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### Purity Culture and White Nationalism: Pushing Forwards and Pointing Back

The American Evangelical Movement holds a large number of adherents, and as such, has diverged into an innumerable variety of beliefs and practices. Central to most of these beliefs, however, is what is called “purity culture” – an evangelical doctrine that emphasizes chastity among unmarried people, rejection of “fornication,” and the devotion of a woman to her husband. This burden has real-world complications for those raised into it, from early marriage (Uecker) to psychological disorders (Asproth, Edger, Zgueb). Evangelical groups who teach purity culture insist that they are simply providing biblical teachings and following God’s will.

When one looks at the tenets of purity culture, however, and compares it to the reproductive platforms of white nationalist groups, one can find a lot of overlap. This is not coincidental. Many elements of purity culture support proposed strategies adopted by white nationalists, particularly the “Quiverfull” Movement, so white nationalists have an incentive to promote the moralization platform. The number of evangelicals within white nationalist groups now categorize a recognizable subgroup: the Christian Identity movement (Bertlet and Vystosky). Even public-faced evangelical organizations bleed into extremism; Bryan Fischer, the American Family Association’s<sup>1</sup> former director of issue analysis and public policy wrote

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<sup>1</sup> The American Family Association is an anti-LGBTQ Christian evangelical hate group (Southern Policy Law Center).

“Welfare has destroyed the African-American family by telling young black women that husbands and fathers are unnecessary and obsolete. Welfare has subsidized illegitimacy by offering financial rewards to women who have more children out of wedlock. We have incentivized fornication rather than marriage, and it’s no wonder we are now awash in the disastrous social consequences of people who rut like rabbits.” (Southern Policy Law Center).

Similar remarks by this group can be found concerning Native Americans and Muslims.

While not all evangelicals agree on what the most “pure” way of life is, this idea of purity is what has driven a variety of extremist views on reproduction, and American evangelism’s tie-ins with white nationalism. The goal for women under purity culture living a “godly” life is so that they may one day marry a “godly” husband. Edger writes, “Virginity is consistently seen as something to be protected and valued, saving one’s self for marriage is a quintessential part of the sexual purity movement.” If one views other races as “ungodly” (as Fischer so clearly does), then white nationalism is not a stretch. For instance, representatives of Focus on the Family, an evangelist Christian organization, discouraged interracial marriage because of supposed compatibility issues, and accused black families of being dependent on welfare and being “ungodly” by having children out of wedlock (Farley). This paper intends to explore the ties between these supposedly separate movements and how they intertwine and feed off one another.

It is important to recognize that subscribers to purity culture are not monolithic. Each family and parish has their own combination of rhetoric and practices, and some forms, such as Quiverfull<sup>2</sup> sects, are much more extreme than others. However, there are many internal

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<sup>2</sup> Quiverfull is a term describing a belief that it is God who opens and closes the womb, and therefore decries all birth control. This ideology is discussed on pages 15-17.

practices and beliefs these groups share that are worth noting for the purposes of this paper, and the rhetoric of major evangelical groups and thinkers of the past and present hold influence and should be examined as well. Berlet and Vysotsky, in their discussion of white supremacist groups, argue that it is better to organize white supremacists by ideological affiliations rather than organizational to avoid overgeneralizations, understand “leaderless resistance” actors<sup>3</sup>, and reduce the need for a “catchall” category; a similar approach is useful for understanding purity culture.

Most purity culture organizations promote two archetypal gender ideals, which has been termed “complementarian theology”: the man as “protector and provider,” and the woman as nurturing and submissive (Du Mez 166-169). A crucial premise within this is the idea of male headship. In the early 1900s, because men felt sidelined as providers by the progresses of the Women’s Rights movement and industrial capitalism that brought in women and children as laborers, the Southern concept of an archetypal patriarch, wherein a man keeps watch over women, children, and (formerly) slaves became central to evangelical theology 16-17). This Southern conceptualization was embraced particularly because it approved of violence as a means of maintaining the social order (17). This view has carried into the modern evangelical community, making its way into the 1989 “Danvers Statement,” and Du Mez argues this is the foundation upon which purity culture was built in the 1990s (167-171). However, the nature of evangelical rhetoric in the decades preceding that Du Mez herself records shows that the two ideologies have been inseparable from the beginning.

Concerning the concept of male headship, Du Mez remarks, “Fundamentally, evangelical “family values” entailed the reassertion of patriarchal authority. At its most basic level, family

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<sup>3</sup> White supremacists without any organizational affiliations (Berlet and Vysotsky 22).

values was about sex and power” (88). For instance, Jerry Falwell, an influential pastor and a segregationist, argued against the Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Act in part because he thought it would “eliminate the husband as ‘head of the family’” (96-97). According to Stasson, evangelical leaders continue to assert that husbands and fathers should be the spiritual leaders of their households, a belief shared by 84.5% of American evangelicals (101).

The “provider” role suggests that men must be the primary breadwinner in a relationship, if not the sole earner. In 2008, megachurch<sup>4</sup> pastor Mark Driscoll’s wife, Grace, when the two were asked their opinions about stay-at-home fathers, said “It’s hard to respect a man who doesn’t provide” (Stasson 100). Mark Driscoll then added a gendered<sup>5</sup> reading of 1 Timothy 5:8, saying if any *man* does not provide for his family, he worse than a nonbeliever (100). This sort of rhetoric is common, used to emphasize that women should be at home with their children in contrast. James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family, asserted women were depressed that traditional housewifery and gender roles had become objects of ridicule (103).

The “protector” conceptualization is an emphatic part of purity culture and evangelist theology today and contains violent overtones. In essence, men are taught that it is their duty to protect women and children around them from the forces of evil, be they communists, Muslims, or those holding lustful thoughts. Girls are portrayed as particularly vulnerable both physically and emotionally (Gish 14). During purity balls and pledges, fathers often vow to protect their daughter’s purity (Fahs 131-135). Critics such as Fahs (131-135) and Lenz argue that such vows teach fathers to treat their daughter’s sexuality as their property and daughters to view their sexuality as their father’s property up until it becomes their husband’s. In order to “protect” the

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<sup>4</sup> Driscoll’s church claimed a weekly membership of 12,000 people (Welch).

<sup>5</sup> The specific word that Driscoll is translating as “man” here is “τις,” which is both masculine and feminine in form, and is better translated as a general “anyone” (de Bakker et al. 97).

chastity of girls some sexual purists avoid dating in favor of “courtship,” wherein a girl is “courted” by men with the permission and supervision of her father. The father also gives final consent to a marriage (Du Mez 171, Brightbill).

This “protector” ideal is often immersed in racialized imagery, if not expressed in explicitly racist terms. Du Mez remarks that in post-Brown conceptualizations of Christian masculinity, “the heroic Christian man was a white man... who defended against the threat of nonwhite men and foreigners” (39). The evangelical political group Concerned Women for America publishes brochures about how Islam permits and even encourages sexual immorality and violence (Darwish). The courtship system also has a built-in anti-miscegenation factor. Because men are considered the spiritual heads of the family (protecting the spiritual health of women and children), fathers would not consent to a marriage to anyone who does not subscribe to their specific set of beliefs, even if they were another evangelical Christian; American churches have been heavily segregated for centuries. Fathers within the courtship system would then be unlikely to consent to their daughters marrying into a family of people of color because of perceived theological differences. Perry found that many white evangelicals conflated Christianity with whiteness and would be uncomfortable with their children dating outside of their race for this same reason (202). In 1983, the Supreme Court decided that the Internal Revenue Service could revoke the tax-exempt status of Bob Jones University (a private Christian college) because it denied admissions to students in interracial marriages or who advocated for interracial dating and marriage (*Bob Jones University v. United States*). Even then, they banned students from interracial dating until 2000, when the policy became the subject of a presidential debate; in an interview with Larry King that year, Bob Jones III, who was president of the University at the time, said that the policy had been put in place because the mixing of ethnicities

(and governments) would herald the arrival of the antichrist (“Bob Jones University Drops Mixed Dating Ban”).

To provide protection, evangelical leaders and thinkers often encourage aggression and use violent messages and imagery. Evangelical writers Tim and Beverly LeHaye coauthored a book that explicitly upheld aggression as a virtue and linked aggressiveness to a man’s sex drive (Du Mez 91). Du Mez calls the violent tones incorporated into this ideology “militant masculinity, an ideology that enshrines patriarchal authority and condones the callous display of power at home and abroad” (3). Del Tackett, writing for the James Dobson Family Institute<sup>6</sup> in 2022 upholds militant masculinity as a matter of national security, attributing the fall of Nineveh, Babylon, and Egypt to the “feminization of men,” (“7 Threats in Our Times, #3: The Loss of the Noble Male and The Rise of Malevolent Compassion”).

In contrast to the masculine ideal, women are supposed to be submissive, especially with regards to sex. Tackett’s “feminization of men” comment is a reference to this conceptualization: women are supposed to be protected, not doing the protecting. Robinson and Spivey also note that anti-LGBTQ bias is strongly linked to this belief (653). Marabel Morgan, in her *The Total Woman* book and courses, argued that wives should submit to and even revere their husbands in order to resolve marital conflict, both through domestic labor and sex (Du Mez 60-64). Tim<sup>7</sup> and Beverly<sup>8</sup> LeHaye urged that even if a woman was tired from domestic labor, she should not show it (91). While most Americans at the time might have considered these ideas fringe,

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<sup>6</sup> James Dobson was a broadly influential evangelical who advocated corporal punishment, strict gender roles, and the “protector and provider” model (Du Mez 78-87). Two of his organizations, Focus on the Family and the James Dobson Family Institute, remain influential among evangelicals.

<sup>7</sup> Credited as the author of more than 85 books, many of which railed against homosexuality, he founded the Council for National Policy (Du Mez 93-94).

<sup>8</sup> Founder of Concerned Women for America, a conservative Christian organization that continues to argue for sexual morality causes and anti-Muslim sentiment (Du Mez 93).

Morgan's book sold millions of copies, and her courses were taken by the wives of NFL players (63-64); among evangelicals, these ideas became mainstream. Even now, women's sexuality is pointed to as key to marital happiness; describing her own experience in the *Washington Post*, Liz Lenz wrote "Recently, while telling a friend from church about a disagreement with my husband, she suggested having more sex. She showed me a handout from her pastor on making a happy home. The number one suggestion: "being available to your husband's needs." As if what was between my legs was the problem and not the very center of my heart."

Christian Identity extremists share in this view of the ideal submissiveness of women; within this ideology, white women are considered weak, corruptible, and "desperately needing White masculine leadership and strength" (Sharpe 611). Gavin McInnes, founder of the white supremacist group The Proud Boys, has parroted this idealization of women as being submissive housewives many times. In a 2015 Fox News interview, he is quoted as saying that God made women to "Stay at home with the kids, they're happier there," and told Tamara Holder, the female news anchor interviewing him, "You would be much happier at home with a husband and children" (Mazza). This is significant because white supremacist groups tend to take advantage of feelings of belonging and shared experiences to connect with others and offer simple solutions to large societal problems to radicalize individuals and direct hate towards minorities (Townsend). This rhetoric forms a bridge between evangelicals and white supremacists, making it easier to radicalize Christians.

Beyond these ideals, men and boys are taught that their minds are sinful, and that they cannot resist sexual temptation without difficulty, while women and girls are taught that their bodies are sinful because they lure men into sin; as a result, women and girls are then held responsible for the sexual purity of those around them (Edger 168, Beahm, Dubick, Hong,

Wolfe). Within the marital context, wives were supposed to meet all the sexual needs so that they would not look for “impure” sexual gratification elsewhere (Du Mez 170). The LeHayes even held one woman responsible for her husband divorcing her and remarrying (purity culture places an emphasis on marriage as permanent) because of her unwillingness to have sex with her husband to his satisfaction (Edger 168). Outside of marriage, parents, pastors, teachers, and church members police girls’ wardrobes from a young age (Beahm, Wolfe). Hong believes that this burden falls especially hard on Asian women because of how they are commonly fetishized in American culture. Anna Beahm, writing for *Reckon South*, recalled that one time “A guy at church told me the boys in my youth group were addicted to pornography because of the way I dressed.” Rebecca Wolfe, in her own recollection, wrote about a time at her church youth group when her pastor’s wife told them, “Girls, help a brother out! Put on a different shirt, don’t wear those shorts. If you don’t want them to see you sexually, if you don’t want them to sin like that, don’t make yourself so sexual. It’s not good for you or them — don’t put stumbling blocks in their way.” Wolfe’s perception of her own teenage body as being “inherently sexual, inherently sinful” would eventually lead to her intentionally developing an eating disorder to hinder the development of her hips and breasts. Asproth suggests Wolfe wasn’t the only one.

Because the onus is put on women to keep men pure, this then is used to justify sexual assault within these communities. The Title IX office at Liberty University, an evangelical school founded by Jerry Falwell, has frequently warned students reporting sexual assault that they could be found to have violated the school’s code of conduct for infractions like “being in any state of undress with a member of the opposite sex,” “having premarital sex,” and “being alone with a man on campus” (Dreyfus). Gish points out that one popular book promoting abstinence until marriage, *What Hollywood Won’t Tell You About Sex, Love, and Dating*, treats a minor’s rape as



her own mistake, and in fact avoids the term “rape” whatsoever (11). Gish finds this a common trait of purity rhetoric (11). Hong remembers at one point blaming herself for another worship leader sending her a picture of his penis. Beahm, recalling her own experience, explained that she “didn’t hear the word “consent” until [she] was in college.” Fahs remarks that overlooking discussions of consent are common, and that evangelical leaders often fail to distinguish between consensual sex and sexual violence (121-123). Instead of consent, the focus is on marital status; in addition to campaigning against the Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Act, Jerry Falwell campaigned against a Senate bill that he believed would allow women to sue their husbands for rape (Du Mez 97). Brightbill criticizes the courtship system as enabling child marriage, providing an exception to what would otherwise be statutory rape.<sup>9</sup> Because of the ideal that women should satisfy their husbands’ every sexual whim, the concept of spousal non-consent is a foreign one to sexual purists.

This permissiveness of rape serves white nationalism in its own way; white nationalists frequently campaign against all abortions without exception for victims of rape or incest because of their fear of being “out bred” by people of color, commonly referred to as “replacement theory” (Sherry, Sharpe 611-612, Bowles). By minimizing the damage of rape by equating it to consensual sex outside of marriage or masturbation, purity culture’s permissiveness of rape makes it easier for evangelicals to align with their ideology. This permissiveness does not extend to Muslims, black people, or Latinx people (Darwish, Du Mez 131).

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<sup>9</sup> While Brightbill does argue a convincing case for courtship enabling child marriage, and the Family Action Council has tried to block bills limiting child marriage, it shouldn’t be overlooked that Massachusetts and California have no absolute minimum age requirement for marriage; this is not solely an evangelical problem (“House Republicans Effectively Kill Anti-Child Marriage Bill, Cite Possible Case Against Gay Marriage,” World Population Review).

The idea that men are nearly incapable of restraining their lust and therefore need women to not tempt them into sin is essential for understanding the murder of eight people, including six Asian-American women, at spas in the Atlanta area in March of 2021, as well as one other concept: “sex addiction.” To be clear, “sex addiction” as a condition is heavily disputed; the American Psychiatric Association does not recognize it (Burke and Perry). Hong considers it “an outgrowth of purity culture gone awry.” The closest recognized condition is what the ICD-11 terms “compulsive sexual behavior disorder,” but Kraus et al. emphasize that “individuals who self-identify as having the disorder (e.g., calling themselves “sex addicts” or “porn addicts”)... may not actually exhibit the clinical characteristics of the disorder,” and should be examined carefully. Graham cites Perry saying that evangelical communities often use sex addiction to describe those who engage in sexual acts that violate their code of sexual morality, but that would otherwise not be considered in any way disordered. The ICD-11 also sets the bar for diagnosis high to avoid pathologizing normal sexual behaviors, which is a point of concern (Kraus et al.). The caution with which the ICD approaches compulsive sexual behavior is likely due in part to the prevalence of what evangelicals frequently term “sex addiction” and “pornography addiction.” To illustrate the difference between these ideas, these are the diagnostic criteria Kraus et al. endorse for compulsive sexual behavior disorder:

Compulsive sexual behaviour disorder ... is characterized by a persistent pattern of failure to control intense, repetitive sexual impulses or urges, resulting in repetitive sexual behaviour over an extended period (e.g., six months or more) that causes marked distress or impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational or other important areas of functioning.

The pattern is manifested in one or more of the following: a) engaging in repetitive sexual activities has become a central focus of the person's life to the point of neglecting health and personal care or other interests, activities and responsibilities; b) the person has made numerous unsuccessful efforts to control or significantly reduce repetitive sexual behaviour; c) the person continues to engage in repetitive sexual behaviour despite adverse consequences (e.g., repeated relationship disruption, occupational consequences, negative impact on health); or d) the person continues to engage in repetitive sexual behaviour even when he/she derives little or no satisfaction from it.

Sexaholics Anonymous, on the other hand, merely provides a broad range of twenty criteria, some of which are common, most of which are vague, and gives no guidance as to how many should apply to qualify as an addict, including

Have you ever thought you needed help for your sexual thinking or behavior? That you'd be better off if you didn't keep "giving in"?... Have you ever tried to stop or limit doing what you felt was wrong in your sexual behavior?... Do you feel guilt, remorse or depression afterward?... Does an irresistible impulse arise when the other party makes the overtures or sex is offered?... Do you keep going from one "relationship" or lover to another?... Do you feel the "right relationship" would help you stop lusting, masturbating, or being so promiscuous?... Do you turn to a lower environment when pursuing sex?... Do you want to get away from the sex partner as soon as possible after the act?... Although your spouse is sexually compatible, do you still masturbate or have sex with others?... Have you ever been arrested for a sex-related offense?

Sex Addicts Anonymous provides a similar set of twelve criteria and encourages people to seek help if they meet two or more.

There are two problems with such broad and vague criteria<sup>10</sup>. First, many of these criteria are not necessarily indicative of a larger pathological issue; a married person watching pornography or cheating does not necessarily constitute a total loss of control, as the term “addiction” implies. Furthermore, people can make bad decisions and regret them without being addicted; for instance, a college student who gets drunk at a tailgate and wakes up with a hangover is not necessarily an alcoholic.

Second, many of these criteria, particularly those pertaining to guilt, are found frequently within purity culture. Although evangelical men<sup>11</sup> consume pornography less than their non-evangelical counterparts, they are far more likely to consider themselves addicted to pornography, and far more likely to report emotional distress from using it (Burke and Perry, Graham). Evangelical leaders frequently point to “sex addiction” as a rationale for the breaking of sexual taboos within their community (Moore). Burke and Perry believe that using the rhetoric of addiction allows self-identified sex and porn addicts to avoid losing moral or social standing within their communities by appealing to scientific language to claim that they are helpless in the face of temptation.

I would add also that the rhetoric protects them in case they “relapse.” In evangelical circles, scrutiny of sexual transgressions and pornography use is harsh: even before being labelled a “sex addict,” men are often placed in “accountability groups,” wherein they are required to share their perceived sexual sins with others, which include “lustful thoughts” (Edger

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<sup>10</sup> Apart from the inclusion of arrests for sexual offenses, as the police are not medical experts, being arrested for an offence does not mean an offence was committed, and a singular criminal act does not qualify as the basis for a disease.

<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, because men are considered primary actors within purity culture, literature around perceived sexual addiction focuses on them, to the near-total exclusion of women (Edger 170).

169-170); some groups for “sex addicts” and “porn addicts” install monitoring software on members’ computers, so if they attempt to view pornography, their “accountability partner” is notified – Robert Aaron Long’s group was one (Graham); in 1986, Jimmy Swaggart, a popular televangelist accused two other popular televangelists of adultery, resulting in the loss of their positions, only for one of those two televangelists to announce that Swaggart himself had been having an affair with a prostitute in 1988 (Du Mez 126-128). This social scrutiny leads to shame, which then “discourages healthy sexual behavior,” leading to a repetition of the behavior that causes the shame (Edger 170). Kraus et al. acknowledge this by saying that self-identifying “sex and porn addicts” might need treatment not for compulsive sexual behavior, but rather conditions like bipolar disorder, depression, and anxiety, and that “Individuals often experience feelings such as shame and guilt in relationship to their sexual behaviour, but these experiences are not reliably indicative of an underlying disorder.” Because the term “sex addiction” is used with such broad and common criteria, it becomes overused to the point of meaninglessness and obscures actual and treatable psychological conditions<sup>12</sup>.

In the Atlanta spa shootings, the killer, Robert Aaron Long, called himself a “sex addict,” and decided to murder the Asian women working in those spas because they were a “temptation” (Kaleem and Jarvie). His halfway-house roommate stated that his perception of himself as a “sex addict” and potentially irredeemable sinner was reinforced by his church community (Kaleem and Jarvie), and an associate pastor at his church gave a sermon only a few months earlier saying that his followers should “cut out” sources of temptation such as pornography (Graham). Because purity culture teaches that women are culpable for the temptation men feel from seeing them or

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<sup>12</sup> If you know someone who believes they may struggle with sexual addiction or compulsive sexual behavior, my advice to them would be to seek help from a private, secular therapist to avoid cyclical shame and armchair diagnoses.

coming into physical contact with them, and because Asian women are so heavily fetishized<sup>13</sup> in American culture, these women were at risk to be targeted by a man breaking under the pressure of the unrealistic expectations of purity culture.

In the background of all of this is lurking another conceptualization that informs the most extreme versions of purity culture and provides the most direct lead into white nationalism, which is Christian nationalism. Whitehead and Perry define Christian nationalism as “the belief that (1) God chose the United States and (2) the United States must follow God’s commands to flourish, as an empirical case of conflated national and religious identities” (423). Bjork-James defines Christian nationalism as the belief that “Christianity [has] a privileged relationship to the state and thus, [Christians are] the rightful determiners of state policy” (280). I would combine the two definitions to describe the ideology as the belief that the United States was established as a Christian nation and must be governed by Christians according to biblical precepts. They are also willing to go to extreme lengths to enforce these “biblical” tenets; in 2018 a bill was introduced to raise the minimum age to obtain a marriage license in the state of Tennessee to 18, but it was sent to a summer study session (a move meant to essentially kill the proposal) at the behest of a representative of the Family Action Council who thought it would hinder their efforts to overturn the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision, which legalized same-sex marriage across the United States (“House Republicans Effectively Kill Anti-Child Marriage Bill, Cite Possible Case Against Gay Marriage”).

Whitehead and Perry and Bjork-James are both discussing Christian nationalism with respect to LGBTQ rights, but a quick scroll through headlines on the news page of Wallbuilders, a Christian nationalist organization, will show that Christian nationalism influences views on

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<sup>13</sup> Some seem to be under the impression that the intended victims were sex workers, and use that to avoid the racial aspect. In actuality, the owner of one of the spas repeatedly ejected patrons who assumed they could have sex with the workers (Holcomb and Andone).

everything from racial justice (“Most Don’t Blame Police for Shootings”) to economic policy (“U.S. Inflation Rate Hits 40 Year High”) to the military (“Army May Shrink to Smallest Force Since World War II Amid Woke Generals, Covid Mandates”). This ideology feeds in part off of a fear among Evangelicals that Christianity is under attack, much like how white supremacists believe that white people are constantly under attack (Sharpe 609); in a 2017 speech in Nashville, Tennessee, Evangelical leader Franklin Graham (who inherited a large ministry from his father Billy Graham) told a crowd of supporters “We are going to be attacked. Let’s pray and get Christians involved in politics,” (“Franklin Graham: Christianity Under Attack, Believers Should Engage in Politics”). Furthermore, the Public Religion Research Institute found in 2015 that 53% of White Evangelical Protestants polled believed that immigrants were a threat to “traditional American values,” suggesting that Christian nationalism is especially prevalent within this demographic<sup>14</sup> (Jones et al.).

As mentioned previously, white nationalist groups frequently look for groups with ideological overlap to recruit from, and the rhetoric of Christian nationalist groups have a significant amount of overlap. The convergence of white nationalism and Christian nationalism now constitutes its own subcategory of white nationalists, called the Christian Identity movement. As Sharpe writes “This aberrant form of Christianity is an outgrowth of the white supremacist philosophy; however, the definition of *White* is narrowed to include only white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants” (605).

The overlap between Christian nationalism and white nationalism can be found in several places, especially with regards to purity culture; take again, for example, the subject of the

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<sup>14</sup> As opposed to 34% of all Americans, 43% of White Mainline Protestants, 41% of White Catholics, and 38% of Mormons (Jones et al.); White Evangelical Protestants hold the largest portion that believe this among all religious groupings. White Evangelical Protestants also hold the strongest support for identifying and deporting immigrants living illegally within the United States (Ibid.).

“biblical family.” Evangelical leaders have placed emphasis on the nuclear, “biblical,” family as a matter of national security for decades. Billy Graham touted the idea that “a nation is only as strong as her homes” (Du Mez 26). Del Tackett, again writing for the James Dobson Family Institute, wrote “It is the biblical family that produces a righteous citizenry and statesmen who lead with integrity,” suggesting that anything other than a “biblical family” was an inappropriate environment in which to raise children (“7 Threats in Our Times, #7: The Attack Upon the Biblical Family”). In parallel, the nationalist group Patriot Front has been seen at anti-abortion rallies with a banner reading “Strong Families Make Strong Nations” (Sherry).

Perhaps the strongest link between white nationalism and Christian nationalism, however, is found within the Quiverfull movement. The name of this ideology is borrowed from Psalm 127: “Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate” (Joyce). Members believe that fundamentally it is God who controls fertility, that birth control is a denial of God’s will, and that the number of children that a woman has is representative of her spiritual convictions (Joyce); they also apply purity culture to its extremes (Garrison). Though being extremely fringe, the ideology has been most famously represented by the Duggar family in *19 Kids and Counting*, but also was the root of the Supreme Court case which allowed religious organizations to not cover contraception in their insurance policies, *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* (Corrigan 139).

Beyond the handful of scripture verses they cite, thinkers within the movement cite an overtly political motive: producing “arrows” for the culture war and conservative Christian voters to overtake the political field (Joyce). Children within this sect are homeschooled and cut off from popular media, so they have little outside influence, and from the perspective of



Quiverfull members, liberals, secularists, and feminists are anti-natalist (Joyce). the belief is that the children will stay loyal to the strict ideology and “out breed” godless liberals. While the Quiverfull movement is an extreme example, the masculine “provider” role is often combined with motherhood being the primary responsibility of women (Stasson 109); in other words, one of the fundamental aspects of purity culture restricts women to childbirth and child-rearing. Similarly, within white nationalist groups, a prevalent source of paranoia is “replacement theory,” which is the belief that birth rates among white people are declining because of a global conspiracy in order for non-whites to “replace” white people in positions of power (Bowles). White nationalists and Christian Identity extremists therefore view white women’s role as to stay home and bear as many ““beautiful, healthy, white babies”” as possible (Sharpe 611). For this reason, Christian Identity extremists also abhor homosexuals and those who provide abortions to white women, something that also links them to purity cultures. So that women can be “re-educated” in order to bear more children, white nationalists often argue for the exclusion of women from the workplace and for men to be the sole income-earners, hearkening to the “provider” ideal (Bowles).

Perhaps the most obvious example of a Christian Identity extremist in the United States is John Earnest, who wrote a six-page manifesto before murdering several Jewish people in a synagogue. Earnest blamed Jewish people for almost everything, but he points back to tenets of purity culture most of all, writing

Every Jew is responsible for... pushing degenerate propaganda in the form of entertainment; for their role in feminism which has enslaved women in sin; for causing many to fall into sin with their role in peddling pornography;... for promoting race

mixing;... for their degenerate and abominable practices of sexual perversion and blood libel... For these crimes they deserve nothing but hell (1).

Earnest is archetypal of Christian Identity extremists, but he also serves as an example of how easily purity culture can be coopted into violent extremism. He blames Jewish people for the sexual immorality of others (1), believes it is his responsibility as a man to murder them (2-3), and believes God is on his side (2).

Earnest is an example of a white supremacist using purity culture's teaching to justify atrocities, and while many evangelicals would argue that their beliefs about sexual morality do not make them violent white supremacists (which they do not), the degree to which purity culture pushes its believers, and men especially, towards Christian nationalism, racism, and violence cannot and should not be ignored. The onus placed on women to check men's sexual morality permits sexual and physical violence, as exemplified by the Long case; the onus placed on men to protect women's sexual morality, and the violent imagery used to convey this idea, encourages violence against minorities that are seen as a threat. The judgement of religious and racial minorities as being sexually immoral reinforces this. In combination, the parallels to white nationalist ideology in terms of gender roles and sexual morality make white evangelicals easy to recruit, and white nationalists like Earnest then point back to purity culture doctrine as justification for their atrocities.

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