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In His Image: A Content Analysis of Evangelical Youth Books for their Representation of Gender Roles and Ideals

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IN HIS IMAGE

2016

TARYN VIS

“In His Image: A Content Analysis of Evangelical Youth Books for their Representation of Gender Roles and Ideals”

IN HIS IMAGE

This content analysis discusses the results of the analysis of twelve major Evangelical books for young adults and their representation of gender roles and gender ideals. The background of the Evangelical church's handling of gender, particularly in relation to media beginning in the 1970s is established and discussed at length in order to situate this analysis amongst previous discussion of Evangelical gender roles. This analysis found that each of the books discussed four main themes of gender roles and relations: biological essentialism, complementarianism, counter-cultural branding of gender, and sexual purity (especially for young women).

IN HIS IMAGE

Introduction

In 2003, I was 10 years old, and my 13 year-old sister was given a copy of the book *Dateable: Are you? Are they?* Which she had received from a well-meaning youth group pastor. The book was marketed as a more contemporary response to the courtship movement that the teenagers at my church decried as unrealistic and tiresome, and my sister was apparently at least slightly curious if she was, in fact, dateable. I don't know if my sister read or took the book to heart, but I snuck it off her bedside table and read the whole thing in one sitting. I don't remember my exact reaction, or even knowing what the purpose of the book was – but I do remember, very clearly, thinking that the boys and girls represented were different than what I had experienced thus far in life.

My introduction to Evangelical youth media was more of a crash-course than most youth group pastors would probably hope for, but that experience will always stick with me for a few reasons. One, because it illustrated the power of the media in the hands of youth – I had absolutely no reason to trust Lookadoo & DiMarco, the books authors, and yet I took it on their word that boys and girls were so fundamentally different they didn't even think the same. Two, because it is the first strong experience I have of thinking that God made boys and girls to be fundamentally different – not just as moms and dads, but within the very core of who they were. Three, and most important in my mind, because it is now what I consider my “aha” moment with legitimating rationales. Despite the fact that I played with mostly boys and had never met a boy anything like what the book described, I was willing to reason away my own experience to fit a message that I assumed must have more authority.

IN HIS IMAGE

This thesis will explore the messages behind the books consumed by Evangelical youth, focusing on messages about gender and gender ideals, and how these messages sit within Evangelical culture, and the larger social structure of gender. As my story should illustrate, these messages do not exist within a vacuum – they carry the power to change minds and shape understanding, especially when passed onto youth in a context which they are led to believe is devoted to truth. I want to explore the area where gender, religion, and media intersect in a stage of life where kids are at their most vulnerable and most searching for answers and confirmation that someone does have the answer.

Literature Review

Evangelical interest in the intersection of gender and religion seems to have surged over the past two decades, perhaps as a response to Christianity's renewed commitment to gender ideals. These ideals have variations over time, but the emergence of "family values" crusaders as a response to 1970s feminism, and the particular emphasis on gender in relation to sexuality by the Evangelical communities have spawned a vast production of media, particularly in and around the role of men in family values (Gallagher, 2003). "In the early 1990s when men, masculinity and fatherhood appeared on the scene as the new focus of evangelical efforts to reinforce and strengthen 'family values'" (Gallagher & Wood, 2005, 136), it reintroduced a long-term trend of contrasting men and women as starkly different in purpose that they required separate literature to address their separate spiritual and social spheres - spheres which relegated women and men to entirely different roles, desires, purposes, and personal values (Coontz, 2005; Coontz, 1992; Gallagher & Smith, 1999).

IN HIS IMAGE

These separate spheres are understood as the result of the biological differences between men and women. Although these books are referring to sex, not gender, it is important to note that Evangelical media generally does not make a clear distinction between the two, often conflating the terms. Gallagher and Wood (2005) studied this theme in an in-depth analysis and research of the language and understanding of the Christian best-seller *Wild at Heart*, a book which focuses on how fundamentally different men and women are in purpose and spirit and how to best fulfill men's needs. In their analysis, the researchers discussed that this book demonstrates that a separate spheres ideology based on biological sex is part of "A quintessentially evangelical text. It places non-negotiable, dimorphous gender identity at the center of the story" (Gallagher and Wood, 2005, 157). The idea of separate spheres present in Evangelical literature of the past few decades borrows heavily from the same separate sphere ideology invoked by religious institutes at the turn of 19th century industrialization, which instructed fathers to return to their homes and relinquish the amorality of capitalism, and to look for moral reformation through their wives and families - a lifestyle now understood as a Headship/Submission ideology (Edgell and Docka, 2007; Gallagher, 2003; Coontz, 1992; Bendroth, 1993).

This polarization of purpose has become a cornerstone of the Evangelical movement – in politics, in religious duties, in sex, and in values (Gallagher & Wood, 2005). Much of the rhetoric used within the literature and media of the past 10-15 years can be traced to James Dobson, a figurehead of the Evangelical "Family Values" movement and the creator of Focus on the Family, a family-centered organization which produces resources for Christians of all ages. These resources center on Dobson's promotion of the "God ordained institution of the family"

IN HIS IMAGE

(Focus on the Family, 2014) through education around biblical values and truths. Dobson rose to notoriety in the mid-1970s, focusing on lax parenting styles and sexual deviancy as the cause for national troubles and the decline of the “traditional” family. He championed a return to “traditional” family values and morals, insinuating, like groups before him that, “that women’s predominance in the church,” as well as the home, workplace, and social culture, “signified its decline” (Kirkley, 1996, 83) - very similarly to the attitude of early 19th century evangelical leaders who worried that religion was being dominated by women and abandoned by men (Bendroth, 1992; Bederman, 1999). The key to Dobson’s argument was a fundamental focus on the biology of men and women as the basis for their social and spiritual differences - differences which were portrayed as non-negotiable results of God’s will and a direct result of our biological composition (Gallagher, 2003, Fout 1993). The biological emphasis of Dobson and others’ work, emphasized by Dobson’s psychology background, showed a significant turn away from the idea of 19th century masculine authority within the church, to absolute masculine authority and power in all realms of life - created and enforced by God (Bendroth, 1992).

Another key idea from this foundation of biological essentialism is the invention of polarized sexuality. While not a cornerstone of Dobson’s original work, his writings have evolved and spelled out that the sex drives of women and men are biologically determined to be entirely different, resulting in a different set of expectations for each regarding sexual purity (Fahs, 2010). In a 2014 blog post titled “More Differences Between Male and Female Sex Drives,” Dobson writes “But the fact remains: Sex for men is a more physical phenomenon; sex for women is a deeply emotional experience.” Dobson was hardly alone in this view of sexuality, and the dichotomized sex drives of men and women would become the premise of

IN HIS IMAGE

other movements, such as the sexual purity movement, as well as becoming an integral component of the “separate but equal” view of gender roles further championed by Evangelicals (Fahs, 2010; Tolman & McClelland, 2011).

Such views of men and women lead to a dichotomized view of roles and relationships within the family, church, and society in general. The most common of these is a brand of gender roles known as “Headship/Submission” (Gallagher, 2003; Gallagher & Smith, 1999). Championed by Dobson, beginning with his 1978 book *Dare to Discipline*, and followed by *Love for a Lifetime*, Headship/Submission roles were explained to be biologically rooted but socially understood. Essentially, “despite his insistence on the gender determinism of human biology, Dobson’s fears reflected his underlying belief that gender roles were not innate but learn through processes of socialization” (Moslener, 2015, 97). Headship submission offered a biologically divided set of roles for men and women, which Dobson traced back to “traditional” marriage roles, in which women’s duties were to be found primarily in the home and with the family, while men were to focus on economic provision, discipline, and civic and religious leadership (Edgell & Docka, 2007; Bendroth, 1992; Gallagher & Smith, 1999).

The definition of “traditional marriage” offered up by Dobson was rooted in biology and practiced in the gender roles he taught as obedience to God’s plan. “Men and women... were created with different but complementary traits that, together fulfilled God’s design for human relationships.” (Moslener, 96). These roles were based in physical biology, and primarily understood and justified through human anatomy. However, according to Dobson, they also offered explanations for the natural behavior of women and men. “[God] put greater toughness

IN HIS IMAGE

in and aggressiveness in the man and more softness and nurturance in the woman – and suited them to one another’s needs” (Dobson, 1987). Marriage and family, according to Dobson and his followers, depended on properly defining and distinguishing the sexes (Gallagher & Smith, 1999). The dominance and power of men was not just granted, it was assumed that men’s very biological makeup made them the rightful leaders of the home, which demonstrates how deeply biology - not just theology - is rooted in the gender ideology of Evangelicalism.

The traits relegated to men and women, along with the use of various theological premises, dictated strict gender roles for Evangelical communities beginning in the 1970s (Bendroth, 1992; Gallagher & Smith, 1999). The patriarchal model of masculine authority and feminine submission quickly became a cornerstone of majority evangelical thought, rebranded under the theological model of “complementarian marriage,” a model which emphasized the proposed unique desires and functions of men and women as a means of justifying the need for separate spheres. “It was only in the 1970s that a new patriarchal religious strain emerged within the evangelical community: the so-called “complementarian” view, which argues that, while men and women are created in God’s image as equals, women have different “roles” or “functions” than men” (Haddad, 2009).

This model understood that men had been granted By God a divine leadership over women, which gave them the ultimate authority of the home, church, and community. While complementarianism was presented as a less aggressive model of male dominance than previous religious hierarchies, it also retained the uniquely biologically focused perspective. “[Evangelicalism] seeks to impose on all men one gender roles and one form of sexuality, while

IN HIS IMAGE

it castigates all other sexual behavior and gender roles” (Fout, 1993, 113). Though Dobson and his followers rarely went as far as to suggest an outright hierarchy, and eventually moved away from using language evoking power images, “his insistence on gender complementarianism reinforced a divine order” by establishing a women’s domesticity in the home and submission to her husband’s will as “an act of obedience” (Moslener, 2015, 96).

These gender roles, while cultivated towards a marriage relationship, were reinforced from an early age and especially promoted among teenagers beginning in the early 1980s (Bendroth, 1992). Teenagers and adolescents were seen as the battleground for passing on church values to next generation; this time of life represented a “last chance” for teens to commit to gender roles and forsake the “worldly views” they would encounter (Fahs, 2010). In order to create a clear separation between expectations within dating and within marriage, a surge in abstinence and sexual purity campaigns for teenagers, especially for girls, manifested in Evangelical theology and media, beginning in the late 1980s. The rhetoric of these campaigns focused once again on biological composition to assign specific duties and responsibilities to young women and men, while also insisting that such an arrangement was both “traditional” and “natural” (Fahs, 2010; Gardener, 2011; Ingersoll, 2003; Moslener, 2015; Young, 1995). Whereas the 1970s had been associated with a practice of “free Love” and sexual promiscuity as a means of empowerment and ownership of sexual identity, the Evangelical church of the 1990s told teens that “True Love Waits,” ingraining into the mind of youth that sexual empowerment comes from waiting for sexual gratification. “...they are recasting an essentially feminist argument of “my body, my choice” and persuading teenagers that they are choice-making individuals who can control their bodies and wait for sex,” (Gardener, 2011, 48).

IN HIS IMAGE

Sara Moslener's book *Virgin Nation* is an exploration of this development in Evangelical political and social culture regarding sexuality - emphasizing the relationship between the Evangelical church's "moral regulation" of sexual purity for women and "spiritual leadership" for men (Moslener, 2015, 5). Purity functions distinctly for men and women based upon their biology - a direct nod to the biological roots of Headship/Submission theology and complementarianism. While some traits are shared, there are key differences: namely, men have been biologically wired to seek out and crave sex, while women seek emotional intimacy (Fahs, 2010). Furthermore, men's craving for sex is described as "natural, insatiable, and indiscriminate," and while sex outside of marriage is still not to be tolerated, it is "usually more difficult for men to tolerate" (Dobson, 1987, 130), and is the job of wives to satisfy. "Men, they posited, were naturally meant to control [sex]" (Fout, 1993,107), because they had been biologically wired to desire it, need it, and demand it.

Women, on the other hand, were to take their submission as wives to bed with them – requiring passivity and care not to invoke the passions and lust of men with clothing, speech, manner, or in any other way. "Given the biological "fact" of masculine hypersexuality, the disciplining of women's bodies is a prominent feature of essentialist manual written for evangelical wives" (Bartkowski, 2001, 41), a feature which would only grow in prominence as the backlash against the sexual revolution and continually hypersexualized culture grew (Gardener, 2011). Women were emphasized, just as they had in the 19th century, as the sex which was best able to temper the moral failing of men - except that men's failings were biological rather than social (Moslener, 2015; Gallagher, 2003). These roles reflected the same ideals of headship submission gender roles, while doubling as a means of maintaining the

IN HIS IMAGE

chastity of women (Moslener, 2015; Ingersoll, 2003). The roles emphasized, particularly for women, that sex outside of marriage was a “moral disgrace” and “deviation from the female’s sexual moral code” (Young, 1995, 290-291). This gender ideology drives an overwhelming message on female modesty, pushing the responsibility of sexual abstinence on girls and women – all rooted in the idea that men are biologically wired to respond with lust, that they are dependent upon their sexual instincts (Fahs, 2010, Hendershot, 2010).

Recognizing the overarching messages of biological essentialism, Headship/Submission, and sexual purity within Evangelical communities, my analysis sought out whether or not similar messages about gender roles were present when the target audience was younger and typically less “marriage-minded” than in other media. Were these themes present in books intended for a pre-marriage audience? Even pre-dating? Had any of these themes fallen away, transformed, or gained in popularity? Essentially, what are the fundamental characteristics of gender roles presented to youth today, and how have we gotten here?

Methodology

This analysis focused on isolating media intended for or widely distributed to Evangelical youth - defined as 12-18 year olds. Evangelical, for the purpose of this paper, refers to the Protestant, transdenominational movement, which is highly concentrated within the United States (Pew Research Center, 2014). This movement is highly dynamic and diverse because of its transdenominational parameters, and is estimated to make up 30-35 percent of the population, giving such media a high level of exposure (Eskridge, 2012). In order to identify a “gender role” or “gender ideal” within the media, gender was defined as the social, cultural,

IN HIS IMAGE

and psychological traits linked to males and females through social context – the social context being an Evangelical community, in this case.

It is difficult to “see” gender as it happens (even with its pervasiveness as a key organizing institution of society,) and the roles, norms, and expectations which arise from gender aren’t always clear or sensible. However, the role of media as a social institution arises to fulfil a practical purpose for gender roles in particular. Media can teach, confirm, and question gender roles within a context, and by studying the media of a particular subgroup, a clearer picture arises of what is being created and consumed about gender roles – “it compels us to understand the complex roles played by social institutions... in shaping our increasingly gendered and racialized media culture” (Brooks & Hébert, 2006, 297). In order to be sure of the authenticity and intentions of the gender roles presented as a means of understanding these complexities, fiction works were excluded from this analysis.

In order to identify a representative group of media, I used the Christian Retailer Bestsellers List (Strang Communications, 2006), Amazon book reviews and ratings, GoodReads reviews and ratings, Evangelical Christian Publishers Association Bestseller Archives (ECPA, various), and also weighted in the number of publications, popularity of authors, and tried to gain a widespread time of publication. The media selected was part of at least one or more “bestseller” lists or archives, and also had at least 50 read/reviews on both Amazon and GoodReads. I originally established a working list of 25 titles, which I randomly picked half of - with the expressed intention of picking a variety of male and female authors, publication dates, and specific topics. While the media does range in how widely it was circulated, all of the

IN HIS IMAGE

authors are established in the evangelical community as authors, speakers, pastors, and curriculum developers. Outliers Joshua Harris and Hayley DiMarco were granted multiple volumes for analysis because of their popularity and the long-lasting repercussions of their messages. DiMarco has over sixty published Evangelical youth books, and was a staple speaker, author, and content creator for various Christian publishing houses and Evangelical programs. Harris, while only the author of a few books, is credited with starting the neo-courtship movement that spawned several offspring books and programs. Elisabeth Elliot's book (*Passion & Purity*) is the oldest in my analysis, at 1984, another outlier because of her works' influence of later Evangelical literature. The rest of the works span a twenty-three year period, 1997 to 2010. In order to maintain that these books were "youth" focused, it was determined that literature previous to the early 1990s would be too dated to be of consequence. The majority of the books span 1997 - 2006 (75%), with two books coming after 2006 (16.7%) and one before 1997 (8.3%).

The coding of the media was performed by a page-by-page reading, in which any reference to gender or gender ideals and roles was noted by page number, quote, or summary (if the quote itself spanned more than a single sentence). By coding the books for messages, rather than for exact phrases or ideas, it became possible to see if the ideas in these books were similar to those in the literature review. With constantly shifting language it was critical that I read for message, rather than exact words, in order to see long-term trends.

After finishing the initial coding of a book, the references were grouped into categories of similar points, with this process repeated over all twelve books, until the four categories

IN HIS IMAGE

presented in this analysis were fully formed. While some outlying mentions to gender roles/ideals were made, they were deemed too infrequent or underrepresented (under a dozen total across all twelve books) to be considered true “ideals” or “roles” regarding gender, and were thus excluded from the final analysis. The final results of the frequency of each theme in each book were tallied and are presented in Table 1 (see appendix B) as a sum total and as a percentage of the overall references.

Findings

The content analysis resulted in four general gender role themes. First, “In His Image,” an argument which suggests that men and women are biologically created and endowed with different purposes by God, resulting in biological gender essentialism. Second, “Complementarianism” or “Spiritual leadership,” a prescribed pattern of gender relations which suggests that men have been given spiritual authority over women, relegating men as the permanent leaders of all aspects of Christian life. Third, “In the world but not of it,” which is an ideology that Christians must turn from so-called “typical,” secular patterns of dating, marriage, and male/female relationships and submit to “traditional” gender roles in order to express the true gender roles created by God, as opposed to “modern” conceptions of gender. The fourth theme is “Purity,” which emphasizes sexual purity in premarital relationships, especially focusing on the virginity, chastity, physical appearance, and modesty of young women, in addition to a general concept of both physical and mental purity in relationships between young men and women.

Within the spread of books, some were more overtly focused on certain themes over others, but all these themes were consistently present within each book. The authors often

IN HIS IMAGE

engaged with multiple themes, building an argument for one theme by using another theme, in order to solidify a distinct ideal of gender for Evangelical women and men. The books averaged approximately 119 references to a gender role theme per book, with a low of 90 references (*Boy Meets Girl: Say Hello to Courtship* by Joshua Harris,) and a high of 164 references (*Dateable: Are you? Are they?* by Justin Lookadoo and Hayley DiMarco). The most common theme was “Purity”, with 29.61% of the references, followed by “Complementarianism” with 25.42%, “In His Image” with 24.86%, and “In the world but not of it” with 20.11%.

“In His Image”

The idea of biological essentialism was the most overtly and highly represented gender role across the literature. In every single book, an author used references to biology, physiology, reproductive organs, “brain differences,” or “the way God made women/men” to suggest that certain traits and behaviors were natural and biologically hardwired. The overtness of this particular category tended to depend upon the audience and subject of the book, with more overt references to biological essentialism tending to be present in books which focused on sexual purity for women, pornography/pornography addiction, and complementarian gender roles in dating relationships.

This category was often used as foundational evidence or support for other arguments, in which biological and physiological differences between the sexes were used to confirm the verity of dichotomized gender roles. The dominating rhetoric of this theme is that men and women were biologically created by God for entirely different purposes, and have thus been endowed with different traits and characteristics, which destines them for different roles within society. For example, in *Dateable*, a book co-written by a single man and woman, the authors

IN HIS IMAGE

establish that girls are destined for homemaking and boys for providing for a home: “Girls are home-builders-you create, you give birth, you nurture and protect your families. So you tend to be on the lookout for the perfect home, the perfect provider, the perfect husband. It's the way you're wired. Guys are hunters-they have to go off to conquer and save the world. It's the way they were designed,” (Lookado & DiMarco, 2003, 21). Some authors, such as Mary Kassain, speak in more general terms, but reach the same conclusion: “God created each sex to be unique. Each has a distinct significance and function. Each perfectly complements the other,” (Kassain, 2010, 121).

Language such as “wired” and “designed” are often used within this category, along with “natural,” “created,” and “made.” In another popular book by Hayley DiMarco, *Sexy Girls: How Hot is too Hot?*, these words are used over 90 times. This type of language was regularly employed when establishing the biological differences between men and women - the authors rarely turn to biological or physiological research, but instead suggest that this gender essentialism was purposefully created by God. Many of the authors also suggest that there is an absolute connection between biological and physiological make up and sex drives (Arterburn & Stoeker, 2002; Arterburn & Ethridge, 2004; DiMarco, 2006a; DiMarco, 2006b; Lookado & DiMarco, 2003; Ludy & Ludy, 2009), male aggression contrasted to female emotional tendencies (DiMarco, 2006ba; Eldredge, 2001; Eldredge & Eldrege, 2003; Lookado & DiMarco, 2003; Ludy & Ludy, 2009; Kassain, 2010), and the ideology of men as “hunters” and “chasers,” while women are “nurturers” and “helpers” (Harris 1997; Harris, 2000; Lookado & DiMarco, 2003; Eldredge, 2001; DiMarco, 2006a; Ludy & Ludy, 2009; Kassain, 2010).

IN HIS IMAGE

Male and female sex drives are often cited in the conversation surrounding biological essentialism. In this scenario, men are equated with having higher sex drives, deriving pleasure from the physical act of sexual intercourse as opposed to emotional intimacy, and being focused on getting and receiving sexual acts in a nearly uncontrollable, or at least instinctual, way - (manifested as "lust," "desire," or "driven by sex,") which is usually fulfilled through visual means. The intended effect of this message is to establish men as sexually dominant, as well as the more naturally sexual of the two genders (Moslener, 2015). By establishing this understanding, the authors can then move forward with arguments regarding the continued dominance of men, as well as discussions revolving around sexual purity.

For women, this dominance and hypersexuality results in the removal of women as sexual and sexually driven beings. The majority of the authors insisted that women were not less sexually stimulated by physical acts and visual gratification, and some suggested outright that women derived little or no pleasure from the physical aspect of sexual intercourse. "Men primarily receive intimacy just before and during intercourse. Women gain intimacy through touching, sharing, hugging, and communication. Is it any wonder that the frequency of sex is less important to women than to men?" (Arterburn & Stoeker, 2002, 40). Women's sexuality is diminished, if not outright removed, in terms of physical pleasure and intimacy, usually replaced by "emotional intimacy" (Lookado & DiMarco, 2003; Ludy & Ludy, 2009), or a desire for "security" (Eldredge & Eldredge, 2002).

This lack of sexual appetite for women and hyperactive sex drive of men results in a variety of gender ideals for both men and women, the majority of which center on the idea of sexuality as a means of expressing love within the confines of marriage, and the need for sexual

IN HIS IMAGE

purity outside of marriage. Men are often simultaneously encouraged to keep their sex drives in check, but also assured that their sexual desires are natural, and that a dutiful wife will help to relieve them (Arterburn & Stoeker, 2002; Harris, 2000; Ludy & Ludy, 2009). Women, consequently, are both asked to keep the sexual desires of men under control, while also guarding their own hearts against “romance porn” (Harris, 1997; Arterburn & Ethridge, 2004; DiMarco, 2006b) - the suggestion that many cultural ideals of romance and love will not be compatible with reality, and thus should be avoided.

This raises a double standard for women, in which they must both recognize and affirm the natural lust of men (while ignoring or denying any sex drive of their own) but also must continue to guard the relationship against sexual impurity. This standard, coupled with further discussions of female sexual purity and spiritual leadership of men over women, creates a distinctively difficult gender ideal for young women. Hayley DiMarco discusses the natural lust of men as something they “can’t help. Well, they can help it, but it’s really, really hard. It’s instinct, this stuff” (2006a, 34).

In referring to a biological foundation for gender, many of the authors also referred to our “natural” instincts as humans - instincts which culminate in distinct gender roles based upon a biological predisposition. Men, in this thinking, want to conquer, dominate, lead, and pursue. Women want to be pursued, be conquered, be taken care of, and create secure and comfortable homes. This position applies directly to the role of sexuality, in which men are characterized by their instinctual and natural desire for sex (which they will cross all boundaries to take part in) and in which women are too-willing to give into sexual advances in the belief

IN HIS IMAGE

that it will secure them a home or relationship (DiMarco, 2006a; DiMarco, 2006b; Harris, 1997; Lookadoo & DiMarco, 2003).

Complementarianism/“Spiritual Leadership”

Drawing from the earlier rhetoric of headship/submission, authors who employ a rhetoric of complementarianism in youth media often refer to the “spiritual leadership” of men over women (Eldredge, 2001; Elliot, 1984; Harris, 1997; Harris, 2000; Lookadoo & DiMarco, 2003; Ludy & Ludy, 2009). “Spiritual leadership” is used to refer to a God-endowed power and authority which men have over women. While the basis of the leadership is in men’s greater spiritual authority, this leadership transcends all areas of life: dating, marriage, family, economic provision, etc. In *Boy Meets Girl: Say Hello to Courtship*, author Joshua Harris addresses his male audience, “Men, it’s our responsibility to take the lead in biblical fellowship” (89), and further encourages them to take up the responsibility of preparing to lead godly homes.

This idea often coincided with interpretation of the Creation story as a means of securing men at the forefront of biblical leadership. While Eve was a “helper” to Adam, he was the one given authority over the land and is viewed as the first creation of God. A few authors even go as far as to discuss Eve’s part in the fall of creation, pointing to Eve as the justification for women’s removal from spiritual, and thus household, leadership. “So [Eve] took a bite.... But tragically, from that day on, tragedy and bitterness dominated her life. We are all Eve’s daughters,” (Kassain, 2010, 10-11). The conversation directed at men and at women follow a similar pattern throughout the media: men are urged to take on the spiritual leadership of the home, and women are reminded that leadership is not their place as women. This

IN HIS IMAGE

understanding often coincides with gender essentialism - how women's inheritance from the fall of creation is their inheritance as women.

Perhaps as a result of a younger audience, the language surrounding complementarianism within the media tends to lean towards a softer, less extreme vision of hierarchical relationships. Rather than the aggressive division of traits which characterize the "separate spheres" of Headship Submission, Spiritual Leadership tends to recognize more of a spectrum of personality, but instead asserts that this spectrum is the result of a loss of "true men and women," (Eldredge & Eldredge, 2003). In this way, women and men who choose not to or who struggle with assimilating to male spiritual leadership are seen more empathetically than the previous rhetoric of sinfulness - it is seen as a failure which can be corrected, rather than an outright sin. But while the language may have softened, the intended outcome is largely the same: "We will not become the women God intends us to be without the guidance, counsel, wisdom, strength, and love of good men in our lives" (16) wrote Shannon Eldredge, a "reformed feminist," and co-author of *Captivating: unveiling the mystery of a woman's soul*.

Eldredge's statement demonstrates how women's value and worth become attached to their relationships with men, and other authors follow up with how a man is evaluated on his ability to obtain and control a wife (Harris, 2000; Lookado & DiMarco, 2003; Elliot, 1984; Ludy & Ludy, 2009). This creates an environment in which the submission and silence of women is painted as both romantic and godly - the ultimate sign of love for a woman is to give up her own opinions, thoughts, and desires, and submit to the will of her husband. This submission doesn't just begin with marriage, however - even before entering into dating or courtship, it is important that women and men understand their roles. "Step back and let him be the one to

IN HIS IMAGE

lead. How else will he learn to lead? How else can you practice for the time when you will follow a husband?" (Harris, 2000, 118). Dating no longer functions just as a means of getting to know someone, but as a time to assign power and authority roles - roles which should be assigned by gender.

Many of the authors especially warn women of going against these roles. A lack of submission, or a woman who is too outspoken is seen as both a threat to the assigned gender roles and a sin against God's divine plan (DiMarco, 2006a; Eldredge & Eldredge, 2001; Kassian, 2010; Lookado & DiMarco, 2003; Ludy & Ludy, 2009). "To be a woman is not to be a man. To be married is not to be single – which may mean not to have a career. To marry this man is not to marry all the others. A choice is a limitation" (Elliot, 1984, 103). Elliot and other authors suggest that to be a Christian woman means to take on a submissive stance towards a husband and other men in your life - for young women, this means submitting to fathers, boyfriends, and eventually to their husbands (Harris, 1997; Harris, 2000; Lookado & DiMarco, 2003; Ludy & Ludy, 2009).

While the financial reality of most couples has turned this submission away from Elliot's particular focus on being a full-time stay-at-home mother, the media still suggests that women's submission is surmount to her identity as a Christian woman. This also means that the Evangelical media is particularly focused on financial stability for men - being able to economically provide for a family isn't just encouraged, it is a crucial aspect of Christian masculinity, as well as establishing your authority over your wife and family. Men who cannot provide full economic support are told that they are not "ready for commitment," and women

IN HIS IMAGE

are warned from committing to a man who “cannot provide the stable home and comfort a woman needs to be satisfied” (Harris, 2000, 63).

Just as Lookado & DiMarco suggested that women are natural homemakers and men are natural hunters because of biology, the authors suggest that a woman’s need for a home and a man’s drive to provide are natural, moral, and socially correct - and that this perspective extends to all aspects of gender relations. “Let him lead. God made guys as leaders. Dateable girls get that and let him do guy things, get a door, open a ketchup bottle. They relax and let guys be guys. Which means they don’t ask him out!!! (Lookado & DiMarco, 2003, 26). For the youth audience of these texts, the message is fairly explicit: good men are to take the lead and hold onto it for the entire course of a relationship, and good women will submit to that leadership at all times. Young women are encouraged to downplay their own interests and personalities in favor of capturing the attention of godly men, and young men are encouraged to find a woman who will “accept his male leadership with grace” (Ludy & Ludy, 2009, 112).

“In the world but not of it”

Likely mirroring earlier Evangelical media, many of the authors turned to a rhetoric of counter-culturalism to justify and convince audiences of their gender ideals. As with the 1970s media discussed earlier, many of the authors respond to what they see as an overly sexualized and morally lacking society with a call to turn from mainstream culture and commit to “traditional” or “counter-cultural” ideas (DiMarco, 2006a; DiMarco, 2006b; Harris, 1997, Harris, 2000; Kassian, 2010; Ludy & Ludy, 2009). This theme tends to be centered around a backlash to feminism, as well as “liberal” gender ideals, and the belief that such gender ideals are borne of a misunderstanding of the biological, social, and ethical roles men and women are designed by

IN HIS IMAGE

God to fulfill. Men and women are encouraged to disavow such ideals as “worldly” and “broken” (Kassain, 2010) and instead satisfy their God-given roles.

For women, these roles are often juxtaposed with “feminist ideals” - ideals which are synonymous with casual sex, financial independence, and turning away from men as leaders. These ideals are painted as unnatural for women, and a consequence of women who are trying to turn away from their God-given roles as mothers and nurturers. “A lot of us want to be really strong and stop acting all girly, so we try to play it tough, as if we don't want love and romance....So a lot of girls...have decided to play the game more like guys - emotionless” (DiMarco, 2006b, 55). This consequence is especially important in terms of sexuality, where women are reminded again that it is not within their natural biology to have strong sex drives. Rather, women seek “to be romanced. She wants to be an essential part of a great adventure; she wants a beauty to unveil. That is what little girls play at, and those are the movies women love and the stories that they love” (Eldredge & Eldredge, 2003, 9). This ideal returns to the ideas of biological essentialism and also to the complementarianism method of valuing women by male relationships - her beauty is to be “unveiled” by a man, she is part of a man’s “great adventure,” and she is “to be romanced” by a man. “The idea that women should cultivate a soft-spirited attitude is very countercultural,” (Kassain, 2010, 69).

This ideal is not only held up as godly and counter-cultural, but traditional - this is the root of womanhood, and thus the roots of a strong relationship with God. The chaos and disenchantment seen within gender roles today are the result of women who have stepped away from their true roles, and men who have lost heart and been emasculated by a feminist, anti-masculine culture (DiMarco, 2006a; Elliot, 1984; Harris, 2000; Kassian, 2010; Ludy & Ludy,

IN HIS IMAGE

2009). Authors invite teens to step back into becoming “real men” and “real women”: “Men don't know what it means to be a man... Women don't know what it means to be a woman, so they end up acting like men” (Harris, 2000, 97). The language here implies that this counter-cultural engagement is once again not only godly, but natural.

This counter-cultural engagement not only applies to marital and dating roles, however. Most famously beginning with Joshua Harris’ 1997 book *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, the neo-courtship movement transformed Evangelical attitudes towards dating, sex, and marriage. Harris’ book was built on the idea that our culture had become lost to the ways of the world, and that a return to a godly life would mean forsaking secular dating ideals in exchange for a courtship model. This model of courtship is centered around the idea that commitment is the key component of healthy, biblically focused relationship, whereas modern dating practices are focused only on personal fulfillment - especially through a false sense of sexual intimacy (Harris, 1997). Neo-courtship arose to challenge the worldliness and failure of modern dating, sparking a generation of Evangelical youth who committed to courtship and sexual purity.

This attitude transcends much of the media’s presentation of marital and dating roles for Evangelical youth. In the sequel to Harris’ first book, *Boy Meets Girl: Say Hello to Courtship*, he detailed his journey to finding his wife and re-established the legitimacy of courtship for finding a soulmate, calling on Christians to turn to a new attitude toward dating. “Christian couples dating like non-Christians... selfish, marked by jealousy, often pushing the boundaries of purity” (Harris, 2000, 30), he stated, and insisted that it was the result of a Christian failure to step into God-ordained gender and marital roles. “I'm sorry that [women] had to assume the masculine traits necessary to fight for yourself and be your own protector” (Harris, 2000, 133).

IN HIS IMAGE

Harris' writing presented a unique strain of gender roles to Evangelical culture, one which saw the feminist movement not as an attack on men (at least not wholly), but rather as a response of the failure of Christians, and men in particular, to act as "real men" and provide economic support and spiritual leadership to women. In his books, Harris encouraged women to step away from "acting as men" and allow men to take the lead so they can restore the strength of God's intended gender roles to their proper place. "When God knows you're ready for the responsibility of commitment, He'll reveal the right person under the right circumstances" (Harris, 1997, 33). This also hinged on both men and women's ability to "commit to their faith" and believe that God would bring them a "soulmate" or "soul-match" (Harris, 1997, 10). Harris particularly emphasized that women must stop indulging in fantasies of their perfect husband, and rather wait on God's timing - "when the Maker brings you a husband" became the supported attitude of young Evangelical women (Harris, 2000, 12). "In no way did God want me to settle for one of the typical "jerks" who were a dime a dozen. He wanted me to save myself for a man who had His very nature and character within him. And He wanted me to trust Him enough to bring that special man to me in His perfect time" (Ludy & Ludy, 2009, 44).

While Harris' books were incredibly popular, the message that was carried on was mostly in relation to the virtues of courtship as a means of establishing women as submissive to husbands - despite the fact that Harris never actually uses the words submissive or submission in reference to women. Harris' books actually encouraged a "communal" neo-courtship - a model where a couple depended upon family and their church community to hold them accountable. Unfortunately, the media which followed Harris' lead tended to encourage a

IN HIS IMAGE

“counter-cultural” view of the world, asking women to forsake their “sinful independence” (Ludy & Ludy, 2009) in exchange for a “traditional” relationship. Evangelical dating had now become tied to headship/submission and complementarianism, rather than just marriage. Furthermore, people who subscribe to these gender ideals are lauded for their ability to take on the burden of being godly in a culture which is assumed to be against their beliefs - “If your goal is purity of heart, be prepared to be thought very odd” (Elliot, 1984, 43). Although some books included disclaimers about the possibility of singleness, the majority focus was still on women waiting for their future spouse with patience, grace, and understanding - and especially with a pure heart and spirit (DiMarco, 2006b; Harris, 2000; Kassain, 2010; Lookado & DiMarco, 2003; Ludy & Ludy, 2009).

Purity

Ranking as the most widely used single phrase across all of the media analyzed, “purity” for teenagers was the marker of evangelical media from the mid 19990s forward. Every single book looked at contained at least a dozen references to purity, while some books were entirely focused on it. Despite its presence across books with diverse audiences and messages, purity was focused largely on one area: sexual promiscuity. Although almost every book also contained an emphasis on purity as more than a reference to chastity, abstinence, or virginity, every single book included multiple references to the importance of sexual purity in the life of an Evangelical teenager.

Given the established foundation of biological essentialism, headship/submission ideology manifested as complementarianism, and the belief that Christian cultural should reflect values contrary to popular culture, the creation and incessant support for sexual purity is

IN HIS IMAGE

unsurprising, especially as the majority of the message is directed at women. Several of the books followed this exact pattern: they established the biological polarity of men and women, expanded to include God's will for men as spiritual and social leaders of homes, in which women are submissive. They then argued that the world has forsaken godly values, and that it the duty of Evangelical Christians to restore their own homes to the rightful ways of life; finally discussing that teenagers and young adults, lacking their own homes and families, could best take on this command by committing themselves to sexual purity in the form of abstinence from sex before marriage and rejection of a "worldly" view of sexuality and relationships (Arterburn & Stoeker, 2002; DiMarco, 2006a; DiMarco, 2006b; Eldredge & Eldredge, 2003; Ethridge & Arterburn, 2004; Harris, 1997; Harris, 2000; Kassian, 2010; Lookado & DiMarco, 2003).

The use of purity in the context of youth media is, as previously mentioned, almost entirely in reference to sexuality. This manifests in different commands and ideals for young men and women, but the premise for both is that indulging in sexual acts before marriage is against the biblical mandate of purity, in addition to expressing a failure to rely on God's timing, as well as confusing God's idea of love with the world's idea of love. For these authors, the functional difference between a Christian understanding of love and a modern cultural definition of love is commitment - which is why marriage is the key to expressing godly love. "Be careful you do not offer too much of yourself to a man until you have good, solid evidence that he is a strong man willing to commit" (Eldredge & Elredge, 2003, 154).

The turn to focus on women's sexual purity, following the above steps, is a logical one. Men are cast as hunters, warriors, and biologically wired to be lustful and sexually focused -

IN HIS IMAGE

which means the responsibility for controlling and sex and adhering to God's sexual laws fall onto women (DiMarco, 2006a; DiMarco, 2006b; Eldredge & Eldredge, 2003; Elliot, 1984; Ethridge & Arterburn, 2004; Harris, 1997; Harris, 2000; Kassian, 2010; Lookado & DiMarco, 2003; Ludy & Ludy, 2009). "You have to agree that guys are visual creatures and that you have a huge responsibility in protecting them from your body" (DiMarco, 2006b, 44). Young women are charged with not only living their lives as example of sexual purity (mostly in terms of modest dress and behavior), but also with the responsibility of the male gaze and reaction to their bodies and behavior. Modesty and purity even equate to the potential success of a relationship: "every time you make it too easy on him by showing him how willing and ready you are, you lose out. He starts to think of you less and less." (DiMarco, 2006a, 38).

This focus on modest dress and on modest behavior constituted an overwhelming amount of the literature directed at young women, validated by an exploration of masculinity rooted in biology. Men are not just "visual creatures," but also have "certain qualities that come hard-wired with the package" (Arterburn & Stoeker, 2002, 55). Young men are told that they have three major male tendencies: "1 - Rebellious by Nature, 2 - Strong Regular Sex Drive, 3 - Receive Sexual Gratification through our eyes" (Arterburn & Stoeker, 2002, 56). Women are warned from falling into the lure of believing any man can overcome this biology as well: "'Ladies, you'll never know just how differently we're wired until you get married'" (Harris, 2000, 120). Furthermore, women are berated for underestimating the biological urges which define and control young men's sexuality: "We're turned on by female nudity in any way, shape, or form.... Women seldom understand this because they aren't sexually stimulated in the same way. Their ignitions are tied to touch and relationship. They view this visual aspect of

IN HIS IMAGE

our sexuality as shallow and dirty, even detestable... Given the fact that it's pretty easy to see many naked or near-naked women these days, it's no wonder our eyes and mind resist control." (Arterburn & Stoeker, 2002, 56-57).

This masculinity is strikingly contrasted with femininity. Femininity is not only a biological difference, but a difference in how the world is viewed and how young women and men should fulfill their roles. As a means of combatting their misunderstanding of male sexuality, young women are charged with the responsibility of dressing and acting in ways which discourage the male gaze and male arousal at all costs possible - for the sake of male purity, as well as their own. "...If you dress like a flesh buffet, don't be surprised when he treats you like a piece of meat" (Lookadoo & DiMarco, 2003, 118) and "If you dress like a piece of meat, you're gonna get thrown in the BBQ. It's that simple" (119) reminds Justin Lookadoo in a chapter on how teenage girls should dress to best support young men and avoid inducing lust.

This advice isn't just for protecting from divine judgment, either, as a continued theme is the loss of value in a young woman when she chooses to dress or act in sexually arousing, promiscuous, or immodest ways. "You cheapen yourself.... You've cheapened your value in the eyes of the world" (DiMarco, 2006b, 59-61). DiMarco takes it a step further in her book *Sexy Girl: How Hot is too Hot?*, suggesting that it's also a sin to dress androgynously to hide one's femininity. "Femininity is defined as the quality or nature of the female sex. It is what makes us unique and what makes us girls. If you are at all interested in boys, then think about your clothes" (DiMarco, 2006a, 116). Femininity is taken to mean an outward display of feminine features: the way a young woman looks, dresses, acts, and is perceived are all feeding into what does or doesn't make her appropriately, Evangelically feminine.

IN HIS IMAGE

Essentially, women are taught that their purity, and particularly their virginity, is an intrinsic and irreplaceable aspect of their identity. “As women, we are given a great gift: our purity. And everything that makes us who we are emotionally - our feminine nature, our sensitivity, our vulnerability, and our desire to give ourselves fully to one man - is part of that gift. Our purity is a treasure. It is so much more than just our physical virginity, it starts with who we are on the inside” (Ludy & Ludy, 2009, 64). While some authors look to create some level of distinction between purity as being attached simply to virginity, the majority suggest, just as Eric and Leslie Ludy, that they are intrinsically tied. Purity extends beyond sexual virginity, but it is always anchored within it.

These ideas carry not into just how young women and men are to view each other, but how they are expected to relate and understand one another. Particularly an emphasis for teenagers, abstinence from sex before marriage is promoted not just for its moral repercussions, but because the very act of sex hold entirely different satisfactions and meanings for men and women: "On the whole, a teenage guys's focus isn't love and romance; it's sex and getting sex. ... Girls are more romantic, or as some would say, delusional” (DiMarco, 2006b, 52). Young women are simultaneously held up for their supposed notions of romance, and chastised for being naive and irresponsible when it comes to addressing male sexuality, and young men are expected to naturally have near uncontrollable sex drives.

Conclusion

The themes uncovered by this analysis were not surprising. In researching and reading previous analyses of Evangelical media, similar patterns were noted, as suggested by the literature review. Rather, it was the depth, frequency, and tenacity with which this themes

IN HIS IMAGE

were addressed which varied from what previous research suggests is the norm. Between the twelve books, an average of 119.3 references to the themes were made - in books with an average page length of 241 pages. These books average a direct reference to one of these four themes nearly once every other page - and many of these references were paragraphs long.

While the ability of media to affect the perspective and perpetuate messages surrounding gender roles already in the culture is no longer disputed (Brooks & Hebert, 2006), the tendency of Evangelical media to believe that its own messages are counter-cultural make this study incredibly important. As evidenced above, over 20% of the references to gender which were made suggested, in some form, that they were countercultural (see Table 1). Yet the messages present in this media are not truly unique to Evangelical thought, nor should they be expected to (Hendershoot, 2006). In fact, the majority of the messages conveyed by these themes are entirely secular in substance, relying very little on scripture or theology, and instead emphasizing an opinion editorial style analysis of secular culture to make the messages fit for Christian consumption.

Essentially, the books analyzed present an argument that is entirely in line with current cultural norms, and simply uses different language to express it. The issue of virginity seems just as likely to pop up in an issue of *Seventeen* magazine or in a non-Christian dating book as it is in Evangelical media - and while secular media is unlikely to warn teenagers to put off sex for fear of eternal damnation, they are just as likely to remind girls of the potential social repercussions. Very little attention was paid in any of the books analyzed to actual theological or scriptural justification - most of the books had less than a dozen verses to cover the hundred or so gender references. This would suggest that these authors are not trying to use biblical

IN HIS IMAGE

inerrancy or theological reasoning to discuss gender roles with teens, but rather appealing to the social and cultural contexts with which youth are familiar with in order to convince them that these gender roles are applicable and effective.

It is equally important to recognize that the consequences of evangelical gender roles can have the same, if not more drastic consequences as secular gender roles. The authors of this media decry the “damage of womanhood” by non-Christian culture - “they’re scared that adopting womanly traits will cause them to be “less” and not “more”” (Kassain, 2010, 67), and implore that women become gentle, pure, nurturing, responsive, and most of all, submissive - as “God equipped us to be” (Kassain, 2010, 76). But as women are called to shrink and silence themselves for the good of their homes, men are reminded that “adventure, with all its requisite danger and wildness, is a deeply spiritual longing written into the soul of man” (Eldredge, 2001, 5). Yet the consequences of a man who seeks danger and believes that his “insatiable wildness” is part of his “masculine heart” (Eldredge, 2001, 9) meeting a woman who believes it is her place to stand by in silence and submit are dangerous, and compounding such ideals with the dedication to male authority can all too easily point to the justification of domestic violence, sexual assault, and more.

But the more frequently present result of this media is the extended pain faced by many young women who anguish over modesty, purity, and the promise of a soulmate. Rarely do these books cover the topic of prolonged or lifelong singleness, “Overall, the evangelical abstinence campaigns do not address the challenges of singleness (What if I never get married? Where, then, is my reward for my abstinence?)” (Gardener, 2011, 13). If a woman’s purpose is to be submissive to a husband, and that husband never appears, can she have another

IN HIS IMAGE

purpose? This dynamic can place the responsibility of finding a soulmate not only on God, but the church, with destructive consequences when they fail to deliver.

Equally disruptive is the emphasis which this brand of Evangelicalism places on female purity and virginity, a dynamic which simultaneously expects girls to desexualize themselves (or accept their God-given lack of sexual desire) and prepare themselves to marry men whom they're told have insatiable and uncontrollable sex drives. While men are clearly denoted more power and control in the form of authority over women, they are equally disempowered in their apparent inability to overcome their hormonal and instinctual urges regarding sexual activity. Furthermore, while men are continually established as the norm, being made more closely in the image of Christ, they are consistently juxtaposed as being animalistic and amoral in nature, lacking the Christian traits which both gender are told to seek out.

What stands out within these themes is not just that they reflect secular culture, and at times even exaggerate it, but that the themes are painted as the will of God - and thus as the duty and command of the youth who consume them. The success of marriage, future of children, support of Christian community, and approval of God all hinge upon the ability of Evangelical youth to adhere to the roles presented. The choices Evangelical youth are asked to make and the roles they are asked to fill are not for the sake of popularity, but are juxtaposed with supposed secular social norms as the means of securing salvation and avoiding the shame of failure before the Christian community. This is especially important for youth who commit early on to the full spectrum of ideas offered - they are asked to isolate themselves and keep company with a like-minded community, meaning that the possibility of failure is compounded by the potential to end up isolated, abandoned, and damned to hell.

IN HIS IMAGE

Given these findings, I argue that the gender roles presented in Evangelical youth books present ideals reflective of the larger cultural norms surrounding gender, while compounding the danger of breaking them by risking the very salvation and value of the individual on their ability to successfully navigate these roles. These roles are narrowing and dangerous, creating an environment in which failure can result in violence, isolation, and lifelong disappointment. Furthermore, the age at which these books are aimed to indoctrinate early and repeatedly – often instructing youth to take them at their word, because their youth prevents them from understanding the full implications of gender.

Essentially, these books and their messages attempt to take the complexity out of the conversation of gender and sexuality. By reducing each gender to a singular and closed list of traits, behaviors, and ideals, they are able to isolate and define what makes a “good” Christian woman or man. Natural human sexuality is demonized and brutalized, and there is no room for growth or discussion, conversation or exploration. The exclusivity of these roles are stifling and homogenous, and perhaps most disappointingly, they do little to honor the variety of God’s creation and the vast complexity of humanity.

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IN HIS IMAGE

APPENDIX A: FAITH & LEARNING STATEMENT// PERSONAL SIGNIFICANCE

If you were to ask me four years ago if I was a feminist, I would have very likely given a passionate spiel about how women were equal and important, but no, feminism wasn't what I would align with. Today, I would even more passionately proclaim that I am a feminist, because Christ was feminist, and because the core of Christianity is feminist. As a woman and as a Christian, I feel completely convicted and assured that feminism is my ministry, mission, and mandate from God.

This project was a reflection of the struggle of my story, and of the struggle of the Church to overcome cultural boundaries – to be “in the world, but not of it,” ironically. As a young woman in the church, an intrinsic part of my identity and story has been reconciling this struggle. I, and many women before me, have lost faith and left the church because of the inability of our system to recognize the potential, talent, and equality of women. The church has failed to protect us, to guide us, to minister unto us, to validate us, to help us grow, to support us, to listen to us, and to allow us equal footing in the eyes of man – all in the name of Christ. My ministry is to reach out to these women and validate their feeling and recognize the failure of the church – while also recognizing the harm that men have suffered alongside us.

Unlike many of these women and men, I have reconciled the inherent and arrogant miscalculation that are the prescribed gender roles in the Evangelical church. Unlike many of these women and men, I have been brought to a place of grace and understanding where I can recognize the failure of the church without letting it erase away the glory of God. Unlike many of these women and men, I have not been so greatly harmed and disturbed that I cannot bear the burden of Christianity any longer. The women and men who have suffered in the name of

IN HIS IMAGE

tradition and doctrine are numerous, and the wounds are great. My mission is to seek a holistic understanding of why we have allowed this hurt to continue, and to confront it with force, in order that we may bring grace, healing, and love to our world.

This project is the first step in the recovery of this struggle. By identifying plainly the messages that the church has set before young men and women – messages the church has not stood up to deny, but rather casually embraced, ignorant of the consequences – I seek to begin a healing process for many young women and men. I want to remove these messages from the language and education of Christians, and to begin to explore gender and sexuality in a space that allows for honest and humble discussion. We are not animals, and we are not puppets – we are humans, divinely created, and endowed with the ability to live beyond our own biology and culture and do God’s work – regardless of what James Dobson might say. I believe that Christ has mandated us as Christians to live beyond any of our own perspectives – no matter how pervasive or assured by society they may seem to be.

Gender is complex, and it is a structure that escapes my grasp and comprehension. It is not a role that the church has the authority to mandate, or a simple way of organizing the world. It does not arise out of a theological doctrine, and it is not the will of God that anyone should be limited or uplifted because of it. I see no reason why God would create and encourage such a variety of creation, such a complex array of personalities, abilities, and talents if he was only going to reduce the world to two sides of a coin. For these reasons, I believe in the absolute equality of both genders, politically, economically, socially, and most of all, before my God and my savior.

IN HIS IMAGE

Appendix B

Book	In His Image	Complementarianism	In the world but not of it	Purity	Total Per Book
Arterburn & Stoeker	33	5	14	40	92
DiMarco (2006a)	40	8	22	62	132
DiMarco (2006b)	29	4	19	73	125
Eldredge	36	29	21	8	94
Eldredge & Eldredge	41	39	18	7	105
Elliot	41	60	25	33	159
Ethridge & Arterburn	27	11	34	44	116
Harris (1997)	18	26	42	21	107
Harris (2000)	8	31	30	20	89
Kassain	21	49	26	43	139
Lookado & DiMarco	34	61	21	48	164
Ludy & Ludy	28	41	15	25	109
TOTAL:	356	364	287	424	1431
Percentage/Total:	24.88%	25.44%	20.06%	29.63%	100%