the 1971 Arizona Right to Life president. See *Arizona Lifeline*, September 1979, Special Collections, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

non-Catholics and also to immobilize Catholic opinion.”⁸⁵ McWhirter implied that not only was the group ecumenical, it would be more so if it were not for the discriminatory force of the media.

Through the mid-1970s, in the *Arizona Lifeline*, the state’s Right to Life newsletter, there were few references to religious people or religious arguments. The few exceptions were articles about Protestants or anti-Catholicism.⁸⁶ In a 1975 editorial on “anti-Romanism,” for example, Arizona Right to Life did not dispute that Catholics in general “are more easily rallied to the pro-life cause than are non-Catholics.” In Protestant denominations, communication “is greatly hampered by their individualistic and pluralistic nature.” The author of this editorial contended that other denominations should resent the suggestion that Catholics had a monopoly on “the respect for unborn human life.”⁸⁷ But even articles on anti-Catholicism were rare. Most articles centered on biology, overpopulation rhetoric, legal arguments, and legislative activity. In these early years, pro-life groups tended to obscure the religious character of the movement, and when necessary, focus only on their ecumenism or on religious discrimination.

An essential way that early anti-abortion activists attempted to shift public focus away from their religious identities was to focus on the movement’s medical credentials. In the March 1973 issue of the *Arizona Lifeline*, the state group reported elections of new officers and noted that all were doctors.⁸⁸ Moreover, in public advertisements in the early 1970s, the group

⁸⁵ Douglas J. Streuf, “A Dead Issue?” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, November 2, 1974.

⁸⁶ For newsletters mentioning Protestants or anti-Catholicism in the early 1970s, see *Arizona Lifeline*, March 1972; *Arizona Lifeline*, January 1975; *Arizona Lifeline*, May-June 1975, all at Special Collections, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

⁸⁷ *Arizona Lifeline*, May-June 1975.

⁸⁸ *Arizona Lifeline*, March 1973, University of Arizona Special Collections. For other moments that the movement emphasized its constituency of doctors and nurses, see Barbara Shumway, “Doctors,

identified its leaders exclusively as doctors and nurses.⁸⁹ This was a conscious choice; the group was by no means made up entirely of doctors and nurses. For instance, Carey Womble, the new vice president, was both a doctor and an Episcopalian minister—and yet the group only noted his medical credentials.⁹⁰ Even though Womble had stopped working as a doctor and was employed exclusively as a chaplain at the University of Arizona, his talks focused solely on the social and medical aspects of abortion.⁹¹ He, too, argued that abortion was not a religious issue, but a “human one.”⁹²

Gradually, over the course of the 1970s, pro-life activists shifted their strategies in regards to religion. They became more practiced at their ecumenical presentation. As activist John Jakubcysk remembered of the late 1970s, “Carolyn [Gerster] and I used to debate together. She was the doctor; I was the lawyer. She was the Protestant; I was the Catholic. She was the female; I was obviously the male. She was the well-experienced leader in the community; I was

Nurses Present Opposition to Abortion,” *Arizona Republic*, March 2, 1971; Nicki Donohue, “Guardian for Unborn Baby Appointed in Abortion Case,” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, October 7, 1971.

⁸⁹ “Abortion: How It Is!” ad, *Tucson Daily Citizen*, March 17, 1972.

⁹⁰ For a chronology of Womble’s life and his religious education, see obituary for Rev. Dr. Carey Clayton Womble, Jr., *Orlando Sentinel* (FL), October 16, 2010. In most other instances Womble identified only as a doctor, see Lisa Von Schweintz, Virginia T. Clements, Allan B. Carter, MD, Rev. John C. Fowler, W. Edward Morgan, and Carey C. Womble, MD, “Strange Reasoning,” letter to the editor, *Tucson Daily Citizen*, January 26, 1972; “Newman Talks Due,” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, September 30, 1972.

⁹¹ “Dr. Womble to Speak on Abortion, Today,” *Arizona Daily Sun*, October 11, 1973; “‘Aspects of Abortion’ Will Be Lecture Topic,” *Arizona Daily Sun*, October 6, 1973; Jamie Joiner, “Dr. Womble’s Talk Helpful,” letter to the editor, *Tucson Daily Citizen*, May 11, 1972. Womble did identify as an Episcopalian minister in articles that focused on the denomination, rather than the movement. See S.C. Warman, “Episcopalians Avoid Abortion Laws Stand; Council Will State Position,” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, February 15, 1971.

⁹² “Tucson Lecturer to Discuss Abortions,” *Yuma Daily Sun*, October 1, 1972.

the young, rising troublemaker.”⁹³ Jakubcysk said this was a specific strategy to disrupt common narratives about the movement. Activists put forward Protestants or atheists “as examples that the stereotypical, white, Catholic, over 30, over 50, over whatever, female ... was not representative of the movement.”⁹⁴ At public rallies, activists emphasized the variety of faiths that composed their movement. At an Arizona “Choose Life” rally in 1975, the group recruited singers from two Catholic parishes and a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) ward women’s group to perform.⁹⁵ At another rally eight years later, hosted by Arizona Right to Life, “representatives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church and Tri-City Baptist Church gave blessings and the benediction.”⁹⁶ In other rallies in the region, pro-life groups assembled lists of churches that supported their work against legal abortion.⁹⁷

In fact, beginning in the late 1960s, pro-life groups had at least verbal support from Mormons and a variety of Protestants and Orthodox people. Clergy from Orthodox Christian churches signed statements of opposition to liberalized abortion, although few Orthodox lay people seemed to join the movement. Early on, some clergy from Baptist, Southern Baptist,

⁹³ Jakubcysk interview.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁹⁵ *Arizona Lifeline*, February 1975, Special Collections, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

⁹⁶ Judith Van Luchene and Jackie Rothenberg, “Women Voters Endorse Right to Choose Abortion,” *Arizona Republic*, January 23, 1983.

⁹⁷ See, for example, Jack Crowe, “10,000 March to Protest Abortions,” *Arizona Republic*, January 28, 1974; Ben Ling, “50 Join Pastors’ Protest Against Abortion,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 4, 1987; Peggy Fletcher Stack, “Utah’s Churches, Members Line Up to Enlist in Anti-Abortion Battle,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 1, 1994.

and Missouri Synod Lutheran churches also lent their support.⁹⁸ In parts of the Four Corners states with large LDS populations (especially northern Arizona and Utah), Mormons were important grassroots activists, attending rallies, offering their choral skills, and helping found pro-life groups.⁹⁹ But the most prominent non-Catholics in early pro-life groups in the Four Corner states were a handful of mainstream Protestants, especially conservative Episcopalians.

The Episcopal Church of the United States, which evolved out of the Church of England in the English colonies, had been, in many parts of the country, filled with elite or upwardly mobile people. The church had stayed out of the politics of slavery in the nineteenth century, but, in the twentieth century, became more committed to the politics of economic and racial justice. Though many lay Episcopalians lived in segregated white suburbs after World War II, some Episcopalian leaders and lay people alike took a public stand against segregation and for the civil rights movement.¹⁰⁰ In the 1960s and 1970s, the church became increasingly divided over social issues, especially the questions of female clergy and homosexuality, and, to a lesser extent, abortion. Because the church remained, to a large extent, decentralized, Episcopalians were relatively diverse theologically and reflected a wide political spectrum. In the 1960s and 1970s, those who identified more with Anglican and Catholic theology and politics worked to move the Episcopal Church away from liberal social justice issues.

⁹⁸ In a 1973 statement of concern on legalized abortion, clergy from Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, and Serbian Orthodox, Missouri Synod Lutheran, Baptist, Southern Baptist, Episcopalian, and Catholic churches added their names. See “A Joint Statement of Concerned Americans,” *Arizona Republic*, March 18, 1973. For more Orthodox support, see “Astronaut Due for Talk Here,” *Phoenix Gazette*, January 26, 1974.

⁹⁹ For Mormon founding of Right to Life group in Arizona, see Futch interview.

¹⁰⁰ “Episcopal Church, USA,” in *Encyclopedia of American Religion and Politics*, ed. Paul Djupe and Laura Olson (New York: Facts on File, 2003), p. 152. For Episcopalians in the suburbs, see Robert W. Pritchard, *A History of the Episcopal Church*, rev. ed (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1999), ch. 9.

In Arizona and Colorado especially, Episcopal bishops, ministers, and laity worked alongside Catholics in their fight against legalized abortion.¹⁰¹ In Arizona, the Episcopal bishop from 1962 until 1979, Joseph Harte, allied with Catholic bishops both before and after *Roe v. Wade*.¹⁰² In 1966, he founded Episcopalians for Life “to reaffirm the ageless Christian principle” that abortion was murder.¹⁰³ Harte had long been a part of conservative organizations within the church, most notably supporting a group, along with Senator Barry Goldwater, called the Foundation for Christian Theology in the 1960s. This group opposed “Humanism” and the church’s involvement in the civil rights movement. At least one Episcopal leader, described it as “fundamentalist, pro-segregation... and not willing to face the 20th century and its demands.”¹⁰⁴ In the mid-1970s, Bishop Harte also opposed women’s ordination to the priesthood, arguing that it had no Biblical precedent. At a time when one “can’t tell a boy from a girl,” he added, “the

¹⁰¹ For examples of early Episcopalian pro-life activists, see Seader interview; Kolb interview; Resolution on Abortion to Arizona Episcopal Convention, 1973, folder 7, box 21, Donohoe Collection; *Arizona Right to Life News*, September 1983, Special Collections, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ; Warman, “Episcopalians Avoid Abortion Laws Stand”; “Group Protests Colorado Abortion Bill at the Capital,” *Greeley Tribune*, December 28, 1970; “Abortion Panel Slated at UNC on Thursday,” *Greeley Tribune*, April 20, 1971; Bill Logan, “Senate Unit Kills Liberalized Abortion Bill,” *Rocky Mountain News*, February 25, 1971; Pat McGraw, “Abortion Foes Says Backers Playing God,” *Denver Post*, December 27, 1971; Joseph Meakin Harte, letter to the editor, “Bishop’s Comment,” *Arizona Republic*, February 18, 1973; “Minister to Censure Abortion,” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, October 17, 1973; “Birthright Auxiliary Plans Tea,” *Scottsdale Daily Progress*, January 25, 1974; 1976 Annual Pro Life Conference and Banquet Program, folder 2, box 21, Donohoe Papers.

¹⁰² For communication between Bishop Harte and Catholic leadership on abortion, see Msgr. Donohoe to Bishop McCarthy, March 12, 1975, folder 14, box 21, Donohoe Papers; Msgr. Robert Donohue, Senate Bill 133, to Most Reverend Joseph M. Harte (Episcopal Bishop’s Office, Phoenix), March 28, 1973, folder 1A, box 21, Donohoe Papers.

¹⁰³ *Arizona Right to Life News*, September 1983.

¹⁰⁴ Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., *Episcopalians and Race: From the Civil War to Civil Rights* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2000), p. 196.

priestly role should not be confused.”¹⁰⁵ Whether the issue was civil rights, abortion, or women priests, Harte always worked within the church to oppose its political liberalism.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, other pro-life Episcopalians began to leave the church, either identifying with the more conservative Anglican Church or with Roman Catholicism. Episcopalian priest James Mote of Denver, for instance, led the American revolt against women’s ordination when his parish seceded from the Episcopal Church in 1977. But while women’s ordination was the catalyst for the parish’s defection, members also cited the Episcopal Church’s support for divorce and its failure to take a stand against abortion as reasons for their secession.¹⁰⁶ So in the Episcopal Church, as in many other Protestant denominations, it was individuals, certain parishes, and even some dioceses that joined the pro-life movement—for they had to contend with an increasingly liberal hierarchy. Every James Mote had a liberal counterpart in many Protestant denominations, each working vociferously either to keep abortion safe and legal or to make it illegal once more.

Mormons who joined the pro-life movement had much more institutional support, at least rhetorically, from the hierarchy of their church. After the 1973 announcement from the LDS Church’s president condemning the *Roe v. Wade* decision, church leaders made regular statements reaffirming their opposition to legalized abortion. In 1975, for instance, Spencer W. Kimball wrote, “we decry abortions and ask our people to refrain from this serious

¹⁰⁵ “Bishop Harte Against Women’s Ordination,” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, February 21, 1976.

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, “State Working on Secession’s Legality Decision,” *Greeley Daily Tribune*, December 8, 1976; “Dissident Priest Expects Rebellion,” *Colorado Springs Telegraph Gazette*, December 3, 1976; Dennis Hevesi, “Bishop James O. Mote, 84, Dies; Led Revolt Against Episcopal Church,” *New York Times*, May 29, 2006; Jakubcysk interview.

transgression.”¹⁰⁷ Church leaders continued to make similar statements to the press and at LDS General Conferences throughout the last decades of the century. But in those decades, Mormon leaders treated abortion differently than they treated murder. If a member of the church committed murder, that person was immediately excommunicated. A member who terminated a pregnancy, on the other hand, was to be “disciplined by Church councils, as necessary.” Abortion, unlike murder, was for Mormons “amenable to the laws of repentance and forgiveness.”¹⁰⁸ Specifically, in certain cases—rape, incest, when the fetus was extremely deformed, or when the life or health of the mother was in danger—abortion was morally acceptable for Mormons, as long as the woman had discussed the issue with both her husband and her bishop.

Mormon opposition to abortion was not new. Nineteenth-century Mormon leaders had publicly opposed abortion, but with a view firmly toward eastern Protestant power. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, Mormons and non-Mormons engaged in a pitched battle over polygamy—and by extension, sexual norms, families, and Christianity. Many Americans rested their anti-Mormon conviction on the “barbarity” of polygamy, believing that it combined the immoralities of the southern slave system and the “Orient’s” harem. Mormons, however, largely supported polygamy, believing that God ordained the practice, and suggested that polygamous families were morally superior to middle-class, Protestant families.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Richley H. Crapo, “Grass-Roots Deviance from Official Doctrine: A Study of Latter-Day Saint (Mormon) Folk Beliefs,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 26, no. 4 (December 1987): 465-85 (quote on p. 473).

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 473-74.

¹⁰⁹ Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 22; Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), pp. 55-83.

Beginning in the late 1860s, Mormon leaders used abortion as an example of eastern excess and immorality, an argument for why Protestant American leaders had no right to impose monogamy on Utah. As the U.S. government ramped up its judicial and legal attacks on polygamy, President of the Church John Taylor wrote of easterners' Protestant God: "Their god is overlaid with gilt and tinsel, but inside it is pregnant with its twin adjuncts foetecide and infanticide."¹¹⁰ In 1884, Taylor discussed the prevalence of abortion in the East and then asked: "These are the people that are coming here to reform us, and are so disgusted with our corruption?"¹¹¹ Taylor added that easterners had actually brought abortion with them to Utah, infecting good Mormons with their immorality.¹¹² Mormon leaders portrayed polygamy as a marital system that protected women and brought more children into the world, and thus more souls into Mormon households. Critiques of the aborting East were criticisms of the failures of monogamous marriage, the hypocrisy of easterners' moral outrage at polygamy, and the excesses of federal power that eastern monogamists levied against Mormons. For LDS leaders in this moment, abortion was a symbol of eastern political and moral degradation.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ John Taylor, Journal of Discourses, March 5, 1882, folder 1, box 6, Lester E. Bush Collection, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT (hereafter Bush Collection). For the escalation of government opposition to polygamy, see Gordon, *The Mormon Question*, pp. 183-220.

¹¹¹ Pres. John Taylor, Journal of Discourses, October 6 and 7, 1884, folder 1, box 6, Bush Collection. Heber C. Kimball used similar arguments twenty-five years earlier. See Heber C. Kimball, Journal of Discourses, July 26, 1857, folder 1, box 6, Bush Collection.

¹¹² John Taylor, Journal of Discourses, October 19, 1884. See also John Taylor, Journal of Discourses, April 9, 1882, folder 1, box 6, Bush Collection. Six years earlier, John Taylor and George Q. Cannon used similar rhetoric about easterners bringing abortion to Utah. See John Taylor and George Q. Cannon, Journal of Discourses, July 21, 1878, folder 1, box 6, Bush Collection.

¹¹³ Meanwhile, anti-polygamists argued that, in order to keep plural marriage a secret in the 1830s and 1840s, Joseph Smith had forced his wives, after his first one, to have abortions. See A.T. Schroeder, *Lucifer's Lantern*, no. 7 (September 1898): 184-88, folder 1, box 6, Bush Collection. Protestants and Mormons in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries levied similar accusations at Catholic nuns, arguing

Although most twentieth-century Mormons disavowed polygamy—the LDS Church renounced the practice in 1890—they continued to oppose abortion. Before the late 1960s, however, this opposition was largely unspoken. With the *Roe* decision, members of the LDS hierarchy verbally supported the pro-life cause, but they did not use their extensive church apparatus to aid the movement materially the way the church did other conservative causes. In the 1970s and 1980s campaign against the Equal Rights Amendment and the more recent campaign against gay marriage, the LDS Church mobilized its members to engage in socially conservative politics. In fact, many have credited the LDS Church, at least partially, with the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1982, the success of the initiative-driven anti-gay marriage bill in California in 2000, and the passage of a ballot proposition that amended the California constitution to ban gay marriage in 2008.¹¹⁴ On the issue of abortion, however,

they were secretly having sex with men (usually priests) and terminating pregnancies to cover it up. In these stories, abortion acts as a potent signifier for sexual and religious deviance. For examples of folk tales about nuns and abortion, see Eileen Black, Provo UT, Fall 1970 writing about herself growing up in Long Beach, CA, folder 17, box 13, Human Condition Legends, Fife Folklore Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan, UT (hereafter Fife Collection); Nancy Lubeck, Pleasant Hill, CA, Winter 1975 writing about Jerry Wright of Pleasant Hill, CA, folder 17, box 13, Human Condition Legends, Fife Collection.

¹¹⁴ For arguments on Mormon influence on the ERA, see 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); D. Michael Quinn, “The LDS Church’s Campaign Against the Equal Rights Amendment,” *Journal of Mormon History* 20 (Fall 1994): 85-155; Jennifer L. Holland, “Salt Lake City is Our Selma: The Equal Rights Amendment and the Transformation of the Politics of Gender in Utah” (MA thesis, Utah State University, 2005); Martha Sonntag Bradley, *Pedestals and Podiums: Utah Women, Religious Authority, and Equal Rights* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 2005). For Mormon influence on gay marriage campaigns in 2000 and 2008, see, for example, Don Lattin, “Mormon Church: The Powerful Force Behind Proposition 22,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 6, 2000; “8: The Mormon Proposition” (directed by Reed Cowan and Steven Greenstreet, 2010); Luke Perry and Christopher Cronin, *Mormons and American Politics: From Persecution to Power* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012), pp. 95-99; Peggy Fletcher Stack, “Prop 8 Involvement a P.R. Fiasco for LDS Church,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 22, 2008; Nicolas Riccardi, “Mormon Church Feels Heat Over Proposition 8,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 17, 2008; Stephanie Mencimer, “Mormon Church Abandons Its Crusade Against Gay Marriage,” *Mother Jones*, April 12, 2013.

church leaders only offered rhetorical support, leaving overt anti-abortion politics to individual discretion.

Many Mormons within church organizations and institutions used their discretion and their positions to oppose legalized abortion. As early as 1973, some leaders of the Relief Society, the primary LDS women's group, asked women at their meetings to oppose abortion.¹¹⁵ In 1977, Barbara Smith, head of the Relief Society, used her platform to oppose abortion because "eternal progression [toward godhood] is dependent on mortality." She added that "it should be no surprise then to find [Mormons] standing against abortion, actively working against it, and urging our members to support and join the battle to preserve life."¹¹⁶ Also in the 1970s, the associated student group at the church's flagship institution, Brigham Young University, worked on anti-abortion letter campaigns and other pro-life activities.¹¹⁷ Certain wards financially supported pro-life organizations through donations and fund-raising activities.¹¹⁸ And some LDS adults leading children's education classes in church incorporated pro-life material into their lessons. On the whole, then, Mormons were strongly opposed to abortion in the last three decades of the century. A 1973 article in *Ensign*, a LDS periodical, contended that 85 percent of

¹¹⁵ Ruth F. Stewart to Mr. Owens, April 3, 1973, folder 14, box 23, Owens Papers; Ruth F. Stewart to Rep. McKay, April 4, 1973, folder 14, box 147, Congressman Gunn McKay Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan, UT (hereafter McKay Papers).

¹¹⁶ Barbara B. Smith, "Life-The Essential," January 22, 1977, folder 1, box 4, Martha Sonntag Bradley Research Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT (hereafter Bradley Collection).

¹¹⁷ Letters for Life, Associated Students of BYU (no date, likely 1979), folder 6, box 3, Associated Students of Brigham Young University Women's Office History Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT (hereafter ASBYU Collection); "BYU Students Support 'Right to Life' Bills," no newspaper, 1979, folder 6, box 3, ASBYU Collection.

¹¹⁸ John L. Carpenter, "Anti-abortion Group Illegally Fund Raising," *Phoenix Gazette*, April 30, 1974.

Mormon women opposed making abortions available to women who wanted them.¹¹⁹ During the fight against the ERA in Utah, many Mormon women argued that opposition to abortion was one of their primary issues.¹²⁰

Still, that sentiment did not always translate into movement participation. In pro-life publications, Mormons only appeared now and again: an LDS teen winning a pro-life speech contest, a couple helping paint a crisis pregnancy center, a Mormon woman singing in a statewide Right to Life conference.¹²¹ Most lifelong pro-life activists in the Four Corners states remember Mormons only as peripheral players in the movement. One Arizona activist argued that Mormons had helped found a pro-life group in Mesa, a Mormon-dominated town, but their participation gradually fell off. She noted, “And I’m not quite sure what happened to that. We [the group] just tend to be Catholic, I guess, because we’re Catholic.”¹²² Some did not recall any Mormon participation, while others claimed Mormons had only gotten involved near the end of the century.¹²³ New Mexico pro-life activist Dauneen Dolce explained why she thought Mormons had not had a large presence in the movement: they “have a way of kind of working

¹¹⁹ Lois Gogarty, “LDS Women Unaffected by Women’s Lib,” *Ensign*, August 1973, folder 9, box 10, Bradley Collection.

¹²⁰ See, for example, “Caucus Leader Claims LDS Aware of Plan,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 25, 1977; Lena Serge Zezulín, “An ERA Missionary in Utah,” *Feminist Studies* 8 (Summer 1982): 457-61 (esp. p. 459); interview with Florence Jacobson, by Catherine Jorgenson, August 9, 1991, pp. 3, 10, folder 4, box 16, Bradley Collection; interview with Lisa Hawkins, by Catherine Jorgenson, August 7, 1991, pp. 4, 6-7, folder 5, box 16, Bradley Collection; interview with Inez Cooper, by M. Esplin, no date, p. 5, folder 2, box 15, Bradley Collection; interview with Gloria Firmage, by Joann Freed, November 20, 1978 pp. 7-8, 14, folder 3, box 15, Bradley Collection; interview with Ruth Funk, by Catherine Jorgenson, August 29, 1991, p. 9, folder 7, box 15, Bradley Collection.

¹²¹ For speech contest, see Right to Life of Utah newsletter, September 1977, folder 1, box 4, Bradley Collection. For crisis pregnancy center cleanup, see interview with Mary LeQuiu, March 22, 2010. For singing at pro-life conference, see interview with Kay Allen, March 16, 2010.

¹²² Futch interview.

¹²³ Allen interview.

their own maybe from history of how things happened. ... [Even now,] I don't get the Mormons in to speak." She argued that "trust" was a problem for LDS people within pro-life coalitions, made up of Catholics and Protestants who, Mormons worried, harbored anti-Mormon feelings.¹²⁴ It is also possible that LDS people did join pro-life groups in the Four Corners states and just avoided telling anyone about their religion. Either way, it is likely that when Mormons participated in the movement, they tended to play supporting rather than leading roles.

Nonetheless pro-life coalitions of the 1970s included not only Catholics but also an array of mainstream Protestant, Orthodox, and Mormon supporters. In time, members of another faith community would join and in some ways supersede these activists; by the late 1970s and early 1980s, the pro-life movement began to attract evangelical Christians. Evangelical activists came from a variety of denominations and independent Christian churches, especially in Arizona and Colorado. These states had become important sites for evangelical revival in the postwar period. Beginning in 1952, Southern Baptists and other evangelical groups helped reinvent evangelicalism as open, flexible, and compatible with modernity. They also began missionizing heavily in the West. By the late 1990s, Arizona and Colorado were home to some of the largest evangelical congregations in the U.S., including Phoenix's First Assembly of God with 9500 members and Denver's Heritage Christian Center with 3500 members.¹²⁵ Colorado especially became a vibrant hub for evangelicalism, home to a variety of evangelical industries and non-profits, including James Dobson's Focus on the Family. In the last two decades of the century, many evangelicals in the region moved beyond any lingering anti-Catholicism to work in ecumenical coalitions with Catholics, Mormons, and other Protestants to oppose abortion.

¹²⁴ Interview with Dauneen Dolce, March 23, 2010.

¹²⁵ Szasz, *Religion in the Modern American West*, pp. 139-141.

Some major evangelical denominations were relatively new to their pro-life commitments. In 1968, preeminent evangelical scholars, pastors, and physicians got together for a conference on human reproduction hosted by *Christianity Today*, the nation's leading evangelical magazine, and the Christian Medical Society. Together the conferees issued a statement that while they could not agree on the sinful nature of abortion, "about the necessity of it and permissibility for it under certain circumstances we are in accord." They argued that procreation was not the sole purpose of sexuality and that abortion was permissible when used "to safeguard greater values sanctioned by Scripture."¹²⁶ In 1971, the Southern Baptist Convention passed a resolution supporting abortion reform and urged their members to work for legislation that would allow abortions in cases of rape, incest, fetal deformity, and when it was likely the pregnancy would cause "damage to the emotional, mental, and physical health of the mother."¹²⁷ The convention reiterated this position in resolutions even after the *Roe* decision, in 1974 and 1976.¹²⁸ Many evangelicals simply felt that the Bible did not provide a clear answer on the morality of abortion. And yet, at the same time, some evangelical and fundamentalist ministers and laypeople were outspokenly pro-life.¹²⁹ A Texas pastor, Robert Holbrook, had been outraged by the *Roe* decision and immediately formed Baptists for Life. Holbrook worked

¹²⁶ Jonathan Dudley, *Broken Words: The Abuse of Science and Faith in American Politics* (New York: Crown Publishing, 2011), pp. 43-44. For more on this conference, see Scott Flipse, "Below-the-Belt Politics: Protestant Evangelicals, Abortion, and the Foundation of the New Religious Right, 1960-75," in *Conservative Sixties*, ed. David Farber and Jeff Roche (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), pp. 127-41.

¹²⁷ Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 115.

¹²⁸ Dudley, *Broken Words*, p. 43. For more on these successive resolutions, see Williams, *God's Own Party*, pp. 118-19.

¹²⁹ Historian Daniel Williams argues that fundamentalists were pro-life since the late 1960s but did not enter the pro-life movement until the 1980s because they did not want to join Catholic-dominated organizations. They did form a few of their own pro-life groups after *Roe*. See Williams, *God's Own Party*, pp. 116-17.

with pro-life groups in the region and also lobbied the Southern Baptist convention to change its stance on abortion.¹³⁰

By 1980, most evangelicals and fundamentalists were firmly, if not staunchly, pro-life. Some historians credit evangelical intellectual Francis Schaeffer with mobilizing these religious groups.¹³¹ In 1979, Schaeffer, a respected speaker and documentarian, released a four-hour documentary called *What Ever Happened to the Human Race?*, which combined extended anti-abortion arguments with powerful imagery of abortions and abortion's supposed victims. The most remembered scene of the movie showed Schaeffer talking in front of the Dead Sea, which was filled with plastic dolls representing those "killed" by abortion. The movie came to churches and meeting halls all over the country, and was, according to two scholars of the pro-life movement, "mobbed like rock concerts."¹³² In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Schaeffer and other evangelical leaders like Jerry Falwell were urging evangelicals to join in coalition with other people of faith in the political arena—in what they termed a "co-belligerency"—and fight against "the moral decay" of America.¹³³

¹³⁰ For Holbrook's engagement with pro-life groups, see *Arizona Lifeline*, February 1975, Special Collections, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ. For his work within the Southern Baptist Convention, see Williams, *God's Own Party*, pp. 118-19.

¹³¹ Peter G. Heltzel, *Jesus and Justice: Evangelicals, Race, and American Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 102-3; Dudley, *Broken Words*, pp. 48-49; Williams, *God's Own Party*, pp. 155-56; Roy Palmer Domenico and Mark Y. Hanley, eds., *Encyclopedia of Modern Religious Politics* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006), p. 490; Seth Dowland, "Defending Manhood: Gender, Social Order, and the Rise of the Christian Right" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2007), pp. 127-28; Mark A. Noll, *God and Race in American Politics: A Short History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 159; James Risen and Judy L. Thomas, *Wrath of Angels: The American Abortion War* (New York: Basic Books, 1998), pp. 124-26.

¹³² Risen and Thomas, *Wrath of Angels*, p. 125.

¹³³ Ibid., pp. 128-29; Dowland, "Defending Manhood," p. 128.

This was a new approach. Many evangelicals earlier in the century had been disengaged from U.S. politics, believing that the world would inevitably become increasingly sinful and corrupt before Jesus' second coming. Thus, there was no use trying to reform society. All that changed by the 1970s. Gradually, many evangelicals had begun leaving their political apathy behind, becoming passionate conservative partisans and eventually revolutionizing Republican politics in the late twentieth century.¹³⁴ Motivated by grassroots activists and politically focused leaders, evangelicals began to lend their political weight to a number of issues, especially abortion. This evangelical influx during the 1980s and 1990s rejuvenated and radicalized the movement. Some simply joined existing pro-life groups; others formed new, more radical groups that rejected the politics of legislative reform. The most famous of the latter cohort was Operation Rescue, founded by evangelical Randall Terry, which focused on civil disobedience and illegally stopping women from accessing abortion. Terry and the many other evangelicals who joined the pro-life movement were part of the increasingly powerful Christian Right, a political coalition that, according to historian Daniel Williams, "would remain a powerful political juggernaut for the next two decades."¹³⁵

¹³⁴ For more on evangelicals and conservative politics, see, for example, Jerome Himmelstein, *To the Right: The Transformation of American Conservatism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Heather Hendershot, *Shaking the World for Jesus: Media and Conservative Evangelical Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Angela M. Lahr, *Millennial Dreams and Apocalyptic Nightmares: The Cold War Origins of Political Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Michelle Goldberg, *Kingdom Coming: The Rise of Christian Nationalism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007); Amy Johnson Frykholm, *Rapture Culture: Left Behind in Evangelical America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); John G. Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ: The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Steven Brint and Jean Reith Schroedel, eds., *Evangelicals and Democracy in America*, vol. 2 (Religion and Politics) (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2009); Clyde Wilcox and Carin Robinson, *Onward Christian Soldiers? The Rise of the Religious Right in Conservative Politics*, 4d ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2010); Williams, *God's Own Party*.

¹³⁵ Williams, *God's Own Party*, p. 6.

While most pro-life activists remember their ecumenical coalitions (both before and after the evangelical resurgence) as relatively conflict free, there were divisive issues that fell along religious lines. One of these was the role of religion in the movement. Some pro-life activists remembered that even in the 1970s, there was debate about what role prayer and proselytizing should play in the movement. Many Catholics, especially those involved in the explicitly ecumenical Right to Life groups, were uncomfortable with displays of religiosity. Ruth Dolan, a Colorado Right to Life activist and, in her words, the group's "token Protestant," recalled an argument in the early 1970s. At the time, she was on the board and in the process of drawing up new bylaws. One evening, she remembered, the board debated whether a rule requiring prayer before and after meetings should be in the bylaws. Dolan was in favor. The rest of the board was not. She remembered:

And I gave a little speech that said well if we want to pass anything ... we had to be on God's side and we better pray.... And they voted it down. So I was so mad I went into the bathroom and splashed cold water on my face because I don't think I can work with these people.... One man said, well I'm not against motherhood and apple pie but I'm afraid we'd offend an atheist. That's when I really blew my stack. [laughs] I don't care if you offend an atheist. I'm offended. God will be offended.¹³⁶

Dolan stayed in the group for the next three decades, taking solace that even though prayer was not in the bylaws, she "never went to a meeting where they didn't [pray]."¹³⁷ Regardless, the implication was clear: in her mind, Catholics were less comfortable with mandating explicit religiosity in the organization's official documents.

Disputes over the role of religion in pro-life organizations were even more acute in certain urban crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs), pro-life clinic-like alternatives to Planned

¹³⁶ Interview with Ruth Dolan, August 8, 2011.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

Parenthood. In Phoenix, various CPCs disagreed about the expectations for volunteers and the role of the Bible in the centers' counseling.¹³⁸ In the early 1970s, some crisis pregnancy centers in the city were founded (often by Catholics) to be explicitly ecumenical and focused primarily upon convincing pregnant women to carry their pregnancies to term. Yet by the late 1970s and 1980s, newer CPCs—founded by evangelical Christians—aimed not just to stop abortions but also to convert women. One Catholic CPC activist explained the evangelical CPCs' argument: “This girl is in crisis. This is the perfect opportunity for her to hear about Christ. Her crisis presents an opportunity, which Christ would want to walk into.”¹³⁹ The ecumenical CPCs countered that a woman should not be pressured to convert because she might feel alienated, or even manipulated, and thus choose to have an abortion. Throughout the end of the century, according to one local Phoenix activist, the ecumenical and the evangelical CPCs did not work together at all, sharing neither tools nor resources. Accordingly, the city's evangelical churches worked only with the evangelical CPCs while Catholic congregations supported only the ecumenical CPCs.¹⁴⁰ Meanwhile, a chain of evangelical CPCs, called Carenet, expected its volunteers to sign a statement of faith, a statement that one CPC activist argued would exclude Mormons.¹⁴¹ Such disputes show how difficult ecumenical political work could be, especially for groups with such different theological commitments.

But while the religious composition of the pro-life movement changed over the last three decades of the century, and even though that religious diversity could be a challenge, ecumenism

¹³⁸ These religious divisions were not present in all towns and cities but they were relatively common. See Terry Ianora, *Crisis Pregnancy Centers: The Birth of a Grassroots Movement* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2009), introduction.

¹³⁹ Allen interview.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ LeQuiu interview.

was nevertheless the norm. It was always religious people on the front lines of the movement, often a combination of Catholics, mainstream Protestants, Mormons, and evangelical Protestants. True, most pro-life activists, even those in the evangelical groups of the 1980s and 1990s, relied heavily on non-religious arguments, focusing on biological, historical, psychological, and racial aspects of abortion. But the movement did develop a religious narrative of abortion—one that could include many faith traditions and also give conservative religious people claim to true “Judeo-Christian values.” That narrative is key to understanding the centrality of religion—and Christianity—within the pro-life movement and late twentieth-century conservative politics more generally.

Making Judeo-Christian Values

Over the course of the 1970s, pro-life activists re-created a place for religion in the movement and in American politics. Rather than a minority religious opinion, opposition to abortion, activists argued, was a core value of the nation. This value derived from its monotheistic heritage—its Judeo-Christian values. Liberals, feminists, secularists, and radicals were leading the country away from its moral core and historical commitments, they contended. Pro-life activists drew straight lines between the nation, monotheistic religion, and uninterrupted reproduction. Legalized abortion not only undermined individuals’ religious values, they asserted; it undermined the nation itself. In the context of anti-abortion activism, Judeo-Christian values made religious conservatives the protectors of the true heart of the nation. It also gave those same religious conservatives claims to history.

The notion of Judeo-Christian tradition had been used as a fashionable rhetorical device in the United States since the 1930s. According to historian Mark Silk, when fascists and anti-Semites embraced the language of Christianity in the 1930s and 1940s, American intellectuals demonstrated their opposition to such movements by invoking the phrase “Judeo-Christian tradition.” Although the meaning of the phrase varied widely among users, many used it to discuss “the spiritual underpinnings of democracy” and to “invoke a common faith for a united democratic front.”¹⁴² In the postwar period, the term became even more ubiquitous, permeating Cold War discourse. Many juxtaposed the Judeo-Christian West and its divinely ordained ethics, nuclear families, and democracies to atheistic Communism. In Biblical fiction and film produced in the 1950s, such *The Ten Commandments* (1956), monotheists were contrasted with materialistic pagans who murdered enthusiastically and focused on their own physical pleasures.¹⁴³ Catholic intellectuals (before Vatican II) were less comfortable with this monotheistic pluralism, however, and rarely used the term Judeo-Christian. When they did use it, they employed the term simply to note the Jewish roots of Christianity rather than to stress common ideals held by both Jews and Christians. By the mid-1960s, the notion of a Judeo-Christian tradition had begun to fall out of favor, especially among many American intellectuals. Some argued that it subsumed Judaism into a monolithic Christian worldview, while others argued that it generalized and glorified a more complicated and oppressive American past. Silk writes that by late 1960s and 1970s, “‘Judeo-Christian’ had become an emblem of things wrong

¹⁴² Mark Silk, “Notes on the Judeo-Christian Tradition in America,” *American Quarterly* 34, no.1 (Spring 1984): 65-85 (quotes on pp. 67-68).

¹⁴³ Michelle Mart, “The ‘Christianization’ of Israel and Jews in 1950s America,” *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 14, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 109-47.

with the West.”¹⁴⁴ And yet: At the moment when the term was receiving its strongest criticism from many American authors and intellectuals, social conservatives embraced it to explain their work and their place in history.

Beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a handful of pro-life people, especially ministers, priests, and religious lay people, began arguing that legalized abortion was a rejection of the nation’s Judeo-Christian tradition and values. Right to Life groups in the Four Corners states gradually incorporated a historical narrative of abortion, Judeo-Christianity, and the nation into their ideology. Pro-life activists contended that the history of the ancient Greeks and Romans proved their point. In the 1970s, an Arizona pro-life activist, a Lutheran, articulated this historical argument to her local newspaper:

Primitive societies before the Greeks believed that society should get rid of the frail, deformed and aged. The Romans considered that slaughter was a triumph and that infanticide was a prudent form of household economy. Subsequently, however, with the spread of the Judeo-Christian ethic, society came to place a high value on human life.¹⁴⁵

In the late 1960s, a Catholic pro-life activist made a similar point in more general terms.

Referring to an abortion reform bill about to pass in New Mexico, Catherine Yoder wrote the state’s governor, “The NATION is no longer CIVILIZED but PAGAN and there is a grave danger of mass annihilation by GOD. HISTORY relates this happening in the past.”¹⁴⁶ Greeks, Romans, and the all-purpose “pagans” or “primitives” had allowed abortion and infanticide, not

¹⁴⁴ Silk, “Notes on the Judeo-Christian Tradition,” p. 83.

¹⁴⁵ Helen L. Genuit, letter to the editor, “Abortions are Fatal,” *Arizona Republic*, August 16, 1978.

¹⁴⁶ Catherine L. Yoder to Governor Cargo, February 19, 1969, folder 241, box 6, Cargo Collection. For more references to Greeks, Romans, and abortion, see William F. Buckley, Jr., “Anti-abortionists Defeated in Aim by Lack of Political Leadership,” *Arizona Republic*, March 19, 1971.

valuing the “sanctity of life.” Pro-life activists contended that later Jews and Christians had rejected Greek and Roman values, and opposed abortion.

Historians of antiquity provide a less clear-cut history, though they agree that both ancient Greeks and Romans practiced abortion and neither condemned the practice the way nineteenth-century Christians did. Ancient Greeks promoted increased reproduction when populations were low and abortion when there were too many children, though Aristotle wrote that abortifacients were only acceptable “before sense and life have begun in the embryo.”¹⁴⁷ Most ancient Greeks believed that a male fetus gained “life” at forty days gestation and a female fetus at ninety days.¹⁴⁸ Even those who attacked abortion were primarily concerned with a father’s rights, rather than female or fetal rights.¹⁴⁹ Some Greek Stoic philosophers argued that abortion was against nature and the fetus had potential for life, though others believed that it gained a soul when first touched by cold air.¹⁵⁰ Romans were similarly mixed. Abortion and infanticide were generally legal in ancient Rome, though Romans were concerned with certain elements of abortion.¹⁵¹ Around the transition to the Common Era, Roman leaders worried about the size of their population and encouraged large families, instituting laws that allowed a man to divorce his wife if she terminated a pregnancy, again protecting the rights of fathers. Around

¹⁴⁷ John M. Riddle, *Eve’s Herbs: A History of Contraception and Abortion in the West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 65.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 77. See also Nancy Demand, *Birth, Death, and Motherhood in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994). In the later Greek period, before Christianity, some expressed moral concern over birth control and abortion. See Riddle, *Eve’s Herbs*, pp. 81-82.

¹⁵⁰ Nigel Wilson, ed., *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 2.

¹⁵¹ Romans had a practice of exposure, where unwanted infants were put out where others could take them as their own. Some promoted infanticide over abortion because abortion was potentially dangerous for the woman. Historians have long debated the social ramifications of this practice and whether or not it was even common.

200 A.C.E., the Roman emperor banned abortion for the first time as a crime against parental rights.¹⁵² Historian John Riddle argues, “The Christians took the lessons attributed to Jesus and mixed them with ideas from the Stoics to arrive at beliefs not much different from prevailing Judaic, Hellenic, and Roman values.”¹⁵³

By the early Middle Ages, both Christians and pagans condemned abortion, along with contraception, castration, nudity, sex during menstruation, and infanticide.¹⁵⁴ This condemnation, however, was very different than the late twentieth-century one. While medieval Christians openly opposed abortion, they disagreed about the quality of the sin and quantity of the penance it required. Some condemned contraception and abortion, while others denounced only abortion. Some weighed the motive for abortion in determining the sin; a poor woman seeking an abortion deserved a lesser moral punishment than a woman covering up the outcome of adultery. Some medieval church leaders met out punishments for abortion, according to Riddle, similar to those for stealing an ox.¹⁵⁵ In the thirteenth century, the church hardened its position on sexuality and abortion—sex was only for procreation and abortion, if the fetus had “quickened,” was wrong.¹⁵⁶ No matter the belief systems at work in the ancient and medieval periods, historians agree that women practiced both contraception and abortion throughout these

¹⁵² Joyce E. Salisbury, ed., *Encyclopedia of Women in the Ancient World* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2001), p. 2.

¹⁵³ Riddle, *Eve's Herbs*, p. 82.

¹⁵⁴ John M. Riddle, *Abortion and Contraception from the Ancient World to the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 3.

¹⁵⁵ Riddle, *Eve's Herbs*, p. 89.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

centuries.¹⁵⁷ Nonetheless, pro-life activists used some Greeks' and Romans' tolerance of abortion to draw clear lines between a "pagan" disregard for life and "Judeo-Christian" concern for life.

These Judeo-Christian values, pro-life activists argued, had been essential to the formation of the United States. In 1969, one New Mexico activist wrote in response to an abortion liberalization bill: "This is not merely a question of one religious belief against another; it is a question of basic human rights, and basic morality. Our society is supposed to be based on Judeo-Christian ethics."¹⁵⁸ Additionally, in many pro-life publications, letters to the editor, and personal letters to congressmen, anti-abortion activists argued that the Constitution was ordained by God. One pro-life Utahn wrote, "Since when is this God-inspired nation legalizing murder!"¹⁵⁹ Utahns Mr. and Mrs. Albert Christian were even more explicit:

[We are] *very* disturbed and angry at the Supreme Court, for assuming that they have any right to legalize abortion and vote against God, their very maker, and the very morals of our country, the flag and what it stands for, our God-given constitution, and every decent American citizen in this great land. These co-herts [sic] of Satan should be cast out as he was.¹⁶⁰

One Catholic theologian and pro-life activist argued that with the *Roe* decision, "our law has been robbed of the Judeo-Christian ethic," which stressed the sanctity of human life and that all

¹⁵⁷ Whether abortion and contraception were widespread, though, is a debate among historians. John Riddle, in *Eve's Herbs*, argues they were. Historian Suzanne Dixon argues that the many discussions of abortion in this period were a result of writers' nostalgia for an imagined past of good women and a sense of threat to men's social authority. See Suzanne Dixon, *The Roman Mother* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

¹⁵⁸ Rev. Raymond Amiro to Governor Cargo, March 14, 1969, folder 241, box 6, Cargo Collection.

¹⁵⁹ Nancy Sluder to Rep. Owens, January 23, 1973, folder 10, box 23, Owens Papers.

¹⁶⁰ Mr. and Mrs. Albert Christian to Rep. Wayne Owens, February 14, 1973, folder 12, box 23, Owens Papers.

human life was in the image of God.”¹⁶¹ Years later, Paul Weyrich, a conservative activist and co-founder of the Heritage Foundation, wrote that the country was now seeking a reassertion of “traditional, Judeo-Christian values.” “These values,” he argued, “which include definitions of right and wrong and ways of thinking and living, have brought about prosperity, liberty and opportunity for fulfillment that western societies have offered their civilians.”¹⁶² In these narrations of the nation, it was neither a pluralistic republic committed to the separation of church and state nor a state founded on an exclusive Protestant Christianity. American law, rather, had sprung from the Judeo-Christian ethic. Such a tradition was religious but capacious: it could include not only Protestants but Catholics, Mormons, and Jews as well.¹⁶³

The idea of an ecumenical Judeo-Christian tradition would have been foreign to most eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Americans, a people keenly aware of the religious difference between denominations of Protestants and certainly among Protestants, Jews, and Catholics. Many American colonies had established state religions and at times punished religious activity outside that particular faith. Even in the colonies without established religions, there was open

¹⁶¹ George W. Cornell, “‘Halt Abortion’ Drive Gathers Steam,” *Albuquerque Journal*, January 25, 1974. For more on God-inspired government and constitution by pro-lifers, see Dorothy Williams to Congressman Owens, March 22, 1973, folder 13, box 23, Owens Papers; Jon Robinson to Congressman Wayne Owens, January 19, 1974, folder 1, box 39, Owens Papers; Mrs. Ross P. Findlay to Representative McKay, 13 April 1973, folder 14, box 147, McKay Papers; Mrs. Mildred A. Hall to Congressman McKay, April 4, 1973, folder 14, box 147, McKay Papers.

¹⁶² John Hightower, “Politics May Tap Evangelical Christians,” *The New Mexican*, June 1, 1986.

¹⁶³ For a sample of material on Judeo-Christian values, abortion, and the nation, see “Black Monday Decision” ad, *Clovis News-Journal*, March 30, 1970; Pat McGraw, “Abortion Foes Says Backers Playing God,” *Denver Post*, December 27, 1971; Lorette Svejcar to Governor King, (received) October 3, 1972, folder 220, box 12, Governor Bruce King Papers, 1971-1974, New Mexico Records Center, Santa Fe, NM; “Euthanasia on Its Way, Priest Says,” *Arizona Republic*, October 19, 1973; Virginia Culver, “Catholic Hospitals Reject Abortions- Rule or No,” *Denver Post*, January 31, 1973; *Arizona Lifeline*, February 1975, Special Collections, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ; Joseph Cusack, “Moral Decay Imperils ‘Nation Under God,’” *Scottsdale Daily Progress*, August 24, 1976; Colorado Pro-Family Coalition, “Articles of Incorporation,” 1980, box 14, Equality Colorado Collection, Denver Public Library, Denver, CO.

discrimination against Jews and Catholics, with many states denying them the right to vote or own property. These religious laws may well have been in response to an irreligious public, since 80 percent of adults did not belong to a church at the time of the American Revolution. Partly because of the animus between different Protestant denominations, the founders did not establish a single state religion or multiple state religions at the federal level, outlawing government aid to any religion and guaranteeing the freedom of religion. As historian Jon Butler writes, “in its breadth, the First Amendment confirmed the eighteenth-century colonial American experience that religion took many forms, and complex ones, in this extraordinarily compound society.”¹⁶⁴ In the nineteenth century, despite First Amendment protections, individuals and state and federal governments allowed for and even promoted discrimination against non-Protestant people, including Jews, Catholics, Mormons, and, of course, many Native Americans.

Though foreign to most Americans living before the mid-twentieth century, an ecumenical Judeo-Christianity proved a crucial way to explain modern American politics and potentially foretell the nation’s future. In pro-life activists’ view—and increasingly in the minds of late twentieth-century Americans—the U.S. was different: different from earlier societies,

¹⁶⁴ Jon Butler, “Why Revolutionary America Wasn’t a ‘Christian Nation,’” in *Religion and the New Republic: Faith in Founding America*, ed. James H. Hutson (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), p. 196. In the last few decades, the question of whether the United States was founded as a Christian nation has been a topic of hot debate. For a sample of the works that argue that the U.S. was not founded as a Christian nation, see Frank Lambert, *The Founding Fathers and the Place of Religion in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Mark A. Noll, Nathan O. Hatch, and George M. Marsden, *The Search for Christian America* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1983); Isaac Krammick and R. Laurence Moore, *The Godless Constitution: The Case Against Religious Correctness* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996). For a sample of work that argues in the affirmative, see Ellis Sandoz, *Republicanism, Religion, and the Soul of America* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006); James Hutson, *Forgotten Features of the Founding: The Recovery of Religious Themes in the Early American Republic* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003). For those that attempt to take a middle ground, see Steven D. Smith, *Foreordained Failure: The Quest for a Constitutional Principle of Religious Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Noah Feldman, *Divided by God: The America’s Church-State Problem and What We Should Do About It* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2006); Christopher E. Eisgruber and Lawrence G. Sager, *Religious Freedom and the Constitution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

and different from the U.S. at its founding. Judeo-Christian to its core, it was now in trouble. And abortion was at the root, or at least it was the most serious symptom, of such trouble. Many anti-abortion activists believed they were witnessing a declining concern with religious morality and a disregard for human life, evidenced in abortion's "genocide." As Utahn Craig Terry wrote to his legislator in 1973, "As history has shown, [immorality and permissiveness] can destroy a nation from within, regardless of the strength of her defenses against external aggression."¹⁶⁵ Pro-life activists portended that this could only result in the imminent destruction of the United States. Pagan societies, activists argued, had embraced "widespread contraceptive birth control, abortion, easy divorce and remarriage, eugenic sterilization, and euthanasia or 'mercy killing,'" all of which led to these societies' destruction.¹⁶⁶ One Colorado woman wrote to a newspaper columnist, "In this day and age there is so much immorality, I feel like we are going back to the Romans and next we will be throwing human beings in the lion's den."¹⁶⁷ Activists at turns referenced the collapse of Rome, God's punishment of the Egyptians in the Old Testament, and the demise of the Nephites in the Book of Mormon, all towards the same moral. Immorality and social decadence, including abortion, had caused societies to decay internally, eroding their institutions and the privilege of God's protection.¹⁶⁸ Americans needed to protect against the same fate for the U.S.

¹⁶⁵ Craig B. Terry to Mr. McKay, September 26, 1973, folder 11, box 147, McKay Papers. For more on decay, see Mrs. J.D. Ensign to Congressman McKay, April 5, 1973, folder 14, box 147, McKay Papers.

¹⁶⁶ "Relaxation of Abortion Law a Sign of the Nation's Decadence," *Denver Catholic Register*, February 2, 1961.

¹⁶⁷ Rufus L. Porter, "A Welcome Relief," *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, April 2, 1971.

¹⁶⁸ "Relaxation of Abortion Law a Sign of the Nation's Decadence"; Jim and JoAnne Mills to Mr. Howe, February 3, 1975, folder 1, box 39, Allan Turner Howe Collection, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT; Craig B. Terry to Mr. McKay, September 26,

Centrally placed at least nominally in pro-life ideology, modern Jews and Judaism had an awkward place in this vision of a socially conservative Judeo-Christian ethic.¹⁶⁹ First, with the exception of an Orthodox Jew here or there, Jews did not participate in the pro-life movement. Modern Jews, much more than members of any other religious group, supported legalized abortion. In the biblical stories pro-life activists used, ancient Jews played a part, but never distinctly as Jews. They were merely lumped in with others in the Christian Bible. Pro-life activists did not use the “Judeo” part of Judeo-Christian values to appeal to modern Jews or even to allude to a distinct Jewish religiosity.

The imagined Jews of Judeo-Christian values did other work for anti-abortion activists. First off, “Judeo-Christian values” helped activists make very specific claims about history. The term placed pro-life activists on the side of Moses in his battle with the Egyptians, on the side of Jews during World War II, and on the side of American democracy during the Cold War. By employing the “Judeo-Christian tradition,” pro-life activists claimed the moral authority of all religion and argued that all “true” monotheists were pro-life. The word itself was both ecumenical and totalizing. The “Judeo” part of Judeo-Christian signaled the linking of many religious traditions and the erasure of difference among them. Jewish belief, Jewish politics, and Jewish people played no part in the expression of this “tradition.” This was a rhetoric for conservative Christians. Flying the banner of Judeo-Christianity, pro-life activists tried to claim more space for conservative politics and Christianity in the American public sphere.

1973, folder 11, box 147, McKay Papers; Clifford Allen Stephens, Jr., to Mr. Owens, February 12, 1973, folder 10, box 23, Owens Papers; Gerald E. Dolan to Representative Wayne Owens, July 29, 1973, folder 17, box 23, Owens Papers.

¹⁶⁹ Other parts of the Christian Right simply focused on a Christian nation and Christian ethics. See, for example, Goldberg, *Kingdom Coming*.

In practice, the notion of Judeo-Christian values provided an important rhetoric for the pro-life movement. It counteracted the moral authority and public voice of religious liberals within activists' faith communities and within a broader American society. In the 1960s and 1970s, religious reformers argued that their faiths had a duty to support liberal social justice campaigns. Conservatives contended that these people were not only wrong, they were antagonistic to Judeo-Christian values. Conservatives lumped religious liberals in with atheists, communists, and feminists as the opponents of religious people. Activists argued that anti-abortion politics were at the heart of religion and the American experiment. They used the "Judeo-Christian tradition" to make their particular religious and political arguments a part of America's moral essence.

Because pro-life activists' version of Judeo-Christian values was made by and for conservative Christians, it is not surprising that explicit, and often exclusive, Christian imagery and language flourished in many parts of the movement from the 1970s onward. It was not uncommon for pro-life protests outside abortion clinics to include signs or conversations about Jesus. At one 1983 protest in Arizona, a pro-life activist walked around an abortion clinic with a large crucifix, but instead of Jesus being crucified, a baby doll, representing a fetus, took his place.¹⁷⁰ Fetuses were dying for America's sins. Though official channels of most right-to-life groups focused primarily on ecumenical religiosity, many pro-life activists infused their activism with their Christian faith. Thus, pro-life activists' vision of ecumenical Judeo-Christian values often existed alongside other religious conservatives' more exclusive claims about the U.S. as a Christian nation based on biblical principles.

¹⁷⁰ Pam Izakowitz, "Birthright: Anti-abortion group pickets on Mother's Day," *Mesa Tribune*, May 8, 1983.

Ultimately, in the late 1960s and 1970s, pro-life activists in each of the Four Corners states built an ecumenical movement and an ecumenical ideology. In each of the states, Catholics were a part, and most often the core, of the movement. These ecumenical coalitions sometimes included Mormons, but because they never joined the movement in large numbers, the pro-life movement in Utah remained small. Especially Arizona and Colorado, states with large and growing evangelical populations, were home to vibrant ecumenical coalitions but also tensions between religiously-committed activists. Within organizations, activists of different faiths wrestled with what the role religion should take in their activism, while facing a world they saw has committed to religious bigotry.

Despite tensions within and between pro-life groups, evangelical, mainstream Protestant, Mormon, and Catholic pro-life activists were all linked in important ways. They all were pushing back against liberal and radical co-religionists. Conservative Mormons faced other Mormons who claimed their religion was historically feminist. Conservative evangelicals overwhelmed moderates in their midst who thought an abortion should be a decision made by a woman, her husband, and her pastor. Conservative Catholics demanded that other Catholics recommit to “tradition” and “natural law,” even as liberal white Catholics and Catholics of color pushed the church to abandon outdated laws and to commit itself to a broader campaign for social justice. Faced with dissent and change within their own faith communities, many religious people worked to place social conservatism in general and anti-abortion politics in particular at the heart of Christian religious practice.

To battle against liberalism within their churches and wards and within American society as a whole, pro-life activists gradually created an ecumenical ideology that could unite activists across faiths. This was an ecumenism devoted to battling common arguments about religion and politics. Anti-abortion activists rejected the ideas that pro-life opinion was simply a religious minority's view or that pro-life politics violated the separation of church and state. Instead, they argued opposition to abortion was at the heart of monotheism. This pro-life Judeo-Christian ecumenism helped to ground conservatives' claim to moral authority in both American history and modern America.

In these early years of the movement, pro-life activists worked to obscure the "Catholic character" of their movement, focusing on their secularism and emphasizing their social and biological arguments. At first, they dealt with the religious nature of their movement by ignoring it. But by the end of the 1970s, pro-life activists had re-envisioned their strategy. Over the course of the decade, activists successfully built a place for conservative religion in mainstream American politics. This chapter has shown how activists in the 1970s and onward helped make abortion essential to how many thought of being a Christian in America. The next three show how, in the 1980s and 1990s, activists expanded their view of this modern religious war from one where good religious (white) Americans saved fetuses to one where they also saved American women, children, and families.

Chapter Three

Pregnant? Need Help?: Crisis Pregnancy Centers and the Redefinition of Women's Rights

Many women waited and worried on the porch at Reachout, a crisis pregnancy center (CPC) in Tucson.¹ Even lemonade and a hand to hold could not cool those Tucson summers or ease the anxiety of an unplanned pregnancy. Women waited their turn at this small house in a residential neighborhood for a free pregnancy test and free counseling about how to handle their situation. Most came by bus or walked or got a ride to the house in Sugar Hill, one of Tucson's few Black neighborhoods. Reachout had begun in 1973 out of frustration. A small handful of friends, neighbors, and co-religionists had started a pro-life group called Conservation of Human Life in 1971, but without direction or guidance, they felt they had made little impact on the growing numbers of women accessing legal abortions.² Discouraged by their lack of practical success so far and inspired by Birthright, the crisis pregnancy center network begun in Canada in 1968, a group of five women from Conservation of Human Life decided to form a clinic-like, pro-life alternative to Planned Parenthood. Once a pregnant woman entered Reachout, volunteers would give her a free pregnancy test. Then, while she waited for the results, pro-life activists would use diagrams, photos, illustrations, videos, and stories about the process of fetal

¹ Interview with Angela Schnieder, March 17, 2010. For a newspaper description of Reachout, see Carla McClain, "Pregnant? Reachout Advises, But With a 'Pro-Life' View," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, August 14, 1981.

² Before *Roe v. Wade*, Planned Parenthood helped get Arizona women flights to California to access legal abortions. See interview with Helen and Phil Seader, March 18, 2010. On the other activities of Conservation for Human Life, see "Abortion-The Destruction of Defenseless Human Life is a Matter of Vital Public Concern!" *Tucson Daily Citizen*, February 16, 1971; "Protecting Human Life," letters to the editor, *Tucson Daily Citizen*, March 4, 1971; "Murder? Legal Abortion Examined," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, March 31, 1971; "Abortion Kickback Denied," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, August 15, 1972; letters to the editor, *Tucson Daily Citizen*, November 7, 1972; Conservation for Human Life, "Abortion Dehumanizes, Degrades, Destroys" ad, *Tucson Daily Citizen*, October 31, 1972.

development to convey that life began at the moment of conception and any interruption thereafter constituted killing. Activists employed these materials and promises of emotional support to convince women not to abort.

While women waited on that porch in the 1970s and 1980s, they may have looked out in a daze over the small, dusty street divided by a concrete culvert and seen their own individual bad situation, their own personal crisis.³ But pro-life activists had a broader view. The activists set up shop in Sunbelt cities and college towns because they saw these locations as filled with people susceptible to abortion. Women of color and young people were their primary clients. Activists used crisis pregnancy centers to stop abortion one woman at a time, to re-educate these “misinformed” women on issues ranging from biology to motherhood to scripture to life itself. This “re-education” took center stage in the 1980s as crisis pregnancy center activists remade abortion-seeking women into victims of feminism, permissive media, money-hungry doctors, and the abortion-legalizing federal government. Using the languages of feminism, biology, and therapy, pro-life activists sought to turn “misinformed” women into women oppressed by liberalism—and hopefully the new faces of the pro-life movement.

Tracing New Right ideologies and constituencies, many historians have analyzed the shifting relationship between Sunbelt cities and suburbs in the postwar era. Almost all argue that as white people moved to the suburbs for financial and racial reasons, they developed a political philosophy that valued private business and private property over federal programs, seeing their economic success as the product of meritocracy and the urban poor’s failure as a product of

³ Neighborhood History and Info, Northwest Neighborhood Association, http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/Northwest_-_Tucson/pages/258594 (accessed June 27, 2011).

government interference.⁴ Social conservatives most certainly agreed that government interference perverted urban cultures, though they were primarily concerned with the “culture of death” that they believed the federally-funded Planned Parenthood promoted in poor areas of cities. If social conservatives agreed on the federal corruption of the city, they disagreed with economic conservatives over the solutions. Many scholars have used this suburban/urban divide to trace the evolution of pro-business, anti-tax, individualistic political opposition to the welfare state. According to such scholars, New Right conservatives were increasingly retreating from urban problems. However, crisis pregnancy center activists in the Four Corner states reveal that social conservatives were beginning to intervene in new ways in urban communities. This intervention was not based on a principled anti-government stance (a stance that held local charities should provide for their community), but rather on an argument that the federal government was no longer doing its job: promoting heterosexual monogamy, uninterrupted reproduction, and patriarchal families—or “morality”—to the American populace. Until the federal government re-committed to this morality, crisis pregnancy center activists would stand in its stead, counseling, educating, and politicizing poor women, women of color, teenagers, and college women of Sunbelt cities. Through them, activists hoped, they could create an alternative women’s rights movement and turn the tide against abortion.

⁴ Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

The Aborting City

Reachout did not get the house in Sugar Hill by accident, though any space the activists acquired would have had to come as a donation. For the first few months the center existed, Reachout had few funds, no private space for counseling, and no offers of permanent housing. Reachout's activists met potentially pregnant women at a local restaurant, which afforded neither the privacy the women desired nor the legitimacy the activists needed.⁵ But within the year, Reachout activists fell upon some good luck. Joan Doran, the wife of a prominent labor and community leader, offered the group a small home in Sugar Hill, a house they would use for little or no rent for almost two decades.⁶

Pillars of Tucson's union community, James and Joan Doran worked on a number of civic issues, from advocating for an Arizona Civil Rights Commission to helping to provide nursery school for disadvantaged children.⁷ Middle class, white, and religious, the Dorans resembled many other early pro-life and crisis pregnancy center activists. While the Catholic Church's strong stand against abortion had motivated many Catholics, like the Dorans, to join the early pro-life movement, early crisis pregnancy centers included volunteers from many

⁵ Seader interview.

⁶ For the donation, see "'Reachout' offers Problem Pregnancy Counseling," *Arizona Lifeline*, February 1975, University of Arizona Library Special Collections, University of Arizona, Tucson. For the status and occupation of James Doran, see "Initiative Given Boost," picture, *Tucson Daily Citizen*, June 1, 1962; "Civic Unity Council Elects," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, January 3, 1963; "TCC Agencies Make Requests," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, January 7, 1966. The director of Reachout in 2010, Angela Schneider, believed that Reachout moved from Linden St. to another, larger location around 1992. See Schneider interview.

⁷ See "TCC Agencies Make Requests"; "Nursery School Unit Names Slate," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, March 18, 1964.

Christian denominations.⁸ In Tucson, Reachout received verbal and material support from local Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopalian, and Southern Baptist congregations.

There was less racial or economic diversity among pro-life activists. Those involved in the pro-life movement in the Four Corners states universally remember it as an almost entirely Anglo-American movement. Accordingly, many CPC activists noted their near constant need for Spanish-speaking volunteers. This suggests not only that there were no native Spanish speakers among them, but also that few activists had jobs or moved in social situations where Spanish proficiency was necessary. The majority of activists lived in middle-class or even more affluent neighborhoods in Tucson or in the suburbs.⁹ Most lived in the northeast side of town, near the Tucson Medical Center.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Tucson remained segregated. As in many other towns, railroad tracks divided the city in half, geographically and socially.¹⁰ In Tucson, the Southern Pacific Railroad ran diagonally from the northwest to the southeast. Through a host of complicated economic, social and legal processes, Anglos moving to Tucson in the late nineteenth century gained control of the most economically desirable part of the city, pushing

⁸ The Dorans were most likely Catholic. James Doran represented, at one time, the Central Trades Council and Catholic Labor Society. See “Initiative Given Boost.”

⁹ For early activists’ residences, see Dr. and Virginia Clements, Mr. and Mrs. Evo Anton DeConcini, Mr. and Mrs. James Doran, Charles Gillette, Marilyn Giedriatis, Lucille Lennon, Dr. Wallace W. and Ursula McWhirter, Redmond and Ruth Neal, and Helen and Phil Seader’s addresses in *1970 Tucson (Pima County, AZ) City Directory* (Dallas, TX: R.L. Polk & Co., 1970).

¹⁰ For geographic and social divisions in Tucson, see Harry T. Getty, *Interethnic Relationships in the Community of Tucson* (reprint; New York: Arno Press, 1976); Thomas E. Sheridan, *Los Tucsonenses: The Mexican Community in Tucson, 1854-1941* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986) and *Arizona: A History* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995); Lydia R. Otero, *La Calle: Spatial Conflicts and Urban Renewal in a Southwest City* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010).

long-time Mexican residents into barrios south and west of the city center.¹¹ By the mid-twentieth century, almost all of Tucson's ethnic Mexican, Native American, Chinese American, and Black populations lived on the west side of the tracks. After migrating in waves after World War I and II, the town's small African American population resided primarily in small pockets in the southwest part of town.¹² As in many other western towns, Africans Americans were at the bottom of the racial ladder and were systematically denied equal education, employment, health care, and housing.¹³ Restrictive covenants had effectively maintained the separation between whites and non-whites in Tucson throughout the twentieth century. Indeed, all the restrictive covenants surveyed by one scholar in the 1940s prohibited African Americans, even though they only made up 2.8 percent of Tucson's population.¹⁴ The only other black neighborhood in town

¹¹ Otero, *La Calle*, pp. 16-19. For an extended analysis of "barrioization," see Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society: For Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California, 1848-1930* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979.)

¹² In the 1920 census, there were 419 African Americans in Pima County, or 1.2 percent of the population. By 1930, there were 1251 or 2.2 percent of the population. In 1940 numbers increased to 2083 or 2.85 percent of the population. Percentages jumped significantly in 1950 census with 5017 African Americans in Pima County or 3.55% of the population. See Historical Census Browser, retrieved July 8, 2011, from the University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/index.html>. For black neighborhoods of Tucson, see Getty, *Interethnic Relationships*, pp. 138-39. For African American migrations to Arizona, see Matthew C. Whitaker, *Race Work: The Rise of Civil Rights in the Urban West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), p. 10.

¹³ See Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African American in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998); Sheridan, *Arizona: A History*; Whitaker, *Race Work*.

¹⁴ For restrictive covenants, see Getty, *Interethnic Relationships*, pp. 140-41. Most covenants also barred anyone of "Mongolian" descent. Some barred those of "Mexican" descent. None explicitly barred Yaquis or Tohono O'odham, the American Indian people of the area, but, Getty notes that many real estate men considered Native Americans to be of "Mongolian" descent (p. 142). Beyond restrictive covenants, real estate agents and neighborhood associations probably maintained racial segregation through private agreement. For the African American population of Tucson, see 1940 census, county level results, Historical Census Browser, University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/index.html> (accessed June 15, 2011).

was on the northwest side, west of the tracks.¹⁵ This more middle-class neighborhood was called Sugar Hill, or, later, the Northwest neighborhood.

In the late 1960s, Sugar Hill was changing, but not because it was desegregating. True, restrictive covenants and school segregation had officially ended in Tucson, as the city began to comply with changing state and federal law.¹⁶ The city was also trying to address the growing issue of Tucson's urban poor with plans for more public housing. Since the early 1960s, Tucson city officials had been aware that they had insufficient public housing for the city's growing population, noting that Tucson had fallen far behind its state rival, Phoenix, in numbers of housing units.¹⁷ In 1968, the city proposed much needed public housing in Sugar Hill, building new projects and taking over an apartment building called El Capitan.¹⁸ This plan sent the neighborhood into full-blown crisis.

¹⁵ See Getty, *Interethnic Relationships*, pp. 138-39. This neighborhood was bordered by a working-class white neighborhood to the west and a poorer Mexican neighborhood to the north (Barrio Belen). See Getty, *Interethnic Relationships*, pp. 133-34 (poor white), p. 135a (Barrio Belen).

¹⁶ In 1909, the Arizona territorial legislature passed a law allowing schools to segregate children of African descent from those of European descent. In 1951, in the face of increasing civil rights activism in Phoenix's black community, the Arizona legislature passed a law allowing local schools to desegregate voluntarily. Tucson's one black school (near the Sugar Hill neighborhood, called Dunbar School) quickly desegregated. After Arizona voters voted 2 to 1 in June 1952 to maintain separate schools, the Arizona courts ruled segregated schools unconstitutional in 1953 (one year before the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision). See Quintard Taylor, "Race and Ethnicity in the Southwest African American and Arizona History," *Arizona Attorney* 34 (February 1998): 17-19; and Sheridan, *Arizona: A History*, pp. 282-84. For Dunbar's desegregation, see Taylor, "Race and Ethnicity," and the Dunbar School Project, <http://www.thedunbarproject.org/about.html> (accessed July 8, 2011).

¹⁷ Steve Emerine, "Tucson Public Housing Only a Fraction of Phoenix Units," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, January 11, 1963; Peter Starrett, "Public Housing Advocates Stress Rehabilitation Aspects," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, February 5, 1963; Charles Turbeyville, "City to Take New Tack Toward Public Housing," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, March 28, 1967.

¹⁸ "'Turnkey' Job Can Go Ahead," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, March 26, 1968; "New 'Turnkey' Hearing Demanded of Council," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, May 22, 1968; "Council Again Trying North Side Housing," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, July 8, 1969.

A local homeowners' association called El Cortez, made up of middle-class African Americans, protested the proposed public housing, arguing that the influx of "Negro juveniles" would devalue homes and turn the neighborhood into a "racial ghetto."¹⁹ The arguments made by the homeowners' association merged issues of class, race, and age, holding up the black youth as a symbol of what would happen if poor people moved into the neighborhood. Members drew on recent events in other cities. Unemployed and alienated, young black men had been the main participants in recent urban uprisings in the Watts area of Los Angeles (1965) and in Detroit and Newark (1967). White city-dwellers had been gradually abandoning newly integrated neighborhoods, and this trend only accelerated in the face of urban unrest.²⁰ Many white people blamed these urban riots on supposedly universal black characteristics: criminality, violence, and disrespect for orderly neighborhoods.²¹ The local response of El Cortez residents, along with those of middle-class African Americans in Los Angeles, Detroit, and Newark, show that some parts of the black middle class also saw urban uprising as a serious problem, albeit one

¹⁹ "'Turnkey' Job Can Go Ahead"; "New 'Turnkey' Hearing Demanded of Council"; "Council Again Trying North Side Housing."

²⁰ See Gerald Horne, "Black Fire: 'Riot' and 'Revolt' in Los Angeles, 1965 and 1992," in *Seeking El Dorado: African Americans in California*, ed. Lawrence B. De Graaf, Kevin Mulroy, and Quintard Taylor (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), pp. 377-404. For more on suburbanization and white flight, see Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Self, *American Babylon*; Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*; Kruse, *White Flight*; Lassiter, *The Silent Majority*.

²¹ Of course, this stereotype of blackness and especially black masculinity was not new. For a small sampling of relevant work, see Donald Bogle, *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks* (New York: Viking Press, 1973); George M. Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (reprint; Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987); Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Literature* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); Glenda Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Maurice O. Wallace, *Constructing the Black Masculine: Identity and Ideality in African American Men's Literature and Culture, 1775-1995* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

with class and generational origins rather than racial ones.²² Although the Tucson homeowners' association used the image of the black ghetto and riotous black youth to make a multivalent argument about neighborhood change, the judge who eventually decided the case focused only on the racial argument, ruling that El Cortez's concerns were baseless and public housing would not alter home values. He contended that the neighborhood was already 96 percent African American; public housing would only increase the ratio of non-black people in the neighborhood.²³ The city got a green light to begin converting El Capitan into public housing.

Race and class tensions only escalated over the next few years. In 1969, someone threw Molotov cocktails into four of the public housing apartments in El Capitan and a house a few blocks away. The *Tucson Daily Citizen* reported that these attacks may have been racially motivated, as at the victims of the El Capitan firebombing were white. One source said that some El Capitan residents believed that the person managing the building for the Federal Housing Administration was favoring white applicants for public housing and evicting black residents.²⁴ This episode was followed by months of extensive police harassment in the area. In

²² For increasing class tensions between African Americans in the post-war period, see Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, pp. 181-207. For black middle-class response to the Watts riot, see Josh Sides, "Straight into Compton: American Dreams, Urban Nightmares, and the Metamorphosis of a Black Suburb," *American Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (2004): 583-606, esp. pp. 590-91. Of course, throughout the twentieth century and especially during the civil rights movement, many middle-class African Americans did "race work" in the service of Black people of all classes; see, e.g., Whitaker, *Race Work*; Darlene Clark Hine, *Speak Truth to Power: Black Professional Class in United States History* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson, 1996); Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Woman's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

²³ "Project Would Cut Negro Ratio, Judge Says," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, April 16, 1968.

²⁴ "Fire Bombs Hit Four Units of El Capitan Apartments," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, April 10, 1969; "Home Near El Capitan Hit By Bottle Firebomb," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, April 11, 1969; "Police Lauded for Work During Fire Bomb Case," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, May 27, 1969.

the period right after the El Capitan incident, many Tucsonans, including Sugar Hill residents, the Tucson Ecumenical Council, and students at the University of Arizona, expressed anger over the police actions, but the outrage soon died down.²⁵ By 1975, many in Sugar Hill and those who represented them in court contended that there was still “near constant police harassment of blacks in the ... neighborhood,” while police saw their actions as justified because this was a “high crime area.”²⁶

Thus, it was not accidental that Reachout’s house ended up in this neighborhood, four blocks from El Capitan. Perhaps the Dorans thought that, with the new public housing projects in the area, they would not be able to earn as much rent from the small house they owned there as they had in the past, and did not mind giving up a little money for charity. Perhaps the Dorans did not want to rent to this new class of Sugar Hill residents. Perhaps they thought the new residents might be especially in need of crisis pregnancy services. Or perhaps all these factors together influenced the Dorans, convincing them that neighborhood would seem less desirable for middle-class residents and thus more prone to unwanted pregnancy and abortion.

The Dorans could draw on a rich history in making such assumptions. Women of color, the urban poor, and immigrant women had long been associated with hypersexuality and what was termed “over-reproduction.” Such women took on renewed social significance in the 1960s and 1970s, as scientists and politicians at the local and national levels envisioned an impending “population bomb” that would lead to environmental and social destruction. As Americans began to see early deindustrialization, white flight, and increasing urban poverty take their toll on

²⁵ “Report on El Capitan Criticized by Students,” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, May 29, 1969; Mrs. C.M. Hitchcock, “Clearing Up Some Confusion,” letter to the editor, *Tucson Daily Citizen*, July 15, 1969; “Police Chief Seeks Meeting on Mansfield Park Issues,” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, June 16, 1972; “Defense Starts for Police Accused in Search-Arrest,” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, May 9, 1975.

²⁶ “Defense Starts for Police Accused in Search-Arrest,” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, May 9, 1975.

U.S. cities, many social critics blamed excessive fertility for the problems of urban America. In 1965, many who testified in congressional hearings on the population crisis directly linked the Watts riot and urban problems such as unemployment, juvenile delinquency, and congestion to overpopulation, and specifically to the fertility of urban women.²⁷ In addition, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, U.S. population control advocates worried that undocumented immigrants and their children were countering efforts at reducing the birth rate.²⁸ So by the early 1970s, over-reproduction and unwanted pregnancy had a geography, a location, one that population control advocates, feminists, and crisis pregnancy center activists could easily find.

Concern over the world's growing population went back to at least the late eighteenth century. Famously, in his 1798 *Essay on the Principle of Population*, Thomas Malthus argued that the world's food supply could not keep up with its population growth, leading to mass starvation and deprivation. In the twentieth century, many reformers took up population control with zeal, worrying not just about the size of their country's population but also its racial, ethnic, and class composition. For many reformers, concerns over certain families' dimensions were paired with an indifference to the rights of poor women or women of color to choose how many children they would bear and rear. This meant that public concern for the composition and size of the population had positive and negative outcomes for women who relied on the state for reproductive services. Over the course of the century, state programs offered birth control, voluntary sterilization, and sometimes abortion to those who wanted them and had no other way

²⁷ Rickie Solinger, *Wake Up Little Susie: Single Pregnancy and Race before Roe v. Wade* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 208.

²⁸ Elena R. Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters: The Politics of Mexican-Origin Women's Reproduction* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), pp. 109-22.

to obtain them, but they also led to coercive reproductive practices.²⁹ Such practices included targeting poor women for family size reduction, experimenting with dangerous birth control methods on unknowing Puerto Rican women, and forcing sterilizations on women of color.³⁰

Since the late nineteenth century, however, there had also been women's rights advocates who believed controlling one's own reproduction was a means by which a woman could better control her life and manage the size of her own family. In the 1870s, diverse women's rights advocates began promoting "voluntary motherhood," which at that time meant a woman's right to refuse sex. Suffragists, moral reformers, and advocates of free love preached, as Elizabeth Cady Stanton called it, "the gospel of fewer children & a healthy, happy maternity."³¹ While these early reformers explicitly criticized contraception, birth control advocates of the early twentieth century would take up the crusade for liberatory reproduction control. Margaret Sanger, the twentieth century's most famous birth control advocate, contended, "A free race cannot be born of slave mothers.... No woman can call herself free who does not own and control her body."³²

But historically, women's rights advocates and population control reformers were not at odds. In many cases, they were the same people. Margaret Sanger is the best example of this.

²⁹ Johanna Schoen, *Choice and Coercion: Birth Control, Sterilization and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

³⁰ Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Solinger, *Wake Up Little Susie*; Gutiérrez, *Fertile Matters*; Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005); Elizabeth Siegal Watkins, *On the Pill: A Social History of Oral Contraceptives, 1950-1970* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1998); Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1997).

³¹ Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: Birth Control in America*, rev. ed. (1976; New York: Penguin Books, 1990), pp. 93-113 (quote on p. 107).

³² Quoted in Connelly, *Fatal Misconception*, p. 50.

As historian Mathew Connelly writes, Sanger was “adroit at co-opting eugenics arguments and drawing analogies between controlling immigration and controlling births, suggesting that parents should be required to ‘apply’ for babies as immigrants applied for visas.”³³ More commonly, women’s rights advocates and population controllers worked in coalition, less because of theoretical congruence and more because of political necessity. By the early 1970s, feminists focused explicitly on the human right of controlling one’s own reproduction and contended that poor women were the group most denied that right. Feminists argued that poor women had less access to medical care and information and to safe abortions than rich women, who could leave their state or the country, and were more likely to suffer the ill economic effects of a large family. Population control reformers, like Colorado’s Richard Lamm, said the greater problem for the United States was that poor people’s excess reproduction was causing the deterioration of American cities and could ultimately subvert American democracy and capitalism. Despite their deep philosophical differences, women’s rights advocates and population control reformers combined arguments for the right of controlling one’s own reproduction and the public good of controlling the population’s reproduction in many political battles for birth control access and abortion law liberalization. While this coalition fell apart in the early 1970s, both groups continued to look to urban poor as a site for reform. Thus, crisis pregnancy center activists, too, came to poor parts of the city believing they knew what was best for its women.

The counseling and advertising plan of crisis pregnancy centers in the Four Corners states drew directly on the format pioneered by Canadian pro-life activist Louise Summerhill.

³³ Ibid., p. 63. See also Daniela Dell’Orco, “From Women’s Rights to the Eugenics of the Race: Margaret Sanger and the Birth Control Movement in the U.S., 1912-1927,” *Storia Nordamericana* 5, no. 2 (1988): 23-49; Andrea Tone, *Devices and Desires: A History of Contraceptives in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), p. 145; Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p. 64.

Summerhill started one of the first crisis pregnancy centers in the world, which she called Birthright, in 1968. (This Canadian center followed just after a Hawaiian activist established a similar center in 1967). Summerhill was a white, Catholic, stay-at-home mother of seven living in Toronto. She was irritated that her local pro-life group was focusing entirely on lobbying.³⁴ Summerhill was disheartened at her group's lack of success and hoped that she could create spaces that would offer women "alternatives to abortion."³⁵ Birthrights were some of the first crisis pregnancy centers in the Four Corners states, specifically, and in the United States as a whole. The first Birthright in the U.S. started in Denver probably in 1969, and within the next three years, forty-nine states had a Birthright.³⁶ Other CPCs, Tucson's Reachout among them, drew direct inspiration from Summerhill and Birthright.³⁷

In that first year, Birthrights sprang up in cities like Oakland, New York, and Phoenix, and in smaller towns like Bennington, Vermont; Stevens Point, Wisconsin; and Las Cruces, New

³⁴ Michael Cuneo, "Catholics Against the Church: Anti-Abortion Protest in Toronto, 1969-1975," (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1988), p. 15. For a sample of Birthright educational material, see Tempe Birthright, "Birthright: Pregnant... Alone?" pamphlet, no date, folder 9, box 36, Planned Parenthood of Northern and Central Arizona Collection, Arizona Historical Foundation, Hayden Library, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ (hereafter Planned Parenthood AZ Collection).

³⁵ Louise Summerhill, *The Story of Birthright: An Alternative to Abortion*, 11th ed. (Toronto: Birthright International, 2006); and Shawna Renee Reeves, "The Development of Post-Abortion Syndrome within the Crisis Pregnancy Center Movement in America: A Historical-Theoretical Study: A Project Based upon an Independent Investigation" (M.A. thesis, Smith College, 2003), p. 8. While Birthright would later try to distinguish itself from other crisis pregnancy centers by not using "scare tactics," in these early years, Birthrights and other CPCs did similar counseling.

³⁶ Summerhill helped establish between 400 and 600 Birthright centers by 1980. For Denver Birthright, see interview with Mary Rita Urbish, August 8, 2011.

³⁷ While there were similar CPCs in all four of the Four Corners states, Utah probably had the fewest. This was in large part because Mormons could rely on LDS Social Services for help with an unplanned pregnancy. While LDS Social Services probably counseled almost always to carry a pregnancy to term, the structure, employees, and expectations of LDS Social Services were different from CPCs. See LDS Social Services Unwed Parent Outreach Program, folder 9, box 6, Jaynann Payne Records and Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

Mexico. But for Summerhill and other pro-life activists, cities would always be the frontlines of this abortion war.³⁸ In her book on the origins and practices of Birthright, Summerhill writes, “In every large city, there are hundreds daily crying out for mercy, for help, whether they seek it or not. When we see them we know we must do all in our power to keep them out of the hands of the abortionists.”³⁹ Summerhill cautioned that many women who sought abortions were “nice, average girls” but that “on college campuses and [in] big-city apartments,” more unmarried couples were living together, getting pregnant, and seeking abortions.⁴⁰ These were the women who most needed the “alternatives” that Birthright and other CPCs offered.

Crisis pregnancy center activists in the Four Corners states had a similar sense of their primary clients. They did not explicitly say they were seeking out specific women—any stopped abortion was a victory—but their location and advertising plans betray their target constituencies, those most at risk for abortion and most likely to lean on a crisis pregnancy center. CPCs in western cities like Denver, Albuquerque, Phoenix, and Tucson set up shop in poor neighborhoods, near abortion clinics, and near college campuses. They also explicitly advertised to poor and young women. One of the big draws of any CPC ad was the emphasis on free pregnancy testing, free counseling, and, later, free ultrasounds. In addition to notices in the city newspapers, crisis pregnancy centers often advertised on public buses, at bus stops, and in

³⁸ For Oakland’s Birthright, see “Birthright Ceremony Scheduled,” *Oakland Star Tribune*, September 29, 1972; for New York’s Birthright, see Ruth Ann Burns, “Abortion Opponents Active,” *New York Times*, June 11, 1972, p. 104; for Phoenix’s Birthright, see interview with Laurie Futch, March 16, 2010, p. 1; for Bennington’s Birthright, see “‘Birthright’ is Forming in Area,” *Bennington Banner* (VT), May 13, 1972; for Stevens Point’s Birthright, see “Birthright Group Forms for Counsel,” *Stevens Point Daily Journal* (WI), April 26, 1972; for Las Cruces’s Birthright, see “Birthright Movement Launched,” *Las Cruces Sun Times* (NM), May 5, 1972.

³⁹ Summerhill, *The Story of Birthright*, p. 39.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

free newspapers.⁴¹ Beyond the poor, CPC activists knew they were speaking to young people. They ran advertising campaigns in high school and university newspapers, and placed notices in university bathrooms, dorms, and school clinics.⁴²

CPC ads and locations meant that they primarily served poor women, women of color, and young women or, as one CPC activist described her clients, women on “the marginal range of self-sufficiency.” For her, that meant women who were barely getting by financially, women still living with or dependent on their parents, and women who did not have health insurance and were not getting medical care elsewhere.⁴³ Activists defined their clients by their “dependency,” their inability to be independent in the ways that middle-class, older, insured, white citizens could be.

First and foremost, this dependency was financial. Money, or lack of it, always circulated around abortion discussions. For many supporters of abortion rights, financial hardship was a good reason to choose to not to expand one’s family. For opponents, this was a minor hurdle that could easily be overcome, because people “always get by.” Maternity clothes, a bassinet, or some diapers just might be enough to convince the fiscally desperate to try to “get by.” “All our volunteers wanted to help the poor girls,” Helen Seader recalled, “They’re so poor. They’re so needy.”⁴⁴ But bassinets and diapers were easy charity. Many pro-life activists were most comfortable with needy women when those women remained at a distance. Many refused to put women up in their homes or even in crisis pregnancy center offices. Seader recalled that

⁴¹ Allen interview.

⁴² Seader interview; LeQuiu interview.

⁴³ LeQuiu interview.

⁴⁴ Allen interview.

activists would often respond, “Will they steal my money if I keep them in my house?” Helen’s husband Phil added, “[Many activists] wanted an FBI examination.”⁴⁵

In western cities, as elsewhere, poverty and racial discrimination worked in tandem, so that crisis pregnancy centers served a disproportionate number of women of color. CPC activists noted that most of the people they saw in Albuquerque, Phoenix, and Tucson were Latina.⁴⁶ Mary LeQuiu of Carenet in Albuquerque added that at her CPC, they saw a lot of “immigrants from... from Mexico or South America, either documented or undocumented. We deal with a lot of undocumented.” Some activists concluded this racial composition was a product of their downtown or inner-city locations, but others believed that abortion-seeking Latinas had a cultural flaw. “I certainly see in the 25 years [I’ve been at the crisis pregnancy center], ... the deterioration of the culture, as far as mores and what is acceptable, and complete ignorance of how important marriage is for themselves and for society,” Laurie Futch noted about her Latina clients.⁴⁷

While many who volunteered at crisis pregnancy centers noted that they saw married women, middle-class women, and white women where they worked, these were neither the women activists sought out nor were they the majority of women who came. The women CPC volunteers targeted were women they considered vulnerable, dependent, or at risk. This sense of others’ marginality had as much to do with activists’ changing perceptions of cities as it did with the race, class, and age of their clients.

⁴⁵ Seader interview.

⁴⁶ Ibid., Futch interview; LeQuiu interview.

⁴⁷ Futch interview.

Ordering Urban Women

Even if Reachout activists believed they were surrounded by women in crisis or soon-to-be in crisis, they still had to get these presumably abortion-seeking women in the door. Thus, Reachout's work began—necessarily, activists reasoned—with deception. One woman in the group suggested that they make advertisements reading, “Is your pregnancy a problem? Call Reachout,” and then put them around the University of Arizona and in the local newspaper. The ad would list a 24-hour hotline that women could call. This is what Reachout did. Pro-life activist Helen Seader recalled, “They didn’t know where [we] were coming from. Most of the girls called because they thought we were going to give them abortions.”⁴⁸ She added, “Everybody that called me wanted an abortion. Everybody.”⁴⁹ Once they called, CPC activists often got these women to come to the house in Sugar Hill to get a free pregnancy test to confirm that they were, in fact, pregnant.

Once inside the CPC, activists offered pregnancy tests to possibly pregnant women, but they also offered alternatives to modern families, modern clinics, and modern feminism. Activists saw legalized abortion as an immoral scheme promoted by the federal government, by doctors, and by families who had lost their way. For pro-life activists, each of these institutions had promoted “morality” and protected “life” in the past. Each could be rehabilitated, hypothetically, but for now pro-life activists believed they themselves had to be the stopgap for women in crisis. In the face of massive cultural transformation on issues of sex and abortion, pro-life activists set up their crisis pregnancy centers to be homes and clinics simultaneously, with pro-life politics at their moral core.

⁴⁸ Seader interview.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Laurie Futch, an activist from Birthright in Phoenix, emphasized that since her CPC had opened in 1973, the counseling there had been designed to feel like a kitchen table conversation between caring female friends. “We just offered friendship to gals who were having a crisis,” she said. “We always [tried] to have a homey place.”⁵⁰ Futch and others asserted that they achieved this kitchen table feeling because they were not professionals. They were just homemakers, wives, mothers, daughters, or friends. When *National Right to Life News* profiled Birthright in 1976, the writer suggested that women came to the CPC precisely because these pro-life counselors were “just women”: “Why should she be afraid to talk with Jane Doe Birthright? This is not someone she has to impress. This is not a brilliant professional. This is not a meaningful person. This is not someone who has the right to look down on her. Just a housewife.” A pro-life counselor was just a woman who listened to another woman’s problems and, as *National Right to Life News* put it, “from the well of her womanhood experience she responds.”⁵¹

Truly, crisis pregnancy centers were woman-only spaces. Sometimes a man accompanied a pregnant woman to a center, but he was almost always left outside or in a waiting room. And often, the board of directors of a crisis pregnancy center was evenly divided between men and women. But the CPC activists, volunteers, and directors were almost always women. Because, for pro-lifers, no man could speak from the well of his “womanhood experience,” men were left with peripheral and subsidiary roles, aiding in promotional and fund raising activities but with never the primary work of the centers. Women had special roles in this corner of the

⁵⁰ Futch interview.

⁵¹ “Helping a 14-year-old girl tell her mother, principal,” *National Right to Life News*, April 1976, p. 15.

pro-life movement. They had the experiential authority to speak to other women and the special moral authority to intervene in intimate familial issues.

Though these activists could stand in for friends or sisters, they most often stood in for mothers. From the beginning of the movement, many activists worried that teenagers would have more abortions partly because of parents' lessening power over their children. Helen Seader remembered her earliest activism as a protest against the Planned Parenthood practice of "taking our girls" to California for legal abortions.⁵² Her group began notifying parents through church bulletins that if their daughter was pregnant, she could end up "with a doctor or with an agency that might refer their girl for an abortion."⁵³ Battles raged in Arizona and a number of other states in the 1970s and 80s over whether a minor had to notify her parents before having an abortion and whether the abortion-seeking adolescent had to get parental consent. In almost all the thirty-four states that eventually passed parental notification or parental consent laws, a minor could go to a judge and get a waiver in order to get an abortion without her parents' knowledge. In many states, these waivers were extremely hard (or even traumatic) to get. Nevertheless, anti-abortion activists saw this practice as representing the continued erosion of parental rights at the hand of a perverse, liberal state.⁵⁴

Additionally, by the mid-1970s, pro-life activists, along with many other Americans, believed they were witnessing an epidemic of teen pregnancy, though some historians claim that

⁵² Seader interview.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1991), pp. 419-20.

the teen pregnancy rate had been decreasing since its peak in the 1950s.⁵⁵ Newspapers and TV news programs feverishly reported on young people's growing disinterest in pre-marital virginity; peer pressure not to use contraceptives; and the descent of young, single (middle-class) mothers into poverty. Many historians trace this hysteria back to an inaccurate 1975 pamphlet, put out by the Alan Guttmacher Foundation, one of the biggest supporters of family planning and abortion rights, proclaiming that there were a "million pregnant teenagers."⁵⁶ While the foundation may have tweaked the statistics to highlight the continuing need for sex education, access to birth control, and legalized abortion, for many Americans, the numbers provided dramatic evidence of rapid social transformation or even social decline.⁵⁷ To be sure, since the 1960s, sexual mores had changed in America. But, in popular culture from the 1970s onward, the pregnant teenager became one of the most potent images of the sexual revolution's errors: excessive, adolescent sexual activity unhindered by forethought, contraception, personal responsibility, or the bonds of marriage. CPC activists, in their own minds, kept pregnant teenagers from making bad situations worse. Activists had to convince a young woman that being a single mother or a teen mom or giving her child up for adoption were better options than having an abortion.

⁵⁵ See Maris Vinovskis, *An "Epidemic" of Adolescent Pregnancy? Some Historical and Policy Considerations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Rosalind Petchesky, *Abortion and a Woman's Choice* (New York: Longman, 1984); Constance Nathanson, *Dangerous Passage: The Social Control of Sexuality in Women's Adolescence* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991); and Kristen Luker, *Dubious Conceptions: The Politics of Teen Pregnancy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

⁵⁶ Janice M. Irvine, *Talk About Sex: The Battles of Sex Education in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 109; Petchesky, *Abortion and a Woman's Choice*, p. 211; Nathanson, *Dangerous Passage*; and Luker, *Dubious Conceptions*. For the racialized history of unwed pregnancy in the postwar period, see Solinger, *Wake Up Little Susie*.

⁵⁷ The pamphlet's numbers included married 19-year-olds alongside 15-year-old single pregnancies.

For social conservatives, concern over teen pregnancy worked in tandem with concern over the liberal state. Teen pregnancy was supposedly increasing because family units were breaking down. Family units were breaking down, in part, because the state was promoting immoral policies that infiltrated children's emerging moral systems, which in turn allowed children to make immoral decisions without parental notification, let alone assent. If the state was not going to support parents' control over their dependents, then crisis pregnancy centers could counter the power of Planned Parenthood by briefly standing in as a girl's parent and trying to stop her abortion. Once CPC activists convinced a girl not to terminate her pregnancy, then they encouraged her to talk to her parents and gain their support for her pregnancy and future child.

So, in practice, CPC activists were not just reasserting parental rights. They knew many parents supported their pregnant teen's choice to have an abortion or even suggested it might be the best option. Many activists contended that parents and boyfriends often pressured young women into having abortions.⁵⁸ Believing that family units were collapsing, CPC activists tried to intervene in and reshape families into their vision of what families should be: loving, supportive, hierarchical, and, above all, pro-life. Thus crisis pregnancy centers created a familial atmosphere not just as an emotional tactic, but as an explicit political critique of modern families.

Even though crisis pregnancy center volunteers rejected the gendered alienation that came with being "professionals," they employed the authority of medicine to make their appeals. CPC activists, from the very beginning, acted like doctors, nurses, or at least all-knowing biology

⁵⁸ For examples of such arguments, see Pamela Zekman and Pamela Warrick, "Counseling the Patient: Buy This Abortion," *National Right to Life News*, February 1979; Micheal Lyons, "Taking it To the Streets," *Arizona Living Magazine*, April 1985, folder 4, box 35, Planned Parenthood AZ Collection.

teachers. Because free pregnancy tests were the explicit hook to get women in the door, counselors automatically put themselves in the place of the healthcare provider when they took a woman's urine sample. Then, much of the counseling centered on fetal development, explaining what a fetus looked like, showing models or movies, discussing heartbeats, fingers and toes, brainwaves, and fetal pain. In many of these situations, activists used scientifically legitimate models and movies, but, in the context of the crisis pregnancy center, these tools took on new meaning.

Some western CPCs used a science documentary made by Claude Edelman from 1971 called *The First Days of Life*, which chronicled fetal development from fertilization to birth using intrauterine photography.⁵⁹ Along with an identically titled book, the movie bookended the story of fetal development with scenes of birth and mothers taking care of young children. Edelman was a part of a largely pro-natalist, postwar scientific culture that increasingly looked to the minute details of fetal development for the answers to persistent human problems. By the late 1940s, historian Sara DuBow argues, scientists and psychologists believed that fetuses not only had a "biological and physiological life," they also had "a biographical and psychological life."⁶⁰ These many fetal lives both extended the responsibilities of the mother all the way back to conception and individualized the developing fetus. *The First Days of Life* book and movie combined details of fetal development with warnings about potential damage if a fetus's mother had psychological problems, smoked, or spent too much time in school, the ground zero of

⁵⁹ Jerry Montgomery, "17 and Pregnant? Birthright's Ear Just for Listening," *The New Mexican*, March 31, 1977.

⁶⁰ Sara DuBow, *Ourselves Unborn: A History of the Fetus in Modern America* (Cambridge, MA: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 47.

contagion.⁶¹ With this information, Edelmann hoped to improve “the quality of life.”⁶² While Edelmann “never intended [his pictures and movie] as any kind of campaign for or against abortion,” his work was clearly pro-natalist; it fetishized prenatal life with phrases like “there was a dramatic explosion of life,” “a pregnant woman is stronger, more beautiful,” and “the human form is unfolding like a flower.”⁶³ CPC counselors easily co-opted scientific work like this to make their pro-life pleas.

CPC counselors also made more amorphous scientific claims. If counselors used similar language to the pamphlets they passed out, then they began sentences with phrases like “In the past few years, research by important medical doctors has proved that...” Such sentences ended with phrases like “life begins at conception” or “unborn babies feel pain” or “abortion could do permanent damage to your female organs.”⁶⁴ Then, with this bodily evidence and the endorsement of distant, faceless doctors, they made the argument that abortion was murder. In the 1980s and 1990s, CPCs became even more medical, sometimes in performance and sometimes in practice. At the Aid to Women CPC in Phoenix, volunteers often wandered the parking lot in lab coats trying to nab abortion-seeking women before they found their way a nearby abortion provider.⁶⁵ Other CPCs began offering free ultrasounds to draw in women.⁶⁶ In

⁶¹ Claude Edelmann, *The First Days of Life* (Paris: France Impressions, 1971), pp. 14, 76, 60. See also *The First Days of Life*, film directed by Claude Edelman and Jim Baufle (Cinema Medica, 1971).

⁶² Edelmann, *The First Days of Life*, p. 15.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 32, 41, 48.

⁶⁴ Dianne Mohahan and Karen Sullivan-Ables, “What You Should Know Before You Choose...Abortion as Your Option” pamphlet, Heritage House '76, Inc/Precious Feet People, folder 1, box 1-3, HH1421, Hall Hoag Collection, John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, RI (hereafter Hall Hoag Collection).

⁶⁵ Gail Maiorana, “Man Accused of Luring Patients to View Films,” *Tempe Daily News*, February 5, 1986.

these spaces, activists could stand in for the doctors who—they believed—had failed these unfortunately pregnant women.

Central to all these assumed identities (doctor, mother, friend) was activists' apolitical nature; their authority came from being outside partisan politics. All CPCs contended they were apolitical. Some merely suggested their pro-life stance was not a political one. But others, like the simply named Crisis Pregnancy Center in Phoenix, said they were actually not anti-abortion or even interested in the battle over abortion; they were just offering alternatives to it.⁶⁷ Such claims clearly disguised how every crisis pregnancy center was explicitly, in funding, volunteers, materials, and ideology, a part of the pro-life movement. But the claims also show how activists thought about truth and politics. In this particular logic, activists suggested that politics constituted an opinion, judgment or spin, whereas what they were doing was providing facts or universal truths. As one CPC activist put it, "We are anti-manipulation here. It is...non-judgmental, total truth telling... [A woman's] dignity is sacred to us. So we are not going to diminish her dignity by trying to put our agenda on her."⁶⁸ Another pro-life author argued there was "no preaching, no moralizing" at crisis pregnancy centers.⁶⁹ Of course, truth claims are inherent to any political movement, but crisis pregnancy center activists often used these claims to distance themselves even from the lobbying or protesting arms of their own movement. As conversations about legal abortion fell into an entrenched, if increasingly angry and emotional,

⁶⁶ Most crisis pregnancy center activists cite the ultrasound as the biggest innovation in pro-life tactics in the movement's history.

⁶⁷ "New Center to offer abortion alternatives," *Tempe Daily News*, October 1, 1982.

⁶⁸ Allen interview.

⁶⁹ "Helping a 14-year-old girl tell her mother, principal," p. 15.

debate, this apolitical stance was both an attempt to escape polarization and a claim about the transcendent, ahistorical, apolitical “truth” of pro-life politics.

Just because pro-life activists offered an alternative to modern families, clinics, and politics does not mean all their clients bought it. Many did not even change their minds about abortion. Some days, Helen Seader recalled, “I wasn’t sharp enough to save babies...there were days when they decided no ...they were going to have the abortion and that tore you up. You went home and said, where were you good, Lord? What could I have said? What could I have done?”⁷⁰ In fact, by Reachout’s own accounting, in 1985, almost 35 percent of clients left the clinic undecided or still wanting an abortion. Over 55 percent came specifically for the free pregnancy test and never intended to have an abortion. That year, less than 10 percent of clients who came for pregnancy tests told Reachout volunteers they had changed their minds about abortion.⁷¹ It is likely at least some of these lied so that they could exit the center more easily.

By the mid-1980s, most clients came to Reachout and other crisis pregnancy centers for material aid. Since their inception, most CPCs had featured a donations closet to help support women who decided to carry their pregnancies to term. Gradually these services expanded, and CPCs offered clothing, diapers, and furniture to poor mothers. In the mid-1980s, over half of Reachout’s clients came for the donations closet, not because they needed a pregnancy test.⁷² In

⁷⁰ Seader interview.

⁷¹ *Reachout News*, March 1986. Subsequent newsletters show similar numbers. See *Reachout News*, March 7, 1987; *Reachout News*, August 1987. Later newsletters omitted success rates. (All *Reachout News* issues in author’s possession).

⁷² *Reachout News*, March 7, 1987; *Reachout News*, March 1989; *Reachout News*, February 1990; *Reachout News*, April 1990; *Reachout News*, October 1990; *Reachout News*, February 1992. (All *Reachout News* issues in author’s possession).

1989, 47 percent were returning clients, most of whom were probably there for donations.⁷³ So managing donations for women who were not immediately considering abortion became the majority of CPCs' work. While many CPC volunteers embraced this shift, others gradually pulled away from crisis pregnancy centers. Helen Seader, who would go on to be a part of the pro-life rescue movement, recalled the reasons for her departure from Reachout, "It was just that when they got away from the initial thing about saving the babies, that I thought, I was tired."⁷⁴

Even those who stayed in CPCs found the system wanting, primarily because it was not clear that material support transformed the social systems that legitimated abortion. This disconnection was especially clear when women came in and took more than what activists believed was their fair share. Mary LeQuiu, an activist at a CPC in Albuquerque, recalled, "I mean, everything in the closets [wa]s donated, 100% donated and you'd have one client come in and wipe the place out."⁷⁵ In these instances, women in need took control of the charity, denying activists the ability to control donations and link clients to a pro-life agenda. Most of the women who used the donations closets were not immediately considering abortion and were not changing their minds about abortion, feminism, or the state, liberal or otherwise.

Even with the quiet dissent of mothers in need or the explicit rejection of pro-life arguments, crisis pregnancy centers did essential work for the pro-life movement. CPC activists envisioned themselves as the frontlines of the abortion war, if not abortion politics, stopping actual abortions rather than debating laws or carrying signs. This was always their primary goal. However, the centers also served as essential sites of political transformation for activists and

⁷³ *Reachout News*, March 1989 (in author's possession).

⁷⁴ Seader interview.

⁷⁵ LeQuiu interview.

their clients. Between the early 1970s and late 1990s, these centers became ideological testing grounds for theories about the role of women in the pro-life movement and in society. Gradually, activists moved from targeting women at-risk for abortion to a full theorization of women as victims of abortion.

Making Activists

In the late 1970s and 1980s, many pro-life activists shifted their rhetorical focus from the fetus as the primary victim of abortion to the fetus and the pregnant woman as the two victims of abortion. In 1981, Dr. Carolyn Gerster, organizer of Arizona Right to Life, told the *Mesa Tribune* that yes, abortion was murder. But she concluded her comments with an important caveat: “I don’t want to come off sounding judgmental, because I believe that abortion is a crime with two victims—the mother and the unborn child.” By 1986, even President Ronald Reagan had adopted this rhetoric. In a letter to a New Mexico pro-life activist, Reagan wrote, “Those victims [of abortion] included not only the babies who die, but also their mothers who are so often misled about the true nature of abortion and who are unaware of the positive alternatives to this violence against their defenseless unborn infants.”⁷⁶ In fact, in 1987, Reagan asked his Surgeon General, Christian fundamentalist and passionate pro-lifer C. Everett Koop, to investigate the health effects of abortion on women. After reviewing hundreds of scholarly articles, Koop dismayed anti-abortion activists around the country by refusing to release his

⁷⁶ “President’s Message,” in Right to Life Committee of New Mexico, *Viva Life* newsletter, January 1986, folder 1, box 1-8, HH120, Right to Life, New Mexico, Hall Hoag Collection.

report, thus tacitly admitting he discovered no systematic link between abortion and women's physical or mental health problems.⁷⁷

The villains in this two-victim narrative were numerous. For many pro-life activists, abortion was, at its root, a product of sexism. Many contended that abortion allowed men to objectify women, use them as sexual toys, and then refuse to protect and take care of them. Abortion was an abdication of men's responsibility. The real brainwashing, though, began with the feminist movement, pro-life activists thought. As they saw it, a group of women had recalibrated the relationships among sex, responsibility, and life, making it seem as if a pro-choice stance was synonymous with a pro-woman stance.⁷⁸ Some even claimed that abortion was akin to a feminist hazing ritual, where women proved their solidarity by having one.⁷⁹ Pro-life activists argued that the feminist cultural narrative of sexual liberation and individual choice demanded that women deny the knowledge of fetal humanity. Arizona activist John Jakubczyk explained, "Women deep down know that it's a baby. They know. Even the pro-choice women know. They just find justifications, rationales, whatever and they do it."⁸⁰ Many contended that women's bodies fundamentally told them "the truth" about the fetus: a truth they could ignore but a truth nonetheless. Then, the state supported this cycle of cultural and biological misinformation by providing women the means to have a legal abortion. And finally, activists claimed, doctors capitalized on abortion by turning it into an industry to make a quick buck.

⁷⁷ Ellie Lee, *Abortion, Motherhood, and Mental Health: Medicalizing Reproduction in the United States and Britain* (New York: Adeline De Gruyter, 2003), pp. 118-20.

⁷⁸ See, for example, Nancy Hufnagel, "It's Murder," *Phoenix Gazette*, April 1, 1985.

⁷⁹ Linda Perry, "Abortion Nightmare Update," Speech to the New Mexico Right to Life State Convention, April 1985, folder 1, Linda E.J. Perry Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard, Cambridge, MA.

⁸⁰ Interview with John Jakubczyk, March 16, 2010.

Activists also began to theorize and name what they saw as the long-term damage women experienced from abortion. By the late 1970s, American audiences were knowledgeable about the mental repercussions of trauma, as the media detailed the experiences of Vietnam veterans with post-traumatic stress syndrome. Pro-life activists claimed that the mental repercussions from abortion were similar, including high rates of depression, attempted suicide, substance abuse and violence.⁸¹ They named this phenomena “post-abortion syndrome.”

This notion had a long and complicated history. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, many physicians had argued that abortion should be illegal because the “systematic prevention of conception” could lead to such physical problems for women as paralysis and such psychological problems as “nervous disease.”⁸² In the 1950s, however, some psychiatrists began to argue the opposite: that, in fact, carrying an unwanted fetus to term could have massive repercussions on a woman’s mental health. At first, psychiatrists used this line of argument to get women access to therapeutic abortions and later, to argue for abortion law liberalization.⁸³ By the 1980s, most psychiatrists and their professional association, the American Psychiatric Association (APA), agreed that abortion did not cause psychological trauma. To be included as post-traumatic stress disorder, the stressor would have to be an experience “that would be

⁸¹ For a pro-life discussion of suicide as a complication of abortion, see *Arizona Right to Life News*, Winter 1995, University of Arizona Library Special Collections; Larry and Lynette Hieber, letter to the editor, “Abortions Not So Safe,” *Yuma Daily Sun*, March 25, 1986.

⁸² DuBow, *Ourselves Unborn*, p. 16.

⁸³ For the use of psychological arguments in the 1950s, see Leslie J. Reagan, *When Abortion was a Crime: Women, Medicine, and Law in the United States, 1867-1973* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 181-90. For an example of a psychiatrist arguing that unwanted pregnancy causes psychological trauma and thus abortion law should be legal, see Bernadine Prince to Manuel Lujan, October 17, 1974, folder New Mexico, 1969-75, carton 4, National Abortion Rights Action League Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard, Cambridge, MA.

markedly distressing to almost anyone.”⁸⁴ Rather, in 1989, Nancy Adler of the APA told *Time* magazine “that despite the millions of women who have undergone the procedure since the landmark ruling *Roe v. Wade* ... there has been no accompanying rise in mental illness.” The APA followed up with thorough studies that found that severe negative reactions to abortions were rare and “best understood in the framework of coping with normal life stress.” “Distress is greater before abortion,” the APA proclaimed. The American Medical Association joined the chorus in 1992 when it published a literature review on abortion that began, “this is an article about a medical syndrome that does not exist.”⁸⁵

Despite loud dissent from the psychiatric and medical communities, pro-life activists turned “abortion regret” into a syndrome in 1981, whether the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostics and Statistics Manual* (DSM) recognized it or not. That year Vincent Rue, a psychotherapist, coined the term during a congressional hearing on “Abortion and Family Relations.”⁸⁶ Pro-life psychologists David Reardon and Anne Speckhard quickly took up the torch of the abortion-damaged woman. Both helped develop the diagnosis, arguing that because of “post-abortion stress,” women re-experienced the trauma of their abortion through flashbacks, hallucinations, and nightmares.⁸⁷ In this diagnosis, pro-life activists imagined a new kind of

⁸⁴ This is the wording in DSM-III-R, published by the American Psychiatric Association in 1987. Quoted in David A. Hamburg, “Foreword,” in *Post-Traumatic Therapy and Victims of Violence*, ed. Frank M. Ochberg (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1988), p. 7.

⁸⁵ Quoted in Lee, *Abortion, Motherhood, and Mental Health*, pp. 119, 120. See also Rachel Needle and Lenore Walter, “Is There a Post Abortion Syndrome?” *Abortion Counseling: A Clinician’s Guide to Psychology, Legislation, Politics, and Competency* (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2008); DuBow, *Ourselves Unborn*, pp. 160-1; Reeves, “The Development of Post-Abortion Syndrome.”

⁸⁶ DuBow, *Ourselves Unborn*, p. 161.

⁸⁷ Ibid.; Anne Speckhard, *Post-Abortion Counseling: Manual for Christian Counseling* (Falls Church, VA: Post-Abortion Counseling and Education, 1987), p. 6.

victimhood for post-abortive women, one where their unknowing perpetration of a moral crime led to long-term psychological damage.

Psychiatrists came to use post-traumatic stress diagnoses for many different victims of violence but, in these early theorizations, the victimization of women who had abortions was most similar to that of Vietnam vets. Pro-life activists argued that veterans and women who aborted experienced trauma because both killed and both could not distinguish the innocent from the guilty.⁸⁸ So women were not the same type of victims as fetuses. Fetuses were innocent victims of murder. Women were victims because society led them unknowingly to perpetrate a moral crime. Their damage was of the guilt-ridden, psychological variety, which could have physical manifestations. As with Vietnam vets, pro-life activists envisioned women who had abortions as victims of society, haunted by the violence they saw and were led to commit.

Now, rather than focusing solely on preserving fetal life, pro-life activists in crisis pregnancy centers began concerning themselves with the mental and moral stability of women during pregnancy and after birth. Now abortion represented more than a singular moment when a woman made the choice to terminate her pregnancy or carry it to term. With the creation of post-abortion syndrome, abortion was actually a part of a whole social structure that misled and damaged women. Thus, crisis pregnancy centers had to expand their vision of pro-life activism. With this diagnosis, CPCs began to work on the educational and therapeutic levels to reeducate American women about the social systems that led to abortion and the trauma it caused.

One way CPC activists addressed this evolving conceptualization of their charge was by re-envisioning their donation system. Rather than allowing women to assess their own needs and take whatever they deemed necessary, many CPCs turned to a system where a woman had to

⁸⁸ Speckhard, *Post-Abortion Counseling*, p. 4.

earn donated items. Many began offering classes in everything from breastfeeding to scripture to fetal development, and women would earn points or “mommy dollars” by attending. The dollars, in turn, could be used for donated items.⁸⁹ One activist noted that the women “felt better about themselves because they earned it. So it wasn’t the entitlement kind of thing. They were also much more respectful. So it engaged them in positive behavior.”⁹⁰ This program reasserted activists’ power over material aid, righted the momentarily inverted power relations between activist and client, and, most important, inaugurated a massive re-education campaign.

Beyond these new education programs, CPCs also revamped their counseling programs. One activist recalled that in the 1980s, “people began to realize that they needed to address the pain that women felt who had chosen abortion.”⁹¹ Nationally and locally, pro-life groups created programs to deal with the grief and trauma they believed women experienced through abortion. CPCs in the Four Corners states organized post-abortion groups and taught local religious leaders how to do post-abortion counseling with members of their congregations. They also participated in groups like Women Exploited (WE) and Women Exploited by Abortion (WEBA) and retreats like Rachel’s Vineyard, a scripturally based post-abortion program where women who had had abortions were taken “step-by-step work through all of the deepest possible wounds” abortion had caused for them.⁹² In Arizona, there was also at least one group for

⁸⁹ LeQuiu interview; Schnieder interview; interview with Laura Bowman, March 24, 2010.

⁹⁰ LeQuiu interview.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Allen interview; *Reachout News*, March 1989, p. 3; *Reachout News*, August 1991, p. 3 (in author’s possession). For more on chapters of WEBA in the Four Corners states, see *Arizona Right to Life Newsletter*, Summer 1984; *Arizona Right to Life Newsletter*, Spring 1985, both in University of Arizona Library Special Collections.

“mothers of aborted children.”⁹³ These programs, ministries, and retreats were a kind of pro-life consciousness raising. Second wave feminists had created consciousness raising as a process by which a woman’s personal experiences were translated into political engagement against sexism. Post-abortion counselors used a similar technique to different ends. They probed deep into the personal trauma, depression, guilt, and melancholy in a woman’s life and gave it a social explanation. They gave those feelings an origin point: abortion.

Post-abortion therapy offered women therapeutic redemption and an opportunity to reorder their relationships with lovers, children, and families. This was the same opportunity offered white unwed teenagers in the postwar period. (Black women were only offered punishment through social policy, as they were thought to be naturally sexual and beyond redemption). In the postwar period, white unwed pregnant women could be cured of their mental illnesses if they expressed remorse, put their children up for adoption, and recommitted to female domesticity. Once they expressed their guilt and shame and repented their social sin, these women could be changed from overly “independent, aggressive, and masculine” social misfits into fully and correctly feminine women.⁹⁴ Post-abortion therapy’s path to mental health borrowed heavily from these postwar narratives of white sexual redemption.

The premise of post-abortion counseling was that women who had abortions were repressed and in denial. And only through confronting this denial, retrieving traumatic events, and grief work could these women be healed.⁹⁵ In the first half of the 1980s, post-abortion counseling in some Four Corners CPCs used a primarily religious manual that called on a

⁹³ “Tears Speak...” *Arizona Right to Life News*, August 1997, University of Arizona Library Special Collections.

⁹⁴ Solinger, *Wake Up Little Susie*, pp. 94-98 (quote on p. 96).

⁹⁵ Speckhard, *Post-Abortion Counseling*, p. ii.

woman to confess her abortion to God as a moral crime, calling abortion Satan's hatred for children. Once a woman asked for forgiveness for her sin, the manual suggested that her psychological and mental problems could be alleviated. In one story, one of the co-authors, minister Bill Banks, recalled Olga, a woman from a "southwestern state" with an incurable bone infection, who came to him for healing. Once he guessed that she had had an abortion and convinced her to confess her sin to God, Banks maintained, "not too surprisingly, she was able to walk without any pain at all, and she left the room *CARRYING HER CRUTCHES!*"⁹⁶ Bill Banks and his coauthor and wife, Sue Banks, connected abortion with physical and psychological problems, but the language of sin, forgiveness, and scripture dominated their counseling techniques.

By the late 1980s, CPCs in the Four Corners states began to use the much more psychologically-focused counseling techniques advocated by the group Post Abortion Counseling and Education (PACE) and described by PACE manuals.⁹⁷ PACE was a ministry of the Christian Action Council, a pro-life lobbying group founded in 1975 by pediatrician and future Surgeon General C. Everett Koop and theologians Francis Schaeffer and Harold O.J. Brown.⁹⁸ In 1980, the Christian Action Council became CareNet, an umbrella organization for CPCs, and their PACE program followed a much more therapeutic model than previous manuals. Many CPC counselors may have counseled extemporaneously, adapting programs as they went along, interjecting their own beliefs and their own experience with trauma or abortion, but most

⁹⁶ Bill and Sue Banks, *Ministering to Abortion's Aftermath* (Kirkwood, MS: Impact Books, 1982), pp. 46-8 (quote on p. 48, emphasis in original). The use of this book is noted in "WEBA News," *Arizona Right to Life Newsletter*, Spring 1985, University of Arizona Library Special Collections.

⁹⁷ Jakubcysk interview; LeQuiu interview.

⁹⁸ J. Brooks Flippen, *Jimmy Carter, the Politics of Family, and the Religious Right* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), p. 51.

probably followed PACE manuals closely, believing they were doing delicate work with delicate psyches.⁹⁹

The first step in PACE's post-abortion counseling was to identify the syndrome in the woman. Each priest, group leader, or crisis pregnancy center counselor had to figure out whether an individual fit the diagnostic criteria. The criteria were, in a word, broad. If a woman experienced the break-up of a romance, was preoccupied with children, or was angry at men—and she had an abortion—she was probably suffering from the syndrome. If a woman was actively pursuing academic or professional success, was adamantly pro-choice, or was questioning God—and she had an abortion—she was potentially traumatized.¹⁰⁰ In other words, one woman's liberation was another's diagnosis. If a woman had any unresolved feelings about her abortion, ranging from mild guilt to a sense of shame to regular re-experiencing of the procedure, she probably had post-abortion syndrome. Together, these criteria included almost any woman who had had an abortion (roughly a third of all American women). These guidelines turned very common female experiences in the 1980s into symptoms, signs of a psyche gone awry.

In the 1980s, fewer women wanted or had access to the idealized life of the 1950s nuclear family. More women were postponing marriage and motherhood or choosing to avoid them altogether. One 1977 study suggested one in five American men would cohabit for at least six months with a woman who was not his wife at some point in his life. And the divorce rate had

⁹⁹ For one post-abortion counselor's concern over delicate psychological work, see interview with Meme Eckstein, August 5, 2011.

¹⁰⁰ Speckhard, *Post-Abortion Counseling*, pp. 4-14.

been rising steeply since the late 1960s.¹⁰¹ Most women by this time had to pursue some kind of wage labor. While this was at least in part due to financial necessity, popular culture, particularly television and film, affirmed these choices in the 1980s with strong female characters doggedly pursuing careers before marriage and children, finding happiness on their own or with other women, and critiquing patriarchy.¹⁰²

Interestingly, but perhaps not unexpectedly, the symptoms of post-abortion syndrome aligned with the broader critiques that conservatives directed at the changing position of women in society. Social conservatives argued that feminism (and the sexual and social revolutions it helped create) had actually led to increased unhappiness among women. Feminism, they believed, had convinced American women that a successful career and a good sex life would bring liberation and thus happiness. By leading women away from traditional marriage and childrearing, feminists had actually led American women away from a moral and fulfilling life. Though the media often echoed these criticisms of feminism, conservatives ultimately blamed the media and the government for promoting feminist revisions of society.¹⁰³

Post-abortion counselors were often dealing with women who had already identified themselves as hurting, depressed, or feeling guilty, but pro-life activists also claimed that post-abortion syndrome could manifest itself in complete repression of any negative feelings or emotional repercussions. Thus, they needed to do public education so that healthy, happy

¹⁰¹ John D’Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 331.

¹⁰² See Sara M. Evans, *Tidal Wave: How Women Changed America at Century’s End* (New York: Free Press, 2003), pp. 176-212; Matthew D. Lassiter, “Inventing Family Values,” in *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, ed. Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 14-15; Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), pp. 14-20.

¹⁰³ Faludi, *Backlash*, pp. 75-111.

women could consider if they were deluding themselves and were, in fact, deeply unhappy and traumatized. Beyond CPCs, pro-life activists in the 1980s and 1990s talked about this syndrome almost anywhere they did educational activism: schools, churches, public forums, protests, and legislatures. In these years, they used media like radio and TV to promote their political diagnosis. In the framework of post-abortion syndrome, pro-life activists implicitly asked, Could the increasing rate of divorce, the phenomena of middle-class single motherhood, and the popularity of feminism itself be a product of mental illness?

In order to break through this rampant denial, PACE counseling demanded that a woman re-experience her abortion. The woman had to detail the physical and emotional experience of that day, the sensations of pregnancy and abortion, the pulse of fetal life and its death, and the interactions with those involved in the abortion.¹⁰⁴ Through the power of suggestion, counseling helped women find answers to questions that they might have had at the time or that they asked now. Does a fetus experience pain or distress? The manuals responded, “The woman becomes acutely aware of her perceptions of the fetus as an unborn child with the capacity to feel, perceive, and signal its distress,” and she re-experiences “a sensation of death.”¹⁰⁵ What happens to the woman’s body and the fetus’s body during the abortion? Counselors claimed this was an “anonymous” procedure, where it was unclear what actually happened, whether the fetus died before or after “delivery,” and where the remains went afterwards. Were healthcare providers insensitive? Many were insulting, insensitive, and abusive, manuals asserted, but ultimately the biggest problem was that providers caused the woman and her fetus pain.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Speckhard, *Post-Abortion Counseling*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 34.

Once explored, the counselor could then “organize” these facts.¹⁰⁷ This “reorganization” explicitly made the connection between a woman’s current anxieties, insecurities, and sadness and her abortion. When a woman acknowledged that the abortion was a “potentially traumatic event,” then the counselor could move to the next step in healing. To reckon fully with her repressed trauma, the woman had to experience some “cognitive and emotional disintegration,” which meant making an explicit link between physical pain and emotions such as rage and fright, on the one hand, and her abortion experience, on the other.¹⁰⁸ This emotional recalling was designed to move beyond “controlled expression” towards “disintegration,” that is, towards emotional collapse.

Manuals counseled that breaking this repression and denial was easiest in group settings, because one woman’s disintegration could cause a collective emotional landslide. They called this “tailgating”: where “one woman’s therapeutic experience provides the vehicle for the experience of others.” One manual offered an example. In one group session, a woman who was ambivalent about conceiving again after her abortion was given a doll and asked to “externalize her feelings about her aborted child.” Even without the words “aborted child,” this doll probably connected abortion to a sense of lost maternal purpose, since many women throughout the twentieth century had learned their social roles as mothers in part through playing with dolls. Once the counselor asked the woman to connect her aborted fetus to her “aborted child” through the body of the doll, she expressed deep feelings of remorse and sorrow. Then other women mirrored this transformation, “mov[ing] from an intellectual exploration of their

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 27.

abortions to a much deeper awareness of the depth of denial and repression of their feelings.”¹⁰⁹

Manuals warned that although this new awareness was possible through individual counseling, it was harder without the emotional responses of a group.¹¹⁰

To begin the grieving process, a woman had to overcome her feelings of guilt (“that the aborted baby was taken at the mother’s request”) and the inability of American culture to recognize the aborted fetus as a family member worth grieving. Women, manuals argued, would go through what experts in death and dying identified as the five stages of grief: denial, bargaining, anger, depression, and, finally, acceptance. At each stage, a woman supposedly wrestled with the chasm between understanding her aborted pregnancy as a termination of a fetus and as the murder of a baby.

To make peace with her “transgression,” counselors suggested she do role-playing to repair her damaged relationships. First and foremost, she was asked to repair her relationships with God and with her aborted fetus. Then, and less important, she might role-play reconciliation with her parents, partner, or healthcare provider. To reconcile with the divine, the woman played both parts: God and herself. While the counselor was never supposed to explicitly speak for God in such role-play, the counselor did tell the woman what God wanted to hear. The manuals offered this template: “Heidi, can you tell God exactly who it is that you killed?” “Heidi, can you ask God to forgive you for killing Brittany?” Eventually, this would lead to the woman’s confession: “Please God forgive me for killing my baby” or “Please God forgive me for letting them kill Abigail.”¹¹¹ In this process, the counselor was supposed to

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 24. For more on post-abortive group counseling, see Eckstein interview.

¹¹⁰ For a similar use of dolls in a more religiously focused post-abortion group, see Emily Bazelon, “Is There a Post-Abortion Syndrome?” *New York Times*, January 21, 2007.

¹¹¹ Speckhard, *Post-Abortion Counseling*, pp. 54-55.

reshape the woman's view of God (if it was askew). If a woman saw God as a judgmental father, manuals directed counselors to tell her that God is forgiving. If a woman mistook divine love for open-ended acceptance, manuals told counselors to remind her that God has a strict law, which had been broken, and that He demands atonement.¹¹² Along the way, "a Christian counselor can offer ... peace by introducing the woman to her Savior, Jesus Christ."¹¹³

To reconcile with her aborted fetus, a woman had to imagine its personhood, give it a name, an identity, and characteristics. Although manuals warned that morbidly obsessing over characteristics and anniversary dates was not healthy, a limited time focusing in detail "on the child... is a much needed part of the grieving process."¹¹⁴ By giving the fetus a name, the woman gave it an identity, humanized it. By giving the fetus characteristics, perhaps characteristics she valued or saw in her family members, she named herself as "the child's mother," made it part of the family. She placed the fetus in a cultural and biological genealogy with her family members. Then, she had to role-play with her aborted fetus, now murdered child. She was supposed to ask the fetus's forgiveness and then imagine it with God. The manuals taught that this could have profound results, such as having a woman end the role-play cradling an imaginary, "very tiny, unborn baby."¹¹⁵ Later, post-abortion media expanded on this moment of forgiveness between the woman and her aborted fetus. In 1998, Christian singer and songwriter Kathy Troccoli penned an award-winning song called "A Baby's Prayer" in which a

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 58-60.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 52.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 63.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 65-66.

soon-to-be aborted fetus prayed for God to forgive and comfort its “mother”: “Do I really have to say goodbye/ Don’t want this time to be through/Oh please tell her that I love her Lord/ And that you love her too.”¹¹⁶ In post-abortion counseling, the aborted fetus and imaginary child offered the woman absolution for her abortion.

This mode of therapy sometime emulated the suggested therapies for people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorders. In other ways, though, PACE’s manuals jumped the psychiatric tracks. Many psychiatrists suggested that PTSD could be treated, in part, with psychotherapy that helped patients re-experience traumatic events. Therapy also could be used to link these events with current destructive behaviors. But this re-experiencing was designed to help desensitize patients to their trauma and to cope better with day-to-day life. It was supposed to help control overwhelming emotion, rather than trigger it. It was supposed to help allay feelings of guilt or responsibility.¹¹⁷ Post-abortion counseling loosely used the framework of PTSD counseling but reversed some its core principles. In post-abortion counseling, re-experiencing trauma elicited heightened emotion, rather than practiced coping. Post-abortion counseling made women see themselves as fully culpable perpetrators rather than helping them manage destructive, self-blaming cycles. Post-abortion counseling’s resolutions were in the

¹¹⁶ Quoted in Sydna Massé and Joan Phillips, *Her Choice to Heal: Finding Spiritual and Emotional Peace After Abortion* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 1998), pp. 84-85. Other similarly themed media include a novel by Frank E. Peretti called *Tilly* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1988), which was a story of a meeting between an aborted fetus and its “mother.”

¹¹⁷ John P. Wilson, “Treating the Vietnam Veteran,” in *Post-Traumatic Therapy and Victims of Violence*, ed. Frank M. Ochberg (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1988), pp. 254-77; Barbara Olasov Rothbaum and Edna B. Foa, “Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder,” in *Posttraumatic Stress Disorder*, ed. Arnold P. Goldstein, Leonard Krasner, and Sol L. Garfield (New York: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 85-110; Frank M. Ochberg, “Posttraumatic Therapy,” Matthew J. Friedman, “Psychobiological and Pharmacological Approaches to Treatment,” and Raymond Monsour Scurfield, “Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder among Vietnam Veterans,” in *International Handbook of Traumatic Stress Syndromes*, ed. John P. Wilson and Beverley Raphael (New York: Plenum Press, 1993).

realization that abortion was murder and a crime that had to be forgiven by the fetus and by God, rather than a long-term improvement in daily life. Being Christian, pro-life activists, post-abortion counselors took for granted that an acceptance of abortion as moral crime and an acceptance of Jesus Christ in their lives would lead to emotional well-being.

Post-abortion stress syndrome was one political manifestation of a larger transformation in American culture: the persistent search for psychological cures to personal and social problems. As historian Eva Moskowitz argues, by the 1970s, “self-awareness became the new religion; trust, intimacy, and communication the gospel.” This was a part of Americans’ increasing dedication to the “therapeutic gospel,” that “happiness is the ultimate goal and psychological healing the means.”¹¹⁸ Many scholars of this cultural phenomenon contend that the turn to the psyche led to de-politicization in the United States. Many began to see psychological problems, such as low self-esteem, at the root of their discontent rather than structural or social problems like sexism, racism, or homophobia.¹¹⁹ One exception to this was the feminist practice of consciousness-raising, whereby personal problems translated into a collective understanding of women’s common oppression. For many second wave-feminists, consciousness-raising was where the personal became the political. It was from the feminist playbook that pro-life activists took this new combination of politicization and therapy.

In the 1980s, the pro-life movement increasingly asked women who had experienced abortion to be the new faces of abortion. Personalization and relatability were always important

¹¹⁸ Eva S. Moskowitz, *In Therapy We Trust: America’s Obsession with Self-Fulfillment* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. 218, 1.

¹¹⁹ Ellen Herman, *Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Philip Cushman, *Constructing the Self, Constructing America: A Cultural History of Psychotherapy* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1995); Dana L. Cloud, *Control and Consolation in American Culture and Politics: Rhetoric of Therapy* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1998); Moskowitz, *In Therapy We Trust*.

to the anti-abortion movement. As many scholars have argued, visualizing the fetus was central to the process of humanizing the fetus. Activists had long believed that if they could get people to see the fetus better (whether in photograph, model, or ultrasound image), understand the fetus's bodily systems, see its development, they could get people to understand it as a baby. Feminist scholars have argued that picturing the fetus in a womb but outside a woman's body obscured the role (and thus rights) of the mother.¹²⁰ While anti-abortion activists continued to seek better ways to make fetuses the human face of the movement, women who had abortions provided an excellent alternative. A Catholic priest and director of the Catholic Respect Life office in Colorado Springs described this strategy directly in 1998:

In order for us to win the abortion debate, we must change the focus from the child to the mother. We must focus on how abortion hurts and damages women. How abortion hurts women socially, emotionally, physically, psychologically and spiritually. When the American people hear stories from women who have been hurt by abortion, ... I believe that they will change their attitude from abortion being a necessary evil to abortion being a destroyer of women.... Post-abortive men and women will be the best spokespersons for the pro-life movement.¹²¹

If other pro-life activists could only work on behalf of the supposed victims of abortion, these women could charge they were also victims. Not only did this give the movement living, speaking victims, it combated one of the feminist critiques of the anti-abortion movement: that pro-life activists privileged the lives of the "unborn" over the living.

¹²⁰ Donna Haraway, "Fetus: The Virtual Speculum for the New World Order," in *Modest-Witness@Second_Millennium_FemaleMan_Meets_OncoMouse* (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 173-213. Lynn M. Morgan and Meredith W. Michaels, "Introduction: The Fetal Imperative," in *Fetal Subjects, Feminist Positions*, ed. Lynn M. Morgan and Meredith W. Michaels (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), p. 7. See also Barbara Duden, *Disembodying Woman: Perspectives on Pregnancy and the Unborn*, trans. Lee Hoinacki (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), and Karen Newman, *Fetal Positions: Individualism, Science, Visuality* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

¹²¹ Bill Carmody, "Pro-Lifers Need to Focus Attention on Education, Not Confrontation," *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, February 6, 1998.

Through these post-abortive grieving retreats and groups, many women came to the pro-life movement. (By the mid-2000s, the Catholic Church ran some kind of post-abortion counseling in at least 165 of its dioceses.¹²²) As one activist who had had an abortion and had gone to Rachel's Vineyard recalled, "that experience freed me so much that I wanted to go out and really help women to counsel women who are thinking about abortion and that brought me to a pregnancy center."¹²³ Another WEBA participant, after realizing her abortion had been a mistake, regularly prayed, "God, please bring me a woman considering an abortion."¹²⁴ Still another crisis pregnancy center activist said that she only came to terms with her abortion through retreats and movement events where she was asked to share her testimony.¹²⁵ Many women who regretted their abortions spoke to state legislatures, to newspaper reporters, and at rallies.¹²⁶ At these events and in crisis pregnancy centers, women were asked to use the evidence of their own experience to convince people that abortion was murder. WEBA participant Pam

¹²² Bazelon, "Is There a Post-Abortion Syndrome?"

¹²³ Allen interview. In 1985, Anne Speckhard did a study of thirty women who had "high-stress" abortion experiences. Speckhard found these women through clinicians and word of mouth. While she did not specify what percentage were a part of pro-life groups, she did note that many had found support in conservative religious and pro-life groups. She wrote that the subjects who affiliated themselves with conservative religious groups or pro-life groups "increasingly viewed abortion as taking a life." She also noted that affiliation with these groups "increased feelings of grief and guilt" but ultimately offered solace through forgiveness of the sin and the critique of the social systems that allowed legal abortion. Anne Catherine Speckhard, "The Psycho-Social Aspects of Stress Following Abortion: A Thesis" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1985), pp. 140, 142.

¹²⁴ Melissa Rigg, "Scars of abortion," *Arizona Daily Star*, undated (probably 1984), folder 72, box 30, Planned Parenthood AZ Collection.

¹²⁵ LeQuiu interview.

¹²⁶ "House Committee Endorses Abortion Information Bill," *Prescott Courier* (AZ), March 5, 1985; Rick Kornfeld, "2 Groups Present Opposing Views on Abortion at Press Conferences," *Arizona Daily Star*, May 17, 1985; Karen Sullivan Ables, letter to the editor, "Planned Parenthood Failed to Give Choice in Abortion," *Chandler Arizonan*, August 1, 1986; Rosemary Schabert, "Senate Panel Rejects Restrictions on Abortion," *Tempe Daily News*, April 3, 1985.

Laub noted, “People like me are living proof that abortion causes far more problems than it solves.”¹²⁷ Arizona WEBA president Karen Sullivan echoed this: “Members want to influence legislators and the general public with first-hand testimony.”¹²⁸ A woman’s abortion placed her on the same level as those who were considering abortion and her trauma was proof that abortion was a physical and moral aberration. This politicization was an explicit goal of post-abortion counseling. Tucson WEBA’s president claimed, “the goals of the program are to help each woman through the grief she feels for her child and to help her look beyond the scope of her individual abortion experience and to be able to reach out and help other women.”¹²⁹ But for many women, such work was not without repercussions. Looking back on the 1980s, anti-abortion activist John Jakubczyk believed that the movement was not prepared to deal with these women who joined the cause: “One of the sad things in the early days is that a lot of women who had suffered from abortions got involved but they hadn’t healed yet. And they burned out. And it was tragic.”¹³⁰

The vast majority of these new pro-life activists were white women. While post-abortion groups in the Four Corners states did not keep racial statistics (or, really, any statistics) on its members, the most vocal members of these groups, those who testified to state legislatures and

¹²⁷ Rick Kornfeld, “2 Groups Present Opposing Views on Abortion at Press Conferences,” *Arizona Daily Star*, May 17, 1985.

¹²⁸ “WEBA-The Voice of Experience,” *Arizona Right to Life Newsletter*, Summer 1984, University of Arizona Library Special Collections. For more on Karen Sullivan’s (later Sullivan Ables’s) post-abortion trauma, see Sullivan Ables, “Planned Parenthood Failed to Give Choice”; Karen Ables, letter to the editor, “A Planned Parenthood Experience,” *Arizona Republic*, October 5, 1987; *Arizona Right to Life News*, March 1998, University of Arizona Library Special Collections.

¹²⁹ “WEBA News,” *Arizona Right to Life Newsletter*, Spring 1985, University of Arizona Library Special Collections.

¹³⁰ Jakubczyk interview.

spoke at rallies, and have made it into the historical record, were all white.¹³¹ In the late 1980s, David Reardon, an early proponent of post-abortion syndrome, did a survey of 252 WEBA members across 42 states. With this study, Reardon aimed to prove that women who had abortions regretted their decisions and suffered psychological trauma after the procedure. Of course, many critics pointed out that the women's membership in WEBA presupposed their experience of trauma. But the survey also exposed the demographics of WEBA membership (or at least the demographics of the supposedly representative survey). Almost 70 percent of those surveyed were between the ages of 25 and 34; 75 percent had their abortions between the ages of 15 and 24; most has first trimester abortions; and 87 percent were white.¹³² With such numbers, it is clear that the personal reception of "post-abortion syndrome" was a racialized one.¹³³

Through multiracial spaces like the Catholic Church and CPCs, large numbers of women of color in the 1980s and 1990s heard the pro-life pitch about the emotional damage of abortion. It is very likely that some were receptive and yet, few joined even this corner of the pro-life movement. Few women of color offered to let their faces be the faces of "post-abortion syndrome." It is likely that for many, legalized abortion did not seem the full explanation for their economic and social needs or their pregnancies.

¹³¹ All the leaders noted in this chapter were white. I do not have a full list of all WEBA leaders in the region, so I cannot say with certainty that absolutely all were white.

¹³² David Reardon, *Aborted Women: Silent No More* (Chicago, IL: Loyola University Press, 1987), appendix. Anne Speckhard's 1985 PhD dissertation focused on thirty women who had "high-stress" abortion experiences, many of whom joined the pro-life movement. All of Speckhard's interviewees were white. Speckhard, "The Psycho-Social Aspects of Stress Following Abortion," p. 48.

¹³³ This is not to say that all white women were receptive to pro-life activists' theories. Huge majorities of women who had abortions never experienced post-abortion trauma. A team of psychologists followed over four hundred women after they had their abortions, charting their emotional reactions over two years. Only one percent claimed to have post-abortion stress. Brenda Major, Catherine Cozzarelli, M. Lynne Cooper, Josephine Zubek, Caroline Richards, Michael Wilhite and Richard Gramzow, "Psychological Responses of Women After First-Trimester Abortion," *Archive of General Psychiatry* 57, no. 8 (August 2008): 777-84.

There is little record of those women of color who went to CPCs and participated in post-abortion counseling but avoided joining the pro-life movement. Without their testimony, we cannot know for sure why they did not become active members. It is possible that, for many, it did not seem plausible that abortion caused all their problems. Perhaps members of communities politicized to any degree by racial justice movements would have been less convinced by a movement that largely ignored the problems of racism and classism. CPCs came to cities, ministered to women of color, poor women, and young women, but then attempted to politicize them only as women for whom abortion was the source of all their woes. It is possible that the psychological and political cure pro-life activists offered to life's hardships was not a satisfying solution for many. For whatever reason, pro-life activism within CPCs and within post-abortion groups remained as white the rest of the movement.

In the last two decades of the century, the new authority that these mostly white, "post-abortionive" women had gained in the movement posed some problems for pro-life politics. Pro-life activists increasingly confronted what feminists already knew: the needs of women and the needs of fetuses were sometimes at odds. Was the movement's first priority not to traumatize women or to keep them from terminating their pregnancy? This tension was expressed most clearly in the debate over whether to use graphic photos and videos of abortions and aborted fetuses. In the 1980s, radical pro-lifers were remaking their street protests, increasingly using bullhorns, pickets, "sidewalk counseling," and large, gory photos both to convince women not to abort and to create a media spectacle.¹³⁴ As the nation watched increasingly radical activists humiliate, harass, and traumatize women seeking abortions, activists within CPCs debated these tactics. Birthright in Canada split from many U.S. Birthright groups over the issues of how to

¹³⁴ James Risen and Judy Thomas, *Wrath of Angels: The American Abortion War* (New York: Basic Books, 1998), pp. 101-32.

counsel, whether to show videos, and whether even to use the word abortion. Other crisis pregnancy centers refused to use pictures of aborted fetuses, turning increasingly to educational material that highlighted “living” fetuses. Still other CPCs popped up whose primary goal was to get women into intimate settings with gory photos or videos.¹³⁵ Many of the longest lasting CPCs, however, sidelined graphic photos in the 1980s, envisioning themselves as part of a truly “pro-woman,” non-judgmental women’s rights movement.¹³⁶ One Arizona activist responded to CPC critics in 1985 with the declaration that her center did not “persecute abortion-exploited women.”¹³⁷

For such activists, the CPC movement was without politics and one of the few places women were respected as human beings and as women. In this way, CPCs became an important place for activists and their clients to remake and re-embrace the category woman. While other scholars have questioned how the feminist movement itself went about creating “woman,” conservatives were also actively making the boundaries, defining the inclusions and exclusions, and highlighting the importance of this identity category.¹³⁸ In the 1970s and 1980s, crisis

¹³⁵ Aid to Women in Phoenix was one such CPC. See Maiorana, “Man Accused of Luring Patients to View Films”; Pat Sabo, “Abortion Foe’s ‘Deceit’ Earns Judge’s Wrath,” *Phoenix Gazette*, April 2, 1986; David Cannella, “Abortion Foe is Guilty of False Imprisonment,” *Arizona Republic*, April 2, 1986.

¹³⁶ Neither Carenet, one of major umbrella organizations for CPCs, nor Birthright condone the use of graphic photos and videos of dead fetuses. See LeQuiu interview, p. 11.

¹³⁷ Micheal Webb, letter to the editor, “Abortion foe responds,” *Sierra Vista Herald*, February 17, 1985.

¹³⁸ See for example, Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989); Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Sherna Berger Gluck, “Whose Feminism? Whose History? Reflections on Excavating the History of (the) U.S. Women’s Movement(s),” in *Community Activism and Feminist Politics*, ed. Nancy Naples (New York: Routledge, 1998); Benita Roth, *Separate Roads to Feminism: Black, Chicana, and White Feminist Movements in America’s Second Wave* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other Women’s Movement: Workplace*

pregnancy centers asked individuals to think about their identities as women as the basis for their bodily knowledge, cultural critiques, and social ties. They asked, As a woman, don't you know your fetus is baby? As a woman, don't you feel misled and traumatized by feminists? As a woman, don't you feel solidarity with other (conservative) women around this kitchen table? Within these questions, there was an unspoken racialization of women as always already white. At crisis pregnancy centers, a universalized womanhood was recreated through an emphasis on reproductive bodies, bodily knowledge about life, the creation of common female experiences, and a sense of female solidarity.

§

By the mid-1990s, crisis pregnancy centers greatly outnumbered abortion providers in the United States. These centers' vague advertisements, strategic placement near abortion clinics, and support from many religious communities meant that they became essential sites of ideological transformation. Offers of free pregnancy tests, free baby clothes and bassinets, and free counseling brought in women in need—most often women of color and young women. Once there, activists worked to convince these women not to abort, and instead take on economic or emotional hardships for the sake of fetal life and motherhood.

From the early 1970s, CPCs sought to stop abortions. But by the 1980s, this part of the pro-life movement became much more ambitious. Activists educated women in conservative religious morals, family planning, and pro-life logic. Gradually, with the help of pro-life psychologists, they fully theorized women as victims of abortion, psychologically damaged by committing socially sanctioned murder. With this theory in hand, activists attempted to “raise

Justice and Social Rights in Modern America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Wini Breines, *The Trouble Between Us: An Uneasy History Between White and Black Women in the Feminist Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Anne Enke, *Finding the Movement: Sexuality, Contested Space, and Feminist Activism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

the consciousnesses” of women to participate in an alternative women’s rights movement. As crisis pregnancy centers proliferated in cities and college towns across the country, activists worked in parallel ways on another group supposedly “victimized” by abortion: American children.

Chapter Four

Out of the Mouths of Babes: Children and Young Adults in the Pro-Life Movement

On a January day in 1986, two hundred Utahns packed Salt Lake City's Capitol Rotunda to mourn the twelfth anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. They started the annual Right to Life rally with pro-life songs from a children's choir. Once the children were done singing and had begun fidgeting in their seats, the keynote speaker addressed them. "Isn't it wonderful that their parents didn't abort them so we can hear them sing today?" asked activist Penny Lea of Pensacola, Florida. Perhaps proud parents nodded and secretly congratulated themselves for saving (that is, giving birth to) their children. But Lea did not allow much time for self-congratulation. Rather, she foretold a terrible future for the children present and America's youth as a whole, all because of abortion. "Abortion is the root of a modern American malaise and has helped create a nation of sad, frightened youths, many of whom turn to suicide," she said. With these children's lives now bookended by narrowly averted "murder" and looming suicide, Lea plunged them into history. "The children of today are troubled because they feel as though they are survivors of a holocaust that dwarfs the Nazi campaign that exterminated the Jews in World War II," Lea claimed. "These children we see here today are survivors.... They have never known a nation that hasn't killed children." With the burden of survivor's guilt on their shoulders, how could America's children be anything but depressed? Lea concluded her remarks with a call to arms: "Unless abortion is stopped, ... we will end up aborting this nation itself."¹ In this fiery speech, Lea portrayed children as psychologically damaged, perpetually at risk, lucky to be alive, and harbingers of America's end. As "survivors of the abortion holocaust," children and young

¹ Brett DelPorto, "Abortion Causing U.S. Malaise, Activist Tells 200 at Capitol Rally," *Deseret News*, January 23, 1986.

adults became the casualties of feminist sins and government policy gone awry. However, young people were more than symbols in the anti-abortion movement of the 1980s and 1990s. Adult activists increasingly sought out children and teenagers to be an audience for their pro-life appeals, remade youth spaces into pro-life spaces, and worked to create a new cadre of activists. Adult activists hoped these “survivors” would be the future of their movement and the future of a better, socially conservative, society.

The drumbeat of child endangerment was not foreign to Americans of the late twentieth century. Beginning in earnest in the 1970s, many parents began to have deep anxieties—even panic—about the safety of their children. Satanic cult leaders, kidnappers, drug dealers, pornographers, sadistic AIDS patients, and sexual predators all seemed to be waiting just around the corner. Anthropologist and cultural theorist Roger Lancaster argues that this deep anxiety about the pending loss of childhood innocence led to a “countervailing adult response: fortify childhood, subject it to greater surveillance, progressively extend the domain of innocence into ever older ages.”² For example, one 1991 study focusing on three generations of nine-year-olds argued that the distance from home that children were allowed to play in 1990 had shrunk to a ninth of what it had been in 1970.³ The threatened or damaged children highlighted in the media were often white and middle class and the perpetrator, often a person of color or homosexual man.⁴ While these concerns were not limited to white middle-class people, the anxiety about

² Roger N. Lancaster, *Sex Panic and the Punitive State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), p. 45. Lancaster argues that while there had been earlier concerns over childhood sexuality and endangerment, these concerns escalated exponentially in the late twentieth century. For concerns over child endangerment earlier in the century, see Estelle B. Freedman, “‘Uncontrolled Desires’: The Response to the Sexual Psychopath, 1930-1960,” *Journal of American History* 74, no. 1 (1987): 83-106.

³ Cited in Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2006), p. 123.

⁴ Lancaster, *Sex Panic and the Punitive State*, pp. 7, 17-18, 39-45.

children at risk was certainly a racialized, classed, and sexualized one. Meanwhile, in American popular culture, rising childhood poverty, especially among people of color, was rarely depicted as a threat to childhood innocence.⁵ These anxieties seeped into innumerable aspects of American daily life and state governance, and most certainly into the rhetoric of American politics.

In the late twentieth century, advocates of the drug wars, nuclear disarmament, and law and order politics as well as opponents of gay teachers, school busing, and the gutting of Great Society programs all used the supposed vulnerability of American children to illicit public support for their causes.⁶ But pro-life activists used children differently than these other movements. Most often, when pro-life activists used the words “children” or “babies,” they were really talking about fetuses or, in pro-life parlance, “the unborn.” For other movements, the existence of children was not in question; they only had to sell their audience on actual children’s vulnerability. Pro-life activists’ use of the word “children,” however, was a political argument in itself. They were claiming that fetuses were children and deserved the same rights as children, and thus that abortion was the murder. No movement better capitalized on the image of the innocent, victimized child in the late twentieth century than the pro-life movement. This was their *raison d’être*.

Because of the pro-life focus on victimized children, actual children were a part of pro-life protest from the very beginning. During the 1967 debate over the liberalization bill in

⁵ In 1985, 20 percent of American children lived below the poverty line. See N. Ray Hiner, “Children in American History,” in *Rethinking the History of American Education*, ed. William J. Reese and John L. Rury (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 174.

⁶ See, for example, Gillian Frank, “‘The Civil Rights of Parents’: Race and Conservative Politics in Anita Bryant’s Campaign Against Gay Rights in 1970s Florida,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 22, no. 1 (January 2013): 126-60.

Colorado, the first pro-life group in the state organized a Mother's March, where mothers and their children protested outside the capitol building. There were babies, children in strollers, and young children carrying signs. Organizers had explicitly asked women to bring their children. As mothers, too, they claimed to have special authority to speak on issues of reproduction and family life. In this Mother's March and other similar protests in subsequent years, children were living props. Children served to authenticate the protesting women as mothers.⁷ Conservative women used children in these early marches to assert specific political subjectivities for themselves; with their children by their side, these women claimed that they entered the public sphere to protect and represent their families. So in these early rallies, children facilitated their mothers' political presence.

In their speaking roles in early pro-life activism, many cast children as innocent voices of truth. Mary Rita Urbish, a pro-life activist in Colorado, recounted a story of one of her early signature campaigns: "We had petitions with a sign that said 'Against Abortion? Sign Here.'" She continued:

And down the street came two little boys. ... And they stopped at the table. "Whatcha doing lady? Well, what's abortion?" ... Dear God, what do you say to this [ten-year-old] boy? And I told him that it means that you kill your baby while it's still in the womb. ... And he looked at me and he said, "Can I sign?" And I said, "no honey, you have to be older to sign, like your mother, or your dad would have to sign." ... He said, "I'm sorry I can't sign your paper, but here, you can use my pencil." Out of the mouths of babes.⁸

Other pro-life parents wrote letters to their local newspapers, using their child's innocent pro-life views as evidence that this position was logical and natural. In 1969, Flora Ashe Paiz wrote to the *Albuquerque Tribune* that after work one night, her four-year-old daughter had asked her if

⁷ Greg Pinney, "Women Stage Brief Anti-Abortion March at Capitol," *Denver Post*, April 6, 1967. See also "5 Women, 2 Children Picket at Mansion," *Denver Post*, April 10, 1967; interview with Mary Rita Urbish, August 8, 2011.

⁸ Urbish interview.

she loved children and if that was why she had ten of them. Paiz responded affirmatively. Her daughter proceeded, “You never wanted to kill any of us before we were born did you, Mommy?”⁹ Paiz rejoiced in what she felt was a truthful exchange and then used it as evidence of the truth of prenatal “life” to larger New Mexican readership. For these adult activists, children could see what some (pro-choice) adults, clouded by political ideology, could not.

In all these stories, children were inherently depoliticized. As innocent bystanders to adult politics, they offered a supposedly pure, unbiased response to abortion. They stood in for everything good, simple, and innocent in a world gone awry. They were pro-life without the politics. Ultimately in these morality tales, children embodied both an imagined pre-adult innocence and an imagined pre-1967 national innocence. It was this imagined past that pro-life activists asked their followers to recreate: one in which Americans were committed to nuclear, patriarchal families and religion; “truth” was uncontested; and abortions were illegal. Unfortunately, activists argued, pro-choice culture had already begun corrupting these innocents. In order to counteract this corruption, pro-life activists had to wage a counter battle, politicizing children in order to make them innocent again.

Thus, the place of children in the pro-life movement changed in the 1980s and 1990s. In an increasingly child-focused culture and within a movement waged in their prenatal names, children and teenagers took on an increasingly important role. In these years, adult activists gradually entered and remade youth spaces into pro-life spaces. Most of this organizing was focused on teenagers, but in many cases it incorporated younger children as well. Activists from around the country traded tools and tactics in this work, meaning that Mormon children saw the

⁹ (Mrs.) Flora Ashe Paiz to Governor Cargo, March 21, 1969 (with attached *Albuquerque Tribune* clipping), folder 241, box 6, Governor David F. Cargo Papers, New Mexico Records Center, Santa Fe (hereafter Cargo Papers).

same pro-life films as Catholic children in Sunday schools and Arizona children witnessed anti-abortion presentations in schools similar to those Colorado children saw. Using the political slippage between fetus and child, activists asked children to represent fetuses, commit to pro-life politics, and take that commitment to their classrooms, their legislatures, and their city streets.

School

Conversations about children and abortion popped up in almost all arenas of the abortion debate, but one of the places they were most prevalent was in public schools. In the post-World War II period, Americans increasingly expected schools to provide more than a curriculum in reading, writing, and arithmetic and lessons in civic values. While activists since the late nineteenth century had attempted “to reform society through schools,” historian William Reese argues that after 1950, Americans gave public schools even more responsibilities: to ensure children’s economic mobility, to prevent delinquency, to provide social services, to be the vehicle for social justice, and to win the Cold War, to name a few.¹⁰ Part of schools’ new social function was to provide a public forum where students could learn and form opinions about politics. Reese sums it up this way: “In one breath the public demand[ed] higher academic standards and basics, and attention to just about every divisive issue.”¹¹ Beginning in the late

¹⁰ William J. Reese, *America’s Public Schools: From the Common School to “No Child Left Behind”* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), pp. 6-9 (quote on p. 2). For more on the history of school reform, see B. Edward McClellan and William J. Reese, eds., *The Social History of American Education* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Jeffrey Mirel, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System: Detroit, 1907-81* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993); Diane Ravitch and Maris A. Vinovskis, eds., *Learning from the Past: What History Teaches Us About School Reform* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); David Tyack and Larry Cuban, *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); Ravitch, *Left Behind: A Century of Failed School Reform* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000); and Reese and Rury, eds., *Rethinking the History of American Education*.

¹¹ Reese, *America’s Public Schools*, p. 327.

1960s, anti-abortion activists played both sides of this equation: both condemning what they saw as secular humanism in public schools (which supposedly sidelined the educational “basics”) and bringing politics into classrooms as a key piece of their educational activism.

The topic of abortion entered public schools even before the *Roe v. Wade* decision. Beginning in the late 1960s, as public conversation about the ethics of abortion escalated, some junior high, high school, and college teachers asked their students to learn about the issue and form an opinion. Students regularly wrote to pro-life and pro-choice groups, state legislators, and governors for information on abortion ethics and law to include in school projects.¹² Once *Roe* was decided, discussions of abortion expanded out from social science classrooms to health and biology courses, as teachers began to include this now legal alternative in their sex education classes. One high school health teacher explained why he talked about abortion to his classroom in the 1970s: “All I wanted the class to do is to perceive different situations and make up an answer (on abortion) they can live with.” He added that because students might be voting on abortion laws someday, they should know something about the debate.¹³ Most of these teachers were likely not activists for either side but rather wanted their students to learn about a contemporary, and divisive, moral, political, and health issue.

¹² Susan Smith to NARAL, December 16, 1971, folder Arizona Correspondence, carton 2, National Abortion Rights Action League Collection, Schlesinger Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (hereafter NARAL Collection) (there are at least eight other letters in this folder from high school and college students requesting materials on abortion for a class); Cindy Sue Culver (8th grade) to Governor Bruce King, April 12, 1972, folder 220, box 12, Bruce King Papers (1), New Mexico Records Center, Santa Fe, NM (hereafter King Papers). This type of education also extended to young adults’ college years. See Diane Wilson to NARAL, March 17, 1972, folder Utah 1969-1975, carton 5, NARAL Collection; Jean Barnard to NARAL, September 18, 1972, folder Utah 1969-1975, carton 5, NARAL Collection; David Schoen to Lee Gidding, April 3, 1970, folder Campus, 1969-1970, carton 6, NARAL Collection; Cynthia L. Hathaway to Governor Cargo, March 26, 1969, folder 241, box 6, Cargo Papers.

¹³ Cathy Janus, “Both Sides of Abortion Issue Explored at Independence High School,” *Teen Gazette* (insert in the *Phoenix Gazette*), January 13, 1979.

Because of these pedagogical openings in junior high and high schools, beginning in the late 1960s, pro-choice and pro-life activists came the public schools to offer their opposing viewpoints. While the decentralization of public schools and relative autonomy of teachers make it difficult to trace such everyday activism, what is clear is that pro-life activists made school education an essential part of their movement. Mary Rita Urbish, a Colorado pro-life activist, remembered that going to public high schools was one of the first things her group did once it formed. She recalled that she and another activist,

got the bum's rush over at East High School [in Denver] because whoever was in the office didn't want us to go to the classrooms.... And [the woman I was with] just persisted until finally they brought the guy who made the appointment to the office and he took us up to his class and we gave our first talk.... We did a lot of that.¹⁴

In subsequent years, the educational committees of many pro-life groups focused in large part on such school presentations. In 1972, one Colorado pro-choice clergyman noted, "Right now the fight is in the schools where groups on both sides go to speak."¹⁵

Pro-life activists sometimes came to classrooms and schools by invitation.¹⁶ When invitations were not forthcoming, insistence also got activists into schools. Nancy Ellefson, an anti-overpopulation activist, recalled that in the early 1970s before *Roe v. Wade* when she spoke to students about overpopulation, the local Right to Life group would come to the school and demand equal time.¹⁷ Because Ellefson's talk did not deal with abortion, she felt that students were getting only one side of the issue. At that point, Planned Parenthood would not help, she

¹⁴ Urbish interview.

¹⁵ Joan McCoy, "Abortion Group's Name is Misnomer," *Rocky Mountain News*, July 10, 1972.

¹⁶ For more school activism by invitation, see Janus, "Both Sides of the Issue Explored"; interview with John Jakubcysk, March 16, 2010.

¹⁷ Interview with Nancy Ellefson, March 24, 2010.

recalled, so “I took a self-taught, crash course in the abortion issue... and I started doing talks on abortion.” Soon after, Ellefson and one of her friends on the local Planned Parenthood board joined forces and formed New Mexico Right to Choose.¹⁸ Thus, at least in New Mexico, school classrooms were some of the first local sites, beyond watching TV or reading the newspaper, where the public experienced pro-life and pro-choice activism, some of the first public places where pro-life and pro-choice became a political dichotomy.

It is possible that in those early years, public schools had fewer rules about the presentations activists gave. After all, many teachers and school administrators were probably unfamiliar with the emerging language and performance of the abortion debate. Because of this, pro-life presentations in Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona could have been more graphic, more religious, and more uncompromising in public schools in these early years. In the early 1970s, according to Nancy Ellefson, pro-life speeches consisted of a “gory little slideshow,” probably based at least in part on the pictures from John and Barbara Willke’s *Handbook on Abortion*.¹⁹ They might also have been similar to the presentation put together for public schools by two white women who were directors of a California pro-life group, United Parents Under God, in the early to mid-1970s.

These two women created an extensive pro-life presentation for junior high and high school students that drew heavily on the Willkes’ *Handbook* and materials produced by a Minnesota pro-life group. The presentation was supposed to be distributed and used across the country. The stated goal was to counter the “women’s liberal abortion speakers” who were allowed to speak to students, and to prepare students “as Christians, to defend the first right of

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid. See also Dr. and Mrs. J.C. Willke, *Handbook on Abortion* (Cincinnati, OH: Hiltz Publishing Co., 1972).

every individual...LIFE ITSELF!” They began their presentation by saying theirs was not a subject normally deemed fit for “atheistic” classrooms “where evil can no longer be called ‘evil.’” They continued: “you are quite literally ‘trapped’ in a completely ‘pagan’ situation in our secular society and schools and we must reach you anyway we can.” They went on to condemn political scientists “who typically work for the STATE” and for whom the “ends justify the means,” and they praised “true scientists” who “dare to look for and at the TRUTH!” They asked students to be like those true scientists. They claimed that pro-choice people, like Hitler, promoted a super race and would eventually call for the elimination of the elderly, the sick, and their political opponents. They named pro-choice people “enemies of God and of our country and of YOUR GENERATION’S children [who] would love to frighten you into killing YOUR OWN OFFSPRING.” After this introduction, the presentation that followed included pictures of aborted fetuses, prematurely born infants supposedly birthed at twenty weeks of gestation, and the tools of abortion, as well as the famous in-vitro fetus photographs from *Life* magazine. These photos proved, they claimed, that a fetus was a “perfectly and completely formed baby” with well-developed bodily functions. Displaying a photo of the feet of ten-week fetus, they said, “these little feet will never kick a football...run on a playground... or play hopscotch.” They argued that all this was happening because American society had abandoned a “Judeo-Christian” reverence for human life.²⁰

Whether consciously or unconsciously, this pro-life educational program was made for a white audience. Almost all the pictures in the presentations were of white people. The students

²⁰ United Parents Under God, “That They May Live: A Presentation on Abortion,” folder 1, United Parents Under God Ephemeral Materials, Wilcox Collection of Contemporary Political Movements, Kansas Collection, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS (hereafter Wilcox Collection). The publication was probably created in the early to mid-1970s because the few citations in it are from between 1970 and 1973.

in school assemblies, the pro-choice political scientists, the “true” scientists, the thoughtful mothers sitting around a table discussing the issue, and young new pro-life activists were all pictured as white. In their pamphlet, the abortion debate was visually represented as an argument between white Americans. The only pictures of people of color were of two prematurely born infants, one supposedly born at 20 weeks and one at 21 weeks of gestation. The authors of the presentation used these pictures to contest the limit of fetal viability (when a fetus has a 50 percent possibility of long-term survival outside the womb). *Roe v. Wade* had made viability an essential issue in abortion law, setting it at 28 weeks gestation but possibly at 24 weeks.²¹ The only people of color in this presentation were those on the cusp of “humanness” and at risk of abortion (though these two infants, no matter when they were born, were the result of wanted pregnancies.) Activists made the point that these two premature infants of color were the people that pro-lifers recognized as fully human and pro-choice people considered less than fully human. Thus, the activists made people of color the objects of salvation by white (Christian, pro-life) activists. The authors of the pro-life presentation added to this racial argument an extended comparison between the Dred Scott decision and *Roe v. Wade*.²² They further hailed their white audience when they said that busing for the purposes of racial

²¹ One journal article that looked at survival rates for infants born between 22 and 25 weeks gestation (over a three-year period) found that only 56 percent of those born at these gestational ages lived longer than 30 minutes. None of those born at 22 weeks gestation survived six months. See Marilee C. Allen, Pamela K. Donohue, and Amy Dusman, “The Limit of Viability—Neonatal Outcome of Infants Born at 22 to 25 Weeks’ Gestation,” *New England Journal of Medicine* 329, no. 22 (November 25, 1993): 1597-1601. Even when prenatal medical technologies improved in the twenty-first century, doctors continued to argue that survival before 22 weeks gestation was highly unlikely because the fetus’s lungs develop between 22 and 24 weeks. See Maria Serenella Perignotti and Gianpaolo Donzelli, “Perinatal Care at the Threshold of Viability: An International Comparison of Practical Guidelines for the Treatment of Extremely Preterm Births,” *Pediatrics* 121, no. 1 (January 1, 2008): 193-98. Almost all studies of the characteristics, survival rates, causes and effects of extremely preterm birth look at births starting at 23, 24, or 25 weeks. I could find none that discussed or analyzed any births at 21 weeks or earlier.

²² United Parents Under God, “That They May Live.”

integration, like pro-choice sex education, undermined parent's natural rights. They recounted a story of a Michigan judge who removed a girl from her parents' home because they refused to allow her to be bused to a "high-crime area."²³ Using racial code and the history of slavery, these authors posed the state and public schools as confounding nature and undermining white parent's rights. Racial segregation and forced reproduction stood as implied twin pillars of the natural order.

Certain aspects of the United Parents under God's manual became common in pro-life presentations in the Four Corners states, while other aspects were sidelined. It is likely that school presentations in the Four Corners maintained an emphasis on visuals, biological discussions, subtle or overt condemnations of abortion providers and feminists, and comparisons that likened legalized abortion to slavery and the Holocaust. The strong Christian tone of the United Parents under God manual was probably less common or quickly dropped in presentations to public schools. Activist Dauneen Dolce remembered that the role of religion was a constant tension in New Mexico Right to Life: "For some people in our movement, ...[t]hey want[ed] this to be a religious movement. We always [dealt] with that." She noted that most people figured out how to bring their faith quietly to the group. Dolce continued, "we [were] certainly not going to go into a school and talk religion, I can tell you that."²⁴ Other pro-life groups, outside the more ecumenical or even secular Right to Life, probably would have been more comfortable with religious language but would have had less access to public schools.

In the early 1980s, pro-life activists began to combine the slide shows that had served them so well with new tools: movies made expressly by the pro-life movement to appeal to

²³ United Parents Under God, "Total Gov't Control of Public Education!" folder 1, United Parents Under God Ephemeral Materials, Wilcox Collection.

²⁴ Interview with Dauneen Dolce, March 23, 2010.

younger and less politically savvy audiences. One shown often in the early to mid-1980s was a 28-minute film called *A Matter of Choice*. The movie begins with a newspaper editor assigning a vaguely pro-choice journalist a story on the ethics of abortion. Her job is to investigate both sides. The journalist meets a greasy looking abortion provider who, while ambivalent about the morality of abortion, says it prevents social ills like poverty and over-population. The journalist then interviews a former abortion provider, now pro-life activist, who rebuts everything the other interviewee had said. Then, the journalist (and the audience) watches an early abortion. Eventually, the journalist realizes that abortion is murder when, while driving, she almost runs over a child. The film moves from a sense of ambiguity on the issue of abortion to the “facts,” leading to the journalist’s (and hopefully her audience’s) inevitable conclusion. “As you watch her investigate, you learn all the basic facts about abortion,” one promotional tract for the movie claimed.²⁵ Through the eyes of this “impartial” journalist, the movie walks viewers through “both sides” but concludes with the clear “truth” of prenatal life.²⁶

Pro-life activists often showed this film to health classes.²⁷ In that setting, depending on how the teacher framed the lesson, *A Matter of Choice* might have come across more as biological truth than political opinion. The film’s setup already gestured to impartiality, with the journalist confronting ostensibly unbiased evidence. In the context of a health, biology, or sexual education class, this journalistic “objectivity” combined with the scientific authority

²⁵ “Saving Lives, Serving Families,” Heritage House ’76 Incorporated Catalog, January 1999, p. 89, folder 3, box 1-3, HH1421, Heritage House ’76, Inc/Precious Feet People, Hall Hoag Collection, John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, RI (hereafter Hall Hoag Collection)

²⁶ *Matter of Choice: A 28-Minute Documentary on Abortion* (Anaheim, CA: American Portrait Films, 1982).

²⁷ *Arizona Right to Life News*, April 1983, University of Arizona Library Special Collections, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

imbued in the classroom space. Here the truth claims made by science and school worked to activists' advantage, helping making the fetus into a baby, and abortion into murder.

As the pro-life movement grew in the 1970s and 1980s, the pressure to bring anti-abortion activists into classrooms probably also increased. By 1983, Arizona Right to Life was imploring its members to ask teachers for invitations. "Word of mouth advertising by parents and teens is a major factor in repeat calls in local high schools," one Arizona pro-life activist wrote in the monthly newsletter. Once teachers realize "our speakers are neither ogres nor tub-thumpers," she continued, "they are invited back by the teachers directly."²⁸ As the abortion wars drew greater attention and increasing numbers of conservatives became politicized, pressure from children and parents helped activists get their foot in the school door.

This type of education did not make newspaper headlines the way that protests outside clinics did, but it did reach an incredible number of young people every year. In the early 1980s, Arizona Right to Life began to note in their newsletter the classes and schools at which their southern division gave talks. In one nine-month period in Tucson, the group's educational division went to sixty classes in health, government, child development, marriage and family, social studies, and biology at eight different public high schools.²⁹ That means that in one school year, in one school district, pro-life activists probably spoke to between 1300 and 1800 students. This kind of numerical specificity was rare in pro-life newsletters, so it is impossible to know how these numbers waxed and waned over the years. Anecdotally, many pro-life activists remember school presentations as a common, everyday part of their activism.³⁰

²⁸ *Arizona Right to Life News*, April 1983, University of Arizona Library Special Collections.

²⁹ *Ibid.*; *Arizona Right to Life News*, January 1983; *Arizona Right to Life News*, July 1983, all at University of Arizona Library Special Collections.

³⁰ Jakubcysk interview; interview with Angela Schneider, March 17, 2010; Dolce interview.

Pro-life activists got a variety of responses from students. Of course, pro-life groups were much more likely to record the encouraging ones. In one Tucson Right to Life newsletter in 1988, a writer noted that the group often solicited reactions from students on their presentations. “The replies...are overwhelmingly positive in nature and reflect a very real desire on the part of the students to have this information available to them,” the writer reassured membership.³¹ A few students wrote to their local Right to Life groups to thank them for their help in bringing pro-life perspectives to schools. What “a wonderful job and a great presentation you gave,” one Tucson student wrote the pro-life speaker. “I’m just glad that there is someone like you to stand up for the children that cannot for themselves.”³² Another student wrote to Arizona Right to Life in 1983, thanking members for providing him with pro-life material for his debate. “My team won our debate on federal funding of abortion and our class was really impressed with our facts. Thanks to you.... Good luck in your fight against abortion,” he wrote.³³ In 1980, two pro-life students in Tucson pushed a bill prohibiting public funding for abortion through the state’s model congress. The students got a two-thirds majority to pass the bill and then, upon veto, they got three-fourths of the model congress to override the veto. At least in this case, adult activists had not only attracted children to the pro-life cause but also created pro-life leaders. Arizona’s adult activists wrote that they were thankful for “the self-expression that we see from these young people who know their biology, know their legal

³¹ *Tucson Chapter, Arizona Right to Life Newsletter*, November 1988, University of Arizona Special Collections.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Arizona Right to Life News*, January 1983.

system, know the field of human rights and who act on the basis of their knowledge.”³⁴ Many pro-life newsletters reminded readers that educational programs were convincing young people to change their minds about abortion and helping to turn the tide against sexual liberalism.

Of course, many high school students were probably bored by, ambivalent about, or antagonistic to pro-life presentations. One of the educational directors of Arizona Right to Life in the 1980s had a more nuanced memory of her visits to public schools. Activist Joan Poulin reported that in public schools the “‘me first’ ethic is always disheartening,” but, she continued, “my faith in human nature is renewed when I see so many of our young people honestly wrestling with the complexities of the issues.”³⁵ “Me first” was a euphemism, in pro-life rhetoric and elsewhere, for a generational selfishness supposedly endemic to those born in the late twentieth century. Activists believed that this ethic was the central motivator for young people’s support of abortion rights, since abortion was the ultimate expression of errant individualism. Thus, Poulin may have been alluding to encounters with students who defended their right to access legal abortion. Her use of “me first” suggests that she may have encountered reticent, or even dismissive, teenagers more often than future pro-life activists. In this less optimistic narration of school activism, Poulin took heart not in conversions to the cause, but in serious consideration of the issue.

New Mexico pro-choice activist Nancy Ellefson argued that overt pro-life and pro-choice political presentations in schools, at least in her state, all but ended in the late 1980s: “What we noticed was the number of requests for speeches in the schools had dropped off.” So they asked the teachers why. “And they said, if we have you in, we have to have Right to Life in. We hate

³⁴ *Arizona Lifeline* (Arizona Right to Life Southern Region newsletter), May 1980, University of Arizona Special Collections.

³⁵ *Arizona Right to Life News*, March 1983, University of Arizona Special Collections.

their presentations so much. To keep them out, we have to keep you out.”³⁶ Instead, New Mexico Right to Choose made booklets listing abortion providers and reproductive resources that teachers could hand out at their own discretion, and thus teachers could avoid giving pro-life activists a public podium. Their words suggest that, at least in New Mexico, the place of overt activism in public schools changed in the late 1980s.

Even if anti-abortion activists got fewer invitations for presentations, at least some individual public school teachers continued to use pro-life material in their classrooms in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1993, in Colorado Springs, Colorado, dozens of parents protested when a teacher showed their seventh-grade children a video clip of an abortion in a sex education class. Strong pro-life arguments accompanied the video, which was originally part of a 1984 Pat Robertson television broadcast. As one Colorado Springs reporter put it, the parental protest started a community-wide debate over “academic freedom, providing balance on controversial issues, and the role of religion in public schools.”³⁷ Some parents also criticized Linda Coates, the science teacher who chose the sex education curriculum, for telling Bible stories in class, arguing that the Bible condemned homosexuality, and not showing the abortion film to parents in advance (as dictated by school policy).³⁸ Coates had her supporters, however. One hundred and fifty parents lined up to defend the teacher and the pro-life film. Some wrote to the newspaper arguing that the anti-film parents were imposing their views on the pro-life “majority” and that

³⁶ Ellefson interview.

³⁷ Trudy Welsh, “Film Sparks Controversy at School,” *Colorado Springs Telegraph Gazette*, May 21, 1993.

³⁸ Ibid.

the film did provide balance “since the news media is excessively pro-abortion.”³⁹ These conservative parents imagined school less as an objective mediator on important public debates and more as a local conservative counterpoint to society’s overt liberalism. But the school district disagreed. The district moved the teacher out of the science department into social studies, and the school rededicated itself to parental previewing of all sex education material.

Perhaps, in the mid-1980s and 1990s, public schools and many public school teachers became less comfortable with activist presentations on the subject of abortion. Perhaps teachers and administrators became less willing to navigate the quagmire of objectivity, balance, and parental rights when it came to outside activists. Perhaps strongly pro-life teachers had to take it upon themselves to integrate anti-abortion materials quietly into their lessons. It is likely that all these things were true. What is certain is that in the 1980s and 1990s, pro-life activists shifted their focus from straightforward anti-abortion political presentations in public schools to abstinence education.

Since the 1960s, some conservatives had argued that comprehensive sex education promoted early sexual exploration among teens, rather than abstinence. Comprehensive sex education, pioneered in the 1960s, included age-appropriate lessons on issues including but not limited to physiology, masturbation, sexually transmitted diseases, contraception, and, later, homosexuality and abortion. Beginning in the 1980s, after decades of contentious local debates, those opposed to comprehensive sex education gained access to federal dollars. In Ronald

³⁹ Ibid., and Alan D. and Eva L. Lind, “Parents Back Science Teacher,” letter to the editor, *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, May 30, 1993. For another letter to the editor arguing that the pro-life film was balance to pro-choice media (or “Hollywood”), see James C. Furfarl, “Help Children Avoid the Choice,” letter to the editor, *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, June 15, 1993. For more letters to the editor claiming that those opposing the film were censoring what the majority supported, see Douglas L. Lamborn, “Film’s Foes Seek to Censor,” letter to the editor, *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, May 29, 1993; and Laura Davis, “Was Attack on Film Political?” letter to the editor, *Colorado Springs Telegraph Gazette*, June 14, 1993.

Reagan's first term as president, conservative U.S. senators helped pass the Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) as a part of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. AFLA allocated funds to programs that worked to prevent adolescent pregnancy by promoting "chastity" and "morality," rather than contraception.⁴⁰ Sociologist Janice Irvine notes that the law was "rigidly anti-abortion," because it "imposed speech restrictions on grantees about abortion, encouraged adoption, and mandated parental consent for teenage girls' involvement in the funded program *unless* the parents supported abortion."⁴¹ To qualify for funding, groups seeking federal monies had to involve religious groups. And to meet the expectations of the law, those groups would have to be pro-life.⁴² Thus, pro-life religious groups became essential participants in many of the nation's new sex education programs.

Religious and conservative groups all over the country used AFLA funds to develop pro-life, abstinence-only sex education curriculums. Janice Irvine argues that this proliferation of new programs illuminates two major transformations in conservative thought. First, between the 1960s and the 1980s, "there was a shift from outright opposition [to sex education] to support for alternative programs," she contends. Second, conservatives involved in AFLA programs embraced a degree of sexual openness, unlike their predecessors in the 1960s who preferred their children have no formal education in sex.⁴³ While Irvine's points are accurate in reference to anti-sex education groups, pro-life groups' educational programs show that some social

⁴⁰ Janice M. Irvine, *Talk About Sex: The Battle Over Sex Education in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 88-90. For more on AFLA, see Jeffrey P. Moran, *Teaching Sex: The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20th Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 204-5.

⁴¹ Irvine, *Talk About Sex*, p. 92.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

conservatives had been taking a form of “alternative” sex education into schools since the late 1960s. Though the early pro-life programs were never as expansive as the abstinence education programs of the 1980s and 1990s, pro-life activists long ago had entered public schools to re-educate students about sex and reproduction.

With the passage of AFLA and rising support for abstinence education, pro-life groups in the Four Corners states capitalized on this federal money and retooled their presentations into abstinence-only sex education. In the late 1980s, with the support of the local Right to Life group, 1800 Tucsonans signed a petition asking the school district to adopt the “Sex Respect” curriculum, a national abstinence-based curriculum. Sex Respect had been developed in 1983 by the Committee on the Status of Women, a conservative pro-life group in Illinois using AFLA funds.⁴⁴ Sex Respect “discarded many topics more mainstream sex educators considered essential, including contraception, masturbation, abortion, adultery, sexual orientation, freedom of choice and the positive aspects of sexuality.” Like many abstinence education programs, Sex Respect emphasized innate male and female gender attributes and responsibilities and exaggerated the fallibility of birth control.⁴⁵ In Tucson, residents were invited to a one-day workshop at the simply named Crisis Pregnancy Center, and, by Right to Life’s accounting, many left encouraged “by the possibilities suggested by this new approach to education about human sexuality.” A member of the Sex Respect steering committee said that if the school district would adopt the program, it would show young people that “they are wonderful human

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 100.

⁴⁵ Moran, *Teaching Sex*, p. 214. See also Patricia Goodson and Elizabeth Edmundson, “The Problematic Promotion of Abstinence: An Overview of *Sex Respect*,” *Journal of School Health* 64 (May 1994): 205-10; Bonnie Trudell and Mariamne Whatley, “Sex Respect: A Problematic Public School Sexuality Curriculum,” *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy* 17, no. 2 (1991): 125-40; Cris Mayo, *Disputing the Subject of Sex: Sexualities and Public School Controversies* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).

beings capable of abstinence and self control.”⁴⁶ Though Tucson’s school district decided not to adopt Sex Respect, the program touched thousands of public school students across the United States as many school districts did embrace the program in the 1980s and 1990s.

In addition to widely embraced abstinence education curriculums, a variety of abstinence programs were promoted on a much smaller scale. In 1997, Arizona Right to Life teamed up with Passion and Principles, an abstinence-only education program created by and primarily taught by one woman, Karen Weston. Weston, by her own accounting, had lost her virginity at fifteen (“an incredible gift I could never get back”), gotten pregnant, and had an abortion. Years later she diagnosed herself as suffering from post-abortion syndrome. She wrote, “the truth was revealed to me through a series of video tapes” and “twenty-one years later I realized I, too, was a victim.” From this pain, she put together an abstinence-only curriculum to teach “young people today ... the truth, the hard truth!” She finished her mini-autobiography in an Arizona Right to Life newsletter with these thoughts: “It is now my life’s work to fight against the lies told on behalf of abortion and the truth about abstinence and adoption.”⁴⁷

Passion and Principles focused primarily on what Weston called, the “4 As”: abortion, adoption, abstinence, and all of your life (as a single parent). Like other abstinence-only education programs, Weston’s talk focused on risks, calling sex before marriage “deadly,” a brief

⁴⁶ *Tucson Chapter, Arizona Right to Life Newsletter*, May/June 1988, University of Arizona Special Collections. For more discussion of sex education and Sex Respect in Tucson Right to Life, see *Tucson Chapter, Arizona Right to Life Newsletter*, November 1986; *Tucson Chapter, Arizona Right to Life Newsletter*, November 1987; *Tucson Chapter, Arizona Right to Life Newsletter*, Summer 1988; *Tucson Chapter, Arizona Right to Life Newsletter*, November 1988; *Tucson Chapter, Arizona Right to Life Newsletter*, March 1989; *Tucson Chapter, Arizona Right to Life Newsletter*, June 1989, all in University of Arizona Special Collections.

⁴⁷ *Arizona Right to Life News*, June 1997, University of Arizona Special Collections.

moment in time that could have long-lasting “devastating effects.”⁴⁸ She combined this with a discussion of her own story and skits that, as Arizona Right to Life put it, “visually impact young people with the truth.” These skits included “‘The Gift Wrapped Box,’ signifying the treasure of a sexually pure lifestyle; ‘The Broken Heart,’ showing the painful reality of ripping one’s heart apart through pre-marital sex; and ‘Tumbling Dice,’ proving once and for all that ‘safe sex’ is a lie.”⁴⁹ At one Phoenix high school, Passion and Principles set up a wedding booth where students came “to experience what was worth the wait.”⁵⁰ Assumedly, “what was worth the wait” was the wedding itself, not any of the sexual or emotional benefits that supposedly came after all that waiting. Together these demonstrations used visual metaphors to convey the emotional and physical risk inherent in premarital sex, and the morality, honesty, and wholesomeness inherent in a heterosexual marriage.

At the crux of Weston’s presentation was the protection of the fetus. Abortion was her first “A,” and the other three were either better or worse solutions to or ways to avoid unplanned pregnancy. Abortion was the problem her program was trying to solve. In many of her presentations to public and private schools, Weston gave out Precious Feet, the pin with feet the size of a 10-12 week-old fetus created by Arizona businesswoman Virginia Evers, as well as “Young Ones,” plastic fetal models of an 11-12 week-old fetus.⁵¹ In the 1980s, a pro-life Wisconsin couple, Dave and Bonnie Obernberger, created the Young One. The Obernbergers had come up with the idea of a doll because their pro-life pamphlets were not having the desired

⁴⁸ *Arizona Right to Life News*, August 1997, University of Arizona Special Collections.

⁴⁹ *Arizona Right to Life News*, June 1997.

⁵⁰ *Arizona Right to Life News*, December 1998, University of Arizona Special Collections.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*; *Arizona Right to Life News*, March 1998, University of Arizona Special Collections.

effects.⁵² The Young One cost 30 cents each in quantities fewer than the 2,000, and only 22 cents in quantities over 10,000.⁵³ Embodying the “unborn,” the fetus doll was both precious and cheap. While the Obernbergers marketed the Young Ones to all corners of the pro-life movement, it seems like the dolls were often used in situations like Karen Weston’s: to educate children and young adults. Pro-life educators could avoid using potentially controversial pictures and give their students a fetus to take home with them.⁵⁴ In educational settings, the dolls served as a bridge from girls’ presumed childhood to an adolescence filled with possibilities for sex and pregnancy. But the doll also had a beautiful duality for activists: it was both a potential baby and potential murder victim. While the dolls were more sterile than gory pro-life photographs, the figures demanded that young people think about murder and innocence. The juxtaposition of the clean, white plastic body and a presentation on the “violence” of abortion was the crux of that pro-life lesson.

Made of cream colored plastic, the fetus doll was white and had the beginnings of a penis. By connecting a 12-week fetus to the ultimate universal subject, the doll argued for its humanity through the re-creation of existing racial and sexed social stratification. Through its whiteness, the doll gained additional social privilege, denying any connection to the expendable black babies of the urban “population bomb.” Through its maleness, the doll gained social privilege, denying feminist assertions that women’s lives were primarily at stake in arguments

⁵² Susan Hope Everett, “A Palm-Size Pro-Life Message,” *Columbia: Knights of Columbus Magazine*, January 1989, pp. 14-15 (quotes on 14), Project Young One Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI (hereafter Project Young One Collection).

⁵³ *National Right to Life News* 17, no. 12 (June 7, 1990), p. 22, folder 4, Pro-Life Action League Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.

⁵⁴ For testimonials on the use of the Young One, see “What Pro-Lifers are Saying,” Young One promotional literature, Project Young One Collection.

over reproductive rights. Finally, through its constructed biology (its belly button without an umbilical cord), the doll gained social privilege through its connection to a born baby, demanding the same rights accorded birthed humans. One pro-life author noted that the Young One was a “powerful message,” because “unlike most handouts, carelessly tossed aside, he simply could not be discarded—or disregarded.”⁵⁵

The Precious Feet pins and the Young One dolls were what Karen Weston called “witness” tools.⁵⁶ Some Christians, especially evangelicals, used the term “witness” to describe testimony that communicated God’s message, particularly salvation through Jesus Christ. Especially in religious communities politicized by socially conservative movements, “God’s message” might have easily included a commitment to anti-abortion politics. The Precious Feet and Young Ones were supposed to “witness” or “testify” to lots of congruent “truths,” all related implicitly or explicitly to the existence of God: Life is sacred. A fetus is life. Abortion is murder. Sex within marriage is the only way to avoid becoming a “murderer.” Sex within marriage also keeps one from throwing away the “gift” of virginity or from an untimely death (from sexually transmitted diseases). Pre-marital sex and abortion were tragedies that would separate one from God. Weston hoped that her “witness tools” would help students learn these truths, to avoid those destinies, and become activists. At one high school presentation, Weston offered students Young Ones so that those teenagers might “‘make a difference’ on their campus and save a life.”⁵⁷ Weston, her fetus pins, and her fetus dolls acted as pro-life missionaries into the heart of teen culture.

⁵⁵ Everett, “The Palm-Size Pro-life Message,” p. 14.

⁵⁶ *Arizona Right to Life News*, March 1998.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

At least some of the students who went through Passion and Principles got the message. Accounting to Weston, one student commented, “Your presentation gives me the strength to go out and tell others about abortion.” Another said, “Abortion is murder. A few seconds of passion can never make up for a lifetime of responsibility.”⁵⁸ Weston summed up the success of her program: “overwhelmingly, I see kids come to the pro-life point of view and [take] a stand for sexual purity.”⁵⁹ Certainly some young people rejected Weston’s message, but she did not convey their negative responses to the constituency of Arizona Right to Life.

Weston’s program also demonstrates the close relationship between many abstinence-only programs of the 1980s and 1990s and crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs). Weston’s activism was a product of crisis pregnancy activism, especially promotion of the idea of post-abortion syndrome. Once self-diagnosed as a victim, Weston directed her activist energy not at women considering abortion, but at young people. She used the ideas and educational tools of CPCs as the foundation of Passions and Principles. In addition to this ideological connection, Weston also developed a concrete reciprocal relationship between her program and local CPCs. After one school presentation, she stopped at a CPC on a whim and convinced a young woman not to have an abortion. The next day she brought this young woman to another school to “share her decision” with an audience of high school students.⁶⁰ Thus, the CPCs, at least in this instance, provided Passion and Principles with an authentic woman who rejected abortion. Through this relationship, Weston helped to politicize two constituencies: one pregnant woman became an

⁵⁸ Ibid. For other student comments, see *Arizona Right to Life News*, August 1997.

⁵⁹ *Arizona Right to Life News*, June 1997.

⁶⁰ *Arizona Right to Life News*, March 1998.

anti-abortion activist (at least for a day) and high school students learned about abortion from two pro-life women who had faced the decision themselves.

Weston was not alone in embodying such connections. In fact, many CPCs took up abstinence education directly. In Albuquerque in the mid-1980s, for example, the local Carenet, part of a larger chain of crisis pregnancy centers, developed its own abstinence education program that activists could take into schools. According to Mary LeQuiu, a Carenet activist whose children went through the program, the program included lessons on “risk avoidance [of] things like drinking, drugs, sexual behavior,” “reproductive health, STDs,” “refusal skills,” “abortion and teen pregnancy statistics and abortion techniques,” and “fetal development.” In their abortion unit, the abstinence educators, according to LeQuiu, noted “a cloud of ignorance about abortion in general, particularly abortion risks.”⁶¹ Lessons on fetal development and the risks of abortion were, of course, CPC activists’ forte. At least part of this abstinence curriculum was probably taken wholesale from pro-life political materials and the school presentations given earlier in the decade. LeQuiu contended that at one point in the 1990s, the Albuquerque Carenet abstinence program was reaching 10,000 New Mexican high school students each year.⁶² By 2005, CPCs around the country had received 130 million dollars in federal money for abstinence education.⁶³

With abstinence-only education, pro-life activists found a federally sanctioned and subsidized home in public schools. In the 1990s, abstinence education obtained support across

⁶¹ Interview with Mary LeQuiu interview, March 22, 2010. The director of Reachout, a CPC in Tucson, also noted one of their board members regularly did abstinence education. See Schneider interview.

⁶² LeQuiu interview.

⁶³ Michelle Goldberg, *Kingdom Coming: The Rise of Christian Nationalism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), p. 139.

the political spectrum, partly because conservatives had been so successful at maligning comprehensive sex education and partly because most Americans approved of its focus on abstinence. But most Americans also wanted sex education that included discussions of HIV/AIDS, STDs, contraception, condoms, and sexual orientation. Polls taken throughout the 1990s showed the same trend. A 1999 poll showed that 93 percent of Americans supported sex education in high school, and 84 percent in junior high school. While most respondents wanted abstinence to be central, two-thirds supported teaching about abortion by the ninth grade.⁶⁴ But as Janice Irvine notes, by the late 1990s, “many students heard only about abstinence.” A 1999 study of all U.S. school districts showed that only 9 percent of children lived in districts that required comprehensive sex education. All other students lived in districts where there was no policy, or where teachers had to teach abstinence but were allowed to teach about contraception, or where teachers could only teach abstinence.⁶⁵ No longer political partisans visiting for a day, paired with pro-choice speakers, pro-life activists now came as abstinence educators. And with the change of title, they gained the legitimacy they needed to tell “the truth” to children and young adults. No longer did activists need to combat the “pagans” or “secular humanists” teaching children. Now, they were the teachers.

⁶⁴ Debra W. Haffner and James Wagoner, “Vast Majority of Americans Show Support for Sexuality Education,” *SEICUS Report* 27, no. 6 (August/September 1999): 22-23. For other similar polls, see, for example, Reese, *America’s Public Schools*, p. 327; “What Americans Think: Sex Education Survey Findings Compared,” *Spectrum* 71, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 30; Kathleen J. Welshimer and Shirley E. Harris, “A Survey of Rural Parents’ Attitudes Towards Sexuality Education,” *Journal of School Health* 64, no. 9 (November 1994): 347-52; “Poll Respondents Say Abortion Should be Legal,” *Scottsdale Daily Progress*, November 11, 1987.

⁶⁵ Irvine, *Talk About Sex*, p. 188.

Home

While the very public space of federally-funded schools was always a primary concern of pro-life activists, they looked as well to politicize private space—or as activists put it, to instill “values” in their children. Some of the most important organizing of children took place in the most “private” of spaces: the home. For adults who had committed their free time to the pro-life movement, it was only natural to incorporate those politics into their home life. These pro-life lessons came in both quotidian and extraordinary forms.

Early on, pro-life parents probably talked to their children about abortion using literature made for adults. But increasingly in the 1980s, parents had new tools for those everyday talks. One example of this material is a 1986 pamphlet targeted at young children entitled, “You Are Special.” Throughout the pamphlet, the author asks children to connect with the fetus they once were. “You began as a single cell when a sperm from your dad and an egg from your mom joined together. At that moment, everything that was you was already there.” It continues with sub-headings entitled, “Tiny You,” “You Were Busy,” and “Your Life Before Birth.” The author links children’s lives to abortion:

Sometimes parents get confused and scared when they find out they’re going to have a baby....They don’t know their baby is alive. They choose abortion. Abortion means that they force their baby to die when it is still growing and living in its mother’s womb. At abortion clinics babies die before they have a chance to be born.⁶⁶

Compelling the child to envision his or her own death, this pamphlet pushed the young reader to identify with all aborted fetuses.

Beyond pamphlets, Christian publishers and pro-life distributors began marketing a number of books parents could read to their children about sex and, implicitly or explicitly,

⁶⁶ “You Are Special,” 1986, Literature folder, Wisconsin Right to Life Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.

abortion.⁶⁷ Virginia Evers's pro-life business, Heritage House, sold many of these books to pro-life audiences. Heritage House marketed such books to parents of children as young as three and of young adults. Books targeted at younger children included *Why Boys and Girls are Different*, *Where Do Babies Come From?*, *Before I Was Born*, and *How Did God Make Me?* All formatted to help parents answer children's questions about sex, these books offered age-appropriate biology lessons along with conservative lessons on gender and sexuality. Promotional material for *How Did God Make Me?* said the book would allow "your son or daughter [to] discover exactly what life is like in the womb" through pictures and simple illustrations. *Before I Was Born* told children "why God made boys' and girls' bodies different" and explained "God's plan for loving marriages and families." Offerings for parents of older children included *How You Are Changing*, *Sex and the New You*, and *Love, Sex and God*. These focused on helping teens navigate puberty, sex, and relationships. With the goals of helping teens "accept themselves as God made them" and "develop healthy relationships with Christ, parents, and friends," books preached open and candid conversations between parents and children. According to Heritage House, these educational materials helped parents move beyond the "sweaty palms and lump-in-the-throat approach."⁶⁸

All these books published in the 1980s and 1990s included some common points. First, children's bodies and personalities came from God. Biology lessons proved first and foremost the existence of God's hand in creation. Second, these books emphasized children's acceptance of themselves. *Where Do Babies Come From?*, for example, encouraged children "to accept

⁶⁷ For a literary analysis of conservatism in various kinds of children's literature, see Michelle Ann Abate, *Raising Your Kids Right: Children's Literature and Political Conservatism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011).

⁶⁸ "Saving Lives, Serving Families," pp. 64-67.

sexuality naturally, as another gift from God.”⁶⁹ This was not progressive sexual liberalism for kids, however. Pro-life parents were not suggesting that God made all sex acts and sexualities, and therefore all were acceptable. In fact, parents were arguing just the opposite. They argued God made boys’ and girls’ bodies different, created puberty, and sanctioned heterosexual marriage for a purpose. This was the “natural” sexuality children should accept. In practice, these books linked sexed bodies to fixed gender attributes and responsibilities to heterosexual marriage and reproduction in a logical continuum, each authenticating the other. Here biology and God worked in tandem to prove sex difference, gender difference, heterosexuality, and uninterrupted reproduction were both natural and divinely ordained.⁷⁰ If children and young adults loved or lusted outside this logic loop, they might risk not “walk[ing] with God for a lifetime.”⁷¹

While pro-lifers and social conservatives advocated teaching both boys and girls about sex and reproduction in the home, boys and girls often got very different lessons. Certain products were made explicitly to appeal to boys or girls. Two such items were an “If Sex Feels So Good, Why Do I Feel So Bad” card for girls and a “Sex—Is There More To It” card for boys. The cards were marketed as simple, cheap political tools for activists. Adult activists could either use the talking points on the cards with adolescents or simply give the cards directly to the teens. The card aimed at girls said that while boys just wanted sex, girls wanted “a lasting relationship.” Girls did not really have a physical yearning for sex, but rather an emotional one.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 64.

⁷⁰ Philosopher Judith Butler dubs this logical circle, “the heterosexual matrix.” See Butler, “Prohibition, Psychoanalysis, and the Production of the Heterosexual Matrix,” in *Gender Trouble Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 47-106.

⁷¹ “Saving Lives, Serving Families,” p. 67.

Encouraging virginity, either primary or “secondary” (when a person recommitted to sexual chastity after having sex), the card asked girls to find their self-respect and commit to remaining “chaste” before marriage. Virginity and chastity were the ideals, and any self-respecting young woman should live up to them.

Boys got a very different message. They were the hormone-driven, sexually-frustrated ying to the girls’ emotionally-driven yang. The boys’ card asked them to see beyond “passion and peer pressure” towards “the relationship they want to have with their wife someday.” Implicitly, it asked boys to treat young women now with the respect they would later show their wives. It also explained “intimacy in a relationship,” because boys were biologically driven without any innate understanding of emotional connection. Finally, boys were asked to remain abstinent until marriage—not pure, not virginal, not chaste, just abstinent.⁷² A pro-life bumper sticker echoed this message: “Real Men Don’t Need ‘Safe Sex’[:] They Choose Abstinence.”⁷³

Of course, this gender/sex structure had old—though not ancient—roots. Before the nineteenth century in the United States, women were often considered more sexually voracious than men.⁷⁴ But in the nineteenth century, with the advent of Victorian morality, this common wisdom reversed. Men now had stronger sexual passions, easily enflamed and detached from reason. Women, now more driven by maternal feelings and morality, had to control men’s more excessive and passionate nature.⁷⁵ Having become basically asexual by “nature,” women

⁷² Ibid., p. 74.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 18. Bumper stickers probably made for girls included “Single, Special, Selective and Worth the Wait,” and “Safe Sex Still Breaks the Heart.”

⁷⁴ John D’Emilio and Estelle B. Friedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 70.

⁷⁵ Nancy F. Cott, “Passionlessness: An Interpretation of Victorian Ideology, 1790-1850,” *Signs* 4 (Winter 1978): 219-36; Carol Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian*

assumed almost all the moral responsibility for sex. In these years, female moral responsibility and its attendant moral authority did not extend to all women; many believed poor women and women of color to be either naturally licentious or more likely to be led astray by men. Thus, these women often bore the burden of responsibility without the benefit of social authority.

While this moral double standard for men and women persisted in certain forms throughout most of the twentieth century, increasingly young women contested their “asexual” label through dating and sexual experimentation. Additionally, in the first half of the century, a handful of theorists and sexologists began rethinking the place of eros in the human condition. While maintaining an interest in gender difference, these thinkers began arguing that sex was a core piece of a person’s identity and essential to marital intimacy. By the 1960s, psychological opinion and private sexual cultures turned into a mainstream phenomenon, as more Americans accepted pleasure and sexual fulfillment as “natural” parts of both men’s and women’s lives.

Historians John D’Emilio and Estelle Friedman describe mid-century American culture this way:

“It celebrated the erotic, but tried to keep it within a heterosexual framework of long-term,

America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); D’Emilio and Friedman, *Intimate Matters*, pp. 70-71. There is a long historiography on how some women (usually white and middle class) used this higher moral plane to enter politics. See, for example, Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: “Women’s Sphere” in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Ellen DuBois and Linda Gordon, “Seeking Ecstasy on the Battlefield: Danger and Pleasure in Nineteenth-Century Feminist Sexual Thought,” *Feminist Studies* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 7-25; Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Shirley J. Yee, *Black Women Abolitionists: A Study in Activism, 1828-1860* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992); Evelyn Brooks Higgenbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Glenda Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Amy Kaplan, “Manifest Domesticity,” *American Literature* 70 (September 1998): 581-606; Louise Michele Newman, *White Women’s Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).

monogamous relationships.”⁷⁶ As the century progressed, the feminist and gay liberation movements contested that heterosexual framework, highlighting the sexism and homophobia ingrained in the institution of marriage. American media, too, portrayed more sex outside of marriage, but most often without the political critique of feminist and gay and lesbian activists.

So in many ways, these pro-life children’s books fit nicely with cultural norms in the late twentieth century. They were a part of the continuous, public conversation about sex that marked the end of the millennium. But conservatives used these books to instill a political critique of modern American society and modern feminism in their children, to instill “values,” values that, in fact, reflected aspects of a more Victorian moral code. In homes saturated with sex, even if it was the abstinence-only variety, children of conservatives were supposed to recommit themselves to binary gender relations, chastity, heterosexual marriage, and uninterrupted reproduction. They were supposed to become moralists for a modern age.

These gendered lessons extended beyond the printed word to toys. In addition to the cheap, plastic Young Ones, some children had access to other types of fetus dolls. In the 1990s, Heritage House developed what it called “Touch of Life Babies,” which were heavier fetal models with real feeling skin, and marketed these models as great for kids.⁷⁷ Heritage House likely envisioned this toy primarily for girls. The advertisement for the doll featured a picture of a ten- or twelve-year-old girl cradling the Touch of Life baby. Opposite the picture were testimonials. One happy (adult) owner named her Touch of Life babies, had a baby shower, wrapped them in swaddling blankets, and put them each in their own cribs. Perhaps parents and activists asked young girls to treat their fetuses similarly. Activists who gave out less expensive

⁷⁶ D’Emilio and Friedman, *Intimate Matters*, p. 300.

⁷⁷ “Saving Lives, Serving Families,” p. 89.

fetus dolls (like the Young Ones) in group settings often recounted offering them first to girls, then being very pleased when boys wanted them as well.⁷⁸ Activists likely believed that girls had the responsibility and natural inclination towards parenthood that could be elicited through the use of the doll. That boys sometimes wanted to “parent” a fetus was a happy, if unexpected, outcome. By replacing a baby doll with a similar sized fetus doll, pro-life activists made the claim that babies and fetuses were the same. And a girl, as the primary consumer of these dolls, was both prospective mother and a once-endangered, grown-up fetus.

Of course, some of the most common educational moments within families came during conversations between parents and children. While most of these conversations are not recoverable, at least one offers insight into some of the gendered lessons parents imparted to their children. Pro-life activist Dauneen Dolce recalled important conversations she had with her four sons as they were growing up. Dolce reminded them that while they did not have to carry a fetus, they had the same responsibility to it. She told one son, “if you came home and you got a girlfriend pregnant, I don’t want you to say she’s pregnant, you’re going to say we’re pregnant.”⁷⁹ She emphasized, however, that while he had the same moral responsibility as the young woman, he did not have the same rights. “I told him she can kill your baby without you saying anything,” she continued. Dolce concluded that giving full legal rights to the woman to terminate her pregnancy “change[d the relationship between] men and women.”⁸⁰ For Dolce, the heterosexual unit was bound by reproductive responsibility, legal and moral. Legalized abortion had freed women and men from that responsibility, causing a ripple effect through the many

⁷⁸ *Arizona Right to Life News*, December 1999, University of Arizona Special Collections; “What Pro-Lifers are Saying.”

⁷⁹ Dolce interview.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

“natural” roles of women and men. Perhaps worried that her sons would imbibe this “new” culture of masculine irresponsibility, Dolce lectured them on the value of moral accountability. But she also told her sons that they were helpless; any errant girlfriend had the legal right to take that moral responsibility away from them and force upon them the emasculating choice of abortion.

Even if children and teenagers got plenty of pro-life lessons at home, this does not mean they necessarily understood those lessons. In the 1970s, an *Arizona Republic* reporter quizzed an 8-year-old boy who was helping picket a Phoenix abortion clinic. He was the son of Carolyn Gerster, the former president of Arizona Right to Life and then vice president of National Right to Life. When asked if he knew what an abortion was, he replied that he did: “abortion is when you kill babies about ten weeks after birth.” But then he “tucked his chin and whispered [that] he wasn’t sure why he was marching.”⁸¹ The confusion on the boy’s part on whether abortion occurred before or after birth shows, in part, how successful activists were at blurring the boundary between fetus and child for so many young people. It also demonstrates that children were not always a reliable audience for pro-life lessons.

Pro-life politics thus became a part of everyday life for many children, but some of the most powerful organizing took place around the most out-of-the-ordinary events in a child’s life. John Jakubcysk, a long time pro-life activist in Arizona, remembered one of the saddest moments for his family: his wife’s miscarriage nineteen weeks into her pregnancy. To grieve the loss, Jakubcysk crafted a small coffin and held a private wake for the family. He said, “All the little kids got to see their brother. And then we had a little memorial service, right around the corner here at St. Francis, at the cemetery. And then later, about a month later, we had a mass.

⁸¹ Bonnie Bartak, “Tots and Mothers Picket Abortion Clinic,” *Arizona Republic*, July 14, 1973.

We had about three-four hundred people at the mass.”⁸² Many of those who attended, Jakubcysk explained, were women who had had a miscarriage or an abortion that they regretted. Though Jakubcysk had been a pro-life activist for many years, he said this miscarriage made abortion more personal to him: “Whether the loss is accidental or, you know, on purpose or through coercion or whatever, there is a loss there.”⁸³ Such ceremonies were not unusual for families dealing with the grief from a miscarriage, but Jakubcysk did something much less common. He linked the miscarriage of a wanted pregnancy to the willful termination of an unwanted pregnancy. Through familial grieving, perhaps abortion was now personal to his children as well.⁸⁴

In the 1980s and 1990s, home lessons in “values” were no longer limited to the dinner hour or the weekends. With an explosion of homeschooling, many now had all week long for such lessons. While schools became sites of escalating battles over prayer, sex education, racial integration, evolution, and citizenship, many conservatives chose to leave the battlefield entirely—and took their children with them. In fact, social conservatives, especially the evangelical ones, left public schools in droves in the 1980s and 1990s. Between the early 1970s and the early 2000s, the numbers of children being homeschooled mushroomed from 15,000 to somewhere between 1 and 3 million.⁸⁵

⁸² Jakubcysk interview.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Former senator and presidential candidate Rick Santorum did something very similar when his wife miscarried in 1996. They too brought the body back to the house for their kids to see, as he said, that it was “real” and wasn’t a “fetus,” but a “baby.” See “Rick Santorum Brings Dead Baby Home for Children,” *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* (CA), January 6, 2012.

⁸⁵ Milton Gaither, *Homeschool: An American History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). Different states had different standards that homeschoolers had to meet. But these standards usually left

Homeschooling was not new to the United States. It had been common in the English colonies and later in the early years of the new nation. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, parents were expected, and sometimes even required by law, to educate their children about the laws of the land and religion.⁸⁶ In the English colonies, home education was not literally restricted to the home but included tutoring, attending “dame schools” (schools often run by a local woman for a fee), and sending children to other families for their lessons.⁸⁷ This system began to change in the early nineteenth century, as many northerners began advocating common schools paid for with tax dollars. Over the course of the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, enrollments in common or public schools rose exponentially from 60 percent of all children in 1870 to 90 percent in 1960.⁸⁸ The rate continued rise after 1960. By the mid-twentieth century, then homeschooling was rather rare.

The modern homeschooling movement began with progressives in the 1960s. Amidst the counterculture and political protests of the 1960s, a small number of parents on the left removed their children from public schools in order to educate them on communes, in cooperatives, and at “Free Schools” (small, decentralized community schools where participants exchanged knowledge).⁸⁹ Though this experiment in non-hierarchical progressive schooling

an incredible amount of room for parents’ own philosophies, which of course was the point of homeschooling.

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 12-14.

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 19-21.

⁸⁸ Harold G. Unger, *Encyclopedia of American Education*, 3d ed. (New York: Facts on File, 2007), p. 110. The increased attendance at public school was, at least partly, the result of compulsory education laws. By 1918, all 48 states had laws mandating children’s attendance at school. These were not enforced right away because, until the 1930s, child wage labor was still legal in some states (p. 292).

⁸⁹ Mitchell L. Stevens, *Kingdom of Children: Culture and Controversy in the Homeschooling Movement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 7; Gaither, *Homeschool*, pp. 96-101.

never had a sizeable following and largely fell apart in the 1980s, it set the stage for a much larger homeschooling movement. The second incarnation of the movement was led by conservatives.

Though a conservative homeschool movement did not begin until the 1980s, conservatives' exit from public schools was foreshadowed decades before. Historians have documented the intensity with which white people around the country, especially in the urban South and North, protested mandatory city busing programs—programs intended to desegregate urban schools and level the educational playing field.⁹⁰ Similar, if less famous, protests happened in the Four Corners states as well.⁹¹ Starting in the mid-1960s, Denver implemented an extensive two-way busing plan, where white children were bused into schools dominated by children of color and children of color were bused into schools dominated by white children. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, many white people resisted the program. This resistance included legal strategies such as the 1969 election of an anti-busing school board, but it also

⁹⁰ For historiography on busing opposition, see Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005) Ronald P. Formisano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991). For Denver's debate over its busing system, see "Busing Started Five Years Ago; Controversy Still Undiminished," *Greeley Tribune*, October 9, 1969; J. Hunter Halloway, "A Tale of Two Cities and Their Busing Problems," *Greeley Tribune*, September 24, 1971; "Busing Issue in Amendment 8 on Next Ballot," *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, October 31, 1974. For a broader perspective on school integration in Denver, see Tom I. Romero, Jr., "Of Race and Rights: Legal Culture, Social Change, and the Making of a Multiracial Metropolis, Denver 1940-1975" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2004), pp. 367-426.

⁹¹ Tucson and Denver had some form of mandatory busing program. As was true in many other parts of the country, students of color were more likely to be bused out of their neighborhoods or have longer bus rides than Anglo students. See J. Hunter Halloway, "A Tale of Two Cities and Their Busing Problems," *Greeley Tribune*, September 24, 1971; "Bridging Three Centuries: The Desegregation Questions, 1968-1983," TUSD District History, <http://www.tusd1.org/contents/distinfo/history/history9310.asp> (accessed September 8, 2012). Phoenix, Salt Lake City, and Albuquerque did not have mandatory busing programs.

included violent resistance such as the 1970 bombing of two-thirds of the school system's buses. When these efforts failed to end mandatory busing in Denver, many white city residents did what others did around the country. They moved to the suburbs.⁹² But some decided that rather than move, they would homeschool their children. Former Colorado state senator and homeschooling parent Kevin Lundberg remembered that the busing system was the reason he and his wife decided to homeschool their children: "I couldn't countenance the idea of sending a kindergartener across town... It wasn't a matter of prejudice of any sort. Well yes there was a prejudice and the prejudice was I wanted my son to have the best education possible."⁹³ This logic was common in anti-busing arguments. The "best education" available was often in white neighborhoods, and thus children in those neighborhoods had a right to it. Opponents did not acknowledge that segregation, economic disparities, and social injustice had created both school excellence in white neighborhoods and school deterioration in the neighborhoods of people of color. Children, in busing opponents' minds, were bearing the burden of federal experiments in social engineering. Or, as one Denver commenter put it, children "have become pawns in what can only be called a monstrous game of musical schools."⁹⁴

For many conservatives, public schools had changed profoundly in the 1960s. In 1962 and 1963, the Supreme Court ruled that official school prayer, school-sponsored religious activities, and classroom Bible readings were unconstitutional. As the decade continued, some

⁹² See "Busing Started Five Years Ago; Controversy Still Undiminished," *Greeley Tribune*, October 9, 1969; Halloway, "A Tale of Two Cities and Their Busing Problems"; James Brooke, "Court Says Denver Can End Forced Busing," *New York Times*, September 17, 1995. For more on Denver debate, see "Busing Issue in Amendment 8 on Next Ballot," *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, October 31, 1974; Jeffrey St. John, "School Busing Issue Termed Child Cruelty," *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, November 17, 1971.

⁹³ Interview with Kevin Lundberg, August 7, 2011.

⁹⁴ St. John, "School Busing Issue Termed Child Cruelty."

parents became further enraged that their children were receiving sex education. Many conservatives began criticizing the political socialization they believed children were getting from public schools, and the critique of a “liberal, secular agenda” only intensified in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Groups like Concerned Women for America and the Christian Coalition regularly warned their members that public schools were places where the federal government could steal the hearts, minds, and even the bodies of their children. Public schools gave children condoms, whisked them away for abortions, and taught them about “diversity,” homosexuality, and “unbridled sex,” some conservatives argued.⁹⁵ Even as some parents complained to their children’s teachers, pushed pro-life school board candidates, and advocated abstinence education, others chose to avoid public schools altogether.

Statistical data on homeschoolers suggests that they were overwhelming white, middle class, and religious. A 1995 sociological study found that 98 percent of surveyed homeschooling families were white, most often with young and married parents and a male breadwinner. The survey also showed that these families made slightly more money than the average American family and were highly religious—91 percent claimed that religious commitment was “very important” to them.⁹⁶ In the 1990s, the Home School Legal Defense Association, an advocacy group, sponsored a study concluding the overwhelming majority of parents who homeschooled

⁹⁵ Christian Coalition of Colorado, Merry Christmas letter, December 1996, folder 11, box 14, Equality Colorado Collection, Denver Public Library, Denver, CO (hereafter Equality Colorado Collection). For more conservative critiques in this vein, see White House Conference on Families, District 1 minutes; 1997 Concerned Women of America, *Colorado News Digest*, Spring 1997, folder 34, box 15, Equality Colorado Collection; Christian Coalition of Colorado, *Colorado: A Supplement of the Christian American*, February 1995, folder 12, box 14, Equality Colorado Collection; Pro-Family Coalition of Colorado, 1991 Pro-Family Conference Program, folder 38, box 21, Equality Colorado Collection.

⁹⁶ Stevens, *Kingdom of Children*, pp. 11-12; and Maralee Mayberry, J. Gary Knowles, Brian Ray, and Stacey Marlow, *Homeschooling: Parents as Educators* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 1995).

their children were evangelical Christians.⁹⁷ Other studies and anecdotal evidence from homeschooling parents confirm that while people who homeschooled their children in the 1980s and 1990s spanned the political and religious spectrum, liberals and non-evangelicals were in the strong minority.⁹⁸ A study by the National Center for Education Statistics found that 83 percent of homeschooling families chose this educational avenue because they wanted to provide “religious or moral instruction.”⁹⁹ As one New Mexican father put it, “We’re trying to keep our kids from perverted sexual and moral views. We can’t completely, but we’ve tried.... But at least we can teach our kids morality. The schools can’t teach morality. They teach safe sex.”¹⁰⁰ Here the phrase “perverted sexual and moral views” most certainly referred to acceptance of teenage and premarital sex, birth control and abortion, and homosexuality. “Moral instruction” at home was the solution for an increasing number of Americans.

Such instruction was not going to happen on its own; even at home, children needed teachers. Overwhelmingly, in families committed to homeschooling, those teachers were mothers. While secular homeschoolers often ignored the role of women in their movement,

⁹⁷ Cited in Colleen McDannell, “Creating the Christian Home: Home Schooling in Contemporary America,” in *American Sacred Space*, ed. David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 190.

⁹⁸ Robert Kunzman, “Homeschooling and Fundamentalism,” *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education* 3, no. 1 (October 2010): 17-28; Lundberg interview; Stevens, *Kingdom of Children*. Scholars of homeschooling argue that the movement became much more religiously, racially, and politically diverse in the twenty-first century. See Gaither, *Homeschool*, pp. 201-26.

⁹⁹ Cited in Kunzman, “Homeschooling and Fundamentalism,” p. 19. For the original, see Micheal Planty, William Hussar, Thomas Snyder, Grace Kena, Angelina KewalRamani, Jana Kemp, Kevin Bianco, and Rachel Dinkes, *The Condition of Education 2009* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, 2009), p. 135. When interviewees had to choose a single reason they homeschooled, “moral and religious instruction” again topped the list with 36% of group. See also Cheryl Wittenauer, “‘Homeschoolers’ Cite Morals, Religion Reasons for Choice,” *The New Mexican*, April 30, 1989.

¹⁰⁰ Wittenauer, “‘Homeschoolers’ Cite Morals, Religion Reasons for Choice.”

religious homeschoolers articulated a special place for women. Many religious homeschooling mothers argued that their job as home educators came from God and nature. Heterosexual married couples often narrated their decision for the mother to leave the workforce and homeschool their children as unremarkable, natural, or a given.¹⁰¹ In these families, homeschooling gave women more authority within their families and helped them argue for the increased importance of mothers in society. Historian Colleen McDannell describes this line of thought: “The concerned mother, even if she is not an expert on every academic subject, is better prepared to teach her children because God wills it.”¹⁰²

The religious focus of homeschooling certainly affected both the curricular and spatial aspects of the practice. Because homeschooling was inherently decentralized, it is impossible to know the myriad ways that parents formed their children’s educational experience. One New Mexican homeschooling family from the late 1980s offers some insight. Karen Limback, from Los Alamos, told her local newspaper she and her husband chose to homeschool their children for “strictly religious” reasons. As the teacher of her children, Limback organized their house to be both home and classroom, nicknamed the “Light of Life Academy,” where the walls featured “quotes from Martin Luther, the Rules of the House, the Declaration of Independence, and the U.S. Constitution.” Elsewhere, bible verses stood next to a map of the thirteen colonies, and the Christian flag, a flag supposed to represent all Christian people often used by evangelicals, was hung next to the American flag.¹⁰³ The educational geography of the Limbacks’ “academy” suggests that their moral instruction fused early American history and Protestant Christianity,

¹⁰¹ Stevens, *Kingdom of Children*, pp. 94-106.

¹⁰² McDannell, “Creating the Christian Home,” p. 204.

¹⁰³ Wittenauer, “‘Homeschoolers’ Cite Morals, Religion Reasons for Choice.”

with Thomas Jefferson and Martin Luther operating as a pair of founding authors of a particular conservative religious nationalism.

With full parental control of curriculum and reduced outside influences, homeschooling children became a prime site for their politicization. This runs counter to one of the major social critiques of homeschooling, which was that homeschooled children would not participate in civic or community activities: critics complained if children retreated from the democratic space of public school, they retreated from American democracy as well. Those who have studied homeschooling, however, have found the opposite: homeschoolers participated extensively in civic and political activities. For example, a 1996 National Household Education Survey showed that children schooled at home or at private schools were 9.3 percent more likely to be politically active than their public school counterparts. The survey also showed that those schooled privately were 13 percent more likely to donate to political causes, 10 percent more likely to attend a public rally, and 26 percent more likely to volunteer for organizations. One scholar concludes that private schoolers participated so much because they formed strong social networks and because they created “*shared moral cultures* that facilitate social solidarity and trust.”¹⁰⁴

Shared “moral” cultures, strong religious affiliation, and opposition to “liberal” or “secular” schools meant that homeschooling parents and homeschooled children were much more likely to participate in conservative and pro-life campaigns than in other types of political

¹⁰⁴ National Household Education Survey numbers and quote in Christian Smith and David Sikkink, “Is Private Schooling Privatizing?” *First Things* 92 (April 1999): 16-20 (quote on p. 19). For more on civic participation, see David Sikkink, “Public Schooling and Its Discontents: Religious Identities, Schooling Choices for Children, and Civic Participation” (PhD diss., University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, 1998).

activities. Denver homeschooling parent Kevin Lundberg argued that the homeschool setting naturally led to politicization:

They weren't taught to be a political activist but they were naturally within that setting ... Well parents who get involved in teaching their kids directly learn an awful lot about a lot of things and become committed to those things.... They're in the rough and tumble world of ideas with their kids. And being essentially Christian in nature the homeschool movement is by necessity not just pro-life but active pro-life....

He contended that parents did not homeschool their children in order to make activists, but rather it happened organically. And while the pro-life and homeschool movements were different, “they were the same people doing the same things,” he remembered. “So you know if you want to find a place where there are pro-life people, go to a homeschool anything and you’ll find them there.”¹⁰⁵ While homeschooling conferences, curricula, and groups were outside the official bounds of the pro-life movement, they contributed greatly to the growth of pro-life political culture. Within homeschool settings, parents taught the pro-life message and urged their children to get involved. It is highly likely that many did.

In the 1980s and 1990s, pro-life parents had an increasing number of tools at their disposal for teaching their children about abortion. With pro-life books, films, stickers, t-shirts, and toys at hand, parents could increasingly integrate their politics into the everyday lives of their children. Politicizing their children could be an important step towards countering liberal influences in public schools and the media and ending legalized abortion. One pro-life educator put it this way: “I feel I have a personal mission to teach youth that life is a precious gift. I believe education is a major key to closing the doors of abortion clinics.”¹⁰⁶ With the rise in homeschooling in the late twentieth century, increasing numbers of white children retreating

¹⁰⁵ Lundberg interview. For an account of pro-life activism in an Illinois homeschooling group, see Stevens, *Kingdom of Children*, p. 152.

¹⁰⁶ *Arizona Right to Life News*, December 1999, University of Arizona Special Collections.

from integrated schools were educated in conservative religion and pro-life politics. Many adult activists in these years used their oft-proclaimed and defended “parental rights” to reaffirm binary gender attributes and responsibilities, naturalize heterosexuality, and demonize the termination of a pregnancy. Ultimately, through these lessons, they hoped that their children would become staunch social conservatives and activists.

The Streets

“So many of the women going in for abortion are teenage girls, and so few of us are objecting,” fifteen-year-old Camille Remmert told the crowd at the 1991 Colorado Rally for Life. Remmert had come to this realization while picketing her local abortion clinic. She told the teens in the audience that they needed to get involved by joining her on a picket line, volunteering for a pro-life teen group, and writing their legislators. “We are the future of this country and they would be foolish not to listen to us,” she said.¹⁰⁷ Remmert was, in fact, part of growing number of teens and even children publically protesting abortion and picketing abortion clinics on a regular basis. Outside clinics, some carried anti-abortion signs with slogans like “Abortion Kills Children,” perhaps hoping their identities as a young people would accentuate this pro-life claim. Others, like Remmert, specifically named themselves as near victims of abortion, carrying signs like “I’m Glad I Wasn’t Aborted” and “Survivors of the Abortion Holocaust.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ *Right to Life Newsletter of Colorado*, March 1991, folder 38, box 21, Equality Colorado Collection.

¹⁰⁸ For pictures of children and young adults protesting in the 1980s and 1990s, see “God is Pro-Life” photograph, July 12, 1986; “Stop Abortion” photograph, July 12, 1986; “Abortion Kills” photograph, no date: all in folder Photographs: Demonstrations R.M.P.P., box 2, Rocky Mountain Planned Parenthood Collection, Denver Public Library, Denver, CO (hereafter RMPP Collection). See also “Walkers Focus on Pro-Life Issues,” *Sun Sentinel* (Fort Lauderdale, FL), May 21, 2006. Survivors of

While adult pro-life activists had dreamed of this type of activism since the late 1960s, both national and local pro-life groups put more effort into organizing young people in the last two decades of the century. One Colorado feminist, working undercover at the 1985 National Right to Life Convention, noted that the group was concentrating largely on “youth and the grassroots.” At the convention, this observer noted “a lot of young people in the 20s and 30s, and even quite a few teenagers.” The convention’s program included workshops on the pro-life youth movement, teaching the pro-life message to children at home, abortion mentality and adolescent sexuality, youth education groups, and “Teen Aid,” an abstinence-only sex education curriculum. The pro-choice spectator also saw extensive marketing of pro-life media to teenagers, including books, movies, and a pro-life pop song called “No Alibis” by Laurie Boone, daughter of singer and actor Pat Boone, famous in the 1950s and 1960s as the more wholesome counterpart to Elvis Presley. Laurie Boone herself said the song was “aimed at young kids, there’s a whole generation of young people right now who don’t know the facts.”¹⁰⁹

In the Four Corners states, activists also paid increased attention to children and young adults. One common way activists got children and young adults involved was through contests. In the mid-1990s, New Mexico Right to Life held a bumper sticker contest for members. The organization asked, “Do you have that one message or visual that will change the hearts of

the Abortion Holocaust was a self-proclaimed “Christian pro-life group” founded in 1998 and made up of people born after 1973. The group claimed, “the Survivors feel that we are directly affected by this holocaust because it happened to us—we are the target. Abortion has claimed the lives of our classmates, friends, our brothers and sisters.” See “Who are the Survivors?” Survivors of the Abortion Holocaust website, <http://www.survivors.la/who-are-the-survivors.asp>. For use of this phrase by teens in the early 1990s, see Paul Solotaroff, “Surviving the Crusades,” *Rolling Stone*, October 14, 1993.

¹⁰⁹ “Overview of the National Right to Life Committee Convention, June 20-22, 1985,” and “National Right to Life Committee Convention-An Overview,” folder Board and Committee Meetings 1985, box 2, RMPP Collection. For use of this music video in New Mexico, see *Viva Life*, September 1986, folder 1, box 1-8, HH120, Right to Life New Mexico, Hall Hoag Collection.

people who are sitting on the abortion fence?” The contest had three entry categories: adult, high school student, and middle school student. The student categories separated teens off from the rest of the membership and actively encouraged their participation. The winner in each category received a “silver feet” pin.¹¹⁰ Other local pro-life groups had speech contests for teens.¹¹¹

In addition, pro-life businesses increasingly marketed pro-life materials to children. In 1981, Heritage House, the Arizona pro-life retailer, had very limited materials designed for children and young adults. The one item marketed explicitly to include children was a “Love Life” t-shirt with a stylized fetus in a womb on the front. Heritage House proclaimed these t-shirts could “outfit the whole family from grandbaby to grandpa” and “were perfect for marches, rallies; ideal for any family outing.”¹¹² By the late 1990s, Heritage House’s pro-life products for children had grown exponentially. The retailer sold gold-foiled Precious Feet stickers; abstinence stickers; child-centered balloons, including ones that read “I’m a Child Not a Choice”; and at least six different child- and teen-focused t-shirts, including one with a seal protesting to save “baby humans” (an answer to human environmentalists who protested to save seals). This was all in addition to children’s books, abstinence education, bumper stickers, and

¹¹⁰ *Viva Life*, December-January 1994, folder 31, box 2, New Mexico Women’s Political Caucus Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM. National Right to Life also used contests to inspire teen participation, especially speech contests. See “Overview of the National Right to Life Committee Convention, June 20-22, 1985.”

¹¹¹ See for example, Eckstein interview; *Colorado Concerned Women for America Newsletter*, January 1990, folder 35, box 15, Equality Colorado Collection.

¹¹² The Precious Feet People Catalog, September 1981, folder 1, box 1-3, HH1421, Heritage House ’76, Inc/Precious Feet People, Hall Hoag Collection.

Touch of Life dolls.¹¹³ Thus, adult activists asked children to be both producers and consumers of pro-life arguments and material.

In most advertisements for and illustrations in child-focused pro-life material, children were pictured as white. In the 1981 and 1988 Heritage House catalogs, the few children represented were white. In the 1999 catalog, which contained much more child-focused materials, the pictures and representations of children proliferated. A white baby graced the cover. White children, probably family members of the owners, helped staff Heritage House, and appeared on the first two pages. White young people advertised pro-life t-shirts. White children and teenagers appeared on the covers of pro-life videos and books. A young white girl cradled her white Touch of Life fetus. Even though representations of children of color were rare, there were a handful of such images present on the pages of the catalog. Children of color showed up on the covers of a book on single parenthood entitled *Do I Have a Daddy?*, a pamphlet on adoption, and a book on teen pregnancy. These were the reproductive issues most stereotypically associated with people of color. But children of color also appeared as members of diverse groups of children on covers of books targeted to children and teens. With these covers, pro-life cultural purveyors imagined a more multicultural young audience for their materials than activists had in the past.¹¹⁴ Pro-life multiculturalism at the end of the century had its limits, however. Later in the same catalog, Heritage House advertised Dennis McCallum's book, *Death of Truth: Responding to Multiculturalism, the Rejection of Reason, and the New Postmodern Diversity*. In the book, McCallum criticized the focus on power and inequality in

¹¹³ "Saving Lives, Serving Families," pp. 20-21, 24-25. For more on expanded marketing of evangelical products to children and young adults in the 1990s, see Heather Hendershot, *Shaking the World for Jesus: Media and Conservative Evangelical Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 34-51.

¹¹⁴ "Saving Lives, Serving Families."

American society, “the ‘political correctness’ movement,” “extreme” cultural tolerance, and the decentering of “Truth” (articulated as Christian, Western cultural values), among other issues.¹¹⁵ Thus, in many ways the movement at the end of the century, even in the child-centered corners, maintained its exclusionary relationship to people of color. It attempted to represent them more often and continued to co-opt the language and symbols of civil rights movements, while simultaneously criticizing discussions of racial inequality and difference.

This exclusionary relationship did not mean that no pro-life parents of color conveyed political messages to their children. In 2006, for example, a 23-year-old ethnic Mexican woman from near Albuquerque reflected her own abortion and how she explained to her pro-life mother: “My Mom used to protest [outside of abortion clinics]. (Laughs). So, we aren’t supposed to [have abortions]. That is why I told her there was something wrong with the baby. She would disown me if she found out what was going on.”¹¹⁶ The movement’s racial messaging discouraged but did not preclude the activism of this young woman’s mother. The young woman’s story also shows that the broad targeting of children and young adults by the pro-life movement did not ensure that they would become and remain pro-life.

Certainly, this young woman was not alone in her quiet dissent from her parent’s politics. Of course, with one in three American women getting abortions on their lifetimes, it is certain that many daughters of pro-life parents went on to get abortions themselves. Children of activists probably rebelled in other ways as well, either as teenagers or as adults, becoming apolitical or pro-choice, secular or religiously liberal, culturally mainstream or, God forbid,

¹¹⁵ Dennis McCallum, ed., *Death of Truth: Responding to Multiculturalism, the Rejection of Reason, and the New Postmodern Diversity* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1996), pp. 14-15.

¹¹⁶ Quoted in Abigail Rae Adams, “Choice Ideology and the Parameters of Its Practice: Alternative Abortion Narratives in New Mexico” (PhD diss., University of New Mexico, 2009), p. 146.

feminist. Though these familial mutinies were probably very common, large numbers of children and young adults in the 1980s and 1990s did follow their parents' lead and join the movement.

Because of the organizational effort to recruit young people and the radicalization of the pro-life movement in the 1980s, young pro-life activists increasingly gained a spot in the national limelight. It was in the late twentieth century that radical pro-life groups demanded cultural attention through publicity stunts, attacks on abortion providers, and civil disobedience. Many Americans watched as these radical groups protested outside abortion clinics, the homes of abortion providers, and even the schools of abortion providers' children. They watched as radical leaders used every opportunity to bring attention to their cause, bringing aborted fetuses to a variety of public events previously protected from the vitriol of the abortion war. They watched as thousands of activists kept women from accessing legal abortions. Finally, Americans watched a dramatic upsurge in violence against abortion providers in the 1980s and 1990s, including eight murders.¹¹⁷ In these years, every abortion clinic in the U.S. experienced some kind of structural attack, or, as pro-life activists termed it, "brick and mortar" violence.¹¹⁸ These actions were, to say the least, controversial. Most Americans were outraged at the

¹¹⁷ All eight of the murders occurred between 1993 and 1998; a ninth was of Kansas abortion provider George Tiller in 2009. For more on these murders, see Patricia Baird-Windle and Eleanor J. Bader, *Targets of Hatred: Anti-Abortion Terrorism* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), esp. 139-251; Jennifer Jeffris, *Armed for Life: The Army of God and Anti-Abortion Terror in the United States* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011); Stephen Singular, *The Wichita Divide: The Murder of Dr. George Tiller and the Battle Over Abortion* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011).

¹¹⁸ Questioning of Joseph Scheidler, *Abortion Clinic Violence: Oversight Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights of the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, Ninety-ninth Congress, First and Second Session, March 6, 12, and April 3, 1985; and December 17, 1986* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987), p. 74; Judith Acree, "Advocates Debate Abortion Issue," *Prescott Courier*, March 19, 1986; Micheal Lyons, "Taking it To the Streets," *Arizona Living Magazine*, April 1985, folder 4, box 35, Planned Parenthood of Northern and Central Arizona Collection, Arizona Historical Foundation, Hayden Library, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ.

physical violence against abortion providers.¹¹⁹ Many others criticized radical groups for the trauma they brought into public spaces. One of the primary nodes of this public outrage was radical pro-life activists' focus on children. The group that garnered most attention for these tactics was Operation Rescue.

The most famous radical pro-life group of its time, Operation Rescue pioneered the pro-life "rescue," in which thousands of pro-life activists would descend on an American city, creating human blockades in order to stop women from accessing abortion clinics. The idea for a pro-life sit-in began with a Catholic anti-Vietnam War protestor, James O'Keefe, who argued in the early 1970s that civil disobedience was the only way to combat legalized abortion. More militant wings of the pro-life movement took up his ideas in the 1980s, especially Randall Terry, an evangelical preacher from New York. Terry popularized the sit-in, and renamed it a "rescue." In cities like Atlanta, Georgia; Buffalo, New York; and Wichita, Kansas, Terry's group Operation Rescue converged for months, tying up the city's police department, the local jails, and making it incredibly difficult for anyone to get near an abortion clinic.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Mainstream pro-life activists condemned these attacks while continuing to argue abortion providers were murderers. Leaders of many radical groups argued that they had not motivated the attacks, though many expressed sympathy for those who did commit the violence. Some also said they were not sorry mass murderers were dead. See James Risen and Judy L. Thomas, *Wrath of Angels: The American Abortion War* (New York: Basic Books, 1998).

¹²⁰ Ibid. For more on Operation Rescue, see Faye Ginsberg, "Rescuing the Nation: Operation Rescue and the Rise of Anti-Abortion Militance," in *Abortion Wars: A Half Century of Struggle, 1950-2000*, ed. Rickie Solinger (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 227-50, and "Saving America's Souls: Operation Rescue's Crusade Against Abortion," in *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Politics, Economies, and Militance*, ed. Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 567-88; Sara Diamond, *Road to Dominion: Right Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States* (New York: Guilford Press, 1995), pp. 229, 250-53, 291; Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War on American Women* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1991), pp. 407-12; Mark Allen Steiner, *The Rhetoric of Operation Rescue: Projecting the Christian Pro-Life Message* (New York: T & T Clark, 2006).

Beyond the general spectacle of rescues, the participation of children and teenagers in this civil disobedience garnered public attention. In 1991, during Operation Rescue's blockades of abortion provider George Tiller's clinic in Wichita, Kansas, children took center stage. During those months of protest, stories of child radicals stood out from the rest. One day, in order to stop women from entering the clinic, one fifteen-year-old girl and five of her seven siblings, "one as young as ten," ran in front of an approaching car and sat down. Their mother quickly joined them.¹²¹ Another day, the *New York Times* reported that one "little girl" protesting at Tiller's clinic was removed but not arrested by police. An adult activist comforted her: "It's all right... There will be another time to get arrested."¹²² National Public Radio recounted that a mother of protesting children in Wichita proudly confirmed that her children had been arrested many times. Other children reportedly "stood nearby in the shade of an oak tree singing children's hymns." Operation Rescue defended the presence of children, declaring, "Those children who were in front of the cars are not any older or younger than the girls who go in there to get abortions without their parents' permission."¹²³ Eventually, one Operation Rescue activist was sentenced to a year in prison for "ordering children to block cars trying to get into Dr. George Tiller's clinic."¹²⁴ While many facets of Operation Rescue's tactics concerned Americans, it was the willingness to embroil children and teenagers in its "rescues" that seemed

¹²¹ Risen and Thomas, *Wrath of Angels*, p. 332.

¹²² Don Terry, "98 Are Arrested as Abortion Foes Defy Judge and Block Clinic," *New York Times*, August 10, 1991, p. 6.

¹²³ "Operation Rescue Uses Children in Protests," Morning Edition, National Public Radio, Washington, DC, August 14, 1991.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

to best prove the group's extremism.¹²⁵ In Wichita itself, the presence and radicalism of these children convinced local police officers that they had been too lenient with Operation Rescue, leading them to more forceful handling of the protesters.¹²⁶

A 1993 article on Operation Rescue in *Rolling Stone* magazine exemplified critics' use of the presence of children at protests to demonstrate the perversity of the radical movement. The author set the scene for a protest on a hot day in Melbourne, Florida:

Women with the blood of the lamb in their eyes trampled all over neighbors' lawns, shoving plastic fetuses into the hands of small children and beshrewing them to burn in hell. And 10 feet from the room where women lay groggy after their abortions, born-again teens stood on aluminum ladders and cried out in angry, plangent wails: "Mommy, Mommy, why did you kill me? Why did you let them pull my head off with pliers?"¹²⁷

Once Randall Terry arrived, the energy of the crowd intensified. "Catching sight of their hero, young girls in T-shirts that read I SURVIVED THE AMERICAN HOLOCAUST shrieked and breathlessly clutched their hearts, as if the fifth Beatle had arrived," the author recounted. When Terry began his fire and brimstone speech, parents pushed their children to block access to the clinic, break the law, and get arrested:

The older kids went solemnly, already adroit, at the age of 9 and 10, at the business of political arrest. Other children as young as 6, however, sobbed and bit their hands in horror, begging their mothers not to make them go. With a knee in their back, though, and the fires of hell in their ears, on came the smallest of Florida's evangelists, tottering, arms out, like tipsy zombies, groaning for their sweet friend Jesus to save them.

¹²⁵ For more on teenage activists and the rescue movement, see Karen M. Thomas, "Teenage Activists: Pawns or Free Choice?" *Chicago Tribune*, June 7, 1992; Jeff Gottlieb, "Teens Give New Life to Operation Rescue," *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1998. For outrage about Operation Rescue's youth activists, see "Endangering Kids for the Pro-Life Cause," editorial, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, August 13, 1991.

¹²⁶ Risen and Thomas, *Wrath of Angels*, pp. 326-32.

¹²⁷ Paul Solotaroff, "Surviving the Crusades," *Rolling Stone*, October 14, 1993, pp. 57-62.

In this recounting, the author focused on the children activists to demonstrate the movement's radicalism, or as he put it, a movement "as cultic and ceaseless as any jihad launched by Tehran."¹²⁸ The young people in the story came across as either fanatical, brainwashed, hysterical, or coerced. Though unhinged, violent adults swirled around this story too, it was the children who truly embodied the excesses and dangers of the rescue movement. With such exoticizing characterizations, many Americans came to see this expression of the pro-life cause as less like the civil rights movement it claimed to be and more like a religious cult, indoctrinating the young with radicalism and violence.

In the Four Corners states, Operation Rescue and other radical groups came most often, though not exclusively, to Colorado. Warren Hern, an outspoken doctor who provided third trimester abortions in Boulder, as well as Denver abortion providers drew this radical group to the Front Range. National Operation Rescue activists were aided by a fervent Colorado-based Operation Rescue affiliate. Between the late 1980s and late 1990s, Operation Rescue had a significant presence in the state, protesting at clinics and outside local high schools. In the late 1990s, its members came to Denver high schools armed with blown-up photos of bloody, dismembered fetuses. The executive director of Operation Rescue Colorado at the time said the group "demonstrates outside schools because they have not been invited inside."¹²⁹

Many criticized Operation Rescue's presence at local high schools. Colorado National Abortion Rights Action League argued, "it is irresponsible to target teenagers, who lack the

¹²⁸ Ibid. For more on this protest, see "Operation Rescue Runs Florida Training Camp," Morning Edition, National Public Radio, Washington, DC, April 12, 1993.

¹²⁹ "Students Hear Anti-Abortion Message," *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, March 4, 1997.

maturity and skills to handle Operation Rescue's trademark aggressive demonstrations."¹³⁰

Locally and nationally, many Americans echoed this sentiment. Some criticized the presence of children at protests, suggesting that they might be damaged because they were too young to understand the consequences of their actions, the complexity of the issue, and this level of social conflict between parents, friends, and the police.¹³¹ Others argued that Operation Rescue's tactic of protesting outside abortion providers' homes and sometimes their children's schools was just plain wrong. All such tactics seemed to violate the division between the adult and public world of abortion politics and the private, protected world of a child's home and school.

It was in these radical years that the pro-life movement's focus on children and young people ran most afoul of public sentiment. Activists had long capitalized on cultural anxiety about childhood and innocence. But in the late 1980s and 1990s, the movement that was supposedly "saving children" now looked like it was endangering them. A movement that hoped to recreate what it saw as a pre-*Roe* national innocence now looked like it was exploiting American youth, spreading the distress of the abortion wars into the private, protected worlds of childhood. In this, many Americans recreated a hard division between public and private, putting children firmly in the private and abortion debates firmly in the public.

The rescue movement's theatrics, violence, and radical youth overshadowed how messy the lines between abortion and childhood had already become. Children were not confined to the movement's radical corners. Some probably joined because they saw a pro-life activist give a presentation at their school or church. Others were surely motivated by abstinence education

¹³⁰ Colorado NARAL, "Operation Rescue Targets Students," *The Voice for Choice* newsletter, Spring 1997, Voice for Choice, Colorado National Abortion Rights Action League Serial, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado.

¹³¹ "Operation Rescue Uses Children in Protests."

programs or homeschool curriculums. Still others probably took to heart their parents' life lessons about sex, abortion, and responsibility. A fetus doll, a friend's t-shirt, or a passing glance at a gory photo outside their school might have convinced them.¹³² Children had long since been named the hope of a pro-life future and the innocent victims of feminism and secular humanism. Thus, they came to the rescue movement not as anomalous individual kids kneed in the back by radical parents, but as an overt constituency of the movement.

Of course, pro-life activists had other explanations for this swell of youth activism. As one activist put it, "They've had friends that have had abortions. They've seen the pain."¹³³ Or, as another pro-life activist theorized, children were more likely to be pro-life because they saw their mothers mourn previous abortions: "One little boy said every spring my mama cries and cries and cries and it's because I don't have a little brother or sister."¹³⁴ For anti-abortion activists, young people joined the cause because they had seen the trauma of abortion. Whether children were envisioned as overt political constituencies or simply traumatized observers, adult pro-life activists increasingly took heart in the young people among them.

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A cursory glance at pro-life rhetoric in the last decades of the twentieth century would show a group concerned with preserving childhood innocence under attack in the modern world. And in fact, activists did often envision childhood as a haven. But they saw that haven as embattled and already corrupted and thus, right at the beginning of their movement, anti-abortion

¹³² For one teen's letter on her unplanned pregnancy, her "responsibility," and her pro-life position, see Judy Clegg to Congressman Owens, no date (recorded March 5, 1973), folder 11, box 23, Wayne Owens Papers, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT.

¹³³ Dolce interview.

¹³⁴ Eckstein interview.

activists worked to educate and politicize children. Activists campaigned to reeducate American youth, those most susceptible, they thought, to the political messaging of liberal activists and the “liberal” media. Gradually, with increasing numbers of tools, anti-abortion activists worked to remake youth spaces—from school to home—into pro-life spaces, politicizing children so that they could eventually help move the United States back to an imagined pre-1967 innocence. Those mass-marketed political tools meant that Mormon, evangelical, and Catholic children and white, ethnic Mexican, and Black children saw the same photos, heard the same pleas to chastity, and held the same fetus dolls in their hands, even if members of these groups did not always receive those political appeals in the same way. Often in this work, however, activists successfully blurred the boundary between fetus and child, implicating real children in legalized abortion. And thus, activists made children into abortion “survivors.” In the late 1980s and 1990s, the American public witnessed one of the outcomes of this public and private political work in the spectacle of pro-life “rescues.” For many observers, teenagers protesting with Operation Rescue—in cities from Denver to Wichita—looked less like wholesome innocents speaking apolitical truths and more like brainwashed zealots.

Though the practice of rescue cast a cultural shadow over the larger pro-life movement, the attention child activists garnered did not change the tactics of the movement as a whole. Children remained the hope for a pro-life future, a new cadre of activists, those at risk of corruption, and living symbols of those aborted. A 1998 issue of the Arizona Right to Life newsletter demonstrated just how important the images and the activism of children and young adults had become. While the issue contained stories about legislation, euthanasia, and elections, its pictures were all of children. An image of a baby graced the cover under the headline “The Real Face of the Pro-Life Movement.” In the middle of the newsletter, a young girl with a dog

advertised pro-life calendars and a young family with three teenagers and a baby promoted abstinence education. In an article about the pro-life booth at the state fair, four little children held fetal models and asked, in the caption, “Were we really this little when we were in our mommy’s tummy?” At the bottom of the page, another picture featured a pregnant mom showing her young son what his soon-to-be brother looked like in-utero. The article told of a four-year-old girl fascinated by a Precious Feet pin, willing to spend her single dollar to have it. But the last photo of the issue displayed the real hope of the movement: two teenage girls smiled for the camera while doing data entry for the pro-life group. In this newsletter, children were the faces of the movement, the marketing tools, the objects of education, and eventually—hopefully—the activists.

Chapter Five

The Family's Basic Right: Abortion and the Making of Family Values

In 2010, during an interview, two anti-abortion activists remembered fondly a story of an abortion averted. Thirty years later, some of the details were a little hazy. Did the event take place in 1970s or the 1980s? Was the woman involved a “street person” or not? Activists Helen and Phil Seader agreed on much of the story: Helen was working one day at a crisis pregnancy center (CPC) in Tucson, even though a protest at Planned Parenthood was underway. At some point, a young, “bright” woman contacted Helen at the CPC and said the man who impregnated her, a “bright” man who worked for the newspaper, wanted her to have an abortion. The two came to the center, and Helen brought a pro-life doctor in to talk to “the girl and boy.” After describing the process of fetal development, the doctor looked at the young man and said, “so you’re a bully.” The man sat on the couch stunned and quiet. Finally he said, “You’re right. You’re describing to me a human being.” Because of this meeting, the woman did not have the abortion. Helen concluded the story, “And they got married and ... they had two more babies and everything. They had a good life.” In other words, stopping this abortion set the couple on a path towards marriage, other children, and perhaps happiness: a “good family” and a “good life.”

Phil Seader then added a caveat, noting that the young woman “did [leave]... him for awhile” for a “mountain man.” Helen, a consummate storyteller, took up the amended account. After the couple married, they had problems. One day the woman showed up at the Seaders’ door and dropped off her child, saying “You made me have her.” The woman had already been living with the “mountain man” and, according to Helen, “her life was falling apart.” The young

woman, the mountain man, and some others had set up camp at the bottom of the Tucson Mountains. Supposedly, the woman was feeding her child wine and doing drugs while living there. After about four months of taking care of the child, Phil and Helen Seader invited the woman and her estranged husband over for dinner. “They got [back] together and were doing fine. They had other children,” the Seaders concluded. Even with the addition of child abandonment, homelessness, and adultery with a mountain man, these activists resolved the couple’s story the same way: “They got a good life.”¹

In the story of the “bright” couple and the mountain man, the Seaders told of their personal commitment to fetuses and babies, but they also illuminated the politics of family within the pro-life movement. In convincing this couple not to have an abortion, the Seaders believed that they saved the woman from emotional and physical damage and redirected the man’s bullying tendencies, his authoritarian masculinity. Carrying the pregnancy to term helped reorder gender relations that were briefly out of whack. The couple consummated this realignment in marriage and more children. “Family” and the “good life” stood in for a return to social order. Few would probably name the “bright” couple’s family a “traditional” one. And yet, for the Seaders, other pro-life activists, and later family values conservatives, any woman or couple who avoided abortion was an exemplar of family values. In the “family values” coalitions of the 1980s and 1990s, anti-abortion activists helped make “life” one of the defining characteristics of the “traditional family.” Other “family values” issues would come and go—concerns over pornography, funding for the arts, the Equal Rights Amendment, and gay teachers, to name a few, all had their heyday in the last decades of the twentieth century. Opposition to

¹ Interview with Phil and Helen Seader, March 18, 2010.

abortion, however, remained one of the few constant commitments of the “traditional family” from its political inception well into the twenty-first century.

Late twentieth-century conservatives were not the first Americans to concern themselves with the health of the family. In fact, the family had been an obsession of postwar American politics and culture. Historian Elaine Tyler May has argued that on a broad cultural level, during the Cold War, Americans focused above all on the home as an institution that could temper and tame the modern world.² Subsequent scholars have demonstrated that this cultural obsession with family had uneven political ramifications. Historian Robert Self in *All in the Family* argues, “in the middle decades of the twentieth century, the heterosexual nuclear family was a liberal political project.”³ Proponents of John F. Kennedy’s New Frontier and Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society insisted that new social programs would economically secure the nuclear family and its male breadwinner. Then, in the later decades of the twentieth century, it was conservatives who wrapped their ideology and policy around the nuclear family. Self uses the terms “breadwinner liberalism” and “breadwinner conservatism” to capture the consistency between the politics of the 1960s and the 1980s. These similar terms obscure, however, the substantial ways in which the contents of the linguistic container “family” changed in those years, especially for conservatives.⁴

² Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (1988; reprint, New York: Basic Books, 2008).

³ Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), p. 10.

⁴ Self does not suggest in the content of his chapters that “family” issues remained constant in this shift from liberal to conservative politics. The terms at the heart of his framework, however, make the nuclear family a stable entity with a male breadwinner at its core. While many social conservatives were certainly concerned with male breadwinners, the parts of conservatism solely dedicated to men’s issues (the men’s movement, for example) were always peripheral to the larger movement. The movement revolved primarily around women, children, heterosexuality, and above all the fetus.

In this chapter, I argue that the family did more than switch teams. What was new in the conservative conception of family in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s was its axis. Social conservatives were not interested, first and foremost, in male breadwinners. While debates over femininity and masculinity, fatherhood and motherhood were central to “family values” politics at the end of the century, the movement had an important new referent: the fetus. Social conservatives put the “unborn” and pro-life political arguments at the heart of the family’s structure and its reason for being. The fetus brought an amorphous, if powerful, dedication to “personal responsibility” and “life” to the core of the traditional family. It made heterosexual reproduction the family’s defining act and its divine, natural validation. The fetus, in the aftermath of *Roe v. Wade*, also helped create the family’s adversaries: feminism, secularism, the media, and the federal government. Here, then, I show how anti-abortion activists helped redefine the “traditional family” in the late twentieth century, and how they worked to place the protection of fetuses at the heart of the pro-family movement, and at the heart of American politics. In so doing, they often drowned out the voices of feminists, of course, but also those of poor people and people of color. Finally, I show how the non-profit Focus on the Family, based in Colorado along with a number of evangelical organizations, further cemented the connection between personal family interactions and national conservative politics. This organization led by southerner-turned-westerner James Dobson helped market the socially conservative vision of “family values” to people across the country. By the end of the century, anti-abortion activists had fully entrenched pro-life politics at the core of social conservatism and had helped develop a framework that would link their struggle to other socially conservative issues.

Making the Family

In the 1960s and through much of the 1970s, “family values” was not the clarion call of social conservatives that it would become by the end of the century. In fact, in those early years, the term rarely came up and when it did, it had no singular meaning. Many newspaper articles used the phrase simply to refer to the values instilled in people by their families.⁵ Others defined family values as the opposite of work- or achievement-oriented values.⁶ Even traditionalists at this time did not define family values the way they would a decade later. At a 1970 conference at Brigham Young University entitled “Changing Family Values in the 1970s,” most sessions focused on student unrest and drugs and very few on issues of gender or sexuality.⁷ By the 1980s and 1990s, the definition of family values had changed dramatically. By then, the term had become political shorthand for a very specific constellation of issues: opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment, homosexuality, comprehensive sex education, pornography, feminism, secular public schools, and abortion. It was socially conservative activists who successfully redefined the politics and values of the “family.”

In the late twentieth century, these activists argued that the “traditional family” and its values had existed from time immemorial. Social conservatives in the 1980s and 1990s regularly posed the “modern” family against the “traditional” family, inferring that there had been

⁵ Alice Brooks, “Who Art in Heaven,” *Gettysburg Times* (VA), April 17, 1964; Edward R. Pinckney and Cathy Pinckney, “Mirror of Your Mind,” *Gadsden Times* (AL), January 1, 1968; “First Time Voters,” *New York Times*, August 28, 1972.

⁶ Joy Miller, “Free Easy Life Seen for 1980,” *St. Joseph News-Press* (MO), October 8, 1966; “Business Mirror,” *Sumter Daily Item* (SC), April 7, 1970; “Big City Jobs Losing Glamour,” *Gadsden Times* (AL), April 7, 1970.

⁷ “‘Changing Family Values’ is Theme of Conference,” *Provo Daily Herald*, January 27, 1970. Within a few years, Mormon leaders and anti-Equal Rights Amendment activists would begin connecting “family values” specifically with the changing roles of women. See “Hold to Family Values, LDS Urged,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 8, 1973.

consistency in familial structure before the 1960s. Conservatives saw the ahistorical “traditional family” as a self-sufficient, loving, and hierarchical unit, with a working father, a stay-at-home mother, and sheltered children. It was composed of people related by marriage or blood (and sometimes adoption) and it persisted until its members’ deaths (or, for Mormon faithful, into eternity). In the traditional family, men, women, and children had defined roles that fit them psychologically and biologically. In conservatives’ formulations, the family protected individuals emotionally and economically while raising them to their highest potential. The traditional family promoted heterosexuality, marriage, individualism, patriotism, independence, innocence, and Christianity in all its members, and abstinence in the young and single.

Historians, well suited to the task, have exposed the myth of the coherent and consistent “traditional family.” Stephanie Coontz argues that this “traditional family” is an “ahistorical amalgam of structures, values and behaviors that never coexisted in the same time or place.”⁸ For example, in the colonial era, many families practiced strict discipline, but also had short marriages because early death was so prevalent. Discussions about sexuality were frank and punitive. In the nineteenth century, many middle-class families had a breadwinner husband and a stay-at-home wife, but this domestic situation was built on the backs of slaves and poor wage laborers (including women and children), who provided goods and services while working long hours under terrible conditions. Many two-parent families in the twentieth century had a male breadwinner but also witnessed verbal and physical abuse, economic privation, and spousal rape.⁹ Historians have even taken to task the 1950s suburban family ideal, perhaps the model most important to late-twentieth-century conservative nostalgia. Joanne Meyerowitz and many

⁸ Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: The American Family and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), p. 9.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-13.

others have shown that not all women in the 1950s were stay-at-home mothers; many worked for wages, joined unions and activist groups, and defied sexual conventions.¹⁰ Even the June Cleavers, the quintessential 1950s middle-class moms, broke with the family patterns of the past, had brief sojourns in domesticity, and then joined the social and sexual revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s, according to historian Jessica Weiss.¹¹ Other scholars of the postwar family have shown that the 1950s suburban family was only possible for most with the help of federal programs, such as subsidized home loans and the GI Bill; it was not a product of meritocracy and a strong work ethic.¹² Thus the traditional family was not traditional at all, but rather a historical composite put together by conservative activists for a contemporary audience. Over the last three decades of the century, pro-life activists and other social conservatives did something more novel than trying to turn back time. They gradually created the traditional family as a political tool for a modern age.

Within the abortion debate, anti-abortion activists did not immediately turn to the “family” as the rationale for their cause. In 1960s and early 1970s, pro-abortion-reform activists

¹⁰ Joanne Meyerowitz, ed., *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

¹¹ Jessica Weiss, *To Have and to Hold: Marriage, the Baby Boom, and Social Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

¹² For a sample of literature on suburbs and the federal government, see Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005).

talked more about families than did the anti-abortion activists.¹³ Experience with dysfunctional or abusive families had brought a good number of health professionals to support abortion reform. For example, in Denver, Edith Jackson, a pediatrician and child psychiatrist, started a program in 1962 at Colorado General Hospital to assist unwed mothers with post-natal mental health, emotional bonding, and the development of healthy parental relationships. Though born in Colorado, Jackson had worked around the U.S. and the world, promoting a variety of solutions to children's mental health problems, from an experimental all-day nursery school to the promotion of breast-feeding.¹⁴ Jackson and almost all psychologists of her time believed that many mental disorders stemmed largely from "inadequate parental care during the formative years."¹⁵ In Colorado, Jackson and her staff tracked a number of unwed mothers for almost a decade, attempting to improve the women's relationships with their children. In the process, Jackson saw many cases of neglect, unrelenting poverty, and parental disconnection. Though she remained committed to psychiatric, occupational, and medical help for single mothers, Jackson wrote that "from the larger, over-all point of view," increased access to contraception

¹³ I use "pro-abortion reform" here instead of "pro-choice" because many of these early activists used the benevolent language of reform rather than the more individualistic "choice." Through the end of the century, after *Roe*, this argument about abuse and "unwantedness" persisted in pro-choice circles but it was not as prevalent as it had been earlier. See, for example, Beatrice Blair to Dawn I. Brett, December 1, 1974, Colorado 1974-75 folder, carton 2, National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (hereafter NARAL Collection).

¹⁴ "Biography," Finding Aid, Edith Banfield Jackson, 1895-1977 Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (hereafter Jackson Collection).

¹⁵ Quoted in Ellie Lee, *Abortion, Motherhood, and Mental Health: Medicalizing Reproduction in the United States and Britain* (Hawthorne, NY: Aldine De Gruyter, 2003), p. 180. For more on American child psychiatry, see Kathleen W. Jones, *Taming the Troublesome Child: American Families, Child Guidance, and the Limits of Psychiatric Authority* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

and legalized abortion were the essential solutions.¹⁶ Eventually, Jackson joined the Colorado Association for the Study of Abortion, a group working to liberalize the state's abortion law.¹⁷

As Colorado approached abortion reform, successfully in 1967 and unsuccessfully in 1971, other supporters echoed Jackson's concerns about the impact of unwanted children on American women and American families.¹⁸ One psychiatrist who supported the 1967 liberalization bill wrote, "I have yet to see a case in which an unwanted pregnancy has not resulted in psychological damage to the mother, the child, or both. Frequently the damage is major and untreatable."¹⁹ In support of a 1971 bill that would have further liberalized Colorado's abortion law, a state senator wrote,

Abortion is a responsible alternative to the birth of an unwanted child. The damage to the child, mother, and society as a whole which is produced by unwantedness is certainly immoral. As [psychologist] Eric [sic] Erikson stated, "The most deadly of all possible sins is the mutilation of a child's spirit." We submit there can be nothing more destructive to a child's spirit than being unwanted and there are few things more disruptive of a woman's spirit than being forced, without love or need, into motherhood.²⁰

¹⁶ Study of Illegitimately Pregnant Women Under Care at Colorado General Hospital From January 1, 1962 to January 1, 1963, folder 75, box 4, Jackson Collection.

¹⁷ Edith Jackson to Brenda, November 27, 1967, folder 75, box 4, Jackson Collection.

¹⁸ For 1967 law, see Chapter One. In 1971, some in Colorado's legislature attempted to reform the law further, eliminating the previous requirements and legalizing abortions through twelve weeks of pregnancy. The bill, however, lost in the Colorado Senate by a very small margin. See Ray Broussard, "New, Liberalized Abortion Bill Is Killed," *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, March 10, 1971.

¹⁹ Cal Queal, "How Colorado Changed Its Abortion Law," *Denver Post (Empire Magazine)*, June 18, 1967.

²⁰ Hugh F. Fowler, "Some Questions and Answers about the Proposed 1971 Colorado Abortion Law—Senate Bill 264," February 24, 1971, folder Colorado (1), box 1, National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) Printed Materials Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (hereafter NARAL Printed Materials Collection). This quote might have been paraphrased from the book by the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry called *The Right to Abortion: A Psychiatric View* (New York: Scribner, 1969). The quote was repeated in Colorado Association for the Study of Abortion (CASA) newsletter, February 1971, folder Colorado (1), box 1, NARAL Printed Materials Collection.

In the testimon⁷ given in support of the 1971 bill, a Presbyterian minister and director of pastoral care at a major medical center in Denver echoed this argument. He concluded his remarks, “the primary right of the fetus is to be wanted. Only in that circumstance is there maximum possibility for human fulfillment, and the avoidance of such tragedies as the battered child.”²¹ In these advocates’ formulations, unwantedness made dysfunctional and abusive families. Unwantedness was the cause of juvenile delinquency and adult lives of crime. Forced reproduction, not abortion, was ruining many American families.

To rebut such arguments, early anti-abortion activists made two primary claims. First, they argued that the “unwanted child syndrome” was a myth. Using the words of a handful of doctors, they insisted it was planned pregnancies that most often led to battered children. For some, they said, planning a family led to greater resentment of a misbehaving child. One pro-life newsletter offered this example: “It’s one short step to say, ‘Look, you little fink, I saved and saved to buy this bedspread, and you just moved your bowels on it.’ Whack. You see, it’s easy to blame the baby.”²² The second rebuttal was to connect an “unwanted” fetus to other “unwanted” people. Anti-abortion activists claimed that abortion was akin to the Holocaust, slavery, and racism more generally.²³ They said that all prioritized certain human lives over others and thus fundamentally disrespected human life. In a 1973 newsletter, the Freeman Institute, a right-wing

²¹ Statement to Legislature Committee, Senate, State of Colorado Regarding, SB. 200, Relating to Abortion, February 24, 1971, folder Colorado (1), box 1, NARAL Printed Materials Collection.

²² “The Unwanted Child Syndrome is a Myth,” *Marriage and Family Newsletter*, August, September, October 1972, folder 4, box 3, Martha Sonntag Bradley Research Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

²³ For more on this, see Chapter One of this dissertation.

group based in Utah, asked its readers, “should every child be a wanted child?” Then the group provided the answer:

Wouldn’t it also be a wonderful world if there were no unwanted wives by husbands, no unwanted aging parents by their children, no unwanted Jews, Black People, Catholics, Chicanos, or ever again a person who at one time or place finds himself unwanted or persecuted... The measure of our humanity is not that there aren’t unwanted ones, but what we do with them. Shall we care for them or kill them?²⁴

Of the two responses to the specter of the “unwanted child,” this was the one that was repeated again and again in pro-life circles. It became a core tenet of pro-life ideology that only people who opposed abortion truly cared about “the unwanted.”²⁵ In this argument, activists moved the discussion away from families and toward a discussion of individuals. Rather than recast the American family at risk that pro-abortion-reform people presented, anti-abortion activists focused on the fetus as an isolated and autonomous individual threatened by a hardened society.

While the rights of the individual (fetus) always dominated pro-life rhetoric, a discussion of families lurked on the peripheries of early anti-abortion activism. The familial relationship that was most important to activists was that of “mother and child.” In the most basic sense, activists invoked this relationship simply by naming it. From the late 1960s onward, pro-life activists repeatedly named the pregnant woman as mother and the fetus as child. Additionally, activists regularly used phrases like “the life of the mother” or “the infant in its mother’s

²⁴ Rights of Unborn,” Freeman Institute, April 1973, folder 14, box 23, Wayne Owens Papers, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT (hereafter Owens Papers).

²⁵ For a sample of such arguments, see Telegram from Dave and Frances Holmes, Albuquerque, to Gov. David Cargo, March 13, 1969, folder 241, box 6, Governor David F. Cargo Papers, New Mexico Records Center, Santa Fe, NM; “Committed for Life” ad, *Albuquerque Journal*, January 14, 1977; Margot Sheahan, guest editorial, “Compassion Needed,” *Spectrum West*, September 14, 1977, folder 1, Margot Anne Meade Sheahan Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (hereafter Sheahan Papers); Helen Epstein, “Abortion: An Issue that Won’t Go Away,” *New York Times Magazine*, March 30, 1980; New Mexico Right to Life, *Viva Life*, July 1986, folder 1, Right to Life, New Mexico, box 1-8, HH120, Hall Hoag Collection, John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, RI (hereafter Hall Hoag Collection).

womb.”²⁶ Activists argued that once a fetus was conceived, the woman gave up some rights to her body and assumed some degree of parental responsibility. As one Arizona pro-life activist put it, “In proffering her body—by an optional act of her will—to a totally new human organism and individual, the mother abrogates certain presumed rights” of bodily control.²⁷

This focus on women and “mothers” in pro-life familial rhetoric had historical and legal origins. As historian Rickie Solinger has argued, in the immediate postwar period, women bore the blame for pregnancy, especially “unwed pregnancy.” She writes, “The traditional expression, ‘he ruined her,’ archaic by mid-century, had been meaningfully replaced by ‘she got herself in trouble.’”²⁸ Some pro-life letter writers echoed this sentiment. One Utah woman wrote her congressman in 1973, “Perhaps if girls were made to pay for their mistakes like in the olden days there would be no need for legal abortions.”²⁹ While pro-life organizations tried to downplay social punishment rhetoric, they did maintain their focus on women’s social responsibility for fetuses. Legally, anti-abortion activists had to focus on women because of the

²⁶ For life of the mother, see Margot Sheahan, letter to the editor, “Abortion No Solution,” *Arizona Republic*, July 15, 1977; “Panel Oks Abortion Bill: Murder Charges Could Be Filed,” *Mesa Tribune*, January 24, 1981; “Abortion Limits Lose Support,” *Deseret News*, February 13, 1990. This phrase has been repeatedly used in legislation regarding abortion necessary to preserve “the life of the mother.” For “infant” quote, see “Where Catholics Stand,” editorial, *Denver Catholic Register*, July 26, 1989. For similar constructions, see *Arizona Lifeline*, February-March 1972, Special Collections, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ; Laura G. Hendrick to Sirs, March 1, 1973, folder 12, box 23, Owens Papers. Pro-choice activists sometimes also used the terms “mother” and “child.” See “Panel Discusses Abortion Right,” unidentified newspaper, 1974, folder 17, box 27, Planned Parenthood of Northern and Central Arizona, Arizona Historical Foundation, Hayden Library, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ.

²⁷ *Arizona Lifeline*, January 1975, Special Collections, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

²⁸ Rickie Solinger, *Wake Up Little Susie: Single Pregnancy and Race Before Roe v. Wade* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 35.

²⁹ Mrs. Clifton Painter to Wayne Owens, February 22, 1973, folder 12, box 23, Owens Papers. For similar exhortations, see Jack R. Gavin to Senator Frank Moss, June 1976, folder 1, box 43, Allan Turner Howe Collection, J. Willard Marriott Library Archives, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT (hereafter Howe Collection); Clara Barton, letter to the editor, “Choice Made Before Pregnancy,” *Deseret News*, May 22, 1990.

Roe v. Wade decision. The court had defined abortion, in the first two trimesters, as a women's rights issue, an issue of an individual's right to privacy. A woman had the singular right to decide whether to carry her pregnancy to term. Throughout the last decades of the twentieth century, pro-life activists tried to curtail this singular right, explicitly by pushing spousal and parental consent laws and implicitly by limiting federal and state funding for abortions. Despite these efforts, the court continued to protect, in some form, a woman's right to choose. Thus, activists focused much of their efforts on her.

With women in their crosshairs, anti-abortion activists domesticated pro-life arguments by calling women "mothers." Of course, "mother" immediately invoked "child," which substantiated activists' core argument that a fetus was akin to a baby. But "mother" also made the abortion debate into a conversation about families rather than one about economics, structural discrimination, punishment, and the law. Over the course of the 1970s, through an emerging rhetoric of family, anti-abortion activists focused their attention on personal relationships, individual responsibility, gender roles, and the dangers of liberalized sexuality.

In these years, those in the anti-abortion movement developed a notion of family that melded older conceptions with the necessities of a movement in the late twentieth century. If stopping abortions was the primary goal, many activists could not be picky about into what kind of (heterosexual) family a child should be born. Within crisis pregnancy centers and in other parts of the movement, anti-abortion activists had to make peace with single motherhood and some other non-traditional familial situations. For example, the Seaders, whose story began this chapter, claimed victory in a family that was born out of premarital sex, with subsequent episodes of child abandonment, homelessness, and adultery. This space for a variety of pro-life families did not mean anti-abortion activists abandoned the heterosexual, patriarchal family

bound by legal marriage. They idealized marriage but they could not mandate it. In this new conception of the “traditional family,” activists shifted the primary focus of the unit toward the fetus.

Unwed Parents Anonymous (UPA), a group begun by Arizona pro-life activist Margot Sheahan, offers insight into the fetus-focused traditional family. In 1979, Sheahan founded the organization that she described as a “self help group for unwed mothers, unwed fathers, maternal and paternal grandparents, and anyone who is affected by the birth, or impending birth, of an out-of-wedlock pregnancy.”³⁰ A white Catholic who had moved for health reasons from Toronto to Arizona when she was twenty, Sheahan was deeply embedded in the pro-life movement by the mid-1970s. In fact, she became the president of Arizona Right to Life in 1976. Sheahan recalled that she had joined the movement for two reasons. In 1960, she had a miscarriage and experienced a tremendous sense of personal loss, already connecting to the fetus as her child. Then, in the mid-1960s, Sheahan and her husband took in pregnant teens who later gave their children up for adoption. She remembered, “One girl’s family had fabricated an extensive story to explain their daughter’s absence during her pregnancy.”³¹ Sheahan did not deny the plight of unfortunately pregnant young women, but rather advocated pro-life compassion towards unwed mothers. As Arizona Right to Life president, Sheahan contended that her dual commitment to the rights of the fetus and the rights of the mother “to be nurtured and loved throughout her pregnancy” were her defining issues.³²

³⁰ “Questions and Answers about UPA,” folder 1, Sheahan Papers.

³¹ Barbara Gallagher, “Margot Sheahan,” folder 1, Sheahan Papers. For more on unwed pregnancy before 1973, see Solinger, *Wake Up Little Susie*.

³² Gallagher, “Margot Sheahan.”

Sheahan had come of age in an era that shunned unwed mothers. In the postwar period, Solinger argues, white women who got pregnant outside of marriage were considered immature or mentally ill, while Black women were considered naturally sexually indulgent. White women were expected to give up their babies for adoption, so the women could be redeemed for the marriage market. Those who kept their babies were socially exiled. Black women were expected to keep their babies because of their presumed biologically-engrained maternalism and licentiousness, which could only be controlled through punitive government policy. Black women could not be redeemed, only punished. Solinger concludes, “the postwar family agenda... mandated marriage and domesticity for women.”³³ Margot Sheahan’s “compassionate” approach deviated significantly from this agenda.

It took a personal familial crisis, however, for Sheahan to channel her compassion into a self-help group. She wrote later, “Suddenly our own family was called to experience the problem of unwed parents—through one of our children.”³⁴ Her nineteen-year-old daughter Angela had become pregnant. Sheahan explained Angela’s pregnancy as a product of her historical moment; she was a teenager when “contraception, abortion, premarital sex and free love were hailed as ‘liberation.’” Sheahan and her husband could not believe that their “beautiful, perky, popular little girl” had become another statistic.³⁵ At the time, Sheahan herself was in a twelve-step program of some kind, which inspired her to follow the format of Alcoholics Anonymous in order to aid unwed parents.³⁶

³³ Solinger, *Wake Up Little Susie*, p. 100.

³⁴ Margot Sheahan to Eva S. Mosley, October 12, 1986, folder 1, Sheahan Papers.

³⁵ Margot Sheahan, *The Whole Parent: Book One: 12 Steps to Serenity for Unwed Parents (A Practical Life Guide)* (Los Angeles: VCA Publishing, 2001), p. xiii.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xv.

Within her group, Unwed Parents Anonymous, Sheahan helped develop a conservative notion of family for a modern sexual age. First, the group provided a space for single parenthood within pro-life and socially conservative circles. Sheahan noted that the group never pushed unwed parents to marry. She told one reporter, “The group does not believe a marriage should patch up a situation, but should be based on mutual love and a life commitment.”³⁷ As a self-help group, UPA focused on the individual and the complicated problems of unwed pregnancy: teenage naïveté, young men’s “playboy” sensibilities, dysfunctional relationships, dating difficulties, overwhelming guilt and anger, and economic and social pressures. While accepting the many paths to single parenthood, UPA narrated it as an inferior family structure built out of personal and social dysfunction. For UPA, single parenthood was a step out of the “natural order,” but also an opportunity for personal development, an opportunity to remake oneself and one’s child into a family. While Sheahan supported single parents, her group maintained that single parenthood was a condition to be borne, not a legitimate personal choice. In the book Sheahan published on the group, she wrote, “it is disturbing to witness the large number of women who choose to raise their child in a fatherless home.”³⁸

At the heart of UPA’s message was chastity. UPA argued that the root of the problem of unwed pregnancy was premarital sex.³⁹ Sheahan and UPA portrayed premarital sex as part of a lifestyle that “ignored personal morality, spirituality, or even a concern for the child who might

³⁷ Margot Sheahan, “Unwed Parents Anonymous,” *Heartbeat*, Spring 1982, folder 1, Sheahan Papers.

³⁸ Sheahan, *The Whole Parent*, pp. xx. For the many paths to single pregnancy, see Sheahan, *The Whole Parent*. For Sheahan’s discussion of natural order, see Sheahan, *The Whole Parent*, pp. 4, 71; Jude Peitzmeier, “Unwed Parents Find Support,” *Scottsdale Daily Progress*, August 18 (no year, probably 1983), folder 1, Sheahan Papers.

³⁹ Sheahan, “Unwed Parents Anonymous,” *Heartbeat*, Spring 1982.

be conceived.”⁴⁰ Contraception and abortion had promised “consequence-free encounters,” Sheahan contended.⁴¹ Contraception was like an addictive drug; at first a person would only use it now and again, “but soon, because it seems so easy, and because sex has such a powerful draw, we begin to indulge our sexual appetites casually.”⁴² For Sheahan, single parenthood was a product of social liberalism and late twentieth-century society more broadly, rather than biological inferiority or mental illness (the causes offered earlier in the century). Sheahan portrayed premarital sexual relationships as chaotic, irresponsible, absent of intimacy and love. Marital sex, on the other hand, was “the ultimate communication of true love,” a communication filled with responsibility that went “beyond sexual exploitation.”⁴³ The only solution to the personal and social problem of unplanned pregnancy, then, was chastity. UPA defined chastity as more than sexual abstinence. To be truly chaste one also had to be modest, decent, refined, “simple in style,” clean, attractive, and “totally honest and assertive in all relationships.”⁴⁴ Promoting this “self control,” as Sheahan put it, to the unwed was the “purpose” of UPA.⁴⁵

Promoting chastity was not just a response to unwed pregnancy, it was also, first and foremost, a response to legalized abortion. In her book on UPA, Sheahan regularly mentioned that many participants had prior abortions. “It is the great unspoken pain that hangs over our

⁴⁰ Sheahan, *Whole Parent*, p. 71.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁴³ For the “ultimate communication,” see *ibid.*, p. 114. For “sexual exploitation,” see “It’s O.K. to Say No! You’ll Like Yourself Better” pamphlet, folder 1, Sheahan Papers.

⁴⁴ Sheahan, *Whole Parent*, p. 113.

⁴⁵ For “self control” see *ibid.* For “purpose,” see “Questions and Answers about UPA.”

meetings; though seldom mentioned, it is always there,” she wrote.⁴⁶ Sheahan provided “representative” stories of UPA participants, which all portrayed abortion in the same way: a convenient way to avoid responsibility, followed by the realization of fetal personhood, profound regret, and emotional damage. Abortion flouted nature because, Sheahan contended, “every pregnant girl, deep down, wants her baby.”⁴⁷ In almost all Sheahan’s writings and interviews, she argued that UPA was a part of a broader pro-life project. She said the group never offered abortion as a solution to pregnant women, because it was a “cop-out” and carried “tremendous negative moral implications.”⁴⁸ If a reporter for the *Arizona Republic* is to be believed, Sheahan kept the group going by “her sheer force of will and her untiring dedication to the life of the unborn.”⁴⁹

Abortion was both the “damage” that brought people to single parenthood and the political force that unified members. One former UPA member noted, “There are girls here, at UPA, from scores of different circumstances with one common bond—choosing ‘life’ for our children even though they are born out-of-wedlock.”⁵⁰ Sheahan reassured soon-to-be grandparents that every baby was a part of God’s design.⁵¹ Sometimes a member’s personal or

⁴⁶ Sheahan, *The Whole Parent*, p. 107. For other descriptions of abortions in the book, see pp. 5, 7, 27, 41, 56-7, 59, 81.

⁴⁷ Everett Craighead, “Unwed Parents Anonymous Helps Ease Distressful Situation,” *Phoenix Gazette*, June 24, 1982.

⁴⁸ For “solutions,” see Sheahan, “Unwed Parents Anonymous,” *Heartbeat*, Spring 1982. For “cop-out” and “moral implications,” see “Questions and Answers about UPA.”

⁴⁹ J.J. Casserly, “Foundation of Love Helps Unwed Mothers Build New Lives,” *Arizona Republic*, February 28, 1985.

⁵⁰ “Testimonies from Unwed Parents Anonymous,” folder 1, Sheahan Papers.

⁵¹ Margot Sheahan, “Grandparents and the Out-of-Wedlock Child,” *Heartbeat*, Fall 1982, folder 1, Sheahan Papers.

political opposition to abortion only developed once she or he came to UPA. Sheahan noted in 1985 that six hundred women had sought advice about whether to carry their pregnancies to term. She said only one had an abortion.⁵²

Margot Sheahan and Unwed Parents Anonymous ultimately reveal the evolving politics of family within the pro-life movement. Marriage and the nuclear family were the ideal places for the individual to flourish. There, individuals learned commitment and responsibility. They had sex within the confines of marriage, where children—sexuality’s “beauty, ... meaning, ... burden, and ... wealth”—could be central. For them, the family was “the singular bastion of hope in a world that is play acting other forms of getting along.”⁵³ Though activists idealized this particular familial model, they did not mandate it. Ultimately the women who came to UPA were redeemed through birth and subsequent chastity, not adoption or marriage. Sheahan reminded her pro-life audience that “most unwed mothers hope to marry someday,” but she also chronicled success among unwed mothers who never got married. In Sheahan’s book on the group, very few of the composite stories or firsthand testimonials end in marriage.⁵⁴ All include some form of increased self-respect, personal responsibility, and reverence for life. For Sheahan, the nuclear family was the “natural order,” but women outside that order could create good families as long as they avoided abortion and remained chaste. In the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, the fetus became the emblem not only of the tragedy of social disorder but also of the promise of social order.

⁵² Casserly, “Foundation of Love Helps Unwed Mothers.”

⁵³ Arizona Right to Life pamphlet, Northern Region, no date, folder 1, Sheahan Papers.

⁵⁴ Sheahan, *The Whole Parent*.

In UPA and elsewhere in the pro-life movement, men and “fathers” played marginal roles. UPA allowed for the participation of all those touched by unwed pregnancy, including men, women, and grandparents. But Sheahan said that the fathers rarely showed up.⁵⁵ She added, “Some fathers ... take little interest in their children and go to great lengths to avoid paying child support,” and she lamented a generation of “fatherless boys” who disregarded “male authority.”⁵⁶ UPA and other parts of movement were deeply concerned about the effect abortion had on men’s rights and masculinity but, perhaps necessarily, these concerns remained on the movement’s periphery.

When fathers showed up in anti-abortion rhetoric in the 1970s and 1980s, they were usually men in search of parental responsibility whose rights had been denied by women and the state. Just a few months after the *Roe* decision, an Arizona Right to Life newsletter editorialized, “How can even the most radical defendant of women’s rights justify the collusion between a woman and her doctor when there might be a man with a sense of responsibility and a box of cigars—but no power to save the life of his own child?”⁵⁷ Here, a woman and her doctor stole parenthood from a potential father. Abortion law severed a man’s legal responsibility for a child and, more important, it took away his rights. While most activists focused much more on mothers, now and again they would invoke the childless father and the fatherless fetus. For example, Arizona Right to Life used Father’s Day in 1980 to protest outside a Tempe abortion clinic because “fathers have no rights over unborn children.”⁵⁸ Surgeon General C. Everett Koop

⁵⁵ Peitzmeier, “Unwed Parents Find Support.”

⁵⁶ Sheahan, *The Whole Parent*, p. xx.

⁵⁷ “Editorial: What about the Father’s Rights?” *Arizona Lifeline*, May 1973, Special Collections, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

⁵⁸ “Pro-Life Unit Plans Protest,” *Mesa Tribune*, June 5, 1980.

told a Phoenix audience a few years later, “There is nothing more fatherless than a candidate for abortion.”⁵⁹

While activists bemoaned the role of men in abortion law, the Supreme Court firmly settled the issue in the 1976 *Planned Parenthood of Central Missouri v. Danforth* decision and the 1992 *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey* decision. In the 1976 case, the court ruled that states could not require a husband’s consent to an abortion as the state itself lacked that right. In the 1992 case, the court ruled that a Pennsylvania law requiring the spouse to be notified before an abortion placed an “undue burden” on women accessing the procedure.⁶⁰ Despite these rulings, anti-abortion activists in the Four Corners pushed spousal consent and notification bills on the state level.⁶¹ Activists in these states and elsewhere pushed men to file restraining orders against women seeking abortions. In a 1988 case in Utah, a man tried to stop his wife from obtaining an abortion and “establish the right of the father to participate in a woman’s decision to have an abortion.”⁶² As in every other case where a man attempted to use a restraining order to stop an abortion, this man failed to stop it or establish that right.⁶³ Such

⁵⁹ Clay Thompson, “Dominoes: Abortions Lead to Euthanasia, Churchmen Told,” *Phoenix Gazette*, June 1, 1984.

⁶⁰ Ian Shapiro, ed., *Abortion: The Supreme Court Decisions, 1965-2007*, 3d ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2007), pp. 61, 228. See also Dorothy E. McBride, *Abortion in the United States: A Handbook* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2008), p. 45.

⁶¹ Liz Doup, “Abortion Bills Studied,” *Scottsdale Daily Progress*, March 11, 1977; Laurie Asseo, “Husband Must Be Told Before Abortion, Under Proposal in House,” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, March 26, 1985; “2 Abortion Bills Die in Committee,” *Mohave Daily Miner*, April 3, 1985; Rosemary Schabert, “Senate Panel Rejects Restrictions on Abortion,” *Tempe Daily News*, April 3, 1985; “In Utah, They Know How to Punish a Woman” ad, folder 18, box 4, Linda Sillitoe Collection, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT (hereafter Sillitoe Collection).

⁶² Jan Thompson, “Utah Man Will Appeal Abortion Decision,” *Deseret News*, May 9, 1988.

⁶³ McBride, *Abortion in the United States*, p. 45.

rulings, at least one activist argued, “struck deep into the roots of the family structure. A father has some responsibility to care for the children once they are born, should he not have more rights in regard to the unborn?”⁶⁴ Though such laments continued, the court’s unequivocal decisions meant that activists spent relatively little time pushing the rights of men.

No matter how often anti-abortion activists invoked the family to discuss personal growth or personal responsibility, there was no denying that they were also talking about the law, that they were advocating turning a common medical procedure for American women into a felony. Pro-life activists had to confront the feminist, pro-choice insistence that illegal abortion or forced reproduction was a social and legal punishment for women who had sex. They had to combat the argument that women’s inability to control their own bodies meant they were lesser citizens. Anti-abortion activists in the 1970s dealt with this problem by focusing, almost always, on the rights, characteristics, and tribulations of the fetus. When they did talk about women, they narrated them as “mothers” led astray, not as legal perpetrators of a potential crime.

In most situations, pro-life activists tried to avoid calling “mothers” murderers. Activists’ central argument was that a fetus was human and abortion was murder. But who was the murderer? Pro-life activists regularly blamed abortion providers.⁶⁵ The focus on abortion providers culminated in violence in the 1980s and reached its pinnacle in the mid-1990s with the murders of eight abortion providers. These murders were a part of larger assault on abortion

⁶⁴ “The Abortion Controversy: Whose Decision Should It Be?” *Mesa Tribune*, January 14, 1981.

⁶⁵ For example, see Kristie M. Ewig and Mark G. Ewig to Owens, January 22, 1974, folder 1, box 39, Owens Papers; Grant A. Broderick to Patriots, (received) May 15, 1975, folder 2, box 36, Howe Collection.

providers in late twentieth century, which also included harassment, assault, death threats, arson, and kidnappings.⁶⁶

The focus on abortion providers built on centuries of American law and legal practice that made “abortionists” primarily liable for the crime of abortion. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, abortion was only a misdemeanor and only after “quickening,” the time a woman felt a fetus move. Among the few ever prosecuted in these years were medical providers who performed abortions on women who died later from complications.⁶⁷ Though anti-abortion laws enacted in the second half of the nineteenth century removed women’s longstanding immunity from prosecution, prosecutors continued to focus almost all of their efforts on abortion providers deemed responsible for abortion-related deaths.⁶⁸ As historian Leslie Reagan argues, “The penalties imposed upon women for having illegal abortions were not fines or jail sentences, but humiliating interrogation about sexual matters by male officials—often while women were

⁶⁶ Since the late 1970s, there have been 179 assaults, 406 death threats, 4 kidnappings, 17 attempted murders, and 8 murders related to abortion providers. See National Abortion Federation, “NAF Violence and Disruption Statistics: Incidents of Violence and Disruption Against Abortion Providers in the United States and Canada,” 2009, http://www.prochoice.org/pubs_research/publications/downloads/about_abortion/violence_stats.pdf (accessed March 1, 2013). The eighth abortion provider murdered was George Tiller in May 2009. Tiller had been shot in both arms in 1993 but survived. In 2009, a gunman shot him at point blank range in his church. See Joe Stumpe and Monica Davey, “Abortion Doctor Shot to Death in a Kansas Church,” *New York Times*, May 31, 2009.

⁶⁷ Cornelia Hughes Dayton, “Taking the Trade: Abortion and Gender Relations in an Eighteenth-Century New England Village,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3d series, 48, no. 1 (January 1991): 19-49.

⁶⁸ For the shift in law in the second half of the nineteenth century, see James C. Mohr, *Abortion in America: The Origins and Evolution of National Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 200-25. Mohr notes that women’s immunity persisted even in the anti-abortion laws of the early nineteenth century. He writes, “every one of the laws passed between 1821 and 1841 punished only the ‘person’ who administered the abortifacient or performed the operation; none punished the woman herself in anyway” (p. 43). For the enforcement of anti-abortion laws before 1973, see Leslie Reagan, *When Abortion Was a Crime: Women, Medicine, and Law in the United States, 1867-1973* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 113-32.

on their death beds—and public exposure of their abortions.”⁶⁹ Thus, while women continued to be punished socially and culturally, abortion providers were the people the state deemed to be legally “at fault” for abortion.

Pro-life activists in the late twentieth century walked a fine line when they delineated the connections between “mothers” and “murder.” Outside abortion clinics, pro-life activists regularly asked women not to “kill their babies,” but rarely did they name women as murderers, as people who might be legally culpable for a crime. Activists attempted to make abortion illegal at every turn, but they skirted one of the primary questions related to that quest: if abortion became recognized by the law as murder, could a woman be prosecuted for homicide?

Utah fell backwards into this debate in the early 1990s. In January 1991, Utah’s legislature passed the most stringent abortion law in the country after just ten minutes of debate and one public meeting. This law would have banned up to 90 percent of all abortions in the state, excluding abortions procured to save the life of the mother, in the case of rape or incest, when the fetus had “grave defects,” or when it was necessary to prevent “grave damage” to a woman’s health.⁷⁰ In their haste, legislators forgot that they had amended the state’s homicide law in 1983 to include “the death of an unborn child,” including abortions not permitted by law.⁷¹ Though the legislators had attempted to exempt women and abortion providers from prosecution in the 1991 law, the language of the bill still left open the possibility that almost any

⁶⁹ Reagan, *When Abortion Was a Crime*, p. 114. She also notes that in the 1940s and 1950s, many women were forced to testify against abortion providers in court, thus punishing women by “frightening, shaming, and exposing them” (p. 171.)

⁷⁰ Julie Mertus, “Utah Abortion Challenge Proceeds at Breakneck Pace,” folder 10, box 35, American Civil Liberties Union of Utah Collection, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT (hereafter ACLU Collection).

⁷¹ Janet Benshoof to Representative Owens, March 28, 1991, folder 8, box 35, ACLU Collection.

woman who had an abortion could be convicted of murder and executed.⁷² The American Civil Liberties Union of Utah put a red line under this “oversight” when it ran an ad in the *New York Times* that read: “In Utah, they know how to punish a woman who has an abortion. Shoot her.”⁷³ As the country imagined a desperate woman facing a firing squad (a legal form of execution in Utah at that time), the state’s legislators quickly amended the law to exempt women who obtained an abortion from prosecution.⁷⁴ This debate, however, highlights an important point about much anti-abortion legislation in the 1980s and 1990s: it was essential for even the most pro-life of legislatures to avoid giving the impression that illegal abortion would make “mothers” into legal “murderers.”⁷⁵

⁷² Janet Benshoof, the director of the ACLU of Utah’s Reproductive Freedom Project, argued that the 1991 law had exempted women from prosecution for “procuring” an abortion or for “seeking to have an abortion performed on herself.” However she argued the law would not exempt women who actually got an abortion. She said the courts had regularly made a distinction between “procurement” and “effectuation” of an act. See *ibid.*

⁷³ “In Utah, They Know How to Punish a Woman” ad.

⁷⁴ Even with this amendment, the law never went into effect. A federal court suspended its enforcement in April 1991, agreeing with the ACLU of Utah that the law “was too broad, violated rights to free speech and denied citizens their right to know what constitutes a crime under the law.” In December 1992, a district court struck down the law as unconstitutional. See “Utah Abortion Law is Suspended,” April 10, 1991, and Brooke Adams, “40 Years After Roe v. Wade, Utah Has One of the Toughest U.S. Abortion Laws,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 21, 2013. For a handful of responses to the law from pro-choice and pro-life sides, see Isi C. Miles to Senator Karen Shepherd, January 25, 1991, folder 6, box 35, ACLU Collection; Rebecca Elliott to Utah Pro-Choice Supporter, no date (probably February 1991), folder 7, box 35, ACLU Collection; “Nazi Baby Killers Need Blood Money!” no date (probably late 1991), folder 11, box 35, ACLU Collection; Peter G. Miller to Utah Pro-Choice Coalition, January 27, 1992, folder 12, box 35, ACLU Collection; Michele A. Parish to ACLU Members and Pro-Choice Supporters, May 1992, folder 13, box 35, ACLU Collection.

⁷⁵ It also representative of 1980s and 1990s pro-life legislation in that it was sweeping, vague, and would not hold up under appeal. Utah Governor Norm Bangerter had warned against such legislation but passed the bill anyway. Brigham Young University law professor Lynn Wardle remembered of this legislature: “There were a lot of red-meat voices in those days saying we’re tired of having the Supreme Court telling us what to do.” For Bangerter, see Sharon Smith to Michelle Parish-Pixler, Governor Bangerter’s State of the State address, January 14, 1990, folder 18, box 4, Sillitoe Collection. For Wardle quote, see “40 Years After Roe v. Wade, Utah Has One of the Toughest U.S. Abortion Laws.”

Family—with its attendant “mothers,” “fathers,” and “children”—was an essential political argument for pro-life activists, but it was also a strategy. Familial rhetoric helped domesticate the abortion debate, moving the conversation away from legal punishment and toward gender roles, personal responsibility, and the protection of the “home.” Pro-life activists also helped conjure the “traditional family” in the 1970s by adding the fetus as one of its primary members and by making pro-life arguments central to its politics. When “pro-family” coalitions began to coalesce in the late 1970s, pro-life activists were ready with their newly fashioned old-fashioned family.

White House Conference on Families

Presidential candidate Jimmy Carter told a New Hampshire audience on the campaign trail in 1976 that “the American family” was in trouble. He said that around the country, people felt unstable and uncertain, without moral direction. The problem, he asserted, was “the steady erosion and weakening of our families.” Rates of single parenting, divorce, familial isolation, juvenile crime, sexually transmitted diseases, teen suicide, and alcohol and drug abuse were all on the rise. He continued, “It is clear that the national government should have a strong pro-family policy, but the fact is that our Government has no family policy, and that is the same thing as an anti-family policy.”⁷⁶ A few months later, facing a Catholic audience, Carter proposed a White House Conference on the Family, where parents, “ordinary citizens,” private sector leaders, and politicians could “discuss specific ways we can better support and strengthen

⁷⁶ “Carter-Mondale on the Issues: Remarks by Jimmy Carter on the American Family, Manchester, New Hampshire, August 3, 1976,” folder 2, box 38, Bruce King Papers, University of New Mexico School of Law Library, Albuquerque, NM (hereafter King papers). See also Los Alamos County Committee for the White House Conference, “White House Conference on Families” letter, 1980, folder 22, box 30176, Governor Tony Anaya Papers, New Mexico State Records Center, Santa Fe, NM (hereafter Anaya Papers).

families.”⁷⁷ His idea, which included many local and state conferences followed by three national conferences, would not come to fruition until the end of his presidency in 1980. Though Carter had envisioned the conferences as creating a middle ground between liberals and the nascent social conservative movement, most scholars have characterized them as a failure, highlighting only the deep divisions between Americans on the politics of family. Observers at the time and historians since have called the three national conferences in Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and Baltimore “angry,” “bitter,” and political “hornet’s nest[s].”⁷⁸ Many have remembered these conferences as a contest between feminist and anti-feminist versions of the family, with one expanding the definition and concerns of family and the other limiting it to the nuclear heterosexual variety.

While the national conferences have received almost all scholarly attention, state conferences offer insight into the power of grassroots social conservatives to mold and impose their definition of family.⁷⁹ This was nowhere more true than in New Mexico. There, social conservatives did more than dominate and debate feminists; they imposed their definition of family on a variety of people with a variety of concerns about families. Here, the fetus-focused, conservative, idealized family trumped the concerns of others over the demise of ethnic cultures,

⁷⁷ “The White House Conference on Families- Historical Roots,” folder 2, box 38, King Papers.

⁷⁸ For “angry,” see Nadine Brozan, “2d Day of Family Conference: Workshops and a Walkout,” *New York Times*, June 7, 1980. For “bitter,” see Sharon Johnson, “After Heated Debates, Family Parley Ends Quietly,” *New York Times*, July 14, 1980. For “hornet’s nest,” see Self, *All in the Family*, p. 335.

⁷⁹ For scholarly attention to the national conferences, see Pamela Johnston Conover and Virginia Gray, *Feminism and the New Right: Conflict Over the American Family* (New York: Praeger, 1983); James Davison Hunter, *The Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), pp. 178-80; William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996), pp. 168-90; Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (New York: Free Press, 2001), pp. 187-89; Janice M. Irvine, *Talk About Sex: The Battles Over Sex Education in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 68; J. Brooks Flippen, *Jimmy Carter, the Politics of Family, and the Rise of the Religious Right* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

economic decline, juvenile crime, alcoholism, and the denial of women's rights. Here, appropriating the language of genocide and anti-racism, social conservatives drowned out people of color, poor people, religious liberals, and feminists, to name a few. Here, pro-life activists led the charge, rallying their troops to make sure New Mexicans went to their national conference in Los Angeles representing the "traditional family."

Headed by Democratic Governor Bruce King's wife, Alice King, the Council for the New Mexico Conference on Families organized the state's conferences. The council divided the state into seven districts, each encompassing at least two counties. Each district committee was responsible for holding city, county, and district hearings. Twelve delegates from the state would go to the Los Angeles conference. The delegates at the state conference would elect at least four delegates, the governor would appoint four, and the remaining four would be up to the council. The council said the purposes of all these meetings were to "develop a process of listening to and involving families themselves"; to delineate policies that hurt family life and to recommend new ones; to identify the diversity of families; to promote community and political activities on the local level; to examine the impact of the economy on families, especially poor ones; and "to encourage diverse groups of families to work together."⁸⁰ The council hoped that the conference would stimulate unity and activism within New Mexico, acknowledging problems for a wide variety of families and offering solutions. At least one New Mexican argued that the conference and its attendant hearings were an "extraordinary effort at 'government of the people, by the people, for the people.'"⁸¹

⁸⁰ Council on the New Mexico Conference on Families, "Statement of Purpose," folder 17, box 37, King Papers.

⁸¹ David Gerke, "Families Stampede?" letter to the editor, *The New Mexican*, March 26, 1980.

In certain parts of the state, this effort at government by the people seemed successful. Many of the local and district conferences, held in March of 1980, occurred without event, especially some in the central and southern parts of the state. For instance, in District Five, which encompassed counties in southwestern New Mexico, the county and district meetings covered a wide variety of issues.⁸² In this sparsely populated area of the state, in the late twentieth century, residents were fairly evenly divided between Anglos and ethnic Mexicans, though the area also had been home to the Chiricahua Apaches until the late nineteenth century, when the U.S. government forcibly sent them to reservations in south-central New Mexico and Oklahoma.⁸³ In District Five's county and district meetings, residents suggested a variety of individual and state-based solutions to the problems of families. They advocated personal commitments to families, better enforcement of current laws, group childcare, and government programs to bring doctors to rural areas, to name a few proposals.⁸⁴ While some socially conservative ideas and recommendations made it into District Five's report, no particular political view dominated the list of issues that came from the district meeting.⁸⁵

⁸² District Five encompassed Catron, Grant, Hidalgo, and Luna counties.

⁸³ U.S. Census Bureau, *New Mexico 2000: Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, 2000 Census of Population and Housing* (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2002), pp. 22-26. For more on the Chiricahua Apaches, see John Anthony Turcheneske, *The Chiricahua Prisoners of War: Fort Still, 1894-1914* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 1997); H. Henrietta Stockel, *Chiricahua Apache Women and Children: Safekeepers of the Heritage* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000); H. Henrietta Stockel, *On the Bloody Road to Jesus: Christianity and the Chiricahua Apaches* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004); Lance R. Blyth, *Chiricahua and Janos: Communities of Violence on the Southwestern Borderlands, 1680-1880* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012).

⁸⁴ Topics from Luna County Conference on Families, folder 18, box 35, King Papers; Topics Out of Hidalgo County Conference on Families, folder 18, box 35, King Papers; Topics Out of Grant County Families Forum, folder 18, box 35, King Papers.

⁸⁵ Ramona Morales, Chairman, District Five, to Mrs. Alice King and Dr. George Goldstein, April 18, 1980, folder 18, box 35, King Papers. Of the three counties—Luna, Hidalgo, and Grant—only Grant

Meetings held in other parts of the state, especially the northern parts, however, were much more clearly divided, and sometimes contentious. In District One, which included two counties in the northwestern part of the state, there was a clear division between the speakers at the local meetings. Encompassing San Juan and McKinley counties, this region included Navajo (Diné), Zuni, Anglo, and ethnic Mexican people. The extractive economy and the Cold War had left their mark on these counties. In the nineteenth century, gold miners had used the region as an agricultural supply center for mining areas in the Rocky Mountains. In the twentieth century, many came to the region to extract coal, oil, and natural gas. With the advent of the Cold War, however, the government focused on extracting the region's most valuable commodity: uranium.⁸⁶ In an area plagued by poverty (especially among Indian peoples), many saw the uranium industry as an economic boon. Towns in the area grew exponentially in these years, as the Cold War brought migrants to its extractive hinterlands. But by the 1970s, it was clear that the uranium industry had taken its toll. In the early 1970s, medical experts found that Diné uranium miners were contracting lung cancer at incredible rates, and in 1979, a uranium mill in the Navajo Nation spilled over one thousand tons of radioactive waste, making it the largest such spill in U.S. history.⁸⁷

seemed to have social conservatives present. See Topics Out of Grant County Families Forum. There is no record of Catron County's meeting.

⁸⁶ Arthur R. Gómez, "Urban Imperialism in the Modern West: Farmington, New Mexico, vs. Durango, Colorado, 1945-1956," in *Essays in Twentieth-Century New Mexico History*, ed. Judith B. Demark (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), pp. 136-37.

⁸⁷ Ferenc Morton Szasz, *Larger than Life: New Mexico in the Twentieth Century* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), p. 82. For more on uranium mining in the region, see, for example, Tom Barry, "What Price Energy? Hazards of Uranium Mining in the Southwest," *American Indian Journal of the Institute for the Development of Indian Law* 5 (January 1979): 18-23; Peter H. Eichstaedt, *If You Poison Us: Uranium and Native Americans* (Santa Fe, NM: Red Crane Books, 1994); Doug Brugge, Timothy Benally, and Esther Yazzie-Lewis, eds., *The Navajo People and Uranium Mining* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006); Judy Pasternak, *Yellow Dirt: A Poisoned Land and the Betrayal of the Navajos* (New York: Free Press, 2011).

By 1980, this region was economically thriving for some, while for others, it promised poverty, isolation, pollution, and exploitation. Some of these economic, environmental, and social divisions could be seen in the district Conference on Families. The conference was bilingual, with roughly half speaking in English and the other half in Navajo. At least one attendee, the vice president of a chapter of the Navajo Nation, noted that he had never seen a meeting where “there were Indians and non-Indians in attendance.”⁸⁸ If the meeting proved anything, however, it was how different the interests of the Indigenous people in the region were from those of many local Anglos.

At the meeting, people discussed education, health, social services, and government. Of the first ten speakers, seven spoke in English and three in Navajo. In this first segment, which focused on education, all the English speakers addressed a general theme: public schools were corrupting children and thus the family. As an arm of government control, schools, the speakers contended, were no longer Christian or patriotic, but rather were indoctrinating children into evolution, sex education, and “values modification.” As one speaker put it, schools are “becoming a platform for promoting the teachings of humanism,” “an atheistic religion.”⁸⁹ Another English speaker, representing “a group of Christian women,” argued that schools should be free of secularism and gay teachers and, ultimately, “more freedom should be return[ed] to the

⁸⁸ White House Conference on Families, District 1, March 15, 1980, folder 22, box 30176, Anaya Papers. There was a translator present, who translated everyone’s testimonies into English or Navajo. There was one person who spoke in a third language (probably either Zuni or Spanish).

⁸⁹ Ibid. One English speaker, a teacher, did not hew quite as much to socially conservative rhetoric, though she did discuss the problems of discipline within schools.

individual.”⁹⁰ Almost all English speakers articulated public schools (and the government) as the source of moral decline and deteriorating families.

The testimony of the Navajo speakers on schools was more positive, despite Diné’s vexed history with formal schooling. In the first half of the century, a minority of Navajo children went to industrial boarding schools for Indians, made to sever children from their parents, language, and culture, while preparing them for primarily unskilled, low-paying wage labor. Many Navajo parents resisted this system and sent their children to mission or day schools nearby. Few Navajo children who grew up in first half of the century attended school for very long.⁹¹ In the postwar period, increased numbers of Navajo children went through formal education and many saw hope for advancement and maintenance of their identities in community-controlled schools.⁹² At the District One conference meeting, one Navajo speaker, a

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Colleen O’Neill, *Working the Navajo Way: Labor and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), pp. 82-84. For more thorough treatments of boarding schools, see David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995); Robert Trewnert, *The Phoenix Indian School: Forced Assimilation in Arizona, 1891-1935* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988); Alice Littlefield, “Indian Education and the World of Work, 1893-1933,” in *Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives*, ed. Alice Littlefield and Martha Knack (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996). For more on the specifics of Navajo education in the first half of the century, see George I. Sánchez, *“The People”: A Study of the Navajo* (Lawrence, KS: U.S. Indian Service, 1948), p. 25; Peter Iverson, *Diné: A History of the Navajo* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), pp. 172-76; Garrick Alan Bailey and Roberta Glenn Bailey, *A History of the Navajo: The Reservation Years* (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1986), p. 169.

⁹² Kathryn Manuelito, “The Role of Education in American Indian Self-Determination: Lessons from the Ramah Navajo Community School,” *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (March 2005): 73-87; Robert S. McPherson, *Navajo Land, Navajo Culture: The Utah Experience in the Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), pp. 207-12. For more on Navajo education in the postwar period, see Robert A. Roessel, *Navajo Education, 1948-1978* (Rough Rock, AZ: Navajo Curriculum Center, Rough Rock Demonstration School, 1979); Hildegard Thompson, *The Navajos’ Long Walk for Education: A History of Navajo Education* (Tsaile, AZ: Navajo Community College Press, 1975); Dorothy Deyhle and Frank Margonis, “Navajo Mothers and Daughters: Schools, Jobs, and the Family,” *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (June 1995): 135-67; Iverson, *Diné*, pp. 190-

self-identified recovering alcoholic who had been “saved by Christianity,” testified on the value of education. He had not been able to go to school, having to work for his family herding sheep, but he noted “I yearned for knowledge ... transmitted by formal education.” Another spoke on the difficulties of discipline within her own home but argued that teachers worked to set good examples for children in the way tribal leaders did not. The final Navajo speaker said he hoped that tribal leaders, government agencies, health officials, and families could work together. United, they could “guide [their] children to be responsible citizens” and “gain pride” in themselves.⁹³ Though Diné people had a much more vexed relationship with schooling than local Anglos did, they refused to join the English-speaking conservatives in demonizing teachers and public schools.

The meeting’s discussion on health focused largely on abortion. The English speakers advocated making divorces harder to get, defunding Planned Parenthood, and requiring parental consent for contraception, but spent a majority of their time discussing the “evil and wick[ed] practice” of abortion. Some spoke about the religious repercussions of abortion, while another addressed the physical. One English speaker discussed at length the role of abortion in the deterioration of the family. The federal government, he said, legalized abortion and funded Planned Parenthood, killing some children and indoctrinating others. He suggested that this was undermining the family’s right to reproduce, both physically and ideologically. The government allowed abortion to undermine the family from within. He argued, “Abortion is the invasion of the family[’s] basic right—life and the right to live... in peace.” This speaker made “life” the central right of the family and thus abortion, the primary problem. Meanwhile, one Navajo

98, 255-58; Jon Reyhner and Jeanne Eder, *American Indian Education: A History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), pp. 271-78.

⁹³ White House Conference on Families, District 1, March 15, 1980.

speaker opposed abortion, describing it as a practice that “eradicate[s] an ethnic group or nationality.” The other Navajo speakers used their time to talk about the need for programs to promote clean water, electricity, holistic health practices, education, and health services for disabled people.⁹⁴ Diné, like many other Indian people, had born the brunt of racist, destructive, and misguided federal programs. But without economic privilege and the political illusion that society was organized as a meritocracy, the Navajo speakers had a more clear-eyed view of federal programs than the English speakers, seeing both their benefits and detriments. Rather than promote the fiction that the federal government could be completely removed from their daily lives, the attending Diné used the conference proceedings to try to influence the shape that future government intervention might take.

The rest of the testimony at the meeting fell into similar divisions. A majority of the English speakers paradoxically advocated small government but also proposed moralistic laws under that banner. Criminalizing abortion and making divorce difficult were not governmental invasions; they were familial protections. The individual and the family fused into one subject oppressed by the state. Navajo speakers and a handful of English speakers spoke on a variety of other issues, with solutions that ranged from the individual to the federal level. Many contended that existing programs were not doing enough or that new programs were needed.⁹⁵ Without a solid majority, however, conservatives were not able to dominate this district’s discussions or determine its issues.

In another part of northern New Mexico, a conservative group also attended county and district meetings, with more contentious results. In District Two, which included Taos, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Mora, Colfax, and San Miguel counties, anti-abortion activists

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

controlled many of the preliminary hearings.⁹⁶ This was especially true in Los Alamos, a county dominated by the Los Alamos National Laboratory and the highly educated, mostly Anglo migrants who came to work for it. The roughly ninety attendees at the Los Alamos meeting advanced a socially conservative agenda, identifying as their top three concerns abortion, government usurpation of parental rights, and expanding definitions of family. The ERA came in as the fifth most important issue to Los Alamos residents. Fifty attendees voted abortion as their number one issue, double the votes the number two issue received.⁹⁷ District rules required that Los Alamos residents bring these topics to the district meeting, where all the counties together would decide their most important concerns and elect their representative to the state meeting.

Many prepared for a political standoff at the district meeting. Before it began, one state Conference on Families council member warned, “I realize that the intentions of the pro-life people are good, but they may not realize they are shutting out other voices.” A staunch pro-life state representative and one of very few prominent anti-abortion hispanos, Silas García, responded, “Programs which promote abortion and promiscuity among our young people hurt the family.... Other issues will come up and may be expressed, and they are important ...[b]ut the root of the problem is in morality.”⁹⁸ In part, this response shows that even in advance of the district meeting, social conservatives were preparing to drown out their opposition. For good

⁹⁶ Anne Hillerman, “Conference Reviews Role of Families,” *The New Mexican*, March 13, 1980.

⁹⁷ White House Conference on Families, Los Alamos County, Issue Votes, folder 22, box 30176, Anaya Papers.

⁹⁸ Hillerman, “Conference Reviews Role of Families.” For an obituary for Silas García, see *Viva Life*, September 1986, folder 1, Right to Life, New Mexico, box 1-8, HH120, Hall Hoag Collection.

reason, many came to the meeting worried that the results would not fully reflect the diversity of New Mexico's families and concerns.

By all accounts, pro-life and socially conservative views dominated the district meeting for Taos, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, and Rio Arriba counties.⁹⁹ One conservative recounted, “the speakers were ten-to-one against abortion, secular humanism, and counseling by school personnel to get an abortion without parental knowledge.”¹⁰⁰ Participants from each county were allotted two hours to speak; Los Alamos and Santa Fe counties were slotted for the afternoon, and their representatives “gave numerous and repetitive presentations opposing sex education, ERA and abortion.”¹⁰¹ A District Two council member complained, “There was a premeditated effort to dominate the Los Alamos, Santa Fe time allocation by a group of people hoping to prove the main concerns of the northern district were anti-abortion, anti-sex education and anti-Equal Rights Amendment at the district conference.”¹⁰² Many complained that this group was “rude and pushy,” and had not been present for the testimonies from the other counties.¹⁰³ Another recounted that the conservatives “seemed to be engaged in proselytizing with a self-

⁹⁹ Rather than have one big district meeting, the district's leaders organized two meetings: one for Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Taos and Santa Fe counties, and one for Mora, Colfax, and San Miguel counties.

¹⁰⁰ Gary Tietjen, “Majority Spoke Out at Meeting,” letter to the editor, *The New Mexican*, April 1, 1980.

¹⁰¹ Gloria V. García, Joe Cortez, Dotti Montoya, Vicki Truot, Vera Valdez, Esta Diamond Gutiérrez, Linda Pedro, Judy Chaddick, Bertha Romero, and Debbie Barton, “Disputes Representative,” letter to the editor, *The New Mexican*, April 9, 1980. See also [name illegible], San Juan Pueblo, to Fred Wilnkleman [sic], March 31, 1980, folder 22, box 30176, Anaya Papers.

¹⁰² Anne Poore, “Family Conferences Encounter Problems,” *The New Mexican*, March 26, 1980.

¹⁰³ García et al., “Disputes Representative.”

righteous fervor [sic] that indicated they were convinced that all those who did not agree with them were either not good Christians or were of inferior moral character.”¹⁰⁴

Eventually, through their sheer numbers, the Santa Fe and Los Alamos representatives dominated written and oral testimony as well as the voting for the topics that would go to the state conference. Between written and oral testimony, 230 spoke against legalized abortion. The next highest number of testimonies on a particular issue was 83. The second and third topics receiving with the largest number of votes were traditional family values and the definition of the family.¹⁰⁵ This group also elected Mary Bond, a Los Alamos pro-life activist, to represent the entire district.¹⁰⁶ Bond received 83 votes, and her nearest competitor got only 32.¹⁰⁷ Though many had come to meeting concerned with a wide range of issues, social conservatives overwhelmed other attendees and voted that abortion was the primary threat to the American family.

Some immediately protested the results of the meeting, especially those from Rio Arriba, a county that borders Colorado and includes a diverse array of residents, from the impoverished,

¹⁰⁴ Jane Foraker-Thompson, “ERA Battle Involves Families Conference,” letter to the editor, *The New Mexican*, May 11, 1980.

¹⁰⁵ Testimony Results from Los Alamos County, WHCOF District Hearing, March 15, 1980, folder 22, box 30176, Anaya Papers.

¹⁰⁶ García, et al., “Disputes Representative”; Poore, “Family Conferences Encounter Problems.” For Mary Bond’s response to the controversy, see “LA Favors ‘Traditional Family,’” *The New Mexican*, March 14, 1980. For Mary Bond’s pro-life affiliation and activism, see “SF Abortion Opponent Cites ‘Personal’ Example,” *The New Mexican*, October 30, 1977; “Anti-Abortionists Call Veto ‘Offense Against God,’” *The New Mexican*, March 22, 1978; Paul Sturiale, “Abortion Pros, Cons March at State Capitol,” *The New Mexican*, January 22, 1979; María Puente, “Abortion Bills Fail in Senate as Time Expires,” *The New Mexican*, March 18, 1979; District II (Contacts), folder 2, box 38, King Papers. District Three, which included Albuquerque, also elected New Mexico Right to Life president Charlotte Goodwin to be their representative. See New Mexico Conference on Families, District III Report, folder 18, box 37, King Papers.

¹⁰⁷ Rep. Silas T. García and Lucy García, “García Answers Criticism,” *The New Mexican*, May 27, 1980.

largely hispano town of Española in the south to the Jicarilla Apache Nation in the north. Rio Arriba, though economically poor, had a rich and complicated history. After the Spanish conquest, this area was home to Santa Clara and Ohkay Owingeh (formerly San Juan) Pueblo peoples, Navajos, Utes, and Jicarilla Apaches, and it came to include a mix of *genízaro* (detribalized Indians, generally former slaves and their descendents), Spanish, and *mestizo* peoples as well. As a part of New Spain, the area served as a rich agricultural region and a buffer zone between Santa Fe and nomadic Indian raiders.¹⁰⁸ With U.S. conquest, American courts refused to honor *nuevomexicanos*' title to common property land grants belonging to villagers as a whole. That land ended up in federal or private hands, often large cattle companies, undercutting the economic base of *nuevomexicano* villagers in the region. (Land grant heirs, especially in Rio Arriba, pushed for restitution of their lost property throughout the twentieth century.¹⁰⁹) The railroad's arrival in the late nineteenth century brought increasing numbers of Anglos to work in mining and logging industries. Then, in the mid-twentieth century, the Los Alamos National Laboratory exacerbated the county's poverty, drawing many *nuevomexicano* residents into low-wage jobs long distances from their homes.¹¹⁰ (Los Alamos

¹⁰⁸ For Rio Arriba, especially the village of Chimayo, during the Spanish era, see James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), pp. 139, 156, 278-279. For the impact of colonial technologies of violence on Indian peoples in this region, see Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

¹⁰⁹ For a thorough study of the land grant struggle in this region, see David Correia, *Properties of Violence: Law and Land Grant Struggle in Northern New Mexico* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013). For the transition to American land law and its effects on the Maxwell Land Grant in present-day New Mexico and Colorado, see María E. Montoya, *Translating Property: The Maxwell Land Grant and the Conflict over Land in the American West, 1840-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

¹¹⁰ For railroad and industries in the county, see John A. Gjevre, *The Chili Line: The Narrow Rail Trail to Santa Fe* (Española: Gjevre, 1969); Camilla Trujillo, *Espanola* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), pp. 73-96. For more on economic relationships with Los Alamos, see Michael L. Trujillo, *Land of Disenchantment: Latina/o Identities and Transformations in Northern New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009).

became a separate county in 1949, following wartime administration by the federal government.) By the 1980s, Rio Arriba county was one of the poorest in the state.¹¹¹ Over 27 percent of its families were living in poverty in 1980, more than double the national poverty rate at the time.¹¹² Thus at the time of the conference, Rio Arriba residents had a long history of dispossession (often by their Anglo neighbors) and a long list of present concerns, concerns that went unanswered at their district meeting.

A group of ten participants from the county (which included both *nuevomexicanos* and Anglos) wrote a Santa Fe newspaper that their interests had been silenced at the meeting. In the testimony from Rio Arriba and Taos counties, they said, residents had spoken on issues of “early childhood services, problems of the aged, health care in isolated areas, the effects of uranium mining, disruption of the family, needs of the handicapped, [and] problems of child abuse and child neglect.” They suggested that representatives from Los Alamos and Santa Fe counties had completely ignored such issues. This political division, the ten argued, had class and racial connotations. Mary Bond, they contended, could not “represent honestly the concerns of Taos and Rio Arriba counties with its Chicano and Indian majority.” They concluded, “Is it not absurd to send a member of one of the wealthiest counties in New Mexico (Los Alamos) to

¹¹¹ In the early 1980s, Rio Arriba had a median family income of only 11,699 dollars. (Los Alamos County’s was three times as much.) See Jon Bowman, “Census Shows LA County Income Higher than Others,” *The New Mexican*, September 18, 1982.

¹¹² For families in poverty, see “Figuring Out the Risks: Factors Show Likelihood of Child Turning Violent,” *The New Mexican*, January 16, 1994. By the 1990s, poverty and social inequality in the region led, in part, to massive heroin addiction, and, in the early 2000s, the county had the highest rate of drug fatalities in the country. See Erik Echolm, “A Grim Tradition, and a Long Struggle to End It,” *New York Times*, April 2, 2008; Angela Garcia, “Land of Disenchantment,” *High Country News*, April 3, 2006, http://www.hcn.org/issues/319/16202/print_view (accessed April 9, 2012). See also Chellis Glendinning, *Chiva: A Village Takes on the Global Heroin Trade* (Gabriola Island, Canada: New Society Publishers, 2005).

represent one of the poorest counties in the nation?”¹¹³ This group from Rio Arriba County did not see the protection of the fetus as the ultimate human rights issue. Rather, for them, it represented a campaign by the privileged that silenced voices for racial and economic justice.

Nevertheless, the group from Los Alamos and Santa Fe had broken no rules. Conservatives took to the newspapers to remind those protesting and a larger New Mexican audience of that. Mary Bond said that conference procedures had been set long before. District committees had reached out to a variety of organizations and had publicized the local and district meetings. Every county had been allotted the same amount of time to testify, and representatives all had the same opportunity to vote. Bond and others from Los Alamos contended that people only complained once “when they saw they were losing the ballgame.”¹¹⁴ Another social conservative argued against the contention that the group had been organized by an outside force: “It was a ground-swell of an indignant silent majority who have had enough of government interference.... No one asked us to go. We made up our minds separately and individually.”¹¹⁵ Ultimately, conservatives had played by the rules, even if they had obscured the conference’s broader purpose. The rules privileged the voices of the prosperous, those who could take the time to come to the meetings and stay until the end of the voting. And so often in this region, economic privilege fell along racial lines, so that despite the conference committee’s best intentions, it was less likely that ethnic Mexican and Indian people would have their interests represented. In District Two, conservatives showed that majoritarian rules could be

¹¹³ García, et al., “Disputes Representative.”

¹¹⁴ Poore, “Family Conferences Encounter Problems.”

¹¹⁵ Tietjen, “Majority Spoke Out at Meeting.”

used to push a narrow political program rather than represent the complexity of New Mexico's families.

Unfortunately, for many New Mexicans, the District Two meeting foreshadowed the dynamics of the state conference in Albuquerque. There, many attendees observed that a contingent of participants wearing red roses took over almost every session; the red rose was the symbol of the pro-life movement in New Mexico.¹¹⁶ The ten topics, or broad categories of interest, discussed at the state conference had been determined at the district level and voted on by the state conference council. Once at the state conference, attendees cast votes on which three particular issues were most important to that broad topic. So, in many workshops, one journalist recounted, "the effect of the voting ... was to entirely change the intent of the topic, thanks to the red roses."¹¹⁷ For example, in district meetings, under the topic "Family Crisis-Violence," many had expressed concern over child abuse, spousal abuse, alcoholism, drug abuse, and incest. In the state conference workshop on this topic, however, attendees ignored these issues and instead voted to express concern over government interference with child discipline, the institutionalization of disabled people, and rising rates of divorce. A group of delegates that included Anglo and ethnic Mexican professionals and conference leaders submitted a minority report arguing that the majority at the state meeting never addressed prevention of family violence or the need for services for people in violent families. The group wrote, "Delegates submitting this [minority] report feel that violence is the threat to the integrity of the family, not

¹¹⁶ Fred McCoffrey, "Family Conference Close-Minded," *The New Mexican*, June 14, 1980; Poore, "Stacked Family Conference Ignored Issues."

¹¹⁷ David Baptiste, Herb Koffler, Cathy Topp, Lynne Johnson, Pally Turner, Shelley Koffler, Barbara Gray-Pendleton, Jullian G. Bartlett, Margaret Vasquez-Geffrey, David K. Sallee, and Margaret G. Bartlett to Alice King and George Goldstein, May 28, 1980, folder 19, box 37, King Papers.

services to aid the victims.”¹¹⁸ The workshops on the topics “Families and Major Institutions” and “Families and Government” came to be forums on the criminalization of abortion, prohibition of state funding for abortion, and parental consent for contraception and abortion. One journalist noted,

Problems stemming from widespread unemployment in rural counties, lack of job training opportunities, lack of adequate child care especially as it affects single parents and problems caused by government institutions in cases such as land grants, uranium mining and land use as they affect the Hispanic and Native American population were discussed in district and state meetings. [These] issues too are gone.¹¹⁹

Finally, the state conference nominated four delegates to send to the national conference in Los Angeles. All, according to observers, were members of the pro-life movement.¹²⁰

In the end, the policy recommendations that came from the conference focused on the state-protected, idealized nuclear family. While conservatives argued that the government needed to “get out” of the family, most of their policy recommendations from the state conference advocated using the long arm of state and federal governments for conservative ends.¹²¹ They called for a constitutional amendment banning abortion, state laws that mandated

¹¹⁸ Minority Report for Family Crisis/Violence, folder 19, box 37, King Papers.

¹¹⁹ Poore, “Stacked Family Conference Ignored Issues.” For other minority reports that discuss the dominance of socially conservative groups, see New Mexico Conference on Families, Minority Report on Child Care/Day Care, May 24, 1980; New Mexico Conference on Families, Government and Families Workshop Minority Report, May 24, 1980; A Minority Report on Sex Education from the New Mexico Conference on Families, May 24, 1980; A Minority Report on Abortion from the New Mexico Conference on Families, May 24, 1980, all in folder 19, box 37, King Papers.

¹²⁰ Poore, “Stacked Family Conference Ignored Issues”; McCoffrey, “Family Conference Close-Minded.”

¹²¹ On certain issues, conservatives did recommend less government regulation. They argued for the elimination of the Department of Education, the elimination of state or federal funding for child care, the retraction of any legislation that infringed on parents’ right to discipline children, and the elimination of a handful of taxes, for example. For elimination of the Department of Education, see Topic Family Values, State Issues Priority Form, New Mexico, White House Conference on Families, May 24, 1980, folder 20, King Papers. For elimination of funding for child care, see Topic Child Care/Day Care, State Issues Priority Form, New Mexico, White House Conference on Families, May 24, 1980, folder 20, King

the teaching of pro-life ideology within public schools, a federal agency overseeing the protection of the (heterosexual, nuclear) family, state and federal programs that gave preference to heads of household in hiring, federal laws that defined the family as heterosexual, as well as laws that prohibited the media from promoting anything other than heterosexuality and that required textbooks to teach creationism.¹²² Ultimately conservatives at New Mexico's conference envisioned a nuclear family unit that perfectly protected and represented the rights and morals of its members but that could not survive without state support. Rather than protecting the rights of individuals or funding programs for people in need, the state was duty bound to protect this familial model by any means necessary.

In many states, the Conference on Families led to similar outcomes. One such state was Arizona. There, too, social conservatives dominated the state meetings and ranked "moral issues" high in the state's list of priorities. They voted abortion their number two issue of concern, after child abuse and neglect. Sociologist and pollster Michael O'Neil did a random telephone survey of Arizona residents and compared the priorities expressed in the random survey to those of the state's conference. Participants in the phone survey were most worried about child abuse, inflation, health care for elderly, working conditions, health care for the poor, disease prevention, and the effect of pollution on health. O'Neil found that even in a generally

Papers. For parents' right to discipline, see Topic Family Crises/Violence, State Issues Priority Form, New Mexico, White House Conference on Families, May 24, 1980, folder 20, King Papers. For the elimination of certain taxes, see Topic Tax Policies/Economics, State Issues Priority Form, New Mexico, White House Conference on Families, May 24, 1980, folder 20, King Papers.

¹²² For constitutional amendment and mandated pro-life school policy, see Topic Abortion, State Issues Priority Form, New Mexico, White House Conference on Families, May 24, 1980, folder 20, King Papers. For heads of household policy and the federal agency, see Topic Government and Families, State Issues Priority Form, New Mexico, White House Conference on Families, May 24, 1980, folder 20, King Papers. For defining the family as heterosexual and laws against the media, see Topic Family Values, State Issues Priority Form. For creationism, see Topic Education/Parenting, State Issues Priority Form, New Mexico, White House Conference on Families, May 24, 1980, folder 20, King Papers.

conservative state, those in the random survey ranked abortion as their twenty-third most important issue. Survey participants were much less concerned with moral issues and expressed less discomfort with “big government.” According to O’Neil, Conference on Families participants in Arizona were more often white, married, parents, female, and middle class than the general population of the state.¹²³

Though no one did a similar demographic analysis in New Mexico, it seems likely that a similar group held sway in that state’s Conference on Families. Many argued that lack of funding and vague rules allowed a privileged minority to dominate New Mexico’s conference. For example, one journalist wrote, “The smaller and less organized voices in Spanish, and in the Pueblo tongues and those who speak for the dispersed and disadvantaged or for the unique ethnic traditions within New Mexico were time after time outmanned, outnumbered, outmaneuvered.”¹²⁴ Others complained that conservative delegates designed a profoundly conservative document to represent a racially and politically diverse state. Another journalist protested, “And suddenly our state, with or without your or my support, is going to that national conference sounding like we have never moved beyond the level of the Scopes monkey trial in Tennessee.”¹²⁵ Ultimately the report sent to Washington from New Mexico was a deeply conflicted document. The cover letter was written in Spanish, English, Tewa (a Pueblo language), and Navajo, but the document as a whole held only the views of an increasingly powerful and organized conservative, white minority.

¹²³ Michael J. O’Neil, “Public Hearings and Public Preferences: The Case of the White House Conference on Families,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (Winter 1982): 488-502.

¹²⁴ Poore, “Stacked Family Conference Ignored Issues.”

¹²⁵ McCoffrey, “Family Conference Close-Minded.”

The 1980 Conference on Families in New Mexico represents an important moment of white social conservative mobilization around an abortion-focused traditional family. In the conference, conservative activists made clear that legalized abortion was the biggest threat to the family and opposition to abortion the most essential family value. The conference also shows how successful anti-abortion activists were at mobilizing other white conservatives around this vision. Social conservatives were building a base. The New Mexico conference illuminates how, in the last two decades of the century, this conservative “politics of family” drowned out a host of other familial concerns from a variety of people. A group supposedly in solidarity with civil and human rights movements refused to prioritize child abuse, pollution, access to healthcare, restitution of land grant lands, and access to public education as serious problems. Conference conservatives even sidelined many problems originating at least in part with the federal government, like the effects of Cold War uranium mining. Social conservatives could not conceive of familial concerns outside of abortion and those supposedly threatening the heterosexual nuclear family. Thus, in this instance, and in many other cultural and political arenas in the late twentieth century, the roar of outrage from “family values” conservatives silenced the economic, social, health, historical concerns of a host of others, especially people of color and the poor.

Focus on the Family

In the late 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, pro-life activists worked successfully in concert with other conservatives to influence policy on state and national levels, helping redefine the politics of the “traditional family.” Alongside this political activism, purveyors in the Christian cultural products industry worked to market and sell that idealized family to increasing numbers of

people, which in turn helped make the conservative vision central to many individuals' sense of their own families. Beginning in the 1970s but exploding in the 1980s and 1990s, the Christian cultural products industry included music, films, books, toys, jewelry, bumper stickers, magazines, and tchotchkes sold through mail order, Christian and secular bookstores, and eventually the internet and major retail outlets like Walmart. This industry was paired with Christian radio and television programs. One of the most important of these marketers was Focus on Family, a non-profit media empire run by evangelical psychologist James Dobson.

Born to an itinerant evangelical minister and a housewife in Louisiana, James Dobson moved west to attend a small Christian college in California, eventually getting his PhD in psychology at the University of Southern California in 1967.¹²⁶ While completing his PhD, he worked at the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles where, he believed, he witnessed personally the excesses of the sexual revolution. Dobson wrote that he "saw firsthand how divorce, abuse, and other forms of familial strife were tearing [children's] lives apart." His time there, Dobson stated, "only served to confirm my belief that the institution of the family was disintegrating."¹²⁷ In order to counter these social trends, Dobson wrote *Dare to Discipline*, his 1970 book on child-rearing techniques. In it, Dobson criticized "permissive" parenting and advocated corporal punishment to instill in children respect for a firm but loving familial hierarchy.¹²⁸ The book became an immediate bestseller. Dobson wrote later that he "had discovered that husbands and wives around the country were hungry for ways to restore broken marriages, raise well-adjusted

¹²⁶ Dan Gilgoff, *The Jesus Machine: How James Dobson, Focus on the Family, and Evangelical America are Winning the Culture War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), pp. 18-21.

¹²⁷ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 21.

¹²⁸ See James Dobson, *Dare to Discipline* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1977); Ann Hulbert, *Raising America: Experts, Parents, and a Century of Advice About Children* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), p. 335.

children, and return to Judeo-Christian ethics.”¹²⁹ Because of the overwhelming response to his book and to subsequent speaking engagements, Dobson created Focus on the Family in 1977.

In Focus on the Family’s early years, Dobson organized parenting and family life presentations and seminars around southern California, focusing on issues from adolescent psychology to the causes of depression in women.¹³⁰ Indeed, because of the way he combined evangelical religion and therapy, at least one scholar credits Dobson with singlehandedly changing Christian media’s discourse, from “the traditional conversion narrative to therapeutic Christian ‘family management.’”¹³¹ Dobson gained a growing audience for evangelical family management throughout the 1980s and 1990s. In 1981, he began a thirty-minute radio talk show that, by 1986, was broadcast on eight hundred radio stations nationwide.¹³² Also in 1986, Dobson and Focus on the Family expanded their efforts in publishing, which had concentrated on a monthly magazine and booklets but now included a variety of books.¹³³ By the mid-1990s, Focus on the Family had an incredible audience, drawing crowds of 15,000 to Dobson’s speaking events, speaking to 2.4 million people monthly through newsletters, and reaching an estimated 8.9 million Americans (and 220 million worldwide) through Dobson’s radio program.¹³⁴ The organization also responded to 250,000 letters a month.¹³⁵

¹²⁹ “Created to Meet a Need,” *Focus on the Family* newsletter, no date (ca. 1987), Focus on the Family folder, Wilcox Collection of Contemporary Political Movements, Kansas Collection, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS (hereafter Wilcox Collection).

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Eithne Johnson, “Dr. Dobson’s Advice to Christian Women: Strategic Motherhood,” *Social Text* 57 (Winter 1998): 55-82 (quote on p. 55).

¹³² Gilgoff, *Jesus Machine*, p. 24.

¹³³ “Created to Meet a Need.”

¹³⁴ Rita Healey, “Is Dobson’s Political Clout Fading?” *Time*, January 24, 2008.

Dobson's audience, however, was of a very particular demographic. Women were the primary consumers of Focus on the Family's material. Dobson explained his female adherents this way: "No modern society can exceed the stability of its individual family units and women seem more aware of that fact than their husbands."¹³⁶ Additionally, one 1993 survey showed that of Focus on the Family's supporters, 80 percent had some college education, 86 percent were Protestant, 92 percent were married, 75 percent had listened to the show for five or more years, and 70 percent were in the 30-49 age group.¹³⁷ By the mid-1980s, Dobson had created a media empire that delivered Christian self-help material to religious people, conservatives, women, and casual radio listeners around the country. By the 1990s, Jerry Falwell, head of the Moral Majority, would call Dobson "the most influential minister in America today, second possibly only to Billy Graham."¹³⁸

Though Dobson had the ears of people across the country, his organization was firmly situated in the U.S. West. Focus on the Family was born in southern California and housed there until the early 1990s. In 1992, the non-profit moved to Colorado Springs, Colorado. Since the 1940s, Colorado Springs had been a military town, home to the Air Force Academy, an Army

¹³⁵ For numbers of letters received, see Julia Lesage, "Christian Media," in *Media, Culture and the Religious Right*, ed. Linda Kintz and Julia Lesage (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), p. 31.

¹³⁶ Dr. James Dobson, "The Future of the Family," *Focus on the Family* newsletter (Special Introductory Issue), 1986, Focus on the Family folder, Wilcox Collection. See also Johnson, "Dr. Dobson's Advice to Christian Women."

¹³⁷ "Focus: Book on Discipline Came First," *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, March 8, 1993.

¹³⁸ "Dobson's Ministry in Focus," *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, March 30, 1997. Dobson was not literally a minister but most evangelicals considered Focus on the Family a ministry.

post, an Air Force base, and a host of other defense-related industries.¹³⁹ Worried about how reductions in the military would affect the local economy, Colorado Springs leaders sought out new industries beginning in the 1970s. A local economist argued that Colorado Springs successfully drew in a number of businesses because it “had the right combination of attributes”: low labor costs, an absence of labor unions, low taxes, and relatively cheap real estate. These attributes meant that the city experienced severe boom and bust cycles in the 1980s, but also drew a host of high tech companies and religious institutions to the city.¹⁴⁰ In these years, Colorado Springs became home to the global missionary group Compassion International, the International Bible Society, the Association of Christian Schools International, evangelical leader Ted Haggard’s 11,000-member New Life Church, and Focus on the Family. Some locals came to call Colorado Springs, “Vatican West.”¹⁴¹

Focus on the Family, James Dobson argued, was concerned strictly with families, not politics. Despite his apolitical avowals, Dobson regularly included fetuses (and pro-life politics) in his vision of the supposedly apolitical traditional family. In Dobson’s newsletters, from very early on, he provided a list of the group’s primary commitments called “This We Believe.” The column read like a mission statement, describing what exactly the “traditional family” meant to Focus on the Family and hopefully to its readers. “This We Believe” detailed the family’s

¹³⁹ For more on Colorado Springs, see Anne Markusen, Peter Hall, Scott Campbell, and Sabina Deitrick, *The Rise of the Gunbelt: The Military Remapping of Industrial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 174-210; Elizabeth Wallace, *Colorado Springs* (Chicago, IL: Arcadia Publishing, 2003); Carl Abbott, Stephen J. Leonard, and Thomas J. Noel, *Colorado: A History of the Centennial State* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2005); Carl Abbott, *How Cities Won the West: Four Centuries of Urban Change in Western North America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), pp. 116-23, 261-62, 286-87.

¹⁴⁰ Sandy Shore, “Colorado Springs Fishes for Business,” *The New Mexican*, July 26, 1992. For Dobson’s explanation for the Colorado Springs move, see James Dobson to Friend, May 1991, Focus on Family folder, Wilcox Collection.

¹⁴¹ Gilgoff, *Jesus Machine*, p. 44.

essential four parts. It was Christian, with its primary purpose to glorify God. It was permanent. Its benefit was children, who were to be molded for a life of service to God. And finally, it was committed to the unborn and all other human life.¹⁴² Another Focus on the Family newsletter, entitled *Helping You Build a Healthier Home*, summed up the group's founding four philosophies this way: Christian mission, the marital bond, the value of children, and the sanctity of life.¹⁴³ In the Focus on the Family headquarters in Colorado Springs, Dobson even populated his own familial genealogy with fetuses. In a room with family portraits going back four generations, one section focused a maternal great grandmother who prayed for the entire family "including generations unborn."¹⁴⁴ From the very beginning of the organization, anti-abortion politics was no mere extension of Dobson's concern over the "traditional family." A pro-life agenda was one of the core values of that idealized family structure.

In his 1986 co-authored book on abortion, *The Decision of Life*, Dobson insisted that the Bible provided evidence of God's will making the fetus a part of the family. Using quotes from the books of Genesis, Jeremiah, Luke, Matthew, and Psalms, Dobson argued that fetuses were known by God and formed by God. Dobson claimed that he was exhilarated by the idea that "The Great Creator of the universe lovingly supervised my development during those pre-conscious days in utero, as He did for every human being on earth." God made individuals in the womb to be a part of the family, and abortion severed that life and that familial connection. He concluded, "If I am the last voice of protest on the face of this earth and am hated and hounded

¹⁴² "This We Believe," *Focus on the Family* newsletter (Special Introductory Issue), 1986, Focus on the Family folder, Wilcox Collection.

¹⁴³ "Principles at Work in Your Family," *Helping You Build a Healthier Home* newsletter, no date (ca. 1990s), Focus on the Family folder, Wilcox Collection.

¹⁴⁴ Gilgoff, *Jesus Machine*, p. 61.

by the bloody industry that profits from the destruction of human life, I will continue to speak on this evil.”¹⁴⁵ From the founding of the organization, Focus on the Family used its platform to speak out against legalized abortion.

Most of Dobson’s pro-life activism in the 1980s and 1990s came through the distribution of explicitly and implicitly pro-life pamphlets, letters, videos, and audio cassettes.¹⁴⁶ In a Focus on the Family resource list from the 1980s, half of the material related to “Christian activism” was about abortion. The other half focused on anti-pornography, liberal censorship of conservative books, and general conservative political mobilization.¹⁴⁷ In a 1986 list of cassettes advertised for sale, the only one offered under the “Issues From the News” section (apparently the politics section) was by Dr. John Willke, who discussed the challenge of being pro-life.¹⁴⁸ Dobson’s stance did not go unnoticed by his audience. When Dobson would go out in public, one of his right-hand men recounted, “people would hug him and tell him how much they’d appreciate[d] his stand on abortion.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ James Dobson and Gary Bergel, *The Decision of Life* (Arcadia, CA: Focus on the Family, 1986).

¹⁴⁶ For letters from Dobson with pro-life content, see, for example, James Dobson to Friend, August 1991, Focus on the Family folder, Wilcox Collection; James Dobson to Friends, March 1995, Focus on the Family folder, Wilcox Collection; James Dobson to Friends, March 1995, Focus on the Family folder, Wilcox Collection; James Dobson to Friend, April 1995, Focus on the Family folder, Wilcox Collection.

¹⁴⁷ Focus on the Family Resource List, October 1986, Focus on the Family folder, Wilcox Collection.

¹⁴⁸ Focus on the Family Cassettes: Practical Ways for Successful Family Living, 1986, Focus on the Family folder, Wilcox Collection. For more Focus on the Family advertisements of pro-life material, see “Strengthen Your Home Life with These Family-Building Resources,” no date, Focus on the Family folder, Wilcox Collection.

¹⁴⁹ Gilgoff, *Jesus Machine*, p. 36.

Dobson's anti-abortion stance fit well in his larger conception of family. Like pro-life activists, Dobson wove together elements of psychology, biology, conservative Christianity, and human and civil rights rhetoric and adapted them to his purpose. As one scholar argues, Dobson made the nuclear family "the boundary between secular society and Christian community."¹⁵⁰ Dobson often invoked nostalgia for an earlier age to define this family at risk. Religious studies scholar Ann Burlein's analysis of the making of the nostalgic family in a 1994 *Focus on the Family* publication demonstrates this. In the newsletter, Dobson contrasts pictures from his 1954 senior year in high school with the moral decline of 1994. He portrays 1954 as an innocent time, with happy, intact families and Christian public space, where few girls got pregnant outside of marriage and racism served as only a slight societal "imperfection." Burlein contends that Dobson worked "to render differences not worth talking about," erasing racism "in the whitewash of moral goodness."¹⁵¹ This whitewashed, nostalgic family—with the deracinated and degendered fetus as its newest member—was the traditional family Dobson sought to protect. It was because this family was threatened that Dobson told his listeners they were in a "civil war" against "secular-humanists."¹⁵² Here, Dobson shows how the family values movement directly inherited the whitewashed racial politics of the pro-life movement.

Dobson's traditional family, like the family of Unwed Parents Anonymous, was also marginally comfortable with single motherhood. Though *Focus on the Family* publications regularly criticized the rising rates of single parenthood, the organization preferred single

¹⁵⁰ Johnson, "Dr. Dobson's Advice to Christian Women," p. 57.

¹⁵¹ Ann Burlein, "Focusing on the Family: Family Pictures and the Politics of the Religious Right," in *The Familial Gaze*, ed. Marianne Hirsch (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999), pp. 311-24 (quotes on pp. 319, 320).

¹⁵² Johnson, "Dr. Dobson's Advice to Christian Women," p. 74.

mothers to aborted fetuses. From the 1980s into the early twenty-first century, Dobson gave material and ideological aid to crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs), institutions in the business of convincing young women to become single mothers. In the 1980s and 1990s, Dobson helped CPCs around the country solicit donations and also alerted them to the possibility they could obtain government funding.¹⁵³ In the early 2000s, Focus on the Family began a fundraising program to help buy ultrasounds for CPCs, in order to move them toward a more medical model. By 2010, the group had raised upwards of 900,000 dollars for this program. Focus on the Family explained, “These mothers will likely never forget the day they first saw the image of their baby, kicking her feet and waving her arms on the ultrasound monitor.” For many CPCs, this was an essential transformation, as many believed the expensive technology was their most important tool.¹⁵⁴ In these years, Dobson and Focus on the Family put much effort and many resources towards single motherhood, even as he denounced its presence in American society. Ultimately, stopping abortions superseded all Focus on the Family’s other political concerns.

Additionally, especially as Dobson became more comfortable intervening in electoral politics in the 1990s, he used his stage at Focus on the Family to speak directly to the Republican Party on the issue of abortion. In 1995, he sent a letter to 2.1 million Americans plus 8000 local and national politicians, criticizing the Republican Party’s stance on the issue.¹⁵⁵ He said he was worried that after opposing abortion for two decades, the party was going to “build a ‘big tent’

¹⁵³ James Dobson to CPC Friend, February 11, 1987, folder 14, carton 95, National Organization for Women Records, 1959-2002, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

¹⁵⁴ Sofia Resnick, “Crisis Pregnancy Centers Push Anti-Abortion Agenda Nationally,” *Colorado Independent*, February 23, 2012.

¹⁵⁵ “GOP Candidates Come to Listen,” *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, July 9, 1995; Joseph D. McInerney, letter to the editor, *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, March 14, 1995.

under which the great moral issues of the day can be skirted.”¹⁵⁶ Dobson believed that party leaders had been “intransigent and unsympathetic” to pro-life activists and he pledged “never again [to] vote for a politician who would kill one innocent baby.”¹⁵⁷ Many criticized this missive as too explicitly political for a non-profit group.¹⁵⁸

Dobson’s defenders, however, argued the letter was a part of a necessary moral crusade, whether it was explicitly political or not. One Coloradoan wrote his local newspaper that Dobson’s abortion letter “was not about politics. It’s about a war against God and the beliefs this nation was founded on.”¹⁵⁹ Another wrote, “Abortion is without question the most important social issue of our time.... Dr. Dobson reminds me of Abraham Lincoln, who wasn’t always popular with everyone either when he spoke out against social injustice.”¹⁶⁰ Evangelical leader Ted Haggard said of Dobson, “Martin Luther King helped African Americans unlike anyone in a hundred years, and Jim Dobson is the leader for civil rights of people who can’t speak for themselves: unborn babies.”¹⁶¹ Dobson’s supporters argued that his pro-life politics constituted a moral human rights campaign, one with a deep history and one that was separate from the spin and compromise of partisan politics.

¹⁵⁶ Dobson to Friends, April 1995.

¹⁵⁷ “GOP Candidates Come to Listen.”

¹⁵⁸ “Abortion Foray Shows Ministry is Political,” letters to the editor, *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, March 14, 1995.

¹⁵⁹ Kevin Coleman, letter to the editor, *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, March 18, 1995.

¹⁶⁰ Jane Drew, “Uproar Unwarranted Over Abortion Missive,” letter to the editor, *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, March 18, 1995.

¹⁶¹ Gilgoff, *Jesus Machine*, p. 3.

By the late twentieth century, James Dobson and Focus on the Family helped integrate the ideology of the “traditional family” into the lives of many, many Americans. Dobson argued that this fetus-focused family was essential to personal success, community stability, and societal morality. Dobson directed his listeners to vote on pro-life issues and for pro-life candidates, and he pushed the Republican Party to be rigidly and radically pro-life. In these years, Dobson made the fetus-focused family both a political rallying cry and a part of an essential personal identity for many conservative Americans.

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By the end of the century, American politics had been immeasurably affected by family values politics and the pro-life movement. Small conservative support groups, like Unwed Parents Anonymous, touched a variety of people in their time of need. UPA helped transform a personal crisis into a possibility for personal growth, and the nuclear family with a breadwinner at its heart to the “traditional” family with the fetus at its heart. Experienced activists and nascent social conservatives took these “values” into local and national political forums, reframing the political imperatives of “the family” and the Republican Party. The New Mexico Conference on Families demonstrates that even in a state with a variety of pressing familial concerns, social conservatives, with plenty of social privilege but a minority in the state, dominated political forums and shouted down the concerns of feminists, people of color, and poor people. In the 1980s and 1990s, empowered by their vision of moral decline and a nation at risk, family values conservatism reached increasingly large national audiences through proliferating conservative media outlets. None were more important than Focus on the Family. Thus, in the last decades of the century, this fetus-focused traditional family reached a variety of Americans on personal, political, and cultural levels.

Through the work of pro-life and socially conservative activists, the fetus had become not only a member of the “traditional family,” but its justification. The “unborn” proved that the nuclear, heterosexual, hierarchical family was ordained by God. The “unborn” redeemed the unfortunately pregnant woman, changing her from a selfish individualist into a chaste mother. Single mothers, if they had avoided abortion, could now be exemplars of the traditional family and family values. The “unborn” established that that family model was biologically driven, ordained by nature. The “unborn” and the “Abortion Holocaust” demonstrated that the federal government was secular and potentially genocidal, run by feminists, gay people, the radical Left, and atheists. These ideological building blocks became the backbone of the New Right, as activists used them in a wide range of political projects, from movements against funding for the arts to campaigns against gay rights. Together these ideals made modern American social conservatism.

Conclusion

In 2010, Arizona Representative Trent Franks set off a firestorm—and provoked more than a few guffaws—when he suggested that African Americans were better off under slavery than in twenty-first-century America. Why were things worse for Black people in 2010? “Half of all black children are aborted,” Franks claimed. “Far more of the African-American community is being devastated by the policies of today than were being devastated by policies of slavery.”¹ In response, mainstream pundits and liberal commentators alike labeled Frank an ultra-conservative kook, akin to a “nutty relative who lives in the attic and spews wacky conspiracy theories.”² One New Jersey editorial board argued that Franks was one of the many newly elected conservatives who were “white,” “dumb,” and “not-ready-for-prime-time.”³ Another reporter—this one from Arizona—suggested that Franks embodied a quintessential Arizona zealotry, and perhaps represented the “Arizonafication” of national politics as well.⁴

Such comments implicitly relegate Franks and others like him to the political margin. This dissertation, on the other hand, suggests that we should be careful not to do so. “Making Babies”—and Trent Franks himself—illuminates a more complicated and deeply rooted story of conservative thought and conservative action than Franks’s detractors envision. He is more than a kook and more than a product of a single state. He, like this dissertation, has a much more

¹ Adam Serwer, “Republican Presiding Over VRA Hearing Once Claimed Abortion Worse Than Slavery,” MSNBC, July 7, 2013, <http://tv.msnbc.com/2013/07/17/trent-franks-once-claimed-blacks-better-off-under-slavery/> (accessed July 20, 2013).

² E.J. Montini, “Franks Equates Abortion with Slavery,” *Arizona Republic*, March 7, 2010. See also Tim Forkes, “GOP Knuckleheads Continue to Speak,” *Baltimore Post-Examiner*, July 1, 2013.

³ “Top 10 Craziest Tea Party Quotes of All Time,” *New Jersey Today*, October 12, 2010.

⁴ E.J. Montini, “Franks Forces a Little Bit of Arizona on Folks in D.C.,” *Arizona Republic*, June 1, 2012. Montini does not use the term Arizonafication but conveys the idea in his editorial.

regional story with a single, ultimately national, movement at its center. And he, like this dissertation, speaks to an ideological turn in American conservatism.

Trent Franks was born in the shadow of the Cold War West, not in Arizona but in a small mining town in southwestern Colorado. The now abandoned town called Uravan—a contraction and combination of the elements uranium and vanadium—was a typical “yellowcake” town, complete with company dominance and high levels of cancer.⁵ Eventually Franks found work in Texas in another classically western endeavor: oil drilling. Some time later, he took a course at Utah’s National Center for Constitutional Studies—formerly the Freeman Institute—and named this one of his most important educational experiences. The Freeman Institute was a religiously inspired right wing, free market group with links to the ultraconservative John Birch Society; the Institute had quickly joined the anti-abortion effort in the early 1970s. Eventually, in the early 1980s, Franks moved to Arizona where he made his name as a single-term state legislator and later a U.S. House Representative. He was a product of older western extractive economies, the radical remaking of those economies during the Cold War, and the rise of anti-communist, religious, socially conservative politics in the region. Thus, in crucial ways, Franks was not born simply of Arizona radicalism; rather he emerged out of a broader regional story.

Somewhere along his route through the West, when Franks was about 20 years old, he had a political epiphany. It came in the form of a pro-life film. “It showed a child in the throes of dying from a saline abortion,” he recalled. “And it was so poignant and so powerful to me

⁵ For mortality rates in Uravan, see John D. Boice, Jr., Micheal T. Mumma, and William J. Blot, “Cancer and Noncancer Mortality in Populations Living Near Uranium and Vanadium Mining and Milling Operations in Montrose County, Colorado, 1950-2000,” *Radiation Research* 167, no. 6 (June 2007): 711-26. For history of Uravan, see Micheal A. Amundson, *Yellowcake Towns: Uranium Mining Communities in the American West* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2002).

that it made an indelible imprint on my heart forever.”⁶ In Arizona, he joined the local Right to Life group, picketed clinics, and helped found a crisis pregnancy center in Tempe that he supports to this day.⁷ Elected to the Arizona legislature in 1984, he was known for “wearing a tie tack in the shape of the feet of a fetus, as a constant reminder of his anti-abortion-rights views.”⁸ Though he lost his seat in the 1986 election, he continued to work on pro-life and socially conservative issues: he founded the Arizona Family Research Institute (a local version of Focus on the Family); he continued to work with the Arizona Christian Action Coalition; he headed Republican Governor Evan Mecham’s Office for Children; and, finally, he led an effort to put a constitutional amendment banning most abortions on Arizona’s 1992 ballot.⁹ (The amendment lost.) The pro-life movement and its logic formed Franks’s political worldview and facilitated his move into other socially conservative forums.

In the course of his pro-life activism, Franks was surely schooled in what I have called the political imaginary of life. In comments on issues from fetal heartbeats to the federal budget, he has melded various rhetorics on fetal personhood, American slavery, the Jewish Holocaust, and civil rights into arguments against legal abortion and, by extension, a large federal government. For Franks, as for so many others, those arguments were paired over the years with powerful visual ephemera—graphic pictures of aborted fetuses, alongside Holocaust and

⁶ Katrina Trinko, “Trent Franks, Pro-Life Warrior,” *National Review Online*, June 19, 2013, <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/351426/trent-franks-pro-life-warrior-katrina-trinko/page/0/2?splash=> (accessed July 22, 2013).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Sean Sullivan, “Who is Trent Franks?” *Washington Post*, June 2, 2013.

⁹ “Republicans Hold Fast On Senate Control,” *Mohave Daily Miner*, November 7, 1984; Ken Hedler, “Franks Seeks Widening of School Tax Credits,” *Kingman Daily Miner*, December 18, 2002; “Abortion Ruling Bodes Ill for Arizona,” *Prescott Courier*, June 29, 1992.

lynching victims; preserved fetuses in jars; symbolic caskets, memorials, and cemeteries; pro-life films; fetus dolls; and fetus pins, like the one he wore in the state house. Political organizing made Franks an activist: he learned that the social conservative movement had the moral high ground, and he learned to see himself as the ancestor of abolitionists, freedom fighters, and anti-racists.

Over the course of his career, Franks translated those political philosophies, like the pro-life movement did, into political projects focused on women, children, and families. He worked with crisis pregnancy centers—places that, as this dissertation shows, first focused on “saving babies” and later transitioned into places to save not only fetuses but also women from abortion, feminism, and liberalism. In 1987, Franks worked in Arizona’s Office for Children, where he used his public position to assail Planned Parenthood staff as murderers.¹⁰ In this, he joined a broader pro-life movement working to politicize children’s spaces and make children the faces of abortion. Finally Franks joined a number of “pro-family” groups, which, in the last decades of the century, made the fetus one of most important members of the family, redefined the politics of that unit, and worked to impose those politics on local, state, and federal levels.

In these political acts, Franks became one of many Americans—and one of many white Americans, in particular—politicized by the anti-abortion movement. Between the 1970s and the 2000s, the pro-life movement built a constituency of conservatives who, at least in part, saw their identities—as individuals and activists—refracted through the prism of abortion. In states with very different racial histories and religious demographics, pro-life activists worked to weld anti-abortion identities with white, religious, American identities. They reformulated individuals’ political imperatives, as well as those individuals’ relationships to the state, their narratives about rights and religion, their perceptions of discrimination and genocide, and their

¹⁰ Michael Lacey, “Jesus Wouldn’t Do That,” *Phoenix New Times*, August 12, 2004.

views, in general, of life. Thus in the 1980s and 1990s conservative Utahns came to look much more like conservative Arizonans, New Mexicans, and Coloradoans. Conservative white Mormons, evangelical and mainstream Protestants, and Catholics began to see themselves as united, not divided, by politics and religion. While quietly pushing back against liberal co-religionists, these conservative religious people laid claim to the authority of religion and the politics of the faithful in America. With the political imaginary of life, this socially conservative base put whiteness and universality at the heart of the American nation and offered an explanation for the nation's seeming ethical demise in the late twentieth century. This narrative of genocide worked to shore up their own privilege in a time when many other activists were exposing it and contesting it.

This conservative coalition helped swing the Four Corners region in national elections to the Republican Party in the 1980s and 1990s. They effectively wooed large numbers of white Americans, many of whom had been a part of the Democratic Party's base, to the cause of life—with its attendant declining moral standards and menacing big government. These activists compelled many to protest at clinics, to advocate for abstinence education, to shout down neighbors at school board meetings and state conferences, and to join the Republican Party. These activists gave white Americans an alternative national story of oppression and heroism. Rather than focus on Black civil rights activists and white liberals, with the backing of the federal government, saving the country from segregation and endemic structural and cultural racism, pro-life activists offered conservative white Americans a story where they fought modern-day slaveholders and Nazis, rescued the ultimate innocents, and saved the nation from its terrible sins. In this narrative, they reframed American history towards the endangerment of fetuses, women, children, and families—an endangerment that white conservative Americans

believed they could share with African Americans, Latinos, and American Indians. They universalized and redirected conversations about prejudice, racism, and sexism towards abortion and its primary purveyors—abortion providers, feminists, and the federal government.

While these strategies bore fruit at the end of the twentieth century and well into the twenty-first century, they offer more problems for conservatives in the Four Corners states moving forward. Committed social conservatives hold public offices in all four states, but recent elections show the region as made up of potential or current swing states, with the exception of Utah, which has a significant white majority and a strong Mormon presence. With stable populations of American Indians and African Americans, and growing populations of ethnic Mexicans, the exclusionary racial politics of social conservatism might serve ultimately to reorient the partisan politics of the region once again.

Despite this political forecast, Trent Franks and his politics have gained momentum and visibility in the twenty-first century. He was elected to the U.S. House in 2003 from a suburban district outside of Phoenix. In 2011, he proposed to the House (for third time in four years) the Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass Prenatal Non-Discrimination Act, which prohibited abortions based on the gender or race of the fetus. The act imposed penalties on abortion providers who performed such an abortion and allowed men, or the “grandparents” if the woman was a minor, to file lawsuits against that provider. The act claimed that such abortions were discriminatory and violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Race- and gender-based abortions, the text of the bill argued, effectively diminish “the representation of women in the American population, and therefore, the American electorate” and they also diminish the number of people of color in society.¹¹ While the bill failed to pass at the federal level, the Arizona legislature

¹¹ H.R. 3541.IH, Bill Text, 112th Congress (2011-2012), Library of Congress <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c112:1:/temp/~c1126A2kRC::> (accessed July 21, 2013).

passed an identical law (with the same name) in 2011. Both in Washington and in Phoenix, social conservatives co-opted the historical power of nineteenth-century women's suffrage and anti-slavery activism to the pro-life cause.

In defense of the Arizona bill, the legislator who proposed it pointed to the high rate of abortions among African American women and the disproportionate abortions of female fetuses performed in China and India. He noted that the doctors who performed such abortions were “the people behind genocides.”¹² Opponents pointed out that supporters of the bill never proved that any abortions in the state of Arizona were based on the race or gender of the fetus. They also showed that the bill would have perverse consequences, for it effectively required any woman of color seeking an abortion to sign an affidavit saying that she was not discriminating against her fetus. While at least on the face of it, anti-abortion legislators considered abortion providers “the people behind the genocides,” it was women of color who had to sign a legal document (and potentially prove) that they were neither duped women, racists, nor genocidal murderers.

Civil rights groups derided the discriminatory premises and potential outcomes of this “non-discrimination” act. The American Civil Liberties Union, the NAACP's Maricopa County branch, and the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum filed suit against Arizona to block the law, arguing that it was premised on stereotypes; discriminated against Black, Asian, and Pacific Islander women; and restricted women's right to self-determination. “The Act intentionally singles out Black and API [Asian/Pacific Islander] women and stigmatizes their abortion decisions,” the lawsuit argued. “The Act is premised on the sponsors' beliefs that Black

¹² Howard Fischer, “Group Files Lawsuit Over Arizona Abortion Limits,” *Arizona Daily Star*, May 29, 2013.

and API women are deliberately using abortion to destroy their own communities.”¹³ The executive director of the National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum contended that the law turned “Asian-American women in Arizona into suspects.”¹⁴

Arizona was the first to pass a law that restricted abortions based on sex or race, though similar laws have been proposed in a number of other states. Oklahoma, Illinois, and Pennsylvania all had laws on the books by 2011 banning sex-selective abortions but not race-selective ones. Since then, at least nine other states have considered such bans.¹⁵ If it ever takes effect, Arizona’s law, now held up in court, will join a long list of other laws restricting abortion in the state and elsewhere that primarily affect marginalized and underprivileged women. In the name of opposition to sexism and racism, and with the language of holocausts and genocides, bills like this transform the fetus into the ultimate victim, while adding to the complicated network of laws that women must navigate in order to access reproductive health care.¹⁶

In the last few years, Trent Franks and other social conservatives have used the language of fetal personhood, slavery, genocide, and civil rights to pass laws restricting abortion. Americans in 2011 watched as state legislatures around the country passed a bevy of bills that restricted women’s access to abortion and reproductive health care more generally. The number

¹³ Alia Beard Rau, “3 Seeking to Defend Ban on Abortions,” *Arizona Republic*, July 3, 2013.

¹⁴ Fischer, “Group Files Lawsuit Over Arizona Abortion Limits.”

¹⁵ Kate Sheppard, “ACLU Takes On Arizona’s Sex- and Race-Selective Abortions,” *Mother Jones*, May 29, 2013.

¹⁶ These laws were paired with a renewed campaign by pro-life groups to reach out to and politicize communities of color. In these years, right-to-life groups put up billboards in urban areas arguing that black children were an “endangered species” and, briefly in Los Angeles, that the most dangerous place for Latina/o children was in the womb. They also began screening to Black audiences a film by a white pro-life activist, *Maafa 21*, that connects slavery, Nazis, birth control, and abortion. See, for example, Shaila Dewan, “To Court Blacks, Foes of Abortion Make Racial Case,” *New York Times*, February 26, 2010.

of measures passed in 2011 was the highest ever in a single year, three times as many as in any previous year. In 2012, the second highest number of state laws passed.¹⁷ These measures ranged in method and scope. They included statutes restricting abortion after twenty weeks gestation (because supporters claim this is when fetuses feel pain); requiring that a woman view an ultrasound before she terminates her pregnancy; limiting health care coverage for abortions; dictating that a woman must be given inaccurate information (that abortion increases the likelihood of breast cancer, for example) before an abortion; mandating that a doctor test for a fetal heartbeat before performing an abortion; and providing funding for “alternatives to abortion,” alternatives often provided in crisis pregnancy centers.¹⁸ Trent Franks undoubtedly has supported such bills as a part of the ultimate human rights campaign, even as he opposed the 2006 reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act and praised the 2013 Supreme Court decision that ruled the act unconstitutional.¹⁹

The pro-life laws that have proliferated in the twenty-first century testify not to a new brand of activists or new strategies but rather to a culmination of late-twentieth-century anti-abortion ideology and politics. These politics worked in very different places to transform white conservative activists into self-proclaimed freedom fighters. Pro-life activists worked to co-opt feminist and anti-racist rhetoric for the purpose of saving women—white women and women of color alike—from themselves. They worked to join conservative Mormons, Catholics, and mainstream and evangelical Protestants into a united religious force to oppose abortion and

¹⁷ “2012 Saw Second-Highest Number of Abortion Restrictions Ever,” Guttmacher Institute Media Center, January 2, 2013, <http://www.guttmacher.org/media/inthenews/2013/01/02/> (accessed July 25, 2013).

¹⁸ Guttmacher Institute, “State Legislation Enacted in 2013 Related to Reproductive Health” <http://www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/updates/2013Newlaws.pdf> (accessed July 25, 2013).

¹⁹ Serwer, “Republican Presiding Over VRA Hearing.”

uphold the country's "Judeo-Christian" values. And they worked to silence the voices of people talking about real racism and sexism in the American past and present, while demanding that the nation's only salvation was to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and return to a time when all Americans valued fetal life and spent their time making babies.

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