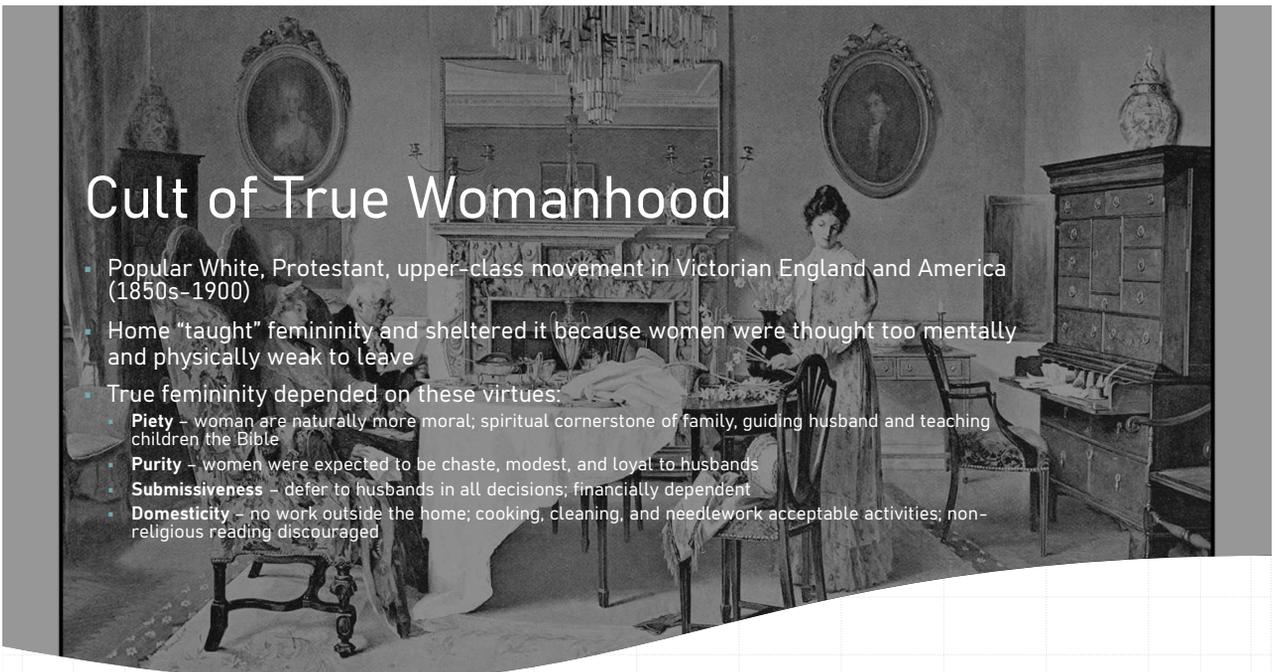




# The Rise of Biblical Womanhood

History of Women in Christianity  
MRCC Fall '21

1



# Cult of True Womanhood

- Popular White, Protestant, upper-class movement in Victorian England and America (1850s-1900)
- Home "taught" femininity and sheltered it because women were thought too mentally and physically weak to leave
- True femininity depended on these virtues:
  - **Piety** - women are naturally more moral; spiritual cornerstone of family, guiding husband and teaching children the Bible
  - **Purity** - women were expected to be chaste, modest, and loyal to husbands
  - **Submissiveness** - defer to husbands in all decisions; financially dependent
  - **Domesticity** - no work outside the home; cooking, cleaning, and needlework acceptable activities; non-religious reading discouraged

2

## “True Woman” becomes “New Woman”

- Feminism developed as reaction against domesticity
- Rise of independent “New Woman”
  - Work outside the home if personally satisfying (from 4m in 1890 to 7.4m in 1910)
  - Access to education (early 1900s)
  - Right to vote (1920)
- New Women were involved in public affairs like Temperance and Suffrage



3



4



## Resurgence of Domesticity Cult

- After WWII, many Americans sought a return to pre-war life, as idealized on TV
  - America nuclear family was “invented” between 1920-1950
  - Before, multigenerational families with multiple breadwinners had been norm
- Unlike Victorian era, no place for single women or cohabitation
- Working mothers blamed for diverse and juvenile delinquency

5

- Civil Rights Movement drew attention to gender inequities
- Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women (1961)
- Equal Pay Act (1963)
- Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963)
- National Organization for Women (NOW)'s Bill of Rights for Women
  1. Equal rights amendment to Constitution
  2. Banning of sex discrimination in employment
  3. Maternity-leave rights and SS benefits
  4. Tax-deductions for home and child-care expenses
  5. Subsidized childcare
  6. Equal and unsegregated education
  7. Opportunities for women in poverty
- Equal Rights Amendment (failed, 1978)



## Reaction: Second-Wave Feminism

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## Christian (anti-)Feminism

"Females are uniquely suited for their domestic duties of home maintenance and child care, and conversely the domination of the public sphere by males is justified by their inherently superior aggressive, analytical, and logical abilities."

(summary of Schlafly's views by Susan Marshall)



Beverly LaHaye



Phyllis Schlafly

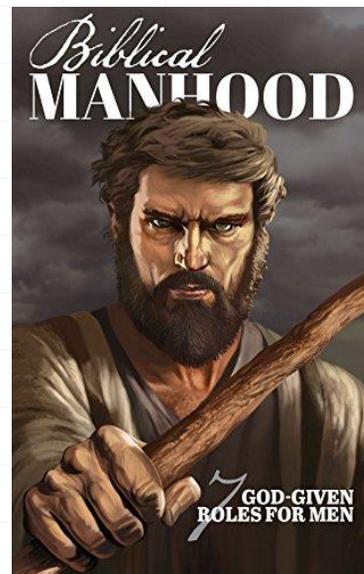


Elisabeth Elliot

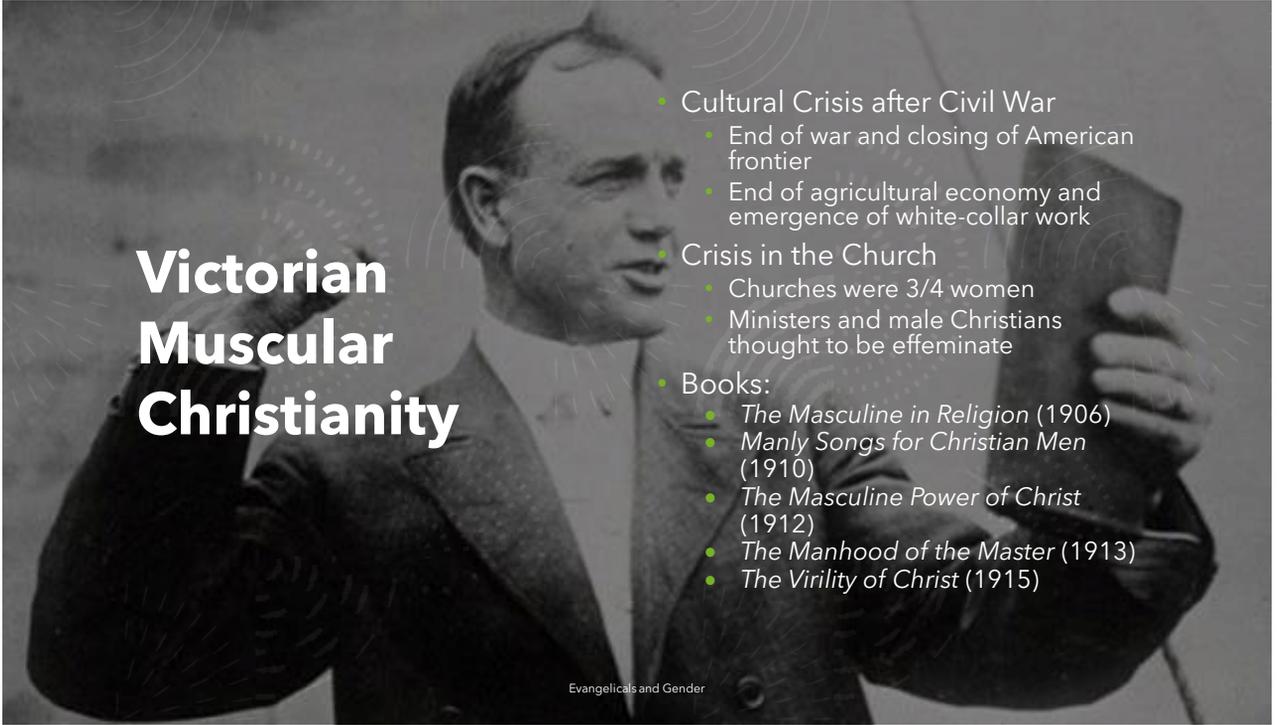
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## Crisis of Manhood

- Response to American "moral bankruptcy" after feminism, *Roe v. Wade* and gay activism in the 1980s
- Evangelical Leaders argued for a strong hierarchical view of life rooted in patriarchal authority and female submission
  - Gordon Dalbey, *Healing the Masculine Soul*
  - Steve Farrar, *Point Man: How a Man Can Lead His Family*
  - Stu Weber, *Tender Warrior*
  - John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*
  - John Eldridge, *Wild at Heart: Discovering the Secret of a Man's Soul*



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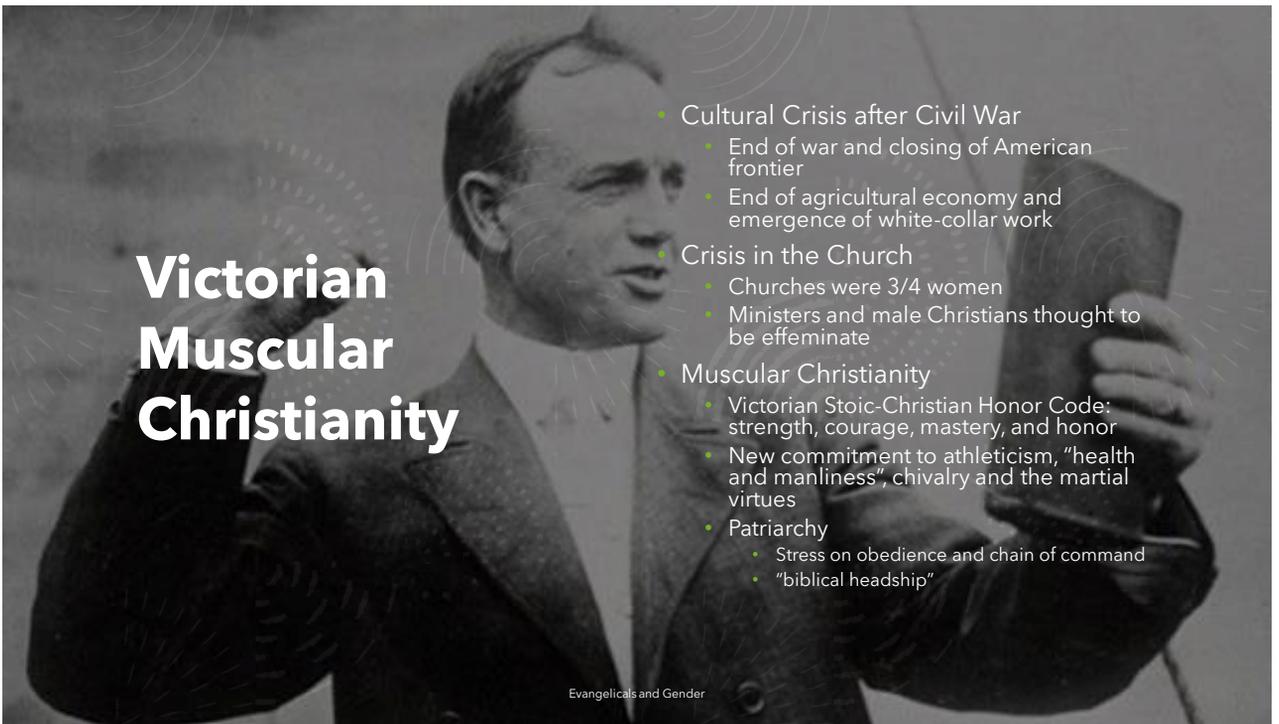


# Victorian Muscular Christianity

- Cultural Crisis after Civil War
  - End of war and closing of American frontier
  - End of agricultural economy and emergence of white-collar work
- Crisis in the Church
  - Churches were 3/4 women
  - Ministers and male Christians thought to be effeminate
- Books:
  - *The Masculine in Religion* (1906)
  - *Manly Songs for Christian Men* (1910)
  - *The Masculine Power of Christ* (1912)
  - *The Manhood of the Master* (1913)
  - *The Virility of Christ* (1915)

Evangelicals and Gender

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# Victorian Muscular Christianity

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- Muscular Christianity
  - Victorian Stoic-Christian Honor Code: strength, courage, mastery, and honor
  - New commitment to athleticism, "health and manliness", chivalry and the martial virtues
  - Patriarchy
    - Stress on obedience and chain of command
    - "biblical headship"

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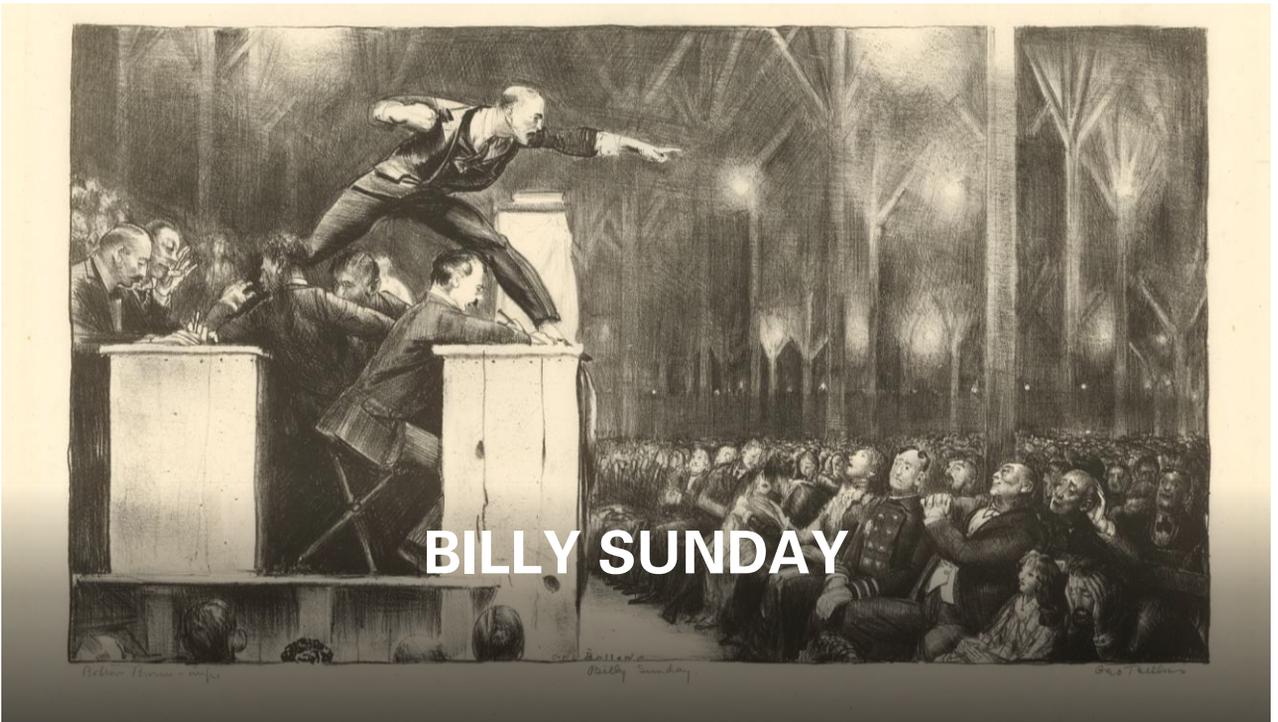


The danger of this growing effeminacy, men like Roosevelt thought, was that it "let those who stand for evil have all the virile qualities," while "gentlemen who were very nice, very refined, who shook their heads over political corruption and discussed it in drawing rooms and parlors were wholly unable to grapple with real men in real life." Who would secure the country's ideals in an age of "over-softness" and "over-sentimentality," Roosevelt asked. "Unless we keep the barbarian virtues," he warned, "gaining the civilized ones will be of little avail."

## Teddy Roosevelt

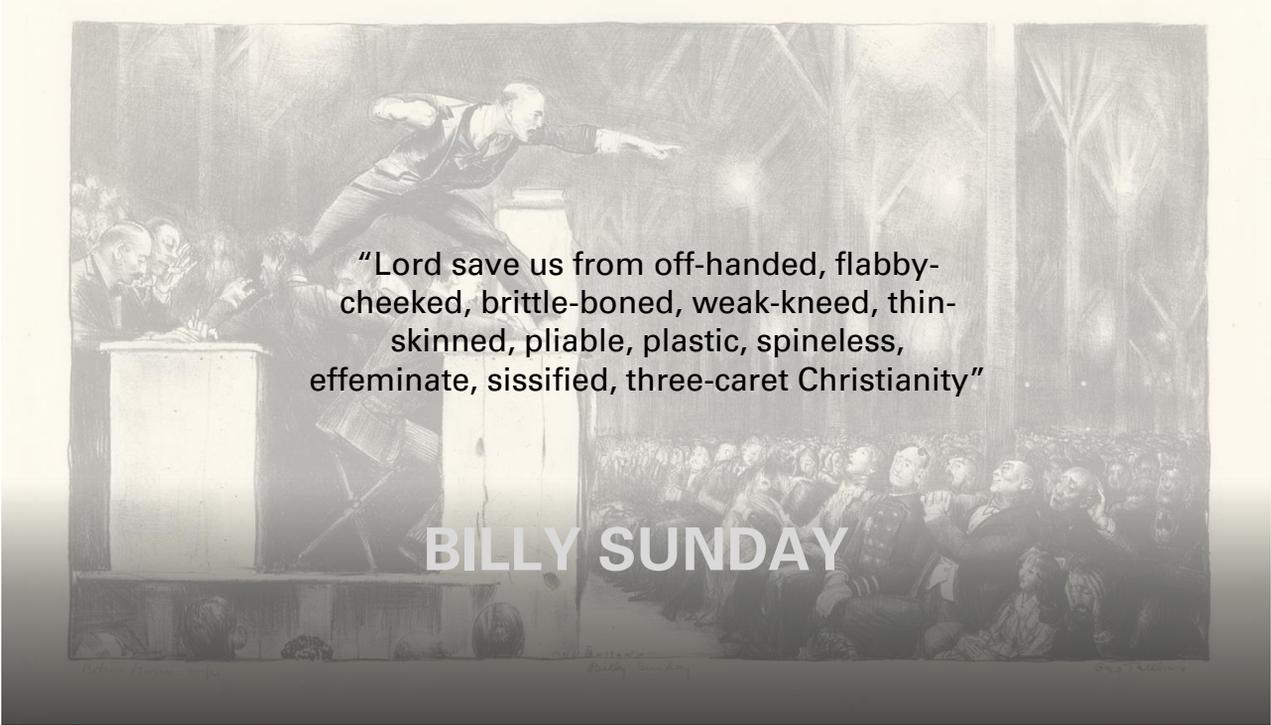
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## BILLY SUNDAY

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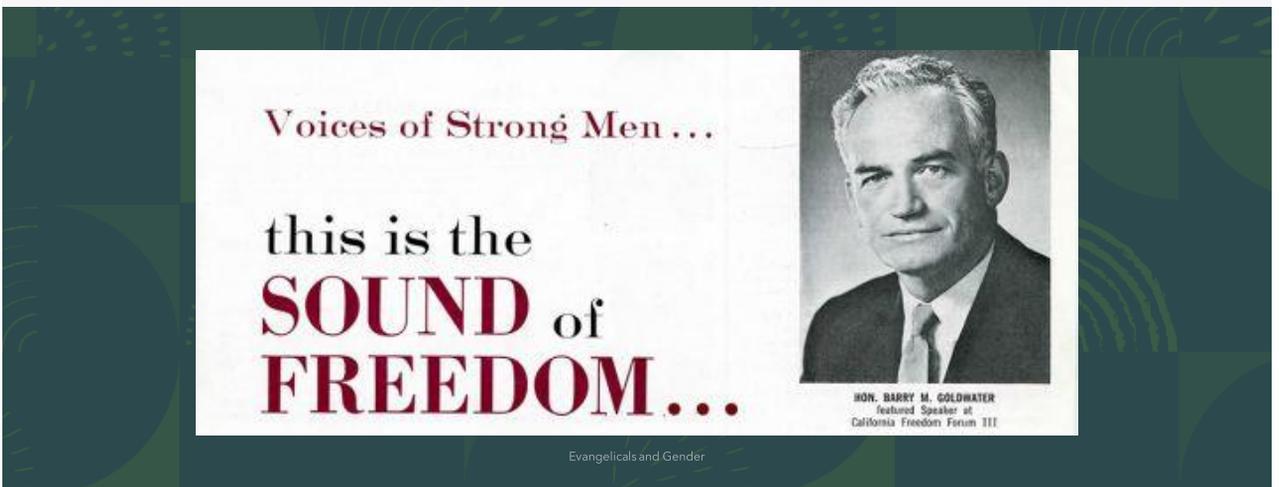
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# Evangelicals Seek Power

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## Pepperdine Freedom Forum (1961)



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# The Silent Majority

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# Vietnam War and New Crisis of Manhood

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## Focus on the Family (1977)

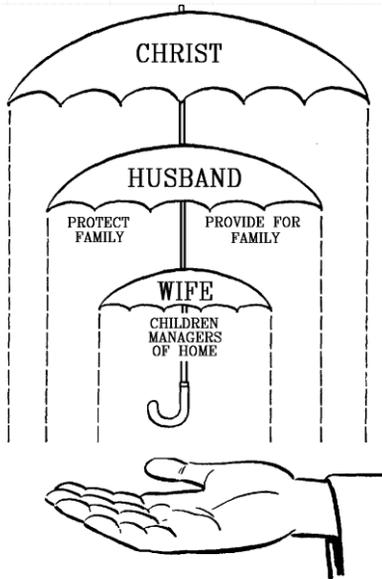
- James Dobson was a child psychologist with a Nazarene background
- *Dare to Discipline* (1970)
  - *Children are naturally sinful, inclined toward rebellion*
  - *Blamed sexual revolution, divorce, and disintegration of family for children's troubles*
  - *Order can be restored by re-establishing distinct gender roles*
- Began full-time "Focus on the Family" seminars in 1973
- Combined elements of anti-communism, militarism, and patriarchy
- Important figure in rise of "religious right"



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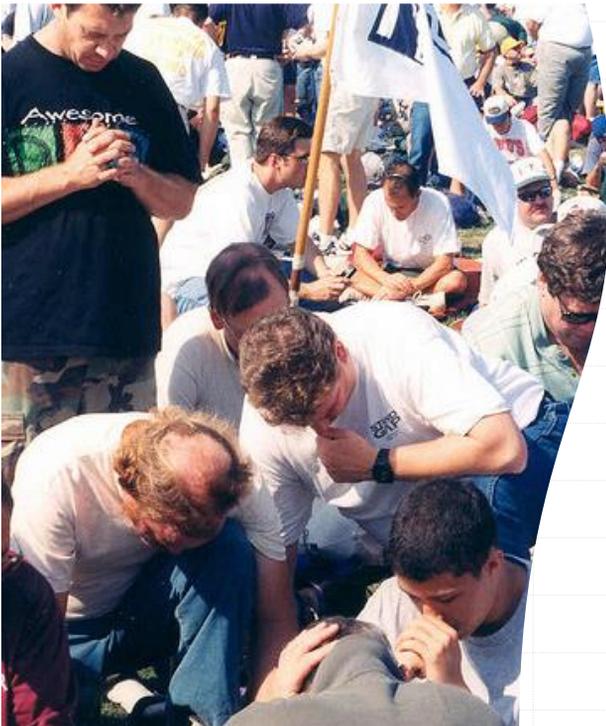
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## Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

- Led by Wayne Grudem and John Piper
- Danvers Statement (1989)
  - Women were created to submit
  - Blamed feminism for “widespread uncertainty and confusion in our culture regarding the complementary differences between masculinity and femininity”
  - Coined term “complementarianism” to describe their position in 1988
- *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (1991)

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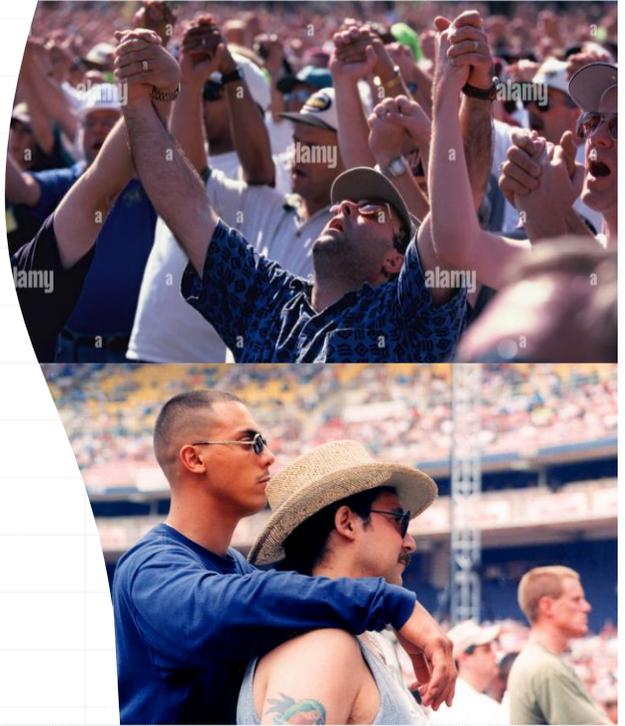
## Promise Keepers (1990)

- honor Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and obedience to God's Word through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- pursue vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises.
- practice spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity.
- build strong marriages and families through love, protection and biblical values.
- support the mission of his church by honoring and praying for his pastor and by actively giving his time and resources.
- reach beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity.
- influence his world, being obedient to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission

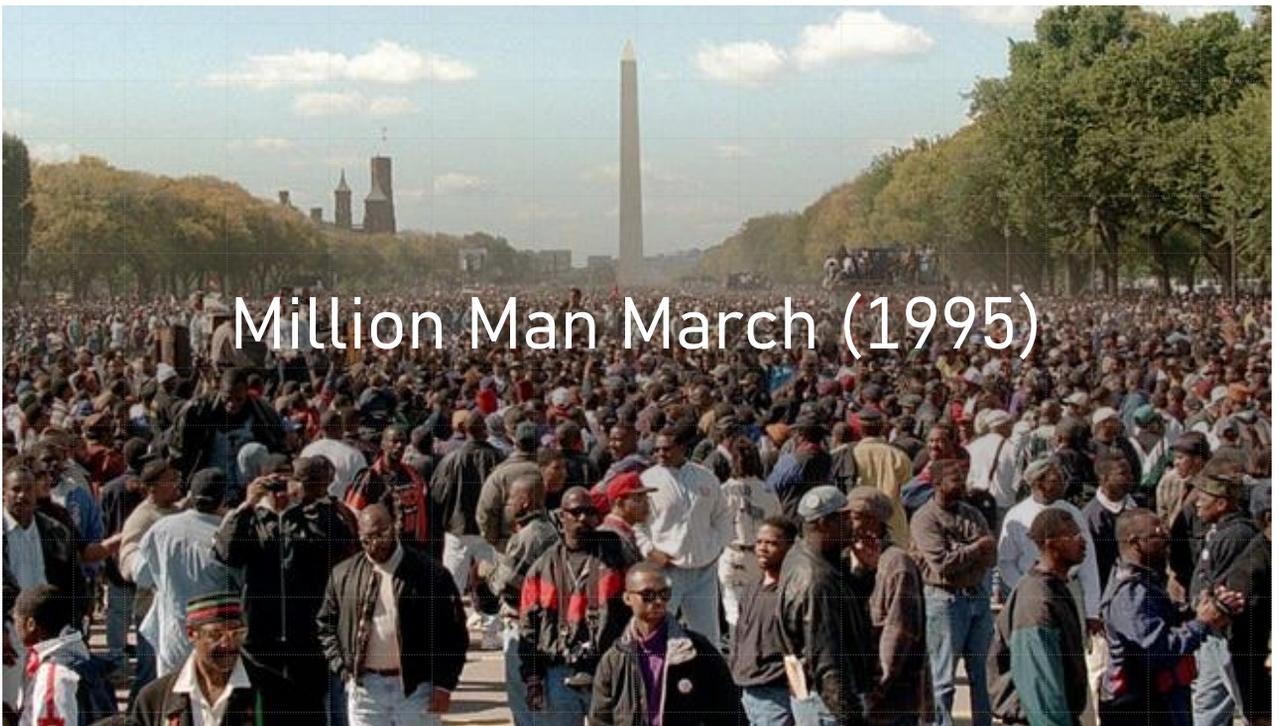
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## “Soft Patriarchy”

- Concerned with male headship and responsibility, but as “servant leaders”
- Encouraged men to become more expressive and in-touch with feelings



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Million Man March (1995)

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# Spectrum of Beliefs

|                                 | Roles in Home | Roles in Church | Roles at Work |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Patriarchal</b>              | Different     | Different       | Different     |
| <b>Strong Complementarian</b>   | Different     | Different       | Similar       |
| <b>Moderate Complementarian</b> | Different     | Differences     | Differences   |
| <b>Soft Complementarian</b>     | Similar       | Similar         | Identical     |
| <b>Moderate Egalitarian</b>     | Similar       | Identical       | Identical     |
| <b>Strong Egalitarian</b>       | Identical     | Identical       | Identical     |
| <b>Feminism</b>                 | Different     | Different       | Different     |

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## Soft vs. Hard Complementarianism

- Soft
  - Tim Keller
  - Men and women have distinct gender roles in church and home, though not in society
  - Men practice “headship” and arbitrate major decisions
- Hard
  - Marc Driscoll
  - Men and women have distinct gender roles in church, home, and society

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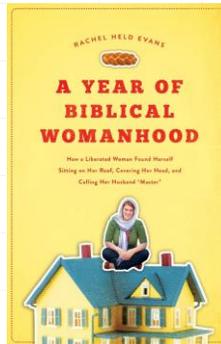
# Pastoral Patriarchy

- Ted Haggard, New Life Church: sex-abuse
- Mark Driscoll: "domineering, verbally violent, arrogant, and quick-tempered."
  - the "Pussified Nation" rant (2000) critical of feminism, homosexual behavior, and 'sensitive emasculated' men", and called for "real men" to rise up in the spirit of Scottish warrior William Wallace
  - See "Rise and Fall of Mars Hill" podcast
- Darrin Patrick: "sins included lack of self-control, manipulation and lying, domineering, misuse of power, and refusal of personal accountability"
- CJ Mahaney, Sovereign Grace Churches: sex-abuse scandal
- James MacDonald, Harvest Bible Chapel: bullying, sexual harassment, authoritarian behavior and lack of transparency in finances, as well as misappropriation of church funds
- Jerry Falwell, Jr., Liberty University: sexual misconduct, financial mismanagement
- Bill Hybels, Willow Creek Community Church: decades of sexual misconduct

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## A Year of Biblical Womanhood (2012)



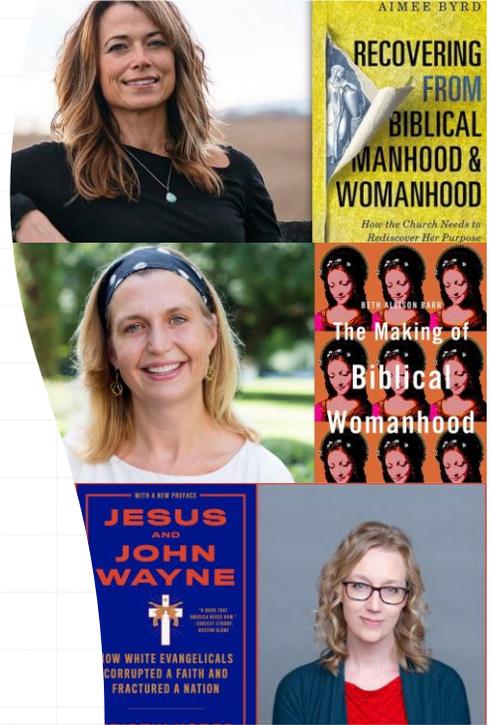
"Strong-willed and independent, Rachel Held Evans couldn't sew a button on a blouse before she embarked on a radical life experiment – a year of biblical womanhood. Intrigued by the traditionalist resurgence that led many of her friends to abandon their careers to assume traditional gender roles in the home, Evans decides to try it for herself, vowing to take all of the Bible's instructions for women as literally as possible for a year."

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## More Challenges

- Kristin Kobes Du Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation* (2020)
- Aimee Byrd, *Recovering From Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (2020)
- Beth Alison Barr, *The Making of Biblical Womanhood* (2021)

"Complementarianism is patriarchy, and patriarchy is about power. Neither have ever been about Jesus." (Barr)



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Sections  The Washington Post  
*Democracy Dies in Darkness* Subscribe S

Religion

# On the heels of her split with Southern Baptists, Beth Moore apologizes for supporting a theology that restricts women

She tweets: 'I plead your forgiveness for how I just submitted to it and supported it and taught it.'



MOST READ RELIGION >



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**Beth Moore**   
@BethMooreLPM



Let me be blunt. When you functionally treat complementarianism—a doctrine of MAN—as if it belongs among the matters of 1st importance, yea, as a litmus test for where one stands on inerrancy & authority of Scripture, you are the ones who have misused Scripture. You went too far.

8:25 AM · Apr 7, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

1,061 Retweets 493 Quote Tweets 11.9K Likes

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**Beth Moore**   
@BethMooreLPM · Apr 7



Replying to @BethMooreLPM

I beg your forgiveness where I was complicit. I could not see it for what it was until 2016. I plead your forgiveness for how I just submitted to it and supported it and taught it. I trusted that the motives were godly. I have not lost my mind. Nor my doctrine. Just my naivety.

 200

 265

 7.3K



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## Saddleback Church ordains three women, draws criticism

MAY 11, 2021 | SOURCE: RELIGION NEWS SERVICE



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## Reality

"[Biblical headship] plays a strategically important yet largely symbolic role in the lives of ordinary evangelicals. While husbands retain the status of head of the household, the roles of evangelical men and women in decision making, parenting, and employment demonstrate that, for the most part, evangelical family life reflects the pragmatic egalitarianism of biblical feminists while retaining the symbolic hierarchy of gender-essentialist evangelicals"

(Sally Gallagher, *Evangelical Identity and Gendered Family Life*, 2003)

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PODCAST

THE  
**RISE & FALL**  
OF MARS HILL

# The Rise and Fall of Mars Hill

Founded in 1996, Seattle's Mars Hill Church was poised to be an influential, undeniable force in evangelicalism—that is until its spiraling collapse in 2014. The church and its charismatic founder, Mark Driscoll, had a promising start. But the perils of power, conflict, and Christian celebrity eroded and eventually shipwrecked both the preacher and his multimillion-dollar platform.

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