The Paths Between Resistance and Collaboration: Evangelical Women in Atlantic Canada

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ABSTRACT

Exploring the relationship between the New Right and Evangelical Christian women in Atlantic Canada, this paper presents evidence that there is some strong support for feminist ideas among Evangelical women, and argues it is wrong to summarily categorize conservative Protestants as supporters of the New Right agenda, thus creating barriers which alienate them from the feminist movement.

RÉSUMÉ

En explorant le lien entre la Nouvelle Droite et les femmes Chrétiennes Évangéliques au Canada Atlantique, cet article démontre qu'il existe un assez grand support pour les idées féministes parmis les femmes évangéliques, et soutient qu'on a tort de catégoriser sommairement les Protestantes conservatrices comme des partisanes de l'ordre du jour de la Nouvelle Droite, créant ainsi des barrières et les aliénant du mouvement féministe.

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps one of the most disturbing aspects of the "New Right" is the apparent participation and collaboration of women in furthering its conservative agenda, particularly when that agenda blatantly confines women to traditional roles or subservient status. Yet, the terms "new right" and "conservative" are often used in a sweeping manner with little regard for accuracy or context. The complexity of what has come to be called the New Right is illustrated in Rebecca Klatch's work, *Women of the New Right*, a book which dissects women's participation in the New Right in the United States. Klatch argues that there are at least two streams of New Right conservativism: one is rooted the conservative Protestant worldview, and the other is an ideology which has grown out of *laissez faire* approaches to economics and government generally. Himmelstein identifies three aspects of New Right ideology: economic libertarianism, social traditionalism and militant anti-communism. It is the second of these with which conservative Protestants are most concerned, and it is primarily on this basis that the New Right has been able to attract religious supporters (1983). The two groups are diverse, and do not always agree with one another (Klatch, 1987). In addition, as Peggy Shriver points out, a relatively small proportion of evangelical Christians actually support the political conservativism and political activism of the New Right. Shriver argues that the claims of the Religious Right related to the number of supporters is likely exaggerated (1989:29).

The problem of discussing the New Right is further complicated by critiques of feminism which would associate some of the conservative agenda of the New Right with at least some feminist approaches. For example, in her book *The New Victorians*, Rene Denfeld compares the approach of feminists to the conservative and restrictive morality of the Victorian era. She is especially critical of feminist approaches to pornography, and goddess worship, which she argues reifies existing stereotypes of what it means to be female and male (1995).Denfeld argues that feminism has deteriorated into a conservative morality crusade which is not easily distinguishable from any other type of conservativism. In light of such attacks on feminism, and the ominous presence of the New Right, it is important to assess both where feminism is, and who comprises the grassroots supporters of the New Right in Canada.

The purpose of this paper is to examine

one group of women -- conservative Protestants or evangelicals -- who are sometimes summarily categorized as being collaborators in the promulgation of the New Right agenda. I will argue that such categorization is indeed a mistake, and from a strategic point of view, we as feminists need to think about ways in which evangelical women can come to feel more comfortable identifying with the feminist agenda, without, of course, their compromising that agenda. As we will see, while there are pockets of "new right collaborators" among women within the evangelical community, more commonly there are women who support, at least in some measure, feminist strategies and approaches. By dismissing evangelical women as being part of the New Right, we create barriers which further alienate them from the feminist project, in contrast to their heavy involvement during the first wave of feminism.

The discussion in this paper is based on interviews with 94 evangelical women in Atlantic Canada. Women from three of the four Atlantic provinces (Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and New Brunswick) were interviewed, and included both Baptist and Wesleyan participants. Both denominations have long been established in Atlantic Canada, and each has a history of evangelism. The interviews were semi-structured in format, and lasted an average of 90 minutes. The participants were nearly evenly divided in employment status between part-time employed in the paid labour force, full-time employed, and full-time homemakers. The majority of the participants had some post-secondary education, most were married, and the average number of children was 2.5.

The research emerged from the work of the Religion and Violence Research Team at the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research at the University of New Brunswick. The Team's research focuses on the response of organized religion to violence against women. This specific project focused on church women and their understanding of and response to woman abuse. My interest in this research is rooted in my own experiences: during the nearly five years in which I practised family law, I represented a number of women clients who described themselves as Christian and who understood the solutions to their marital difficulties through a Christian worldview. I became intrigued by the variety of responses to marital breakdown by the Christian churches in my community, and the ways in which conservative religious groups frequently shattered my preconceived notions about who they were, and how they responded to the needs of women in crisis.

As a feminist, I wanted to incorporate feminist research principles into my study at both a theoretical and a methodological level. For initial guidance, I turned to the works of Sandra Harding (1987) and Marie Mies (1983). Sandra Harding argues against attempting to identify specific feminist research methods, but rather distinguishes what she claims are three features of feminist research: 1) its focus on gender as a category to be analyzed and critiqued; 2) its generation of problems from the perspective of women; and 3) the placing of the researcher in the context of the research so that the researcher's historical specificity is revealed. Harding insists that quantitative methods should not necessarily be excluded from the feminist research repertoire, but whatever the methodology, it should take into account the three features of feminist research outlined above.

The work of Maria Mies (1983), which expands on the three features of feminist research outlined by Harding, also provided some guidelines as to the overall methodology of a feminist research project. Her suggestion that research be entered into with an approach of conscious partiality forced me to think about my preconceptions in relation to evangelical Christians, a position which became a way of thinking throughout the research, not simply an initial consideration.

Mies also argues that research must be "research from below" (1983:123) and that it must be "brought to serve the interests of dominated, exploited and oppressed groups, particularly women."[1] While it is well-recognized that women have been marginalized by sociological research (Smith, 1987), I would argue that evangelical women have been doubly disadvantaged. Not only are they marginalized because they are women, but they have also been largely ignored--both as

"sisters" and as worthy subjects for research--by the feminist community. It was in part for this reason that I wanted to include as many women as possible in my study in order to be able to argue that the results speak in some way about the lives of evangelical women in Atlantic Canada in general. Understanding how church women respond to and understand woman abuse can provide resources to evangelical women both as abused women and as service providers, to their faith communities, and to secular groups who work to end violence against women. In entering this research it was my hope that this project might in some way empower its participants, who work within a context which is often overwhelmingly patriarchal .[2]

For me, research from below also took on another dimension in that I had to struggle to respect the voices which expressed views different from my own; there was, admittedly, sometimes a tendency to think of myself as the "enlightened feminist from above." My early graduate studies in feminist theory and method were especially influenced by the work of Dorothy Smith, who emphasizes the importance of women's standpoints (1987), and it was the influence of that work which often acted as a "reality check" for me.

Feminist research must also, according to Mies, feature "active participation in actions, movements, and struggles for women's emancipation" (1983:124). Although I am not myself an evangelical Christian, I was confident that, given the level of activism within the Religion and Violence Research Team in the past,[3] the research results would become part of the Team's resources as it works to raise awareness amongst church communities about woman abuse. In addition, because of my ongoing contact with the transition house movement in New Brunswick, I hoped that I would be able to raise awareness about how the needs of evangelical women can be met better, as well as how to strengthen already existing ties between church women and transition house workers. I am also optimistic that at least some of the communities within which I have worked will use the research results to help them develop better strategies for meeting the needs of abused women both within the faith community and the communities in which they live. In this way, the research will work to change the status quo, a process which I believe has already begun through the interview process, during which countless women have said "you have really made me think about this issue." Such "conscientization" is the first step to change and action (Mies, 1983:127).

Finally, it was my hope that this research would reveal some of the commonalities between evangelical women (some of whom describe themselves as feminists), and their secular "sisters" in their struggle to meet the needs of abused women. Revealing common ground may work to counteract the sometimes exclusionary politics of feminism which often works to label all Conservative Protestant women as "right wing," and thus minimizes any contribution they might make to the overall emancipation of women, including the struggle to end violence against women. These considerations of feminist method and methodology were not only part of the initial design phase of the research, but remained an element of the process of the research as I conducted the interviews and analyzed the data.[4]

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Although their first wave activism was more likely rooted in maternal feminism than equality-based feminism, evangelical women were integral to gaining suffrage in Canada.[5] (Kealey, 1979; Matheson and Lang, 1976) Maternal feminism supported suffrage on the basis that, as the moral guardians of society, women should have the vote in order to preserve moral integrity (Kealey, 1979; Gorham, 1979:59; Mitchinson, 1979). Without the vote, they could not completely fulfil this duty. Suffrage was not the only focus of evangelical women's activism during the first wave of feminism: they also worked to establish social welfare programmes (Pederson,1995:323). Also known as domestic or social feminism, maternal feminism "refers to the conviction that women's societal role as mother gives her the duty and the right to participate in the public sphere." (Kealey, 1979:7) For evangelical women, maternal feminism combined with their evangelical worldview to promote public service in a variety of ways.

In contrast to those women who supported

suffrage on the basis of women's moral superiority, equality feminism during the first wave was based on a more general commitment to a greater role for women in society. As we shall see later, it is this version of feminism which seems to be most likely to be supported by evangelical women today. Eventually, however, those who argued for women's greater participation in public life based on their unique qualifications as mothers and wives overshadowed the equality feminists (Roberts, 1979:19;Gorham, 1979:70).[6] A concern for human, rather than women's, welfare became the focus of social action, and the feminist movement went into relative dormancy for nearly four decades. The first wave of feminism foreshadowed two things in the feminist struggles of years to come. The first was the reemergence of maternal feminism as relational and biologically based feminism using more sophisticated interpretations of psychology and physiology in relation to women. The second was the ever present tendency in the feminist movement to succumb to humanism. Susan Bordo discusses the dominance of humanism at the end of the first wave of feminism (1990:151), and alerts us to the dangers of becoming complacent about the need for feminism.

The revival of feminism was prompted in part by women's anger over male domination of the civil rights and the socialist movements of the sixties (Rhode, 1989:55). Excluded from leadership and strategic roles, women began to assert their desire to be heard. As the new wave began, an issue which emerged as a central concern was women's lack of control over their own bodies,[7] particularly in relation to reproduction.[8]

The focus of second wave feminism brought the movement more directly into opposition with conservative Protestant ideology. As women's ability to access the paid labour force became a focus of feminist activism, many women who worked as full-time homemakers began to feel that their work was being denigrated. A previous cause for celebration--prowess in the domestic sphere, was now cause for embarrassment. The focus on sameness and androgyny in the early part of the second wave was in contrast to the evangelical worldview's positing of God-ordained, distinct, roles for women. As feminism became increasingly associated with pro-abortion activism, the ideological differences between evangelicals and feminists widened. As a result, evangelical women did not have the same level of involvement in round two of the feminist struggle as they had had in the first wave, and the gulf between feminists and evangelical women has sometimes been rather large.

Both feminists and evangelical Christians accuse the other of "false consciousness" (although evangelical Christians are not likely to use this phrase). Feminists sometimes see evangelical women as being duped by a patriarchal religious ideology which prevents Conservative Protestant women from realizing their full potential. On the other hand, evangelical women sometimes view feminists as adhering to an ideology which promotes self-centredness and "militant" behaviour. Yet, interestingly, for both groups service for a "cause" is a hallmark. For evangelical women, the "cause" is ultimately Christ, but some evangelical women translate ideology into support for women's equality by citing Christ's behaviour in relation to women and by referring to scripture which supports the equality of women.

As Debra Kaufman points out in her study of Orthodox Jewish women, accusations of false consciousness are hardly productive. She argues that what is missing in feminists' characterizations of women who are committed to patriarchal settings as suffering from false consciousness "is the understanding that women are often simultaneously victims and agents, subjects and object. Theoretical categories cannot distinguish between an 'authentic' and 'alienated' woman's experience. Vital human experiences cannot be reduced to abstract orthodoxies--feminist or religious" (1991:68).[9] It is for this reason that it is important to pay close attention to how women who adhere to conservative religious ideologies themselves describe their own experiences and their understandings of alternative worldviews like feminism.[10]

COLLABORATORS OR RESISTORS?

Presumably, if feminism is in opposition to the conservative agenda of the New Right, then we

might at first think that there would be little support amongst evangelical women for feminism. But, the results of this research challenge that notion, and lead to the conclusion that evangelicalism, at least among women, is not a bastion of support for New Right policies and agendas.[11] In the context of religion, the New Right has been most closely associated with conservative Protestantism, specifically evangelicalism and especially fundamentalism. Religious support for the right is focused on social traditionalism, especially a commitment to the rhetoric of "traditional family values." However, to equate adherence to a conservative Protestant worldview support for the New Right agenda would be a mistake.

Like any group of people who subscribe to a common ideology, evangelical women are diverse (cf.Nason-Clark and Belanger, 1993). Although the women in this study are guided by Conservative Protestant ideology, they are not monolithic in their response to it. Among the group of women who participated in this research there exist basically three groups, which have been identified as "traditionalists", "moderates", and "liberals." These "ideal types" are not unique to my research: Nancy Ammerman has used them in her research with congregations (1995), and Lyn Gesch identifies three similar groups (traditionalists, moderates and feminists) in her study of mainstream religious groups (1995). In the following sections I will describe three participants whose views are representative of these three groups. I will then offer some insights on the ways in which these three positions may support or oppose New Right ideology. By using case studies to frame the discussion, we can gain a more complete picture of the complexities of this group of women who describe themselves as evangelicals. This approach has been used successfully by other researchers who study women and religion (cf. Stacey, 1990 ; Kaufman, 1991).

TRADITIONALISTS

Eileen is a fifty-two-year-old mother of three children, all of whom are young adults who no longer live at home. When I ask Eileen what feminism means to her, she says "militant-braburners. I think they have ruined it for those of us who wanted to stay home with our children." Can one be both a feminist and a Christian? "Well, since most feminists wouldn't call their husbands the head of the home, then no, I don't think so." She tells me that Christian women must obey the Bble, which clearly sets out the man as the head of the household. Though she has heard some Christian women call themselves feminists, she is skeptical about whether the two are compatible. "Would you use the label feminist to describe yourself?" I ask, although I am quite sure I already know the answer. "No!" she responds abruptly.

Eileen is representative of the group of women amongst evangelicals who are very traditional in their approach to women's roles and more literal in their interpretation of biblical prescriptions. This group might be characterized as fundamentalist, although only one participant actually used that word to describe herself. This group represents about 10% of the women interviewed in this study. These women responded negatively to questions such as "the feminist movement has brought about many positive changes for women" and see themselves as being in opposition to feminists. To them, there is a clear, biblically prescribed hierarchy or natural order which, in descending order is God, man, woman and children. Traditionalists believe that women are God-ordained to be mothers and full-time homemakers. In this model, men are the "head" of the household. This traditional model is upheld by such well-known evangelicals as the American, Beverley LaHaye, who writes:

> The woman who is truly Spirit-filled will want to be totally submissive to her husband. Regardless of what the current trend towards "Women's Lib" advocates, anything which departs from God's design for women is not right. Submission does not mean that she is owned and operated by her husband but that he is the "head" or "manager." A manager knows how to develop and use the gifts in others. This is what God intended the husband to do for the wife. He helps her develop to her

> greatest potential. He keeps track of the overall picture but puts her in charge of areas where she functions well. This is a truly liberated woman. Submission is God's design for women (1976:71).

It is this traditional approach which has attracted the attention of secular feminists, and which is the source of much of their criticism of Conservative Protestantism's approach to women. Yet, as is illustrated by the moderates and the liberals, the traditional perspective of submission is one end of a spectrum of conceptualizations of submission. Traditionalist evangelicals are most clearly in opposition to feminist ideals, however described (liberal, radical, and so on), of the three groups described in this paper. There is seemingly little, if any, common ground for collaboration or dialogue between traditionalists and feminists. As a feminist researcher who is not an evangelical, I found it was this group of women who most clearly illustrated the contrasts between my worldview and the evangelical worldview. The notion that the male partner in a relationship should have the final say in a decision simply because he is male is offensive to me. However, even this is too simplistic a conceptualization of the traditionalist approach. The women I interviewed were strong, articulate, competent and confident, which is certainly consistent with the image of women who speak out on behalf of the New Right agenda.

It is obvious that among this small group of women their Christian worldview supports New Right ideology. Not only are they anti-feminist, which is partially manifested in their support for narrowly prescribed roles for women, but they also expressed opposition to abortion and anti-gay and lesbian sentiments. However, it is important to remember that this group of women represents only a small proportion of the women interviewed. Also, they were no more pious in their expressions of religiosity (church attendance, church involvement) than were the moderates or the liberals. While they are "collaborators" with the New Right, they do not represent the majority of evangelical women.

MODERATES

Faith is a forty-three-year-old mother of four children. When I ask her what she thinks feminism means, she replies cautiously "well, I think there is a good side and a bad side to feminism." When I ask her about the "good side" she says that she thinks that when a woman does the same job as a man, she should get equal pay. She adds that she thinks she is equal to her husband, even though she does not work outside the home. Can one be both a feminist and a Christian? "Sure," says Faith, "as long as God comes first." She tells me that her views have changed over time, and while she used to see feminism only in a negative light, she has come to appreciate some of the advances feminism has brought for women. When I ask her whether she would describe herself as a feminist, she laughs "Well, I guess I would describe myself as a moderate, home-based feminist. But, I doubt that a true feminist would think that I can be a feminist, since I stay at home."

The second group, who make up the majority of the participants (approximately 80%), were more moderate than the traditionalists in their approach. They were less likely to subscribe to headship and submission without qualification. By qualification, I mean that while they might affirm the headship of their husbands, they interpreted submission in their daily lives as partnership, in which decisions about work, family and church were made together with their husbands. Moderates also expressed a willingness to embrace feminism, although they were careful to delineate those aspects of feminism which they could not reconcile with their Christian commitment. For example, because feminism is sometimes perceived as promoting self-interest, this brings it into conflict with one of the dominant ideologies of evangelical Christianity, often expressed as the "JOY" formula, or "Jesus, others, then you." This group of evangelical women emphasized service to others as one of the key mechanisms for demonstrating their faith, and thus attention to self-actualization, which they would call "selfishness," is in direct opposition to their worldview.

For this group, the key to accepting

feminism is moderation. Participation in events which involve public protests, marches or "extremism" is not viewed favourably, nor is "male-bashing." But, pay equity and equal opportunity for women in the paid labour force were endorsed as positive feminist goals. As a feminist myself, I was often surprised at the narrow conceptualization by evangelical women of the feminists: I had not thought of myself as a man-hating, bra burning, placard carrying, rude person.

However, I was also surprised that one in four of the participants was willing to describe herself as a feminist, and a further 20% were "qualified" feminists who distanced themselves from particular activities they associated with feminism like "man-hating." Among some of these participants there was also a perception that one could not be both a full-time homemaker and a feminist, a difficulty which the feminist movement must address if it is to be accessible to women who are not employed in the paid labour force. Amongst these women were also a group who refused to call themselves feminists because, as they explained, they were uncomfortable with the negative connotations of the label "feminist." Though they supported the goals of feminism, they felt that control of the meaning of feminism had been appropriated by the media and secular culture generally, with the result that feminism was most often associated with negative qualities. Further, this group of moderates was sometimes accepting of stereotypes about feminism.

Do these evangelical women support a New Right agenda? They are critical of extremism in any form, and they do not accept the narrowly constructed roles for women and men positied by the traditionalists, nor is their stance on abortion expressed in either/or terms. While they are conservative in many ways, it would be misleading to equate that with support of the blatantly anti-feminist agenda of the New Right.

LIBERALS

Jennifer is a thirty-six-year old full-time teacher, who is also the mother of two children. By the time I get to the "feminist" section of the interview, she has already told me that she calls herself a Christian feminist. To Jennifer, feminism is reponsible for bringing society out of the "dark ages". Though she admits that there are things about feminism that she doesn't like--the move to call God "she" for example, and the "man-hating" version of feminism, she is comfortable with many aspects of the feminist movement. Obviously, it is possible to be both a feminist and a Christian, "after all", she says, "didn't Jesus Himself honor women and work for women's equality?"

The third group were more liberal in their interpretations of evangelical ideology than either traditionalists or moderates. They were more likely to reject notions of headship and submission, seeing the Christian marriage as a partnership with no need for lip service to those evangelical doctrines which can be interpreted to diminish women's equality. This group of women were also more likely to call themselves Christian feminists. They also were the most likely group to challenge or question the patriarchal organization of the church. This group of women was able to reconcile feminism and evangelicalism to bring both worldviews to bear on their everyday lives. How "radical" their feminism is, is not easily answered based on the data at hand, but it is certainly a question worthy of further research.

Evangelical feminists have interpreted the dogma of submission rather differently than do traditionalists. Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty contextualize Paul's call to submit in the cultural milieu in which it emerged. Moreover, they argue that there is nothing unique in Christianity's call for women to submit (1974:99). Christian feminists like Scanzoni and Hardesty (1974), Dorothy Pape (1976) and Faith Martin (1988) de-emphasize submission between husband and wife, arguing that the call to submit is intended to apply to all Christian's relations with each other and that men and women should be equal within the marriage relationship. Scanzoni and Hardesty argue that submission is mutual, and does not imply a hierarchical relationship between men and women. They recognize that the doctrine of submission is often misinterpreted both within in the church, and in secular descriptions of it:

> The picture of Christian marriage usually given is one of an autocrat lording over a docile child-wife who has no mind of her own, no interests but those of her husband and children, and little inclination toward personal growth. It is dangerous teaching and can only work against the Christian principles of unselfishness, love, and striving toward Christian maturity -- principles that God asks of all believers, whether male or female (1974:102).

In the minds of some Christian feminists, even a reinterpretation of submission to emphasize mutual submission is dangerous. Because of its interpretive baggage, the language of submission it simply too loaded.

Although there is a feminist presence within conservative Protestantism, the impact of feminist evangelicals should not be overestimated as their numbers are relatively small (Hunter,1987). That being said, despite their small numbers, Christian feminists may be facilitating significant changes in the way evangelical churches conceptualize and transmit gender roles. This group, who represented about 10% of the participants, was likely to support full participation by women both in church lay leadership and clerical positions.

Clearly, this group of evangelical women cannot be viewed as "collaborators" with the New Right. In contrast to the moderates, who are likely to reject an affiliation with the New Right both on the basis of extremism and its ideological stance toward women, the liberals are in sharp ideological contrast to the agenda of the New Right. They are "resistors".

CONCLUSION

The categories discussed above are loose, and intended only as a broad characterization: for example, not all women who rejected submission called themselves Christian feminists. The point is that self-declared evangelical Christian women range from those who adhere to a traditionalist stance to those who are somewhat liberal in their interpretations of evangelical doctrines. While each of these responses could be characterized as "evangelical" and thus fall within Conservative Protestant ideology, they are, clearly, diverse. Like the diversity to be found among secular feminists, evangelical women translate evangelical ideology in ways which help them to make sense of their own experiences as mothers, wives, volunteers, and members of the paid labour force.

From a feminist praxis standpoint, this research raised a number of problematic issues. First, it is troubling that we have so little control over the dissemination of the feminist agenda; it was clear that much of what the participants knew about feminism was gleaned from the media. Second, the self-exclusion by women who were full-time homemakers simply because of that status was disturbing. These women perceived themselves as not being "allowed" to be feminists. Whether this has been a message given by feminists, or an interpretation of feminism offered by anti-feminists, it is a reality that must be dealt with. Thirdly, if we insist on labelling women "New Right" collaborators simply because they profess a particular religious conviction, we are alienating a potentially powerful group of allies in the fight for women's equality. To be sure, there are women who support the New Right agenda within conservative Protestant culture, but among this sample of evangelical women, they were a small minority.

The apparent fractionalization of the feminist movement is cause for concern. First wave feminism was lulled into silence in part because of such divisions. Can we afford to be silenced again?

ENDNOTES

1. There are a variety of opinions about this: while some see such an approach as compromising objectivity, others see it as an integral component of sociological research. For an explication of the latter position, see Porter (1995).

2. *Amazons,Bluestockings and Crones:A Feminist Dictionary* defines patriarchy as a term which is used to "characterize abstractly the structures and social arrangements within which women's oppression is elaborated" (Kramarae andTreichler, 1992:323). See also Meyers (1988) for a detailed discussion of the uses and misuses of the term.

3. During the past year, the Team's members have given educational sessions within faith communities approximately 30 times.

4. The research was also shaped by my extensive work with the Religion and Violence Research Team. Interviews with clergy, transition house workers, and focus groups with church women prepared me my own research both in terms of design and content.

5. Natural rights feminists supported not only an increased public role for women, but also believed that women have the right to define themselves autonomously (Kealey, 1979:7).

6. Scott points out that we should not write the history of feminisms as "a story of oscillations between demands for equality and affirmations of difference" (1990:145). Such 'snapshots' are too general to accurately portray the processes of feminism. Clearly, the suffragist movement and its theoretical underpinnings cannot be neatly categorized. Gorham also makes this point (1976:52-53). It is also difficult to know what women's motivations for involvement were. Some may simply have seen maternal feminism as the easiest means to an end.

7. For one example see *Roles Women Play: Readings Toward Women's Liberation* (Garskof, 1971).

8. This is not to imply that all women were united in this effort. Issues such as abortion were and continue to be sources of division among feminists.

9. In addition, such criticisms ignore the long history of biblical criticism by Christian women who have sought to reinterpret the Bible in ways which eliminate patriarchal interpretations (see Lerner, 1993).

10. Both the participants in this research and Christian feminist scholars resist the conflation between evangelicism and new right politics. (see Scanzoni and Hardesty, 1974).

11. One of the problems of critiques of the New Right has been the tendency to simply equate conservative Protestantism with support for the New Right. For example, Shirley Radl chooses to explore statements by Jerry Falwell, who might be said to be on the far right of the right. Radl then makes conclusions about religious affiliations with the New Right based on the statements of Falwell (1983). Yet, as Shriver points out, many evangelicals do not support the extremism of the New Right or the Religious Right.

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