

Awakening the Lay Evangelical Mind:
Francis Schaeffer, James Houston, and the Christian Study Center Movement
in North America

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
INTRODUCTION	1

PART I: FIRST GENERATION: INNOVATION

Chapter

ONE	BUILDING A SHELTER, LAUNCHING A MOVEMENT: THE SCHAEFFERS' L'ABRI AS A SPIRITUAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND ASPRIATIONAL COMMUNITY	38
	New Vistas: The Schaeffers' Break with Separatist Fundamentalism, 1953-1955	42
	Building a Shelter: L'Abri's Formation and Early Years, 1955-1960	46
	Open Doors: L'Abri and the Schaeffers' Rise to International Fame, 1960-1974	62
	Shifting Scenes: Film, Politics, and L'Abri, 1975-1984.....	67
	The Ethos of a Shelter: Analyzing a Multifaceted Community and Its Legacy	74
	Variations on Christian Community at L'Abri	76
	L'Abri as a Spiritual Community	79
	L'Abri as an Intellectual Community	83
	L'Abri as an Aspirational Community	91
	A Final Aspiration: Recreating L'Abri	100
TWO	REGENT COLLEGE: JAMES HOUSTON AND THE MAKING OF LAY THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION.....	102
	Founding Regent College	104
	Making Regent College	109
	Houston's Models for Regent College.....	110
	Houston's Vision for Regent College	122
	The Ethos of Regent College in its First Decade	133
	Time, Place, and Hospitality	133
	Gender and Lay Theological Education	141
	Evangelical Openness	147
	The Enduring Influence of James Houston.....	149

PART II: SECOND GENERATION: REPLICATION

THREE	<p>LAY THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR THE MASSES: R. C. SPROUL, THE LIGONIER VALLEY STUDY CENTER, AND THE VIDEO REVOLUTION.....155</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">The Ligonier Valley Study Center: Prehistory156</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">The Ligonier Valley Study Center: Early Years and Ethos168</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Community and Place171</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Lay Theological Education177</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Gendered Spaces181</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Reformed Theology185</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Ambition for Growth and Wider Influence188</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">The Video Revolution Comes to Stahlstown197</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Leaving Residential Learning Behind: The Transition from Study Center to Ligonier Ministries209</p>
FOUR	<p>REPLICATING REGENT: THE C. S. LEWIS INSTITUTE AND JAMES HOUSTON’S CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY CENTER MOVEMENT IN NORTH AMERICA215</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Stirrings of an Evangelical Study Center Movement215</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Developing Regent College as a Model for University Engagement.....218</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">“Regent College, East”225</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Regent-Sized Ambitions: From Cornerstone to C. S. Lewis College230</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Trimming the Sails: From C. S. Lewis College to C. S. Lewis Institute.....243</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">New Directions247</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Conclusion252</p>
FIVE	<p>LAY THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION BERKELEY STYLE: DAVID GILL AND THE TRANSITION FROM “RADICAL” FREE UNIVERSITY TO NEW COLLEGE BERKELEY254</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Hippies, Jesus, and Berkeley in the Late-1960s255</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><i>Right On</i>: The Underground Press and Lay Theological Education261</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">The Crucible: A Forum for Radical Christian Studies.....276</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">New College Berkeley: Berkeley’s own Graduate School for Lay Theological Education289</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Searching for Sustainable Lay Theological Education in Berkeley297</p>
SIX	<p>THE LAY EVANGELICAL MIND AND MR. JEFFERSON’S UNIVERSITY: THE CHARLOTTESVILLE CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STUDY314</p>

Establishing an Evangelical Presence: Daryl Richman and Action Ministries	315
Evangelical Para-Church Ministry Moves onto University Grounds	324
Founding a Study Center in Charlottesville, 1975-1976	334
Building an Evangelical Network in Charlottesville: Trinity Presbyterian Church	345
Between L'Abri and Regent College: The Center for Christian Study in its First Decade, 1977-1985	351
The Study Center's Uncertain Future, 1985-1986	366

PART III: THIRD GENERATION: NEW MODELS, ENDURING PARTNERSHIPS

SEVEN	BUILDING A NEW MODEL: DREW TROTTER, THE CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STUDY, AND THE CONSORTIUM OF CHRISTIAN STUDY CENTERS	370
	Expanding the CCS's Educational Goals	374
	Expanding the Chancellor Street House: Hospitality and the CCS as Place	388
	Expanding the Movement: The CCS and the Consortium of Christian Study Centers	404
CONCLUSION.....		420
ARCHIVES LIST		443
INTERVIEW LIST.....		444
BIBLIOGRAPHY		445

Abstract

This dissertation explores evangelical efforts to awaken and nurture the hearts *and* minds of lay evangelicals in North America through the development of a Christian study center movement that first garnered sustained evangelical attention in the late 1960s. Inspired by Francis Schaeffer's Swiss L'Abri and James Houston's Vancouver-based Regent College, a network of North American study centers emerged in the 1970s offering an array of educational options within community settings that were simultaneously spiritual, intellectual, and aspirational. Based in large part on the example of L'Abri and Regent College this second generation of study centers included learning communities in places as diverse as Washington D. C., Charlottesville, Virginia, Stahlstown, Pennsylvania, and Berkeley California. Of these communities it was the Charlottesville Center for Christian Study that exerted the greatest influence on the future of the North American Christian study center movement by providing a model for a third generation of university-based study centers, which were eventually linked through their involvement in the growing Consortium of Christian Study Centers. Because many of the study centers in the Consortium are located adjacent to elite universities, their influence within evangelicalism extends far beyond the campuses they serve.

In addition to charting many previously undocumented institutional histories, the case studies presented in this dissertation also add further nuance to our understanding of late-twentieth century evangelicalism, which far too often is characterized as overwhelmingly anti-intellectual or reduced to the history of the Religious Right. The latter shift is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the treatment of Francis Schaeffer, whose history has often been flattened to include only his post-1973 anti-abortion

crusade. Rather than following Schaeffer's late-in-life turn toward political activism, this narrative examines the legacy of his earlier work among a small, but disproportionately influential group of evangelical baby boomers and shows how Schaeffer, in addition to other advocates of lay theological education like James Houston and R. C. Sproul, changed the way many North American evangelicals thought about art, culture, and higher education.

In charting the history of Schaeffer, Houston, and the study center movement they inspired, this dissertation also brings to the fore a number of persistent tensions within North American, and especially US, evangelicalism. Efforts to develop more robust models of lay theological education forced study center leaders, and to a lesser extent their students, to face tensions associated with the handling of power, ambition, mass-media, the counterculture, upward mobility, and gender. As study center leaders wrestled to balance theological convictions and the everyday demands of sustaining educational communities they sought to address these tensions in sometimes-novel ways. In the process, they launched a movement that would do much to shape the minds, social networks, and aspirations of evangelicals for decades to come.

Acknowledgements

It takes a village to complete a dissertation—at least if one hopes to maintain one’s emotion, spiritual, vocational, and relational health during the process. While the stereotype of the doctoral student as an isolated being huddled over some musty book or document in a long-forgotten corner of the library has some basis in reality, the heroic myth of the solitary scholar venturing into new intellectual realms with only her intellect and personal stamina (and perhaps one trusty advisor) as companions seems to be a recipe for disappointment and perhaps disaster. In my experience the process is both a product of relationships and an opportunity for developing new and deeper relational ties. While I spent my fair share of time huddled over musty documents (literally, some were covered with orange and purple mold) and in virtual solitary confinement in archives and libraries, these times were made possible and enjoyable not simply because of their ability to sate my intellectual curiosity, but also because I knew I had a network of people behind me, a network composed of many who supported me long before this dissertation began to take shape. I have been looking forward to having a chance to acknowledge their help for a long time now.

What I did not know when I was a young undergraduate was that scholarship requires not only time and hard work but also money. The financial aspect of advanced study became evident to me when I entered graduate school at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Thanks to the seminary’s generous scholarships and financial aid I was able to commit myself to my studies far more than would have been the case had I had huge tuition bills looming over my head. Additionally, I was blessed to attend a great church during my time in seminary. Rick Osberg and the folks at Grace Church took me and my

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I doubt I would ever have realized my passion for scholarship or found my way into a PhD program were it not for the help of two very important individuals. Caleb Maskell offered me a model of scholarly vocation that was fresh, expansive, and inspiring. More than that he was willing to invest time in me, talking me through various parts of the process, from initial applications to ways of approaching and organizing my developing dissertation. When I needed a place to stay during a research trip my first call was always to Caleb. More often than not he knew someone with an extra couch or room in the city where I was headed.

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In addition to teachers and professors there have been many who in large and small ways have made the journey of the last five years possible and enjoyable. I am thankful to Garrett Heath for his friendship and willingness to listen (and re-listen) to my long descriptions of my work. I am grateful to the many, many individuals who took time to sit for interviews throughout this process, especially Carl Armerding, Ward and Laura Gasque, James Houston, Daryl Richman, and R.C. Sproul, each of whom played an important role within his or her local Christian community and the larger movement this project examines. Another important source of help came from Jane Spencer Bopp, David Gill, Dale Myers, Beat Steiner, and Drew Trotter who offered me the use of their personal collections and sometimes allowed me to dig through attics and basement troves in search of documents. Among the many joys of this project was the opportunity to experience “home-based hospitality” first hand. I remain deeply grateful that Carl and Betsy Armerding, Brian and Lydia Dant, James Houston, Susan and Steve Phillips, Michael and Amy Raburn, and Drew Trotter opened their homes to me.

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The goodness of God undergirds this project and my entire life. His faithfulness to me exceeds words. *Soli Deo Gloria.*

Introduction

In February of 1970 Francis Schaeffer, an American countercultural evangelist, bestselling evangelical author, and founder of the Swiss-based work/study community, L'Abri (French for "shelter"), received a letter from a young American named David Gill. Gill, two years out of the University of California, Berkeley, was working as a high school history teacher in the Bay Area. He was also an emerging leader in Berkeley's countercultural World Christian Liberation Front (CWLF). In less than two years he would go on to serve with Sharon Gallagher as the co-editor of CWLF's underground newspaper *Right On!* and help found a free university known as "The Crucible." In his letter, Gill outlined how Schaeffer's 1968 book *The God Who Is There* had "revolutionized my testimony at UC Berkeley." Then he came to his main question: "Have you every considered a sort of "Farel House West" in Berkeley?"¹ In Gill's opinion, Berkeley seemed just the place for a branch of L'Abri and its residential study center Farel House. "Berkeley," he enthused, "would be an ideal place to take over an old fraternity house and use it to confront modern men...with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ."²

Gill was not the only evangelical interested in recreating Schaeffer's innovative learning community. Between the winter of 1970 and the summer of 1971 Schaeffer received similar letters from a number of individuals who would go on to become leading players in the development of an evangelical study center movement in North America. In June of 1970 Jim Hiskey, a former PGA golfer who in collaboration with the National

¹ Emphasis original. David Gill to Francis A. Schaeffer, February 13, 1970, Box 56, File 6, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina.

² Gill to Schaeffer, February 13, 1970.

Prayer Breakfast had started a L'Abri-style campus ministry at the University of Maryland, wrote to tell Schaeffer "how grateful we are for your ministry."³ From the other side of the continent Jim Houston, founding Principal of Vancouver's Regent College, a newly formed venture in lay theological education, wrote in August to ask Schaeffer if he would speak at the next Regent Summer School. "We really need you at this critical time," Houston noted. "The launching of any orbital mission requires tremendous thrust to begin with and we feel that you alone can provide some of this [thrust] by supporting us next summer."⁴ During the spring of 1971, while Schaeffer was speaking at the first U.S. L'Abri conference at Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, he met R. C. Sproul, a young Presbyterian minister from Cincinnati who had studied for a doctorate at the Free University in Amsterdam. Within a week Sproul wrote Schaeffer to follow up in a discussion the two had regarding Sproul's desire to start a L'Abri-type study center in Ligonier, Pennsylvania.⁵ In September of the same year, Beat Steiner, a student leader in Action Ministries at the University of Virginia, struck up a correspondence with Schaeffer. Steiner hoped Schaeffer might agree to conduct a series of lectures the next spring at Mr. Jefferson's University.⁶

By the end of the decade each of these individuals had founded independent learning communities of their own. To varying degrees the projects they launched owed

³ Jim Hiskey to Francis A. Schaeffer, June 25, 1970, Box 56, File 12, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina.

⁴ James M. Houston to Francis A. Schaeffer, August 7, 1970, Box 52, File 26, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina.

⁵ Sproul's first letter: R. C. Sproul to Francis A. Schaeffer, March 18, 1971, Box 56, File 6, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina. Sproul referred to Schaeffer as a mentor in 1979, see R. C. Sproul to Francis A. Schaeffer, June 21, 1979, Box 56, File 6, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina.

⁶ Beat Steiner to Francis A. Schaeffer, July 27, 1971, Personal Collection of Drew Trotter.

something to Schaeffer’s approach, which wedded intellectual and cultural awareness with deep spirituality and an emphasis on hospitality. The study centers that emerged from their efforts demonstrated a remarkable ability to adapt to the shifting cultural, political, and religious dynamics in the second half of the twentieth century. In the process they appealed to a generation of young evangelicals caught between the impulses of the counterculture and the Christianity of their youth.⁷

In his role as catalyst of a developing Christian study center movement, Schaeffer was not entirely alone. Beginning in 1968, the Oxford-trained geographer James Houston was also beginning to use his position as Regent College Principal to alert North American evangelicals to the pressing need for more vigorous programs of theological education for the laity. In as much as Regent College represented the outworking of Houston’s lay-centric emphasis, the geographer-turned-educational-innovator believed the College represented “an idea whose time has come.”⁸ Many young evangelicals agreed.

For evangelical Baby Boomers who were coming of age in the midst of unprecedented affluence, opportunity, and cultural upheaval, Schaeffer’s L’Abri and Houston’s Regent College functioned as multifaceted spiritual, intellectual, and aspirational communities capable of inspiring a generation of evangelicals—most of whom were lay people (i.e., not clergy)—to *pray, think, and become* with intentionality.

⁷ When I use the word “evangelical” in this study I am referring on the one hand to those who are shaped by the four concerns Bebbington identifies (1. crucicentrism, 2. conversionism, 3. biblicism, 4. activism) and who, unlike fundamentalists, seek to engage their culture rather than separate from it. This term also implies a more culturally rooted but hard to decisively pin down identity: evangelicals were people who consumed and made evangelical culture and took part in evangelical social networks. For Bebbington’s definition, see David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain a History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1993), 2-3.

⁸ James M. Houston, “An Idea Whose Time Has Come,” *Regent College Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (Winter 1972).

Beginning in the early 1970s, many of those who came into contact with L'Abri and Regent College sought to recreate these pioneering learning communities by founding a number of independent study centers. It was the start an evangelical study center movement, which, thanks to its foothold within some of North America's most prestigious institutions of higher education, would exert an influence that far exceeded any strictly numerical assessment of its reach. Like L'Abri and Regent College before them, many of these study centers shaped the spiritual, intellectual, and cultural aspirations of young evangelicals by challenging them to integrate their faith more intentionally into their intellectual, professional, and social aspirations. In so doing these learning communities helped form some of North American evangelicalism's most influential relational networks.

Evangelicals and Post-War America

That a small, Christian community in the Swiss Alps would be among the most influential shapers of American evangelicalism in the second half of the twentieth century was by no means a forgone conclusion. For much of the middle decades of the twentieth century American evangelicalism joined with the wider American culture by deemphasizing small initiatives like a home-based ministry in favor of large undertakings. On a national level, America had emerged from World War II more confident than ever. On the international front the United States had played a leading role in turning the tide of the conflict away from the Axis powers in Europe. After being caught off guard and embarrassed at Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, Americans responded in the summer of 1945 by unleashing a new super weapon—the atomic

bomb—on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. With a victory in the war and more atomic bombs at the ready, the United States was poised to lead the world into the second half of the twentieth century.

At home things were looking up for most (white) Americans too. The surge in production necessitated by the war and need for new housing for returning veterans helped the nation move from the Depression of the 1930s to the unprecedented affluence of the 1950s and 1960s.⁹ Even the Soviet Union's successful development of its own atomic bomb in 1949 could not derail Americans' optimism and enthusiasm for growth in these years. Americans built bomb shelters, but they also built lives. As a whole, the nation met the communist threat by trying to match every Soviet project with bigger and better versions at home. The G. I. Bill (1944) simultaneously addressed the influx of unemployed service people and the growing Soviet threat by funneling over a million people and five billion federal dollars into higher education by 1946.¹⁰ The same year a national "baby boom" began as soldiers returned from the front. This increase in births would last nearly twenty years (1946-1964) as Americans at the grassroots adapted their family sizes to meet the demands of a "cold" war. As Vice President Nixon's 1959 "kitchen debate" with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev at the American Exhibition in Moscow showed, "domestic containment" played out in more than just family size; even

⁹ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 143-155.

¹⁰ John R Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 263.

home appliances were a front in this battle.¹¹ Whether in their appliances or families, Americans pushed for bigger and better. Patriotism seemed to demand as much.¹²

Churches also benefitted from these trends. In the decades following V-J Day the battle against “atheistic communism” pushed Americans into “patriotic piety” and pews at a rate never before seen in America.¹³ Thanks to booming suburbs and pent up demand from the Depression, denominations undertook massive building projects.¹⁴ American church attendance peaked at about 49 percent in 1958.¹⁵ President Eisenhower famously summed up the national mood in 1955 when he stated that the American government “makes no sense unless it is founded on a deeply felt religious faith—and I don’t care what it is.”¹⁶ Indeed, as Will Herberg noted in his 1955 best seller, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, the forces within American mainstream religion were moving toward unification rather than distinctiveness—at least if one belonged to the Judeo-Christian tradition.¹⁷ Congress did what it could to aid this effort, adopting the phrase “In God We Trust” as the national motto in 1954.

¹¹ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound*, xxvi, 10-18.

¹² Elizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf : Distributed by Random House, 2003), 119-121.

¹³ Sydney E Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 953-954. For more on American rates of church attendance see Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005 Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005).

¹⁴ Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 26-29, 35-39. See also Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*.

¹⁵ Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion*, 159.

¹⁶ Eisenhower as quoted in Ahlstrom, *A Religious History*, 952-953.

¹⁷ Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology*, 1955. For an assessment of Herberg’s work and its place among other post-war religious books see Matthew Hedstrom, *The Rise of Liberal Religion: Book Culture and American Spirituality in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

For the most part, evangelical Christians shared these impulses.¹⁸ In 1942 Harold J. Ockenga (1905-1985), the cosmopolitan pastor of Boston's Park Street Church, pulled together a cohort of influential evangelicals to form the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). As an alternative to the mainline Federal Council of Churches (f. 1908), the NAE represented both Ockenga's theological allegiance to his fundamentalist roots as well as his larger cultural ambition. Reclaiming the title "evangelical," Ockenga and other "new" evangelicals in the NAE sought to reclaim the great evangelical heritage that they felt fundamentalism had forfeited in the second half of the 1920s.¹⁹ As Mathew Avery Sutton and others have recently demonstrated, fundamentalists had not entirely retreated from American society and circled the wagons on every front. They still sought to play an active role in the areas of politics and social concern.²⁰ But, as Ockenga and his peers rightly noted, fundamentalists had almost completely disengaged from mainstream intellectual and cultural life.²¹ The neo-evangelical project sought to re-engage these cultural gatekeepers without theological compromise.²²

Like their peers in the wider American culture, evangelicals demonstrated their high aims through myriad ambitious undertakings. First, individuals like Ockenga and the

¹⁸ Of course, evangelicals were less willing to hedge on theological issues than were their mainstream peers. Evangelicals did not warm to Catholics until their shared opposition to abortion united them in the mid-1970s. A good example of this evangelical skepticism toward Catholics can be found in Sean Casey's account of the 1960 presidential election: Shaun Casey, *The Making of a Catholic President: Kennedy vs. Nixon 1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 52-150.

¹⁹ These forfeitures were most evident in the fall out from the 1925 Scopes Trial and the loss of fundamentalist influence in key institutions like the Presbyterian Church and the Northern Baptist Convention. For more see George M Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Bradley J Longfield, *The Presbyterian Controversy Fundamentalists, Modernists, and Moderates* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

²⁰ Matthew Avery Sutton, *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), xiii-xiv.

²¹ In the domain of higher education Sutton's emphasis on continuity is less convincing.

²² Garth Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 161-211; Owen Strachan, *Awakening the Evangelical Mind: An Intellectual History of the Neo-Evangelical Movement*, 2015.

“Cambridge evangelicals” he mentored bucked fundamentalist norms and sought out doctoral training at Harvard and other prominent universities.²³ Intent on proving themselves, individuals like Carl F. H. Henry (1913-2003) and Edward J. Carnell (1919-1967) earned more than one doctorate. Carnell managed to complete a Th.D. at Harvard and a Ph.D. at Boston College simultaneously.²⁴ Neo-evangelicals like Ockenga, Henry, and Carnell were evangelical versions of the “organization man” William Hollingsworth White described in his 1956 bestseller. Collectively, these neo-evangelical standard bearers were determined to push themselves and the evangelical movement toward greater productivity and a larger influence.²⁵

Their efforts bore remarkable fruit. From the late 1940s through the 1960s a small group of evangelical leaders built an expansive neo-evangelical institutional network. Building on the impulses that led them to found the NAE in 1942, Ockenga and other neo-evangelical leaders founded Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California in 1947. Then, with the help of the emerging evangelical superstar, Billy Graham, and Sun Oil heir, J. Howard Pew, Ockenga and a handful of other neo-evangelicals launched the periodical *Christianity Today* in 1956. Kenneth Kantzer, one of the Harvard-trained Cambridge evangelicals spearheaded the founding of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in 1962, and in 1969 the leading evangelical trio (Ockenga, Graham, and Pew) again teamed up to found Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary just north of Boston. Each of these efforts were designed to one-up mainline religious institutions like Princeton

²³ During the early 1940s the low enrollment numbers that resulted from World War II made it easier for evangelicals to gain acceptance to Harvard. The term “Cambridge evangelicals” is Strachan’s (*Awakening the Evangelical Mind*, 23, 72-77).

²⁴ Rudolph Nelson, *The Making and Unmaking of an Evangelical Mind: The Case of Edward Carnell* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

²⁵ William Hollingsworth White Jr, *The Organization Man* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1957).

Theological Seminary or publications like *The Christian Century*.²⁶ Each of these efforts was non-denominational and was meant to unify American evangelicals. Each was designed to be big.

No one better epitomized the neo-evangelical push for evangelical unity or bigger and bigger platforms of influence than Billy Graham. Graham had been active in evangelical circles as a well-known Youth for Christ speaker for years, but it was during the 1949 Los Angeles Crusade that he bounded into the nation's consciousness. Like nineteenth-century evangelists Charles Finney and Dwight L. Moody before him, a successful trip to England a few years later confirmed that Graham was an international sensation as well. Graham spoke to millions in his lifetime, counseled presidents and stars, and, as historian Grant Wacker notes, in the process "enlarged the horizons of the possible" for American evangelicals.²⁷ Graham was the evangelical prizefighter. With Graham in their corner, neo-evangelicals like Henry and Ockenga felt like they were poised to dramatically impact the hearts and minds of the American people. They hoped to launch a generation of evangelicals who could "infiltrate" the highest echelons of academic and political life in America.²⁸ Their goals were as large as Graham's crowds. They raised millions of dollars and created enduring institutions designed to help them reclaim the social and intellectual heritage their fundamentalist predecessors had abandoned.

²⁶ For the ambitious goals of the founders of Fuller Theological Seminary see George M Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987). For the goals of those who founded *Christianity Today* see Carl F. H. Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian: An Autobiography* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), 144-219; Elisha J Coffman, *The Christian Century and the Rise of the Protestant Mainline* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 182-216.

²⁷ Grant Wacker, *America's Pastor: Billy Graham and the Shaping of a Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), 309.

²⁸ In the tradition of "know thy enemy," Ockenga was a lifelong student and adamant opponent of communism. Ironically, he took the idea of "infiltration" directly from communist strategy. See Harold John Ockenga, "Resurgent Evangelical Leadership," *Christianity Today*, October 10, 1965, 11-15.

The 1960s Cultural Shift

But large organizations like the NAE and Fuller Seminary do not change easily, and by the early 1960s change seemed to be an ever-present part of American life. Neo-evangelicals struggled to keep up as the relative cultural cohesion of the 1950s disappeared amidst the cultural upheaval that accompanied the Civil Rights Movement, the sexual revolution, a shifting youth culture, and conflicting opinions about the war in Vietnam.²⁹ America in the mid-to-late 1960s was not the same nation that leaders like Ockenga and Graham knew in the 1940s. In the 1970s fragmentation would be even more pronounced.³⁰ Ockenga and his peers had left a significant legacy, but the cultural consensus they dreamed of had eluded them.

Few aspects of American life were marked more by change than the nation's burgeoning university system. Perhaps the most basic yet important change universities experienced during these years was unprecedented growth. While enrollment in higher education had increased from 2.6 million to 3.6 million over the course of the 1950s, it was in the 1960s, as the first Baby Boomers entered universities and the U. S. government poured 2.9 percent of the Gross National Product into research and development, that university attendance soared. Between 1960 and 1970 university enrollment in the United States grew 139 percent. By 1970, 8.6 million students were

²⁹ See Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion*, 138-172.

³⁰ Daniel T. Rodgers, *Age of Fracture* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2011).

attending college.³¹ For the most part these students were white, “children of plenty,” the beneficiaries of post-war affluence.³²

What these millions of students found when they arrived at many American universities was a shifting cultural milieu where student activism around issues of equality and free speech were ushering in more egalitarian and anti-traditionalist emphases.³³ From New York and Texas, to Michigan and Berkeley, student activists, many of whom had first found their voice in the Civil Rights Movement, moved into New Left organizations like Students for a Democratic Society (SDS, f. 1962).³⁴ Within organizations like SDS, students in the New Left pursued a two-pronged agenda. On the one hand these students followed C. Wright Mills (1916-1962) and later Jacque Ellul (1912-1994), who in books like *The Power Elite* (1956) and *The Technological Society* (1964) critiqued modern life under bureaucratic capitalism.³⁵ In addition to a more democratic society, these students also wanted more authentic lives than many felt their middle-class experience afforded. From their political action to their musical tastes many embraced what historian Grace Hale calls “the romance of the outsider” by attempting to find authenticity in identification with marginalized groups—especially African-Americans.³⁶ The growing prevalence of existentialism during these years only

³¹ Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion*, 155.

³² Grace Elizabeth Hale, *A Nation of Outsiders: How the White Middle Class Fell in Love with Rebellion in Postwar America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Douglas C Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

³³ Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion*, 158-159.

³⁴ Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 12, 165.

³⁵ C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956); Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York: Knopf, 1964).

³⁶ Hale, *A Nation of Outsiders*, 1, 86-122, 175, 205-224. See also Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 164.

compounded student activism. Activism became the path to authenticity.³⁷ In the 1960s and 1970s the New Left went about constructing its own counterculture based on these ideas. Universities were at the epicenter of this countercultural push.

Evangelical students were not immune to these trends. The percentage of evangelicals who attended at least some college tripled between 1960 and 1972, and would continue to rise throughout the rest of the twentieth century.³⁸ Though many evangelicals surely opted to attend Bible schools and Christian colleges where the cultural status quo was less contested, many, perhaps motivated by economic hardship or the desire for a degree from a notable secular institution, did not.³⁹ For evangelicals at secular universities during the 1960s, neo-evangelical propositional apologetics and establishment style were cold comfort in the face of the counterculture's ubiquity and "the death of God."⁴⁰ Furthermore as their peers railed on "the establishment" and "squares" it was understandable if evangelicals on campus felt some remove from neo-evangelical leaders like Ockenga who seemed the antithesis of all things valued by hippie culture.

Faced with this challenge evangelicals entered the last years of the 1960s desperate to find new ways to understand, experience, and share their faith. What many

³⁷ Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 85.

³⁸ David R Swartz, *Moral Minority: The Evangelical Left in an Age of Conservatism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 16. Between 1976 and 2006 evangelical college attendance increased 133 percent—more than any other religious tradition during that time period—but evangelical educational attainment was still below the national average (D. Michael Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 78. This still holds true in 2016 (1615 L. Street et al., "Religious Landscape Study," *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project*, May 11, 2015, <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/>).

³⁹ In a 1972 *Christianity Today* article University of Wisconsin professor Frank Nelsen noted the economic realities that might prompt an evangelical to attend a state university (Frank C. Nelsen, "Evangelical Living and Learning Centers: A Proposal," *Christianity Today* 26, no. 17 (May 26, 1972): 7–8).

⁴⁰ In April of 1968 *Time* magazine reflected the prominence of death of God theology by devoting its cover story to an analysis of Religion in America. The cover of the magazine read, "Is God Dead?"

of them found was Jesus, distinct from the churches of their youth. The first traces of what would become the Jesus Movement began to appear in San Francisco during the fall of 1967, just after the counterculture reached its zenith during the “Summer of Love.” As evangelical Christians like Ted Wise began ministering to hippies they contextualized the Gospel message in order to cater to the interests, needs, and aesthetic sensibilities of their listeners. Jesus emerged as the ultimate rebel, the “notorious leader of an underground liberation movement,” whose “long hair, beard, robe, sandals, etc.” were “of the hippie type.”⁴¹ By 1968 this contextualized form of Christianity had spread to places like Hollywood and Costa Mesa, California. From there “Jesus Freaks” fanned out across America. As millions of mostly young people experienced Jesus and used the popular countercultural mediums like folk songs, rap sessions, and psychedelic art—not the least of which was the bumper sticker—to tell the world of their new-found faith, the movement became undeniable.

By 1971 Christian publications of all kinds were trying to assess the phenomenon. Already, however, the Jesus Movement was changing. As Jesus People participated by the tens of thousands in Bill Bright’s *Explo ’72* they demonstrated what Larry Eskridge describes as a transformation “from being a religious expression of the counterculture to a widespread evangelical youth culture of choice.”⁴² Bright (1921-2003), the founder of the evangelical student ministry Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC), epitomized the straight-laced style and highly centralized ministry of earlier neo-evangelicals and

⁴¹ The CWLF published a full-page wanted poster in its second issue of *Right On*. See “Wanted: Jesus Christ,” *Right On*, The CWLF Collection, Graduate Theological Union Library, Berkeley, California.

⁴² Larry Eskridge, *God’s Forever Family: The Jesus People Movement in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 145.

seemed hardly the person to organize an event for countercultural youth.⁴³ By 1972, however, few Jesus People seemed to care. Explo '72 promised celebrity speakers, good bands, and plenty of fun. The Jesus Movement had become one more option within America's youth culture.⁴⁴ Yet even as it transformed the counterculture into mass culture the Jesus Movement retained portions of its original ethos. From 1968 through much of the 1970s Jesus People shared a regard for highly literalistic interpretations of Scripture, a supernaturally charged view of life, and a countercultural pessimism.⁴⁵ These traits did little to heighten regard for the intellect among Jesus Freaks. Instead, they demonstrated that the Jesus Movement was a reincarnation of the revivalist impulse for simplicity with new cultural and charismatic twists. If Jesus People could find every answer in the Bible or hear from God directly, book-learning seemed less important. Even as they matriculated through university classes and gained the professional competencies necessary for an increasingly competitive and professionalized marketplace, Jesus People were prone to act as if the mind had little to say to one's faith.

Francis Schaeffer: Bridging the Divide

Some, however, were convinced that this rupture between the mind (i.e., "the head") and personal spirituality (i.e., "the heart") could and must be bridged if Christians, and Christianity for that matter, had any chance of being viable in an increasingly pluralized and educated society. By the late 1960s young evangelicals who longed for this balance of head and heart turned by the thousands to the writings and ministry of an

⁴³ For a thorough treatment of Bright see John G Turner, *Bill Bright & Campus Crusade for Christ: The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

⁴⁴ Turner, *Bill Bright*, 140-146.

⁴⁵ Eskridge, *God's Forever Family*, 54-55.

eccentric Presbyterian pastor named Francis A. Schaeffer (1912-1984). By this time Schaeffer, once a fundamentalist minister of the purest pedigree, had traded his suit and tie and close-cropped hair for a goatee and long locks, a look more befitting his status as the countercultural guru of evangelicalism. In 1955 Schaeffer and his equally impressive wife Edith (1914-2013) had cut their ties with the fundamentalist Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions (IBPFM) in order to launch L'Abri, an independent, home-based mission focused on reasoned evangelism and hospitality. In the Schaeffers' hands these two missional emphases took on a life of their own far beyond the Sunday school pleas to "accept Jesus into your heart" or the well crafted Sunday dinner or church pot-luck. Schaeffer's evangelism was based on reason and buttressed by his wide-ranging interests in philosophy, history, theology, and art. For her part, Edith turned hospitality into an art form of its own.⁴⁶

In America, word about the Schaeffer's experimental approach initially spread slowly. The Schaeffers received positive exposure in *Time* in 1960, but it was Francis Schaeffer's speaking tour around the student ministry and Christian college circuits in the United States in 1965 that launched his fame among the surging number of college-educated, American evangelicals who desired to intellectually engage their faith.⁴⁷ In 1968 Schaeffer became a full-fledged evangelical star after Inter-Varsity Press published his edited lecture transcripts as *The God Who Is There* and *Escape from Reason*.⁴⁸ For the first time American evangelicals found one of their own who spoke with authority and clarity about the pressing cultural and philosophical issues of the day while

⁴⁶ Edith Schaeffer, *The Hidden Art of Homemaking* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1985).

⁴⁷ "Mission to Intellectuals," *Time* 75, no. 2 (January 11, 1960): 64.

⁴⁸ Barry Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 74-108.

simultaneously living a life of inspirational faith and countercultural appeal. What had once been a trickle became a flood as hundreds of American evangelicals—many of whom were students and individuals in their twenties—began traveling to L’Abri each year in order to experience Schaeffer’s blend of culturally and intellectually engaged Christianity.

By the late 1960s the Schaeffers’ L’Abri, though the most visible, was not the only evangelical effort to reclaim the domain of the intellect. Throughout North America Christians were in the process of launching other experiments in community learning that balanced a countercultural appeal with a deep conviction that all Christians—not just trained clerical professionals—needed to be educated in theology and Christian philosophy enough to “think Christianly” in their day-to-day lives. As with Schaeffer, a life-long Presbyterian minister, Reformed theology exerted a notable influence on many of the evangelicals who formed study centers and alternative communities in the 1960s and 1970s.⁴⁹ Indeed, virtually every sustained effort to develop lay theological education in North America in the second half of the twentieth century had ties to Reformed theology.⁵⁰ On a practical level, this means the history traced in these pages is disproportionately full of Presbyterians, though it also includes many Anglican and what may seem to some a surprising number of Plymouth Brethren.

⁴⁹ Reformed theology can encompass more than strict Calvinism; however, the tenants of Calvinism (TULIP: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, the perseverance of the saints) provide a useful jumping off point for any discussion of Reformed theology.

⁵⁰ This is one of the realities that kept this project from the theological scope of a book like Molly Worthen’s *Apostles of Reason*. While there were Arminian and Ana-Baptist colleges and seminaries, there were very few, if any, longstanding efforts by these groups to develop lay theological education or study centers. Even in the twenty-first century it is difficult to track down notable study centers stemming from these theological traditions. When I asked leading Arminian theologian and evangelical commentator Roger Olson whether he knew of any Arminian or Ana-Baptist study centers he mentioned a few small efforts that were launched in the 1970s (e.g., Chicago-based Reba House and Jesus People USA), but eventually abandoned their educational emphases. See, Roger Olson, email to author, August 8, 2015.

By placing distinct emphasis on the sovereignty of God over all of creation Reformed theology—most often associated with the work of the sixteenth-century reformer John Calvin—carried within itself the seeds of cultural engagement that bore significant fruit within twentieth-century American evangelicalism. Beginning in the 1940s and growing more notable as the century wore on, Reformed theology marked many of evangelicalism’s most significant intellectual institutions and endeavors.

Reformed theology was not new to the American scene in the 1960 and 1970s. For much of America’s history the keepers of this Reformed heritage had been heirs of the Scottish Enlightenment, often Presbyterians who brought Reformed principles to America through influential seminaries like Archibald Alexander’s Princeton Theological Seminary (f. 1812). A significant change occurred, however, during the period treated in this study. By the middle of the twentieth century, many influential voices within American evangelical circles were developing a greater appreciation for a brand of Reformed theology that traced back to Dutch Reformed theologians, especially Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), a journalist and theologian who founded the Free University of Amsterdam in 1880 and served as Prime Minister of the Netherlands from 1901 to 1905.⁵¹ Though Kuyper had given his famous “sphere sovereignty” speech, which asserted that “there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry ‘Mine!’” in 1880, it was only in the second half of the twentieth century that American evangelicals—especially *lay* evangelicals—began to develop a widespread appreciation for concepts like the lordship of Christ and

⁵¹ For more on Kuyper’s thought and influence within North American evangelicalism, see James D Bratt, *Abraham Kuyper: Modern Calvinist, Christian Democrat* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013); Richard J. Mouw, *Abraham Kuyper: A Short and Personal Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011).

common grace. As Kuyper had argued, the lordship of Christ in every sphere of life and society meant that all of life (with the exception of sin) falls under God’s concern and carries inherent worth. For its part, the concept of common grace helped make the lordship of Christ translatable to Christians’ lived experience because it made room for Christians to work with non-Christians to achieve common aims. God’s expansive grace meant that Christians could enter into various fields of endeavor confident that even in a fallen world God’s grace was at work both holding back evil and enabling good—good that could be accomplished by Christians and non-Christians alike.⁵²

For many of the communities examined in this study, the lordship of Christ provided an initial impetus for action, while an emphasis on common grace grew more gradually over time. By the end of the twentieth century many of American evangelicalism’s keenest historians pointed to Kuyperian Reformed theology—often termed Neo-Calvinism—as one of the few paths to evangelical intellectual engagement. “Neo Calvinism,” historian James Bratt asserts, “is the only resource available besides neo-Thomism to rescue American evangelicalism from cultural irrelevance, to unite the warm heart at which evangelicalism excels with the furnished mind that public engagement requires and the responsible pluralism that modern society demands.”⁵³

⁵² In order to see the way in which these concepts trickled down into popular evangelical literature by the early twenty-first century one can examine the work of prominent Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) pastor Timothy Keller. “Without an understanding of common grace, the world can be a pretty confusing place for a Christian,” Keller asserts. “By rights, sin should be making life on earth here much more unbearable than it is...The reason it is not worse is because of common grace....Without an understanding of common grace, Christians will have trouble understanding why non-Christians so often exceed Christians morally and in wisdom.” What this means, according to Keller, is that “[Christians] are likely to be on firm footing if we make common ground with non-Christians to do work that serves the world.” Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God’s Work* (NY: Dutton, 2012), 190-192.

⁵³ Bratt, *Abraham Kuyper* (2012), 380. For more on the enormous impact Kuyper’s thought has exerted on evangelical higher education in general, see Joel A. Carpenter, “The Perils of Prosperity: Neo-Calvinism and the Future of Religious Colleges,” In *The Future of Religious Colleges: The Proceedings of*

Though not every learning community treated in this study was deeply informed by Neo-Calvinist versions of Reformed theology, it is hardly surprising that most were touched by Kuyper's thought to some degree or another, even if only secondhand through Schaeffer or Sproul.

To a lesser extent than theology, the cultural norms of the counterculture also exerted an influence on many of the learning communities examined in this history. Schaeffer was hardly alone in his desire to adapt his ministry to the developing counterculture. The Toronto-based Institute for Christian Studies (ICS) began in 1967 with a strong countercultural message that seemed almost too radical for many in Toronto's Dutch Reformed community who had worked for over a decade to fund the venture.⁵⁴ In Vancouver, James M. Houston, a cultured Oxford Don and hardly the picture of countercultural radicalism, managed to make Regent (f. 1968) just radical enough to attract interests among a countercultural generation without offending conservative Plymouth Brethren leaders in the city.

Together, L'Abri, Regent College, and the ICS would inspire a generation of evangelicals to intellectually engage their faith in culturally sensitive ways the highly structured neo-evangelical network never had. Of the three it was L'Abri and Regent College—both less marked by a strongly Dutch Reformed culture than the ICS—that held the broadest appeal for North American evangelicals.⁵⁵ Indeed, American

the Harvard Conference on the Future of Religious Colleges October 6-7, 2000, edited by Paul J. Dove (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 183.

⁵⁴ For a taste of the ICS's founders' affinity for countercultural radicalism, see John A. Olthuis, *Out of Concern for the Church* (Toronto: Wedge Pub. Foundation, 1970). For responses within their constituency, see Robert E. VanderVennen, *A University for the People: A History of the Institute for Christian Studies* (Sioux Center, IA: Dordt College Press, 2008), 27, 63-71.

⁵⁵ This is not to say that the ICS was not an influential force within American evangelicalism. It did exert a tremendous amount of influence on a small group of leading Reformed thinkers, most notably scholars at Calvin College—a Dutch Reformed school in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The ICS also played a

evangelical efforts to imitate the method and successes of L'Abri and Regent College abounded in the 1970s. For many, L'Abri and Regent seemed refreshing alternatives to much that mid-century neo-evangelicalism had to offer. Whereas neo-evangelicals had called for cultural engagement and then pointed to Walter Sallman's "Head of Christ" or the Sunday school class flannelgraph board, Schaeffer offered guided tours of art museums.⁵⁶ Whereas neo-evangelicals described the universal value of education but then funneled the vast majority of their resources into theological seminaries geared to train professional *clergymen*, these new learning communities held forth educational opportunities for the laity—men *and women*. Furthermore, unlike neo-evangelical efforts that catered to the bigger and better impulse of the immediate postwar years, the leaders of these non-traditional ventures expressed a desire to be part of a network made up of smaller communities based on more personalized relations. They had traded the neo-evangelical "organization man" emphasis for a *modus operandi* that was much closer to the one E. P. Schumacher would describe in his 1973 *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*.⁵⁷ In so doing L'Abri and Regent College functioned as places where young evangelicals could both *belong* and *become*. One could grow in one's faith and become more intellectually and culturally cosmopolitan all within the framework of a

significant role in keeping the Reformed thought of Abraham Kuyper before the eyes of North American evangelicals. The list of prominent evangelical scholars influenced by the ICS includes historians George Marsden and Ronald Wells, and philosophers Richard Mouw and James K. A. Smith among others. Still, the ICS did not exert a significant influence on the rise of evangelical study centers in North America. For this reason—and for reasons of length—I have chosen to forgo an in depth treatment of the ICS in this project. For those who are interested in studying the ICS more, Robert E. VanderVennen's book is a useful starting point.

⁵⁶ For a description of the ubiquity and artistic aspects of this painting, see Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 29; Richard Wightman Fox, *Jesus in America: Personal Savior, Cultural Hero, National Obsession* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004), 374-375.

⁵⁷ E. F. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as If People Mattered* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2010).

close-knit Christian community. In as much as places like L'Abri and Regent represented these elements, they captured the evangelical imagination. They also inspired a number of prominent imitators. The evangelical study center movement had been born.

Toward an Understanding of a Movement

This project seeks to trace the origins, ethos, and legacy of these early evangelical learning communities as they spread across North American evangelicalism in the years after Schaeffer's 1965 American tour. The timing for this type of study seems right. On the one hand, many who played a role in founding the learning communities examined in these pages are still alive and capable of sitting for interviews. Even more of those who experienced places like L'Abri or the Ligonier Valley Study Center as young people are capable and willing to share their stories or dig through their attics and basements for old newspapers, letters, and various other related documents. On the other hand, this project also benefits from the three, four, and sometimes five decades that separate today from the launching of many of these study centers. In the intervening years some notable archival holdings have been collected and catalogued. This project especially benefits from the recently digitized Francis A. Schaeffer Collection at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, the small but rich Christian World Liberation Front Collection at Berkeley's Graduate Theological Union, and the newly collected and catalogued James M. Houston Collection at Regent College. The Houston Collection is especially notable as this study is the first to make use of this expansive resource.

By its nature, this project can only treat some of the most significant study centers in what I am describing as an evangelical study center movement. By as early as 1980,

key leaders within the movement were already able to identify approximately thirty of these centers in North America alone.⁵⁸ I highlight some of the most influential and long-lasting of these institutions in the first generation (i.e., L’Abri, Regent College) and second generation (i.e., the Ligonier Valley Study Center, the C. S. Lewis Institute, the Center for Christian Study, and New College Berkeley) of this movement, but there were many more study centers—some located in private homes and church basements—that are not treated here. While the years of the early-to-mid 1970s were especially conducive to the development of study centers, some key learning communities founded during these years continued to thrive and inspire the development of new study centers well into the twenty-first century. Today the Consortium of Christian Study Centers (CCSC), led by Drew Trotter, the long-time director of the influential Center for Christian Study in Charlottesville, Virginia, counts membership of twenty-two university-based study centers.⁵⁹ There are many more centers located outside of university communities that draw on the study center legacy but do not come under the umbrella of the CCSC.⁶⁰

For a majority of the study centers in this movement it was L’Abri or Regent College—or, as was often the case, a combination of the two—that that served as primary catalysts and models for new study centers. For much of the 1960s and 1970s L’Abri was

⁵⁸ “Conference on Study Centers,” June 20, 1977, Box, Pre-1987 Correspondence: Folder, Conference on Study Centers, Westminster Seminary, June 1977, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

⁵⁹ “Member Study Centers: Consortium of Christian Study Centers,” <https://studycentersonline.org/membership/member-study-centers/> (accessed March 9, 2017). See also “Christian Study Centers Extend Evangelical Presence at Elite Universities,” *ReligionWatch: An Online Publication of Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion*, <http://www.religionwatch.com/christian-study-centers-extend-evangelical-presence-at-elite-universities/> (accessed March 16, 2016).

⁶⁰ Examples include two U. S. L’Abri branches, one in Southborough, MN and another in Rochester, MN (“Southborough, Massachusetts,” L’Abri, <http://www.labri.org/mass/index.html> (accessed March 14, 2016); The C.S. Lewis Institute, which is based in Washington D. C., and has now expanded to ten other domestic and two international locations, see “The C. S. Lewis Institute: Discipleship of Heart and Mind,” C. S. Lewis Institute, <http://www.cslewisinstitute.org> (accessed March 16, 2016).

the more influential of the two thanks in part to the Schaeffers' flair for communicating with evangelicals of nearly all backgrounds in a language at once understandable and inspiring. Furthermore, L'Abri was a unique venture unlike virtually anything that North American evangelicals had ever even conceived, let alone sought to implement. It aroused immense curiosity and drew attention. For its part, Regent College played a significant role in shaping North American evangelicalism and the nascent study center movement by turning the conversation around reasoned faith explicitly toward the laity in ways that revitalized and expanded evangelicals' regard for lay theological education. Throughout the better part of the 1970s Houston and Regent College were evangelicalism's foremost advocates for lay theological education as they tirelessly promoted the need for graduate-level theological education tailored explicitly to the lay professionals and situated within the context of a secular university.

Of course, neither L'Abri nor Regent College emerged in a vacuum. Both their methodology and emphasis on laity, though unprecedented in scope within North American evangelical circles, was not entirely new. While this study cannot possibly include a thorough treatment of the evangelical, mainline, and secular contexts in which L'Abri and other evangelical study centers emerged, it may perhaps be helpful at this point to briefly situate the movement within related religious and secular learning communities.

Within evangelicalism, neo-evangelicals like Ockenga had launched the Boston Evening School of the Bible in the fall of 1942 to help train lay men and women in the Boston area. For several years this training center enrolled between four and six hundred

adults in a fairly standard Bible school curriculum.⁶¹ In the 1940s, Ockenga and members of the Plymouth Scholars' Conference also sought to develop a graduate summer school.⁶² The idea never gained traction in the 1940s, but summer schools—most notably Regent's phenomenally successful one—became the heart of lay theological education in the 1970s.

Early leaders like Houston also knew that there were plenty of models for alternative learning communities and study centers outside of evangelicalism. Some of these models were European. The British university system, for one, provided models like Oxford's embedded colleges or the Cambridge-based Tyndale House (f. 1944) that provided a starting point for the development of North American efforts. Even in the United States there were examples of residential study centers and intellectually inclined campus ministries prior to the popularization of study centers within the evangelical world. Before Houston spent a semester at the University of Texas as a visiting professor of geography in the fall of 1966 mainline Protestants at the university had founded the Christian Faith and Life Center (CFLC) in 1952. Like later evangelical efforts, the CFLC was modeled on European prototypes like the Iona experiment—an intentional Christian community in Scotland—and later the idealized learning community of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Life Together* (1939, translated 1954).⁶³ As historian Dough Rossinow notes, the CFLC soon became “one of those robust experiments in community intellectual living that was in such stark contrast to the comfortable campus life of the

⁶¹ Garth Rosell, *Boston's Historic Park Street Church: The Story of an Evangelical Landmark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2009), 142-144.

⁶² Owen Strachan, *Awakening the Evangelical Mind: An Intellectual History of the Neo-Evangelical Movement* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2015), 99.

⁶³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954). For these influences see Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 56, 69.

1950s.”⁶⁴ Like other mainline efforts during this period such as campus YMCAs and the Student Christian Movement, the CFLC lost its Christian identity as religious pluralism and student activism during the Civil Rights Movement transformed the organization into a vaguely religious center for generalized activism by the early 1960s.⁶⁵ When SDS leaders Tom and Casey Hayden were married at the CFLC in 1962 it was a sign of things to come. Soon many who were involved in the CFLC left to join other activist organizations.⁶⁶ As Rossinow notes, “by the mid-1960s, the CFLC was no longer a religious study center but, rather, a human potential workshop experimenting with various therapeutic techniques that arrived from the West Coast.”⁶⁷

In addition to the CFLC’s efforts to develop a community that cultivated the intellect while nurturing Christian faith (at least initially) and activism (i.e., the head, the heart, and the hands), it also tapped into another cultural development—lay renewal.⁶⁸ The role of the laity in the Church had been a growing concern since at least the early 1940s when individuals like John D. Rockefeller and J. C. Penney took part in the Laymen’s Movement, which was designed to bring Christian values to bear in the spheres of business and politics. Eventually the movement established its own retreat and study center, the Wainwright House, in Rye, New York in 1951. This house was designed to serve as the religious retreat center for the United Nations.⁶⁹ Just three years later the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) titled one of its six sections:

⁶⁴ Willie Morris quoted in Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 54.

⁶⁵ After 1955 the CFLC was opened up to students and teachers who did not attend church. In 1956 Jesse Wesley Mathews was hired as the CFLC’s director. He revolutionized the program by adopting a loose blend of Christian existentialism and religious pluralism, see Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 58-69.

⁶⁶ All of the information pertaining to the CFLC and the university YMCA at UT can be found in Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 53-153.

⁶⁷ Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 81.

⁶⁸ Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 56.

⁶⁹ Hedstrom, *The Rise of Liberal Religion*, 111.

“The Laity: The Christian in His Profession.”⁷⁰ In 1961, Howard Butt, a successful grocer and businessman, founded Laity Lodge on a 1,900 acre Texas ranch.⁷¹ Like the Wainwright House, Laity Lodge sought to form networks of laity who could integrate theology into their everyday lives. Butt’s retreat center would host the Congress of the Laity in 1978.⁷² By the early 1960s the same laicizing impulses that defined these mainline efforts were also helping to shape the greatest overhaul of Roman Catholicism since the Council of Trent (1545-1563). Between 1962 and 1965 Vatican II significantly elevated status of the laity among Catholics through liturgical reforms and by deemphasizing the superiority of religious vocations.⁷³

As has often been the case in American religious history, evangelicals adopted similar emphases years after their mainline and Catholic peers. Schaeffer was near the front of the evangelical curve on the issue of community-based-learning, and Houston became evangelicalism’s leading voice for explicitly lay theological education. Both helped evangelicals navigate the communal and laicizing effects of the counterculture and corresponding Jesus Movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As evangelicals rediscovered the importance and power of the laity, leaders like Schaeffer, Houston, and those they inspired helped them funnel at least some of this energy away from populism and towards more intellectual pursuits.⁷⁴ Ockenga and neo-evangelicals may have

⁷⁰ “Timeline — World Council of Churches,” <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us/organizational-structure/assembly/since-1948> (accessed March 16, 2016).

⁷¹ “History and Vision,” Laity Lodge, <http://www.laitylodge.org/discover-laity-lodge/history-and-vision/> (accessed March 16, 2016).

⁷² “From the Archives: The 1978 Congress of the Laity,” *Laity Lodge*, <http://www.laitylodge.org/from-the-archives-the-1978-congress-of-the-laity/> (March 16, 2016).

⁷³ Paul Lakeland, “The Laity,” in *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*, eds. Raymond R. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 192-206.

⁷⁴ As a member of the Plymouth Brethren, a sect within evangelicalism that relied on voluntary lay-teachers rather than professional clergy, Houston was especially aware of the lay-clerical divide.

awakened the evangelical minds of a handful of clergy and evangelical theologians, but individuals like Schaeffer and Houston took these reforms to the evangelical masses. In so doing they awakened and inspired the *lay* evangelical mind.⁷⁵ The effect for evangelicals was nothing short of a “vocational revolution.”⁷⁶

As this study will show, one of the important carryovers of the impulse toward a greater emphasis on the laity was an expanded area of influence for women within evangelicalism. As Anne Braude notes in her important 1997 essay “Women’s History *Is* American Religious History,” the undeniable fact is that women have always made up a majority of religious practitioners in America.⁷⁷ Within North American evangelicalism, where women have often (but not always) been kept out of pulpits, they have been intricately involved in para-church ventures like international missions and campus ministries such as Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF).⁷⁸ Thus study centers, as para-church domains of the laity, fit the longstanding evangelical mold for women’s involvement. The key difference, however, was that most evangelical para-church organizations that permitted the full participation of women were service-oriented ministries, evangelistic efforts, or teaching positions aimed at basic literacy or Bible

Evangelicalism had a long history of lay involvement and influence. This seems to have dropped off a bit during the decades following World War II, just at the time mainline liberals in both North America and Europe were experiencing lay renewal. The Jesus Movement, especially its charismatic emphases, was a strong laicizing force in American evangelicalism. For the laity in evangelical history, see Deryck W. Lovegrove, *The Rise of the Laity in Evangelical Protestantism* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002).

⁷⁵ Note the title of Owen Strachan’s recent treatment of Ockenga and the “Cambridge evangelicals”: *The Awakening of the Evangelical Mind*.

⁷⁶ Mark Thomas Edwards, *The Right of the Protestant Left God’s Totalitarianism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 164.

⁷⁷ Anne Braude, “Women’s History *Is* American Religious History,” in *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, ed. Thomas A. Tweed (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 87–107.

⁷⁸ For women in missions, see David J Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 470–471; Andrew F Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 231–232; Scott W. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 109–110.

instruction. Few if any of these options offered women the chance to pursue their own intellectual formation as a primary or even secondary goal. In the 1960s most evangelical seminaries were not much better. Women were admitted to education programs but were often kept from studying homiletics or from earning a Bachelor of Divinity degree. Study centers—especially formal graduate programs like Regent College and New College Berkeley—played a significant part in changing this by offering young evangelical women some of the most egalitarian learning communities American evangelicalism had to offer. Indeed, some of the communities highlighted in this project were among the few evangelical groups that could handle the activism of the feminist Evangelical Women’s Caucus (EWC, f. 1973).

As some evangelical feminists discovered, however, the openness of these institutions toward women was still not complete. Places like L’Abri and Regent promoted to varying degrees an ambivalent *evangelical openness*, which was marked by what seemed to be contesting desires. On the one hand, most of the leaders of the learning communities treated here had a desire to see female students thrive; however, for reasons ranging from cultural sympathies to biblical hermeneutics, many of the men who led these institutions had a difficult time maintaining a thoroughgoing egalitarianism. In the case of L’Abri, the scenario was especially complex. While some women found it a liberating place full of deep thinking and opportunity, others sensed a sexist culture where women were encouraged to pursue “the art of homemaking” rather than teaching roles. The ambiguity of a woman’s place at L’Abri stemmed in part from Edith’s competing identities as a model homemaker who was also a widely read author and internationally solicited speaker, to the fact that L’Abri encouraged some women to pursue graduate

theological studies while at the same time playing an enormous role in the development of “family values”—a set of ideals based around the middle-class ideal of a stay-at-home mother and a breadwinning father that would go on to have significant political force by the end of the 1970s.⁷⁹ By the 1970s the “family values” that the Schaeffers helped to popularize would have important political implications within American politics.⁸⁰

As one might expect, politics does come up in this narrative. Unlike many accounts of evangelicalism in late twentieth-century America, electoral politics is not a major concern of this study. The story I tell is one concerned with the development of the lay evangelical mind and networks of interconnected evangelical learning communities. Like David Swartz’s *Moral Minority* (2013), this narrative sheds light on groups of evangelicals who did not—at least at first—well represent the standard Nixon-voting, revival-going evangelical mainstream. Of course, this does not mean that the individuals involved did not have political motives or that the intellectual and professional networks individuals like Francis Schaeffer and James Hiskey formed did not have larger political ramifications. It simply means that this study seeks to identify the earlier stage in this process before Americans had a “born-again” President or ever conceived of a “moral” majority. Furthermore, because this is not just an American history, but a North American history with strong European ties, the normal political framework does not always apply, and even when it does, it often does not work well. This is primarily a cultural and intellectual history, not a political one.

⁷⁹ Seth Dowland, *Family Values and the Rise of the Christian Right*, 2015. See also J. Brooks Flippen, *Jimmy Carter, the Politics of Family, and the Rise of the Religious Right* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011); Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Women’s Crusade* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁸⁰ Dowland, *Family Values*; Flippen, *Jimmy Carter and the Politics of Family*.

This is a shift from the standard history of evangelicalism during this period. For much of the last quarter century the vast majority of scholarship on evangelicalism has focused on understanding the rise of the Religious Right. This is an understandable impulse. Beginning around 1976, when *Newsweek*'s cover story, "Born Again," highlighted "the year of the evangelical," through at least the election of George W. Bush in 2004, Americans who defined themselves as "born again" or "evangelical" emerged as a significant, increasingly unified voting bloc. As Steven Miller notes, this was an "age of evangelicalism" in which evangelicals moved from the margins and developed "an impressive amount of sway in American Society."⁸¹ Of course, as scholars like Daniel K. Williams, Joseph Crespino, Darren Dochuk, and Matthew Avery Sutton have made clear, it was not that evangelicals entered politics for the first time during these years. Evangelical Christians were politically and socially active in places like Mississippi and California long before the 1980 election. As Williams notes, "what was new in the 1980s was not evangelicals' interest in politics but, rather, their level of partisan commitment."⁸² Racism, social and economic demographics, and migration patterns all played a role in these shifts, but they alone were not enough to sway evangelicals across the country to the Republican party.⁸³ Only after the formation of Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority in

⁸¹ Steven P. Miller, *The Age of Evangelicalism: America's Born-Again Years*, 2014, 4-5. Michael Lindsay's 2007 *Faith in the Halls of Power* offers an impressive sociological look at this phenomenon.

⁸² Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 2.

⁸³ For a treatment of race in the presidential election of 1980 see Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007) 237-278. For treatments of how demographics and migration patterns impacted the rise of the Religious Right see Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); James N Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10273403>; Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011).

1979 and the crystallization of Republican and Democratic platforms on issues like sexual morality and abortion did evangelicals move en masse to the GOP.⁸⁴ As David Swartz has shown the later trends played a significant role in making evangelicalism a more homogenous political force. In the late 1970s evangelicalism's strong left-leaning constituency was fragmented by identity politics but also by the Democratic Party's hard turn to the left on issues like abortion.⁸⁵

Perhaps nowhere has this shift toward a political frame of observation more obscured the history of evangelicalism in the second half of the twentieth century than in the case of Francis Schaeffer. While some scholars and popular commentators note Schaeffer's lasting influence on the evangelical mind in passing or downplay it as merely "a grand and clever exercise in anti-intellectualism," it was much more than that to a generation of evangelicals who found in Schaeffer's limited quiver the very arrows that could propel them to greater intellectual heights than Schaeffer would ever know.⁸⁶ Unlike better-trained neo-evangelical intellectuals at Fuller Seminary and Gordon-Conwell Seminary or the Dutch scholars at the ICS, Schaeffer possessed the ability to inspire both aspiring evangelical academics and the average evangelical at home. Scholars like Molly Worthen, Mark Noll, George Marsden, Ronald Wells, and a host of others are right when they refute Schaeffer's work—especially his historical work after 1975. To a large degree it was, as Worthen correctly notes, "notoriously irresponsible."⁸⁷ Yet an overemphasis on Schaeffer's later work and politicization distorts the real and

⁸⁴ As Flippen notes, even as late as 1976 family issues were still not completely partisan (*Jimmy Carter and the Politics of Family*, 64).

⁸⁵ Swartz, *Moral Minority*, 219-232.

⁸⁶ Molly Worthen, *Apostles of Reason: The Crisis of Authority in American Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 219. For an example of Schaeffer's ability to inspire, see Barry Hankins, "'I'm Just Making a Point': Francis Schaeffer and the Irony of Faithful Christian Scholarship," *Fides et Historia* 39, no. 1 (Winter-Spring 2007), 34 and ft. nt. 63.

⁸⁷ Molly Worthen, *Apostles of Reason*, 216.

significant role he played in helping a generation of evangelical baby boomers engage elements of culture and ideas that had been all but absent within much of North American evangelicalism. Of course, Schaeffer did not singlehandedly push evangelicals on to intellectual heights. There were evangelical scholars like Wheaton's Arthur Holmes and Johns Hopkins's Timothy Smith and evangelical-friendly philanthropies like the Lilly Foundation that played important roles in the slow but notable development of an evangelical mind.⁸⁸ Demographics mattered, too; evangelicals were gaining affluence during these years and working to acquire levels of educational attainment to match their growing incomes.⁸⁹ Yet Schaeffer, and to a lesser extent the evangelical study center movement that he helped birth, did play an important and thus far underappreciated and under-examined role in this process.

Schaeffer's influence was significant for another reason as well; perhaps more than any evangelical of his generation Schaeffer turned the eyes of Americans toward Europe and a more cosmopolitan version of evangelicalism. In this he paved the way for others like the scholars at the ICS and James Houston to better connect lay evangelicals in North America to the work of cosmopolitan European evangelicals Abraham Kuyper, Dutch art historian Hans Rookmaaker (1922-1977), leading English New Testament scholar F. F. Bruce (1910-1990), internationally known English pastor John Stott (1921-2011), and, perhaps most important of all, the English novelist, literary scholar, and popular theologian C. S. Lewis (1898-1963), who was an acquaintance of Houston.⁹⁰ The

⁸⁸ Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power*, 75-113.

⁸⁹ On the educational attainment of American evangelicals, see Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power*, 78.

⁹⁰ Other evangelicals were also beginning to point to these figures, especially C. S. Lewis, who had been well received by many US evangelicals even before his death in 1963. One of the most notable promoters of Lewis among American evangelicals was Wheaton College's Clyde S. Kilby.

example of these cosmopolitan European evangelicals, especially when combined with the influence of the American counterculture, made the learning communities that appear in this narrative places that were often remarkably open to intellectual curiosity and a surprising array of political thought. For lay education specifically, but also for evangelical higher education in general, interaction with evangelical leaders and scholars who hailed from outside the United States was a vitally and arguably necessary part of helping evangelicals create room for a learning communities capable of avoiding the polemics, internecine disputes, and stilted theology that marked the more pugnacious, culturally aloof American versions of fundamentalism and evangelicalism. In short, the growth of the lay evangelical mind in North America, especially in the United States, required European exposure.

Perhaps most importantly of all, L'Abri and Regent College functioned as more than *intellectual* and *spiritual* communities; they were also *aspirational* communities. In some cases the aspirations aroused were intellectual. More than a few of L'Abri's Farel House students stood in awe of Schaeffer's seemingly limitless ability to answer questions and cite obscure examples from philosophy and art history. They studied in hope of mastering, like Schaeffer, the art of well-crafted apologetics. More than a few of the men seemed to want to *be* Schaeffer; some even donned Swiss hiking knickers of their own.⁹¹ Others aspired to the Schaeffers' emphasis on prayer and faithful dependence on God's provision. In many narratives, however, both of these elements pale in comparison to the community's cultural allure. For a generation of middle-class evangelicals who found little in their family or church backgrounds to prepare them for

⁹¹ Linda Mercadante, *Bloomfield Avenue: A Jewish-Catholic Jersey Girl's Spiritual Journey* (Cowley Publications, 2006), 120.

the art and culture of their times or the niceties of interior decoration, fashion, and the proper presentation of food, L'Abri became a training ground for upward social mobility. At L'Abri dinners middling evangelicals learned how to carry on intelligent conversation over multiple-course meals and tables set with fresh flowers and candles. They learned how to talk intelligently about fine art, carry themselves in an art museum, and appreciate Bach. Schaeffer and those he inspired also helped evangelicals understand the art of their times, from the silence of John Cage, to the music of Dylan and the Beatles, or the movies of Fellini and Bergman. Schaeffer and the L'Abri community taught middle-class evangelicals how to appreciate and desire the finer things in life. Following the Schaeffers many other study center leaders undertook similar, though usually far less pronounced, efforts.

All of these impulses made early evangelical learning communities and study centers exciting and complex places. They were innovative efforts to help evangelicals deal with change—both in the university and in society as a whole. Their combined force was to provide lay evangelicals, male and female, with a variety of options for theological and cultural education just as more and more evangelicals were attending college. Their countercultural sensibilities (smallness, interests in art and culture, an emphasis on community) combined with their emphasis on a familiar orthodoxy (often of an unabashedly Reformed cast) made the name L'Abri especially fitting. As communities like L'Abri and Regent College turned into a grassroots study center movement they and the places they inspired did indeed function like *shelters*. Marked by a persistent tension between being “in” the world yet not “of” it, the communities detailed in this history could easily function as retreats, or “ghettos” from the confusing environs of the secular

world and pluralist university. Yet the idea of shelter also carried with it a second connotation; for most who came through their doors places like L’Abri or New College Berkeley were also temporary—more launching pads than citadels.⁹² Though a few evangelicals wedded their lives to these places, and some no doubt used them as shelters to avoid deep interaction with pluralist campuses and peers, many only stayed for a short time before leaving these communities to engage the wider culture by seeking to live lives of faith that nurtured both the head and the heart.

Finally, it is important to note that tensions inherent in the concept of a “shelter” are not the only ones that run throughout this history. To varying degrees the individuals who led these communities were frequently navigating personal tensions as they balanced life within localized learning communities and study centers with the ambition for wider influence. Egos were sometimes on full display, a reality aided by deep patriarchal and authoritative tendencies within American evangelicalism, where “anointed” charismatic leaders have long held great sway.⁹³ The way in which the figures in this study navigated these tensions was often a product of at least two factors: 1) their level of celebrity within the evangelical world and 2) the way in which power was distributed within the organizations they founded. For individuals like Schaeffer and Sproul who encountered a fair amount of evangelical celebrity while simultaneously functioning within a relatively closed power structure in which they were seen as the primary, if not sole, intellectual authority, the temptation to trade in their commitment to a localized learning community

⁹² On a basic level the evangelicals who visited the communities detailed in this study had already taken a step away from a completely sheltered faith. If they wanted shelter, they could have stayed in their largely culturally and intellectually unaware churches. Students at these study centers demonstrated that they wanted some engagement with the larger world of culture and ideas, even if this engagement was still mediated to varying extents through evangelical ministries.

⁹³ Randall J. Stephens and Karl Giberson, *The Anointed: Evangelical Truth in a Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2011).

and a system of checks and balances within their ministry was high. Others navigated these tensions differently, but no one entirely escaped them.

Still, amid these tensions, at times in spite of these tensions, the figures detailed in this study did much to raise interest in theological education and Christian community among lay evangelicals in North America just as greater numbers of them were beginning to filter into American universities make their way to more influential spheres of American life. While the success of efforts like L'Abri, Regent College, or the Center for Christian Study to impact secular universities and wider American culture to any kind of quantifiable extent remains debatable, there is no doubt that the movement they helped launch left a lasting mark on the aspirations of North American evangelicals and did much to help awaken the lay evangelical mind.

PART I**THE FIRST GENERATION:
EXPERIMENTATION**

Chapter 1

Building a Shelter, Launching a Movement:

The Schaeffers' L'Abri as a Spiritual, Intellectual, and Aspirational Community

In America the 1960s and 1970s were “movement” decades. In the early 1960s the Civil Rights Movement, which culminated in the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, sent the South’s Jim Crow laws to their grave and captured the attention of a nation. With equality under the law achieved (in letter if not always in fact), Americans turned their attention and the organizing skills they had developed when protesting for civil rights to other projects—many of which drew their strength from the involvement of American youth. In the 1960s post-war prosperity and the demographic shifts that accompanied the coming of age of a generation of “baby boomers” meant that more young people than ever were attending college, a reality that further contributed to the changing US social and cultural reality.¹ Just as the Civil Rights Movement was reaching its dénouement, the Berkeley Free Speech Movement erupted among students at the University of California. Other movements followed shortly after as a countercultural impulse began to permeate campuses, cities, and even suburbs, across the nation. From hippies and black panthers to feminists and activists for gay rights, Americans took part in a variegated assortment of movements that were transforming their society.

The vast majority of American evangelicals experienced these shifts with an uneasiness tinged by fear and anger. Uncomfortable with most of these movements,

¹ John R Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 261.

evangelicals were underrepresented in them all.² This did not mean that they were content to retreat back to their enclaves. Like their fundamentalist forbearers before them, their evangelistic convictions pushed them, however haltingly and often awkwardly, toward engagement.³ Many who did seek to engage individuals in America's emerging counterculture found that traditional means of evangelizing fell flat. Harnessing the entrepreneurial spirit, ingenuity, and missionary impulse that had marked American evangelicalism since at least the First Great Awakening, some evangelicals began to experiment with new ways of contextualizing the gospel for their generation.⁴ Soon evangelical innovators infiltrated the counterculture, adopting countercultural dress, language, and lifestyles and initiating a movement of their own. As scholars like Larry Eskridge have shown, the resulting "Jesus Movement" would help usher millions of baby boomers into the evangelical faith and lay the groundwork for innovations ranging from modern worship music, and "Jesus Junk," to mega-churches.⁵

In many ways the Jesus Movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s was inspired and partially sustained by another movement within American evangelicalism that, ironically, stemmed from a small mountainside village in Switzerland. By the late 1960s the ministry of Francis and Edith Schaeffer was fast developing into a "Schaeffer

² The virtual absence of white evangelicals from the Civil Rights Movement is perhaps the most glaring example, see Curtis J. Evans, "White Evangelical Protestant Responses to the Civil Rights Movement," *Harvard Theological Review* 102, no. 2 (April 2009): 245–273.

³ As Matthew Avery Sutton has shown, American fundamentalism has been engaged in politics since its inception in the early 1920s, see *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

⁴ For examples of evangelical ingenuity in evangelism, see Harry S Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1991); Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, *Charles G. Finney and the Spirit of American Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1996); Matthew Avery Sutton, *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁵ Eskridge, *God's Forever Family*.

Movement” as growing numbers of disaffected youth turned to the Schaeffers—both their books and their multifaceted ministry, *L’Abri*—for answers to life’s greatest questions and for a gospel that was big enough to inform every aspect of their lives in what seemed an increasingly complicated world.⁶ From the publication of his first books in 1968 until his death in May 1984, Schaeffer functioned as an evangelical icon whose influence was perhaps second only to Billy Graham among American evangelicals.

Perhaps it is exactly in the comparison with Graham that Schaeffer’s ability to inspire his own movement within American evangelicalism stands out most clearly. While the clean-cut, all-American, golden-voiced, “ah shucks” Graham and the long-haired, knickers-wearing, nasal-toned, firebrand Schaeffer seemed separated by more than an ocean in the 1970s, the two held more in common than their modes of dress and speech revealed. Both came from working class homes, showed early intellectual promise, attended good fundamentalist schools, “married up” to daughters of cultured missionaries to China, and raised large families that symbolized a traditional evangelical home life even though both men spent many nights and weeks away. Neither was an academic, yet both used the title “Doctor” and were inclined to speak well out of their depths on a wide range of subjects.⁷ Both were international celebrities, yet to a large degree they each showed remarkable resistance to the first two vices of the unholy trinity (money and marital infidelity) while succumbing on some level to the third (power).⁸ In

⁶ Schaeffer’s son in law, Udo Middelman contends that Schaeffer’s bad experiences within Carl Macintyre’s movement led him to resist forming any type “movement” as such (Udo Middelman, email to author, January 11, 2017). While this seems to be true as far as Schaeffer’s explicit motives and ministry approaches are concerned, it is difficult to deny that Schaeffer did in fact launch a new “Schaefferian” movement within evangelicalism.

⁷ Both Graham and Schaeffer were awarded multiple honorary doctorates.

⁸ Graham’s greatest temptation toward power came during the presidency of Richard Nixon, see Steven P. Miller, *Billy Graham and the Rise of the Republican South* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Wacker, *America’s Pastor*. For his part Schaeffer developed close relationships

the late 1960s and 1970s no one influenced American evangelicals more than these two evangelical superstars. There were many well-known pastors and Bible teachers in America, but Graham and Schaeffer were on a different plane.

But differences in personality, theology, and approach to ministry meant that the lasting legacies of Graham and Schaeffer would be vastly different. Graham worked with novel success in traditional channels; Schaeffer utilized the work of artists and philosophers to seemingly create a new type of ministry altogether. Graham soothed evangelical hearts as his crusades were televised into American living rooms; Schaeffer threw open the curtains of evangelical windows and let the light of culture shine in. Graham ushered hundreds of thousands into evangelical faith and helped make evangelicalism more acceptable in American society; Schaeffer changed the way evangelicals thought, or, at the very least, he changed *what* they thought about. Graham made American evangelicalism bigger; the Schaeffers made American evangelicalism different.

Perhaps the most important reason the Schaeffers—and as many have noted both Francis and Edith must be taken into account when talking about L’Abri—were able to effect so much change within American evangelicalism during these years stemmed from the uniqueness of their decision to open their own home as their primary place of ministry. While Graham’s mountaintop home in Montreat, North Carolina was designed to be a place for the evangelist to get away from the demands of the world, the

with politicians later in his life, see Edith Schaeffer, *The Tapestry: The Life and Times of Francis and Edith Schaeffer* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1981), 544; Frank Schaeffer, *Crazy for God: How I Grew up as One of the Elect, Helped Found the Religious Right, and Lived to Take All (or Almost All) of It Back* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2007), 294-300. The degree to which Schaeffer actively sought out these relationships is debatable. To some who were close to him Schaeffer described “being exhuded” into a wider influence by former students who looked to him for insight, see Middelmann, email to author, January 11, 2016.

Schaeffers' mountainside L'Abri in Heumoz, Switzerland, functioned as a place to host the world for days, months, and years at a time. French for "the Shelter," L'Abri offered a generation of evangelicals from America and around the world a chance to discuss ideas and find what the Schaeffers described as "honest answers to honest questions."⁹ Not a commune but certainly a spiritual and intellectual community, L'Abri gave the Schaeffers a place to hone their thinking and a platform from which to launch out into a global ministry as writers, speakers, and film makers in the 1970s.¹⁰ In the process the Schaeffers' deep appreciation for beauty (from table settings to classic and modern art), their firm conviction that Christians need never fear pursuing the truth, and their embodiment of the Reformed idea that the lordship of Christ extends to all of life, inspired a generation of evangelicals to reconsider the spiritually, intellectually, and culturally stunted versions of Christianity they had encountered in their homes and churches. As hundreds and then thousands of American evangelicals read the Schaeffers' books and made the pilgrimage to L'Abri, American evangelicals experienced a Schaeffer Movement that shaped not only their spirituality and theology but also their wider aspirations.

New Vistas: The Schaeffers' Break with Separatist Fundamentalism, 1953-1955

In the spring of 1953 the Schaeffer family returned to the United States on furlough. After spending nearly a decade serving as the pastor of Presbyterian Bible

⁹ Francis A. Schaeffer, *Two Contents, Two Realities*, in *Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview. Vol 3, A Christian View of Spirituality*. (Westchester IL: Crossway Books, 1982).

¹⁰ Later, longtime L'Abri worker and Schaeffer friend Jerram Barrs would explicitly deny that L'Abri was a commune. Instead he described it as "a cross between an extended family and a study center." See Jerram Barrs, "Francis A. Schaeffer: The Early Years" (Covenant Theological Seminary, Fall 1989), lecture 23.

Church congregations in Grove City, Pennsylvania, Chester, Pennsylvania, and most recently St. Louis, Missouri, the Schaeffers accepted a call in 1948 to serve as missionaries in Europe under the fundamentalist Independent Board of Presbyterian Foreign Missions (IBPFM).¹¹ Since that time they had seen fruit from their work in countries across Europe and where they lived in Champéry, Switzerland. They had also encountered trials. Foremost of these was what Francis Schaeffer later described as his own “spiritual crisis” in the winter and spring of 1951.¹² It was this crisis, marked by deep soul searching regarding why Christians—including himself—did not evidence the reality of Christ’s work in their lives that drove Schaeffer first to hours of pacing in the hayloft of his chalet and then toward a realization that would make his 1953 furlough a watershed event.

¹¹ In the late 1920s and early 1930s J. Gresham Machen and other fundamentalists in the Presbyterian church lost control of the denomination and Princeton Theological Seminary, but they managed to gain complete control of the IBPFM, see Longfield, *The Presbyterian Controversy Fundamentalists, Modernists, and Moderates*. Space does not permit the inclusion of a full biographical treatment of Schaeffer. Many biographical accounts of Schaeffer’s life already exist. The most thoroughly researched is Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America*. Two biographies that are written by individuals with close personal interactions with Schaeffer include: Collin Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer: An Authentic Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008) and Louis Gifford Parkhurst, *Francis Schaeffer: The Man and His Message* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1985). Of these Parkhurst comes closest to hagiography. Several family members have also told Schaeffer’s story. These include Edith Schaeffer, *The Tapestry: The Life and Times of Francis and Edith Schaeffer* (Waco, TX.: Word Books, 1981) and Frank Schaeffer’s controversial memoirs, *Crazy for God: How I Grew up as One of the Elect, Helped Found the Religious Right, and Lived to Take All (or Almost All) of It Back* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2007) and *Sex, Mom, and God: How the Bible’s Strange Take on Sex Led to Crazy Politics, and How I Learned to Love Women (and Jesus) Anyway* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2011). Shorter pieces on Schaeffer that offer good vignettes of his life include: J. I. Packer’s preface in Ronald W. Ruesegger, *Reflections on Francis Schaeffer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, Zondervan, 1986); Michael S. Hamilton, “The Dissatisfaction of Francis Schaeffer: Thirteen Years after His Death, Schaeffer’s Vision and Frustrations Continue to Haunt Evangelicalism,” *Christianity Today* 41, no. 3 (March 3, 1997): 22–30; and Os Guinness, “Fathers and Sons,” *Books and Culture*, <http://www.booksandculture.com/articles/2008/marapr/1.32.html> (accessed October 10, 2015).

¹² Francis A. Schaeffer, “True Spirituality,” in *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian View of Spirituality*, vol. 3 (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982), 195. See also, Michael S. Hamilton, “The Dissatisfaction of Francis Schaeffer: Thirteen Years after His Death, Schaeffer’s Vision and Frustrations Continue to Haunt Evangelicalism,” *Christianity Today* 41, no. 3 (March 3, 1997): 22–30; Os Guinness, “Fathers and Sons,” *Books and Culture*; Ronald W. Ruesegger, *Reflections on Francis Schaeffer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, Zondervan, 1986).

During his dark night of the soul Schaeffer attempted to go back to his teenage agnosticism in order to rebuild his faith on a firmer foundation. The process convinced him that fundamentalist separatism was a mistake and the lack of love among Christians was a travesty. Sanctification, or “true spirituality” as he would later call it, was much more—though never less—than having the right doctrine; it was living a life marked by love and the “power and the enjoyment of the Lord.”¹³

To a significant degree this new spiritual understanding was a product of Schaeffer’s changing context. After spending years within the pressure cooker of American fundamentalism, Schaeffer’s time in Europe had opened his eyes to a new world marked by opportunity and great need. Europe provided the freedom to attend art exhibits and take in the best of western culture without the fear of a fellow fundamentalist criticizing the decision to engage these “secular” pursuits. Perhaps more importantly, the European context posed deep practical and philosophical challenges to Christianity that made the typical concerns of American fundamentalists (e.g., drinking, smoking, dancing, card playing, theatre, etc.) seem far less important.¹⁴

Schaeffer brought these experiences and convictions with him when he returned to the United States in 1953. He knew that these newfound convictions might meet with disapproval.¹⁵ What Schaeffer may not have fully realized at the time was just how deeply

¹³ Schaeffer, *The Tapestry*, 391. In 1951 Schaeffer published a two-part piece by this name in the *Sunday School Times*. The move demonstrated a shift in Schaeffer’s thought; it was the first time he had published a piece in a journal that was not affiliated with separatist fundamentalism. For more on the significance of this publication, see Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 106. For an online transcript of Schaeffer’s article, see Francis A. Schaeffer, “The Secret of Power and the Enjoyment of the Lord,” *Ephrata Ministries*, 1951, <http://www.ephraministries.org/remnant-2009-2Q-secret-of-power-and-enjoyment-of-the-Lord.a5w>.

¹⁴ Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, 44.

¹⁵ Schaeffer was certainly aware that he and Presbyterian Bible Church kingpin, Carl McIntire, were growing further apart in their views regarding the importance of strict separation, see Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, 47-50.

his words would divide leaders in his tiny fundamentalist denomination, the Bible Presbyterian Church. What began as Schaeffer's call for living a Christian life in which love was a greater reality ended a year later in a denominational schism and the subsequent establishment of Covenant College, Covenant Theological Seminary, and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.¹⁶

Schaeffer's involvement in these events won him loyal friends, but it also resulted in a wave of criticism, not least of which stemmed from the IBPFM, which was still under the direction of arch fundamentalist Carl McIntire, the leader of the Bible Presbyterian Church. For a time during the Schaeffers' furlough even the family's return to Europe was in question.¹⁷ When the family did eventually return to Europe in September 1954 their relationship with the IBPFM was anything but certain. A few months after the Schaeffers' arrival in Europe the IBPFM signaled its displeasure with the Schaeffers' methodology—an emerging emphasis on conversation and home-based hospitality for seekers—by cutting the family's already modest stipend by one hundred dollars a month.¹⁸

The financial cuts could hardly have come at a worse time. By late September of 1954 the Schaeffers were already dealing with a string of family crises. The worst of these concerned the health of their two-year-old son Francis “Franky” (later “Frank”) A.

¹⁶ Originally the Bible Presbyterian Church broke into McIntire's Bible Presbyterian Church (Collingswood Synod) and the Bible Presbyterian Church (Columbus Synod), to which Schaeffer belonged. Shortly after the split the latter denomination took the name Evangelical Presbyterian Church. See Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, 52.

¹⁷ Edith and the Schaeffer children prayed all summer for money to purchase their return ticket. In what would become the L'Abri *modus operandi* the money came on the last possible day. For an account of these events, see Schaeffer, *The Tapestry*, 394-396.

¹⁸ Udo Middelman argues that Schaeffer always maintained that he had no methodology, see Middelman, email to author, January 11, 2016. However, like seeker friendly churches that adopt an unspoken liturgy while avoiding traditional liturgical emphases, Schaeffer's anti-methodological approach focused on conversations about ideas and centered in the context of a hospitable community was a methodology, and a highly imitated one at that, in itself.

Schaeffer IV.¹⁹ On the return voyage aboard the *Ile de France* Frank contracted polio. While the doctors were able to keep the disease from causing complete paralysis, his left leg would require years of physical therapy and intensive surgery before regaining most of its original functionality. To make matters worse, the Schaeffers' second-oldest daughter, Susan, contracted rheumatic fever in mid-September 1954 and was bedridden for two months. Other disasters followed in early 1955. First the town of Champéry experienced a serious avalanche and mudslide that came extremely close to the Schaeffers' own Chalet Bijou. Then on February 14, another crushing blow arrived in the form of two letters from the Swiss government. The first informed the Schaeffers that their unwelcome "religious influence" made it necessary that they leave the Roman Catholic Canton of Valais by March 31, 1955. The second letter extended the eviction's scope to all of Switzerland and barred them from returning to the country for two years.²⁰ It was against the backdrop of these storms that the Schaeffers built their shelter.

Building a Shelter: L'Abri's Formation and Early Years, 1955-1960

From the start L'Abri was anything but a carefully planned program.²¹

Throughout their lives the Schaeffers insisted "it was not our plan to have anything like

¹⁹ Francis August Schaeffer IV went by the name "Franky" throughout his early life and during his years of involvement in the evangelical world. Later he adopted the name "Frank." To avoid confusion I use the latter name uniformly throughout this history, with the sole exception being when the name "Franky" appears in a quotation.

²⁰ For Edith's take on these events, see Edith Schaeffer, *With Love, Edith: The L'Abri Family Letters* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 309-312, letter of March 7-9, 1955; Edith Schaeffer, *L'Abri*; (Worthing (Sussex): Norfolk P., 1969), 73-92; Schaeffer, *The Tapestry*, 399-417.

²¹ In 1956 Schaeffer described his vision for the future of their ministry noting, "Really, we have no plans for the future. For the first time in my life, I think, I have no plans." Francis A. Schaeffer, *Letters of Francis A. Schaeffer: Spiritual Reality in the Personal Christian Life* (Crossway, 1986), 64, letter of February 8, 1956.

L’Abri.”²² Like the blue forget-me-nots that blossomed in the mountain meadows nearby, L’Abri grew naturally out of the Schaeffer’s practice of inviting individuals to spend time with them in their home conversing over tea or an evening meal about the things of God. This ministry of hospitality and conversation began as a trickle after the family moved during the summer of 1949 from their cramped apartment in Lausanne to a house in Champéry.²³ Between 1949 and 1955 the Schaeffers hosted a variety of individuals in their home—first in Chalet Bon Accueil then Chalet des Frenes and finally in Chalet Bijou.²⁴ Even in the years prior to the formal launching of L’Abri, the Schaeffers found themselves hosting a diverse pool of visitors ranging from groups of English girls from a nearby finishing school and Roman Catholics with questions to Americans on European tours and G.I.’s on leave from bases in Germany.²⁵ Together Francis and Edith made sure that their guests received home-cooked meals, carefully planned teas, and plenty of time for Bible study and unscripted conversation.

The Schaeffer’s first considered attaching the French word *l’abri* to their work of hospitality in September of 1954 when Francis suggested to Edith that they give the name to Chalet Bijou. The suggestion symbolized his hope that their home could function as “a spiritual shelter” individuals could “come to for help.” To Schaeffer the name seemed to

²² Schaeffer, *The Tapestry*, 344.

²³ For a description of how the Schaeffers procured this rental house, see Francis A. Schaeffer, *Letters of Francis A. Schaeffer: Spiritual Reality in the Personal Christian Life* (Crossway, 1986). Edith devoted nearly six pages to helping members of her praying family “understand completely how wonderfully the Lord gave us this new place” (104).

²⁴ The Schaeffers lived in Chalet bon Accueil over the summer of 1949. In September they moved to Chalet des Frenes, a house they liked very much. The family had to leave Chalet des Frenes in March of 1951 because it was put up for sale at a price they could not afford. For Edith’s take on this move, see Schaeffer, *With Love, Edith*, 197-198, letter of March 29, 1951.

²⁵ For a book-length account written by an American who visited the Schaeffers in Champéry in the early 1950s and then returned later to become a L’Abri Worker, see Betty Carlson, *The Unhurried Chase* (Wheaton, IL; London: Tyndale House; Coverdale House, 1970). Carlson would go on to write two other works pertaining to L’Abri: Betty Carlson, *A Song from L’Abri* (Good News Publishers, 1975); Betty Carlson, *From the Mountains of L’Abri* (Good News Publishers, 1977).

fit as many were “already coming for coffee in the mornings and tea in the afternoons— children as well as school girls, adults from hotels as well as M. Ex. from the village.”²⁶ Edith liked the idea and spun into action. She immediately began compiling a folio decorated with pine trees on a hillside and inscribed with the words: “L’Abri...come for morning coffee, or afternoon tea, with your questions.”²⁷ As the Schaeffers encountered one hardship after another in the months ahead Edith would continue adding images and ideas to the collection, sometimes using them as a means of encouragement for her husband, who even in the best of circumstances was inclined toward melancholy. By January of 1955 Edith was convinced that God had given her a promise for L’Abri based on Isaiah 2:2, which described how God would establish his house at the top of the mountains and “all nations shall flow into it.”²⁸

As it turned out, the eviction notice of February 14, 1955 marked more a beginning for the Schaeffers than an end. While the Schaeffer family was forced to leave the Canton of Valais, thanks to the help of kindly disposed government officials, they were allowed to remain in Switzerland provided that they find a house in the Protestant Canton of Vaud by March 31, 1955. In the nick of time—an occurrence that the Schaeffers attributed to prayer and divine intervention—they were able to make a down payment on Chalet Les Melezes just outside the village of Huemoz.²⁹ Situated at an altitude of over 3,000 feet, the long balconies and many windows of the chalet provided panoramic views of the Rhone Valley and the famous Dents Du Midi mountain range, which reached heights of over 10,000 feet. Susan Schaeffer, the first of the family to

²⁶ Francis Schaeffer quoted in Schaeffer, *The Tapestry*, 402, 404.

²⁷ Schaeffer, *The Tapestry*, 404.

²⁸ Schaeffer, *L’Abri*, 76.

²⁹ They made the initial payment on March 5, 1955. For more on this process, see Schaeffer, *L’Abri*, 77-112.

catch a glimpse of the view from Chalet les Melezes on a clear day, was so moved by what she saw that she “skipped up and down...saying, ‘Hallelujah! Thank the Lord. This is what you’ve given us!’”³⁰ Hers would not be the last soul moved toward God by the vista. In the years to come account after account from those whose lives were re-oriented to God at L’Abri contained reference to the significance of the alpine beauty that surrounded the chalet.³¹ At Swiss L’Abri place mattered greatly. The major draw was always Schaeffer, but it certainly did not hurt that his cozy fire and long hikes took place in a corner of the world where even nature itself seemed to point to heaven.

In the wake of their eviction from Valais things started to move quickly for the Schaeffers and their nascent vision. In a Family Letter dated March 7-9, 1955, Edith informed the Schaeffer’s Praying Family of both the Schaeffers’ upcoming move from Chalet Bijou and the their new ministry focus, which she explicitly named as L’Abri for the first time. “L’Abri is what we feel the Lord would have us add to the work He had given us here in Switzerland. L’Abri means ‘shelter’ in French and our thought is to have a spiritual shelter for any who have spiritual need.”³² She followed this up with a broad description of her vision for the ministry, which even then she envisioned to be diverse and holistic in scope:

There are a number of people who have been saved in Chalet Bijou who want to come *back* again for short or longer periods of Bible Study in a most informal way. We want them to feel free to come and in addition to these we want to open the doors for unsaved friends, for others who are Christians but who long for

³⁰ Susan Schaeffer in Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 134.

³¹ Os Guinness’s story gives a hint of the ways in which the Schaeffers’ gifts were complemented by the natural beauty that surrounded L’Abri. Commenting on his first three weeks at L’Abri in the summer of 1967, Guinness notes, “Those three weeks were stimulating beyond description. I would come out of the seminars and lectures night after night and walk...You have this incredible view at L’Abri. It looks over the Dents du Midi and the incredible range of mountains and the Rhone Valley. I’ve never had such an intense, intoxicating few weeks of thinking in my life. It turned me around.” Os Guinness, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, October 19, 2015, author’s possession.

³² Schaeffer, *With Love, Edith*, 308.

more reality and a deeper spiritual life, and for Christian workers who desire to dig deep into a spiritual study and have time for discussion and meditation. All this we feel can be wonderfully combined with skiing or walking in the mountains, as the beauty of the Alps is a perfect background for a time of forgetting and leaving behind the ‘world’ and concentrating on the things of the Lord. We have no plans for something ‘big’ — but we are praying that one by one people may be led to us whom the Holy Spirit will help *here*.³³

Over the course of the next several decades the Schaeffers’ European ministry would look very much like this vision.

Before the dreams of Edith’s letter could be realized, however, some practical steps needed to be taken. First, the Schaeffers’ needed to ensure that they could pay for their house. Through the help of friends in the United States they managed to raise the just over 8,000 francs necessary to cover the closing costs and full down payment by the deadline of May 30. Convinced that God had provided for their needs in this area and would continue to provide for their needs as they waited prayerfully on him, the Schaeffers followed up the successful purchase of their home by sending in their resignation to the IBPFM on June 5.³⁴ In many ways the IBPFM had been a hindrance to the Schaeffers’ ministry in the preceding months, but even a modest stipend was something. By resigning from the IBPFM the Schaeffer’s freed themselves from bureaucratic oversight and separatist fundamentalism, but they also severed their lifeline of financial support. Drawing on the legacy of “faith” missionaries before them like George Mueller and Hudson Taylor, the family would now rely on God to provide not just “the people of his own choosing” for their ministry, but also the necessary funds to sustain their family and to feed and house the people God sent. Because one of the primary guiding principles of L’Abri was that the ministry exist primarily to serve as “a

³³ Emphasis original. Schaeffer, *With Love, Edith*, 308.

³⁴ Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 131-133.

demonstration” of God’s existence in the world, the Schaeffers decided that they would never explicitly ask for funds or advertise their ministry in order to attract students.³⁵

They were putting themselves in God’s hands and would wait for Him to provide.³⁶

As far as the Schaeffers and the small community that assembled at Chalet Les Melezes were concerned God held up his end of the bargain. Though money was often tight there seemed always to be just enough. For their part, the Schaeffers did all they could to help God in his task of provision by stretching resources as far as possible. They used the phrase “active passivity” to describe the way in which through their work at L’Abri they sought to balance the tension between waiting on God to demonstrate his existence through miraculous provision while all the while doing their part to live with the utmost frugality.³⁷

For those who stayed with the Schaeffers during the 1950s and 1960s L’Abri’s somewhat fragile financial status was obvious. Hurvey and Dorothy Woodson, the first L’Abri workers from outside the Schaeffers’ family, describe L’Abri in the 1950s as “very poor” and extremely cold in the winter.³⁸ Hurvey, who was often in charge of regulating the house’s temperature when Schaeffer was away, remembers being assigned to guard L’Abri’s stockpile of firewood so that visitors would not use too much.³⁹ Edith would sometimes dig in the coals from the previous day’s fire for bits that might still be

³⁵ In February 1956 Francis Schaeffer described the work of L’Abri by noting, “I do believe He is giving a demonstration here of His existence. I believe more and more that *this* is truly the central task of the Christian—to give the Lord the opportunity to exhibit his existence.” See Dennis, *The Letters of Francis Schaeffer*, 63-63, letter of February 8, 1956.

³⁶ It is worth noting that the Schaeffers did follow through on this commitment, as least as far as explicit asking is concerned; however, Edith was quite adept at what I call “asking without asking.” When one reads her Family Letters it is hard to miss the frequent references to how tight resources were at L’Abri. It is likely that more than a few of her readers were motivated to give after reading of a pressing need at L’Abri.

³⁷ Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 125.

³⁸ Dorothy Woodson in Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 141.

³⁹ Hurvey Woodson in Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 141.

useful. ‘It was really a very tight situation,’ Woodson remembers. ‘We ate a lot of cornflakes, and we didn’t have much, we really didn’t.’⁴⁰

Woodson’s allusion to food is telling. Food—its sourcing, preparation, presentation, and consumption—played a central role at L’Abri. Food also took up a substantial percentage of the ministry’s budget. Together these two realities meant that at L’Abri food often functioned as a good barometer of the ministry’s financial stability. It is not surprising that the vast majority of those who have recorded their experiences at L’Abri mention food. Even before L’Abri officially began the Schaeffers were fond of having guests for dinner, and frequently used a family meal as a forum for taking and answering questions. As L’Abri developed, the Schaeffers began to follow a regular weekly pattern that included several lunches and dinners devoted to eating and conversation. After 1960 the Schaeffers launched a more formal program of lunches centered around long “Farel House” lunches, named after the newly launched Farel House, which was originally located on the closed porch of a nearby chalet before it was eventually moved to a large room under the Chapel. Farel House formed the center of L’Abri’s educational ministry from 1960 on.⁴¹ These weekly lunches provided a forum for conversation and an opportunity to expand L’Abri’s fledgling audiotope ministry.⁴²

⁴⁰ Hurvey Woodson in Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 142.

⁴¹ Farel House itself was named after the Swiss reformer, William Farel (1489-1565). Farel was among Francis Schaeffer’s favorite Reformers.

⁴² Schaeffer was first recorded in 1958, but recording took off after 1960, largely due to the taping of conversations held during the Farel House lunches. Audiotapes conversations from the Farel House lunches and Schaeffer’s weekly Saturday night talks were also augmented by recordings of Schaeffer’s sermons and various other lectures. These tapes developed into a significant part of L’Abri’s teaching method and were also distributed widely among English-speaking evangelicals around the world. By 1968 L’Abri had 850 hours of tapes available, see Schaeffer, *L’Abri*, 222. Some of these early tapes have been preserved and digitized and can be accessed at the Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, which is held at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. These tapes offer the listener a chance to experience Schaeffer’s empathetic, engaging, and far-ranging conversation style first hand. For more on the development of L’Abri’s tape ministry, see Schaeffer, *The Tapestry*, 516-518; Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, 58-59.

That food was able to play such a large role in the ministry in spite of real financial restraints was largely due to the ingenuity and culinary artistry of Edith.

Through both conscious and unconscious decisions made primarily by Edith Schaeffer herself, L'Abri mealtimes proved to be among the ministry's most formative events. For much of L'Abri's first two decades Edith planned, wrote, and even illustrated menus while also overseeing a team of L'Abri students and workers in the preparation of meals.⁴³ Soup by virtue of its low expense and its ability to be stretched to feed last-minute guests was a regular part of the L'Abri menu.⁴⁴ As more than one visitor to L'Abri has mentioned, main courses were often high in starch and carbohydrates and low in protein. Frank Schaeffer remembers “praying for red (or any) meat” rather than the cheese and “ingredient-stretching-casseroles” that provided the main fare at L'Abri.⁴⁵ For Linda Mercadante, a young American who found herself at L'Abri after hitchhiking through Europe, Edith's careful concern for meal presentation marked by artistic place settings, candles, and fresh flowers could not make up for a lack of nutritious options at meal time. Unlike the meals Mercadante received in her Jewish-Italian family, L'Abri meals were a “culinary nightmare.” “While it was Switzerland outside, inside at the table it was the Protestant Midwest,” Mercadante remembers.⁴⁶

We had cereal and white bread for breakfast. Lunch was bean soup, yogurt, and more white bread. Dinner featured starchy casseroles, a few cooked vegetables if they were in season, lots of potatoes, rice—and more bread. With so many people sharing, seconds were rarely available—except for bread. On Sundays if we were lucky, we might get a boiled egg in the morning and a chicken wing for

⁴³ For an example of Edith's careful preparation and illustration of a L'Abri Sunday lunch menu and the detailed instructions she gave to those who were preparing the meal, see Schaeffer, *L'Abri*, 208.

⁴⁴ Hurvey Woodson in Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 144.

⁴⁵ Schaeffer, *Sex, Mom, and God*, 27.

⁴⁶ Linda Mercadante, *Bloomfield Avenue: A Jewish-Catholic Jersey Girl's Spiritual Journey* (Cowley Publications, 2006), 118-119.

dinner....We had fruit only infrequently, and the only snack food allowed was leftover bread. I was hungry all the time, especially for protein.⁴⁷

For Mercadante, a budding feminist, distribution of protein at mealtimes was a small testament to latent sexism at L'Abri. At Sunday meals she "noted immediately" that "it was the girls who got the chicken wings while the boys got the legs or breast meat."⁴⁸

Those taking part in meals and in the wider L'Abri community were classified as belonging to one of four or sometimes five categories based on the duration and purpose of their stay in Huemoz. Among the earliest distinctions made at L'Abri was the basic distinction between "guests" and "workers." Guests were able to stay for a short time (usually no more than a week) at L'Abri for free. According to Edith the absence of a guest fee played an important role in fostering the "'enlarged Family' feeling" at L'Abri. "No one who comes to L'Abri as a guest pays for board and room. It is not a 'conference,' it is a place where doors are open, as a private home would be, to those whom the Lord sends with special spiritual needs."⁴⁹ Unlike temporary guests, workers functioned as permanent staff and were paid minimally—usually around twenty-five to thirty-six dollars a month—based on personal need.⁵⁰ Beginning in 1960 with the

⁴⁷ Mercadante, *Bloomfield Avenue*, 119.

⁴⁸ Mercadante, *Bloomfield Avenue*, 119. For some, like African American photographer Sylvester Jacobs, Edith's soup made a much more positive impression. For Jacobs's deeply appreciative account of Edith's cooking and hospitality see, Sylvester Jacobs and Linette Martin, *Born Black* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 105-107.

⁴⁹ Edith Schaeffer, *Dear Family: The L'Abri Family Letters, 1961-1986* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 22, letter of July 21, 1961.

⁵⁰ Thanks to Os Guinness for his concise description of the different roles at L'Abri, see Os Guinness, interview. Another helpful overview can be found in Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America*, 58. For more on workers' pay, see Jerram Barrs, "Francis Schaeffer, The Later Years: Life At L'Abri," *Resources*, 1989, <https://www.covenantseminary.edu/resources/resource/courses/francis-schaeffer-the-later-years/>, Lecture 3, "Life at L'Abri." There is some variance in the historiography regarding the pay of workers. While some called workers' income "pay," Hankins notes "workers were given a 'gift' thirty dollars a month" (58). Barrs argues that worker pay was not influenced by tenure, but Edith Schaeffer reports that workers who had been with the ministry for more than three years were paid up to eleven dollars a month more than less experienced workers, see Schaeffer, *Dear Family*, 75. Udo Middelman recalls that every worker,

development of L'Abri's Farel House, the Schaeffers also accepted "students." L'Abri students paid two dollars a day for meals and personalized instruction by Schaeffer or a L'Abri worker.⁵¹ Students spent roughly four hours a day in lower floor of the Chapel (i.e., Farel House) listening to Schaeffer's tapes. They then spent another four hours working in the L'Abri kitchens, gardens, woodworking shops, etc. Students could stay for up to three months. Eventually, however, enough students and guests requested to stay longer that L'Abri established the position of "helper." Students who became helpers at the end of their three-month stay could remain at L'Abri for an additional six months.⁵² The real powerbrokers at L'Abri were L'Abri "members." In order to become a member one had to be elected to membership after serving at least three years as a worker.⁵³ The only exceptions to this rule were Edith's father, George Seville, and Hans and Anky Rookmaaker. All three were part of L'Abri's founding leadership team.⁵⁴

While the Schaeffers were careful not to overtly advertise L'Abri in outlets like *Christianity Today*, their work soon began to attract a larger audience. Before all the boxes were even unpacked in Chalet Les Melezes the Schaeffers began to receive guests at their home. Word quickly began to spread both at the University of Lausanne, where Priscilla Schaeffer was studying, and in the United States, where the Schaeffers maintained connections with friends, family, and former congregants through Edith's Family Letters. Almost entirely by word of mouth, the Schaeffers found that within a few months of officially launching L'Abri, their home was seldom empty, especially on the

including the Schaeffers themselves, received \$25 a month, which translated into a decent stipend due to the 1-4.3 rate of exchange, see Middelman, email to author, January 11, 2017.

⁵¹ Originally Schaeffer himself oversaw the students' course of study. As student numbers grew, he gradually transferred this duty off to a handful of L'Abri workers like Os Guinness.

⁵² Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 92.

⁵³ Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 92; Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, 58.

⁵⁴ Middelman, email to author, January 11, 2017.

weekend. By the time L'Abri marked its official one-year anniversary in July of 1956 the number of visitors had increased to the point that Edith was able to tell the Praying Family that L'Abri had hosted 187 from mid-June through July.⁵⁵

Several of those who came through the doors of Chalet Les Melezes during the initial years would play an important role in shaping the future of the ministry and in spreading the word on a grassroots level about what was happening at L'Abri. Among the first guests in the spring of 1955 was Dorothy Jamison, a Californian who was spending time hiking through Europe between semesters of graduate school at the University of Minnesota.⁵⁶ By 1959 Jamison had become the first L'Abri worker, married Harvey Woodson, a fellow L'Abri worker whom the Schaeffers knew from St. Louis, and, with her husband, founded a second L'Abri in Milan, Italy.⁵⁷ John Sandri, a nineteen-year-old American whose parents were Swiss, showed up in the summer of 1955, was converted by November, and was engaged to the Schaeffers' eldest daughter, Priscilla, by March of 1957. After completing a theological degree at Covenant Theological Seminary, he and Priscilla would go on to play a leading role in Swiss L'Abri for years to come.⁵⁸

Another early guest of note was Jane Stuart Smith, an internationally known opera singer born to an elite railroad family in Roanoke, Virginia. Smith, then living in Milan, showed up at L'Abri for the first time for Easter in 1956. By February 1960 the journey she embarked on that weekend would prompt her to give up her career and join L'Abri as a worker. Throughout the next decades her story would filter around the world

⁵⁵ Schaeffer, *With Love, Edith*, 362, letter of July 31, 1956.

⁵⁶ Schaeffer, *The Tapestry*, 429.

⁵⁷ Schaeffer, *L'Abri*, 134; Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 140-141.

⁵⁸ Sandri was eventually dismissed from his teaching role at L'Abri after Francis Schaeffer decided his view of inerrancy was lacking. See Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 310.

as an unofficial advertisement for the Schaeffers' work.⁵⁹ Perhaps the most quantifiable aspect of Stuart's presence at L'Abri was her decision to use the money she earned from the sale of her custom-made opera costumes to fund the construction of the L'Abri chapel, which was finished in the fall of 1964.⁶⁰

A few months after Smith's initial visit the Schaeffers hosted another family who was even then exerting a significant influence on the shape of Francis Schaeffer's thinking and the wider ministry and international prominence of L'Abri. Schaeffer first met Dutch art historian Hans Rookmaaker following a 1948 meeting of the fundamentalist International Council of Christian Churches in Amsterdam.⁶¹ From their initial conversation, which famously lasted until 4 am, Schaeffer and Rookmaaker enjoyed a close friendship based on a shared passion for art and Reformed theology. On the basis of this friendship, the Rookmakers and their three young children came to L'Abri in the summer of 1956 for an extended stay. During this time both Hans and Anky were impressed by the Schaeffers' deep spirituality, especially their emphasis on prayer.⁶² In the years to come the Rookmakers' involvement in the ministry of L'Abri grew.

⁵⁹ Smith's story was eventually crystalized in a book by fellow L'Abri worker Betty Carlson in 1975: Carlson, *A Song from L'Abri*.

⁶⁰ Schaeffer, *Dear Family*, 5-7; Carlson, *A Song from L'Abri*, 169-170. According to Middelman, the sale of these costumes only ended up covering the cost of chapel organ, see Middelman, email to author, January 11, 2017.

⁶¹ Laurel Gasque, *Art and the Christian Mind: The Life and Work of H.R. Rookmaaker* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 72-74. Rookmaaker's fiancé, Anky Huitker, was working in the ICCO office, where she got to know Schaeffer. Rookmaaker, who loved Jazz music, was eager to talk about the subject with Schaeffer. Schaeffer told Rookmaaker that he had about a half hour to spare. The two then launched into a conversation on the topic of modern art that lasted until 4:00am. For another account of Schaeffer's friendship with Rookmaaker and excerpts from an interview with Rookmaaker about his friendship with Schaeffer, see Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 75-80. An earlier, less professional biography of Rookmaaker is Linette Martin, *Hans Rookmaaker: A Biography* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979).

⁶² Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 148-149.

Eventually they become full L'Abri members, and in 1971 they launched Dutch L'Abri in the farming village of Eck en Wiel near Amsterdam.⁶³

While there is some debate as to the degree to which Schaeffer and Rookmaaker's friendship was marked by "intellectual reciprocity," there is little doubt that both men benefitted greatly from the relationship.⁶⁴ On a basic level Schaeffer helped the Dutch Rookmaaker tweak the English of his dissertation in order to make it acceptable to his committee and provided a sounding board for Rookmaaker's thoughts. For his part, Rookmaaker stood behind Schaeffer as a kind of scholar-at-large for L'Abri.⁶⁵ Indeed he was one of the few academic voices Schaeffer permitted into his inner circle of advisors, a group primarily made up of family members and far younger acolytes. Convinced of the quality of Rookmaaker's thought, Schaeffer used L'Abri conferences and his frequent lectures to Inter-Varsity groups in England as platforms to introduce Rookmaaker and his work.⁶⁶ Once given the stage Rookmaaker's engaging style and deep knowledge were on full display. By 1970 when Rookmaaker published his cross-over best seller, *Modern Art*

⁶³ Gasque, *Art and the Christian Mind*, 98-99.

⁶⁴ Many have asserted that it was through his friendship with Rookmaaker that Schaeffer developed his understanding of modern art, see Molly Worthen, *Apostles of Reason: The Crisis of Authority in American Evangelicalism*, 2014, 211. Schaeffer's principle biographer notes "There can be little doubt that Rookmaaker was the major influence on Schaeffer's thinking about art," see Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America*, 124. Others, however, argue for more give and take between the two men. Gasque points to a deep "intellectual reciprocity" that developed between the two men, see Gasque, *Art and the Christian Mind*, 96. William Edgar, a Harvard-trained musician who was converted at L'Abri argues similarly: "Earlier on I was fairly convinced that Schaeffer's knowledge of art and music owed enormous amounts to Rookmaaker, almost as a one-way street. I have since come to the conclusion that while Schaeffer was less the scholar than his friend, he nevertheless had amassed a considerable understanding of the arts on his own... Fran once told me that he and Hans were so close, he was never sure which one had generated some of their best ideas first!" see *Schaeffer on the Christian Life*, 51. Perhaps the greatest indication of Rookmaaker's esteem for Schaeffer's intellect came during the Dutch Scholar's May 1965 inaugural address as the new professor of art history at the Free University of Amsterdam. Speaking of Schaeffer, Rookmaaker noted, "Since the first time we met, in 1948, we have had many long talks about faith, philosophy, reality, art, the modern world, and their mutual relations. I owe very much to these discussions, which have helped to shape my thoughts on these subjects." Rookmaaker in Gasque, *Art and the Christian Mind*, 102-103.

⁶⁵ Gasque, *Art and the Christian Mind*, 100-101.

⁶⁶ Gasque, *Art and the Christian Mind*, 100-101.

and the Death of Culture, his Schaeffer-aided transition from Dutch academic to public intellectual stardom was complete.⁶⁷ Until his early death in 1977 Rookmaaker would be one of the most sought after lecturers on the interaction of art and modern culture within English-speaking evangelicalism on both sides of the Atlantic.

Before Schaeffer could play a role in introducing Rookmaaker in Britain, however, he needed to be introduced on English soil himself, something that did not happen in a meaningful way until he and Edith traveled to London in late May of 1958. In typical L'Abri fashion, Schaeffer's introduction on the British scene came via a relationship he and Edith formed with a L'Abri guest who wanted to give some of her friends back home a chance to experience the challenging conversations she had enjoyed at Chalet Les Melezes. The short trip paved the way for future trips, English L'Abri conferences, and an English L'Abri branch, which benefitted in its early years from the leadership of Swiss-L'Abri-trained individuals like Jerram and Vicki Barrs and Ronald and Susan (Schaeffer) Macaulay.

The Schaeffers' 1958 London trip signaled the beginning of a new period of fruitfulness and prominence at L'Abri. As the Schaeffers began complementing their Huemoz-based ministries with an increasing amount of travel and outside speaking, first in England and then in America in 1965, their influence within English-speaking evangelicalism began to increase—as did the amount of visitors to Swiss L'Abri. It was

⁶⁷ The book remains in print, see H. R. Rookmaaker, *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994 [1970]). Sales of this book were aided by the fact that Malcolm Muggeridge, a well known British television personality and public Christian voice, endorsed the book as one of his *Observer* books of the year, see Gasque, *Art and the Christian Mind*, 181.

during these years that the beginnings of a journalistic obsession with the work of L'Abri became apparent.⁶⁸

Among the most notable treatments of the Schaeffer's work during its early years came in 1960 after a journalist whose daughter attended high school with Debby Schaeffer tipped off a friend at *Time* magazine about the Schaeffer's work. The resulting article titled "Mission to Intellectuals" in the January 11, 1960 issue of *Time* introduced the Schaeffers' heretofore relatively unknown ministry to thousands of readers in the United States and around the world. By calling L'Abri "one of the most unusual missions in the Western world" the article presented Schaeffer as anything but a staid fundamentalist type. The article highlighted Schaeffer's passion to present "the Bible's historical truth in such a way that it is acceptable to today's intellectuals," along with his assessment that "Protestantism has become bourgeois."⁶⁹ Yet, as significant as the *Time* article was, it was not the written word but rather L'Abri's relational emphasis that brought Schaeffer to the United States in February of 1965.⁷⁰

The invitation for Schaeffer to spend twelve days lecturing groups of students from Harvard and a number of other well-known Boston-area schools came at the urging

⁶⁸ Though not technically advertising for guests, the spate of articles that began with a trickle in the early 1960s and increased to a steady flow in the 1970s served as a largely unacknowledged but real supplement to the Schaeffer's prayerful, word-of-mouth emphasis. For example: "Dropping Out into Jesus," *Vanguard*, March 1971; Ronald Hendrix and Miriam Hendrix, "L'Abri Fellowship: The Ministry of Francis Schaeffer," *The Lookout*, January 3, 1971, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina; David W. Gill, "Schaeffer!," *Right On* 3, no. 11 (May 1972): 7; Danny Smith and Francis A. Schaeffer, "A Conversation with Francis Schaeffer," *Right On* 5, no. 10 (April 1974): 1, 2, 10; Edward B. Fiske, "A Look at the Man and the Shelter That Continues to Attract Evangelicals from Around the World," *Moody Bible Institute Monthly*, October 1975.

⁶⁹ "Mission to Intellectuals." For their part the Schaeffers, in spite of their initial attempts to talk the reporter out of covering the article, seem to have approved.⁶⁹ In the late 1960s visitors to L'Abri would still find the article, along with other articles meant to stimulate conversation, pinned to a small bulletin board in the corridor of Les Melezes, see Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 150-151. For Edith Schaeffer's take on the article, see Schaeffer, *With Love, Edith*, 447, letter of February 12, 1960.

⁷⁰ Although Barry Hankins dates Schaeffer's initial Boston trip to 1964 multiple times (e.g., pp 75, 76, 79), this trip occurred in February of 1965, not 1964.

of a young evangelical scholar and collegiate pastor at Boston's Park Street Church named Harold O. J. Brown (1933-2007).⁷¹ By 1965, Brown, a Floridian by birth, had spent the better part of two decades in Boston. Over that time he had picked up three Harvard degrees (A.B., 1953; B.D., 1957; Th.M. 1959), a Fulbright Fellowship, and was well on his way to completing a Harvard Ph.D. in Reformation ecclesiology.⁷² Brown first heard of Schaeffer through his sister, Judy, who wound up at L'Abri after Priscilla Schaeffer found her lost beside Lake Geneva in 1959 and invited her to Huemoz. At his sister's urging Brown made a trip to L'Abri in 1961. He was captivated by the holistic, culturally engaged version of Christianity he found there. Upon returning to Boston he maintained contact with the Schaeffers and frequently directed promising Harvard undergrads like William Edgar, Dick Keyes, Henry Baay, and Jim Hurley to L'Abri.⁷³ Some of these students, like Edgar, a cosmopolitan jazz musician who was converted at L'Abri in the summer of 1964, "spoke incessantly" about the Schaeffers at Harvard and did much to help drum up publicity for the Swiss sage among Boston-area students.⁷⁴ The results were heady. During the twelve-day trip Schaeffer lectured as often as three times a day to audiences numbering as many as 400 students.⁷⁵ Describing the trip in a Family

⁷¹ Hamilton, "The Dissatisfaction of Francis Schaeffer," 26. Brown described his vision for Schaeffer's visit as "a sort of pan-Boston lecture series." See, Harold O. J. Brown to Francis A. Schaeffer, November 23, 1964, Box 56, File 38, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina.

⁷² Brown earned his Ph.D. in 1967. For more biographical information on Brown, see John D. Woodbridge, "Harold O. J. Brown," *First Things*, July 10, 2007, <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2007/07/harold-oj-brown>; Susan Wunderink, "Theologian Harold O. J. Brown Dies at 74," *ChristianityToday.com*, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/julyweb-only/128-13.0.html> (accessed March 30, 2016).

⁷³ For an example of Brown's role as an unofficial L'Abri representative in Boston, see Harold O. J. Brown to Francis A. Schaeffer, October 15, 1964, Box 56, File 38, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina. Brown came into contact with many university students in the Boston area through his positions as a teaching assistant at Harvard and a college pastor at Harold J. Ockenga's famous Park Street Church.

⁷⁴ Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, 66.

⁷⁵ Schaeffer, *Dear Family*, 88.

Letter written just before she and Francis headed back to Europe, Edith enthused “It is as if *suddenly* both in England and here doors have swung open in a new degree.”⁷⁶

Open Doors: L’Abri and the Schaeffers’ Rise to International Fame, 1960-1974

As was typically the case, Edith’s instincts proved correct. Over the next two decades open doors would define the work of L’Abri Fellowship like never before. As his February 1965 Boston trip showed, there were open doors for travel—especially travel to the United States. Later during the same year Schaeffer followed up his Boston lectures by presenting his views of contemporary society in even greater depth at Wheaton College near Chicago and at California’s evangelical Westmont College. These trips were harbingers of things to come. In 1968 the Schaeffers were joined by their teenage son Frank and Os Guinness—who was permitted to come on the condition that he pay his own way and carry Schaeffer’s bags—on a fourteen-city tour with stops at places like Wheaton and Westmont while also including new destinations like Michigan’s Calvin College.⁷⁷ Later Schaeffer would follow up these American trips by launching the first American L’Abri Conference at Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Tennessee in March of 1971. From that point on, the door to the United States never remained closed for long—a reality that allowed the Schaeffers to become increasingly integrated into American evangelicalism and the American political scene.

For Schaeffer, one open door led to another. His early success on the American evangelical lecture circuit led to openings in the world of publishing. As early as 1965

⁷⁶ In its published version this letter is dated March 3, 1965 and the location is listed as Huemoz; however, in the letter Edith notes that she and Francis plan to return to Switzerland on March 7, so it is probable that the letter was written in the United States despite the location mentioned in its heading. See Schaeffer, *Dear Family*, 84, 88.

⁷⁷ Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, 77; Guinness, interview, 2015.

demand for tapes and the 55,000-word, 130-page transcript of his lectures at Wheaton turned his mind toward publishing a book based on the “Speaking Historic Christianity into the Twentieth-Century World” lecture series that he had been developing and adapting for several years.⁷⁸ “I realized I had a responsibility to publish,” Schaeffer would later recall.⁷⁹

And publish he did. In 1968 Schaeffer published a minimally edited version of his 1965 Wheaton lecture transcripts as *The God Who Is There*. The same year he also published *Escape from Reason* based on reworked transcripts from lectures he delivered in the UK in 1966 and 1967.⁸⁰ Both books were published in the UK by Hodder and Stoughton a few months before InterVarsity Press (IVP) made them available for US markets.⁸¹ Schaeffer would go on to publish twenty more books, twelve of which were published through IVP.⁸²

Schaeffer was not alone in his efforts to publish material related to the work of L’Abri. As early as 1963 Edith had decided to turn what she often described as “the story of L’Abri” into a book.⁸³ Published in 1969 by London’s Norfolk Press, the book did much to popularize the image of L’Abri as a *place* in the wake of the substantial increase in publicity the ministry was receiving due to Francis’s more theoretical publications. As Francis Schaeffer noted in the brief forward to *L’Abri*, Edith’s book presented an important supplement to the image of L’Abri one might get from reading *The God Who*

⁷⁸ This is a title Schaeffer gave to his lectures, see Francis Schaeffer in Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 161.

⁷⁹ Francis Schaeffer quoted in Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 162.

⁸⁰ Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 164-172.

⁸¹ Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, 79.

⁸² Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, 79. Tyndale House, Fleming H. Revell, and Crossway also published Schaeffer’s books. In 1982 Crossway published a five volume series *The Complete Works of Francis Schaeffer*, which contained updated versions of all of Schaeffer’s published books up to that point.

⁸³ Schaeffer, *Dear Family*, 55, letter of August 28, 1963.

Is There or Escape from Reason. His books stemmed from L'Abri's emphasis on providing "an honest answer to honest questions." Edith's book, however, offered readers a glimpse into the ways "the Personal-Infinite God" demonstrated his reality at L'Abri. They were, to Schaeffer's mind, "the two sides of a single coin."⁸⁴

L'Abri, rather than sating the growing curiosity of evangelicals on both sides of the Pond, only inspired more curious visitors to make the pilgrimage to Huemoz. The book also launched Edith's career as an author. From 1969 on Edith emerged as one of the leading evangelical authors of her time. Unlike her husband's books, which almost all read as either sermons or efforts to make arguments for a modern age by looking to history, Edith ventured into a number of different topics and genres. Books like her autobiographical *The Tapestry* (1981) and *With Love, Edith: The L'Abri Family Letters, 1948-1960* (1988) provided some of the most intimate accounts of life at L'Abri. Titles on more traditional topics like *Affliction* (1978) and *The Life of Prayer* (1992), were rounded out by *What Is A Family?* (1975), *Christianity is Jewish* (1975), and a children's book titled *Mei Fuh: Memories From China* (1998). Edith's taste for aesthetics frequently emerged in published works like *Forever Music* (1986), *My Life with the Great Pianists* (1992), and *The Hidden Art of Homemaking* (1971). *Hidden Art*, which flowed naturally out of her attempts to add simple beauty to daily life at L'Abri, was especially characteristic of Edith's influence both at L'Abri and in wider evangelical circles. Decades later young evangelicals were still trying to live by Edith's admonition that "a Christian, above all people, should live *artistically, aesthetically, and creatively*" as they beautified their own homes and college dormitories by "writing out...notes neatly

⁸⁴ Francis Schaeffer, "Forward," in Schaeffer, *L'Abri*.

and beautifully, artistically arranging the loathsome cafeteria food on the unaesthetic plates and trays” while at college, “and, occasionally, bringing in fresh flowers.”⁸⁵

Together open doors for international speaking and writing meant that more literal doors were opening as well. By the fall of 1966 Edith was noticing a shift: “L’Abri seems to be growing, with more people *coming* here all the time, and more calls coming for us to go to a scattered number of places to speak.”⁸⁶ As the ministry expanded it seemed that “‘private life’ is fading out from any of our daily schedules.”⁸⁷ The situation would only become more frenzied in the next few years. In his tell-all memoir Frank Schaeffer describes 1968 as the year L’Abri “was at its zenith”—a rare point in which his account squares with other leading L’Abri voices like that of Os Guinness.⁸⁸ October 1969—when Chalet Les Melezes and L’Abri’s multiple other chalets were still full after a busier-than-usual summer—signaled a new normal.⁸⁹ As Edith noted for readers of her October 1969 Family Letter, “We have all suddenly and with a great feeling of dismay, awakened to the fact that there is *not* going to be a difference between summer, autumn, winter, and spring as far as numbers of people coming to L’Abri.”⁹⁰

Especially in America, the late 1960s marked a watershed moment in Schaeffer’s prominence. The earlier American lecture tours had alerted handfuls of evangelicals to Schaeffer’s ideas and unique ministry. It was the books, however, as they were

⁸⁵ Rachel Marie Stone, “Remembering Edith Schaeffer,” *Her.meneutics* in *Christianity Today*, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/women/2013/april/remembering-edith-schaeffer-evangelical-woman-in-pearls-and.html> (accessed May 11, 2016).

⁸⁶ Schaeffer, *Dear Family*, 110.

⁸⁷ Schaeffer, *Dear Family*, 110.

⁸⁸ Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 207. For an example of the extent to which Guinness’s assessment of the Schaeffer’s differs from that of Frank, see Guinness’s extensive *Books and Culture* review of *Crazy for God*: Os Guinness, “Fathers and Sons.” See also, Edgar, *Schaeffer on the Christian Life*, 75.

⁸⁹ By 1969 Swiss L’Abri consisted of several chalets and a chapel building used for Sunday morning services and L’Abri’s educational ministry, Farel House.

⁹⁰ Schaeffer, *Dear Family*, 140, letter of October 13, 1969.

distributed to college students through collegiate ministries, book tables, and well meaning pastors and parents that catalyzed a wave of American pilgrims to L'Abri.⁹¹ As the American counterculture began to be marked by pockets of increasing violence and dissention by the end of 1968, Schaeffer's willingness to address issues in contemporary culture with unflinching certainty tempered by deep empathy and a countercultural style was hard to resist. That his ministry was based out of a community rather than a church or large, business-like ministry only added to the allure. For a generation marked by a "small-is-beautiful" mindset, no international ministry seemed smaller or more beautiful. Even when Edith tried to downplay the allure of L'Abri, noting "L'Abri is *not* a rosy glow of excitement and perfection, not even for one day," letters still poured in from individuals around the globe who wanted "to come to L'Abri, to sell homes, furniture, leave all, and 'join the community.'"⁹²

By the early 1970s Schaeffer was *the* spokesman of choice for a generation of countercultural American evangelicals like Jack Sparks of the left-leaning Christian World Liberation Front in Berkeley, CA and was also beginning to become a favorite among more mainstream pastors and Christian leaders.⁹³ In addition to friendships with Christian leaders like Billy Graham, Schaeffer was now coming into contact with pastors and lay Christians from across the United States who wrote to him regarding wayward

⁹¹ Hamilton, "The Dissatisfaction of Francis Schaeffer," 28.

⁹² Schaeffer, *Dear Family*, 180, letter of March 4, 1972, emphasis original.

⁹³ For a description of the types of people who came to L'Abri between about 1965 and 1975, see Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 207-214. In early 1971 Sparks spoke highly of Schaeffer saying, "I really respect Francis Schaeffer; he's much more brilliant than any of us here."

children, applause for his books, or with ideas for new L'Abri branches in places like Laurel, Mississippi, Berkeley, California, and rural, western Pennsylvania.⁹⁴

Shifting Scenes: Film, Politics, and L'Abri, 1975-1984

In the face of such rapidly increasing fame L'Abri could not help but change. While there were still meals to be eaten, conversations to be had, and tapes to be listened to, for those who had been at L'Abri for sometime it was clear that by the mid-1970s the ministry was notably different. Perhaps the most noticeable and significant change was the increasing absence of the Schaeffers from daily life at Chalet Les Melezes. In the two decades since the founding of L'Abri, the Schaeffers had transitioned from a relatively unknown missionary couple to internationally known authors and evangelical celebrities. Along the way they encountered both the benefits and the costs of success. The sale of millions of books brought huge royalties, which, because the Schaeffers donated much of the profit from their publications to L'Abri, provided a significant boon to the ministry's financial stability throughout much of the 1970s.⁹⁵ However, as with all celebrities, fame meant that personal space virtually disappeared. Though Edith had once described L'Abri as a type of extended family, by January of 1973 this was no longer the case. "At some time in the past years, the balance has changed, a line was crossed, and Melezes ceased really to be a shared home." Instead, "the hall became a kind of youth hostel or entrance

⁹⁴ Robert Marsh to Francis A. Schaeffer, May 1972, Box 51, File 25, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina; David Gill to Francis A. Schaeffer, February 13, 1970; R. C. Sproul to Francis A. Schaeffer, March 18, 1971.

⁹⁵ On royalties, see Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, 57; Barr, "Francis Schaeffer: The Latter Years," 1990, Lesson 3, Life at L'Abri. In 1991 James Davidson Hunter reported that Francis Schaeffer had sold three million copies of his books in the United States alone, see James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* ([New York]: Basic Books, 1991), 244. According to Frank Schaeffer, Edith Schaeffer did keep some of the profit from her books. She used this to fund the Schaeffers' annual family reunion, see Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 303.

to a pension in atmosphere at times. One could not walk through without being asked dozens of questions, or without having a picture snapped.”⁹⁶ In the face of such constant attention the Schaeffers found that the small apartment they had been renting as a get-away and writing retreat was no longer sufficient. Sensing an “assurance that we were being led to move into a home of our own,” the Schaeffers purchased Chalet le Chardonnet, which was located about ten minutes up the mountain from Chalet les Melezes. They moved into their new home on January 26, 1973.⁹⁷ From that point on the Schaeffers primarily saw individual L’Abri students and guests at their new home by appointment.⁹⁸

A new house was not the only thing that kept the Schaeffers away from Chalet les Melezes during these years. International celebrity meant a demand for international travel. Books demanded book tours. The Schaeffers had spent much of the fall of 1972 on the road as Francis spoke to groups at Princeton University, Geneva College in western Pennsylvania, the American L’Abri branch in Los Gatos, CA, the University of Hawaii, and universities in multiple Japanese cities, Hong Kong, and India.⁹⁹ By 1973 a new home and a full travel itinerary meant that students who traveled to L’Abri to sit at the guru’s feet were now facing the prospect of learning not from Schaeffer himself but from one of his sons-in-law or a lesser-known L’Abri worker.

⁹⁶ Schaeffer, *Dear Family*, 201, letter of February 10, 1973. In addition to personal photography, professional photographers frequently stopped by L’Abri. The most famous and extensive photographic treatment of L’Abri is Sylvester Jacobs, *Portrait of A Shelter* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973). Jacobs was an African American photographer who first heard Schaeffer and then spent time at L’Abri, where he was positively impacted by Schaeffer, see Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 165-166; Sylvester Jacobs and Linette Martin, *Born Black* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 100-104.

⁹⁷ Schaeffer, *Dear Family*, 201-202.

⁹⁸ Edgar, *Schaeffer on the Christian Life*, 73.

⁹⁹ Schaeffer, *Dear Family*, 203.

By far the most significant change at L'Abri, however, came in 1975 when Francis Schaeffer followed Frank's suggestion and entered the world of film. Since at least 1974 Schaeffer had been working on a book titled *The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*.¹⁰⁰ Originally the project, which would eventually become Schaeffer's widely popular *How Should We Then Live?* book and film series, was conceived as only a more expansive print version of the declension narrative that Schaeffer had already charted in books like *The God Who Is There* and *Escape from Reason*. Frank, however, had other ideas. He was convinced that his father needed to expand the reach of his ideas and that film was the best means to this end.¹⁰¹ Working together with Gospel Films producer Bill Zeoli—the son of the evangelist Anthony Zeoli, whom Schaeffer had met shortly after coming to Christ—Frank convinced his father to venture beyond the printed word.¹⁰² That Zeoli was a convincing salesman, the son of a significant evangelist, believed in Frank's potential, and had access to the huge fortune of Amway co-founder Richard DeVos did not hurt.¹⁰³ As Frank later recalled, “Until Billy Zeoli showed up, Dad, with his preference for the small-is-beautiful hippie ethos...had avoided the temptation to capitalize on his growing fame.” Comparing Schaeffer's allure for evangelicals to that of the era-appropriate allure of the Grateful Dead for Deadheads, Frank notes that Schaeffer felt his work would lose its meaning if he “sold out” when he was “on the cusp of going big-time” by taking “the last step” toward celebrity.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Schaeffer, *Dear Family*, 225, letter of November 26, 1974.

¹⁰¹ As he admits, the suggestion also fit with his own ambition to direct and film movies, see 258.

¹⁰² At the very least Edith saw it as significant that Zeoli was the son of Anthony Zeoli, see Schaeffer, *Dear Family*, 235, letter of July 4, 1975; Schaeffer, *The Tapestry*, 55.

¹⁰³ Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 256-269; Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, 161-165.

¹⁰⁴ Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 257.

But with the prodding of his son and the son of Anthony Zeoli, Schaeffer took more than a step into filmmaking. With characteristic abandon, he and Edith threw themselves wholeheartedly into the production of a *How Should We Then Live?* documentary film. Francis and Edith hit the road for film shoots across Europe in August of 1975, and the rigors of prepping for daily shoots took up nearly all of the Schaeffers' energy for much of the next year-and-a-half.¹⁰⁵ After the filming was finally completed, the Schaeffers readied themselves for a fourteen-city North American film tour in which Schaeffer would host question and answer sessions after viewings of the film. The first of these showings took place before 5,600 people in Oakland, California on January 30, 1977—Schaeffer's sixty-fifth birthday.¹⁰⁶ From this point on, Schaeffer shifted his focus increasingly away from the one-on-one conversations and small group exchanges that had been the hallmark of L'Abri and instead focused on gathering large crowds for a handful of big events.

More than simply taking the Schaeffers away from Huemoz, filming changed L'Abri and the Schaeffers' legacy in several other important ways. On a basic level, film made Schaeffer—both his ideas and him as a person—a more widely known evangelical star. Film reached a broader audience than his books because film required less of the viewer than the stilted prose, philosophical references, and verbal descriptions of art in books like *The God Who Is There*. While Schaeffer's books were firmly middlebrow in their cultural appeal, film could reach an audience with lowbrow tastes for popular television programming or the low-budget, talking-head films that were beginning to

¹⁰⁵ For a thorough treatment of the rigor of these months spent filming, see Edith's account in *The Tapestry*, 583-592.

¹⁰⁶ Schaeffer, *The Tapestry*, 592.

emerge within the American evangelical market.¹⁰⁷ Film spread Schaeffer's influence wider but also stretched it thin by accentuating the generalizations that marked Schaeffer's entire career.¹⁰⁸

Perhaps more importantly, film signaled a shift in the way in which the Schaeffers handled power, both within L'Abri and in the larger political world. Internally, the Schaeffers' decision to move forward with the film project marked the end of an era at L'Abri. As former L'Abri member Os Guinness notes,

In principle, Schaeffer was just one of the "members" who ran the Swiss L'Abri. I can't remember how many there were. Let's say fifteen. No one was higher than anyone else in principle, and no major decisions were to be made without unanimity -- rather like Acts 15, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." But as the early seventies went on, it became that the family members were "more equal" than anyone else, and that Franky, who was not a member at all, was "more equal" than anyone.¹⁰⁹

Thus even though some members of L'Abri cast votes against embarking on the film project, Schaeffer effectively vetoed the members' decision and chose to move forward with Frank's project anyway.¹¹⁰ The significance of Schaeffer's decision to pursue an unwritten policy of what even Frank himself later described as "naked nepotism" was highlighted by the corresponding exit of several long-time L'Abri workers, including Os

¹⁰⁷ Eithne Johnson, "The Emergence of Christian Video and the Cultivation of Videoevangelism," in *Media Culture & the Religious Right*, ed. Linda Kintz and Julia Lesage (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 191-198.

¹⁰⁸ Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, 165-175.

¹⁰⁹ Guinness, interview with author, 2015. For another description of this process, see Os Guinness, "Fathers and Sons." Middellmann remembers the meeting differently. "I remember the members' meeting in which Schaeffer asked for consent regarding making the film, and when a few objected, he said he would then leave L'Abri and start something else to make the film, to which he was intellectually and in every other way committed. He did NOT override the vote, as there never was a majority of objectors." Middellmann, email to author, January 11, 2017.

¹¹⁰ Guinness, interview with author, 2015.

Guinness and his wife Jenny. “It was then,” Guinness remembers, “that several of us knew it was time to leave the Swiss L’Abri.”¹¹¹

Filmmaking—including the subject matter of the films, the relationships with wealthy donors that made filming possible, and the American tours that accompanied the release of the film—also played a significant role in Schaeffer’s late-in-life turn toward political engagement.¹¹² With its emphasis on the issue of abortion and its closing call to political action, *How Should We Then Live?* marked a turning point in Schaeffer’s career that alienated many of the evangelical scholars and intellectuals who once enthusiastically supported him, while simultaneously helping Schaeffer “solidify a popular constituency more inclined toward activism.”¹¹³ Once again, Frank played a significant role in goading his father into a new *modus operandi* where the issue of abortion—until then primarily a Roman Catholic issue—joined the topic of scriptural inerrancy as the foremost of Francis Schaeffer’s concerns.¹¹⁴ In Frank’s telling, the change came after an argument in which he called his father a “fucking coward” because Francis was unwilling to tackle the issue of abortion in *How Should We Then Live?* After taking a couple days to pray with Edith about the issue, the elder Schaeffer became

¹¹¹ Guinness, interview with author, 2015. It is worth noting that the shift to filmmaking also changed basic L’Abri values, such as the prohibition on asking for financial support. On a technical level L’Abri maintained its prior commitment to avoid asking for money; Frank was never a student, helper, work, or member of L’Abri, so he did not technically represent L’Abri, nor did the money he raised go to L’Abri but rather the film project (Middelmann, email to author, January 2017). Still Schaeffer’s name became connected to major donors in a new way through the film project. As Frank recalls, “Once the production got under way, we were no longer just praying that the Lord would meet our needs. I was running all over America talking to people like Mary C. Crowley (founder of Home Interiors and Gifts), Bunker Hunt (of the notorious Hunt brothers in Dallas...), Amway’s founder and president Rich DeVos (based in Grand Rapids), Mrs. Nancy DeMoss (of the Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation), and every other evangelical philanthropist Billy [Zeoli] had on his list,” Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 261.

¹¹² Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, 175. Hankins notes, “Schaeffer had uttered scarcely a word about political involvement” prior to the publication and filming of *How Should We Then Live?*”

¹¹³ Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, 177.

¹¹⁴ Seth Dowland, *Family Values and the Rise of the Christian Right* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 120-128.

convinced that his son was right and made room for a discussion of abortion in the film's manuscript.¹¹⁵

From this decisive exchange until his death on May 15, 1984, Francis Schaeffer functioned as one of the most significant culture warriors within American evangelicalism. Books like *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, published in 1979 with the help of Schaeffer's long-time friend and future US Surgeon General C. Everett Koop and then made into a multi-part film by Frank, and *A Christian Manifesto* (1982) were even more staunchly dedicated to overturning *Roe v. Wade* and the "sociological law" that Schaeffer believed undergirded the decision.¹¹⁶ Schaeffer's high-profile absolutist stance in the growing abortion debate in America did much to change evangelical consensus on the issue and played a significant role in catalyzing the formation of Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority (1979) and the burgeoning Religious Right it represented.¹¹⁷ The theological divides between the suit-and-tie Baptist televangelist and the countercultural Swiss sage were spanned by Schaeffer's long-held, but until this time

¹¹⁵ Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 267. Frank Schaeffer's account has both the ring of credibility to it as well as a hint of self-importance that is common to virtually all he writes about L'Abri. It is worth noting that Schaeffer was also pushed toward the abortion issue by another younger man, Harold O. J. Brown, who subsequent to spending time at L'Abri became an editor for Christianity Today and a friend of C. Everett Koop, one of the earliest outspoken opponents of abortion within evangelical Protestantism. Brown wrote the first critical piece on abortion in *Christianity Today* in 1975 and also urged Koop and Schaeffer to get together to oppose abortion. See, William C Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996), 193-194. He also spearheaded the formation of Protestants and Catholics Together, see John D. Woodbridge, "Harold O. J. Brown."

¹¹⁶ Francis A. Schaeffer and C. Everett Koop, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* (Old Tappan, NJ: F.H. Revell Co., 1979); Francis A Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1981). For Schaeffer's concept of sociological law, see Francis A Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?: The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture* (Old Tappan, NJ: F.H. Revell Co., 1976), 216-223; Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto*, 41-51.

¹¹⁷ For Schaeffer's influence on the Religious Right, see Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*; Daniel K Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Grace Elizabeth Hale, *A Nation of Outsiders: How the White Middle Class Fell in Love with Rebellion in Postwar America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

rarely emphasized, conception of “co-belligerency.”¹¹⁸ Though not always willing to sanction the methods or theological views of others on the Religious Right, Schaeffer came to see them as useful partners in pursuit of a shared goal. Working with co-belligerents like Falwell, D. James Kennedy, and James Dobson, Schaeffer became more popular and well known than ever among everyday American evangelicals. This wider acclaim, however, was matched, though far less noticeably, by a growing “disaffection” with Schaeffer among the very evangelical intellectuals he had once inspired.¹¹⁹ For them it was an earlier Schaeffer, represented by the holistic ministry of L’Abri in the mid 1960s and early 1970s, who pointed to the clearest way forward.

The Ethos of a Shelter: Analyzing a Multifaceted Community and Its Legacy

As important as the last decade of Schaeffer’s life has been for American evangelicalism, especially in regard to the increasing politicization of evangelicals around the issue of abortion and the subsequent founding of Falwell’s Moral Majority, to emphasize Schaeffer’s late turn toward politics without offering a similar emphasis on the significant and lasting influence of his earlier work at L’Abri, including his early publications, only tells part of the story. The politicization of Francis Schaeffer is a story

¹¹⁸ Schaeffer used the term “co-belligerent” as early as 1972, but it did not become a notable part of his publications and ministry until the late 1970s. Writing to Harold O. J. Brown in the summer of 1972 Schaeffer remarked, “I feel we must be co-belligerents at times with what the New Left is saying, but we are not allies.” See Francis A. Schaeffer to Harold O. J. Brown, July 26, 1972, Box 56, File 38, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina.

¹¹⁹ Hamilton, “The Disaffection of Francis Schaeffer,” 1997; Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, x-xv. Some of the most notable critiques of Schaeffer from evangelical scholars of his time include: Ronald A Wells, “Francis Schaeffer’s Jeremiad: A Review Article,” *Reformed Journal* 32, no. 5 (May 1982): 16–20; Ronald A Wells, “Whatever Happened to Francis Schaeffer?,” *Reformed Journal* 33, no. 5 (May 1983): 10–13; Ruegsegger, *Reflections on Francis Schaeffer*.

that has been told often and in some detail.¹²⁰ The influence of Francis Schaeffer as the catalyst of what scholars have variously described as “an army of evangelical scholars” and a “vocational revolution” within American evangelicalism has been the topic of far less scholarly work.¹²¹

Yet as a handful of scholars like historian Barry Hankins and sociologist Michael D. Lindsay have argued, Schaeffer must be understood as someone who did more than raise evangelicals’ political consciousness. For a generation of young American evangelicals who came of age in the maelstrom of the 1960s and early 1970s, Schaeffer was a steppingstone, not to political action, but to new spiritual, intellectual, and socio-cultural possibilities.¹²² Because L’Abri was not just an idea but a *place*, a community one could visit, it functioned as a tangible expression of Schaeffer’s ideas and was often easier to experience and describe than to define.¹²³ Before it was an icon and a pilgrimage sight for evangelical pastors on the countercultural make, L’Abri was being experienced

¹²⁰ Some recent examples of this include: Williams, *God’s Own Party*, 207-209; Hale, *A Nation of Outsiders*, 287-288; Miller, *The Age of Evangelicalism*, 51-58; Dowland, *Family Values and the Rise of the Christian Right*, 120-128. For analysis of Schaeffer’s political thought, see J Budziszewski, ed., *Evangelicals in the Public Square: Four Formative Voices on Political Thought and Action* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006).

¹²¹ Hamilton, “The Dissatisfaction of Francis Schaeffer,” 22; Mark Thomas Edwards, *The Right of the Protestant Left: God’s Totalitarianism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 164. Both of these scholars point to the vast influence of Schaeffer on the emerging evangelical mind, but neither goes into great detail or offers an in-depth analysis of how this influence actually came about.

¹²² The image of a steppingstone comes from Hamilton, “The Dissatisfaction of Francis Schaeffer,” 28.

¹²³ Attempts to describe L’Abri had to cover a lot of ground. For example, J. I. Packer describes L’Abri in 1986 as a “study center, rescue mission, extended family, clinic, spiritual convalescent home, monastery, and local church rolled into one: a milieu where visitors learn to be both Christian and human through being part of a community that trusts God the Creator and worships him through Christ the Redeemer.” See J. I. Packer, “Forward: No Little Person,” in *Reflections on Francis Schaeffer*, ed. Ronald W. Ruesegger (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1986), 15.

by a generation of young people who helped make it one of the most influential spiritual, intellectual, and aspirational communities within twentieth-century evangelicalism.¹²⁴

Variations on Christian Community at L'Abri

Though Schaeffer has been described in a variety of ways, he was first and foremost a pastor who invited people not to a large program but rather into the familial intimacy of his home.¹²⁵ It followed that L'Abri, though a multifaceted ministry, was defined by the deep spirituality that marked the Schaeffers' own lives *and* the sense of community that stemmed from their decision to open their home to anyone whom God might bring. Though it was the Schaeffers' spirituality that inspired their hospitality, most who came through the door of Chalet les Melezes or, by the early 1970s one of the nearly ten other L'Abri homes, experienced these two foundational elements of L'Abri inversely. Especially before the publication of Schaeffer's books, it was usually the sense of community, with its policy of open-door hospitality and acceptance of those with questions, that drew people to L'Abri for the first time. "I had never experienced anything like it," Linda Mercadante noted when reflecting on the hospitality she encountered at L'Abri in 1973. Mercadante had shown up at the Schaeffers' door with almost no knowledge of Schaeffer, no winter coat, and little money after several harrowing experiences hitchhiking through Europe. Within her New Jersey, Jewish-

¹²⁴ By the early-to-mid 1970s a trip to L'Abri functioned something like a rite of passage for pastors who wanted to be hip or culturally relevant. Os Guinness remembers a day when a busload of Baptist pastors came to the village, "fanned out and several of them almost grabbed a long-haired hippie and wanted to be photographed standing next to him." For Guinness, it was a sign that "L'Abri had become the 'in' place go for Christians." See Guinness, interview, 2015.

¹²⁵ In a winsome and well written 1986 reflection on Schaeffer, J. I. Packer perceptively calls Schaeffer "a prophet-pastor" while emphasizing that Schaeffer never referred to himself as a scholar or professional philosopher, see J. I. Packer, "Forward: No Little Person," in *Reflections on Francis Schaeffer*, ed. Ronald W. Ruesegger (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1986), 7.

Italian family hospitality was reserved for family members and seldom if ever extended to strangers. At L'Abri, however, Mercadante found that the Schaeffers and other L'Abri workers, "were very self-consciously hospitable." The worker who opened the door took Mercadante in, spent time talking with her, and, upon learning that she had no coat, quickly pointed her in the direction of the L'Abri "grab bag," where guests and students choose from an assortment of clothing items for free.¹²⁶ "They really risked a lot. They put themselves out there for people, essentially for strangers."¹²⁷

Of course, the practice of showing hospitality to strangers was not something the Schaeffers invented. Within Christian tradition there has long been an emphasis of hospitality that stretched back to the early days of the church and probably further back to the story of Abraham.¹²⁸ American history held its own array of experiments in Christian community—the duration and orthodoxy of which varied greatly.¹²⁹ By the late 1950s Americans interested in modern examples of Christian intentional communities could look to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's underground seminary at Finkenwalde and efforts like the Evanston, Illinois-based Reba Community.¹³⁰ L'Abri joined these communities as models when American culture turned toward communal living with new enthusiasm in the late 1960s and early 1970s.¹³¹

¹²⁶ Mercadante, *Bloomfield Avenue*, 117.

¹²⁷ Mercadante, interview, 2015.

¹²⁸ Christine D Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 3-60.

¹²⁹ A few prominent examples include the Oneida Community, the Shakers, and early communities of the Church of Latter Day Saints. For a good overview, see Catherine L Albanese, *America, Religions and Religion* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Pub. Co., 1981), 154-177; R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

¹³⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*; Charles Marsh, *Strange Glory: A Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (New York: Vintage Books, 2014), 227-245; Dave Jackson and Neta Jackson, *Living Together in a World Falling Apart* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 2009), 5.

¹³¹ Robert Houriet, *Getting Back Together* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1971), xii-xiii.

What set L'Abri apart from most of these other ventures was the ministry's ability, beginning with the Schaeffers themselves, to put forth a version of extended family living—replete with shared meals, household chores, and times of unscripted conversation—that was simultaneously in tune with the ethos of the counterculture *and* in step with historic Christian orthodoxy as expressed through Reformed theology.¹³² Drawing on the methods of Christian missionaries from Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) to Hudson Taylor (1832-1905), Amy Carmichael (1857-1951), and E. Stanley Jones (1884-1973), Schaeffer contextualized the gospel to the cultural milieu he sought to minister within without compromising what he felt to be the historic truth of the Christian message.¹³³ Schaeffer's unique ability to contextualize the Christian mission to his time was something one could both hear and see. He spoke the language of the Beats and the countercultural generation that followed them. He called the middle class “bourgeois” and “plastic,” and railed on the emptiness of a consumerist and individualistic middle class that valued “personal peace and affluence” above all else.¹³⁴ He often spoke convincingly on the writings of Camus and Sarte, the films of Fellini and Bergman, and the music of Bob Dylan, the Beatles, and Jefferson Airplane. Schaeffer also adopted the

¹³² For an example of efforts that failed to hold these two emphases together, see Houriet, *Getting Back Together*.

¹³³ It is important to think of Schaeffer within the context of the Christian missionary movement. His decision to wear the clothes of those he was ministering to was a typical expression of what missionaries refer to as “contextualization.” For more on Ricci's adoption of Chinese dress and culture, see Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist, *History of the World Christian Movement. Volume 2, Volume 2*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 169-178. For Edith's reflections on the influence of Hudson Taylor's China Inland Mission on her parents' mode of dress, see Edith Schaeffer, *The Hidden Art of Homemaking* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1985), 189-190. For more on Amy Carmichael and contextualization, see Elisabeth Elliot, *A Chance to Die: The Life and Legacy of Amy Carmichael* (Old Tappan, NJ: F.H. Revell Co., 1987). For a general overview of contextualization in the history of mission, see Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*; Lamin O. Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989).

¹³⁴ Francis A. Schaeffer, “The New Super Spirituality,” in *Complete Works of Francis A Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview. Vol 3, A Christian View of Spirituality* (Westchester IL: Crossway Books, 1982), 385.

dress of those he was trying to reach. Well before most evangelical churches welcomed long-haired, shoeless hippies into their sanctuaries, Schaeffer himself “took to wearing beige Nehru jackets, odd linen shirts, and mountain climbing knickers” while also “wearing his hair longer and longer” and growing a goatee.¹³⁵ Like place, at L’Abri clothing mattered. For countercultural visitors to L’Abri, Schaeffer’s physical appearance—and the similar appearance of many L’Abri guests and workers—signaled that L’Abri was both safe and hip. As Frank Schaeffer later noted, by the early 1970s his father “had evolved into a hip guru preaching Jesus to hippies, a precursor to, and the spiritual father of the Jesus Movement.”¹³⁶

L’Abri as a Spiritual Community

While styles of dress and topics of discussion made the Schaeffers and L’Abri approachable for disaffected evangelical youth and countercultural vagabonds, these attempts at contextualization were secondary to L’Abri’s primary identity as a *spiritual* community. In order to understand Schaeffer, one must remember that before he was frequenting museums, pontificating on Kierkegaard, or functioning as an icon of countercultural evangelicalism he was a pastor. God—the God who Schaeffer claimed “is there”—was the impetus for his efforts. For Schaeffer, the truth of the Gospel meant not only that God was Lord of *all* aspects of life, but also that Hell was real.¹³⁷ These spiritual realities drove the Schaeffers to risk the “costly” and “unantiseptic” hospitality that left

¹³⁵ Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 208. The exception was Sunday, when Schaeffer, unable to fully detach himself from his fundamentalist past, donned a black suit and tie, see Mercadante, *Bloomfield Avenue*, 120.

¹³⁶ Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 208.

¹³⁷ Schaeffer’s belief in the reality of hell was a motivating impulse for the “revolutionary Christianity” and sacrificial hospitality of L’Abri. See Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*, in *A Christian View of the Church* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982), 93.

their wedding presents broken and tattered and that led them to allow young people whom they suspected had venereal diseases to sleep between their sheets.¹³⁸ The Schaeffer's faith undergirded it all. Indeed, as longtime L'Abri worker Jerram Barrs later noted, "understanding spirituality" was "essential for understanding anything at all about the work of L'Abri."¹³⁹

Understanding spirituality at L'Abri begins with understanding the centrality of prayer to the Schaeffers' work and the common life of those who stayed at L'Abri. Schaeffer's spiritual crisis in 1951 awakened both him and Edith to the way in which they and many other Christians with orthodox theology undervalued prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Within a few years, this emphasis on prayer grew to the point that the Schaeffers were willing to sever ties with the IBPFM and the financial stability it represented in order to found L'Abri as a faith-mission dedicated to demonstrating God's reality by relying on prayer rather than pleas for financial support or advertising for guests.

The Schaeffers' model necessitated a life of prayer. "When we say we pray, looking directly to the Lord to supply funds and workers, we really mean it," Edith emphasized to the 1,300 recipients of her "Family Letter" in 1959.¹⁴⁰ Prayer marked out L'Abri's days, weeks, and years and showed Schaeffer to be anything but a cool rationalist.¹⁴¹ Throughout the first two decades of L'Abri's existence (and much of its

¹³⁸ Reflection on the costliness of hospitality, Schaeffer noted: "In about the first three years of L'Abri, almost all our wedding presents were wiped out. Our sheets were torn. Holes were burned in our rugs. Indeed once a whole curtain almost burned up from somebody smoking in our living room." Regarding "unantiseptic" situations, Schaeffer noted: "We have girls come to our homes who have had several abortions by the time they are seventeen. Is it possible they have venereal disease? Of course. But they sleep between our sheets." See Schaeffer, *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*, 92-93.

¹³⁹ Jerram Barrs, "Francis Schaeffer, The Later Years: The Beginnings of L'Abri, I" 1989.

¹⁴⁰ Schaeffer, *With Love, Edith*, 442, letter of September 1, 1959.

¹⁴¹ Barrs, "Francis Schaeffer, The Later Years: The Beginnings of L'Abri, II," 1989.

subsequent history) a day a week was set-aside for staff prayer.¹⁴² During these days the staff selected half-hour blocks of time for prayer in L'Abri's prayer room, where they interceded for L'Abri, the Schaeffers, the needs of L'Abri guests, and other pressing concerns.¹⁴³ Prayer was not reserved for the weekly day of prayer alone, but extended into almost every part of L'Abri. Prayers took place as guests and workers kneeled around living room coffee tables, hiked, or sat around the Schaeffers' fireplace. At dinnertime prayers were often so long and detailed that kitchen workers sometimes worried that the soup would get cold.¹⁴⁴ Each year L'Abri set aside at least one whole day for fasting and prayer, thereby freeing "all the Workers for prayer and quiet meditation without any of the usual work."¹⁴⁵

The centrality of prayer at L'Abri stood out to many who passed through Chalet Les Melezes, and both recent converts and lifelong Christians found themselves challenged to deepen their life of prayer after spending time at L'Abri.¹⁴⁶ Few were more deeply impacted by the Schaeffers' emphasis on prayer than Hans and Anky Rookmaaker. When the Rookmaakers traveled to L'Abri for three weeks in the summer

¹⁴² For an example of how the practice of a day of prayer continued to mark life at English L'Abri into the twenty-first century, see Wade Bradshaw, *By Demonstration: God: Fifty Years and a Week at L'Abri* (Carlisle: Piquant Editions, 2005), 25.

¹⁴³ One frequent concern was finances. L'Abri typically functioned on the edge of insolvency, so prayers that contributions would come in were common. The specific day of the week designated for prayer seems to have changed over the years, but most frequently it seems to have been Monday. For more descriptions of prayer at L'Abri see, Jerram Barrs, "Francis Schaeffer, The Later Years: Life At L'Abri"; Jerram Barrs, "Francis A. Schaeffer: The Early Years: The Structure of the Work at L'Abri"; Schaeffer, *L'Abri*; Schaeffer, *With Love, Edith*; Schaeffer, *Dear Family*; Edgar, *Schaeffer on the Christian Life*, 30.

¹⁴⁴ Regarding mealtime prayer at L'Abri, Edgar notes, "I would have to get used to smelling the excellent savors of the great cooking at L'Abri while the praying person went from Genesis to Revelation, then the cosmos." Edgar, *Schaeffer on the Christian Life*, 24.

¹⁴⁵ Schaeffer, *Dear Family*, 48, letter of August 28, 1963. As Edith noted, fasting also carried an additional benefit for those who cooked and prepared meals because fasting put aside "the distractions of mealtime for that one day" (48).

¹⁴⁶ Edgar, *Schaeffer on the Christian Life*, 30.

of 1956 they found that “the Schaeffers prayed, prayed actually much more than the Dutch churches” and that their prayers were often answered.¹⁴⁷

Prayer also played a role in shaping hospitality at L’Abri. “The warm welcome was genuine,” Edgar notes. “Indeed, it resulted from a prayer that was often said at L’Abri: ‘Lord bring us the people of your choice.’” Edgar believes this prayer played a significant role in helping the Schaeffers and other workers at L’Abri treat “every guest...as if he or she was a special envoy” sent in God’s providence.¹⁴⁸ Thus it was no surprise that Schaeffer and many L’Abri workers were known to spend large amounts of time in conversations with individuals, all the while acting as if the individual in front of them was the most important person on the planet.¹⁴⁹ In some sense he or she was. In the eyes of the Schaeffers *this* person at *this* time was a specific answer to their prayers.¹⁵⁰

The end result of the Schaeffers’ efforts to make L’Abri a countercultural community marked by prayer and vibrant spirituality often had immediate and lasting ramifications. The deep spirituality and authentic community that many experienced at L’Abri made it relatively easy for individuals like John Sandri, William Edgar, Linda Mercadante and a host of others whose names have slipped from history to commit themselves to the God whom the Schaeffers said made it all possible. Conversions and

¹⁴⁷ Anky Rookmaakker in Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 149.

¹⁴⁸ Edgar, Schaeffer on the Christian Life, 25.

¹⁴⁹ Dorothy Jamieson Woodson notes, “When Mr. Schaeffer would talk to you, there was nothing else in the world that was going on. He was totally focused on you.” Woodson in Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer*, 145.

¹⁵⁰ Of course, as Frank Schaeffer notes, an “unofficial aristocracy” existed at L’Abri. The Schaeffers did play favorites to some degree. If a well known person came through L’Abri, he or she often got larger amounts of individual time with the Schaeffers. See Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 211.

re-conversions to Christianity abounded at L'Abri. Indeed, to at least one Atheist-turned-Christian at L'Abri, "It seemed everyone was becoming a Christian."¹⁵¹

L'Abri as an Intellectual Community

While spirituality undergirded everything at L'Abri, it was not spirituality that most shaped L'Abri's reputation. Even though many left L'Abri with new or renewed faith and a deeper appreciation for prayer, it was L'Abri's intellectual appeal that received the widest acclaim and set the ministry apart in the minds of many. From at least the publication of the 1960 article in *Time*, which declared L'Abri to be a "mission to intellectuals," Schaeffer joined a small company of evangelically sanctioned "intellectuals," of which C. S. Lewis was emerging even then as head.¹⁵² Throughout the 1960s and much of the 1970s L'Abri was likely the leading destination in the world for intellectually curious evangelicals who wanted to explore their questions, understand their culture, and embrace their intellectual curiosity within the framework of traditional Christian theology.

One of the most amazing things about this phenomenon was that Schaeffer never technically claimed to be, and in fact was not, a trained scholar. Though he did have a divinity degree from Faith Theological Seminary, his doctorates were honorary (Highland College, CA, 1954; Gordon College, MA, 1971) and his approach to scholarship was scattered and eccentric. As Os Guinness, who spent years working

¹⁵¹ Mercadante, who arrive at L'Abri as an atheist and left as a Christian, was one of those who converted. Mercadante, *Bloomfield Avenue*, 127.

¹⁵² Wheaton College English professor Clyde Kilby discovered Lewis in 1943. He would go on to promote Lewis widely within American evangelicalism, eventually publishing *The Christian World of C. S. Lewis* in 1964. For more on Lewis's reception among evangelicals in America, see George Marsden, *C. S. Lewis's Mere Christianity: A Biography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 100-108.

closely with Schaeffer, has said more than once, he never saw Schaeffer read a book except the Bible.¹⁵³ Instead, Schaeffer got his information in small bits picked up from decades of talking with European university students and his obsessive reading of magazines.¹⁵⁴ Schaeffer's reading preferences reflected his isolation from scholarly discourse. With the exception of his close friendship with Rookmaaker, Schaeffer functioned seemingly without much interaction with the larger scholarly world.

This was a trend that many genuine evangelical academics were beginning to find disturbing by the early 1970s. For George Marsden, a budding evangelical scholar who following Schaeffer's 1968 visit to Calvin College wrote positively of Schaeffer's ability to "make Christianity appear intellectually relevant to the contemporary era," Schaeffer's seeming disregard for the wider scholarly community was a surprising and then frustrating reality.¹⁵⁵ During a 1969 trip to L'Abri Marsden managed to track down Schaeffer—whom even then, Marsden notes, was "very inaccessible"—and asked him about his intellectual influences.¹⁵⁶ Schaeffer named Westminster Theological Seminary's Cornelius Van Til as a partial influence but claimed to have worked out most of his material on his own.¹⁵⁷ Two years later Marsden and Richard Mouw, another promising

¹⁵³ Guinness, interview, 2015. Speaking of Schaeffer's approach to reading and learning, Guinness remarked, "Of course, Schaeffer was wrong on certain details and issues. He was not a scholar, though he was a brilliant thinker and had an extraordinary knack of connecting things no one had connected before. I must say, though, I lived with him for several years, and I never saw him open a single book except the Bible. Much of his reading came from magazines such as "Newsweek" and "The Listener."

¹⁵⁴ Guinness, interview, 2015; For more positive assessment of Schaeffer's discipline as a scholar, see Barrs, "Francis Schaeffer: The Latter Years," 1990, Lecture 4, question and answer session. According to Barrs Schaeffer "did study a great deal." Latter in the course Barrs noted that Schaeffer "took advantage of every moment he had. He was an extraordinarily self-disciplined person." See Barrs, Francis Schaeffer: The Latter Years, 1990, Lecture 5, "The Ministry the Lord Gave the Schaeffers."

¹⁵⁵ Marsden in Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer*, 78.

¹⁵⁶ George Marsden to author, "Re: Dissertation Question: L'Abri and Evangelical Scholars," August 11, 2015.

¹⁵⁷ Marsden to Cotherman, 2015. It is notable that Schaeffer did not even mention Rookmaaker to Marsden at the time. When Marsden later spoke with Rookmaaker about Schaeffer's intellectual influences, Rookmaaker "said that he himself had supplied [Francis Schaeffer] with most of his ideas on the arts."

young scholar at Calvin College, approached Schaeffer about the possibility of taking a group of Calvin College students to L'Abri for January term. Schaeffer turned down their request. The students were welcome to come, Schaeffer informed them, but not Marsden or Mouw. Schaeffer demonstrated his insistence on being the sole authority at L'Abri by telling the two junior professors that their presence might lead to a conflict concerning the center of leadership at L'Abri.¹⁵⁸

That Schaeffer's intellectual isolation (and his inability to recognize it) only increased as his fame and authority grew in the mid and late 1970s shows up clearly in his correspondence with James M. Houston, the founding Principal of Vancouver's Regent College (f. 1968). In August of 1970, Houston began writing to Schaeffer on a regular basis. In addition to extending multiple requests that Schaeffer speak at Regent's Summer School or annual convocation, Houston compared notes with Schaeffer on topics like biblical ecology and the place of the creative arts within North American evangelicalism.¹⁵⁹ Over the next few years, however, Houston became worried about Schaeffer and the intellectual isolation Houston believed marked L'Abri. When Schaeffer finally agree to visit Regent College in May of 1975 Houston had the chance to discuss his concerns with Schaeffer over breakfast.¹⁶⁰

Shortly after their Vancouver exchange, Houston spelled out his fears to Schaeffer in a letter. Again Houston urged Schaeffer to expand his thinking by broadening the

¹⁵⁸ Marsden to author, 2015.

¹⁵⁹ James M. Houston to Francis A. Schaeffer, August 7, 1970.

¹⁶⁰ Schaeffer had finally accepted one of Houston's invitations to speak at Regent. For Houston the breakfast was a memorable event in its own right because when the Schaeffers sat down to eat they each brought a package holding sixteen pills. When Rita Houston asked what the pills were for, the Schaeffers remarked that a friend had given them their dietary requirements for the day. Rita Houston, then remarked, "Well then, you won't be needing my breakfast will you?" See Houston, interview with author, October 24, 2016. For a reflection on the disruptive affect Schaeffer's talk had on the Regent student body, see Linda Mercadante to Francis A. Schaeffer, October 4, 1975, Box 51, File 36, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina.

circle of his advisors: “Within the body of Christ we need each other and the way in which others can cross-fertilize, or indeed correct our own perspective, and certainly in this day of highly specialized skills to help each other in specialties that are not our own.”¹⁶¹ Houston then raised his concern that L’Abri had become the wrong kind of shelter—a ghetto instead of a temporary resting place: “L’Abri has been your strength; please do not let it be a source of weakness because it became too much of a ghetto of thought. It is a shelter for those from outside but do not let it be a ghetto for the thought that comes from within.”¹⁶²

Schaeffer, by this time well into the production of his first film and riding a still-growing wave of celebrity, did not think Houston’s assessment well founded. After noting that he did “appreciate” Houston’s “concern,” Schaeffer continued,

I realize the danger but really Jim, I think that either you, or someone who is giving you this impression, have really missed the actual situation. I’m really anything but isolated. Endless theologians and other thinkers come here to talk with me and on top of that, in my time away lecturing, I have long conversation with almost the whole spectrum of theological and intellectual thought.... Of course, none of us can have too much inter-contact but I don’t think the possible danger in my case is realized. For example, in my new book and film which I’m working on, we’ve had about ten competent researchers in every possible area not only check my work but make input into it.¹⁶³

In the end, however, he seems to have failed to convince Houston. This exchange would be the last between the two men.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ James M. Houston to Francis A. Schaeffer, May 1, 1975, Box 52, File 26, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina.

¹⁶² Houston to Schaeffer, May 1, 1975.

¹⁶³ Francis A. Schaeffer to James M. Houston, June 19, 1975, Box 52, File 26, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina.

¹⁶⁴ Houston still believed his early assessment to be correct when I spoke with him in October of 2015.

But the middle-aged Houston, with his PhD and long career as a geographer at Oxford, was not Schaeffer's typical student. Much more typical was Sharon Gallagher, a lifelong evangelical who spent time at Swiss L'Abri in 1971 after her graduation from Westmont College. Gallagher had met the Schaeffers and Guinness during their 1968 lectures at Westmont. For Gallagher, Schaeffer was a tour guide to artistic and intellectual realms the evangelical subculture she grew up in had little interest in or time for. For Gallagher L'Abri was "really intellectually stimulating." Schaeffer was a large part of the allure. Thinking back on the experience after several decades Gallagher remembers being "very impressed" by Schaeffer. "Later on when I met people whose specialties were some of the fields he commented on they said, 'No, no, he is wrong about this.' But just the idea of integration of worldview was very exciting."¹⁶⁵

For thousands of young evangelicals like Gallagher it was precisely Schaeffer's ability to make the Reformed principle of the Lordship of Christ in all spheres of society seem applicable for contemporary culture that made him so inspirational. Like the Dutch theologian, journalist, and statesman Abraham Kuyper, who at the founding of the Free University of Amsterdam in 1880 famously declared, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!" Schaeffer never equivocated regarding the need for Christians to be involved in all aspects of society.¹⁶⁶ It was precisely his ability to convincingly teach and model the expansive relevance of the Gospel throughout the course of his ministry that exerted such a significant impact on those who encountered his books or stayed at L'Abri. Once again,

¹⁶⁵ Sharon Gallagher, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, December 3, 2015.

¹⁶⁶ James D Bratt, *Abraham Kuyper: Modern Calvinist, Christian Democrat* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013), 195.

Os Guinness's story provides a helpful window on the way in which this influence worked:

Francis, for me as for thousands of English and American young students who were Christians, was a door opener. It was not only okay but right and proper and responsible, as a Christian, to understand the whole of life— 'All truth is God's truth,' as the early Christians said. So whether it's art or philosophy or culture or the films of Ingmar Bergman or the music of John Cage, the whole of life is fair game to think about freely as a Christian.¹⁶⁷

Similarly, Thena Ayers, a Canadian Inter-Varsity student-leader who spent a year at L'Abri following her graduation from the University of British Columbia, describes her time with the Schaeffers as "a hugely integrative, productive time" for similar reasons.

It was a time of reflecting on my undergraduate education for the first time in a thoughtful, articulate, Christian environment, and with seriously capable Christian contemporaries, who were also wrestling with the kinds of things that I was wrestling with...Dr. Schaeffer was like a *breath of fresh air* for evangelicals because he was talking about literature, and film, and philosophy, and the whole world of ideas, and doing so with a confidence and a kind of godly authority. What I knew out of my Inter-Varsity background was that all truth was in Christ, and I saw Schaeffer living it out. He would embrace all of these fields and wrestle with it as a Christian, and think it through as a Christian. He took us into his thinking. So there was an opportunity to listen to tapes, to discuss with my own contemporaries, then to hear him lecture, then people would ask him questions, and then...sit at meals with him where out of the day's studies there would be informal questions and answers. I found it inordinately stimulating. I treasured those thoughtful relationships. I was pushed in terms of deepening my own faith and its connection with the larger world of intellectual thought, etc., even though I had wrestled with all these things as a student but had not had that level of discussion to see my way clear, especially [of] existentialism, that was a big thing. So that was all totally rich.¹⁶⁸

For both Guinness and Ayers, as for many others whose own stories read similarly in the larger contours if different in the exact details, time spent with the Schaeffers at L'Abri was often the foundation upon which they then added further academic work and a

¹⁶⁷ Os Guinness in Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 160.

¹⁶⁸ (Emphasis original) Thena Ayers, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, October 26, 2015, Regent College.

lifetime of influence as standard-bearers for thoughtful evangelical engagement with culture and the life of the mind.

One of the reasons Schaeffer was able to function as a “stepping stone” for a wide intellectual and vocational reorientation within American evangelicalism stemmed in no small part from the way in which his books were distributed.¹⁶⁹ From the late 1960s through the 1970s and into the 1980s evangelical young people who showed intellectual promise were frequently given copies of books by C. S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer. As “church youth leaders and campus ministers introduced their brighter students to Schaeffer’s books,” they ended up playing a part in “launching scores of evangelical scholars on their careers.”¹⁷⁰ For Steven Garber, an “intellectually curious” twenty-year-old and recent drop out from UC Berkeley, it was an encounter with the work of Schaeffer and others from L’Abri in the early 1970s that first lit “a match...in my heart,” that prompted him to visit L’Abri the next year and continued to illuminate his life as a college professor, campus minister, and vocational consultant for decades to come.¹⁷¹ Like Garber, many of those who experienced this multifaceted and integrative approach to theological education would eventually go on to pass on these insights to a new generation through pastorates, college professorships, and the development of Christian Study Centers.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ The image of Schaeffer as a “stepping stone” comes from Hamilton, “The Dissatisfaction of Francis Schaeffer,” 28.

¹⁷⁰ Hamilton, “The Disaffection of Francis Schaeffer,” 28.

¹⁷¹ Steven Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness: Weaving Together Belief and Behavior* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2007), 43. At L’Abri Jerram Barrs was Garber’s tutor. Garber notes that “my study that fall opened up a new universe to me.” He went back to school, and “By the time I finished my third year of undergraduate study I was on my second reading of Guinness’s *The Dust of Death* (43-44).” Gerber went on to work with the C. S. Lewis Institute before founding the Washington Institute for Faith, Vocation & Culture.

¹⁷² It is virtually impossible to quantify Schaeffer’s influence in this regard. However, a partial list of those who went on to be influential in the Christian Study Center movement after being influenced by

Right theology and an expansive vision were only part of Schaeffer's allure. Content mattered but so did style and tone. For countercultural young people it mattered that Schaeffer seemed more a "swashbuckling" rebel than a collected seminary professor who dolled out knowledge in measured tones.¹⁷³ Schaeffer advanced classical Reformed convictions regarding the need for the integration of the Gospel in all of life, but in his books, lectures, and conversations these concepts were charged with intense conviction, theatrical gusto, and an unflinching confidence in the truth of the Christian worldview. Something like Thomas Jefferson, who famously promoted learning at his newly founded University of Virginia by declaring that professors and students at the school must not be afraid "to follow truth wherever it may lead," Schaeffer urged evangelicals to pursue truth without fear.¹⁷⁴ "The truth of Christianity is that it is true to what is there. You can go to the end of the world and you never need be afraid, like the ancients, that you will fall off the end and the dragons will eat you up." For Schaeffer this meant that one could "carry out your intellectual discussion to the end of the discussion because Christianity is not only true to the dogmas, it is not only true to what God has said in the Bible, but it is also true to what is there, and you will never fall of the end of the world!"¹⁷⁵ For evangelicals raised on the stock questions and predictable answers of Sunday school curricula and flannelgraph boards, this sentiment was liberating. Suddenly the whole range of intellectual and vocational options—including, but not limited to, professional

Schaeffer would include: Jim Hiskey, Drew Trotter, David Turner, Beat Steiner, Sharon Gallagher, David W. Gill, and R. C. Sproul.

¹⁷³ David W. Gill, the founder of Berkeley's L'Abri-inspired Crucible and later Regent-inspired New College Berkeley notes, "My college friends and I were inspired a lot by Francis Schaeffer's swashbuckling writings attempting to articulate and promote a robust Christian worldview." See "A Marginal Life," *David W. Gill*, <http://www.davidwgill.org/autobio/> (accessed October 5, 2016).

¹⁷⁴ "Thomas Jefferson to William Roscoe - Thomas Jefferson: Exhibitions-Library of Congress," <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/75.html> (accessed October 6, 2016).

¹⁷⁵ George Marsden, *C. S. Lewis's Mere Christianity: A Biography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).

scholarship—were open for legitimate Christian endeavor. It is no wonder that later scholars would term this a “vocational revolution.”¹⁷⁶ Through his books and the example of L’Abri, Schaeffer launched a movement that revolutionized the scope of American evangelical thinking.

L’Abri as an Aspirational Community

Perhaps the most significant way in which Schaeffer and L’Abri shaped evangelicalism in its North American context was by modeling a cosmopolitan version of evangelicalism that proved immensely alluring. L’Abri was not only a place to *believe* spiritually, or *belong* communally; L’Abri was a place to *become*. Unlike many of the churches L’Abri’s guests hailed from, the Schaeffers seemed oriented to the present and future as much as to the past. Just as importantly for a generation of students raised with seemingly unbounded affluence and opportunity for educational and social advancement, the Schaeffer’s class sensibilities looked up the social ladder not down. From the way they dressed and talked, to the company they kept and how they kept it, the Schaeffers helped shape the aspirations of an entire generation of upwardly mobile evangelicals. L’Abri made this possible. As a community L’Abri necessitated daily, sometimes hourly, interactions between the Schaeffers and their young admirers; therefore, few aspects of the Schaeffers lives were inaccessible. Guests at L’Abri had front row seats as the Schaeffers preformed cosmopolitan evangelicalism before their eyes on a daily basis.

One of the clearest and most humorous ways in which L’Abri students demonstrated L’Abri’s aspirational reach was by imitating Francis Schaeffer’s dress,

¹⁷⁶ Edwards, *God’s Totalitarians*, 164.

mannerisms, and style of speech. By the early 1970s Schaeffer had created his own brand marked by eccentric clothing and a brooding face set off by long, combed-back hair and a white goatee.¹⁷⁷ The ensemble was an eclectic mix of counterculture suave and Swiss traditionalism—except on Sunday when Schaeffer changed the blend to counterculture-suave-meets-American-fundamentalism by wearing a plain black suit to church. Like any celebrity, Schaeffer’s style inspired imitators. By 1973 guests to L’Abri found many “Schaeffer ‘wannabes’” who were “mostly young guys imitating [Schaeffer’s] tone of voice, pronouncements, and even the knickers that Francis Schaeffer wore everyday.”¹⁷⁸

Knickers aside, many of the aspirational qualities the Schaeffers and the L’Abri community nurtured were significant in the reorientation of individual lives and American evangelicalism as a whole. Many accounts, not the least of which is that of Hans and Anky Rookmaaker, recall being impressed by the Schaeffer’s deep spirituality as it was expressed through prayer. They were not alone. Like the Rookmaakers, many left L’Abri or finished reading one of Francis or Edith’s books with aspirations of deepening their own faith and prayer life to match that of their spiritual heroes.¹⁷⁹ Similarly, the Schaeffers inspired many to cultivate their minds through study at L’Abri’s Farel House, at Schaeffer-approved seminaries, or sometimes at major universities. In the late 1960s and early 1970s there was a virtual pipeline from L’Abri to places like Regent College, Westminster Theological Seminary, and Covenant Theological Seminary.¹⁸⁰ In

¹⁷⁷ Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 208.

¹⁷⁸ Mercadante, *Bloomfield Avenue*, 120.

¹⁷⁹ This is reflected in many letters held in the Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, which is housed at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

¹⁸⁰ Schaeffer’s connections to Covenant Theological Seminary and Westminster Seminary are well known; his connections to Regent College less so. Yet Schaeffer exerted a significant influence on the Regent Student body in the early 1970s. Ward and Laurel Gasque—key shapers of Regent and then New College Berkeley, told Schaeffer in late 1978 that he had “probably touched the lives of more Regent students than any other person.” See Ward and Laurel Gasque to Francis A. Schaeffer, December 12, 1978,

her 1969 book, *L'Abri*, Edith reflected on this trend, which sent eight L'Abri students and their spouses to Covenant Seminary in the fall of 1968. "That seminary in St. Louis will be flooded with L'Abri people this autumn!" Edith noted with unrestrained satisfaction.¹⁸¹ She went on to note "there are three Harvard graduates in a Philadelphia school [i.e., Westminster Seminary], all three from L'Abri."¹⁸² Even if Schaeffer himself had never formally studied for a doctorate, his ability to be conversant and surprisingly informed on a wide array of topics was a capacity that helped prompt many evangelicals to think more seriously about their own intellect and its relationship to both the gospel and contemporary culture. Many leading evangelical thinkers and innovators including Os Guinness, David Wells, William Dyrness, and Drew Trotter entered PhD programs after spending time at L'Abri.

Schaeffer's cultural sensibilities and artistic taste also provided plenty of aspirational fodder for aesthetically deprived American evangelicals. While Schaeffer's taste for the music of Bach may have seemed perfectly normal to L'Abri guests like William Edgar who grew up in a wealthy cosmopolitan home before entering Harvard as a musicologist, for most of the Americans who streamed through Chalet Les Melezes, Bach, Cézanne, and even Rembrandt were hardly familiar friends.¹⁸³ Perhaps no realm of Schaeffer's influence was more liberating and captivating for middlebrow evangelicals than his affinity for fine art. Nowhere was Schaeffer more at home, more of a tour guide,

Box 83, File 15, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina. Upon her arrival at Regent, Mercadante reported to the Schaeffers that "I've been thinking about you both lately. Maybe its because I've been hearing so many people talk about L'Abri ever since I got to Regent." See, Mercadante to Schaeffer, October 4, 1975, Box 51, File 36, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection.

¹⁸¹ Schaeffer, *L'Abri*, 214.

¹⁸² Schaeffer, *L'Abri*, 214. This group included Dick Keyes and William Edgar.

¹⁸³ Edgar's father was a high ranking American executive who worked out of Geneva during the second half of the 1960s, see Edgar, *Schaeffer on the Christian Life*, 24-25.

or less an American evangelical than when he was immersed in some form of artistic expression. As Mel White, a prominent evangelical ghostwriter who worked with Schaeffer on some of his later projects, notes, in the area of art as with much that Schaeffer discussed, “It wasn’t what he said but what he was talking about that made the difference.” White notes:

Francis was pointing at art, at music, at film, at theater, at government; he was talking about polity and all of these issues that had been on the off-list for evangelicals. We didn’t go to movies when I grew up. And now he was talking about the great films and the way they’ve changed our lives. We didn’t go to Florence to look at the statues with leaves—we stayed home and looked at the head of Christ on a flannelgraph. And suddenly Francis was opening the whole world to us and saying, “We’re Christians; this all belongs to us; this is all God’s. Every realm is His.” I think Francis was the first voice that said, “Reclaim everything in God’s creation: It’s yours.” We had just talked about souls until then.¹⁸⁴

Unlocking the gates to artistic realms outside what most American evangelicals would have ever encountered unaided, Schaeffer stoked the imaginations and aspirations of a generation by teaching them how to appreciate fine art. It was a lesson with both personal and social benefits.

As important as Francis himself was for the development of L’Abri, no one helped cultivate L’Abri as an aspirational community more than Edith. Indeed, for some who were close to L’Abri, Edith was “the secret of L’Abri.”¹⁸⁵ In tangible and symbolic ways L’Abri was Edith’s means for working out the upward cultural mobility of an entire generation of evangelicals (especially young evangelical women) that she had spent a lifetime cultivating in Francis, who hailed from a rough, culturally unaware, working-

¹⁸⁴ Mel White in Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 160.

¹⁸⁵ Os Guinness, “Fathers and Sons.” Edgars calls Edith “the ‘hidden artist’ who held L’Abri together.” Edgars, *Schaeffer on the Christian Life*, 62.

class background.¹⁸⁶ Raised in a genteel, well-educated missionary family, Edith had developed an early love of art, stylish dress, and high culture that endured throughout her life. Edith's passion for art extended to everyday aesthetics. She was a champion for all forms of human creativity, including "everyday" forms of art like cooking and sewing, because she saw all art as stemming from the creativity of God. "We have been created in His image, so we can be, and are *made* to be, creative," Edith told readers.¹⁸⁷ This theological conviction undergirded her call for Christians to live "artistically, aesthetically, and creatively" in their daily lives by dressing more carefully, cultivating musical ability, or simply working to make their handwriting more visually appealing.¹⁸⁸

L'Abri was the canvas where Edith's ideas took shape. Unlike the drab homes many L'Abri guests had ground up in, Edith worked to make Chalet Les Melezes an artistic masterpiece. From the designer fashions she wore and the classical music she and Francis relished to her zest to put fresh flowers on the table and offer meals that were attractive both to the palate and the eye, Edith modeled what she described as "hidden art" for a generation.¹⁸⁹ "At mealtimes every effort was made to provide a gracious setting that would facilitate intense but civilized conversation," Mercadante remembers. "Tables were beautifully laid with table clothes, fabric napkins, flowers, and even candles.... There was no grabbing food, boisterousness, or interrupting allowed. Instead, everyone sat up straight, stayed in their seats, and politely contributed to the

¹⁸⁶ For more on the cultural differences between Edith and Francis and Edith's efforts to help her husband rise above his working class background, see Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 12-19. According to Frank Schaeffer, it was Edith who took Francis to an art museum for the first time (19).

¹⁸⁷ Schaeffer, *The Hidden Art of Homemaking*, 25.

¹⁸⁸ Schaeffer, *The Hidden Art of Homemaking*, 32.

¹⁸⁹ She published her reflections on this theme in 1971. See Schaeffer, *The Hidden Art of Homemaking*. For more examples of Edith's concern for everyday beauty at L'Abri, see Schaeffer, *L'Abri*; Schaeffer, *With Love, Edith*; Schaeffer, *Dear Family*; Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America*, 68-69.

conversation.”¹⁹⁰ This was a far remove from what Mercadante and many other L’Abri guest experienced at home. “Edith, was very, very sophisticated, well dressed...always looked very nice, and seemed to have a good sense of style. So most of the young women were impressed with her because most of us did not have a lot of money and really did not have a lot of things with us and really did not have a lot of clothes.”¹⁹¹ Through her cultivation of a cultured, aesthetically conscious home, Edith’s presence in Chalet Les Melezes provided a fitting complement to Francis’s wide-ranging lectures on art and his guided museum tours. Together Edith and Francis modeled the dignified, artistically aware cosmopolitanism that would prepare young L’Abri guests to navigate the halls of power where more than a few of them would eventually find themselves.¹⁹²

The significance of Edith’s presence as an example of Christian womanhood was also a profoundly influential—and remarkably complex—part of life at L’Abri. While Edith assumed a traditional “helpmeet” role in many ways as she worked behind the scenes to hide Francis’s physical abuse and short temper and enable her husband’s ministry, she was no wallflower.¹⁹³ Fittingly described as “a force of nature,” Edith wowed L’Abri visitors with more than her artistic sensibilities and culinary flair. The possessor of enduring physical beauty, natural confidence and personal charm which were all magnified by her herculean stamina and capacity for work, Edith Schaeffer was,

¹⁹⁰ Mercadante, *Bloomfield Avenue*, 118.

¹⁹¹ Mercadante, interview, 2015.

¹⁹² D. Michael Lindsay, “Evangelicals in the Power Elite: Elite Cohesion Advancing a Movement,” *American Sociological Review* 73, no. 1 (February 1, 2008): 60–82.

¹⁹³ That physical abuse sometimes marked the Schaeffers’ marriage is highly likely. Because L’Abri was a small place the couple’s loud arguments and the occasional shattered vase were impossible to hide. Frank Schaeffer recalls his mother showing him bruises on her arm, which she told him she received from her husband. Frank Schaeffer claims this abuse stopped in the late 1960s when he confronted his father. See Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 216.

as Guinness notes, “one of the most remarkable women of her generation.”¹⁹⁴ Often staying up all night to write her Family Letter or finish one of her various other projects, Edith never showed signs of weariness or even took a nap.¹⁹⁵ Rather, she flaunted her stamina, frequently telling readers of her Family Letter how late she stayed up to write them. Her work ethic was matched by her genuine love for people. Multiple guests at L’Abri remember Edith taking time to extend personal kindness extended through a sympathy letter written to a young woman she had never met or a picnic lunch made special for a newly engaged couple.¹⁹⁶ “I have never met such a great heart of love, and such indomitable faith, tireless prayer, boundless energy, passionate love for life and beauty, lavish hospitality, irrepressible laughter, and seemingly limitless time for people—all in a single person” Guinness later remarked.¹⁹⁷ A “second mother” to many, an inspiration to more, Edith was the most powerful, multi-talented female presence within post-war American evangelicalism.

Edith’s very presence in the ministry of L’Abri gave the lie to any strict notion of female subordination. Though Francis Schaeffer did not believe the Bible sanctioned female ordination or preaching, Edith traveled the world lecturing to crowds of women and men. Likewise, she was a highly published author and could out work and out charm her husband—and just about anyone else for that matter—any day of the week. Her powerful yet loving presence captured the hearts of many who stayed at L’Abri. More than a few young women aspired to copy her style of dress and her capacity for work—a

¹⁹⁴ Guinness, “Fathers and Sons.”

¹⁹⁵ Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 112.

¹⁹⁶ Ayers, interview, 2015; Barrs, “Francis Schaeffer: The Latter Years,” 1990, Lesson 3, “Life at L’Abri.”

¹⁹⁷ Guinness, “Fathers and Sons.”

choice that left many broken and disappointed.¹⁹⁸ It is little wonder. Between the intensity of Edith's personality and the paradox that embodied her emphasis on women's domestic duties and oversight of family life all while she was traveling around the world and working at a frenetic pace, keeping up with Edith was no small task.¹⁹⁹

On top of all of this, L'Abri functioned as a launching pad for the socially connected lives many evangelical baby boomers aspired to. No longer content with the cultural isolation that still marked American fundamentalism and, to a large extent, American evangelicalism, middle-class guests who visited to L'Abri in the 1960s and 1970s found themselves thrust into a web of relationships that included people whose social standing and educational and racial backgrounds would have precluded their interaction in many evangelical contexts.²⁰⁰ By connecting average evangelicals with evangelicals of higher social classes, educational backgrounds, and public prominence, L'Abri helped craft the aspirations of middle-class, evangelical baby boomers while simultaneously forming the relational network they would need to advance in domains

¹⁹⁸ Attempting to keep up with Edith was a dangerous endeavor. Guinness notes that Edith's "turbo-personality left many people, and particularly young women who tried to copy her, gasping in her slip stream," see Guinness, "Fathers and Sons." Edith's personality was especially grating on her children, leaving them with what Frank Schaeffer describes as "a lifetime of conflicted emotions." According to Frank, the Schaeffers' daughters "sometimes turned into quivering wrecks from trying to keep up with their mother." He attributes much of Edith's actions to his mother's "spiritual pride" that "made her children grow up with the feeling that no matter what we did to serve the Lord, it was never enough. Mom had gotten there first, and the rest of us weren't even in the race." Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, 112-113.

¹⁹⁹ It is worth noting that women in American fundamentalism have often found a way to subvert submission to their advantage; Edith, however, did this on a much larger scale than virtually anyone else. For this trend in American fundamentalism and evangelicalism in the twentieth century, see Brenda E. Brasher, *Godly Women: Fundamentalism and Female Power* (Rutgers University Press, 1998); R. Marie Griffith, *God's Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission* (University of California Press, 1997).

²⁰⁰ L'Abri welcomed guests from around the world, including many non-western and non-European countries in Africa and Asia. African-Americans like the photographer Sylvester Jacobs also found the Schaeffers' lack of racial prejudice refreshing. For Jacobs's reflections on L'Abri, see Sylvester Jacobs and Linette Martin, *Born Black* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977).

ranging from education and politics, to art, media and business.²⁰¹ Demonstrating the burgeoning power of para-church organizations to connect evangelical powerbrokers and build influential interpersonal networks, L'Abri functioned as the unofficial hub of American evangelical influence throughout much of the 1970s.²⁰² Billy Graham, Jack Sparks, Bob Dylan, George H. W. Bush's mother, Dorothy Walker Bush, and Chuck Colson were some of the most famous who came into L'Abri's orbit during these years but there were many others, including graduates of Ivy League schools, sons and daughters of prominent American pastors, businessmen, and politicians, who also touched the lives of average evangelicals through their encounter with the Schaeffers.

L'Abri's identity as an evangelical melting pot where the mores of the more culturally astute classes were both taught and caught meant that the once-isolated retreat was perfectly poised to be a principle mediator of American evangelicals' growing social, intellectual, cultural, and political ambitions in the years to come. L'Abri became a credential, a passport into an unofficial but nevertheless important evangelical club. As one-time L'Abri guests, students, and workers fanned out across the globe they often continued to cherish the relationships they made in Huemoz. These relational connections bore lasting fruit. As sociologist Michal Lindsay notes, the relational network that L'Abri forged still exerted significant influence within American life over three decades after Francis Schaeffer's death. Of the three hundred and sixty elite informants Lindsay interviewed for his 2007 book *Faith in the Halls of Power*, "13 percent mentioned L'Abri, its founder Francis Schaeffer, or his writings as having a profound influence on

²⁰¹ D. Michael Lindsay, "Evangelicals in the Power Elite: Elite Cohesion Advancing a Movement," *American Sociological Review* 73, no. 1 (February 1, 2008): 71.

²⁰² The Schaeffers began transitioning their primary residence to Rochester, MN in 1978 and 1979 when Francis Schaeffer underwent several rounds of extensive treatment for lymphoma at the Mayo Clinic.

their lives.”²⁰³ Furthermore, the result of this L’Abri connection was significant. Lindsay found that “Through L’Abri, a number of leaders from different sectors built interpersonal networks that have remained important to them throughout their lives. These connections helped informants get job interviews, meet future business partners, and develop supportive friendships as they moved to new cities.”²⁰⁴ Important for much more than the political legacy most studies of Schaeffer foreground, L’Abri—as a spiritual, intellectual, and aspirational community—served as the glue that held many of the most influential voices of twentieth-century evangelicalism together.

A Final Aspiration: Recreating L’Abri

The above paragraphs demonstrate to some degree the intense and enduring appreciation for and influence of L’Abri and the Schaeffer movement on evangelical Baby Boomers in the late twentieth century. Such significant allure and influence meant that many evangelicals in America and around the world wanted a chance to access L’Abri more regularly and expand its ministry beyond Huemoz, Milan, Amsterdam, California, and the UK. For these individuals, L’Abri inspired aspirations of launching similar experiments in spiritually deep and intellectually robust communities on university campuses, at retreat centers, and in cities across North America. By the late 1960s L’Abri was by far the most famous and ready-made model for evangelicals who aspired to take part in helping to bridge the deep-seated evangelical head-heart divide and rescue the evangelical mind from the shallow obsession with personal piety that defined

²⁰³ Lindsay, “Evangelicals in the Power Elite,” 70

²⁰⁴ Lindsay, “Evangelicals in the Power Elite,” 70. For a more detailed study of the way in which American evangelicals gained power across several sectors of society between 1976 and 2006, see Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power*.

much of the Jesus Movement. It was not, however, the only innovative attempt to take thoughtful, studied Christianity to North American evangelicals. Other significant and innovative educational communities were emerging, some of which would eventually vie with L'Abri for pride of place within intellectually engaged North American evangelicalism. It is to one of the most influential of these communities and the Canadian city of Vancouver that we now turn our attention.

Chapter 2

Regent College:

James Houston and the Making of Evangelical Lay Theological Education

As the Schaeffers took their first steps back into the North American orbit and began directing their energy toward lecture tours and the publications that would carry the ministry of L'Abri to new audiences around the world in the mid-1960s, a group of Plymouth Brethren leaders in Vancouver, Canada were beginning to lay the groundwork for a different kind of Christian learning community, one that would soon stand alongside L'Abri as the most significant catalysts for lay intellectual and theological engagement within North American evangelicalism. Like L'Abri, the effort that would soon become Regent College sought to develop an integrative approach to theological education that was capable of inspiring Christians to “think Christianly” about all of life, not least the secular professions more and more of them were entering.¹ At Regent College, no one played a more significant role in cultivating this identity than James Mackintosh Houston (b. 1922).

When Houston arrived in Vancouver in January 1967 the initial vision for what was to be Regent College had already been cast.² Led by Marshall Sheppard, a successful

¹ James M. Houston, “Regent College Vancouver: A New Venture in Christian Scholarship,” 4.

² Although no book-length treatment of the history of Regent College has been published, shorter published and unpublished histories abound. Of the published histories the most notable can be found in: John G Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to Its Character* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 154-164; Robert K. Burkinshaw, *Pilgrims in Lotus Land: Conservative Protestantism in British Columbia, 1917-1981* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1995), 215-222. The most in-depth treatment of Regent's founding (c. 1961-1970) is Kenneth V. Botton, “Regent College: An Experiment in Theological Education” (PhD, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2004), <http://search.proquest.com/pqdtglobal/docview/305080117/abstract/FE2B427B616E4F05PQ/1>. Regent's own publications and archival holdings contain numerous historical accounts. Some of the most notable are: James M. Houston, “The Inside Story of Regent College” n.d. c 1970, Box 1, Folder 56, James

shoe merchant and Plymouth Brethren leader in the Vancouver area, a group of likeminded men from local Brethren assemblies and a few young Brethren scholars had been working to found a Plymouth Brethren graduate school of theology since at least 1963.³ In 1965 these men formed a “School of Theology Committee,” chaired by Sheppard, in order to bring this vision to fruition.⁴ Houston entered the picture in late 1966 and officially joined the venture in 1967.

From the start Houston’s involvement changed the project. Houston immediately gave the nascent institution many things it desperately needed: maturity, academic credibility, and connections with influential British evangelicals. Perhaps more important were the intangibles: his charismatic leadership, an emphasis on personal relations, and “an aura of mystique” that “endeared him to a wide circle of young followers” and seemed to provide the new school with “an early fascination factor.”⁵ Houston attracted young students and gave the school a reputation for innovation, despite its fairly traditional curriculum. Thus, although Houston joined the project largely in agreement

M. Houston Papers; Brian P. Sutherland, “Historical Development,” in *Openness to the Future, A Prelude to Planning*, 1974; Ian S. Rennie, “Regent College: A Reflective View,” *Regent Collage 2*, no. 1 (June 1981); W. Ward Gasque, “The History of Regent College” (Unpublished, 1984), Folder 23, Regent College Michael Collison Collection; James M. Houston, “Founding Days At Regent” November 1990, Box 1, Folder 56, James M. Houston Papers. This chapter also draws on oral history interviews with many who were involved in Regent during its first decade, including: Carl Armerding, Ward and Laurel Gasque, and James Houston among others. This chapter also makes use of three archival collections housed at Regent College: The Michael Collison Collection, the Keith Sheppard Grant Collection, and the James M. Houston Papers. The first two of these were compiled by Regent students and are helpful but small. The James M. Houston Papers are a recent addition to the Regent College archives. They were catalogued in the spring of 2015 by Regent College librarian, Cindy Aalders. This project is the first to make extensive use of this collection.

³ Botton, “Regent College,” 128. The precise date that Sheppard began formulating their visions for a school is hard to pin down. Sheppard’s consideration of the idea goes back at least to 1963 when he made a special trip to Fuller Seminary to meet with up and coming Brethren scholars Don Tinder and W. Ward Gasque in 1963. See, Susan Phillips and Soo-Inn Tan, *Serving God’s Community: Studies in Honor of W. Ward Gasque* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2015), xx-xxi.

⁴ Alister E. McGrath, *J.I. Packer: A Biography* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 224.

⁵ Carl E. Armerding, “Reflections of a Canadian Theological Educator--A Personal History,” in *Studies in Canadian Evangelical Renewal: Essays in Honour of Ian S. Rennie*, ed. Kevin Quast and John Vissers (Markham, Ontario: FT Publications, 1996), 66.

with the aims of the original committee, it was Houston's personality and the degree of emphasis he placed on a few key aspects of the school's vision—most notably his strong emphasis on lay education and his aversion to Regent's eventual adoption of the professional Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree—that set Regent's course in its first decade as it grew from a faith venture to a viable institution capable of reshaping the way North American evangelicals thought about theological education for the laity.

Founding Regent College

Both religious commitment and shifting social realities prompted Marshall Sheppard's push for a new school. While most Plymouth Brethren in North America were known for their hostility toward the academy, by the early 1960s many in Vancouver's Plymouth Brethren assemblies were aware that the academy could not be ignored. For the affluent, socially prominent Vancouver Brethren these changes hit close to home: their children, like those of middle-class parents across North America, were going to college in ever increasing numbers.⁶ In fall of 1965 John Cochrane, prominent Vancouver businessman and friend of Sheppard, took to the pages of the Brethren

⁶ To some degree this was because a majority of Vancouver's Brethren assemblies were "open," therefore largely eschewing the strict sectarianism and anti-intellectualism that marked the more "exclusive" assemblies in the sect. Berkinshaw notes that not only was Vancouver home to "one of the strongest concentrations of Open Brethren in North America, if not in the world," many of these Brethren were individuals of "considerable means." For example four leading Brethren families (the Copp, Sheppard, Funston, and Rae families), largely controlled the retail shoe market in Vancouver and Victoria. See, Berkinshaw, *Pilgrims in Lotus Land*, 216-219, 313 ft. nt. 55. College enrollment in the U. S. more than doubled between 1950 and 1960, from 168,043 to 393,553. Between 1960 and 1970 enrollment increased fivefold, eventually coming in at about 2.1 million. These trends did not stop until the mid-1970s (John R Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 299-300, 326.

periodical *Calling* with an assessment of the changing cultural landscape—and a proposal.⁷ The idea of a Plymouth Brethren graduate school was about to go international.

Titled “The Effect of Increased Education—And A Proposal!” Cochrane’s article cut to the chase.⁸ Citing U.S. statistics that projected the number of college students to nearly triple from 2.7 million in 1955 to 8.6 million in 1975, Cochrane predicted “the emergence of a more academic church congregation.”⁹ Cochrane then made the implication of these trends explicit: “[I]t seems likely that the new college generation will expect the twentieth-century church to meet certain standards. Our theology will have to be related to the world around us.” Cochrane continued on with a statement especially pertinent for a sect historically opposed to professional clergy: “preachers will have to possess qualifications sufficient to command the respect of their audiences.”¹⁰ Cochrane’s “proposal” was similarly jarring to Brethren ears; he suggested that the Brethren establish their own graduate school in North America—perhaps in Vancouver—that would help the heirs of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), the nineteenth-century founder of the Plymouth Brethren sect and dispensationalist theology, adapt to the times without losing their souls. Cochrane proposed that the school be a *graduate institution*, located *on the campus of the University of British Columbia* (thus with access to the University’s library), and *open to “men and women” from all Christian traditions*.¹¹ As far as programing was concerned, Cochrane foresaw “a one-year course

⁷ Marshall Sheppard had founded *Calling* in Vancouver in 1958. The paper soon developed an international readership. See Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, 155.

⁸ John Cochrane, “The Effect of Increased Education—and a Proposal!,” *Calling*, Fall 1965, 9–11.

⁹ Cochrane, “The Effects of Increased Education,” 9.

¹⁰ Cochrane, “The Effect of Increased Education,” 10.

¹¹ Emphasis mine. Cochrane, “The Effect of Increased Education,” 10-11. The fact that the school was open to men and women even from the planning stages reflects both the Brethren flexibility that resulted from the lack of a formal ordination process and the innovative nature of the venture. At this point most, if not all, evangelical seminaries treated women students as second class. For a personal reflection on

for the student who plans a business or professional career...and three year course for those who believe the Lord may be leading them into full-time ministry at home or abroad.”¹² Cochrane compared the school favorably to Fuller Theological Seminary but was careful to make one distinction that reflected the ecclesiological views of his audience: the program would emphasize “the training of laymen rather than the development of professional clergy.”¹³ Sheppard’s idea was out.¹⁴

When Cochrane’s article reached James Houston, he wasted no time drafting a reply.¹⁵ Houston, the son of Plymouth Brethren missionaries, a leader in British “Open Brethren” circles, and a long-time lecturer in geography at Oxford University, had himself been mulling over the idea of a similar center for theological study since at least the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.¹⁶ For Houston, a changing world demanded that

this topic see Thena Ayers, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, Vanouver, B. C., October 26, 2015, Regent College.

¹² Cochrane, “The Effect of Increased Ecuation,” 11.

¹³ Cochrane, “The Effect of Increased Ecuation,” 10.

¹⁴ Prior to this Sheppard and others committed to the idea had largely tried to keep the idea out of the public eye as they tested the Brethren waters through personal correspondence and semi-private meetings at places like Inter-Varsity’s 1964 Urbana Conference. Ward Gasque played an extremely important role in this early networking. It did not take long, following the appearance of Cochrane’s article, for the criticisms to appear in prominent Brethren periodicals. Some like J. M. Davis registered deep suspicion, noting that “the proposal to establish a theological seminary sponsored by assemblies in some central place in the U.S.A. or Canada is open to question on very serious grounds.” See, J. M. Davis, “Concerning the Proposal for a Post Graduate Study Center,” *Letters of Interest*, October 1965, 14. Others took a less confrontational but still guarded stance. According to Neil M. Fraser, “It is to say too much, in my opinion, that advanced theological training will not benefit our assemblies,” but still “the growing tendency for a more educated ministry among us will, if present indications are true, result in the old cry for a king like the other nations.” Still, while the eager student could learn all he wanted by studying classic works at home, Frazer was pragmatic: “he would not have the prestige that goes with his degree from a theological college. The unlettered man as a rule has no access to the colleges to reach students for Christ.” See, Neil M. Fraser, “Regarding A Post-Graduate Study Center,” *Letters of Interest*, November 1965, 13.

¹⁵ James M. Houston, “The Inside Story of Regent College.”

¹⁶ Houston had been a university lecturer in the School of Geography since 1947. In 1964 he became a fellow of Hertford College, Oxford. He would become Bursar (i.e., second in authority) of Hertford College in 1967. He kept this position until he resigned from Oxford University in 1970. He was personal friends with key Plymouth Brethren leaders like the world-renowned biblical school F. F. Bruce and G. C. D. Howley, the editor of the British Brethren periodical *Witness*. No full biography of Houston has been published at this time. One of the best treatments of Houston’s life can be found in Arthur Dicken Thomas’s two-part article in *Crux*. See, Arthur Dicken Thomas, “James M Houston, Pioneering Spiritual Director to Evangelicals,” *Crux* 29, no. 3 (September 1993): 2–10; Arthur Dicken Thomas, “James M

Christians fit their pedagogy to the times. By the time Houston read Cochrane's article in 1965, emerging problems in Vietnam, and the beginnings of international student protest only increased his empathy for a generation of students growing up under the shadow of war and the real potential of nuclear holocaust.¹⁷ He was ready to try his hand at something new, something like the venture Cochrane suggested. Still, he was not completely convinced the timing was right. His Plymouth Brethren piety had conditioned him to wait on God's timing. Convinced that God would make it perfectly clear if he was to enter this venture, Houston decided to wait. He never sent the letter.¹⁸

He did not have to wait long. At the suggestion of young Plymouth Brethren scholar and planning committee member Ward Gasque and on the recommendation of the renowned Brethren biblical scholar F. F. Bruce, the Vancouver committee wrote to Houston in November of 1966 with the request that he consider serving as the yet-to-be-named graduate school's first principal.¹⁹ Writing from the University of Texas, where he

Houston, Pioneering Spiritual Director to Evangelicals," *Crux* 29, no. 4 (December 1993): 17–27. Whether Houston first conceived of the idea of an institute for Christian study in 1961 or 1962 is a somewhat debated point. In later reflections, Houston would sometimes date the idea to 1961, when he served as a visiting professor at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. See James M. Houston, "The Inside Story of Regent College." Stackhouse follows this account dating Houston's interaction with the idea to 1961; Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the 20th Century*, 156. McGrath dates this turn to either 1961 or 1962, (McGrath, *J.I. Packer: A Biography*, 226). In a recorded interview, however, Houston describes the intense emotion he felt being in Winnipeg (i.e., North America, not Britain) during the summer of the Cuban Missile Crisis. This seems to suggest that Houston initially conceived of the idea for an institute for Christian study while he was in Winnipeg during the Cuban Missile Crisis during the summer of 1962.

¹⁷ James M. Houston, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, Vancouver, BC, October 24, 2015. See also Houston in Botton, "Regent College," 126.

¹⁸ James M. Houston, "The Inside Story of Regent College."

¹⁹ The committee had originally asked F.F. Bruce to head the institution in August of 1966, but Bruce was not willing to leave his position as the John Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at Manchester University, where he directed more doctoral dissertations in biblical studies than anyone else in the United Kingdom between 1959 and 1978, see Laurel Gasque and W. Ward Gasque, "Frederick Fyvie Bruce: An Appreciation," c 1990, http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ashland_theological_journal/23-1_01.pdf. For another appraisal of Bruce's influence, see N. T. Wright, "Forward," in *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*, by F. F. Bruce, sixth edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), vii–xi. Houston did not know Bruce had been offered the job until years later: James M. Houston, "Founding Days At Regent." For Ward Gasque's roll in getting Houston to Regent, see Phillips and Tan, *Serving God's Community*, xxiv–xxv.

was then serving as a visiting professor in geography, Houston's reply in mid-December contained a lengthy list of questions that to some extent belied his deep interests in the venture.²⁰ Questions aside, however, the geographer, already in North America, consented to visit the committee in January 1967.

Once in Vancouver, Houston immediately assumed the role of visionary leader. He outlined three elements essential to his vision for the proposed school. In Houston's opinion the college should be (1) *a graduate institution*, (2) *on the campus of the University of British Columbia* (and affiliated with the university) that (3) could *transcend denominational lines*.²¹ In virtually every point Houston's call followed Cochrane's 1965 article. The differences that did exist between the two proposals were largely differences of degree. While Cochrane had never used the word affiliation, he had assumed that the school would be on the UBC campus and gain access to the UBC library. Likewise, while Houston agreed with Cochrane's emphasis that the school needed to transcend denominational lines, he went beyond Cochrane by insisting that the school exist free from any explicit ties to the Plymouth Brethren.

²⁰ Botton, "Regent College," 178, 290. Houston's questions revolved around several categories ranging from the role of the principal, to finances, and the school's relationship to both the Plymouth Brethren and the University of British Columbia.

²¹ Emphasis mine. The wording of these three points differs slightly depending on which account one reads. This is taken from the earliest firsthand accounts James M. Houston, "The Inside Story of Regent College," c. 1970 (which does not mention affiliation) and Brian P. Sutherland, "Historical Development," 1974 (which does include an emphasis on affiliation). See also Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, 157. The word "transdenominational" may actually be an anachronism here. If so it is one that occurs in almost every telling of this meeting. Houston related later that "the description 'trans-denominational' was actually given us by a lawyer acting on our behalf, to obtain a Charter of Incorporation that we received from the government of British Columbia, in 1968." Houston, "Founding Days at Regent." There is some debate about how thoroughly the committee shared Houston's emphases. According to Houston, Sheppard "originally...had in mind a Bible College for the Brethren assemblies. London Bible College seemed a possible model. Yet when I gave him my own vision, that Regent should be transdenominational in character, a graduate school, and its aim should be to seek affiliation with the University of British Columbia, he readily assented to the proposal" Given Houston's strong emphasis on lay theological education it is notable that these three points did not explicitly include that particular emphasis.

Most on the committee realized that Houston's points were not too radical a departure from the original goal. To them it seemed Houston was the right man for the job. A couple months later Sheppard wrote Houston confirming the committee's decision, noting "we are sure you are the man needed...every finger pointed in your direction." He went on, framing Houston's decision in heroic terms: "I think we all recognize it would be a difficult decision for you to leave secure, secular employment in your profession to head a school which is nothing at the moment but a dream. But were not all the great men of faith faced with similar decisions?"²² Houston initially hesitated, but after spending the summer in Vancouver, he agreed to serve as the school's first principal.²³ On April 4, 1968 the provincial government of British Columbia granted the newly christened Regent College a charter to grant theological degrees.²⁴ Regent's first Summer School was scheduled for the summer of 1969. Houston was at the helm. Regent College was launched.

Making Regent College

A provincial charter and a high-profile principal gave the Vancouver venture hope for success but no certainty of it. Throughout the first years Houston was leading what in a candid moment he termed "a survival venture," dependent upon contributions from

²² Marshall Sheppard to James M. Houston, March 31, 1967, Box 1, Folder 8, James M. Houston Papers. Eventually, Houston would come to think of his journey in Sheppard's terms, often using the story of Abraham's faith journey to frame his own. As Houston's early student and later Regent professor Don Lewis remembers, "[Houston] was a heroic figure. Like an Abraham leading into an unknown land. That was pretty much what he articulated as well." See Botton, "Regent College," 122.

²³ James M. Houston to Marshall Sheppard, April 26, 1967, Box 1, Folder 8, James M. Houston Papers.

²⁴ After having failed to find a good geographical, biblical, or Plymouth Brethren (e.g., Gasque's suggestion of "Chapman Hall") name, the committee settled on Regent—the name of fellow planner Ken Smith's real estate company. See, James M. Houston, "Founding Days At Regent." For Gasque's suggestions see, W. Ward Gasque to Brian P. Sutherland, April 24, 1967, Box 1, Folder 12, James M. Houston Papers.

Board members and a seemingly endless round of marketing and traveling on the part of Houston and other faculty members to keep the school afloat.²⁵ From the time Houston laid down his three imperatives until he officially gave his notice of resignation to Oxford and moved with his wife, Rita, and their four children to Vancouver in 1970, Houston balanced his life as Bursar of Hertford College, Oxford, with multiple trans-Atlantic trips and intra-continental trips across North America.²⁶ In the fall of 1968 he suffered a physical collapse in New York City while on a promotional and funds-raising trip along the eastern coast of the United States. Houston thought he had had a heart attack. It proved to be fatigue, however, and he was soon back on the road.²⁷ Throughout this time Houston found himself talking and writing about Regent College constantly. In speeches, sermons, and long personal letters he laid out his hopes for the college. In the process Houston offered his audiences models upon which to compare Regent and a vision for what Regent could become. All the while Houston was working to craft an ethos of scholarship within community that would define the school for decades to come. Ironically, nearly all of his models for the new venture came from the Old World.

Houston's Models for Regent College

Because Houston envisioned Regent College as a novel venture in theological education, he often sought to distinguish the Vancouver school by comparing it with older models. Some models, such as the undergraduate Bible schools that dotted the

²⁵ James M. Houston to Mr. and Mrs. Victor Adrian, November 24, 1970, Box 2, Folder 3, James M. Houston Papers. For board contributions see, James M. Houston to Marshall Sheppard, September 24, 1969, Box 1, Folder 8, James M. Houston Papers.

²⁶Houston did not officially resign from Oxford until 1971. Houston, email to author, March 29, 2016.

²⁷ James M. Houston to Walter [last name unspecified], October 13, 1968, Box 1, Folder 41, James M. Houston Papers; James M. Houston and John Bennett, October 15, 1968, Box 1, Folder 41, James M. Houston Papers.

North American landscape, were easily cast aside. As Cochrane's 1965 article demonstrated, the committee had already moved on to the concept of a graduate school by the middle of the decade. Of course, Cochrane envisioned that the Vancouver school would have some Brethren distinctions (e.g., no strict lay/professional divide; it would accept men and women; it would be located on a university campus), but in general Cochrane's article demonstrated that the committee was planning to set up the Brethren equivalent of seminary.

Houston's models, however, did not come from the United States or Canada. In a pattern that would hold for most of his life, Houston looked to Europe, not North America, for inspiration. One of the most ready models was Tyndale House, Cambridge. Founded in 1945 by the evangelically minded Tyndale Fellowship (f. 1938), by the late 1960s the residential study and research center was playing a significant role in Britain's post-war evangelical renaissance.²⁸ As Tyndale House developed it was able to acquire a top-notch library for biblical research and thereby attract some of the brightest established and up-and-coming evangelical scholars in the world.²⁹ Many important scholars with Regent connections, including J.I. Packer, F. F. Bruce, and William J. Martin, were involved in the Tyndale Fellowship at some level.³⁰ With its residential,

²⁸ McGrath, *J.I. Packer*, 48-50. Like much in the history of Houston and Regent College, The Tyndale Fellowship also had close ties to IVCF. The Fellowship was founded in 1938 by a British Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship committee in an effort to re-engage evangelicals intellectually. For information on Tyndale House's history and current programs, see also Tyndale House Cambridge, *Tyndale House Cambridge*, "About Tyndale House," n.d., accessed February 15, 2016. For Ward Gasque's take on the significance of the Tyndale Fellowship and its study center, see W. Ward Gasque, "Evangelical Theology: The British Example," *Christianity Today*, August 10, 1973.

²⁹ McGrath, *J.I. Packer*, 50.

³⁰ McGrath, *J.I. Packer*, 50. For more on the Tyndale House program and J. I. Packer's role in it, especially his 1973 speech on the atonement, see Leland Ryken, *J. I. Packer: An Evangelical Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2015), 55, 137-139.

university-centered location and a good library the physical Tyndale House provided the Tyndale Fellowship with a geographical base capable of scholarly synergy.³¹

Houston liked much of what he saw at Tyndale House, especially its ability to bring together scholars and advance evangelical scholarship. He did, however, want to push Regent in a broader direction beyond Tyndale House's specific focus on biblical studies and theology. Houston laid out his dream for Regent College in a 1968 letter to John Alexander, a fellow geographer who left the field to become National Director of the United States branch of the campus ministry Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF):

Regent College will have two primary purposes...the first is to provide an intensive one-year course to graduates, of both sexes, on an inter-denominational basis, before taking up their secular careers...The second aim is to have a research centre rather on the lines of Tyndale House in Cambridge, U.K., where scholars—not necessarily theologians—can have the facilities to write and publish works of significance to evangelical testimony.³²

In one of his earliest published reflections on the need for Regent College, Houston made much the same point: “It is planned that Regent College will provide facilities for an academic community of scholars engaged in the advancement of published work considered to be of importance for Christian witness. Scholars of repute will be granted

³¹ McGrath, *J.I. Packer*, 50.

³² James M. Houston to John Alexander, August 31, 1968, Box 1, Folder 41, James M. Houston Papers. By the time Alexander accepted the position of IVCF national director in 1964 he had already been ministering for twelve years to college students and faculty at the University of Wisconsin—where he had been chair of the geography department. Keith Hunt and Gladys M. Hunt, *For Christ and the University: The Story of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship-USA, 1940-1990* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 238-245. For Alexander's lasting impact at the University of Wisconsin, see: “John Alexander,” *UW Christian Faculty*, <http://uwchristianfaculty.org/tradition/alexander/alexander.html> (accessed February 16, 2016).

financial assistance to stay at the College during sabbatical leave from their own Universities.”³³ Though implicit, the model of Tyndale House shone through.

In these early years Houston also saw Tyndale House as a model that might prompt established evangelical scholars to relocate to Vancouver. As always, Houston aimed high. By 1968 he had identified Carl F. H. Henry (1913-2003) as a top prospect. Henry was among the most well known evangelical philosophers and public intellectuals in both North America and Europe. Close friend of neo-evangelical organizers like Harold J. Ockenga and Billy Graham, Henry served on the original faculty at Fuller Theological Seminary (f. 1947) before leaving to become the first Editor in Chief of Billy Graham’s *Christianity Today* in 1956.³⁴ Houston spoke of his hope of getting Carl Henry to “throw in his effort with us,” to his friend, Stacey Woods, founding director of Canadian IVCF (f. 1929) and then director of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES).³⁵ In Houston’s opinion Henry’s involvement was especially important because, as he told Woods, “notable scholars are not all that common in evangelical circles.”³⁶ Houston laid out his idea to Henry in January 1969. He hoped that Regent College might “provide a residential centre for Christian scholars that may be considered comparable to Tyndale House, though much broader.”³⁷ Houston then suggested the

³³ James M. Houston, “Regent College Vancouver: A New Venture in Christian Scholarship,” *Thrust*, January 1969, 7.

³⁴ For more on Carl Henry see his autobiography: Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian*. For Henry’s role at Fuller, see Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*. For Henry’s role at *Christianity Today*, see Coffman, *The Christian Century and the Rise of the Protestant Mainline*.

³⁵ “History,” *Canadian Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship*, <http://canadianivcf.org/history> (accessed February 23, 2016); C. Stacey Woods, *The Growth of a Work of God: The Story of the Early Days of the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship of the United States of America as Told by Its First General Secretary* (Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 1978).

³⁶ James M. Houston to C. Stacey Woods, October 17, 1968, Box 1, Folder 39, James M. Houston Papers. For more on Stacey Woods and early IVCF efforts in Canada, see Woods, *The Growth of a Work of God*.

³⁷ James M. Houston to Carl F. H. Henry, January 6, 1969, Box 1, File 24, James M. Houston Papers.

possibility of merging Henry's recently founded Institute for Advanced Christian Studies (1967-2002) with Regent College if Henry was interested in "being the director of the research centre of Regent College and perhaps Professor of Christian communication."³⁸ Houston's high hopes would be disappointed, however. Henry, who perhaps unbeknownst to Houston had been working to found his own "Crusade University" since 1955, would never relocate to Vancouver.³⁹

Henry's decision was one of many disappointments Houston faced in his first years at Regent. Tyndale House only worked as a model if he could get eminent scholars to join in the effort, but time and time again well known scholars turned him down. Early in the process Houston's own expansive vision for the school and sense of calling had made him optimistic that notable scholars in a range of fields would be drawn to the project. In the end, however, he would only be able to entice one other well known scholar, W. J. Martin, to Regent's full-time faculty. Martin, a professor in Semitic Languages at the University of Liverpool, took early retirement in order to join the venture. The other posts were either part-time (Ian Rennie, John A. Toews), short-lived (Stanley M. Block, Samuel J. Mikolaski), or held by promising but unproven Brethren scholars (W. Ward Gasque, Carl E. Armerding). Furthermore, besides Houston and Block all of these early faculty members had fairly traditional seminary credentials.⁴⁰ Yet Houston's dream necessitated a stellar faculty with wide-ranging academic backgrounds. As far as Regent's fulltime faculty were concerned this scholarly community seemed out

³⁸ James M. Houston to Carl F. H. Henry, January 6, 1969.

³⁹ For a good history of Henry's efforts to found a top-tier, evangelical research university see: Owen Strachan, *Awakening the Evangelical Mind: An Intellectual History of the Neo-Evangelical Movement*, 2015, 127-157; Owen Strachan, "Carl Henry's University Crusade: The Spectacular Promise and Ultimate Failure of Crusade University," *Trinity Journal* 35, no. 2 (2014): 75-92.

⁴⁰ This largely follows Carl Armerding's assessment of the situation: Carl E. Armerding to Michael G. Collison, July 22, 1993, Folder 4, Regent College Michael G. Collison Collection.

of reach. Necessity, however, became the mother of one of Regent's most significant inventions.

In their early planning Houston and the Vancouver committee decided to launch Regent College by hosting a "Summer School" for six weeks (two three-week sections) in the summers of 1969 and 1970 before fulltime classes officially started (fall 1970). Whereas Houston could not assemble a superstar cast of full time professors willing to relocate to what still seemed like a remote corner of the globe, he *was* able to convince a good number of eminent scholars to come to Vancouver for a few weeks in the summer. Given the light teaching load, fair honorarium, and the chance for a reprieve from routine while surrounded by Vancouver's pristine beauty, the opportunity to teach at Regent's Summer School turned out to be enticing. Starting that first summer and continuing on for decades, Regent's Summer School regularly hosted some of the biggest names in evangelical scholarship and church life.⁴¹ Within its first six years the Summer School brought together a "who's who" of evangelical figures, most notably: Conwell Seminary president S. S. Babbage (1969); Canadian poet Margaret Avison (1969);⁴² leading British New Testament scholar F. F. Bruce (1970); Dutch art historian and founder of Dutch L'Abri Hans Rookmaaker (1970, 1974); L'Abri worker and emerging evangelical public intellectual Os Guinness (1971); New Testament scholar R. N. Longnecker (1972); vice-president of the Tom Skinner Association William E. Pannell (1973); leading South American evangelical Samuel Escobar (1973); Wheaton College's famous philosopher Arthur Holmes (1973); British theologian and bible scholar J. I. Packer (1975); General

⁴¹ A nearly complete set of early Regent Summer School Brochures and of the *Regent College Bulletin* can be found in folder 1 of the Michael G. Collison collection at Regent College.

⁴² Avison received the Governor's General award twice and was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1984. See "Margaret Avison : The Poetry Foundation," <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/margaret-avison> (accessed February 16, 2016).

Secretary for the Latin American branch of IFES C. Rene Padilla (1975),⁴³ and leading scholar of church growth Donald A. McGavran (1975). Not only did these scholars attract attention and students (56 the first summer and hundreds after that), together they also offered North American evangelicals a much more diverse and cosmopolitan expression of evangelicalism than what one would find in even the best evangelical seminaries at the time. Furthermore, the summer faculty seemed to enjoy their time at Regent, sometimes forming friendships and even scholarly relationships with other scholars they met in Vancouver.⁴⁴ F. F. Bruce, though admittedly not an unbiased observer, published glowing reviews of Regent after teaching at the 1970 Summer School:

Those who have been concerned in establishing it have received so much encouragement in unforeseen ways that they are left in no doubt that God has been directing and blessing the enterprise throughout. News of what it intends to do has already stimulated one or two other North American schools to that imitation which is the sincerest form of flattery, and if it goes on as it has begun, it will discharge an outstanding ministry for the kingdom of Christ.⁴⁵

That scholars enjoyed Regent's Summer School can also be inferred from the fact that in some cases, most notably that of James I. Packer, involvement in Summer School became a trial run for relocation to Vancouver. Indeed, for students and professors alike, Summer School was one of Regent's best recruiting mechanisms.⁴⁶

⁴³ Both Escobar and Padilla played an important role in forcing North American and European evangelicals to consider the concerns of their fellow evangelicals in the majority world. Both men burst on the evangelical scene in the early 1970s through their involvement in conferences like IVCF's Urbana and the 1974 Lausanne Congress. For more, see David R Swartz, *Moral Minority: The Evangelical Left in an Age of Conservatism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 113-134.

⁴⁴ An example of this can be seen in the scholarly appreciation that grew between F. F. Bruce and Hans Rookmaaker during the Summer School of 1970. F. F. Bruce, "Regent College, Vancouver," *The Witness* 100, no. 1199 (October 1970): 419.

⁴⁵ Bruce, "Regent College, Vancouver," 419.

⁴⁶ For a take on the way a Summer School experience could play a role in shaping a scholar's decision to join the Regent faculty, see McGrath, *J. I. Packer*, 233-236.

Houston's model for the summer school project, like much of Regent College as a whole, came from his experiences at Oxford University. Prior to his permanent relocation to Vancouver in 1970, Houston had lived in Oxford since he began his doctoral studies there in 1945.⁴⁷ For Houston, the Oxonian influence on Regent was obvious. As he later noted, "Much of what we introduced [at Regent] was experimented at Oxford."⁴⁸ Regent's innovative Summer School was exhibit A.⁴⁹ By the time Houston helped launch the 1969 Summer School, he already had eighteen years of experience running a similar summer program in Oxford. Along with several concerned professionals and scholars (including F. F. Bruce) in local Open Brethren assemblies, Houston helped develop "The Young Men's Bible Study Conference," in Oxford. These conferences offered students a chance to study the Bible and interact with Christian experts in the field. According to Houston the success of these Oxford conferences led directly to the proposal that Regent begin with a summer program.⁵⁰ Not everyone in Vancouver was thrilled by the suggestion, but Houston's argument, strengthened by his previous experiences, won the day. Rather than functioning as a one or two-year temporary measure, Regent's Summer School became one of the most notable, lasting, and, indeed, imitated features of the College.⁵¹ Houston's Oxford experiences and the connections he made there went a long way in helping to make the program a success.

⁴⁷ McGrath, *J. I. Packer*, 226.

⁴⁸ Houston in Botton, "Regent College," 127.

⁴⁹ Reflecting on these summer schools later, Armerding noted: "The concept, however, was still quite innovative in 1969-1970, and it probably needs to be stressed that Regent was a leader in the development of what became a major trend." Carl E. Armerding to Michael G. Collison, July 22, 1993.

⁵⁰ Botton, "Regent College," 127.

⁵¹ Brian Sutherland's 1974 report details both the mixed response to the idea of a Summer School and the original feeling that the summer program would be temporary. See Brian P. Sutherland, "Historical Development," 8.

More than one of the lectures at Regent’s Summer School had previously taught in the Oxford conference.⁵²

It was not simply that Houston moved in the right networks; it was also that these earlier schools, located in the heart of historic university towns, offered access to scholars and professionals in a variety of fields. Thus Houston was able to work with the surgeon Melville Capper, as well as with scientists like Sir Robert Boyd, a pioneering space scientist, and Donald McKay, who worked in artificial intelligence.⁵³ These helped expand the Oxford “Bible conference” beyond the pages of the Good Book to include a wide range of topics, each of which was considered in relation to Christian thought. According to Houston, the “integration of faith, theology, and all the professional disciplines,” one of Regent’s most distinctive, if also elusive, goals, “emerged from this milieu.”⁵⁴ Summer School was a means for continuing and expanding this integrative work. From the beginning, Regent’s Summer Schools offered an array of biblically and theologically oriented classes interspersed with courses taught by writers, poets, art historians, geographers, scientists, ministers, historians, and many who moved between categories.

Another Oxford-based model that proved to have life-long significance came in the form of a personal relationship—an occurrence that is not surprising given Houston’s long-held emphasis on the importance of personal relations. Between 1946 and 1953 Houston shared an apartment in Oxford with Nicolas Zernov, the leader of the Orthodox community in England and lecturer in Eastern Orthodox Culture at Oxford.⁵⁵ Zernov’s academic position combined with his prominent position as the secretary of the

⁵² Botton, “Regent College,” 127.

⁵³ Botton, “Regent College,” 127.

⁵⁴ Botton, “Regent College,” 127.

⁵⁵ J. M. Houston et al., *For Christ and His Kingdom: Inspiring a New Generation* (Vancouver: Regent College Pub., 2012), 49.

Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, an organization that sought to promote dialogue between Anglicans and Orthodox, made him a prominent figure in the religious landscape of Oxford. That Houston, far outside his Brethren element, gained much from this friendship is hard to doubt. Even though Houston's deep appreciation for the spiritual writings from Catholic and Orthodox traditions became stronger later in his career, it took root during this time.⁵⁶ Yet it was not Zernov himself but one of the many other prominent religious figures who found their way into Houston and Zernov's apartment who would exert the most significant influence on Houston.

Houston met British novelist, scholar, and lay theologian C. S. Lewis during one of the discussion groups Zernov hosted at the apartment. In Lewis, Houston found a professional scholar willing to take the risk of venturing out of his own field and into the realm of theology, all the while emphasizing that he was "a very ordinary layman of the Church of England."⁵⁷ Whereas Houston was initially unwilling to deliver papers outside of his own field of geography to the group, Lewis was willing to give broadcast talks to the entire nation on theological topics far removed from the medieval volumes of his profession.⁵⁸ Houston and Lewis took part in Zernov's monthly meetings together for six years. Though the two never became close friends—Houston remembers Lewis being quite guarded about his personal life—Lewis made a deep impact on Houston. In Lewis,

⁵⁶ Thomas, "James M Houston, Pioneering Spiritual Director to Evangelicals," September 1993, 7.

⁵⁷ C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (Zondervan, 2001), viii.

⁵⁸ A move that came with high costs in the context of Oxford University. See, Alister E McGrath, *C.S. Lewis: A Life : Eccentric Genius, Reluctant Prophet* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2013), 216-218.

Houston found a model for the kind of “amateur” theologian he hoped to be and help foster among others tempted to define themselves by their professional identities.⁵⁹

Lewis’s rejection of a reductionist, functional view of life left a lasting mark on Houston. A half a century later Houston was still noting the significance of the last conversation he had with Lewis in which he asked Lewis, “What would you say was your central message you were communicating through all your literary works?” To which Lewis promptly replied, “against reductionism.”⁶⁰ For Houston this translated into a growing sense that the modern impulse toward isolated, professional identities had to be countered by a turn to the relational. Prior to meeting Lewis Houston was already disillusioned by the overreach of professionalism. As he watched British architects develop the new profession of “regional planning” during World War II or geographers at Oxford scramble to reestablish their place in the profession in the post-war years, Houston became convinced that one’s identity must be rooted in Christ, not a profession.⁶¹ This shift in Houston’s thinking became evident in 1969 when his friend E. M. Blaiklock, a classics professor at the University of Auckland, New Zealand who was spending a year in Britain, asked Houston to contribute to a collection of essays titled *Why I am Still a Christian*. The book was designed to be a response to Bertrand Russell’s

⁵⁹ For more on Houston’s esteem for Lewis’s work as a layman and theologian amateur, see Houston in Botton, “Regent College,” 124. Houston’s esteem for Lewis’s version of amateurism remained throughout his life. For an example of his concept of this, see J. M. Houston, *The Mentored Life: From Individualism to Personhood* (Vancouver: Regent College Pub., 2012), According to Houston, “a vital need today is to preserve the Christian life’s ‘amateur status.’ For just as family life and friendship are where we live relationally, so is the Christian life. These are the realms of *dilettantes*, literally, those taking ‘delight’ in God, and as *amateurs* or ‘lovers’ of each other (30).”

⁶⁰ Houston et al., *For Christ and His Kingdom*, 49. Lewis’s most significant critic of reductionism comes in his 1943 book, *The Abolition of Man*. In it Lewis rails at length against reductionist “scientism” and its infiltration of education.

⁶¹ Houston, interview.

(1870-1972) widely read *Why I Am Not a Christian*.⁶² Of the eleven contributors Houston was the only one to reject an explicit link to his professional identity. Sandwiched between a list of titles ranging from “A Philosopher Examines the Question” to “A Biochemist Shares His Faith,” and “A Musician and His God,” Houston’s “A God-centered Personality” stood apart from the rest. It also demonstrated the anti-reductionist trajectory of the rest of his life. Rather than allowing oneself to be defined by a professional identity, Houston called for a renewed emphasis on the personal and relational elements of the Christian faith in the face of an increasingly fragmented culture:

[T]hese worlds of man’s creation are only abstract partialities, much less part of life, compared with you and me. Do we not find it so much easier to ask of the stranger, *what* he is? instead of being aware of *who* he is? So much of our secular and materialistic culture is obsessed with our *having*, and ignorant of our *being*. This anxiety is not being dispelled by science and education. Rather our ailment grows with their increase....It is my contention that our society may distinguish individuals as units of the human species, but it is only the Christian faith that has truly recognized *persons*, their real purpose and genuine relationships.⁶³

With this essay Houston publically set his course along what he would later term “the trajectory of the personal.” It was a direction from which he would never veer.⁶⁴

⁶² Houston and Hindmarsh, *For Christ and His Kingdom*, 51; E. M. Blaiklock, *Why I Am Still a Christian* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 1971); Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian: And Other Essays on Religion and Related Subjects* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957).

⁶³ Houston in Blaiklock, *Why I Am Still a Christian*, 84-85.

⁶⁴ In 2012 Houston was awarded the inaugural Christian Leadership Award in Higher Education by Christian Higher Education Canada (CHEC). In his remarks, which were subsequently published, Houston affirmed this continuity: “What has given integration and meaning to my whole narrative more than fifty years later has been consistently living “this trajectory of the personal” and believing it is far more valuable than just being “a professional.” It has been a costly journey that not even fellow Christians have understood.” Houston et al., *For Christ and His Kingdom*, 52-53. For more on Houston’s emphasis on personal relations (and Lewis’s influence in this area), see Thomas, “James M Houston, Pioneering Spiritual Director to Evangelicals,” September 1993, 7-8. Later in his life Houston would emphasize the importance of personal rather than professional identity for an aging society where all-too-often a person lost his or her identity when he or she retired. In Houston’s opinion this represented “the wastage of two decades of prime, mature manpower that stirs out its life with coffee spoons at Starbucks in the morning and its only monument, lost golf balls in the afternoon” (Houston, interview). See also J. M. Houston and

Houston's Vision for Regent College

The same convictions that inspired his anomalous contribution in Blaiklock's book also informed Houston's vision for Regent College, especially his strong emphasis on the theological training of laity. Sheppard and the Vancouver Theology Committee had always understood their project as having a lay emphasis. Everything in their Brethren background pointed in this direction. While some among the Brethren did work in fulltime ministry as missionaries, local assemblies did not, as a rule, hire professional clergy. Instead, local laymen were expected to share the preaching and teaching roles. Houston shared these ecclesiastical sensibilities. He also harbored a personal aversion to what he felt was an increasing overemphasis on professionalism in all of life. Together these twin concepts—one a product of his Brethren background, the other a dimension of his personality and experiences—pushed Houston to emphasize the education of laity to a degree that sometimes baffled board members and other Regent faculty.⁶⁵ For Houston, all professionalism was suspect, but religious professionalism especially so. From the start Houston set forth a vision of Regent College as an “evangelical institute of Christian studies” focused on strengthening the lay Christian mind.⁶⁶ There can be little doubt this emphasis was convictional for Houston. As Regent's story would soon show, it was also strategic and controversial.

Michael W. Parker, *A Vision for the Aging Church: Renewing Ministry for and by Seniors* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2011).

⁶⁵ Laurel Gasque, W. Ward Gasque, Carl E. Armerding, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, October 23, 2015, Regent College.

⁶⁶ Houston intentionally chose to call Regent an “institute” rather than an institution. As he later recalled, “Regent College [is] called an ‘evangelical institute of Christian studies.’ I got that from the Encyclopedia Britannica. I was a contributor to it, and in 1965 we had a dinner at the Guildhall [in London] celebrating our Bicentenary, so we were each given the first edition of 1764. If you look that up, an institution is an organization that is set up for whatever purpose is deemed appropriate, but an institute is a fiduciary trust that carries out the vision and wishes of its founders,” (Houston, Interview, October 24, 2015). Houston had been thinking about the Christian mind since at least 1964 when he published an article on the topic in *Witness*. See James M. Houston, “Having a Christian Mind,” *Witness*, April 1964.

Given the realities of founding (and then funding) a new college it is not surprising that Houston tempered his emphasis on lay education in some of his earliest projections for Regent College. To some degree pragmatism had to trump idealism in Regent's first years. There were bills to be paid and friends to be made. Houston, already suspect in the eyes of many denominational leaders, some international evangelical figures, and even many among the North American Plymouth Brethren community, had to tread carefully.⁶⁷ Furthermore, he had a committee of Brethren assemblymen in Vancouver who had already been planning on a three-year course of study "for those who believe the Lord may be leading them into full-time ministry at home or abroad" that sounded a lot like a B. D. (Bachelor of Divinity, the professional ministerial degree that preceded the development of the Master of Divinity, or MDiv, degree).⁶⁸ Facing these realities, Houston emphasized Regent's focus on lay education while still allowing room for what seemed very much like a professional ministerial degree.

Starting in 1968 Houston went to work laying out his vision for Regent College to potential donors, faculty, students, and allies. Writing to Paul Little of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship in June of 1968, Houston projected Regent "would be more like an institute of Christian Education with a non-professional bias" aimed at "[g]raduates ready to start their secular career" who "would be recruited for a one-year basic course." Notably, he predicted that the course of study would include "[c]ourses in pastoral

⁶⁷ That at least some leaders of established denominations distrusted Regent is well known and much attested in the literature. Houston was aware that certain leading evangelical and fundamentalist figures like Francis Schaeffer, then a rising star, held his theological orthodoxy in question. Houston and Schaeffer had met in Oxford in 1968 and discussed theology during a long walk in the park, see James M. Houston, interview. Reactions to Cochrane's original proposal in Brethren publications demonstrate suspicions within Houston's own religious community. See also Carl E. Armerding to James M. Houston, January 20, 1968, Box 1, Folder 11, James M. Houston Papers.

⁶⁸ John Cochrane, "The Effect of Increased Education--and a Proposal!" Carl Armerding remembers that he and others understood talk of a three-year degree to be synonymous with a B. D. See Laurel Gasque, W. Ward Gasque, Carl E. Armerding, interview.

theology, religious sociology, contemporary arts” in addition to “more traditional subjects such as biblical exegesis, Theology, and Church History.” In short, this vision amounted to what would soon become Houston’s golden standard: Regent College, an institute dedicated to making lay people more thoroughly Christian in their everyday lives and their secular careers. Notably, however, Houston did not stop there. He followed up these lay-centric goals by opening other doors of possibility, adding “there might be a minority doing a three year professional course, and a few doing doctorates.”⁶⁹ In Regent’s early years Houston emphasized lay education, but he also left the possibility of a professional degree open.

Houston’s exchange with Little reflects a vision still in the process of formation. A certain ambiguity would mark the divide between lay and professional education for years to come in Houston’s own vision for the school, and, not surprisingly, in the vision of others. In early 1969 founding board member Don Bennett told one inquirer that Regent’s program would likely include a “three-year Bachelor of Divinity and Doctoral Studies.”⁷⁰ Yet Bennett was not entirely sure of himself. That same day he dashed off a worried letter to Houston noting that he had responded in the interest of good public relations but felt that he was “in no position to intelligently reply other than what I have done.”⁷¹ What he needed from Houston was a form letter that laid out Regent’s vision and goals.

At almost exactly this time Houston published an article in the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada’s *Thrust* (f. 1968) that situated Regent’s particular mission within

⁶⁹ James M. Houston to Paul Little, June 25, 1968, Box 1, Folder 41, James M. Houston Papers.

⁷⁰ Don Bennett to Robert B. Merritt, January 15, 1969, Box 1, Folder 4, James M. Houston Papers.

⁷¹ Don Bennett to James M. Houston, January 15, 1969, Box 1, Folder 4, James M. Houston Papers.

the context of the university.⁷² Citing examples of international student unrest, Houston described the modern academy as “adrift” and “confused.” In Houston’s eyes the state of evangelical attitudes toward scholarship were not much better. Citing English literary critic, novelist, and theologian Harry Blamires (b. 1916), who in his 1963 book *The Christian Mind* lamented, “There is no longer a Christian mind...the modern Christian has succumbed to secularization,” Houston joined in the critique noting that evangelical Christians had forgotten how to “think Christianly.”⁷³ In Houston’s view a key part of this “tragedy” was that “many University graduates have well trained minds in secular studies, but a simplistic faith, not much advanced beyond what they learnt in Sunday School.” Because of this they tended to be “schizophrenic in thought with separate compartments of mind marked ‘secular’ and ‘religious.’”⁷⁴ Counteracting these trends was, to Houston’s mind, Regent’s primary mission. Stating plainly that the College’s “primary purpose is to train laymen,” Houston laid out a one-year diploma program (another idea he carried over from England) for students “who will be willing to sacrifice one year off their careers for an intensive course in Christian thought and life.”⁷⁵ Though the Diploma program was not a professional degree, Houston conveyed a hope that it would be accredited with other colleges and universities. Houston envisioned that the program’s “main objective will be the training in Christian maturity so that graduates will

⁷² For more on the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and *Thrust* see Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, 165-173.

⁷³ Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1978 [1963]), 3; James M. Houston, “Regent College Vancouver: A New Venture in Christian Scholarship,” 4. Blamires was also a student of C. S. Lewis.

⁷⁴ Houston, “Regent College Vancouver,” 4.

⁷⁵ Houston, “Regent College Vancouver,” 6. Cochrane proposed the idea of a one-year program in 1965, but this program was called a “degree” program. Houston developed the idea of a degree program during a 1967 train ride to visit Bruce in Manchester. On the train he was struck by the idea of the British Diploma in Education (ironically, a professional credential), which British university students took in an extra year after their undergraduate studies. See James M. Houston, “Founding Days At Regent.”

leave to be better equipped Christians, ready to enter their careers as engineers, doctors or housewives.”⁷⁶ This goal, Houston proposed, would be achievable thanks to the mix of relational counseling and scholarship Regent promised to offer.

But did Regent’s focus on the theological training of the laity exclude professional clerical training? In 1969 Houston did not seem to think so. In February Houston wrote to Ian Rennie (1929-2015), a credentialed scholar who was also an influential evangelical Presbyterian minister in Vancouver. Perhaps considering Rennie’s potential reservations to a lay-oriented graduate school with strong Brethren influences, and undoubtedly aware of the good Rennie’s support could do for the fledging venture, Houston laid out an inclusive vision for Regent:

While we want to make the one-year course for graduate students a distinctive feature of Regent College, I see clearly the need also to establish a full three-year professional course for theological students who will be ministers of the Gospel. Perhaps we can start the latter program a year after we have engaged the first of our staff for the one-year course, to give time to plan carefully a curriculum that will be academically sound and also realistic for full-time Christian ministers.⁷⁷

Houston’s overtures apparently convinced Rennie that there was room for a professional minister at Regent. Rennie joined Regent’s Board shortly after this exchange and served on Regent’s original faculty as a “special lecturer” in church history from the fall of 1970 until the fall of 1972, when he took up a full time position as an associate professor of church history.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Houston, “Regent College, Vancouver,” 6.

⁷⁷ James M. Houston to Ian S. Rennie, February 8, 1969, Box 1, Folder 6, James M. Houston Papers. Houston would later state that at some point early on he realized that Rennie “was very much looking to establish the ‘Fuller of the North.’” See, Botton, “Regent College,” 181.

⁷⁸ Brian P. Sutherland, “Are You Keeping Up?,” *Calling*, 1970.

Rennie's involvement in the college demonstrated that Houston's idea of a "transdenominational" institute was becoming a reality. Though similar to Houston and the Vancouver committee in his evangelical sensibilities, Rennie did not see established clergy, or professional training for ministers, as something to be avoided. His presence alone sent a strong message to inquiring students. By hiring Rennie Regent seemed to be saying that Presbyterians and those in other established denominations—even those who were considering ministerial degrees—were welcome at Regent. Yet Rennie bridged the lay-professional divide by more than his presence alone. As the debate about Regent's "true" identity began to heat up in the mid-1970s Rennie emerged as an important commentator on Regent's vision and trajectory. In 1974, he presented a paper entitled "Emphases of the Program: Lay vs. Professional," to Regent's first strategic planning conference.⁷⁹ Rennie began by laying out the two sides of the debate at Regent. While some claimed that "everyone seems to have been agreed thus far that the training of 'lay' Christians is the exclusive or at least a major part of the task of Regent" and not insignificantly part of what made Regent unique, others contended that "the original vision of Regent contained a 'professional' as well as a 'lay' element."⁸⁰ While both of these sides could harness evidence to back up their claims, Rennie demonstrated that the most powerful indicator of Regent's key concern was what it was actually doing, not what it claimed as its founding vision. "Whether it was in the original vision or not," the school was now training professional biblical scholars and was seriously considering adding a program for the training of Young Life staff members to its curriculum. Perhaps,

⁷⁹ The conference was called "Openness to the Future: A Prelude to Planning." The entire program, including all the presented papers, are available in the Box 2, Folder 12 of the James M. Houston Collection. Houston felt that this conference successfully conveyed Regent's character. He soon had all of these papers published so they could be distributed to incoming board members and faculty.

⁸⁰ Ian S. Rennie, "Emphases of the Program: Lay vs. Professional," 1974, 2-3.

Rennie suggested, these signs showed that Regent was “prepared to give serious consideration to being involved in another aspect of ‘professional’ Christian training.”⁸¹ Provocatively, Rennie pondered whether God had given Regent its world-class faculty “without some purpose of relatedness to the training of the ‘professional’ ministry?”⁸² For Rennie, and what seemed to be a growing number of Regent faculty and board members, the answer was not *either lay or professional*; it was *both lay and professional*. Regent could retain its distinctive identity by combining both emphases in “its own unique mix.”⁸³

By focusing on the reality that Regent had already moved decidedly toward granting professional degrees Rennie also demonstrated Houston’s own uncertainty about the role of professional education at Regent. By the spring of 1974 Houston had largely succeeded in his mammoth effort to make Regent College viable. In 1972 he helped develop a two-year program leading to a degree—the Master of Christian Studies (MCS). In the fall of 1973 Regent moved toward his original vision by gaining affiliation (though provisional) with the University of British Columbia.⁸⁴ Just that spring he had successfully lured Clark Pinnock, a rising evangelical star in the field of theology, to

⁸¹ Rennie, “Emphases of the Program,” 3.

⁸² Rennie, “Emphases of the Program,” 3.

⁸³ Rennie, “Emphases of the Program,” 3. That Rennie desired that Regent might become a training school for ministers in addition to a graduate school for the laity became more evident after Regent established the MDiv in 1979. In 1981 Rennie reflected on Regent’s development noting that the college’s process of maturation from its emphasis on “the primacy of lay training” to “the production of a small but tremendously important body of budding scholars; the development of full-time Christian workers; and now the training of pastors” occurred “all in the right sequence and proper proportion. If Regent had planned it, it couldn’t have done better” (Rennie, “Regent College: A Reflective View”).

⁸⁴ Ad Hoc Committee on Regent College--Request for Affiliation,” *UBC Senate Summary*, November 14, 1973, 3-4. It is important to note that Regent’s affiliation with UBC hinged on two fortuitous scenarios. On the one hand, Houston’s goal of an affiliated school was only possible in Canada’s western provinces, which had been understood as frontier provinces, and thus afforded more flexibility in their institutional alignment. Still Houston doubts that Regent would have been able to affiliate without the immense help of offered by two prominent UBC administrators. James Houston, email to author, March 29, 2016.

Regent's full-time faculty. Moreover student numbers were promising; 225 students attended the Summer School of 1973, and that spring forty students were set to graduate with a Diploma in Christian Studies (D.C.S).⁸⁵ Seven more would be graduating with the MCS degree. Yet even these successes did not assure the college's long-term viability. The college may have been on the evangelical map, but geographically it was still renting space from the Vancouver School of Theology, and it looked like there was going to be an operating deficit at the end of Regent's current fiscal year, which ended on May 31, 1974. Thus, even as he affirmed Regent's emphasis on lay education and was hopeful about Regent's future prospects, Houston was still interested in pursuing new opportunities to serve the people of God and to grow Regent's student body and donor base.

As Rennie noted in his 1974 paper, one of the ways Houston had attempted to do this was by exploring the option of a curriculum in youth ministry. Previously, William Starr (b. 1926), President of Young Life from 1964-1977, had approached Houston in the summer of 1973 with an idea: perhaps Regent could be the primary training center for Young Life staff workers in Canada?⁸⁶ Starr's proposal was worth consideration; if Regent were to become Young Life's Canadian hub not only would Regent exert a theological influence on student ministry in Canada, students and funds would also likely be forthcoming. Houston brought the idea to the Faculty Senate in the fall of 1973, but later related to Starr, "It was decided that too many issues remained unanswered for us to

⁸⁵ "Summer School 1973," *Regent College Bulletin* 3, no. 3 (Summer 1973); "Convocation IV," *Regent College Bulletin* 4, no. 2 (Spring 1974).

⁸⁶ William S. Starr to James M. Houston, July 25, 1973, Box 3, Folder 17, James M. Houston Papers. For Houston's part, he had been considering some kind of relationship with a student ministry since 1968. See James M. Houston to C. Stacey Woods, October 17, 1968.

embark immediately on this program.”⁸⁷ At the meeting Houston had found that the idea aroused two concerns among the faculty. The first was related to the school’s vision for lay ministry. Since Regent was “not a theological school, oriented towards professional training,” it would need a new curriculum and degree were it to undertake the training of Young Life staff members. This, however, begged the question: “Would it be inconsistent to have this program and still not have the B. C. program for church pastors and ministers? Or would this open the way to becoming a fully developed seminary?” Secondly, Houston himself wondered how many staff the program would require. On this front it helped that Starr’s brother Chet Starr was a Young Life leader in the Vancouver area and was willing to help with the program. Houston thought that perhaps Os Guinness, a rising star at Francis Schaeffer’s L’Abri, might also be willing to join the venture if enough funds were available.

By January, however, Houston had warmed to the idea, thanks in part to conversations with Chet Starr. The two men agreed that a separate “Master of Christian Youth Ministries” degree geared toward developing Young Life staff members was both “feasible and mutually attractive.”⁸⁸ With Houston and Starr’s backing the Regent Board and Faculty Senate began moving forward on a program geared to the ministry needs of Young Life staff members. In addition to a new degree program the “Young Life Training Curriculum for 1974-1975” proposed that students in the second year of the program could choose to take pastoral care classes at the Vancouver School of Theology.

⁸⁷ James M. Houston to William S. Starr, October 10, 1973, Box 3, Folder 17, James M. Houston Papers. The rest of this paragraph is based on this letter.

⁸⁸ James M. Houston to Arthur D. Parker, January 30, 1974, Box 3, Folder 17, James M. Houston Papers.

By including an option for students to take a course in pastoral care, Regent College was inching toward a seminary degree.

A seminary degree at Regent was not to be, though—at least not on Houston’s watch. After 1975 Houston grew more skeptical of what he deemed to be Regent’s shift toward training for professional ministry. The Young Life curriculum was somewhat disappointing from the start: the initial class attracted few students and the second class, which began with seven students, finished with four (two Young Life trainees and two auditors). It seemed students with no connection to Young Life were not interested in the program. Houston also noted that the courses were “clearly...not on the same academic level as other courses in the college.”⁸⁹ The faculty, however, believed it could be improved and was worth the effort. In 1975 Houston still agreed.

But some doubts lingered. Did the Young Life programs and similar professionally oriented programming mesh with his original vision for lay theological education? When Chet Starr moved on from his teaching position at Regent in 1977, Houston was not willing to go to great lengths to replace him. As some on Regent’s faculty and board moved further toward the prospect of professional education—even discussing the possibility of an MDiv program—Houston moved in the opposite direction by re-emphasizing his call for lay theological education. By the second half of the decade Regent was no longer struggling for life. The school was now attracting the best evangelical scholars in the world as summer lecturers and full-time professors and in 1975 had managed to buy a property (and the two large frat houses that sat on it), which was ideally located across from the main entrance to the University of British

⁸⁹ James M. Houston to Gary Bell, January 29, 1975, Box 3, Folder 17, James M. Houston Papers.

Columbia—an institution with which Regent gained indefinite affiliation in 1977.⁹⁰ Now Houston saw that his fear that the college might grow too big was being realized.⁹¹ Regent College did not need more specialty programs to attract new students.

By the time Houston took his first sabbatical in the spring of 1977 the tide of opinion had turned dramatically toward increased growth and the implementation of an MDiv program for the training of pastors. Of course the idea that Regent might offer an MDiv degree was by no means a new development; the possibility of a three-year professional degree had been a part of the Regent vision from the start. As noted above, Houston had expressed a similar possibility himself more than once. By 1978, however, he was less willing to see a both-and solution that maintained Regent's original vision. With the growth of the school, the board had created the position of Vice-Principal in 1977 to ostensibly help Houston, who was heavily involved at Regent and beyond by that time. To some, including Houston himself, it had all the makings of an institutional *coup*.⁹² In the fall of 1978 the Regent's Board of Governors created the title of "Chancellor" for Houston, and made Carl Armerding Principal.⁹³ Noting that he had "both generated and suffered from tensions in the College since its inception," Houston

⁹⁰ W. Ward Gasque, "The History of Regent College," 11.

⁹¹ Houston had been purposeful in casting a vision for a small college from very early on. By the mid-to-late 1970s, however, size considerations were no longer a topic to be wary of in the future. Regent was already too big in Houston's eyes. See James M. Houston to Doug Coe, September 30, 1974, Box 3, Folder 1, James M. Houston Collection; James M. Houston to Doug Coe, December 4, 1975, Box 3, Folder 1, James M. Houston Collection; James M. Houston to Robert and Mary Boyd, January 28, 1976, Box 2, Folder 4, James M. Houston Papers; James M. Houston to S. Chowdry, August 9, 1977, Box 2, Folder 4, James M. Houston Papers.

⁹² Five years later Houston reflected on these proceedings, noting "I have also forgiven those who forced my resignation in 1978," (James M. Houston, "Chancellor's Report to the Board" (Regent College, April 28, 1983), Regent College Keith Shepherd Grant Collection).

⁹³ Houston would remain Chancellor of Regent College until he resigned from the position in 1984. He did, however, continue on at Regent as Professor of Spiritual Theology until his retirement. Houston maintained close ties with Regent for the rest of his life.

urged the board members to keep the school small and retain its lay emphasis.⁹⁴ Neither happened. The momentum for growth was by then too strong to be stayed for Houston's relational model. In 1979 Regent followed through on Ian Rennie's 1974 suggestion and began offering an MDiv degree. Within a decade Regent College would be the largest graduate school of theology in Canada.⁹⁵

The Ethos of Regent College in its First Decade

Growing disputes about the nature and implications of Regent's focus on lay education aside, by 1977 Regent had firmly established an ethos that many seemed to find both unique and compelling. Regent developed a reputation as a theologically orthodox option for evangelicals seeking an innovative learning community capable of blending academic rigor and some of evangelicalism's brightest stars with evangelical spirituality, personal relationships, and—thanks to its non-traditional goals and methods, relatively young faculty, and emphasis on community—a touch of countercultural allure. In short, Regent was exciting. In an era of “happenings” and “be-ins” Regent joined L'Abri as a place worth a pilgrimage.

Time, Place, and Hospitality

For some, Regent became the logical post-L'Abri step.⁹⁶ Like L'Abri, Regent possessed a charismatic founder who thrived in one-to-one conversation and seemed to understand the deep angst of evangelicals coming of age in the midst of the

⁹⁴ Houston, “Chancellor's Report to the Board.”

⁹⁵ By 1985 over 300 men and over 125 women were enrolled at Regent for a FTE of 250 students. See Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, 161.

⁹⁶ The best example of this is probably found in Mercadante, *Bloomfield Avenue*.

counterculture and the “technological society” that Jacques Ellul critiqued a decade before.⁹⁷ Houston, however, held several advantages over Schaeffer. Unlike Schaeffer, Houston had an earned doctorate, taught at Oxford, and had a personal relationship—the depth of the friendship did not much matter—with C. S. Lewis, who was then fast becoming a heroic figure for American evangelicals. (By the 1970s everything—and everyone—Lewis had touched was turning to evangelical gold in North America. Houston would benefit for the rest of his life from this connection.⁹⁸) Regent also offered a less dogmatic theology than did Schaeffer. Regent was Reformed, but it also had strong Plymouth Brethren tendencies and a few Mennonite and Baptist influences as well.

Context mattered, too. Like L’Abri, Regent was geographically situated in a picturesque setting, that though perhaps not as alluring as Europe, offered expansive mountain ranges *and* the sea. Like both L’Abri and the Toronto-based Institute for Christian Studies, Regent occupied a position that maintained some distance from the rough-and-tumble world of the Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam-era conflict, and American evangelical infighting. Canada, much like Switzerland, was a small country inclined more toward peaceful neutrality and polite sociability than its neighbor to the

⁹⁷ Ellul, *The Technological Society*.

⁹⁸ Houston’s papers contain at least nine papers in manuscript form on C. S. Lewis. The topics of these range from “The Sexuality and Prayer Life of C. S. Lewis,” to “The Mythopoetic World of C. S. Lewis,” and “Mere Christianity: Lewis’s Understanding of the Christian Life.” Most of these can be found in Box 6, Folder 9 of the James M. Houston Collection at Regent College. From the mid-1970s on Houston was frequently sought out as a commentator on Lewis. He was involved in an advisory role in the C. S. Lewis Society at Princeton University and to Lewis-centric publications like *The Canadian C. S. Lewis Journal* sought him out, see James M. Houston, “Letters,” *The Canadian C. S. Lewis Journal* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1979). For more on evangelicals’ lasting interest in touching someone who touched Lewis see: David Graham, *We Remember C.S. Lewis: Essays & Memoirs* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2001); James Houston, “Past Watchful Dragons: Learning Spiritual Formation from C.S. Lewis,” *Open Biola*, <http://open.biola.edu/resources/past-watchful-dragons-learning-spiritual-formation-from-c-s-lewis> (accessed February 24, 2016); James M. Houston and Bruce Hindmarsh, *An Interview with James Houston about His Friend C. S. Lewis in Honor of the Lewis Anniversary*, 2014, <http://www.kendallharmon.net/t19/index.php/t19/article/52473/>; James M. Houston, *C. S. Lewis as Prophet for Postmodernism* (C. S. Lewis Institute, 2010), <http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/node/1112>.

South. Indeed, as Ian Rennie once noted, “Canada, with its dislike of extremes and polarities, provided a healthy setting for a college that did not want to be aligned with passing fads, but that would strive to affirm the inestimable vision of ‘mere Christianity.’”⁹⁹ Furthermore, Regent College was positioned to reap benefits secondhand as Canada’s star rose on the international scene thanks to events like the 1967 Montreal Expo, 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal, and the 1983 World Council of Churches Assembly in Vancouver.¹⁰⁰

Even within Canada, Vancouver was a city with a distinctive culture all its own. Houston picked up on the city’s unique ethos and strategic value early on. He outlined Vancouver’s uniqueness in the fall of 1968:

Toronto, I sensed, is too nationalistic and self-contained within its culture to want or supply north-south links with the U.S. and Latin America. Montreal has its preoccupation with French-speaking Quebec. An American University campus would not interest Canadian Christian enterprise very significantly apart from Wheaton and Dallas, Fuller, etc. For N. American Christian co-operation why not select a Canadian city for the next venture? Vancouver is open fully to U.S. influences and links.¹⁰¹

But Vancouver’s connective capacity did not only extend north-to-south, it also stretched east-to-west. Vancouver was simultaneously the last outpost of the British Empire and the emerging gateway to the East—a fact that Marshall Sheppard intuited very early on. With an eye on the strategic significance of the Pacific Rim, Sheppard had conveyed his opinion early and often that “Vancouver *is* in the centre of things!”¹⁰² History would prove him right. In the ensuing decades Vancouver and the University of British Columbia emerged as a major hub for Chinese students, businesses, and tourism—all

⁹⁹ Ian S. Rennie, “Regent College: A Reflective View.”

¹⁰⁰ Carl E. Armerding, “Reflections of a Canadian Theological Educator--A Personal History,” 69.

¹⁰¹ James M. Houston to C. Stacey Woods, October 17, 1968.

¹⁰² Sheppard in Botton, “Regent College,” 83.

trends that positively impacted Regent.¹⁰³ It was David Lam, a visiting professor from Hong Kong who taught the first classes in Cantonese and who would go on to financially underwrite Regent's upgraded campus in the late 1980s. Regent's first endowed chair was established as a result of the generosity of a single Chinese family.¹⁰⁴ By 1995 Chinese endowments accounted for over 1.7 million of Regent's total 3.6 million dollar endowment.¹⁰⁵ Together these factors meant that Regent was able to naturally develop a community ethos that was simultaneously Canadian and international.

In addition to influences outside North America, larger socio-religious trends in the United States and Canada helped Regent as well. In the late 1960s and early 1970s the Jesus Movement helped evangelical Protestants catch up to the laicizing trends that had moved through mainline denominations and the Catholic Church in the prior decades.¹⁰⁶ The Jesus Movement ushered millions of (mostly young) Christians into the evangelical fold by the mid-1970s.¹⁰⁷ In large part these "Jesus People" were marked, like many of their secular peers in the era of SDS, Bob Dylan, and the Weathermen, by a "romance of the outsider," which led them to view "authenticity" as something outside of middle-class culture and its established institutions—including the church.¹⁰⁸ Jesus

¹⁰³ Carl E. Armerding, "Reflections of a Canadian Theological Educator--A Personal History," 73-74. For instance, Regent's first endowed chair was funded by a Chinese family.

¹⁰⁴ W. Ward Gasque, "Regent Reflects," 10, Regent College Michael G. Collison Collection.

¹⁰⁵ "Regent College: The Annual Report, 1994-1995," Regent College Michael G. Collison Collection.

¹⁰⁶ The reforms of Vatican II are prime examples of this trend: Paul Lakeland, "The Laity," in Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella, *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006): 193-208; Walter M. Abbott and Joseph Gallagher, *The Documents of Vatican II* (London: Chapman, 1966).

¹⁰⁷ For early treatments of the Jesus Movement, see Robert S. Ellwood, *One Way: The Jesus Movement and Its Meaning* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973), <http://search.lib.virginia.edu/catalog/u1177259>; Ronald M. Enroth, Edward E. Ericson, and C. Breckinridge Peters, *The Jesus People: Old-Time Religion in the Age of Aquarius* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972). For a good recent history, see Eskridge, *God's Forever Family*.

¹⁰⁸ Grace Elizabeth Hale, *A Nation of Outsiders How the White Middle Class Fell in Love with Rebellion in Postwar America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1-9, 238-275.

emerged as “the ultimate rebel.”¹⁰⁹ Further, the strong charismatic sensibilities of the Jesus Movement fostered a belief that the Christian “rank and file” (i.e., the laity) could be filled with the Holy Spirit and his gifts regardless of their lack of credentials or formal training.¹¹⁰ Jesus People did not see established churches or ecclesiastical hierarchies in the book of Acts; they did, however, see a Holy Spirit-filled community that was perfectly suited to the communal impulse of the times.¹¹¹ Obviously, these impulses meshed well with Regent’s anti-clerical, low-church Brethren background and Houston’s explicit concern for the laity. These anti-establishment (or at least outside-the-establishment) sensibilities enticed some young people in the generally anti-intellectual Jesus Movement to devote themselves to study, but Regent could not have done this without its equally strong emphasis on community. At Regent one could both study *and* belong.

Community came naturally in Regent’s early years. A small student body and the college’s close quarters in the basement of the Vancouver School of Theology (VST), where Regent rented classroom space, virtually guaranteed that students would get to know each other well.¹¹² Yet it was more than acquaintance or proximity that gave early students and faculty a sense that they were part of a “family.”¹¹³ Informed by Plymouth Brethren practice and inspired by Oxford collegiality and Houston’s emphasis on personal relations, students, faculty, and faculty families worked intentionally to build a

¹⁰⁹ Hale, *A Nation of Outsiders*, 238.

¹¹⁰ Deryck W. Lovegrove, *The Rise of the Laity in Evangelical Protestantism* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 254-255.

¹¹¹ Lovegrove, *The Rise of the Laity*, 255.

¹¹² For personal reflections on community life during these years, see Kit Schindell, “Kit Schindell,” *Regent Reflections*, 1995, 3–4; Kit Schindell, “Have You Met Dal Schindell?,” *Crux* 50, no. 1 (2014): 46–47; Mercadante, *Bloomfield Avenue*.

¹¹³ The title of Regent’s first in-house news sheet was “Family Affair,” (“Rita Houston” in *James M. Houston to Arthur D. Parker, January 30, 1974, Box 3, Folder 17, James M. Houston Papers*. This document can be found in the Michael G. Collision Collection at Regent College.

sense of community at Regent. Hospitality served as an important means of bringing these goals to fruition.

For many in Plymouth Brethren circles personal hospitality was a way of life. Inspired by the New Testament Book of Acts, many Brethren homes had special “prophet’s chambers,” where Brethren leaders or out-of-town guests could stay.¹¹⁴ Many of those involved in Regent’s early history had experienced this type of in-home hospitality first hand. Following a stint in the U.S. Navy Carl Armerding spent two years traveling around Europe as an Officers Christian Union Staff member. According to Armerding, “in England you had people with big suburban homes, and you always stayed with them. You never stayed in a hotel. Hospitality in the home was a key.”¹¹⁵ For Ward and Laurel Gasque, too, home-hospitality was of high value. Both were the recipients of Brethren home-based hospitality from Vancouver to London.¹¹⁶ The Gasques also spent time at Schaeffer’s L’Abri and hosted Francis and Edith Schaeffer in Manchester while Ward was studying for his PhD¹¹⁷

Houston intentionally cultivated an emphasis on home-based community. He encouraged Regent’s early faculty members to buy homes nearby so they could be involved in the life of the college outside of working hours.¹¹⁸ Houston and his wife, Rita, led by example. After purchasing a home in the area the Houstons began entertaining

¹¹⁴ Armerding, Gasque, interview.

¹¹⁵ Armerding, interview. A reluctance to stay in homes almost cost Walter Wright, Jr. a bid for the presidency at Regent in 1988. Wright had informed the selection committee that he only stayed in hotels.

¹¹⁶ Ward stayed at the home of prominent London editor C. G. D. Howley (1907-1980) in 1959. Later Gasque stayed at the home of Marshall Sheppard on his first trip to Vancouver in 1965 (Phillips and Tan, *Serving God’s Community* xvi, xxii).

¹¹⁷ Phillips and Tan, *Serving God’s Community*, xxiv.

¹¹⁸ Armerding, interview. Clark Pinnock recalled later that this was sometimes done in a systematic way. Professors were given lists of students to host.

students at their home each Sunday afternoon.¹¹⁹ On occasion they also hosted students for longer periods of time. In the summer of 1974 they hosted several students in their home for the entire six-week Summer School. Writing in the pages of the *Regent College Bulletin*, Rita Houston described how her initial hesitancy to host “several strangers” changed to enthusiasm as the students joined the family in meal preparation, long discussions, and prayer. She summed up her experience that summer with a commentary on Regent’s community: “Looking back over the summer school, I view it primarily in terms of people rather than lectures or classes.”¹²⁰

Houston expected that other faculty would follow his example by opening up their homes to students as well.¹²¹ The faculty needed little prompting. According to Armerding the early faculty was “delighted with everything that Jim brought” and were fully united around his early emphases, including home-based hospitality.¹²² Faculty members opened their homes for discussion groups, meals, and informal conversations. Laurel Gasque remembers, “rich wonderful times” full of “communal meals” and interaction that “deepened our commitments.”¹²³ Sometimes famous scholars like Hans Rookmaaker would take part in informal discussions in a Regent faculty home full of inquisitive students.¹²⁴ Larger events like Christmas parties filled even modest faculty

¹¹⁹ Jim and Rita Houston to Friends, December 13, 1971, Box 2, Folder 3, James M. Houston Collection.

¹²⁰ Rita Houston, “Summer School Perspective,” *Regent College Bulletin* 4, no. 3 (Summer 1974).

¹²¹ Clark H. Pinnock to Michael G. Collison, June 13, 1994, Folder 33, Regent College Michael G. Collison Collection.

¹²² Armerding, interview.

¹²³ Laurel Gasque, Interview by author, Vancouver, B. C., October 23, 2015.

¹²⁴ Sharon Gallagher, then editor of the Christian World Liberation Front’s underground paper *Right On!*, moments around a dinner table or in faculty homes with famous scholars like Han Rookmaaker made Summer School at Regent an event not to be missed (Sharon Gallagher, interview by author, December 3, 2015).

homes with nearly a hundred people.¹²⁵ At least one marriage engagement was announced in “a great, warm glowing celebration” in the Houstons’ large dining room.¹²⁶

Sometimes students were more permanent guests. Nearly every early faculty family rented out rooms to students to help make ends meet. In some cases faculty took students in for other reasons. The Armerdings, for instance, once took in a young female student in order to protect her from her physically abusive husband.¹²⁷

All of these interactions fostered a sense of community that transcended faculty-student divides. As Armerding would later reflect, “if you go back to the early days of Regent and talk to the students...no student would ever have gone through Regent without having been repeatedly in a faculty home. Not once or occasionally but repeatedly in a faculty home. That was the basis for Regent community.”¹²⁸ The fact that students *and* faculty were part of a community together made Regent unique. For a student generation turned off by hierarchy and bureaucracy, including the forms of these structures many identified within large universities, faculty hospitality mattered.

Whether at faculty homes or in the “common room” in the Vancouver School of Theology, unique spaces of interaction fostered community at Regent. Early students fondly recall how the cramped classrooms and the common room’s role as the central student union, chapel, study area, and cafeteria helped build relational bonds. While Houston had intended Regent’s affiliation with UBC to encourage interactions with the wider university community, at least some students seldom strayed out of the VST

¹²⁵ Armerding, interview.

¹²⁶ Laurel Gasque, interview.

¹²⁷ Linda Mercadante, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, phone, December 16, 2015; Mercadante, *Bloomfield Avenue*, 152-153.

¹²⁸ Armerding, interview.

basement.¹²⁹ Friendships and more than one marriage took root in this subterranean space. When Regent did finally gain its own geographical home in 1975 space once again played a role in community formation as faculty members and their families joined students painting and scrubbing graffiti off of the former fraternity houses' walls.¹³⁰ For the next fourteen years these two fraternity houses would house the College even as student enrollment grew well in excess of 200. Space—unique and in short supply—helped make Regent a community.

Gender and Lay Theological Education

Another Plymouth Brethren influence in Regent's cultivation of community came in the form of the College's openness to enrolling female students. Nearly alone among the most well known evangelical theological schools of the day, Regent accepted female students without any limitations. The Brethren emphasis on the ministry of the laity certainly helped in this regard. Regent could easily sidestep questions on the controversial topic of female ordination by arguing that it was a school for the laity, not a seminary. From the start, however, it should be noted that Regent's openness to female students was definitely an *evangelical openness*. Even at Regent female students were sure to meet some classmates and even a professor or two (e.g., Bruce Waltke, J. I. Packer) who did not fully endorse equal status for female students and/or the ordination of women. This demonstrates that even with Regent's progressive model, evangelicals' longstanding hermeneutical approaches to Scripture and cultural convictions died hard.

¹²⁹ Beat and Barbara Steiner, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, Phone, February 28, 2016. The Steiners met at Regent and were married during the summer following their graduation. For another notable example, see Kit Schindell, "Kit Schindell"; Schindell, "Have You Met Dal Schindell?"

¹³⁰ "Rita Houston," *Regent Reflects*, 21.

Still it is important to note that even though Regent was hardly a bastion of feminism, it was significantly more open to women than many evangelical learning intuitions at the time. The stories of Thena Ayers and Linda Mercadante illustrate both the successes and limits of Regent in comparison with other prominent evangelical learning communities. Both Ayers and Mercadante came to Regent via Swiss L'Abri. For Ayers, who graduated from the University of British Columbia in 1967, involvement with Regent College was a return home. For Linda Mercadante, a New Jersey girl of Jewish and Catholic heritage, it was one more stop on a personal pilgrimage. Both women would benefit from the evangelical openness of the Regent community, but both would also notice the limits of this openness.

Even though she was from British Columbia and had moved in Inter-Varsity circles on the campus of UBC, Ayers did not hear about Regent until Jerram Barrs brought it up for prayer during a small group prayer time at L'Abri. Astonished by the revelation, Ayers sought out more information on the new school but did not make immediate plans to return to Vancouver. She had come to L'Abri planning only to stay until she took up graduate studies at Princeton Theological Seminary in the fall. Her experience at L'Abri changed her plans. She turned down her acceptance to Princeton Seminary and spent a year as a L'Abri worker and acolyte of Edith Schaeffer. Then, newly alerted to the perils of "liberal" theology, Ayers chose to apply to evangelical graduate schools and seminaries in North America.

It was not long before Ayers encountered evangelical sexism.¹³¹ Because she was a woman, Ayers, who had been awarded a full academic scholarship to study at Princeton

¹³¹ It is noteworthy that Ayers does not remember encountering any sexism at L'Abri (Ayers, interview).

Theological Seminary the year before, was accepted “conditionally” at both Fuller and Trinity. Furthermore, “on the basis of being a woman” she was informed that she “could not take the homiletics course.” Ayers, who had been born into an Anglican family, was a relatively recent convert to an evangelical form of Christianity and had never considered this possibility: “I was a new Christian at university and the message that women were not gifted of God had not gotten through to me, and I had no idea that I could not do these things, so I was genuinely surprised and a bit taken aback.” In the end, Ayers still opted to join about ten others from L’Abri who were headed to Covenant Theological Seminary. Located in St. Louis, where Schaeffer had spend the better part of a decade as the pastor of a large Presbyterian church, Covenant was a seminary affiliated with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (later the PCA). Having played a part in the school’s founding through his role in splitting the Bible Presbyterian Church, Schaeffer was especially fond of Covenant, and he frequently directed L’Abri students to the St. Louis institution.¹³²

At Covenant Ayers had much the same experience as she had had at Fuller and Trinity. Upon arrival she learned that she was being placed on “academic probation” at the seminary even though she had earned first class marks at UBC. It quickly became apparent to her that this was more than bias against Canadian grading structures. Soon after this experience one of the seminary’s administrators called Ayers into his office and informed her, “that there were five women on the college and it was hoped that I would

¹³² Barry Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 52.

act and dress accordingly.”¹³³ Nothing in her L’Abri experience or her Anglican upbringing had prepared her for this.

Ayers’s time at Covenant was followed by an invitation to return to Vancouver and join the staff of IVCF at UBC. Ayers was thrilled at the chance to apply her theological education and follow in the footsteps of her college mentor, Cathy Nickle. In Nickle, a prominent female Bible teacher, and IVCF Ayers found a mentor and an organization open to the ministry of women. Shortly thereafter she also discovered that some at Regent College shared these sympathies. In the early 1970s Ward Gasque made a personal phone call to ask Ayers if she would consider joining Regent’s Senate as the IVCF liaison.¹³⁴ This was to be the beginning of a life-long relationship with the college.¹³⁵ Ayers went on to earn her D.Ed. in adult education and eventually returned to Regent as the first permanent female faculty member. As the sole female on the faculty Ayers worked hard to increase the number of women instructors at Regent. But even as the openness to hire women grew at Regent, she found that “it was very difficult to find women” because there were “not a lot of women who were encouraged by their churches...or by other Christians to study theology.”¹³⁶

There were a few, however, who pressed toward scholarship in the midst of this sometimes subtle but nonetheless strong and persistent reality. Linda Mercadante was one such individual. After growing up in a Catholic-Jewish family Mercadante took up a

¹³³ Ayers, interview.

¹³⁴ Ayers, interview.

¹³⁵ Ayers, with a large network of IVCF contacts, was also an influential recruiter for Regent. In the early 1970s Ayers spread the word about Regent as she traveled across North America in her work with IVCF. For Barbara Butler, a young IVCF worker in northern Colorado who would later play a role in founding a study center in Charlottesville, Ayers’s enthusiasm for Regent was contagious. Butler did not recognize the names of the scholars coming to summer school, but she hungered for solid Biblical teaching and respected Ayers’s opinion (Beat and Barbara Steiner, interview).

¹³⁶ Ayers, interview.

career in journalism and exchanged her Christian faith for feminism before eventually winding up at Swiss L'Abri.¹³⁷ As noted previously, Mercadante was moved by the hospitality and faith of the Schaeffers and many others in the L'Abri community and eventually experienced a conversion to an evangelical form of Protestantism. The fact that her new-found faith coexisted with her deep commitment to feminism and liberal politics made for some interesting conversations at L'Abri. Mercadante remembers that she and Schaeffer butted heads on the issue of feminism more than once, but for Mercadante the positives of her experience at L'Abri far outweighed the negatives. The community environment and the chance to study theology made it easy to stay in Huermoz for the better part of a year.

During this time a fellow L'Abri student showed Mercadante a copy of a paper written by a female graduate student at Regent College. Mercadante had never heard of Regent, but the paper, which offered a theological and biblical argument against women's oppression, raised her curiosity. At the urging of Shelia "Birdie" Bird, an English woman and L'Abri's only certified counselor, who, as Mercadante remembers, "out of all the leaders...alone encouraged me," Mercadante applied and was accepted to the Vancouver school.

Mercadante arrived in Vancouver in the summer of 1975. Regent's unique ethos made the college a good fit. "It was informal, intellectual, and sociable. The faculty was very accessible and students came from many different professional fields and religious backgrounds, all taking time out to explore their faith."¹³⁸ Mercadante's mind blossomed at Regent. So did her feminism. After finding the women's studies reading room at the

¹³⁷ This account of Linda Mercadante's experience is drawn from both her published memoir *Bloomfield Avenue*, and a phone interview I conducted on December 16, 2015.

¹³⁸ Mercadante, *Bloomfield Avenue*, 142.

VST's library, Mercadante began reading all she could about feminism. She found Christian feminism to be especially fascinating. Soon she was hosting talks on the subject at Regent. While she was still a student, the fledgling Evangelical Women's Caucus (EWC) paid for her travel to Pasadena, California, where she delivered a talk at one of the organization's meetings. Under the supervision of Clark Pinnock, Mercadante finished a thesis entitled "From Hierarchy to Equality." Ward Gasque, a strong believer in gender equality, helped her turn the thesis into a book. Her initial print run of 500 sold out on the day it arrived.¹³⁹

Not everyone was as helpful as Pinnock and Gasque. Mercadante recalls that "whenever I spoke about my research, many fellow students seemed skeptical of my findings, especially the men who thought my feminist leanings made me a radical."¹⁴⁰ Even Houston, whose experience with his own professionally capable sisters informed his belief in the capacity of women, let Mercadante down.¹⁴¹ In what may have seemed like a compliment to some, Houston offered Mercadante a position as his secretary.¹⁴² To the aspiring scholar, who would later earn a PhD from Princeton Theological Seminary and be ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA), the offer was yet another vestige of evangelical sexism. Still, even if being an ambitious woman was not easy at Regent, it was, unlike many places in North American evangelicalism, at the very least possible.

¹³⁹ Mercadante, *Bloomfield Avenue*, 153-157.

¹⁴⁰ Mercadante, *Bloomfield Avenue*, 156.

¹⁴¹ Houston, interview.

¹⁴² Mercadante, interview, 2015.

Evangelical Openness

Regent's evangelical openness extended beyond issues of gender equality. Unlike most theological schools, Regent never espoused a single theological or eschatological outlook—a surprising feat for a school founded by Plymouth Brethren.¹⁴³ Following its Brethren impulse, Sheppard and the first generation of Regent's founders tried to avoid forcing the faculty to sign a yearly statement of faith. Given the concerns of their constituency, however, Sheppard relented. Regent adopted the World Evangelical Fellowship's generic statement of faith, which intentionally avoided dogmatism on issues like eschatology and variations of inerrancy.¹⁴⁴ Houston himself was a cosmopolitan evangelical, who, unlike Francis Schaeffer, R. C. Sproul, or even J. I. Packer, was not willing to get bogged down in the theological swamps of six-day young earth creationism or the intricacies of inerrancy and the growing evangelical "Battle for the Bible."¹⁴⁵ For some, like Francis Schaeffer, Houston's evangelical openness came as confirmation of previous doubts about the orthodoxy of the Vancouver school.¹⁴⁶ When Schaeffer finally consented—after years of requests—to visit Regent in 1975, he delivered a stark convocation address on the inerrancy of scripture that kept Regent students talking for months to come.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ John Nelson Darby, the founder of the Plymouth Brethren, was also the founder of dispensational eschatology.

¹⁴⁴ Brian Sutherland, "Regent College Opens July 2," *Letters of Interest* 99 (February 19, 1969): 20; Botton, "Regent College," 7.

¹⁴⁵ A polemical and widely read take on this is Mercadante, *Bloomfield Avenue*.

¹⁴⁶ For one perspective on Schaeffer's take, see Mercadante, *Bloomfield Avenue*, 141-142.

¹⁴⁷ "Convocation," *Regent College Bulletin* 5, no. 2 (n.d.). Schaeffer had already expressed his doubts to Houston in a letter from 1971 (Francis Schaeffer to James Houston, September 7, 1971, Box 52, File 26, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina). Linda Mercadante commented on the student response to Schaeffer's convocation talk in October of 1975, noting "It seems your convocation [address] made quite an impression, although not all-together positive." Linda Mercadante to Francis A. Schaeffer, October 4, 1975, Box 51, File 36, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, South Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina.

It was not that Houston lacked firm evangelical theological convictions. Throughout his life Houston held closely to traditional Christian orthodoxy and at times was even willing to put a friendship on the line when he saw a ministry moving in a direction that seemed contrary to evangelical principles.¹⁴⁸ Unlike many influential evangelicals in the 1970s, however, Houston largely avoided polemics. Instead he worked hard to foster a broadly evangelical openness at Regent. For many this proved a winsome formula. As a visiting professor, Robert L. F. Boyd, observed in 1974, “If I look for a single delightful word to epitomize the varied impressions I get from Regent College, it would be ‘openness.’”¹⁴⁹ Boyd encountered a student body and faculty whose openness to friendship almost made him “lose [his] British reserve.” “Above all,” he reflected, “minds are open, open to the Word of God in Christ and in nature, through scripture and through science.”¹⁵⁰

The last comment is telling. Openness to fields beyond the traditional realms of theology and biblical studies (i.e., interdisciplinary studies) was Houston’s goal from the start. Geography naturally pushed Houston toward awareness of his environment, and along with a few others including Francis Schaeffer, Houston pioneered the concept of “biblical ecology” in evangelical circles. These themes dominated *I Believe in a Creator* (1980), the first book Houston published outside the field of geography.¹⁵¹ Other fields were open, too. In the early days of Regent art was especially intriguing for Houston. Writing to Francis Schaeffer in the summer of 1970 Houston predicted that an openness

¹⁴⁸ For example, Houston broke off his support for the 1977 Congress of the Laity at Howard Butt’s Laity Lodge because he thought the event had lost its evangelical moorings. See James M. Houston to Sam Fore, August 10, 1977, Box 3, Folder 15, James M. Houston Collection.

¹⁴⁹ Robert L. F. Boyd, “Summer School Perspective,” 43.

¹⁵⁰ Boyd, “Summer School Perspectives,” 43.

¹⁵¹ J. M. Houston, *I Believe in the Creator* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).

to art would be among Regent's most distinctive features: "We believe that it is through the encouragement of the creative arts, as well as doing some work in the behavioral sciences, that the distinctive character of the college will be best promoted."¹⁵² Houston was right. Thanks to the work of Laurel Gasque and early Regent DCS graduate Dal Schindell, Regent would go on to develop a reputation as one of the most innovative centers for evangelical art on the continent.¹⁵³ Eventually Regent would dedicate a portion of its new building to function as the "Lookout Gallery," a permanent art gallery that hosted work from Regent students and Vancouver-area artists as well as exhibits by widely renowned artists like John Koerner.¹⁵⁴

The Enduring Influence of James Houston

Undoubtedly, the most important shaper of Regent's early ethos was Houston himself. More than merely someone who shaped the contours of the college's development, for many Houston became an embodied representation of the school. This seems to have been especially true for younger students. Like Schaeffer, Houston possessed a story of faith that inspired young people who were themselves seeking to find God outside of the standard, middleclass routine. Houston and the other Regent founders like Carl Armerding initially anticipated that the College would cater to "young professional people, who would 'take time out' for a year of theology."¹⁵⁵ Instead, they "found a good many of the 'lost generation', hoping to 'find themselves.'"¹⁵⁶ Houston's

¹⁵² James M. Houston to Francis A. Schaeffer, August 7, 1970.

¹⁵³ Laurel Gasque, interview; Julie Lane Gay, Loren Wilkinson, and Maxine Hancock, "Introduction [50 No 1 Spring 2014]," *Crux* 50, no. 1 (2014): 2–3.

¹⁵⁴ Laurel Gasque, Carl Armerding, interview, October 23, 2015.

¹⁵⁵ Carl E. Armerding to Michael G. Collison, July 22, 1993.

¹⁵⁶ Armerding to Collison, July 22, 1993.

unique personality proved helpful for individuals in both groups. In Houston, professionals found someone able to see them as people, beyond their degrees and achievements, while “seeking” students found an individual who blended a deep knowledge of the counterculture and emerging post-modernism with a willingness to engage students personally.¹⁵⁷ For both groups, Houston was an inspiration. According to Don Lewis, an early Regent student who went on to become a professor of church history at the school, “there was a sort of aura around Jim Houston” in the early days. To students he was “a heroic figure,” who at the call of God left his own Ur (i.e., Oxford) and was now “like an Abraham leading into an unknown land.”¹⁵⁸ Houston’s capacity to inspire also extended beyond Regent’s student body. As the only member of the first faculty who actually forfeited his previous career for Regent, Houston’s example “presented a stirring challenge” to other early faculty members as well.¹⁵⁹

Houston may have been a hero to some, but he was not distant or unapproachable. If anything his peers thought he was perhaps too approachable. Even when he was Principal students took up huge chunks of his time in one-on-one meetings in which he offered counseling and spiritual direction. Eventually, Houston would fill entire days of the week with these sessions.¹⁶⁰ Not surprisingly, the roots of this practice can be traced back to Oxford. C. S. Lewis’s own willingness to come under direction aroused Houston’s curiosity, but it was his own experience as an Oxford tutor that set the course for his life. Tutorial instruction stood at the center of Oxford pedagogy. Within the

¹⁵⁷ Houston was among the very first evangelicals to identify post-modernism. See Hans Boersma, Craig M. Gay, and D. Bruce Hindmarsh, “Introduction: A Festschrift for James M. Houston,” *Crux* 48, no. 3 (September 2012), 4.

¹⁵⁸ Don Lewis in Botton, “Regent College,” 122.

¹⁵⁹ Houston would later give entire days over to counseling, taking appointments from 8 am until around 5 pm. Thomas, “James M Houston, Pioneering Spiritual Director to Evangelicals,” September 1993.

¹⁶⁰ In 1993 Houston was providing spiritual direction to students two to three days a week with appointments stretching from 8:30am until 5pm (Thomas, “James M. Houston,” (September 1993), 2).

Oxford system, students were permitted to skip Houston's one lecture each week, but tutorial sessions were mandatory. Houston found that students began sharing about their personal problems during these one-on-one sessions. He soon dedicated himself to reading psychology in order to more adequately meet the psychological needs of his students.¹⁶¹ In light of these experiences Houston began to see the multiple ways in which universities had forfeited their prior emphasis on personal relations. The "crisis of the university" that resulted from this severance alienated thought from action and glorified "technological values" above all else.¹⁶² Universities were left with cold scientism: "for the truth divorced from personal relationships can degenerate into another science of human thought."¹⁶³

Houston sought to counter these "technological values" at Regent through a commitment to getting to know students on a one-to-one level. The results were profound. As Bruce Hindmarsh, the James M. Houston Professor of Spiritual Theology at Regent, later observed, "There are countless Christian men and women today whose lives have been changed by a single, never-to-be-forgotten conversation with Jim. Informally and formally, he became a spiritual director and mentor to a whole generation of students, and to hundreds of men and women around the world."¹⁶⁴ Many of the individuals who came under Houston's care during these years became loyal friends of Houston and his vision for Regent College. By pioneering spiritual direction among evangelicals in North

¹⁶¹ All of the material on Houston at Oxford in this paragraph comes from Thomas, "James M. Houston," (September 1993), 6.

¹⁶² James M. Houston, "The Christian Presence in the University," *Crux* 10, no. 4 (c. Summer 1973), 22. Houston referenced C. S. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength* to make this point. The last of Lewis's science fiction trilogy, the novel demonstrates the danger of scientism taken to its logical conclusion (C. S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups* (London: HarperCollins, 2000)).

¹⁶³ James M. Houston, "Regent College Vancouver: A New Venture in Christian Scholarship," 7.

¹⁶⁴ Boersma, Gay, and Hindmarsh, "Introduction."

American Houston played a key role in altering the landscape of evangelical spirituality on the continent. He also gave Regent yet another claim to innovative distinctiveness.

If Houston's relational emphasis was refreshing to a generation who had lived through and even attended college at the height of the counterculture, his "radical" penchant for anti-establishment rhetoric—albeit in a reserved British form—attracted attention. According to Armerding, "the simple fact remains that people came out of his presentations with greatly varying ideas of what was projected, though most were enthusiastic about what they heard. Common to almost every hearer was the following: Jim's vision was in some sense *radical*."¹⁶⁵ In Houston, a generation of students saw an individual who wanted to do away with the trappings of the technocracy in favor of personal relations. Furthermore, Houston's transdenominational stance and emphasis on the laity registered well with evangelical baby boomers, many of whom, along with their non-evangelical peers, had come to distrust hierarchies of all kinds. Indeed, the surging popularity of C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity* among American evangelicals during these years testified to deep desire for basic Christianity devoid of the trappings of religious hierarchy and clergy. To at least a few it seemed Houston had achieved this goal. One Summer School student described Regent's "theological atmosphere" as "relaxed and unthreatened, without doctrinaire arrogance. Essentials of Scriptural belief were affirmed and reaffirmed, while secondary matters were left there and differences welcomed and affirmed."¹⁶⁶ It is hard to imagine a more unqualified implicit endorsement of "mere Christianity" than this.

¹⁶⁵ Emphasis original. Carl E. Armerding to Michael G. Collison, July 22, 1993, 1-2.

¹⁶⁶ "Summer School Perspective," *Regent College Bulletin*, Summer 1974.

Fueled by these convictions, Houston set his eyes on the University. He sensed that modern students were “not going to be satisfied with University life in a desperate world, if it is only a preparation for a better job, or an institution concerned with learning for its own sake.”¹⁶⁷ He also predicted that as the church declined in public esteem the university was destined to “become the central institution of our time.” Thus “the Christian presence is vitally needed there now.”¹⁶⁸ For a generation of evangelicals who had come too late for the activism of the Civil Rights Movement and who still debated the best approach in Vietnam, the university could stand in as a unifying cause, a battleground worth fighting for. Ready for action evangelical young people from Berkeley, to Charlottesville, and Washington D. C. found a their own calling in Houston’s words. Houston, in his life, his writing, and in his efforts to build Regent College as a lay-centered, university-affiliated graduate school, gave young evangelicals a clarion call: “Do not desert the campus for the church.”¹⁶⁹ As it turned out a good number of them were listening.

¹⁶⁷ James M. Houston, “Regent College Vancouver: A New Venture in Christian Scholarship,” 4.

¹⁶⁸ James M. Houston, “The Christian Presence in the University,”

¹⁶⁹ Houston, “The Christian Presence in the University,” 23.

PART II

THE SECOND GERATION:

REPLICATION

Chapter 3

Lay Theological Education for the Masses:

R. C. Sproul, the Ligonier Valley Study Center, and the Video Revolution

The success of places like L'Abri and Regent College inspired other enterprising evangelicals to attempt similar ventures. Throughout much of the 1970s and into the early 1980s the most widely known attempt to build on the legacy of one of these earlier ventures was R. C. Sproul's Ligonier Valley Study Center (LVSC). Founded in 1971 in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in rural Stahlstown, Pennsylvania, the LVSC became a pioneer in the areas of lay theological education and the mass production and distribution of videotaped lectures. The latter emphasis helped propel Sproul and his blend of staunchly Reformed theology and everyman grassroots appeal into national and international celebrity. Though LVSC was conceived as a residential study center in the mold of L'Abri, Sproul and his team gradually and intentionally shifted their focus away from a ministry centered around a geographical place and opted instead for a video-based ministry that would eventually be headquartered in a small office complex in the burgeoning city of Orlando, Florida. Leaving the Rust Belt for the Sun Belt, Sproul and his team built Ligonier Ministries into one of American evangelicalism's most notable distributors of lay theological education. In the process Sproul's success allowed him to serve as a catalyst for an emerging network of influential Reformed ministers, who were intent on bringing staunchly Reformed theology back into prominence among American churches, seminaries, and lay people.

The Ligonier Valley Study Center: Prehistory

Robert Charles “R. C.” Sproul was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1939. After graduating with a B.A. in philosophy from nearby Westminster College, Sproul enrolled at the recently consolidated Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in the fall 1961.¹ While there he came under the teaching of the renowned Jonathan Edwards scholar John H. Gerstner (1914-1996). Gerstner was a fellow Westminster College alum who went on to earn multiple degrees at Westminster Theological Seminary before eventually joining other “Cambridge evangelicals” for doctoral studies at Harvard University during the World War II years.² After earning his PhD in 1945, Gerstner pastored two congregations of the United Presbyterian Church in North America (UPCNA) in Pittsburgh before joining the staff of Pittsburgh Xenia Seminary (later Pittsburgh Theological Seminary) as a professor of church history in 1950. Throughout his distinguished career Gerstner functioned as a leading proponent of Reformed theology within American evangelicalism. During his life he was also one of the most notable evangelical voices

¹ Surprisingly little biographical work has been done thus far on Sproul. The biographical details of Sproul’s earlier life that appear in this chapter are almost universally taken from an oral-history interview with Sproul, see R. C. Sproul, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, phone interview, February 12, 2016, Ligonier Ministries holdings. The best biographical treatment is R. C. Sproul, Jr.’s R. C. Sproul and R. C. Sproul, *After Darkness, Light: Distinctives of Reformed Theology : Essays in Honor of R.C. Sproul* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2003). Other short biographical treatments of Sproul include: “Meet the Staff: The Sprouls,” *Table Talk* 2, no. 2 (April 1978): 5; Dick Staub, “R. C. Sproul’s Testimony: The Theologian and Author of Five Things Every Christian Needs to Grow Talks about How He Met Jesus and Why Playing the Violin Is Like Reading the Bible,” December 1, 2002, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2002/decemberweb-only/12-30-21.0.html>; “R.C. Sproul: A Man Called By God by Burk Parsons,” *Ligonier Ministries*, <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/r-c-sproul-man-called-god/> (accessed May 27, 2016). Pittsburgh Theological Seminary was officially formed in 1959 after the merging of the United Presbyterian Church in North America (UPCNA) and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) in 1958. The PCUSA’s Western Theological Seminary was merged into the UPCNA’s Pittsburgh-Xenia Seminary’s East Liberty campus in 1959. For more, see “History,” *Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*, <http://www.pts.edu/History> (accessed May 26, 2016).

² The term “Cambridge evangelicals” is Strachan’s. For more on the influx of evangelical PhD candidates at Boston-area universities like Harvard and Boston College during the World War II years when universities accepted more evangelicals due to depressed enrollment, see Owen Strachan, *Awakening the Evangelical Mind: An Intellectual History of the Neo-Evangelical Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), especially 23, 96.

within the UPCNA, the UPCUSA (f. 1958), and eventually the reorganized Presbyterian Church (USA) (f. 1983), before eventually joining the conservative Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) in 1990.³

Gerstner encouraged Sproul's natural proclivity for both traditional Reformed theology and scholarship. Following his graduation from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 1964, Sproul continued to build on these two interests by enrolling as a doctoral student in systematic theology under the noted theologian G. C. Berkouwer (1903-1996), then teaching at Abraham Kuyper's Free University in Amsterdam. Sproul's time at Free University was cut short, however, due to the extended illness and death of his mother, dwindling finances, and complications related to the birth of his son, R. C. Sproul, Jr., the next year.⁴ Forced to return to the States, Sproul took a temporary teaching position at his alma mater, Westminster College, and was granted a waiver from the faculty at Free University. This waiver allowed him to continue his studies under Berkouwer without returning to the Netherlands to attend classes.⁵

As a visiting lecturer at Westminster College Sproul and his wife, Vesta, developed an informal ministry to college students that combined education and hospitality. Both traits would eventually mark the Sprouls' work at the LVSC. In addition

³ For more on the history of the PC(USA), see "History of the Church," *Presbyterian Historical Society, National Archives of the PC(USA)*, <http://www.history.pcusa.org/history-online/presbyterian-history/history-church> (accessed May 26, 2016). Unlike Sproul and many other evangelicals, Gerstner was slow to leave the mainline denomination. He did not join the PCA until 1990. For more on Gerstner, see John H. Gerstner and R. C. Sproul, *Soli Deo Gloria: Essays in Reformed Theology: Festschrift for John H. Gerstner* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1976); "Dr. John Gerstner Joins Ligonier Staff," *Tabletalk*, October 1980, Ligonier Ministries holdings; "John H. Gerstner, Ph.D., D.D.," *Our Daily Bread Christian University*, January 1, 1970, <http://christianuniversity.org/professors/dr-john-h-gerstner/>; David T. Myers, "March 24: Homegoing of Dr. John Gerstner," *This Day in Presbyterian History*, March 24, 2012, <http://www.thisday.pcahistory.org/2012/03/march-24-homegoing-of-dr-john-gerstner/>.

⁴ Sproul's father had died when Sproul was in high school, see Sproul and Sproul, *After Darkness, Light*, 2-3.

⁵ Sproul, interview, 2016.

to R. C.'s educational duties at the college, the Sprouls invited students to their home nearly every evening for times of Bible study and prayer. Sproul recalls that these meetings typically lasted until midnight, though "on a couple of occasions, it went all night."⁶

The Sprouls continued to foster close relationships with students through home-based hospitality and prayer the next year when R.C. took a teaching job at Gordon College, an evangelical liberal arts college located just outside of Boston. Sproul's move to Gordon was also a strategic move for his own education. Berkouwer had worked behind the scenes to help Sproul transfer his academic work to Harvard University, where he would be working with the Dutch scholar Heiko Oberman (1930-2001). Once again, however, Sproul was forced to change plans. Shortly after Sproul took up his teaching duties at Gordon, Oberman left Harvard for a position in Germany. Again Berkouwer worked on behalf of his student, eventually organizing a plan that would allow Sproul to commute to the Netherlands while continuing to teach in the U.S.⁷ Under this agreement Sproul earned a Drs. (Doctorate Dogmatic) degree in 1968.⁸

Without an academic rationale for being in New England, Sproul accepted a call in the fall of 1968 to teach philosophical and systematic theology at Temple University's Conwell School of Theology.⁹ The move put Sproul and his young family much closer to their geographical roots in western Pennsylvania. It also offered Sproul a chance to develop an affinity for lay theological education. He had taught middle school Sunday

⁶ Sproul, interview, 2016.

⁷ Sproul, interview, 2016.

⁸ "Dr. R. C. Sproul, Noted Theologian and Widely Acclaimed Communicator Will Be Speaking at Grace Presbyterian Church," *Oscela Star-Banner*, November 11, 1982, sec. B, 3. See also "R.C. Sproul, A Man Called by God."

⁹ Sproul taught for two years at Gordon College, see Sproul, interview, 2016.

school classes during his time as a seminarian in Pittsburgh, but it was in Philadelphia that Sproul grew to relish adult education. In addition to his responsibilities at Conwell School of Theology, Sproul worked part time for Orland Evangelical Presbyterian Church, a suburban church located a short distance from Westminster Theological Seminary and near where the Sprouls lived. As he taught adult education classes comprised of “doctors, lawyers and housewives and farmers” the young theologian realized that teaching lay adults was something he “thoroughly enjoyed.”¹⁰ The experience did much to develop what Sproul would later describe as his “taste for lay education.”¹¹

An affinity for lay education was not the only thing Sproul discovered during his year in Philadelphia. During his time at Conwell School of Theology Sproul encountered a personality that would deeply inform the shape—if not entirely the content—of his future work. In the late 1960s Francis Schaeffer was a relatively new player on the American evangelical stage. Schaeffer’s rise in prominence during these years was largely due to the publication of his first books, *Escape from Reason* and *The God Who Is There*, in 1968.¹² Schaeffer, a Presbyterian minister but not a formal theologian, had previously held little interest for Sproul. During his year at Conwell School of Theology, however, Sproul found that his students’ interest in the Swiss phenomenon necessitated an engagement with Schaeffer’s work. “I had hardly even heard of Francis Schaeffer,” Sproul remembers, “but many of my students had listened to his tapes. Some of them had gone to Switzerland, to Huemoz, and had been students at L’Abri. So all of a sudden

¹⁰ For the make up of Sproul’s classes, see Dick Staub, “R. C. Sproul’s Testimony.” In a 2016 interview Sproul described his classes as Oreland as mostly made up of “professionals.”

¹¹ Sproul, interview, 2016.

¹² For more on the content and reception of these books, see Barry Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 74-108.

students were asking me questions about Francis Schaeffer about whom I did not know anything.”¹³ Sproul soon “started reading all his material, so I would be able to interact with the questions the students were raising.”¹⁴

As enjoyable as his time in Philadelphia was, it was not long before Sproul found himself looking for a new job. In 1970, the year after Sproul began teaching at Conwell, the school moved to Hamilton, Massachusetts as part of a merger with Gordon Divinity School. The merger was the brain-child of American evangelicalism’s big three—Billy Graham, Harold J. Ockenga, and J. Howard Pew—and was designed to create on the East Coast the kind of theologically orthodox, intellectually rigorous, denominationally independent graduate institution that Ockenga and other neo-evangelicals had once dreamed Fuller Theological Seminary (f. 1947) might be for the West Coast. Sproul, like the other professors at Conwell School of Theology, was invited to move to Boston. Sproul, however, decided against returning to New England. Instead, the young theologian demonstrated his growing appreciation for lay theological education by considering several options outside of the academy. Eventually, he took a position as Associate Pastor at the prestigious College Hill Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, Ohio.

At College Hill Sproul’s work focused primarily on “adult education and evangelism training for laymen. In this environment the young pastor came into his own as a lay educator.”¹⁵ Through his Evangelism Explosion courses and the Wednesday and Sunday evening Bible studies he directed, Sproul developed a large following in

¹³ Sproul, interview, 2016.

¹⁴ Sproul, interview, 2016.

¹⁵ “Meet the Staff: The Sprouls,” *Tabletalk*.

Cincinnati.¹⁶ Soon his Sunday night teachings were being attended by hundreds of people representing twenty-five Protestant and Catholic churches.¹⁷ One of those who was attracted to Sproul’s teaching during this time was Jack Rowley, a young videographer at General Electric’s Cincinnati facility. Rowley, like so many others, was inspired by Sproul’s “brilliant, brilliant mind” and his ability to explain “lofty” theology at a “lay level.”¹⁸ Sproul’s keen insight and everyman appeal won over his listeners to his teaching style and the version of Reformed theology that he advocated. Many of the students who took part in his ministry at College Hill would find themselves seeking out Sproul’s teaching—whether on audiocassette or in person at the LVSC—in the years ahead. When Sproul eventually left College Hill in 1971, the demand for the kind of Reformed evangelicalism that Sproul embodied prompted Jack Rowley and a group of College Hill members to start a new church called Church of the Covenant, which initially affiliated with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and later joined the PCA.¹⁹

Sproul’s success at College Hill also drew the attention of individuals outside of the Cincinnati area. Since his time as a visiting lecturer at Westminster College, Sproul had stayed connected to a network of churches and Christian leaders in the greater Pittsburgh area and was frequently invited to speak at conferences for two major groups—lay adults and college students. Initially, Sproul’s ministry to lay adults in the city of Pittsburgh primarily involved his participation in The Pittsburgh Experiment.

Founded in 1955 by the Episcopal Priest Samuel M. Shoemaker, Jr. (1893-1963), The

¹⁶ Evangelism Explosion was developed in 1962 by D. James Kennedy. The program helped make Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida one of the fastest growing churches of the time. See “History,” *Evangelism Explosion International*, <http://evangelismexplosion.org/about-us/history/> (accessed June 13, 2016); James Davison Hunter, *American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983), 80-83.

¹⁷ Sproul, interview, 2016.

¹⁸ Jack Rowley, interview, April 4, 2016.

¹⁹ Rowley, interview, 2016.

Pittsburgh Experiment had ties to both Alcoholics Anonymous and the ministry of Norman Vincent Peale (1898-1993), long-time pastor of New York's Marble Collegiate Church and the internationally known author of *The Power of Positive Thinking* (1952).²⁰ Shoemaker, an evangelical Anglican, envisioned the Pittsburgh Experiment as part of a religious movement in the city that might "make Pittsburgh as famous for God as it was for Steel."²¹ In modern parlance, it functioned intentionally as a "marketplace ministry" aimed at lay business professionals, who were encouraged to take part in what Shoemaker described as a "30-Day Prayer Experiment" around an issue in their personal lives.²² The ministry proved to be enduring and reproducible, spawning similar efforts in numerous cities across the United States and around the world.²³ Before accepting the call to College Hill Sproul seriously considered joining The Pittsburgh Experiment as a

²⁰ "History," *The Pittsburgh Experiment*, <http://www.pittsburghexperiment.org/history> (accessed May 26, 2016). Shoemaker exerted a significant influence on Alcoholics Anonymous founder Bill Wilson. Wilson took part in Shoemaker's "Oxford Group," a group focusing on confession of sins and a return to primitive Christianity that met for many years at Shoemaker's church in New York City. For more on Shoemaker's influence on Alcoholics Anonymous founder Bill Wilson, see John F. Woolverton, "Evangelical Protestantism and Alcoholism 1933-1962: Episcopalian Samuel Shoemaker, the Oxford Group and Alcoholics Anonymous," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 52, no. 1 (March 1983): 53-65. For more on both Alcoholics Anonymous and Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking*, see Matthew Hedstrom, *The Rise of Liberal Religion: Book Culture and American Spirituality in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 100-105, 212. Peale's son-in-law, Paul F. Everett (1929-2010), became the director of the Pittsburgh Experiment in 1969 and kept the post until his retirement in 1995.

²¹ "History," *The Pittsburgh Experiment*. For more on Shoemaker's vision, see "A City Under God," *Parade Magazine*, 1955, http://s3.amazonaws.com/churchplantmedia-cms/the_pittsburgh_experiment/parade-magazine.pdf; Samuel M. Shoemaker, "How to Bring a Nation Under God," *Christianity Today* 2, no. 3 (November 11, 1957): 5-8.

²² Shoemaker came to Pittsburgh's influential Calvary Episcopal Church in 1952 after serving for twenty-six years as the Rector of New York City's Calvary Protestant Episcopal Church. In 1955 *Newsweek* named him one of the ten greatest preachers in the United States,

²³ Versions of the Pittsburgh Experiment have been developed in numerous cities including Cincinnati, OH; Cleveland, OH; Columbus, OH; Mobile, AL; Portland, ME; and Jacksonville, FL. Internationally, the ministry has influenced similar efforts in Australia, Canada, East Africa, Sweden, and Zaire. See "History," *The Pittsburgh Experiment*.

theologian in residence; however, the untimely death of the Experiment's then director, Don James, in 1969 forced Sproul to change his plans.²⁴

In addition to his involvement with The Pittsburgh Experiment Sproul also frequently addressed campus ministers and college students represented by para-church organizations like Young Life, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF), and the nascent Coalition for Christian Outreach (CCO). The CCO was a local upstart campus ministry dedicated to reaching college students with the Gospel and connecting local churches to campus ministry—an area of Christian ministry that CCO leaders felt was often carried on devoid of local church involvement.²⁵ The Coalition was founded in 1971 by British Christian singer John Guest, then serving as youth pastor at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in the Pittsburgh suburb of Sewickley, and a group of other local ministers and campus ministry staffers.²⁶ Initially, the CCO grew out of the combined efforts of John Guest, Bob Letsinger (Pittsburgh Power and Light), Bob Long (Bellefield Presbyterian Church), Jim Welch (Fox Chapel Presbyterian Church) and Carl Derk (IVCF), who in 1970 together hosted the “Revolution + One” conference in Pittsburgh.

²⁴ Sproul, interview, 2016. The Sprouls had even visited Pittsburgh to look for houses when James's untimely death in 1969 “threw everything into temporary chaos.” At that point Sproul made the decision to accept the position at College Hill Presbyterian Church.

²⁵ “Lakeland Ledger - Google News Archive Search.” <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1346&dat=19830507&id=AAowAAAIBAJ&sjid=iPsDAAAIBAJ&pg=3060,3017559&hl=en> (accessed May 26, 2016).

²⁶ Sproul, interview, 2016. Guest became the first Executive Director of the CCO in 1971. For more on the history of the CCO, see “Our History,” *Coalition of Christian Outreach*, <http://ccojubilee.org/am-site/media/cco-history.pdf> (accessed May 26, 2016). The CCO was initially developed out of the 1970 “Revolution + One” conference. Sproul was a speaker at this conference (Sproul, interview, 2016). The CCO's conference was soon renamed Jubilee. Annual Jubilee conferences were held in Pittsburgh at the Hilton Hotel. The event featured speakers from LVSC, the Pittsburgh area, and across the nation (“Jubilee '78: Seminar Speakers” (CCO, 1978), Dale Myers, personal collection; “Jubilee 1981” (Thompson Media, 1981), Dale Myers, personal collection). David Gill of the Christian World Liberation Front and founder of New College Berkeley describes Jubilee Conferences by noting, “We really liked the Jubilee Convention and the Coalition of Christian Outreach because they were really into the integration kind of stuff, so we liked them even better than Inter-Varsity in those days.” Gill spoke at the Pittsburgh conference multiple times in the 1980s. See, David Gill, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, Skype, December 15, 2015, author's possession.

Sproul spoke at the original conference and continued to be heavily involved in CCO events for more than a decade. Through this involvement Sproul stayed on the collective radar of evangelical church leaders in western Pennsylvania even when living far from the Steel City.

Sproul's capabilities as an educator of both lay adults and college students eventually caught the eye of individuals involved in The Pittsburgh Offensive—another coalition of Christian leaders in the Pittsburgh area who were intent on influencing their region for Christ. The makeup of The Pittsburgh Offensive shows the degree of cross-pollination that existed among Pittsburgh's evangelicals during these years.

Reid M. Carpenter, the city's Young Life director and friend of Pittsburgh Experiment director Don James, headed up the ambitious venture. In the late 1960s James had taken Carpenter to Mt. Washington—an overlook in Pittsburgh that offers a panoramic view of Downtown Pittsburgh and the surrounding metropolitan areas. While looking down on the city James, a former Marine Drill Instructor, asked Reid a series of pointed questions. "Do you love Jesus? Do you Love Pittsburgh? Are you willing to commit 15-20 years to seek the Lord's will here?"²⁷ Carpenter caught James's vision and began funneling his energy into the development of The Pittsburgh Offensive. Other local para-church leaders including Guest and former University of Pittsburgh football standout Bob Long, who replaced Guest as Executive Director of the CCO in 1972, joined Carpenter in the venture. The group also included a handful of interested lay people. Of these none was more significant than Dora Hillman, the widow of the

²⁷ Michael J. McManus, "Christians Want Pittsburgh Known for God as Well as Steel," *Lakeland Ledger*, May 7, 1983, sec. A, 10.

industrial tycoon J. Hartwell Hillman.²⁸ Taking a keen interest in the group, Hillman hosted the meetings of The Pittsburgh Offensive in her home.²⁹ The group soon attracted national and international attention as pastors from other cities sought to replicate the coalition-building capacity and success of the project.³⁰ Thanks to his leadership in the Pittsburgh Offensive, Carpenter was even invited to join evangelical celebrities like Hans Rookmaaker, Richard Longenecker, and Carl E. Armerding as a lecturer at Regent College's 1974 Summer School.³¹

By 1970 members of The Pittsburgh Offensive had decided that their region needed a study center dedicated to educating campus ministry staffers who usually had neither the time nor the desire to attend a traditional seminary. Early on Sproul emerged as the leading candidate to fill the position. Originally, the group had considered founding this study center in Pittsburgh's Oakland district.³² Oakland was a natural choice. Located adjacent to both the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University, Oakland was the intellectual center of life in the city.

Hillman, however, had other ideas. She agreed with fellow Pittsburgh Offensive members that the region needed a study center, and she was willing to back the venture on one condition—the study center would be located not in Oakland but in Stahlstown, Pennsylvania, a rural area an hour east of the city in a mountainous part of western

²⁸ Jack Rowley, "The Ligonier Valley Study Center Early Years," *Ligonier Ministries*, <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/ligonier-valley-study-center-early-years/> (accessed September 8, 2015).

²⁹ McManus, "Christians Want Pittsburgh Known for God as Well as Steel."

³⁰ McManus, "Christians Want Pittsburgh Known for God as Well as Steel."

³¹ "Summer School 1974," 1974, Folder 2, Regent College, Michael G. Collison Collection. In 1978 The Pittsburgh Offensive created the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation, whose three goals included: "raising funds from major Foundations to support various Christian ministries; mobilizing diverse Christian support for many projects and researching future projects, particularly those successfully pioneered in other cities" (McManus, "Christians Want Pittsburgh Known for God as Well as Steel"). For more on the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation, see "About Us: History," *Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation*, <http://www.plf.org/about-us/history.aspx> (accessed May 26, 2016).

³² Sproul, interview, 2016.

Pennsylvania near the town of Ligonier. Ligonier and the surrounding mountains had historically been a favorite haunt of Pittsburgh's most wealthy class.³³ Hillman had constructed a circular, window- and skylight-filled mansion on top of one of the area's highest peaks.³⁴ She took charge of the study center's development, traveling to Cincinnati to discuss the concept with the Sprouls and offering to donate 52 acres and build accommodations for the study center if the group was willing to locate the center in Stahlstown.³⁵

For his part, Sproul was interested but unsure. The idea of a study center caught his attention, but before he launched into such an uncertain and relatively unproven venture he wanted to talk with someone who knew the ins and outs of starting and sustaining this type of ministry. Francis Schaeffer was the obvious choice. In 1971 Schaeffer was the one American evangelical who seemed to know something about running a viable study center.

Thanks to the success of his books Schaeffer was in demand within American evangelicalism in the early 1970s. By that time Swiss L'Abri was packed throughout much of the year, and Schaeffer was receiving a growing number of invitations for speaking engagements in North America. While Schaeffer turned down most of these requests, he did accept a few. In March of 1971 Francis and Edith Schaeffer left the confines of Huemoz for a conference at Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Tennessee. Sproul saw the Schaeffers' visit as a chance to personally ask their advice regarding the invitation Hillman and The Pittsburgh Offensive had extended to him. With

³³ Because the Carnegie and Mellon families often spent time in the area, the region surrounding Ligonier was sometime referred to as "the Mellon's playground." Sproul, interview, 2016.

³⁴ R. C. Sproul, Jr., interview by Charles E. Cotherman, phone interview, May 24, 2016, author's possession.

³⁵ Sproul, interview, 2016; "R.C. Sproul, A Man Called by God."

the help of Covenant College President Marion Barnes, who hosted a meeting between Sproul and Schaeffer in his home, Sproul was able to spend “several hours walking and talking with Dr. Schaeffer.” During this time Schaeffer offered “words of encouragement and strategy for starting the Ligonier Valley Study Center.”³⁶

The meeting was the beginning of a friendship that would continue until the end of Schaeffer’s life. In addition to their shared interests in founding learning communities that would encourage evangelicals to think deeply about the things of faith, the two men discovered that they shared strong theological convictions related to the issue of biblical inerrancy. As soon as Sproul returned to Cincinnati he sent off a letter to Schaeffer, thus beginning a sporadic but enduring correspondence with the rising evangelical star.³⁷

Sproul came away from the meeting impressed with Schaeffer and convinced that it might be possible to start a L’Abri-esque study center in western Pennsylvania. In early 1971 the Sproul family spent a week at Hillman’s Stahlstown estate. When they left, they had decided to take part in the venture, provided the local UPC presbytery approved the call and allowed Sproul to transfer his credentials to the local Redstone Presbytery. Because Sproul had already developed a reputation as a theological conservative in the mainline denomination, his acceptance by the Redstone Presbytery was by no means

³⁶ R. C. Sproul, “In Memoriam: Francis Schaeffer, 1912-1984,” *Tabletalk* 8, no. 4 (September 1984): 12.

³⁷ Sproul’s first letter was dated March 19, 1971 (R. C. Sproul to Francis A. Schaeffer, March 18, 1971, Box 56, File 6, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina). For his part, Schaeffer encouraged the venture, noting in his March 22, 1971 response that he would “be thinking about you as you make your decisions for the new work” and also offering his help in the future. See Francis A. Schaeffer to R. C. Sproul, March 22, 1971, Box 56, File 6, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina. Accounts of the founding of the LVSC sometimes mention the influence of Schaeffer and L’Abri but details of Sproul’s interactions with Schaeffer are never provided, e.g., see “R.C. Sproul: A Man Called By God.”

certain.³⁸ In the end, the committee approved Sproul’s request with what Sproul describes as “great reluctance.”³⁹ By the end of that summer Sproul and his family, along with Jim Thompson and his family (whom the Sprouls had met at College Hill), moved to Stahlstown as the founding Ligonier Valley Study Center (LVSC) staff. The plan was for Sproul to do the teaching while the Thompsons would help with the everyday running of the study center and make ends meet by recording and then selling or renting audio tapes of Sproul’s lectures through Thompson’s company, Thompson Media. The Ligonier Valley Study Center was born.

The Ligonier Valley Study Center: Early Years and Ethos

When the Sprouls and Thompsons arrived in Stahlstown in the summer of 1971 they began building the ministry from the ground up. Sproul moved his family into a newly constructed house—the first of many tangible testaments to Hillman’s generosity and penchant for underwriting new building projects.⁴⁰ The Sprouls’ large living room, which could seat over forty people comfortably, became the study center’s primary teaching space. This home-centered ministry represented one of many undeniable

³⁸ Sproul had previously been among a few UPC ministers who wrote position papers opposing the ambiguity of language in the New Confession adopted by the UPC and included in the 1967 *Book of Confession*. He favored the Westminster Confession, the church’s traditional confession and the confession that he and all those who were interviewing him at the Presbytery meeting were ordained under—a point he used to his advantage in the interview (Sproul, interview, 2016).

³⁹ Sproul, interview, 2016.

⁴⁰ Rowley, interview, 2016. Rowley noted that Hillman “had a thing about building buildings. She loved to build buildings. She was quite wealthy and she would continue to add a building occasionally.... [T]hanks to Dora Hillman the buildings were coming at no charge to us. She was building them. You know a ministry generally couldn’t do it. They wouldn’t be able to afford it.”

carryovers from L'Abri.⁴¹ As at L'Abri, community and home-based hospitality stood near the center of what Sproul envisioned for the ministry.

Hospitality was *near* the center, but not *at* the center of Sproul's hopes for his study center. It was lay theological education that most shaped Sproul's vision. With the backing of para-church ministries and a few prominent churches in the Pittsburgh area, the LVSC emerged in its early years as a ministry that was for churched people and para-church ministers what L'Abri was for seekers and those who had perhaps grown up in the church and then drifted away. The LVSC emphasized lay theological education that included a L'Abri-like emphasis on apologetics but this emphasis stood alongside a rigorous commitment to educating evangelicals in systematic theology. Like L'Abri, the LVSC did attempt to offer some cultural commentary; however, cultural commentary was much more central to Schaeffer's program than to Sproul's. Partly due to this latter distinction, the LVSC did little to help American evangelicals cultivate a more cultured appreciation for art and social etiquette. Sproul did not take students to art museums or play Bach as loudly as his stereo speakers could endure. Similarly, Sproul's study center did far less than L'Abri to fuel the cultural and social aspirations of American evangelicals. The Sprouls, their team, and many of their students were more mid-western and middle class than many of the folks who made their way to L'Abri. From the start,

⁴¹ Ligonier Ministries staff member Jack Rowley notes the L'Abri connection during the early days of the LVSC: "It was L'Abri that inspired the way we did things at Ligonier. We kind of patterned ourselves pretty much after L'Abri, and to that end that's the way we ran things." See Rowley, interview, 2016. Many of those who frequented the LVSC brought L'Abri connections with them. Bill White joined the LVSC as the Director of Ministry in 1977. His credentials included a PhD in psychology and two visits to L'Abri. As an early *Tabletalk* article notes, "As a couple, Bill and Carol had visited L'Abri in Switzerland for two weeks in the summer of 1969. This was such a memorable event for them that they returned with their children in 1973 for the entire summer to live, work, and study," see "Meet the Staff: The Whites," *Tabletalk* 1, no. 1 (May 6, 1977). Having been at L'Abri was a badge of honor in the 1970s. Several of the LVSC students and at least one LVSC teacher profiled by *Tabletalk* had come to the LVSC after spending time with the Schaeffers in Switzerland, see "A British Scholar at Ligonier," *Tabletalk* 1, no. 2 (July 1, 1977); "Student Life," *Tabletalk* 1, no. 3 (August 1977).

Sproul and his ministry were a down-to-earth contrast to the Schaeffers' eccentricities. The LVSC was much more defined by campus ministers, middle-class church-goers, and Pittsburgh Steelers fans than the many hippies, artists, high rollers, and intellectuals who frequented L'Abri. Yet the primary difference between the two ministries was not social or cultural. Sproul taught apologetics in courses designed primarily to train campus ministers and lay people to discuss questions of faith with those they encountered outside the study center, not to facilitate conversions among those who found their way to Stahlstown.⁴² The LVSC was an educational endeavor first, foremost, and almost exclusively.

A third element that was built into the ethos of the LVSC was the characteristic evangelical emphasis on growth and "reaching" larger numbers of people.⁴³ In some ways growth and survival were linked in the LVSC's early years. From 1971 when Sproul moved to Ligonier with his family and the Thompsons through the middle of the decade it was apparent that the ministry needed to grow in order to survive. Through a series of planned and unplanned occurrences Sproul and the LVSC board made strategic decisions starting in 1977 that were meant to dramatically increase the ministry's influence. For the next seven years this emphasis on growth would help to make Sproul a celebrity among American evangelicals. It would also play a key role in the Ligonier study center's shift from a relationally based ministry centered around a geographical place to an idea-based ministry focused on media.

⁴² Sproul, interview, 2016.

⁴³ Eventually the LVSC's newsletter *Tabletalk* would carry a regular feature titled "Reaching" that drew attention to the ways in which the footprint of Sproul's ministry was growing. For examples, see Esther DiQuattro, "Reaching," *Tabletalk* 7, no. 1 (February 1983): 5; Esther DiQuattro, "Reaching," *Tabletalk* 7, no. 2 (April 1983): 5; Esther DiQuattro, "Reaching," *Tabletalk* 7, no. 4 (September 1983): 5, 14; R. C. Sproul, "Reaching," *Tabletalk* 7, no. 5 (December 1983): 5.

Community and Place

Perhaps nothing better demonstrated the influence of the Schaeffers and L'Abri on the LVSC than the Sprouls' emphasis on home-based hospitality. In his 1970 book *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century* Schaeffer had called American Christians to open up their homes to what he described as “unantiseptic situation[s].”⁴⁴ With the power of L'Abri's example behind him Schaeffer “dared” Christians to “begin opening your home for community.”⁴⁵ For the Sprouls this message was new only in its scope, not its impetus. From the mid-1960s on the Sprouls had welcomed people, usually college students, into their home. These efforts were limited, however, to their own personal decisions as a family. With the founding of the LVSC, the Sprouls were intent on making their personal convictions regarding home-based hospitality a distinctive of the entire ministry. At LVSC the Sprouls worked to ensure that not only *their* home, but *all* staff homes were places of hospitality and community.

Staff homes at Ligonier were both public and private spaces. While serving the needs of staff families, which in a majority of cases included young children, staff homes also played a central role in the life of the study center. Because of both financial considerations and the simple fact that the study center's isolated location meant that there were no hotels nearby, staff families often hosted students in their homes overnight.⁴⁶ This was no small undertaking. By the time the first dormitory was

⁴⁴ Francis A Schaeffer, *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*, in *A Christian View of the Church* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982), 93.

⁴⁵ Schaeffer, *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*, 93.

⁴⁶ I've drawn these details from my interviews with early LVSC staff members including R. C. Sproul, Jackie Shelton Griffith, Stuart Boehmig, and Jack Rowley. Though not an official staff member at

completed in the summer of 1978, 3,624 people had spent the night in staff homes at the study center.⁴⁷ Throughout much of the 1970s staff families also hosted students on a rotating basis several times each week for evening meals. Stuart Boehmig, a former Young Life director in Pittsburgh who became the Executive Director of the LVSC in 1976 after his graduation from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, describes how the process of home-based hospitality worked:

[W]e would have, say, two people staying with us...If there were eight homes available who were doing this, then two of those homes would host a dinner for them. If we were hosting a dinner that night we might have twelve people for dinner. We were told what to have. We had the food available. We would cook it. They would come to dinner at our house and somebody else's house. The next night they would go to two other people's houses. Then we would gather for an evening singing and lecture time.⁴⁸

In these informal settings LVSC students were offered an opportunity to develop close ties with staff members and the study center's ministry seemed as much relational as it was educational. For students and the staff members working to market the study center these relational connections were among the most frequently emphasized aspects of the LVSC program. As one student noted, "What I like most is having time with the staff families. I've been so aware of their acceptance of me. There's a real feeling of

the time, I've also interviewed R. C. Sproul, Jr., who experienced all of these events as a child and teenager.

⁴⁷ "Cedarwood Housing Facility Now Ready," *Tabletalk* 2, no. 4 (June 1978): 1.

⁴⁸ Stuart Boehmig, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, FaceTime, May 23, 2016, author's possession. Boehmig and his wife, Kathy, would serve on the Ligonier staff until May 1979, see "The Field Mouse," *Tabletalk* 3, no. 4 (May 1979). Boehmig would go on to first serve with John Guest at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Sewickley before eventually founding Orchard Hill, one of the largest churches in the Pittsburgh area. For more on Orchard Hill, see "Church Withdraws from Diocese of Pittsburgh," *The Archives of the Episcopal Church*, January 10, 1992, http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/ENS/ENSpress_release.pl?pr_number=92008A; Rebecca Sodergren, "Building Churches One Person at a Time: District Clergy to Follow Lead of Most-Attended House of Worship," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 23, 2000, sec. B.

welcomeness [sic] in the homes.”⁴⁹ The only aspect of the study center’s ministry referenced with more frequency was Sproul’s capabilities as a teacher.

More than simply a ministry ideal, geographical realities made community formation among the LVSC staff a necessity. Geographically, the study center’s rural location meant that the study center was a campus virtually unto itself. In the 1970s when many Christians were intrigued by the idea of Christian community, the communal aspect of the LVSC was especially appealing. In more than one case, the sense of community that the staff families demonstrated prompted individuals to move to the area simply to be part of what was going on. Sometimes individuals (e.g., the Rowley family) who began spending more and more time at the study center eventually became staff members. In other cases, people moved to the area specifically to be near the study center and never joined staff but were simply a part of the general LVSC community. As one early LVSC staff member remembers, “People just came and lived in Ligonier and Stahlstown to be part of what was going on there....There was something bigger than just R. C. and his teaching going on.”⁵⁰

A sense of community spirit was also forged through activities that occurred away from the dinner table and outside the classroom. With few options for entertainment off campus, staff and students alike were forced to create their own activities. Sports were a cheap and easy way to kill time and engage a student population that in the early and

⁴⁹ For student takes on the importance of home-based hospitality at the LVSC, see “The Challenge,” *Tabletalk* 2, no. 8 (October 1978): 1. For more, see Robert Michael Coho, “Why I Give to Ligonier,” *Tabletalk* 2, no. 8 (October 1978). For their part the LVSC staff emphasized the importance of these relational connections with a high degree of regularity in the mid- and late-1970s. This was a key aspect of their marketing of the study center. For examples, see “Table Talk,” *Tabletalk* 1, no. 5 (October 1977); “Cold Winter, Warm Hearts,” *Tabletalk* 1, no. 8 (February 1978); “Ligonier--A Place for You,” *Table Talk* 2, no. 5 (n.d.): 3.

⁵⁰ Jackie Shelton Griffith, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, phone interview, May 31, 2016, author’s possession.

mid-1970s still skewed young.⁵¹ Harkening back to the experiences of many staff members (Sproul included) who participated in sports through high school and college, the LVSC staff emphasized athletic competition and fun throughout the week.⁵² In some cases, such as Bill White's "Leaping Ahead in Your Life" program, physical activities such as jogging and weight lifting were incorporated into a curriculum that also included coursework. This and similar programs represented the Reformed conviction that all of life was spiritual while also reflecting national fitness trends and the so-called "jogging revolution."⁵³ At other times sporting events were less formal. For many years a highlight of the summer months was the Wednesday night hot dog roast and picnic, which was always followed by a softball or volleyball game and a campfire replete with singing and a marshmallow roast.⁵⁴

The isolated location of the LVSC when combined with the shared mission of members of the LVSC staff also helped facilitate a deep sense of community among LVSC staff members. On one level community was a necessity from the start at the

⁵¹ Through out most of the 1970s the LVSC devoted a large amount of its energy to college ministry, frequently hosting trainings for local campus ministry groups and often specifically targeted college-aged individuals for their residency programs.

⁵² By all counts Sproul was himself a good athlete and quite competitive. Several of the men on the LVSC staff were former collegiate football players. When asked at the end of the interview if there was anything that needed to be mentioned about the LVSC that we had not already covered, Jackie Shelton Griffith was quick to note the importance of sheer fun at the study center. See Jackie Shelton Griffith, interview by author, May 31, 2016.

⁵³ The unrivaled success among how-to videos of *Jane Fonda's Workout* in 1982 symbolized the increasing attention Americans were paying to physical fitness. Within three years the video, priced at \$59.95, had sold over 950,000 copies and grossed 34.2 million dollars, see Frederick Wasser, *Veni, Vidi, Video: The Hollywood Empire and the VCR* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001), 125-126. For Christian views of the body and physical fitness in the twentieth century the best source is R. Marie Griffith, *Born Again Bodies: Flesh and Spirit in American Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

⁵⁴ L'Abri also somewhat famously hosted a weekly hot-dog roast for years, see Frank Schaeffer, *Crazy for God: How I Grew up as One of the Elect, Helped Found the Religious Right, and Lived to Take All (or Almost All) of It Back* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2007), 145. In 1977 the Wednesday evening picnics were attracting sixty or seventy people, see "Meet the Staff: Pat Erickson," *Tabletalk* 1, no. 2 (July 1977). For more on the Wednesday picnics, see "The Field Mouse," *Tabletalk* 1, no. 3 (August 31, 1977). For a young R. C. Sproul, Jr. events like this made growing up at the LVSC "sort of like living at camp all of the time, though we had more of the comforts of home thankfully," see Sproul, Jr. interview, 2016.

LVSC because of the study center's remote location and dire financial situation.⁵⁵ Staff members who were missing paychecks together had little choice but to team up to survive.⁵⁶ In addition to official activities like meal preparation, meetings, and weekday lunches in the study center's small cafeteria, there were also unofficial get-togethers like combined staff yard sales featuring lemonade stands manned by staff members' children.

Like other "destination study centers" such as L'Abri, the net effect of the LVSC's rural setting was not entirely negative.⁵⁷ Pennsylvania's Appalachian Mountains were not the Alps, but they were still a source of natural beauty and solitude. Indeed, not infrequently individuals came to the LVSC specifically seeking a slower, more relaxed pace. One student at the study center noted how LVSC's "relaxed, casual atmosphere" with opportunities "to rest and relax while studying" compared favorably to the stricter regimen of normal seminary life.⁵⁸ Not all time away from the classroom was strictly leisure. Following the L'Abri model, Sproul initially required that resident students offset the cost of their stay by working twelve hours a week at the study center.⁵⁹ Still, even as students worked and studied, the study center and the surrounding mountains offered plenty of time and space for leisure pursuits such as hiking and trout fishing.⁶⁰ The function of the LVSC as a retreat center was especially appealing to high-profile

⁵⁵ Hillman enjoyed funding building projects more than funding budgets. During its first year the LVSC had a total budget of \$85,000, of which Hillman contributed \$5,000. Sproul had a difficult time raising money, however, because people were under the impression that Hillman was financing the entire project. They fell \$10,000 short of budget the first year. Funding problems would continue to plague the LVSC throughout its first decade. More than once the Sprouls and other staff families would go without paychecks.

⁵⁶ Both Sproul and Rowley described numerous instances of missing paychecks when funds were tight. When the Rowleys joined the staff in 1977 they missed their first scheduled paycheck, see Rowley, interview, 2016; Sproul, interview, 2016.

⁵⁷ I get the term "destination study centers" from Drew Trotter, President of the Consortium of Christian Study Centers. See Andrew J. Trotter, interview with author, April 6, 2016.

⁵⁸ "Student Life."

⁵⁹ "Ligonier Is for Learning," *Tabletalk* 1, no. 3 (August 1977).

⁶⁰ "Student Life," 1977.

individuals like Charles Colson (1931-2012). Colson, who had risen to national infamy as Nixon's hatchet man during the Watergate scandal, had spent time in prison before being converted in part by reading C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*.⁶¹ Following his conversion, Colson became an evangelical celebrity due in large part to the publication of his bestselling autobiography *Born Again* (1976) and his efforts to found a national prison ministry (Prison Fellowship, f. 1976).⁶² Colson decided to visit the LVSC after being moved by an audiocassette of Sproul's teaching on the holiness of God.⁶³ In the summer of 1978 Colson visited the study center, and called the study center "a lovely spot." Colson enjoyed "the quiet and lovely atmosphere" at the study center and noted that he would "love to come back."⁶⁴ In the years to come this desire would become reality. Colson joined the LVSC board in 1980 and helped facilitate a close connection between the LVSC study center and Prison Fellowship over the next few years.⁶⁵

The benefits of living in such a secluded community setting aside, life constantly lived in such close proximity was not without its trials. While some, like R. C. Sproul, Jr. (a child and teenager during most of the LVSC's ministry) enjoyed having frequent houseguests, for many the relational demands of the study center, especially the

⁶¹ George Marsden, *C. S. Lewis's Mere Christianity: A Biography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 117-119.

⁶² Charles W. Colson, *Born Again* (Old Tappan, NJ: Chosen Books, 1976).

⁶³ Kent Schoffstall, "Christ Last Hope for U.S.--Colson," *Tabletalk* 2, no. 7 (September 1978): 1.

⁶⁴ Schoffstall, "Christ Last Hope for U.S.--Colson," (1978). For more on Colson's relaxing time at the LVSC, see "Prison Fellowship Attends Seminar," *Tabletalk* 3, no. 3 (April 1979): 1.

⁶⁵ In the spring of 1979 the LVSC hosted key Prison Fellowship staff, board members, and supporters for a seminar. On the basis of the success of this venture, Sproul and the LVSC staff began hosting groups of ten to twenty inmates and prison ministers for intensive training retreats several times a year from January 1980 through 1984. See Esther DiQuattro, "Reaching," September 1983. For more on the link between Prison Fellowship and the LVSC, see "Remember Those Who Are in Prison," *Tabletalk* 4, no. 4 (n.d.): 9; "Prison Ministry Seminar," *Tabletalk* 4, no. 3 (March 1980): 1; Esther DiQuattro, "Reaching," September 1983; "LVSC News: New Appointment," *Tabletalk* 8, no. 5 (November 1984): 2.

continuing cycle of house and dinner guests, became a strain.⁶⁶ Eventually, the limited space and the intense obligations related to housing students in family homes led Sproul to push for the building of a dormitory (i.e., Cedar Lodge) in 1978.⁶⁷ According to Rowley, this was a necessary step away from the L'Abri model because housing students in staff homes “was burning staff families out because it was so demanding on the families that the children were kind of reacting negatively to all these students all the time around. There was no family time because all of these families are weighed down pretty heavily.”⁶⁸ Staff families still continued to feed students in their homes for several years after the completion of the dormitory; eventually, however, this practice was also eliminated.⁶⁹ By the early 1980s staff homes had largely transitioned from public to private spaces.

Lay Theological Education

A desire to expand the theological education of the laity formed the center of the LVSC's mission. Indeed, it was the study center's emphasis on education—as opposed to evangelism—that in Sproul's mind most distinguished his study center from Schaeffer's efforts at L'Abri. According to Sproul, “the central difference between the LVSC and L'Abri was that L'Abri was founded basically as an outreach in evangelism to non-Christian students principally in Europe, but not exclusively. Whereas the vision for the

⁶⁶ One-time LVSC Executive Director Stuart Boehmig reflected on the relational aspect of the ministry, calling it “grueling.” According to Boehmig, “[W]hen people come and they pay money to come they expect a lot of attention, and they have high expectations about what is going to happen. I think that's, again, why we began to move away—and I know the move to Orlando really did this—from all that highly intensive intentional relational aspect to more of a transmission of the Word and of the teaching. R.C.'s pretty isolated today...It's pretty hard to get to him. In his study center days he'd just be hanging around the living room or playing softball.” See Boehmig, interview, 2016.

⁶⁷ “Decisions for Christ,” *Newsweek*, October 25, 1976.

⁶⁸ Rowley, interview, 2016.

⁶⁹ Sproul, Jr., interview, 2016.

LVSC was for nurture and for grounding in theological education principally for para-ministry workers and church people.”⁷⁰ Briefly stated, this meant that the central emphasis of the LVSC “was not on evangelism but on Christian education.”⁷¹

To a large degree this educational emphasis was the central motivating factor for the members of the Pittsburgh Offensive who had originally contacted Sproul in 1971. For these individuals a key concern was the training of the many campus ministers who worked with students at universities and schools in and around Pittsburgh. Through most of the 1970s Sproul catered the ministry of the LVSC to the needs of these groups by hosting special training sessions for incoming campus ministers in para-church ministries like Young Life and especially the CCO each year.⁷² During these sessions campus ministers would take part in Sproul’s lectures on systematic theology, biblical studies, and apologetics while also benefiting from recreational events and interaction with other LVSC staff members.⁷³

While college students and young campus ministers made up a large portion of those who studied at the LVSC in the early and mid-1970s, Sproul worked to diversify the study center’s student base along the lines of gender and age. One of the study center’s most enduring programs, the Wednesday Morning Bible Study, went a long way in accomplishing this goal. Wednesday morning Bible studies took root at the study center almost as soon as Sproul arrived in Stahlstown. In August 1971 Annette Rathburn, the President of nearby St. Michael’s Episcopal Church’s women’s group, inquired of the

⁷⁰ Sproul, interview, 2016.

⁷¹ Sproul, interview, 2016. When LVSC officially filed its Articles of Incorporation with the state of Pennsylvania in early January of 1975, it claimed to be “formed exclusively for the purpose of promoting Christian theological education and scholarship.” Stephen R. Gooder et al., “Articles of Incorporation of Ligonier Valley Study Center,” January 8, 1975, Ligonier Ministries holdings.

⁷² Sproul, interview, 2016.

⁷³ For example, in the fall of 1977 thirty eight members of the CCO came to Ligonier for training, see “Ligonier Trains Campus Leaders,” *Tabletalk* 1, no. 5 (October 1977): 1.

newly arrived minister as to whether local women could hold their September meetings at the study center.⁷⁴ When Sproul agreed to lead the study, Rathburn promptly called women at six other local churches, some of whom showed up with coffee, lunch, and their pastor in tow the next Wednesday.⁷⁵ What was supposed to be a month-long engagement quickly became an institution as women from as far as sixty miles away made the weekly trip to Stahlstown. The number of individuals who came to know of Sproul and the study center through these weekly Bible studies was substantial. Between August 1971 and July of 1978 total attendance at these Bible studies totaled over sixteen thousand.⁷⁶

Another weekly meeting that frequently drew large crowds was Sproul's Monday Night Summer Lecture Series.⁷⁷ Like only the Wednesday morning Bible study and picnic, Monday night lectures were open to both paying resident students and the general public. A typical Monday night included two lectures, the first by a LVSC staff member at 7:30 pm and the second by Sproul at 8:45 pm. These lectures followed themes such as Boehmig's series on "The Heroic Christian: A Study in the Life of David" or Sproul's series on "The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ."⁷⁸ Many weeks these lectures drew large crowds that filled the chairs in the Sprouls' living room. Earnest attendees frequently spilled onto the floor, sitting within inches of the lecturer's feet. Overflow crowds regularly flowed out of the house and onto the Sprouls' large porch to listen to the

⁷⁴ "Wednesday Study Rolls On--Rain or Shine," *Tabletalk* 2, no. 5 (July 1978): 1.

⁷⁵ "Wednesday Study Roles On," *Tabletalk*, (July 1978).

⁷⁶ "Wednesday Study Roles On," *Tabletalk*, (July 1978). The exact number given by the LVSC was 16,466.

⁷⁷ "Ligonier Packs Them in on Monday Night," *Tabletalk* 2, no. 7 (September 1978): 9.

⁷⁸ "Monday Night Summer Lecture Series, June 26 to August 21," *Tabletalk* 2, no. 5 (July 1978): 9.

lectures through open windows.⁷⁹ These lectures were followed each week by what Sproul referred to as a “Gab Fest.” Similar to Schaeffer’s Saturday night free flowing question and answer sessions, these Gab Fests were designed to be times of “informal discussion” where individuals could “ask your most troublesome questions” and then receive an answer “in a secure and healthy atmosphere.” Gab Fests were likely especially appealing to attendees given the large number of college students and young people who frequented these summer meetings. In LVSC marketing Gab Fests were called both “provocative” and “profound,” labels sure to raise the curiosity of perplexed college students.⁸⁰

Six years into the study center’s history college students made up about 40 percent of the over 18,000 people who came to Ligonier to study in 1977.⁸¹ One of the ways in which the study center attracted a large number of college students was by hosting courses for college credit in January and May. These courses were typically taught by Sproul in the field of apologetics or theology, and attendance ranged from the teens to nearly forty.⁸² One of the study center’s most ambitious undertakings involving courses for college credit was the “Leaping Ahead Program” in which students could

⁷⁹ Sproul described Monday nights during a telephone interview: “We would have “Gab Fests” in the evenings once a week, and we would get one hundred or two hundred people coming out once a week from Pittsburgh in buses or private cars. We would have people occupying every square inch. We had a building that had a living room and a family room all combined, took all the walls out so we had this big lecture hall, and a big porch outside. In the summer when these groups would come people would not only occupy the whole room but they would also be out on the porch. I mean the fire marshal would have had us in big trouble, but we were in such a remote area of the mountains that nobody seemed to care about that.” Sproul, interview, 2016. For a photo of the Sprouls’ living room completely filled with Monday night students, see “Ligonier Packs Them in on Monday Night” (1978). Once again, the similarities between the LVSC and L’Abri are striking. For a similar description of L’Abri, see Jerram Barrs, “Francis Schaeffer, The Later Years: Life At L’Abri.”

⁸⁰ “Monday Night Summer Lecture Series,” *Tabletak* (July 1978).

⁸¹ Of the 18,000 who studied at the LVSC, only 800 were resident students, see “Ligonier Celebrates Sixth Year,” *Tabletalk* 1, no. 4 (September 1977): 1.

⁸² The best-attended January session was the 1979 course in “classical apologetics,” which enrolled thirty nine students. See “New Year Starts Big,” *Tabletalk* 3, no. 1 (February 1979): 1; R. C. Sproul, “The Year in Review,” *Tabletalk* 3, no. 8 (September 1979): 1–3.

earn “a full term of college credit” by “completing four weeks of work at home in addition to participating in the ten weeks residence at Ligonier.”⁸³ By the end of the 1970s over forty colleges and universities had awarded credit for courses taught at the study center.⁸⁴

Gendered Spaces

One consequence of Sproul’s emphasis on lay education was that unlike most evangelical seminaries, which discouraged or virtually prohibited female theology students in the early and mid-1970s, women were welcomed to study at the LVSC on equal footing with their male peers.⁸⁵ This did not mean that Sproul and the LVSC staff advocated a thoroughgoing egalitarianism. Part of the reason Sproul left the UPCUSA in 1975 and joined the PCA was because he thought his former denomination’s acceptance of women’s ordination underscored a deeper failure to uphold biblical authority. In 1974 the UPCUSA issued a denomination-wide ruling that centered on a Pittsburgh Theological Seminary student, Wynn Kenyon. Kenyon, a friend of the Sprouls, had stated during his ordination trial that he could not in good conscience participate in the ordination of a female minister. In response to Kenyon’s answer the UPCUSA ruled in 1974 that Kenyon could not be ordained and any other minister who took exception to women’s ordination could not be placed in a pulpit. This effectively pushed many conservatives in the UPCUSA into the PCA. Alluding to this decision, Sproul would later

⁸³ “Leaping Ahead Program for College Credit,” *Tabletalk* 4, no. 2 (February 1980): 1.

⁸⁴ “January Term,” *Tabletalk* 2, no. 7 (September 1978): 5.

⁸⁵ Numerous female interviewees noted how difficult it was for a woman to gain entrance to or study at most evangelical seminaries during this time (e.g., Thena Ayers, interview; Linda Mercadante, interview; Jackie Shelton Griffith, interview).

call himself “a Kenyon Decision casualty.”⁸⁶ Sproul’s convictions on the issue of women’s ordination when taken together with traditional middle-class social norms and an emerging “family values” emphasis within American evangelicalism had important implications for the LVSC.⁸⁷ While female students were welcomed in the classroom, female staff members were most often confined to domestic duties like childcare and meal preparation rather than teaching and preaching.

There was one exception to the otherwise consistent LVSC staff norm of male teachers and female domestic workers. Jackie Shelton (later, Griffith) first came to the study center in 1975 after being directed to the LVSC by her brother-in-law, who was a Young Life leader. Having developed a deep desire to learn more about God after college, Shelton asked her brother-in-law, “Where can I go to just learn about God?”⁸⁸ He quickly laid out what he saw as her three best options—studying either at L’Abri with

⁸⁶ For more, see Richard E. Knodel, Jr., “Ascension Presbytery (PCA),” *PCA Historical Center*, <http://www.pcahistory.org/findingaids/presbyteriesAM/ascension.html> (accessed June 10, 2016). Sproul was one of these individuals. Kenyon was friends with Sproul and had earlier caused some controversy at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary around the issue of biblical authority, see “Pressure in Pittsburgh,” *Christianity Today* 28, no. 7 (January 4, 1974): 53–55. Sproul’s contemporary reflections on the situation as well as Francis Schaeffer’s response can be found in the Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, see R. C. Sproul to Francis A. Schaeffer, September 3, 1975, Box 56, File 6, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina; Francis A. Schaeffer to R. C. Sproul, September 14, 1975, Box 56, File 6, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina. Schaeffer had called Sproul to offer his support when Sproul was considering changing his denominational loyalties.

⁸⁷ Among the most prominent advocates of “family values” was Edith Schaeffer, who encouraged women to embrace domestic tasks in books like Schaeffer, *The Hidden Art of Homemaking*; Edith Schaeffer, *What Is a Family?* (Old Tappan, NJ: F. H. Revell Co., 1975). For historical treatments of evangelicals and family values, see Donald T Crichtlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman’s Crusade* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Flippen, *Jimmy Carter, the Politics of Family, and the Rise of the Religious Right*; Dowland, *Family Values and the Rise of the Christian Right*. Dowland shows that “family values” really entailed an exaltation of white middle class social norms, which emphasized a male breadwinner and female homemaker. Of course, for many Americans, financial realities make this expectation unrealistic or undesirable.

⁸⁸ Griffith, interview, 2016. Unless otherwise stated all the biographical material on Griffith comes from our 2016 interview. A short biographical treatment of Griffith can be found in an early *Tabletalk* article, see “Meet the Staff: Jackie Shelton,” *Tabletalk* 1, no. 4 (September 1977).

Schaeffer, at Regent College with Packer, or at the LVSC with Sproul.⁸⁹ After listening to Sproul teach at the initial Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology (PCRT) in 1975, Shelton was convinced that her brother-in-law was right. “I just knew that I could learn from this man the very thing that I was seeking, just to know God.”⁹⁰ Shelton soon quit her job at the National Audio Visual Center in Washington D.C. and became a long-term resident student at the LVSC.

Shelton loved the Christian community and learning that she found at the study center. She “devoured” the tape library, and soon found that she had listened to every available tape.⁹¹ Throughout her time at the study center one pressing need stood out to her: the lack of a female staff member dedicated to counseling and advising courses of study for female students. Even though hundreds of women studied at Ligonier, “there was no one on staff if you think about the teaching staff—not including the wives of the people on staff—that was dealing with the women students.”⁹² To Shelton—who though untrained as a counselor had been “counseling” fellow students since her first night at the study center when she roomed with a young woman who had attempted suicide the week before—the need for a female staff member was obvious. At the end of three months of study at the LVSC Shelton made a proposal designed to meet this need. She offered to stay on at the study center “to help the women students come up with a study program

⁸⁹ Griffith remembers being told, “‘Well, there’s three places you can try: L’Abri’ (which I had been reading Schaeffer’s books), he said ‘but that’s really more for non-Christians. Or you could go study with J. I. Packer out at Regent or there’s this guy, R. C. Sproul, and by the way there’s this conference, The Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology (PCRT) that is being held.’”

⁹⁰ Griffith, interview, 2016.

⁹¹ Griffith, interview, 2016. The library included tapes from the LVSC as well as tapes from L’Abri.

⁹² Griffith, interview, 2016.

when they come.” To her surprise the LVSC staff unanimously supported her proposal on one condition—that she also teach.⁹³

For the next three years Shelton took part in teaching and community life at the study center. Even though she found teaching alongside people like Bill White (PhD in counseling) and Sproul “more threatening than [one] can imagine,” she eventually settled into a routine and found life in the LVSC community, with all its learning, gardening, praying, playing, and time for relational development, to be “really rich.”⁹⁴ In addition to her duties as a teacher and counselor, Shelton took on a number of special tasks (e.g., serving as an amateur counselor and librarian) during her time at the study center.⁹⁵

Throughout all of this Shelton remembers Sproul’s kindness and support of her role as a female teacher. Once she specifically asked Sproul “Where are the women in [church] history?” She remembers him responding by calling the absence of women’s stories “a failure of history.” Because “it wasn’t [her] mission to have some kind of radical impact” Shelton did not press the point. In truth, she felt “privileged to be where I was and learn what I was learning from so many great teachers and just have the opportunity to do something.” Her own theological and biblical study had convinced her that women were perfectly justified to teach men outside of the ordained offices of the church. That was good enough for her and, so it seemed, for Sproul. When she eventually

⁹³ Griffith, interview, 2016. The draw for LVSC staff members seems to have been Shelton’s undergrad study of radio, TV, and film. They initially asked that she teach a course on Christianity and twentieth century culture. This emphasis on cultural media fit well with the typical way in which a handful of women found their way into evangelical organizations. During these years women could gain a foothold when they focused on literature, art, or media where they could never have entered as lecturers in biblical studies or theology.

⁹⁴ Griffith, interview, 2016.

⁹⁵ When the study center renovated a two stall garage to serve as an upgraded library Shelton headed up the effort, spending “a few hundred hours looking up books and typing new labels” in order to bring the LVSC library into alignment with the Library of Congress cataloguing system. See Jackie Shelton, “Ligonier Opens New Library,” *Tabletalk* 1, no. 2 (July 1978).

left the LVSC in the fall of 1978 to pursue an MA and then a PhD in counseling at the University of Pittsburgh, she received a warm LVSC send off.⁹⁶ In the end, Shelton's time at the study center was an anomaly. No other woman would ever hold a teaching role at the LVSC.

Reformed Theology

From the beginning, Reformed theology defined the ethos of the LVSC. Sproul attributed his deep affection for Reformed theology to the influence of Gerstner, his strongest and most enduring mentor. As R. C. Sproul, Jr. would later note, the influence of Gerstner played a significant role in Sproul's development as "a zealot for the Reformed faith."⁹⁷ Sproul's entire graduate education, from his time with Gerstner to his time with G. C. Berkouwer at the Free University, helped deepen and clarify this theological stance. Unlike many other American evangelicals, who peddled a theologically non-descript "born-againism," Sproul wore his specific brand of theology on his sleeve. From his teaching, writing, and institutional involvement (e.g., the Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology, f. 1975), Sproul emphasized a staunchly Reformed message that influenced thousands of lay Christians to see their faith through the lens of Calvin. On one level this emphasis helped some LVSC students better understand Reformed theology's implications for all of life.⁹⁸ This was a small, but significant impact of Sproul's ministry that is by its nature hard to measure. More

⁹⁶ Griffith, interview, 2016. See also "Field Mouse," *Tabletalk* 2, no. 7 (September 1978).

⁹⁷ Sproul and Sproul, *After Darkness, Light*, 5.

⁹⁸ As Abraham Kuyper famously stated when he said "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!" Reformed theologians emphasized that no realm of human society was secular or outside the Lordship of Christ. For more on the ways in which Kuyper's own life symbolized the various implications of this theological perspective, see Bratt, *Abraham Kuyper*.

noticeably, Sproul's emphasis on Reformed theology connected him to a network of staunchly Reformed pastors including John F. MacArthur (b. 1939) and James D. Kennedy (1930-2007), the latter of whom followed his Reformed principles into high-profile political involvement.⁹⁹

Sproul's appreciation for all things Reformed extended to the Reformation in general. Like Schaeffer, who in his 1976 book *How Should We Then Live* held up the Protestant Reformation as a nearly perfect ideal, Sproul's appreciation for the Reformers and the principles they espoused exerted a seemingly constant influence in his ministry.¹⁰⁰ In addition to the Magisterial Reformers' emphasis on theological principles like *Sola Scriptura*, *Sola Fida*, *Sola Gratia*, *Solus Christus*, and *Soli Deo Gloria* Sproul frequently cited the Reformers' willingness to take theological learning to the masses (i.e., the laity).¹⁰¹ Describing the Reformers in a 1979 issue of LVSC's periodical *Tabletalk* (whose title was itself a testament to Luther's practice of talking theology with students around his kitchen table), Sproul noted, that the Reformers "were not interested merely in

⁹⁹ Kennedy's influence spanned decades. In 1979 he joined the Moral Majority as one of its founding board members (William C. Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996, 198-200). With the credibility of PhD from New York University, a congregation at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida that numbered 10,000 by 2007, and a vast media network Kennedy was among the most influential American preachers at the turn of the millennia. American history and Reformed theology were both of special interest to Kennedy. In 2007 Kennedy opined in 2007 "if we are going to get back to the principles that made America great...we must get back to the principles of John Calvin because it was precisely his principles that made this nation great" (Kennedy in Randall J. Stephens and Karl Giberson, *The Anointed: Evangelical Truth in a Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2011), 81. Kennedy also partnered with Rousas Rushdoony, the founder of Christian Reconstructinism, to co-found the Coalition for Religious Liberty, see Molly Worthen, *Apostles of Reason: The Crisis of Authority in American Evangelicalism*, 2014, 227.

¹⁰⁰ Schaeffer saw the Reformers as men who could appreciate art and as people who "standing under the teaching of Scripture had freedom and yet at the same time compelling absolute values." See Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?* in *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer, A Christian Worldview, Volume 5: A Christian View of the West* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982), 134.

¹⁰¹ The chapters in a festschrift dedicated to Sproul in 2003 testify to Sproul's appreciation for these Reformation principles. The chapters of the book follow the five 'solos' of the Reformation and the five points of Calvinism, see Sproul and Sproul, *After Darkness, Light*, 2003.

publishing technical works for the applause of the scholarly world.”¹⁰² Instead, they “were willing to risk their academic reputations in order to minister to the people”—a trait Sproul likely recognized in himself.¹⁰³ Based on this assessment, Sproul emphasized a path toward this “new reformation” that basically called for wide-spread adoption and replication of his own efforts at the LVSC:

We need scholars today who have a burden for the education of Christians everywhere....The real effort of reformation in our day must be met head-on by the finest scholars that the Church has produced. They should spend at least a portion of their time communicating, writing, and preparing materials for the laity. That is a task to which the Ligonier Valley Study Center is committed.¹⁰⁴

For Sproul the task of reaching the multitudes with quality educational materials was urgent. In his mind education followed close on the heels of grace as God’s main tool in the process of transformation. As Sproul noted in his widely read 1985 book *The Holiness of God*, “the renewal of the mind” was “the key method Paul underscores as the means to the transformed life.”¹⁰⁵ For Sproul, Paul’s emphasis was clear. “Renewal of the mind” meant “nothing more and nothing less than education. Serious education. In-depth education. Disciplined education in the things of God. It calls for a mastery of the Word of God. We need people whose lives have changed because our minds have changed.”¹⁰⁶

With Paul and the Reformers behind him, Sproul hoped that the LVSC might, “contribute to the cause of spiritual renewal and reformation” through an expanding

¹⁰² R. C. Sproul, “Right Now Counts Forever: My People Perish,” *Tabletalk* 3, no. 7 (August 1979): 1. For more on the rationale for the name *Tabletalk*, see “Table Talk,” (1977).

¹⁰³ Sproul, “Right Now Counts Forever: My People Perish,” (1979).

¹⁰⁴ Sproul, “Right Now Counts Forever: My People Perish,” (1979). To his credit, Sproul knew that this task was bigger than what the LVSC could do on its own. Launching a new Reformation required a larger coalition of lay-oriented scholars. “Certainly the materials that we present can be improved and we call upon those who are far better equipped than we are to join in the task of reaching the multitudes.” Sproul, “Right Now Counts Forever: My People Perish,” (1979).

¹⁰⁵ R. C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1998 [1985]), 164.

¹⁰⁶ Sproul, *The Holiness of God*, 164.

program of lay theological education.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, the need for “a modern reformation” had been on Sproul’s mind since at least the fall of 1977 when he unveiled an ambitious set of goals for the LVSC staff. In the face of “rising secularism and the instability it brings,” Sproul laid out an expansive vision: “What do we need? We need a new Reformation. Nothing less than a Reformation comparable to the 16th century Protestant Reformation will do. I am convinced that the future of Western Civilization is at stake. Reformation is not an option. It is a necessity.”¹⁰⁸ Drawing on the example of the Reformers, who met the challenge of their age by cultivating leaders who were “great scholars” but “not ivory tower scholars,” and who were willing and able to “make full use of the most advanced methods of communication available,” Sproul challenged the LVSC staff to a similar level of engagement that was “bold, yet disciplined and responsible.” In so doing he harnessed his ambitions for the future of the LVSC to a reformation past.

Ambition for Growth and Wider Influence

While the characteristics Sproul highlighted among the Reformers were accurate, they were also calculated for effect. By the fall of 1977 Sproul had decided that the LVSC needed to grow. After over six years of work the study center was still struggling to pay bills and expand beyond its primary identity as a regional training center. The lack of national prominence was not entirely for lack of trying. Sproul had attempted to raise the profile of the LVSC and build a larger coalition of Reformed scholars before 1977. In

¹⁰⁷ “The Mission of Ligonier,” *Tabletalk* 5, no. 7 (October 1981): 1. The full mission statement read: “To contribute to the cause of spiritual renewal and reformation through a teaching ministry designed to inform masses of people with Biblical content and to train key church and para-ministry leaders in Biblical truth including doctrine, practice, and cultural interpretation (theology, ethics, practical theology, and apologetics).”

¹⁰⁸ R. C. Sproul, “A Modern Reformation: Ligonier’s Vision,” *Tabletalk* 1, no. 6 (November 1977).

1974 the study center hosted leading evangelical scholars like Gerstner, J. I. Packer, Clark Pinnock, John Warwick Montgomery and others for what *Christianity Today* described as “a top-level conference on the inspiration and authority of Scripture.”¹⁰⁹ As a result of this conference the study center published *God’s Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture*.¹¹⁰ Edited by lawyer and Christian apologist John Warwick Montgomery (b. 1931), these essays spoke to American evangelicalism’s greatest internal controversy and paved the way for Sproul to become the first President of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI, f. 1977).¹¹¹ Framed as “a ten-year effort to study and defend the doctrine of biblical inerrancy,” the ICBI brought many of evangelicalism’s leading voices together around the issue of scriptural authority.¹¹² The organization’s influential 1978 “Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy” owed much to the work of the earlier conference at the LVSC.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ K. Eric Perrin, “Back to Basics,” *Christianity Today* 28, no. 4 (November 23, 1973): 56–57.

¹¹⁰ Conference on the Inspiration and Authority of Scripture, John Warwick Montgomery, and Ligonier Valley Study Center, eds., *God’s Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1974).

¹¹¹ Sproul served for a short time as President of the ICBI until his responsibilities at the study center and the loss of several key staff members prompted him to give up the position in 1979, see R. C. Sproul to Francis A. Schaeffer, June 21, 1979. Examples of the intra-evangelical skirmishes over the issue of inerrancy in the years surrounding the Ligonier Conference on Biblical Inerrancy abound. For Schaeffer’s desire to see inerrancy strengthened in the influential 1974 Lausanne Covenant, see “The View From Lausanne,” *Christianity Today* 18 (August 16, 1974): 35–37. For much of the 1970’s *Christianity Today*’s chief editor was Harold Lindsell. Lindsell’s polemical *Battle for the Bible* questioned whether Christians who did not unequivocally support biblical inerrancy could be called “evangelical.” See, Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1976), 210. In part, the struggle over inerrancy was the fall-out from a controversy that first burst onto the evangelical scene at Fuller Theological Seminary in the early 1960s. For more on the situation at Fuller, see George M Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1987), 197–233. The best treatment of evangelicals and the issue of inerrancy written by a non-evangelical is Gary J. Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998).

¹¹² “A Campaign For Inerrancy,” *Christianity Today* 22 (November 4, 1977): 51–52.

¹¹³ Nearly 300 individuals attended the October 1978 ICBI summit at the Chicago Hyatt Regency O’Hare Hotel. The final 5,000 word statement was approved by four fifths of those present. Packer and Sproul did the lion’s share of the writing for the project, with Sproul drafting the statement’s 19 articles.

Sproul's involvement in these conferences and the networks they represented helped to enlarge the scope of the LVSC's ministries, but the study center's greatest catalyst for growth came not through these large organizations but rather through the work of a consultant named Bobb Biehl. After working for several years on World Vision's executive team Biehl founded Masterplanning Group in 1976. Over the next four decades Biehl would become a key behind-the-scenes shaper of American evangelicalism as he advised "large, fast growing, churches," non-profit and for-profit organizations and served on boards as diverse as Duane Peterson's Jesus People USA (25 years) and James Dobson's Focus on the Family (31 years).¹¹⁴

Sproul contacted Biehl in 1976 after Archie Parrish, the Executive Director of Evangelism Explosion and mutual friend of both Sproul and Biehl, "challenged R. C. to expand his outreach and contact his chief consultant—Bobb Biehl."¹¹⁵ At first Sproul hesitated, telling his friend "I'm not a visionary, I am just a teacher." Over time, however, Sproul warmed to Parrish's advice. By the fall of 1977 Sproul had hired Biehl to consult with the LVSC. The implications of this relationship soon became apparent in Sproul's own sense of the study center's unrealized potential. Addressing his staff at their annual meeting he put forth a vision whose scope was immense. "I've caught Archie's vision and I pass it on to you," Sproul told his staff. "Here is where the Ligonier Valley Study Center is headed. Here is our game plan. Here are our goals. Here is what I'm giving

Notably, the ICBI's Executive Director, Jay Grimstead, was also the founder of "a small lay training center in the San Francisco Bay area." See, Donald Tinder, "Proinerrancy Forces Draft Their Platform," *Christianity Today* 23, no. 4 (November 17, 1978): 36–37. For another roughly contemporary assessment of the 1978 ICBI conference, see David P. Scaer, "International Council on Biblical Inerrancy: Summit II," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (April 1983): 153–58. For the full text of the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, see International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21, no. 4 (December 1978): 289–96.

¹¹⁴ Bobb Biehl, "Would You Like to Know a Bit About Me?," *Bobbbiehl.com*, <http://bobbbiehl.com/about/> (accessed June 13, 2016).

¹¹⁵ Sproul, "A Modern Reformation: Ligonier's Vision," (1977).

myself to for the next five years, God willing. Our goal is to have 100,000 people using our materials for education and encouragement on a regular basis by January 1, 1982.”¹¹⁶ For Sproul these projections symbolized his decision to lead the LVSC in a gear up for “maximum ministry”—a prerequisite if the study center staff hoped to “contribute to Reformation.”¹¹⁷

By the time Sproul addressed his staff in the fall of 1977 they were already well aware of some of the changes that came with Sproul and Biehl’s lofty goals. Changes designed to help the LVSC meet these new expectations had already led to what Sproul himself described as “a time of enormous stress, anxiety, and work-load for all of us” as “the security of our established patterns was upset and uncertainty of where we all fit in has been keenly felt.”¹¹⁸ In addition to concerns about staffing and programming, this shift in scope if not in emphasis was also accompanied by financial hardships as the study center raised its original 1977 budget from \$185,000 to \$250,000 over the course of one year. “That’s not boldness, that’s brinkmanship,” Sproul reflected. “We took enormous risks by putting together the kind of organizing and staff I’ve needed to reach our goals. I feel the weight of those risks everyday. The winter was a disaster and we were pushed to the wall....But we will end the year meeting this greatly increased budget.”¹¹⁹

Of the many staffing changes that eventually accompanied the study center’s structural overhaul, one of the more significant was the decision to name Stuart Boehmig,

¹¹⁶ Sproul, “A Modern Reformation: Ligonier’s Vision,” (1977).

¹¹⁷ It was not that the LVSC was alone responsible for catalyzing this “modern Reformation.” While the study center’s role was important Sproul noted that he and the staff “must do everything in our power to help the church because it is first and last the church who must be the chief instrument of Reformation.” See Sproul, “A Modern Reformation: Ligonier’s Vision,” (1977).

¹¹⁸ Sproul, “A Modern Reformation: Ligonier’s Vision,” (1977).

¹¹⁹ Sproul, “A Modern Reformation: Ligonier’s Vision,” (1977).

a new teacher at the study center, Executive Director of the LVSC. This shift in responsibility came at the direct suggestion of Beihl. According to Boehmig,

Bobb came in from California *a lot*, and spent days and days at the study center interviewing people [and] talking to people. His conclusion at the end of it [was that] he had a lot of methodology things that he was suggesting to us, but he also said...to R. C. “You need to be teaching and you need to be directing, but you need somebody to run it for you.”¹²⁰

Beihl’s time at the study center convinced him that Boehmig was the man for the job.

Soon the recent seminary graduate moved from a basic teaching role into what he describes as “a management role of implementing the new direction of LVSC.”¹²¹

Under Boehmig’s oversight the LVSC expanded its institutional reach by launching a monthly in-house newsletter, *Tabletalk*, in May of 1977. Named after the rousing conversations that took place around Martin Luther’s dinner table in Wittenberg, the publication was meant to embody the study center’s “conviction that the things of God should be regularly discussed in the course of everyday life.”¹²² Early on the newsletter was filled with a number of regular columns written by Sproul, Boehmig, and other LVSC staff members. By in large these regular columns were devoted to theological or biblical teaching, though Sproul often devoted space in his “Right Now Counts Forever” column to cultural commentary on issues ranging from a discussion of “the Pepsi Generation” to the prescient topic of violence in professional football.¹²³ More

¹²⁰ Boehmig, interview, 2016.

¹²¹ Boehmig, interview, 2016.

¹²² This was printed for a time on the *Tabletalk* masthead, see “The Mission of Ligonier,” *Tabletalk* 5 no 8 (November 1981), 1. For an English translation of Luther’s original dinner-table observations, see Martin Luther, *The Tabletalk of Martin Luther: Luther’s Comments on Life, the Church and the Bible* (Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus : Christian Heritage (imprint), 2003). The newsletter eventually shifted to a formal magazine publication but retained the name *Tabletalk*.

¹²³ Boehmig called *Tabletalk* “our primary teaching platform,” see Boehmig, interview, 2016. For examples of the range of topics covered in Sproul’s column, see R. C. Sproul, “Right Now Counts Forever: Roots in the Pepsi Generation,” *Tabletalk* 1, no. 1 (May 6, 1977); R. C. Sproul, “Right Now Counts Forever: God, Violence, Pro Football,” *Tabletalk* 1, no. 4 (September 1977); R. C. Sproul, “Right Now

than once politics was the focal point of Sproul's reflections as he demonstrated that his biblical conservatism often translated into political conservatism as well. Though Sproul noted that "even a cursory reading of Scripture makes it evident that God cares about poor people" he was not convinced that government involvement through an unbalanced budget or greater taxation would help America's poor.¹²⁴ Writing in his regular column in February of 1981 Sproul opined:

The principle of redistribution of wealth to benefit the greatest number is an idea whose time should be over...In every experiment in world history of forceful redistribution of a people's wealth the bottom line was a *lowering* of the people's standard of living. As a weapon against poverty it is proven folly. Yet we continue to dream of a great society where everyone will be equally prosperous. Government grows bigger and bigger, taxation becomes heavier and heavier and the nation's wealth shrinks smaller and smaller.¹²⁵

In the same issue Sproul included a modern parable that ranged far from the magazine's typical fare. "The Parable of Peter The Profit-Making Pork Producer, or The Ballot is a Bullet" was an anti-taxation screed aimed at the excesses of big government. "Regal Ronnie," a thinly disguised allusion to Ronald Reagan, featured prominently in Sproul's fictionalized account.¹²⁶

As important as these teaching articles were, however, *Tabletalk's* greatest contribution to the study center's mission came not through its informational columns, but rather through the publication's ability to raise the study center's profile and market the materials Sproul and his staff were producing in ever increasing quantities. According

Counts Forever: Terrorism," *Tabletalk* 2, no. 5 (July 1978). In its early years *Tabletalk* had the feel of an in house newsletter. Regular columns like "Meet the Staff" and "The Fieldmouse," which outlined the accomplishments of staff members and their children give a feel for the community-based ethos that defined the study center through most of the 1970s. Eventually, these columns were done away with or were replaced with more formal ones like "LVSC News."

¹²⁴ R. C. Sproul, "Right Now Counts Forever: Theology and 'Reaganomics,'" *Tabletalk* 6, no. 1 (February 1982).

¹²⁵ R. C. Sproul, "Right Now Counts Forever: Robbing Hood," *Tabletalk* 5, no. 2 (February 1981).

¹²⁶ R. C. Sproul, "The Parable of Peter the Profit-Making Pork Producer, or the Ballot Is a Bullet," *Tabletalk* 5, no. 3 (March 1981).

to Boehmig, “Our whole goal at that point administratively was to build our mail list and to build our visibility with people.”¹²⁷ As a free publication *Tabletalk* did much to help grow the study center’s mailing list.¹²⁸ Between 1977 and 1979 the LVSC mailing list nearly tripled in size from 3,550 to 10,261.¹²⁹ Such an increase in distribution frequently pushed the study center staff to the edge of financial viability. In the same report in which Sproul had noted the large increase in the LVSC mailing list, he also informed readers that while *Tabletalk* functioned as “a much appreciated ministry,” it also “represents a growth problem” as publishing costs rose along with the list.¹³⁰ A few times, finances got so tight that Sproul made the decision to alter *Tabletalk*’s format or stop publication altogether for a month.¹³¹ Overtime these financial realities led Sproul and his staff to adopt a trimmed-down quarterly publishing schedule in the fall of 1981.¹³² *Tabletalk* would continue to serve as the ministry’s primary publication throughout the rest of Sproul’s career.

One of the reasons that Sproul and the LVSC staff continued the production of *Tabletalk* throughout the latter half of the 1970s and into the 1980s in spite of the heavy financial burden stemmed from the pivotal role the publication played in the study center’s marketing strategy. While early issues of *Tabletalk* included a number of substantive articles, the average reader could be forgiven for mistaking the publication

¹²⁷ Boehmig, interview, 2016.

¹²⁸ The LVSC built their mailing list by recommending that current subscribers send their friends a free subscription, see “Send a Friend Something for Nothing: Send *Tabletalk*,” *Tabletalk* 2, no. 4 (June 1978): 5.

¹²⁹ Sproul, “The Year in Review” (1979), 3.

¹³⁰ Sproul, “The Year in Review” (1979), 3. Sproul noted that costs for *Tabletalk* had grown from \$700 dollars an issue in 1977 to around \$3,000 an issue in 1979. Noting that “we frankly don’t know what to do,” Sproul solicited recommendations, telling his readers to “write me if you have an idea.”

¹³¹ The format was altered in order to cut costs for the month of September in 1979, see Sproul, “The Year in Review,” (1979). *Tabletalk* was not published in June of 1980 and 1981, see “No June *Tabletalk*!,” *Tabletalk* 4, no. 6 (July 1980); “*Tabletalk* in Transistion,” *Tabletalk* 5, no. 5 (July 1981): 2.

¹³² “*Tabletalk* Decision Reached,” *Tabletalk* 5, no. 8 (November 1981).

for a Christian book supplier's mail-order catalogue. In the magazine's first year of publication (May 1977-April 1978) just under half of its total pages were devoted to either explicit appeals for support or to advertising the study center's programs and products.¹³³ Three years later (May of 1980-April of 1981) over fifty percent of the pages in *Tabletalk* were devoted to advertising products ranging from the LVSC cookbook (*Our Favorite Recipes*) and "Christian Education Audits" to new residence programs and videotapes.¹³⁴ One of the things that set *Tabletalk* apart from the underground newspapers of the early 1970s and Christian and secular periodicals alike was the uniformity of advertisements presented in *Tabletalk*'s pages. *Tabletalk* took no paid advertisements. All marketing within the magazine was directed back into the study center or back into the publication and teaching ministry of Sproul himself.

By the end of the 1970s Biehl's marketing and organizational savvy had combined with Sproul's natural abilities to help transform Sproul and the LVSC into a brand. The result was a gradual, perhaps only somewhat intentional, shift away from Sproul's original first-among-equals leadership style based on a team of fellow teachers to a ministry that more and more revolved around his own personality. From the beginning of his involvement with the LVSC Biehl had called Sproul "the goose that laid the golden eggs" and had challenged Boehmig and other LVSC staff members "to take

¹³³ Determining what articles counted as promotional was difficult because many of the articles detailing events at the LVSC were implicitly promoting the study center. For the most part I did not count these articles as advertisements except in the case of the "Meet the Student" features. Based on my designations regarding what features were informational and what were advertisements, I found that between May of 1977 and April of 1978, 53 (or 46%) of *Tabletalk*'s 115 pages were devoted to advertisements or fundraising. In most cases these appeals were unmistakable.

¹³⁴ 62 of *Tabletalk*'s 118 pages during this twelve-month period were devoted explicitly or implicitly to marketing or fundraising. This does not count the ten-page "Ligonier Valley Study Center Audio/Video Tape Catalogue" that appeared in the April 1981 issue. If this supplement is counted the percentage of *Tabletalk*'s pages devoted to marketing or self-promotion rises to 59%.

those eggs and get them out to people in a way that was going to generate [more ministry and resources].”¹³⁵

In addition to the publication of *Tabletalk* two other decisions that traced back at least in part to Biehl’s recommendations also dramatically influenced the future course of Sproul’s ministry. The first of these decisions concerned an overhaul of the LVSC Board of Directors. In early 1979 the LVSC board voted “to expand from 7 members to a maximum of 21 members.”¹³⁶ Soon the original in-house board made up of LVSC staff had expanded to include numerous executives and nationally known figures like Charles Colson. Drawn from across the country this new board by its very makeup had less direct connection to the everyday rhythm of life at the study center or the sense of place that the study center represented. Being less tied to a place, the implementation of a new board model at the LVSC marked a subtle but significant departure from the study center’s first seven years of ministry. It was a departure made possible—even preferable to some—by the study center’s success in the relatively new field of videotaped ministry. In the years to come it would be Sproul’s decision to invest heavily in the new technology of videotape that would enable his transformation from a local star to a national evangelical celebrity.

¹³⁵ Boehmig, remembers Biehl emphasizing “that as you create that ministry out there then it creates resources for you. So we created a product. It created a ministry, and that ministry as it fed people and changed people created resources of their giving and of their buying of the materials.” Boehmig notes that “this is what I was supposed to implement, which I did because I believed in it.” See Boehmig, interview, 2016.

¹³⁶ “New Directors Join Board,” *Table Talk* 3, no. 6 (July 1979): 1.

The Video Revolution Comes to Stahlstown

In August of 1984 a Newsweek cover story proclaimed that a “Video Revolution” was changing the way Americans watched television. “The boom in VCR’s is overturning the tyranny of television” the article declared citing research that the number of American households with at least one VCR stood at 10 million—a number on pace to grow to 15 million by the end of the year.¹³⁷ By 1987 Newsweek predicted that one in three American households would own a VCR.¹³⁸ Even Richard Snyder, chairman of the influential Simon and Shuster Publishing House, found himself admitting that “Home video...is going to be the next major mass medium.”¹³⁹ Consumer statistics were already proving him right. By the late summer of 1984 the top-selling Hollywood film (*Raiders of the Lost Ark*) had sold over 600,000 copies, while top-selling videos in newer genres like *Jane Fonda’s Workout* and the documentary/music video *Making Michael Jackson’s Thriller* had sold 420,000 and 450,000 units respectively.¹⁴⁰

At the heart of this success was the frequently repeated claim that video, with its “time-shifting” capabilities, freed Americans from the control of broadcast TV. As Newsweek declared, “The theme of this uprising is power to the people. Ever since the television set took control of the American family, it has ruled dictatorially... More than any other system the VCR lets viewers overturn television’s tyranny.”¹⁴¹ With these liberating and democratizing characteristics, video tapped into what historian Michael Z.

¹³⁷ Eric Gelman et al., “The Video Revolution: How the VCR Is Changing What You Watch,” *Newsweek*, August 6, 1984, 50. Internationally, the number of VCRs sold by the end of 1984 totaled 68 million, see Wasser, *Veni, Vidi, Video*, 74.

¹³⁸ Gelman et al., “The Video Revolution: How the VCR Is Changing What You Watch,” 52.

¹³⁹ Gelman, et al., “The Video Revolution,” 1984, 50.

¹⁴⁰ Gelman, et al., “The Video Revolution,” 1984, 53.

¹⁴¹ Gelman, et al., “The Video Revolution,” 1984, 51.

Newman describes as the American people's "quasi-religious faith in electronic technology."¹⁴²

When the technology that would eventually undergird this video revolution first emerged such sweeping success was hardly imaginable. Magnetic video recording was first developed in the United States in the early 1950s, but it was Japanese engineers in the 1970s who developed video technology that was both desirable and affordable for a mass market.¹⁴³ The key to the success of Japanese products like Sony's Betamax (1975) and Matsushita's VHS (1977) was that they offered both playback *and* recording capabilities.¹⁴⁴ The latter feature was a must for both American and Japanese consumers.¹⁴⁵ In fact, it was a suggestion related to recording made by individuals at RCA, one of the primary American marketers of Matsushita's VHS recorders, that eventually helped the VHS format overtake Sony's earlier Betamax technology. The Americans at RCA recommended that Matsushita increase the length of VHS tapes from two hours to four hours—a timeframe long enough to record an American football game.¹⁴⁶ By 1978 VHS was the dominant video format in the United States and was beginning to appear in homes outside of the nation's "income elite."¹⁴⁷ As production rose and prices fell from roughly \$800 a unit in 1975 to just over \$300 a unit in 1984, the

¹⁴² Michael Z. Newman, *Video Revolutions: On the History of a Medium*, 2014, ix, 20.

¹⁴³ In 1984 Newsweek dated the American invention of video recording to 1961, see Eric Gelman et al., "The Video Revolution: How the VCR Is Changing What You Watch," 51. In reality magnetic audiotapes had been in use since the 1930s and magnetic videotapes had been developed in the 1950s, see Wasser, *Veni, Vidi, Video*, 53-60. CBS devoted millions of dollars to the "first high-profile home video unit" in the late 1960s, but ended the project in 1970 due to questions about video's viability (60-61). Japanese engineers did develop the U-Matic videotape system in 1969. It was adopted in the United States primarily as an educational technology for classroom and industrial use. Ford Motor Company bought 4,000 U-Matic machines in 1972 as tools for employee education, but these machines did not catch on with the general public. See Newman, *Video Revolutions: On the History of a Medium*, 21-22.

¹⁴⁴ Wasser, *Veni, Vidi, Video*, 70-73.

¹⁴⁵ Wasser, *Veni, Vidi, Video*, 69.

¹⁴⁶ Wasser, *Veni, Vidi, Video*, 72.

¹⁴⁷ Wasser, *Veni, Vidi, Video*, 91.

VCR became a standard feature of American society.¹⁴⁸ During its golden years (1981-1986) home video became big business, as major film companies, cable networks, and a small army of video rental-store owners sprang into action to grab a portion of the revenue generated by the new medium.¹⁴⁹

Evangelical Christians were not far behind their secular peers in the appropriation of video. Like generations of evangelicals before them, evangelicals in the late twentieth century proved remarkably quick on their feet when it came to adapting to changes in media. Not only did televangelists make the most of the emergence of cable television stations, in the late 1970s a fast-growing market for Christian home video emerged just as the Christian film industry began to flounder.¹⁵⁰ In the late 1970s evangelicals like James Dobson, a child-psychologist turned evangelical family guru, discovered the power of video when coupled with the marketing savvy of a Christian publishing house. In 1978 the Texas-based Word, Inc. approached Dobson about videotaping and marketing his seminars on Christian parenting. The success of this symbiotic relationship soon inspired what has been termed “The Dobson Effect,” as numerous other publishing houses and “megacommunicators” sought to cash in on the phenomenon of “series and seminar films

¹⁴⁸ Gelman et al., “The Video Revolution: How the VCR Is Changing What You Watch.”

¹⁴⁹ Wasser, *Veni, Vidi, Video*, 81-136. The high price of video cassettes (often \$79.00) helped give rise to a new marketing strategy—the video rental store. By 1979 there were 700 rental stores in the United States. This number continued to grow until it crested in 1989. By that time there were 30,000 rental stores in the United States, see Wasser, *Veni, Vidi, Video*, 101.

¹⁵⁰ For more on evangelical’s history of innovation in and appropriation of various forms of media, see Candy Gunther Brown, *The Word in the World: Evangelical Writing, Publishing, and Reading in America, 1789-1880* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*; Eskridge, *God’s Forever Family*. For more on televangelism and Christian home video, see Eithne Johnson, “The Emergence of Christian Video and the Cultivation of Videoevangelism,” in *Media Culture & the Religious Right*, ed. Linda Kintz and Julia Lesage (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 194.

on ‘the family.’”¹⁵¹ Soon “talking head” videos featuring what historian Eithne Johnson describes as “the professional lecturer specializing in Christian lifestyle issues” became a staple of Christian bookstores, church libraries, and home video collections as evangelicals demonstrated their individual tastes and growing purchasing power.¹⁵² As early as 1981 *Christianity Today* signaled the coming of age of video by devoting nearly an entire issue to Christian media.¹⁵³ By 1984 the video market had expanded enough to prompt the publication to include an eighteen-page “Special Advertising Section” entitled “How to Use Christian Film and Video.”¹⁵⁴

Sproul and the LVSC staff did all they could to harness the vast potential of video. Years before “The Dobson Effect,” took effect, the video revolution was already transforming Sproul’s ministry at LVSC. This was in large part due to the effort and foresight of an enterprising young videographer named Jack Rowley. Almost singlehandedly, Rowley propelled Sproul to the forefront of evangelicals in the realm of

¹⁵¹ Eithne Johnson, “The Emergence of Christian Video and the Cultivation of Videoevangelism,” 197. The “Dobson Effect” seems to have been recognized first in a 1987 *Christianity Today* special advertising piece, “An Industry on the Move,” *Christianity Today* 17 (April 1987): 50, 54–55.

¹⁵² On the growth of Christian consumerism and evangelical individualism, see Johnson, “The Emergence of Christian Video and the Cultivation of Videoevangelism”; James Davison Hunter, *American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983), 73-101. As Hunter notes, evangelicals did not create these trends; rather, they “accommodated” to larger trends in American life, perhaps the greatest of which include individualism and an emphasis on marketability. Two of the most notable sociological discussions of individualism in American life are: Robert N. Bellah, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Robert D Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000). During the years under review in this chapter evangelicals gained steadily in terms of affluence, see Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power*.

¹⁵³ Articles that touched on video in this edition of *Christianity Today* included: Theodore Baehr, “Tangled Christian Telecommunication,” *Christianity Today* 25, no. 20 (November 20, 1981): 34–35; Carol R. Thiessen, “Now a Guide to Religious Video/Tape/Disc Programs,” *Christianity Today* 25, no. 20 (November 20, 1981): 35–36; Dennis H. Tegtmeier, “Congregational Video: A Viable Ministry,” *Christianity Today* 25, no. 20 (November 20, 1981): 36. The latter was especially optimistic about the place of video ministry within the local church. Tegtmeier described how his church used a small VHS unit “to carry church services to elderly and shut-in members.” Tegtmeier also offered advice on which systems to buy (VHS, not Beta or U-MATIC), and predicted that “Recent breakthroughs in camera technology put videotape ministry within reach of the skills and budget of most congregations.”

¹⁵⁴ “How to Use Christian Film and Video,” *Christianity Today* 28, no. 13 (September 24, 1984): 35–53.

videotaped teaching. After serving in the military Rowley had cut his teeth in video production as the director of video education for General Electric's jet engine division, where he produced instructional videos used by the Israeli Air Force and maintenance workers.¹⁵⁵ On the side, Rowley also worked as an independent consultant with Kroger Co., where he helped the supermarket chain develop an in-house TV facility. A technology geek, Rowley soon bought his own videotaping equipment and began experimenting with the medium.

As his appreciation for the potential of video grew Rowley began to think that video might offer him and others among Sproul's former students in Cincinnati a chance to once again experience the presence of their favorite teacher. In mid-1974 Rowley wrote to Sproul offering to videotape some of his lectures. At first Sproul was hesitant to accept Rowley's offer; however, after learning that Rowley owned his own videotaping equipment and motorhome and therefore would neither charge the LVSC for these services nor take up any of the LVSC's limited housing, Sproul did eventually give his assent to the project.¹⁵⁶ Over Thanksgiving weekend 1974 the video revolution came to Stahlstown without fanfare in the Rowley motorhome.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Sproul, interview, 2016.

¹⁵⁶ Sproul was also likely unsure of video's potential. In 1974, before Sony released the Betamax system, videotape was such a new medium that most people were still unaware of its existence. Rowley helped the Sprouls appreciate the power of video by taping the Pittsburgh Steelers' first Super Bowl victory in January of 1975 and then sending it to the Sprouls. The capacity to watch the game again and in one's own home made a big impression on Sproul's nine-year-old son: "I had never heard of videocassettes. My friends had never heard of videocassettes—the idea that you could tape off of the television was just staggering and mind-boggling to us. The idea of filming something made sense. People filmed stuff all the time, like when we first filmed the "Holiness of God" that wasn't that weird, but the idea that you could watch it on your T.V. or that you could tape something off your T.V. was just very strange. My friends would come over, and I would ask, "Do you want to watch the Super Bowl?" And they would say, "What do you mean do I want to watch the Super Bowl? That was months ago." We had one of the great big heavy tabletop, top-loading things, and you had to go in a special room to watch it. So that was...to know about this technology before anyone had even heard of it was bizarre." See, Sproul, Jr., interview, 2016.

¹⁵⁷ Unless otherwise noted, the details of Rowley's early involvement at the study center are all taken from a 2016 phone interview with Jack Rowley.

Rowley's Thanksgiving trip was the beginning of what would become one of Sproul's most influential and long lasting professional partnerships.¹⁵⁸ Though Rowley did not officially join the LVSC staff as Media Director until August of 1977, his 1974 trip to the study center was the first of what would become a regular commute from Cincinnati to Stahlstown. The tapes were received with enough enthusiasm by Sproul's former College Hill students that Rowley made a follow-up trip over the 1974/1975 Christmas and January break. Over the course of the next year Rowley made twelve trips to the LVSC to videotape Sproul. In the next two years Rowley showed Sproul's taped lectures in ten Cincinnati churches and hosted numerous video Bible studies in his home, sometimes hosting as many as three Bible studies a week.¹⁵⁹

When Rowley joined the LVSC staff in 1977 it signaled Sproul's decision to follow the trajectory of expanded ministry, which Biehl had outlined the year before. In addition to hiring Rowley to focus on expanding the study center's videotape offerings Sproul also worked to acquire the rights to the study center's audiocassettes, which Jim Thompson's Thompson Media had owned since 1971.¹⁶⁰ The study center finalized the purchase "of all tapes of lectures given by members of the LVSC staff" on April 1, 1977.¹⁶¹ Together with the development of videotapes—the rights to which the study center owned from the start—this purchase marked a strategic shift toward developing

¹⁵⁸ Rowley joined the LVSC staff in 1977 and remained on the Ligonier Ministry staff throughout the entirety of Sproul's career. He was the only individual to do this.

¹⁵⁹ "Meet the Staff: The Rowleys," *Tabletalk* 2, no. 3 (May 1978): 5.

¹⁶⁰ Thompson supported his family in part by renting out Sproul's tapes at ten cents a day, see Rowley, interview, 2016. Thompson's company also recorded and sold tapes featuring leading evangelical speakers from venues outside the study center like the CCO's Pittsburgh Jubilee conferences. Thompson continued to produce and market these tapes after he stopped recording tapes at the LVSC. See, "Jubilee '78: Keep It Going with Cassettes from Thompson Media" (Thompson Media, 1978), Dale Myers, personal collection; "Jubilee 1981."

¹⁶¹ "LVSC Begins Own Tape Ministry," *Tabletalk* 1, no. 1 (May 6, 1977).

more diversified income stream.¹⁶² By 1978 the decision was reaping noticeable dividends. Not only was the exciting medium of video attracting larger numbers of students to Sproul's teaching, the study center's media ministry was already showing its promise as "a vital source of income for Ligonier."¹⁶³

Well aware of current trends within videocassette technology, Rowley sensed rightly that the rise in popularity of home-video recorders offered a promising market for Sproul's teaching. He also knew, however, that the vast majority of churches and individuals still had little access to the technology necessary to play video. Furthermore, even where the necessary technology was available, few pastors or lay leaders understood how to use the equipment. In order to help rectify this knowledge and technology gap Rowley began writing numerous *Tabletalk* articles and eventually a regular column on "Audio/Visual" topics.

Rowley began writing about videotape in earnest in the spring of 1979. In articles like "Video Revolution Begins," "Video Education: A Reality for You," "What to Consider Before Beginning a Videotape Ministry," and "How Many Can You Reach With A Video Ministry," Rowley outlined a rationale for video ministry that extended beyond the success of the LVSC.¹⁶⁴ While it was true that if the LVSC was "to reach our goal of helping 100,000 students by 1982...every means of mass communication will be

¹⁶² In one of his early efforts to cast a larger vision for the LVSC Sproul laid out the need to "build our resource base on a solid foundation" through a diversified funding model based on increasing "our support from churches and fees and tape-resource income." See R. C. Sproul, "A Modern Reformation: Ligonier's Vision."

¹⁶³ "Meet the Staff: The Rowleys," 5.

¹⁶⁴ Jack Rowley, "Video Revolution Begins," *Table Talk* 3, no. 3 (April 1979): 12; Jack Rowley, "Video Education: A Reality for You," *Tabletalk* 3, no. 4 (May 1979): 12; Jack Rowley, "What to Consider Before Starting a Video Ministry," *Tabletalk* 3, no. 5 (June 1979): 12; Jack Rowley, "How Many Can You Reach With A Video Ministry?," *Tabletalk* 3, no. 6 (n.d.): 12.

necessary,” Rowley also outlined a plan for church-based and eventually home-based video ministry that could help other ministries grow.¹⁶⁵

These articles also offered an array of practical tips from choosing between U-MATIC, Betamax, and VHS systems (all formats offered in multiple speeds by the LVSC as late as 1980), selecting the appropriate wiring scheme when utilizing multiple television sets, or determining how many individuals could comfortably view a teaching video at one time.¹⁶⁶ At times Rowley offered common-sense pedagogical strategies such as recommending a ten-minute discussion time after a video or limiting home-based video studies to the “ideal” size of “about ten people.”¹⁶⁷ In other instances, he put his expert technical knowledge on display.

Let me suggest a very inexpensive way to add up to four TV sets in a large classroom situation. A video player has but one RF output, the modulated signal which is normally fed to the antenna input of the TV set. That RF output can be connected to a “splitter” that will accept one input and supply up to four outputs...For minimum signal loss and most durability, use coaxial cable. Be sure to purchase RG-59 coax since it matches the impedances incorporated within the player and TV set. You can even obtain RG-59 in long runs so that it can be cut up and tailored to your classroom layout. “F” connectors for the ends of the cable lengths are available from electronic stores...The maximum, unamplified distance you can locate a TV set from the player is one thousand feet. However, the more TV sets connected to a splitter, the weaker the signal; so you had better not plan on getting as far as one thousand feet without a noticeable loss in quality. You may have to experiment a little...We have already tried just about every combination and arrangement of equipment and people possible. In any case, God will honor your efforts and give you increase.¹⁶⁸

Even with all of Rowley’s help, however, the demands of setting up a video ministry often seemed too complex or cost-prohibitive for local churches. Rowley had more

¹⁶⁵ Rowley, “Video Revolution Begins,” 12.

¹⁶⁶ For the study center’s use of all three video formats, see Jack Rowley, “Audio/Video: Video Equipment,” *Tabletalk* 4, no. 1 (January 1980).

¹⁶⁷ Rowley, “What to Consider Before Starting a Video Ministry,” 12; Rowley, “How Many Can You Reach With A Video Ministry?” 12.

¹⁶⁸ Jack Rowley, “How Many Can You Reach With A Video Ministry?”

advice for churches faced with these issues. If money was a concern, churches could rent tapes for an affordable fee. If coordinating video ministry was an issue, Rowley suggested that a church designate a “video manager.”¹⁶⁹ If the church was close enough, Rowley and other LVSC staff members were even willing to bring and assemble the necessary equipment at the viewing sight.¹⁷⁰

While it is impossible to quantify the extent to which Rowley’s “how to” pieces impacted the overall willingness of churches to incorporate video teaching into their regular programming, it seems likely that Rowley’s articles prompted at least some congregations to try their hand at video ministry. Because of this Rowley’s articles often functioned as implicit marketing pieces for LVSC materials. They joined more explicit marketing campaigns designed to help the study center reach the ambitious goals set in 1977. From the beginning *Tabletalk* featured regular “Tape of the Month” advertisements. In the fall of 1980 Linda Rowley, a longtime partner with her husband in the actual filming of video, was hired as Ligonier’s first salesperson to “handle all questions and inquiries related to video” and “schedule the viewing of video series in churches.”¹⁷¹ In this position Linda Rowley often spent at least four hours a day cold-calling churches in an effort to develop new markets for LVSC materials.¹⁷² Eventually, she also began writing page-length promotional reviews of *Tabletalk*’s featured video series each quarter.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ For Rowley’s suggestion of a video manger, see Jack Rowley, “Is Your Church Using Video? You Need A Video Manager,” *Tabletalk* 3, no. 10 (November 1979).

¹⁷⁰ Rowley, interview, 2016.

¹⁷¹ “The Field Mouse,” *Tabletalk* 4, no. 10 (November 1980). On Rowley as the first LVSC salesperson, see Rowley, interview, 2016.

¹⁷² Rowley, interview, 2016.

¹⁷³ Rowley, interview, 2016. For a brief period of time Linda Rowley authored a column titled “Tapetalk.” For an example, see Linda Rowley, “Tapetalk: Knowing Scripture,” *Tabletalk* 7, no. 4 (September 1983): 10, 14.

By the early 1980s the study center’s videotape ministry was fast garnering national attention. In some cases individuals like John MacArthur, the prominent pastor of Grace Community Church in Los Angeles, sent representatives to the LVSC to learn more about developing a ministry system of their own.¹⁷⁴ Through better production and increased marketing Sproul’s influence was becoming more extensive within American evangelicalism, especially among lay evangelicals in Reformed circles. The biggest boost to Sproul’s profile came in 1982—a year Rowley described at the time as “the breakthrough year for video.”¹⁷⁵ During that year Dora Hillman financed the construction of a new building designated as a video production studio. Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous “major donor” from Wichita, Kansas, the new studio was outfitted with over \$100,000 worth of state-of-the-art video equipment.¹⁷⁶ At the same time Tyndale House Publishers also approached Sproul with “a plan to distribute [his] tapes.”¹⁷⁷ In the official announcement of this new partnership *Tabletalk* described how the study center’s “involvement with Tyndale in placing video cassettes in Christian Bookstores throughout our nation” gave “greater visibility in teaching the Word of God.”¹⁷⁸ The decision to partner with Tyndale for marketing and distribution purposes also aligned well with the LVSC’s reshaped mission to “contribute to the cause of spiritual renewal and reformation” by educating “masses of people.”¹⁷⁹ To Sproul and the LVSC staff, the

¹⁷⁴ Rowley, interview, 2016. Rowley dates this visit to 1983.

¹⁷⁵ Jack Rowley, “LVSC Video: Small Beginnings...New Horizons,” *Tabletalk* 6, no. 4 (October 1982).

¹⁷⁶ Rowley, interview, 2016. The figure \$100,000 is Rowley’s estimate.

¹⁷⁷ Rowley, “LVSC Video”; On the major donor from Kansas, see Rowley, interview, 2016. Rowley did not identify the donor by name.

¹⁷⁸ “Ligonier Valley News,” *Tabletalk* 6, no. 4 (October 1982): 12. In a testament to Rowley’s expertise, Tyndale hosted both Jack and Linda Rowley at the company’s Executive Offices, where the Rowley’s conducted a seminar on the use of video in churches.

¹⁷⁹ Between 1971 and 1985 Sproul and the LVSC Board adjusted the wording of the LVSC mission multiple times. This quotation comes from “The Mission of Ligonier,” which was published on the

growth of Sproul's ministry was an important contributor to the needed modern reformation. As Rowley noted in 1980, "in order to have sufficient impact upon a culture which seems to be running out of time, it would seem reasonable to make use of every means of mass communication possible."¹⁸⁰ The LVSC spared no energy in seeking to do just that.

More than simply elevating the profile of the entire study center, the partnership with Tyndale, because of the fact that it was predominantly Sproul's tapes that were marketed, gave much greater visibility to Sproul as a "widely acclaimed communicator" and master teacher.¹⁸¹ From at least the early 1980s and possibly from the time of Biehl's involvement, the work of the LVSC moved away from a team-based, residential ministry toward a ministry increasingly focused on Sproul's individual abilities. By 1982 in addition to purchasing general LVSC materials such as audio and video tapes, "Marriage Enrichment Surveys," the "Christian Education Audit," and copies of the "LVSC cookbook," *Tabletalk* readers could also support Sproul's individual radio teaching ministry directly through the "Luke Club," or even buy a membership in "The Romans Club," which *Tabletalk* billed as "a special fellowship of people with whom R.C. will stay in regular contact, focusing on Romans—a perennial study group with whom R.C. will share new insights."¹⁸² Once a feature of the overall study center experience, by 1982

Masthead of *Tabletalk* in October of 1981. In its entirety it reads: "To contribute to the cause of spiritual renewal and reformation through a teaching ministry designed to inform masses of people with Biblical content and to train key church and paraministry leaders in Biblical truth including doctrine, practice, and cultural interpretation (theology, ethics, practical theology, and apologetics)."

¹⁸⁰ Rowley, "Audio/Video: Video Equipment."

¹⁸¹ "Dr. R. C. Sproul, Noted Theologian and Widely Acclaimed Communicator Will Be Speaking at Grace Presbyterian Church."

¹⁸² For more on The Luke Club, see "The Luke Club," *Tabletalk* 6, no. 2 (April 1982); "Join R. C. in an LVSC Club Today!," *Tabletalk* 7, no. 1 (February 1983). For more on The Romans Club, see "The Romans Club," *Tabletalk* 6, no. 4 (October 1982): 13.

even “regular contact” with Sproul was something that could be systematized and marketed.

By 1984 the study center’s video ministry was thriving. As *Tabletalk* predicted as early as February 1978, by the mid 1980s the VCR had indeed become a part of many American homes.¹⁸³ More consumers meant more revenue from video, but expanded production demands also meant more production costs. In 1985 Ligonier’s new Executive Vice President Ralph D. Veerman noted that high production costs for videotapes meant that the study center barely broke even and certainly was not getting rich from video sales.¹⁸⁴ What the numbers did not directly show, however, was the way in which Sproul’s ability to produce and widely market video led to contributions from a wider pool of individuals. Thus, while Veerman could note that “video expenses are higher than income but we see audio/video outreach as a ministry and not as a source of ‘profit,’” it was still true that video played a key role in helping to mobilize the approximately two-thirds of the ministry’s budget that came from contributions.¹⁸⁵

Like Veerman, Sproul could also identify some unforeseen consequences that stemmed from the ministry’s growing video presence. While the overall impact of video was positive, the entire ministry had to adapt to the time constraints that accompanied videotapes designed to be used in church and Sunday School settings. In the early years of videotaped ministry at the study center Sproul’s sermons would range in their duration, sometimes lasting nearly an hour. Once video became a key emphasis, however, Sproul’s

¹⁸³ “By 1985 You Will Have a Video Recorder in Your Home.,” *Tabletalk* 1, no. 8 (February 1, 1978).

¹⁸⁴ Ralph D. Veerman, “Ligonier News: Ethics,” *Tabletalk* 9, no. 4 (August 1985): 2. Veerman’s hiring demonstrated the close ties between Sproul’s Ligonier Ministries and Colson’s Prison Fellowship. Veerman came to Ligonier following a stint on the staff of Prison Fellowship, see “LVSC News: New Appointment.”

¹⁸⁵ Veerman, “Ligonier News: Ethics,” 2.

teaching was usually shortened to twenty-minute chunks of time in order to afford room for follow up discussions in Sunday school classrooms.¹⁸⁶ Consumer demand also meant that Sproul often felt forced to teach on subjects he saw as of secondary importance. In a 1981 Right Now Counts Forever piece entitled “Frustrations of a Christian Educator,” Sproul noted that while a need existed for “heavier” teaching because “content changes lives,” most Christians who purchased materials from the LVSC voted with dollars for lighter subjects.

When we spend money to advertise or promote series like the Holiness of God or other ‘non-practical’ teaching tapes we lose our collective shirts. They are a disaster at the ‘box office.’ I know, for example, that if we advertise a lecture series that speaks directly to a *felt* need, such as improving marriages, dealing with teenage sexual problems, and the like, we will almost certainly break even in our expenses and perhaps do a little better. But if we attempt to promote something like The Holiness of God, I know going in, we are going to incur a serious deficit.¹⁸⁷

Even as video opened up new doors of influence for Sproul and the study center, the new medium and the consumer’s will proved difficult to contain. Sproul and Rowley certainly shaped the LVSC’s video content, but video also shaped the LVSC.

Leaving Residential Learning Behind: The Transition from Study Center to Ligonier Ministries

By the time Veerman penned his breakdown of the ministry’s budget in 1985, the LVSC as a *place* had ceased to exist. Ligonier Ministries, an Orlando-based ministry dedicated to the production of Sproul’s teaching via large conferences, publishing, and various forms of mass media, had taken its place. Sproul’s relocation from the residential

¹⁸⁶ Jack Rowley, “How Many Can You Reach With A Video Ministry?”

¹⁸⁷ R. C. Sproul, “Right Now Counts Forever: Frustrations of a Christian Educator,” *Tabletalk* 5, no. 4 (April 1981): 2.

Stahlstown study center to a small office complex in the Orlando suburbs had occurred the previous summer, but the change had been a long time coming. Since at least 1976 when Sproul hired Biehl to begin consulting with the ministry, the study center's transition from a regional, residential training center to a national and international producer of lay education materials had shaped Sproul's vision for his own ministry and with it, life at the LVSC.¹⁸⁸

While the publication of *Tabletalk* and the development of a well-honed video production and marketing team had helped to facilitate this transition, two major changes in the study center's leadership structure made the shift away from a relational, multifaceted ministry toward a mass-produced ministry based on streamlined intellectual content possible. The first of these was a Beihl-inspired reorganization of the LVSC board in 1979. It would be this board, made up of ministry and business leaders from across the nation, who would eventually decide without Sproul's knowledge that Sproul's gifts would be best utilized if the ministry left behind its taxing and costly residential emphasis and focused instead on conducting a national ministry headquartered in a major metropolitan area. It did not take much to convince Sproul that they were right.

Of course, this change could never have taken place when Dora Hillman was alive. Throughout the study center's first decade no one had been as firm a supporter of Sproul or as generous with finances as Hillman. The study center's very location had been moved from Pittsburgh's Oakland district to its bucolic setting in Stahlstown because Hillman—"a thundering paradox of a woman," who was both an "exuberant

¹⁸⁸ As individuals like Boehmig and Sproul, Jr. attest, these changes, while perhaps right for the success of the ministry, were not easy on LVSC staff and family members, see Boehmig, interview, 2016; Sproul, Jr., interview, 2016. For Sproul, Jr.'s published reflections on the difficulty with which he gave up the dream of a residential study center, see R. C. Sproul, Jr., "Banner of Truth," *R.C. Sproul Jr.*, <http://rcsprouljr.com/blog/the-kingdom-notes/banner-truth/> (September 8, 2015).

Christian” and “willful,”—had deemed the rural site appropriate.¹⁸⁹ It would have been extremely difficult for Sproul to leave the LVSC while his principal benefactor was still alive. In the end he did not have to make such a difficult choice. Hillman died in the late summer of 1982. Shortly thereafter the LVSC Board began moving ahead with plans for relocation.

After extensive research and feasibility studies the LVSC Board narrowed the relocation choices down to three southern cities—Dallas, Atlanta, and Orlando.¹⁹⁰ Several factors made Orlando a natural choice. Unlike Dallas and Atlanta, both home to several national ministries and denominations, Orlando was relatively virgin territory for national ministries in the early 1980s. Furthermore, the city had recently emerged as an international attraction thanks to the popularity of Disney World (f. 1971).¹⁹¹ Originally, Sproul described the launch of his Orlando office not as a relocation, but as an expansion: “We are opening a new office in Orlando designed to have a base to reach people from a

¹⁸⁹ Sproul remarked in his eulogy for Hillman, “Only God knows the intensity of her will.” See “A Thundering Paradox of a Woman,” *Tabletalk* 6, no. 4 (October 1982): 2–3. Others have used the term “dictatorial” rather than willful, see Griffith, interview, 2016. Of Hillman, Griffith stated, “She loved R. C., but she also was dictatorial. She would give things and there would be somewhat strings attached.” Sproul notes that he “never saw her as dictatorial” and thinks the term is an unfair assessment of Hillman (R. C. Sproul, letter to author, September 14, 2016).

¹⁹⁰ The southeast was chosen because individuals in this region demonstrated the most interest in Sproul’s materials. This was no doubt in part due to the PCA’s disproportionate presence in the South. Sproul, interview, 2016. When the LVSC officially announced the move to Orlando in August and September of 1984, Sproul described the decision noting, “In response to increasing demands for our material and services, the Teaching Ministry is moving closer to *you*” (emphasis original), see R. C. Sproul, “On the Move,” *Tabletalk* 8, no. 4 (September 1984): special supplement.

¹⁹¹ According to Sproul, “[The Board] had boiled down their city locations to three: Dallas, Atlanta, and Orlando. I said to them, ‘I don’t care which of the three you choose just as long as it’s not Atlanta or Dallas.’ So that’s how we went to Orlando. I have people that think I went to Orlando to play golf. That wasn’t the reason we went at all.... The reason is because Atlanta is a perpetual parking lot or construction zone and the ecclesiastical situation was pretty much controlled by the Southern Presbyterian Church in Atlanta. Dallas was the heartland of dispensationalism. Orlando was kind of an open town, just in the early days of Disney. It had this family orientation. And at that time, to our knowledge, there were no national ministries based in Orlando. It was before Campus Crusade moved there.... But that was the reason we chose Orlando.” See Sproul, interview, 2016.

metropolitan center,” he told readers of the LVSC’s yearly update letter.¹⁹² Sproul noted the obvious, “our remote location has been a serious detriment to outreach,” but he assured his readers that in spite of the geographic shift and the down sizing of LVSC staff “Summer sessions will continue at our Ligonier campus.”¹⁹³

By August of 1984, however, Sproul’s trajectory was moving further and further from its former orbit. The Sproul family moved to Orlando with another LVSC family and two single LVSC staff members in November of 1984. With the exception of the Rowleys, the rest of the LVSC staff either found jobs in Stahlstown or dispersed to other ministry positions. Because the study center had already scheduled programming through the summer of 1985, Rowley stayed in Stahlstown for one more year before moving his family to Orlando in the late summer of 1985. In spite of Sproul’s insistence that summer sessions would continue in Stahlstown, the 1985 session was the last to be held at the LVSC. The property was sold in late 1985 to a Christian drug rehabilitation ministry.¹⁹⁴

In some ways Sproul remade himself (and his renamed Ligonier Ministries) in Orlando. Gone was the countercultural appeal as his plaid pants, turtlenecks, sunglasses, and long hair disappeared along with his relational, community-centered ministry. A well-oiled professional ministry took its place as together Sproul and Rowley built something of evangelical media empire and developed R.C. Sproul and Ligonier Ministries into a marketable brand. In Orlando, Rowley sold off his increasingly outdated

¹⁹² R. C. Sproul to LVSC Friend, August 1984, Box, Archives Programs, 1985-1989; Folder, Brochures, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

¹⁹³ Emphasis original. Sproul to LVSC Friend, August 1984.

¹⁹⁴ This ministry closed in the mid-1990s and the property was sold to a private businessman. The buildings have now been renovated into a lodge, bed and breakfast, and restaurant called Foggy Mountain Lodge. For more, see Wilkins Services-TJ Wilkins, “Foggy Mountain Lodge, Restaurant, Wedding Reception and Banquet Hall, Stahlstown, PA,” <http://FoggyMountainLodge.com> (accessed February 11, 2016); LigonierTV, *Foggy Mountain Lodge & Restaurant on Ligonier TV*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XISjC7F13D4> (accessed February 11, 2016); Jack Rowley, “The Ligonier Valley Study Center Early Years.”

video equipment and rented space from the local CBS station, whose crew handled all the filming.¹⁹⁵ From that point on Sproul would be filmed most frequently on a specially made set at the front of an audience typically composed not of resident students but of local friends of the ministry with time to stop by the studio during recording. The move to Florida also crystalized a demographic shift in Sproul’s target and actual audiences—now mostly middle-aged and middle-class professionals with little time for extended stays at a residential study center but with money to purchase Ligonier products.¹⁹⁶

Fittingly, video best marks the ministry’s transition away from its original countercultural appeal and collegiate emphasis toward a more formal, traditional, and mass-marketable teaching ministry. Watching a young, somewhat eccentric Sproul describe the holiness of God from behind the LVSC pulpit in 1975 and watching the suit-and-tie clad, nicely tanned Sproul deliver a lecture on “Man, the Supreme Paradox” from Orlando’s CBS studio in 1986 offers vastly different visual aesthetics and relational appeal.¹⁹⁷ In the latter lecture Sproul seems the consummate professional, far removed from the raw, sun-glass-bespeckled teacher of former years. The audience, unseen in the earlier tape, but comfortable enough to blurt into Sproul’s teaching with an unscripted

¹⁹⁵ Rowley, interview, 2016. Rowley described the transition in detail during his interview: “Our plan in moving to Orlando was not to build another studio. The Board of Directors felt that it was going to be too expensive. Our equipment by that point, after three to four years of operating probably needed to be replaced. It was not as state of the art anymore. Things were developing very rapidly in television. They decided that they didn’t want to build another studio here, they would just simply rent office space, not even have any housing of any kind. Everybody, any of the families, would buy their own homes in the area. Any of the taping was going to be done outside. We arranged with our CBS station here in Orlando to do all of our taping for us....They had, of course, all the equipment. We paid them for the use of one of their studio rooms, and they came in with their own people, their own control room personal and everything. I simply furnished all of the sets that were used. We built a room. We had all the furniture, carpeting, bookcases—everything that would go into the set. The studio, the CBS station, would supply all the equipment, the personnel to operate the equipment, and all of the lighting. And then I would go back and we would later edit the masters, put the titles on, develop a set of masters we would use for duplicating purposes. We were cranking them out.”

¹⁹⁶ R. C. Sproul, Jr. commented on a noticeable shift toward an older, more established demographic during his interview. See Sproul, Jr., interview, 2016.

¹⁹⁷ My thanks to Jack Rowley for supplying me with these early Sproul videos.

question, becomes a part of the set, functioning as a well-dressed, perfectly behaved, somewhat sterile, studio audience in the latter film. It is precisely video that makes these changes clear, however. If one simply listens to the message, the same passionate voice and sharp logic can be heard in 1975 and 1986 (or 1996 or 2006, for that matter). As much as things had changed, continuities remained. Throughout the rest of his ministry Sproul would rank among the leading American advocates of Reformed theology and lay theological education. Through his numerous books, videos, radio programs, and addresses at conferences and in his independent St. Andrew's Chapel in Sanford, Florida, Sproul arguably did as much as any popular evangelical preacher or media personality of his generation to promote the development of the lay evangelical mind.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁸ St. Andrew's Chapel is an independent church founded by Sproul in 1997, see "History & Identity," *Saint Andrew's Chapel*, <http://www.saintandrewschapel.org/about/who-we-are/history-identity> (accessed February 11, 2016).

Chapter 4:
Replicating Regent: The C. S. Lewis Institute and James Houston's
Contribution to the Study Center Movement in North America

As R. C. Sproul's efforts at the Ligonier Valley Study Center demonstrate, the Schaeffers' L'Abri was the foremost model and catalyst for some of the most widely known efforts to develop the lay evangelical mind in the 1970s. L'Abri, however, was not the only available model. By the mid-1970s James Houston's Regent College had proven to be another viable model of lay theological education. Unlike L'Abri, however, Regent managed to emphasize lay theological education while still maintaining ties with the larger academy. Indeed at precisely the time that Schaeffer made the shift to film and more popularized modes of communication, Houston was working hard to help evangelicals move in the opposite direction by "replicating" Regent College's efforts to bring a thoughtful Christian presence to the university.

Stirrings of an Evangelical Study Center Movement

In May of 1972 *Christianity Today* carried a proposal that caught James M. Houston's attention. In one of the periodical's featured articles, Frank C. Nelson, an assistant professor of history and philosophy at the University of Wisconsin, suggested that "evangelical living and learning centers" be established "on private property near large state universities."¹ In the midst of increasing "economic stresses and strains" Nelson envisioned that these centers might provide evangelical parents with alternatives

¹ Frank C. Nelson, "Evangelical Living and Learning Centers: A Proposal," *Christianity Today* 26, no. 17 (May 26, 1972): 7.

to costly private colleges.² Nelsen's primary model was Oxford. His American precedent came from universities like Michigan State and the University of California, Santa Cruz, which each housed smaller state colleges.³

In terms of function, Nelsen imagined that these centers would employ a "permanent staff" of "academically qualified evangelical educators" with other "outstanding scholars brought in to lecture for a semester or two."⁴ This teaching staff would host group discussions and mandatory seminars, but would also "spend time talking informally with students." Nelsen emphasized that these centers "would not replace good Christian liberal-arts colleges," nor would they be in competition with existing student ministries. Rather, he believed that these privately funded centers would complement the work of student ministries and offer cash-strapped evangelicals a rationale for sending their daughters and sons to a secular university. Nelson's goals for these centers were tailored to this evangelical demographic. According to Nelson, "the objectives of the Center would be to develop in the Christian student both the courage and the skills necessary to make his witness for Christ effective in the classroom and on campus."⁵ Maintaining one's faith and evangelism were front and center, but there was room for an intellectual dimension.

In general, Houston liked the idea. In fact, as the principal of Regent College, he was already leading a venture very similar to what Nelsen proposed. Houston did not want this to be lost on *Christianity Today's* readers. In a letter to the magazine's editors

² Nelsen, "Evangelical Living and Learning Centers," 7. For an example of the staying power of this argument, see Thomas Albert Howard, "Should I Send My (Christian) Child to a (Secular) State University?," *Anxious Bench*, February 16, 2014, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/anxiousbench/2014/02/should-i-send-my-christian-child-to-a-secular-state-university/>.

³ Nelsen, "Evangelical Living and Learning Centers," 7.

⁴ Nelsen, "Evangelical Living and Learning Centers," 7.

⁵ Nelsen, "Evangelical Living and Learning Centers," 8.

Houston pointed out that Nelsen’s article “describes what in fact has already been established by Regent College since 1970.”⁶ Regent did, however, differ from the proposal in a few respects. Critiquing Nelsen’s proposal, Houston noted that Regent functioned on a graduate level. In Houston’s opinion this made Regent a better fit within the life of a university, “since universities could reasonably object that [undergraduate] students attending the centre may have conflicts of interest, time-tables and subject matter with the courses on campus.” Secondly, Houston was against Nelsen’s recommendation that these centers own their own property. To Houston’s mind—at least in 1972, before Regent gained its own property in 1975—this strategy represented “an unnecessary expense” for the Christian community while simultaneously indulging the deep-seated evangelical tendency toward what Houston termed “the ‘ghetto’ mentality” and the “holy huddle.”⁷ For Houston it was “the faith and commitment of their teachers,” not the sheltered atmosphere these centers might provide, that would inspire students toward meaningful Christian engagement. Thus, although Houston admitted that it was “exciting to see the growing evidence of emphasis on evangelical scholarship, seeking to re-establish itself on our university campuses and in public life,” he was convinced that Regent, not an undergraduate study center, provided the best way forward for evangelicals who found themselves at a university. Indeed, Houston was already beginning to wonder what it might look like if his model were exported. Could Regent be replicated on other university campuses? By the mid-1970s Houston was convinced it

⁶ James M. Houston to Christianity Today, June 3, 1972, Box 2, Folder 3, James M. Houston Papers. All of Houston’s quotations in the paragraph are from the same letter.

⁷ In January of 1976 Houston wrote to a Regent College supporter noting, “It has made a tremendous difference for us to have our own property, though it will now take us some years before we can repay all those to whom we are indebted for the initial purchase” (James M. Houston to Robert and Mary Boyd, January 28, 1976, Box 2, Folder 4, James M. Houston Papers).

could be done. For the better part of the decade he worked to convince other evangelicals of the same thing.

Developing Regent College as a Model for University Engagement:

The university was absolutely central to James M. Houston's early vision for lay theological education. When Houston first dreamt of an institute for advanced Christian studies in his Winnipeg apartment in 1962, the model was Oxford University, with its embedded colleges, not the autonomous Bible schools or seminaries that characterized evangelical higher education in the United States. By the 1960s Houston was a university man through and through. He had risen through the ranks at Oxford to achieve the influential position of Bursar of Herford College in 1967. The next year the University of Texas offered him a full professorship in geography and the directorship of its prestigious Institute of Latin American Studies.⁸ In general, Houston believed in the university's potential for good. But, in an era when science had delivered the atomic bomb to humanity, he also feared its tendency for ill if scientific rationalism was divorced from the moorings of personal relations and Christian belief.⁹ Either way he was confident that the second half of the twentieth century would be determined by the academy, not the church. The latter, he anticipated, was only destined for increased irrelevance.¹⁰

⁸ Houton in Botton, "Regent College," 88.

⁹ Houston followed his friend C. S. Lewis in this regard. See Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*; C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1947). Other Christians in his Oxford circle were also worried about these technological trends in society, perhaps most notably, J. R. R. Tolkien, who weaved them into his *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. For more on both Lewis and Tolkien in this area, see Philip Zaleski and Carol Zaleski, *The Fellowship: The Literary Lives of the Inklings: J.R.R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Owen Barfield, Charles Williams*, 2015. Houston was also influenced by the work of Jacques Ellul, especially *The Technological Society*.

When Houston founded Regent College his first instinct was to foster as close a connection to the University of British Columbia as possible. Beginning in the winter of 1967 he began seeking out a part-time position in the University of British Columbia's (UBC) geography department. He encouraged W. J. Martin, formerly a professor of Semitic languages and linguistics at Liverpool University, to do the same in UBC's religious studies department. Of course, an additional source of income was welcomed given Regent's uncertain financial future.¹¹ For Houston, however, this was a strategic effort as well. If Regent hoped to significantly influence modern society it had to do so from within one of society's most influential institutions—the academy. Thus, Houston believed that it was “absolutely essential that we integrate as much as we possibly can with the University.”¹² Houston was confident that Regent could successfully achieve this goal if only he could “get the right scholars” to sign on.¹³

For Houston integration with UBC meant official affiliation. It was not enough to be on the edge of campus. Houston envisioned Regent as an evangelical partner within the UBC community, not a neighbor across the way. Affiliation came with fringe benefits like expanded library use, but it also meant that Regent faculty would be permitted to sit on the UBC Senate, and vice-versa. Affiliation was a top priority for Houston in Regent's early years. He alerted UBC President Walter Gage of his intent in December of 1970. With the help of Robert M. Clark, a UBC economics professor and the Dean of Academic Planning at UBC, Regent successfully won its bid for affiliation (though be it

¹⁰ The mid-1960s was the high water mark for church attendance in America. For more on church attendance rates in American history, see Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005 Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*.

¹¹ Houston and Martin did not collect a salary from Regent College from 1970 through 1977. James Houston, email to author, March 29, 2016.

¹² James M. Houston to C. Stacey Woods, October 17, 1968.

¹³ Houston to Woods, October 17, 1968.

“provisional”) in 1973.¹⁴ (Indefinite affiliation came in 1977.) To Houston’s mind affiliation with a major university set Regent College apart from other evangelical schools and study centers of a more Schaefferian variety. Convinced that Regent offered a model for cultivating Christian minds while meaningfully engaging the secular University, Houston pondered whether Regent could be reproduced elsewhere.

One of the first people he told about his emerging concept of “imitation,” was none other than Francis Schaeffer. Reminiscing about their walk together in London Park prior to Houston’s decision to resign from Oxford, Houston conveyed how “blessed” and “encouraged” he was by the growth of the fledgling college. Yet even in the winter of 1973 Houston was already beginning to realize what Schaeffer knew well by this time: growth, though exciting, brought a host of new challenges. What had seemed barely possible in the fall of 1970 when the college kicked off its first full semester of classes with only four full-time students was on the verge of becoming a reality; Regent was growing too big. Houston expressed his hope to Schaeffer that Regent would “keep our numbers to about 100.” Houston’s emphasis on personal relations made small numbers a necessity. Because he believed “personal contact is all important,” he predicted that Regent would “lose qualitatively” if it grew beyond 100 fulltime students. The solution, Houston insisted, lay in creating Regent-like institutes in other places to help meet a real and understandable demand. “Our real concern” Houston explained, “is not Regent College as such, but to create the possibility of others to do similar ventures on other secular campuses. By being credible and viable on one campus, perhaps we can then be

¹⁴ As noted above, Regent gained provisional affiliation with UBC in 1973 and indefinite affiliation in 1977. Clark also delivered the first convocation address at Regent in 1971, see “First Convocation,” *Regent College Bulletin* 1, no. 2 (Summer 1971). For more on Robert Clark, see “Affiliation,” *Regent College Bulletin* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1974); “UBC Senate Summary,” November 14, 1973; Robert M. Clark, “Robert M. Clark,” *Regent Reflections*, 1995.

imitated and repeated on many others.”¹⁵ This would be Houston’s major emphasis for the next five years. Regent College, he believed, was poised to start a movement.

Houston was not alone. Like L’Abri, Regent’s success inspired a number of individuals to approach Houston about the possibility of starting other “Regent Colleges” around the world. One of these inquiries came from Peruvian evangelical leader Samuel Escobar. Less than a year before his famous speech at the 1974 Lausanne Congress on Evangelicalism, Escobar wrote to Houston proposing the Acadia region in eastern Canada as a good location for a second Regent College.¹⁶ Escobar was not alone in his desire to replicate Regent. In the summer of 1974 the *Regent College Bulletin* reported that Houston’s travels had revealed that “Regent’s reputation has spread to different parts of the world.” Houston reported that in places like Australia and New Zealand Christians “wish to build up similar work.”¹⁷ Individuals in Toronto Canada and in prominent U. S. college towns like Berkeley and Ann Arbor all made their case for a “Regent” of their own between 1974 and 1977.¹⁸

Houston’s growing interest in the “replication” of Regent made a significant impact among Regent’s student body as well. At Regent’s first long-term planning conference in the spring of 1974 Regent student Beat Steiner (b. 1950) presented a paper entitled “The Replication of Regent College.” Steiner, the son of a Swiss chemist who relocated to New Jersey, had come to faith during his studies at the University of

¹⁵ James M. Houston to Francis A. Schaeffer, February 23, 1973, Box 52, File 26, Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina.

¹⁶ Samuel Escobar to James M. Houston, September 10, 1973, Box 2, Folder 3, James M. Houston Collection.

¹⁷ “Travelers,” *Regent College Bulletin* 4, no. 3 (Summer 1974).

¹⁸ Houston spent about a month during the summer of 1975 at a summer school start up in Toronto. For other inquiries about starting Regent-esque ventures, see Max De Pree to James M. Houston, May 18, 1977, Box 3, Folder 13, James M. Houston Collection; David Gill to Carl E. Armerding and James M. Houston, October 25, 1977, Box 3, Folder 7, James M. Houston Collection.

Virginia. While at Virginia his experiences in a strong campus ministry and his encounters with Francis Schaeffer paved the way for his enrollment in Regent's 1973 Summer School and then to his fulltime enrollment in the Diploma of Christian Studies (DCS) program that fall. At Regent Steiner's sharp mind and natural capacity for administration quickly became apparent to Houston, who made Steiner his research assistant for the 1973-1974 academic year. In addition to tracking down obscure journal articles for Houston's *I Believe in a Creator*, Steiner also spent a lot of time with Houston and his family. Houston became one of Steiner's most valued mentors, advising him at critical crossroads for years to come. Steiner's access to Houston was nearly unparalleled among other students. The Houstons invited a different group of students to their home each Sunday, but only Steiner and one other student had an open invitation every week. The Houstons became like a family to Steiner, and Steiner came to deeply appreciate Houston's mind, heart, and vision for lay education. By the middle of spring semester, Steiner was a thoroughgoing advocate of his mentor's vision for Regent's multiplication.¹⁹

Steiner began his paper on replication by summarizing Regent's mission. After having spent nearly a year at Regent, Steiner was convinced that "Regent was from the start...based on a fundamental need in the church for theologically aware laymen and for professionals who could think Christianly about their professional activities." To Steiner the fact that others in "New Zealand, Latin America, and Asia" were beginning to express a desire for the same type of education demonstrated that "the need" was "as broad as it has shown itself to be deep." Regent as a single institute in Vancouver could never hope

¹⁹ Unless otherwise noted all details of Steiner's time in Vancouver that appear in this paragraph are taken from my phone interview with Beat and Barbara Steiner, February 28, 2016.

to meet these needs singlehandedly. Echoing Houston's concern, Steiner noted that Regent was already approaching "what appears to be its maximum size." Replication seemed to be the only way to be faithful to both Regent's own vision and the real needs of the church: "It is thus consistent with, if not integral to, the vision of Regent College, Vancouver, that similar institutions should be developed elsewhere, presumably on the same principles....It is appropriate that the College begin planning for such replication."²⁰ Houston could not have said it better himself.

Steiner followed up his call for replication by fleshing out some of the implications such a proposal entailed. Regent needed to be clear about the role it would play in the development of another college. Steiner laid out three possibilities: Regent as fully involved parent; Regent as sponsor; Regent as independent model.²¹ The conference needed to consider whether Regent would connect itself institutionally as in the formation of a branch campus or whether the college would maintain an advisory role.

Steiner foresaw, however, a few "general requirements" that needed to be met before any attempt to replicate the college was made. As had been the case in Vancouver, Steiner predicted that any future venture would require a local group of Christian leaders capable of giving the new college administrative leadership, raising funds, and building community support. Following Houston's emphasis on the strategic importance of the university, Steiner's second requirement was "a suitable university setting." For Steiner this entailed: "a. available library services; b. a site within the confines of the campus; c. a group of Christian faculty committed to the vision; d. the possibility of relating to the

²⁰ Beat U. Steiner, "The Replication of Regent College," 1974, 1. All quotations from this paragraph are from the first page of Steiner's document.

²¹ Steiner, "The Replication of Regent College," 4.

university in a formal academic manner.”²² Steiner did, however, foresee a few “obstacles.” One was “disinterest and hostility in universities,” due to their emphasis on “secular” and “objective” ideals of scholarship. In Steiner’s treatment “secular Religious Studies departments” came in for special scrutiny.²³ Secondly, Steiner worried, based on his own experience at the University of Virginia, that the wall between church and state might be harder to scale in the United States than in Canada.

That the idea of replication had taken firm root in Steiner’s mind—and by implication the mind of his mentor, James Houston—became unmistakably clear in the paper’s next section, which went on to list nine locations that were already under consideration. Each suggestion was accompanied by a paragraph description of the merits of the location. In addition to broad considerations (e.g., “Latin America,” “Asia,” “Australia and New Zealand”) Steiner listed specific locations in North America. In Canada, Kent Garrett, a former regional director for Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) was planning a summer school based on the Regent model for the summer of 1975 at Stanford Fleming College just outside Toronto. “Regent has been requested to become involved if not sponsor the summer school,” Steiner noted.²⁴ Steiner noted that Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario was another possible Canadian site. In the United States the interest of professors like Robert Linder and Richard Pierard made Indiana University a strong possibility. Likewise, several professors at the University of Wisconsin had contacted Regent about their interest in “founding an evangelical learning center.” The University of Virginia, where Steiner had just helped campus Christian

²² Steiner, “The Replication of Regent College,” 2.

²³ Steiner’s experience as an honors student in the University of Virginia’s department of Religious Studies had been especially negative. He even completed his honors thesis with a professor out of the department (Steiner, interview).

²⁴ Steiner, “Replicating Regent,” 3.

groups gain access to campus facilities for their meetings, also came up for consideration. Perhaps the most interesting location of all was the University of Maryland, whose “close links with Washington D. C.” made the site “a strategic location.”²⁵ Steiner, who as a student at the University of Virginia was involved in the National Prayer Breakfast, knew of powerful evangelical Christians in D. C. He was not the only one who saw the strategic appeal of the University of Maryland’s close proximity to that city.

“Regent College, East”

Like other evangelical stars such as John Stott and Francis Schaeffer, James Houston spent a lot of time touring the IVCF circuit in the early 1970s. The para-church student ministry was one of the biggest promoters of an academically open evangelical spirituality in the UK and North America. More than most campus ministries, IVCF blended the typical evangelical emphasis on personal piety (i.e., “the heart”) with intellectual openness (i.e., “the head”). For Houston, who embodied this combination of “head” and “heart,” it was a good match. His connections with IVCF were deep, going back at least to his early days in Oxford.²⁶ There, he had led the local chapter of Inter-Varsity for some years before his move to Vancouver. In North America Houston found that IVCF connections also proved to be one of Regent’s best forms of student recruitment.²⁷ Thus his long-term concern for the intellectual and spiritual vitality of students and his new concern to see Regent established as a viable college together prompted Houston to continue to speak to IVCF groups whenever possible. Thus it was

²⁵ Steiner, “Replicating Regent,” 3.

²⁶ While in Oxford Houston had tried to get British Inter-Varsity to host C. S. Lewis for a talk. As a testament to the ambiguity with which evangelicals viewed Lewis prior to his death, the group refused Houston’s idea. Amazingly, the Oxford chapter of Inter-Varsity never hosted Lewis (Houston, interview).

²⁷ James M. Houston, interview.

entirely true to form that Houston accepted an invitation to speak to the IVCF group at the University of Maryland in fall of 1973.²⁸ The talk was held at Cornerstone, an independent student ministry and community house directed by Jim and Lorraine Hiskey.

By the time Houston arrived at Cornerstone (named in reference to Ephesians 2:20-22) Hiskey had already been involved in student ministry for about ten years.²⁹ After a successful career as a professional golfer and a conversion from Mormonism to evangelical Christianity, Hiskey had founded a student ministry in Kansas and worked there until 1964, when Frank Carlson (1893-1987), a U. S. Senator from the state, invited them to relocate to the D. C. area. In Carlson, Hiskey found an advocate with connections to make his emerging study-center dream a reality. In 1953 Carlson was among those who along with the support of fellow Kansan Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890-1969) and the leadership of Abraham Vereide (1886-1969) helped to found the Presidential Prayer Breakfast. (The name was changed to the National Prayer Breakfast in 1970). Carlson was also connected to The Fellowship (f. 1944), a secretive discipleship group (also founded by Vereide) that focused on mentoring politicians and key decision makers in the D. C. area.³⁰ The Senator saw the Hiskeys' ministry as an outgrowth of the Prayer

²⁸ Hiskey and Houston met prior to this during a 1971 conference in Jerusalem. The first College Park "Summer Study Institute" brochure ("Background and Development of the Institute," *Summer Study Institute*, 1976), uses this date. In an interview with Hiskey, however, he dated Houston's visit to 1973. Another account of Houston's visit and his ensuing work with what would become the C. S. Lewis Institute can be found in J. Edward Glancy and Joel S. Woodruff, "Celebrating Forty Years of Heart and Mind Discipleship: A Brief History of the C. S. Lewis Institute," *Knowing and Doing*, Spring 2016, 1–10. This account dates Houston's first discussions with Hiskey to 1971.

²⁹ Regarding the name "Cornerstone," Hiskey noted, "Cornerstone was the idea of having a real solid foundation" (Hiskey, interview).

³⁰ The most in depth treatment of The Fellowship is Jeff Sharlet's participant/observer account: *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008). See also Jeff Sharlet, *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2008). Halverson was also the pastor of Fourth Presbyterian Church in Bethesda, Maryland. For Coe's influence, see TIME STAFF, "The 25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America - TIME," *Time*,

Breakfast's concern to meet growing student discontent with Christian principles.³¹

Further encouragement came from prominent members of The Fellowship such as future Senate Chaplain Richard "Dick" Halverson (1916-1995) and an up and coming D. C. socialite and pastor to presidents, Douglas Coe (b. 1928).³² Hiskey was impressed by the opportunity. Later that year he and his family moved to College Park, a convenient twenty minute drive from D. C.

As Hiskey worked with students he began to see important connections between his desire to see Christians engage their faith holistically (i.e., intellectually as well as emotionally) and the emphases of Francis Schaeffer's ministry at L'Abri. Furthermore, L'Abri seemed to uphold these twin commitments while simultaneously emphasizing a third trait that was close to Hiskey's heart—hospitality. Intent on experiencing L'Abri for himself, Hiskey took his family to L'Abri for six months in 1971.³³ He loved what he found there. Hiskey returned home more determined than ever to help others develop

http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1993235_1993243_1993262,00.html (accessed February 29, 2016).

³¹ Hiskey, interview.

³² See Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power*, 32, 35-38. When Vereide died in 1969 his mantle passed to Douglas Coe. Coe's secretive ministry to high powered politicians would eventually earn him the title "stealth Billy Graham." He was a direct advisor to Carter during the Camp David accords, and has ministered to every U.S. president since from 1970. Perhaps the most telling marker of Coe's influence is evidenced by Lindsay's observation that in his interviews with prominent evangelical leaders across several fields "one in three mention Coe or the Fellowship as an important influence (35)." This led Lindsay to comment, "there is no other organization like the Fellowship, especially among religious groups, in terms of its access or clout among the country's leadership (35)." Lindsay calls the Fellowship's brand of evangelicalism "an evangelicalism of the establishment (37)."

³³ Hiskey was raised in Idaho. He played golf at the University of Houston, eventually earning All-American honors, before going on to play for the PGA. Throughout his adult life he was involved in various athletic ministries. For more details, see Paul Meier and Jim Hiskey, *Winning Is a Choice: How the Champions Do It, and How We Can Too* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007), vii, 139-138, and the back flap. For an early take on Hiskey as a young golfer, see Lyle Olson, "Outlook," *Idaho State Journal*, July 10, 1955.

Christian faith marked by Schaeffer's emphasis on "content and community," or as Hiskey would more frequently say, "the head and the heart."³⁴

Hiskey's trip to L'Abri seems to also have been motivated by developments within his ministry at the University of Maryland. Just prior to Hiskey's L'Abri pilgrimage, the generosity of local businessman Arthur Seidenspinner allowed Cornerstone to buy a house that had once been the home of former University of Maryland president Curley Byrd (1889-1970).³⁵ This development allowed Cornerstone to transition from a standard, somewhat itinerant campus ministry to a ministry centered in a permanent somewhat L'Abri-esque space. The sprawling eight-bedroom brick house on over two acres of land offered the ministry proximity to the university and room for a variety of programs. The basement became a study center, with a library that included a large selection of Francis Schaeffer's tapes. Common rooms on the main floor offered plenty of space for large gatherings. The house also offered living space. The Hiskeys and their children lived communally at the house with a few college students and recent graduates. Both L'Abri and Detrich Bonhoeffer's description of his underground seminary in *Life Together* informed Hiskey's efforts to nurture a learning *community*. Soon other local Christians began opening their homes as communal living spaces.³⁶

³⁴ Jim Hiskey, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, Phone, February 23, 2016. Hiskey repeatedly emphasized the blending of spirituality and intellectual openness in these terms during the interview. According to Hiskey, "You really need good biblical truth but it needs to be in the context of community....You have to do both the head and the heart. The head is the content. The community is the heart." Unless otherwise specified all the information on Cornerstone's ministry to students prior to Houston's 1973 visit comes from my interview with Hiskey.

³⁵ Byrd served as the president of the University of Maryland from 1936-1954.

³⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*.

Around the time Houston arrived in 1973 there were five houses and about 20-40 people involved in Cornerstone's ministry.³⁷

Houston was inspired by what he found when he arrived at the Hiskeys' College Park home. Houston thought Cornerstone—with its large house on the edge of a major university and its proximity to D. C.—might be just the place for an experiment in replicating Regent College. During the course of his talk that night Houston explicitly mentioned such a possibility. As Hiskey remembers, “[Houston]...saw a vision that we could be something like Regent College. He would call that a “Regent College, East.” Hiskey, who had harbored no ambitions of founding anything more than “a little study center” that could “help people love God and love each other...and get a solid foundation” was taken aback. To Hiskey, Houston's idea seemed irrational.³⁸ When Houston left, Hiskey let the idea lie dormant.

Houston, however, was not willing to let the idea rest. As he sought to establish Regent as a viable institution he simultaneously mulled the idea of replication. By the 1974-1975 academic year the concept of Regent's replication loomed larger than ever in Houston's mind. In a contemporary audiocassette geared toward student recruitment Houston again outlined his vision for the college. Two aspects of Regent's identity shaped his remarks. First, Regent was not a seminary; rather, it had a special calling to train lay people. Secondly, Regent maintained a deep regard for personal relations. As Houston described it, “Regent is not an institution; rather, it is a family.” Thus the school

³⁷ These details come from my interview with Hiskey. For an example of Cornerstone's activities and ethos, see the ministry's newsletter “Cornerstone,” June 1975, Box 3, Folder 10, James M. Houston Collection.

³⁸ Hiskey's own account is worth preserving in its entirety: “But in 1973 Jim gave us this vision. I thought he was...almost irrational. (I could not say that because he was such an academic.) But it just seemed like, gee wiz, we're just trying to start a little study center here and help young people love God and love each other and get their priorities straight and get a solid foundation. Cornerstone was the idea of having a real solid foundation” (Hiskey, interview).

needed to remain small. Houston's target was 100 students. Together Houston's belief in Regent's vision and his concern that the school not grow too large led him to conclude: "Regent must be repeatable."³⁹

By 1975 Houston was convinced the best option for such a venture was College Park, Maryland. True to form, Houston decided to pursue the idea by reaching out to his personal friends, many of whom were highly visible evangelical leaders. Houston took the initiative. In 1975 Hiskey received a call from Houston that began with the words, "I'm here with John Stott. Did you want to start this Summer Study Institute?"⁴⁰ Hiskey knew he could not pass up the opportunity to bring one of his heroes to College Park. He said, "yes." From that point on, Cornerstone became Houston's first experiment in the replication of Regent College.

Regent-Sized Ambitions: From Cornerstone to C. S. Lewis College:

From the time Stott committed to lecture at the College Park 1976 summer school, Houston threw himself wholeheartedly into the venture. In addition to his role as Regent's Principal, Houston took the unofficial job of primary booster for the new project. College Park became a notable fixture in Houston's correspondence during the fall of 1975 and the spring of 1976. Houston knew that to a great degree the success of the venture relied on him. As he had done at the start of Regent's Summer School in 1969, Houston reached out to academic friends like F. F. Bruce for help. This time, however, he also had another group of supporters—Doug Coe and the influential politicians and business people linked to the Fellowship House in Washington D. C.

³⁹James M. Houston, *The Aims and Spirit of Regent College in the Early 1970s* (Vancouver, BC: Regent Audio, 1974).

⁴⁰ Hiskey, interview.

Houston met Coe in 1974. It was not surprising that Coe, who had moved into leadership of The Fellowship (also known as “The Family”) in 1969, made a good impression on Houston. In many ways the younger Coe was a man after Houston’s own heart. Coe was a sharp, lay Christian who emphasized personal discipleship and Christian witness in professional environments.⁴¹ His access to high-ranking U.S. politicians no doubt also endowed him with a sense of mystique and gravitas that surely helped to captivate Houston’s attention. Striking up a correspondence with Coe in the fall of 1974, Houston recalled a previous chat in which they had “talked about the vital need to nurture leadership and godliness in young promising men of God who could be expected to be tomorrow’s leaders.”⁴² Over the next several months Houston stayed in touch with Coe and more than once invited him to Regent for a visit or a Summer School term. He also kept Coe up to date about the upcoming Maryland summer school.⁴³ In November of 1975 Houston laid out his vision for the College Park project to Coe in detail. Perhaps with Steiner’s experience of the separation of church and state in his mind, Houston described his rationale for involvement in the Cornerstone venture. “I want to be quite clear about my own motive in being at Cornerstone,” Houston wrote. “This could have strategic importance, as with the influence of many Christian leaders in Washington, the possibility of breaking through the prejudices concerning Church and State on a secular campus are best faced at College Park.”⁴⁴ Even though other universities may have

⁴¹ STAFF, “The 25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America - TIME”; Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power*, 32, 35-37.

⁴² James M. Houston to Doug Coe, September 30, 1974.

⁴³ James M. Houston to Doug Coe, June 30, 1975, Box 3, Folder 1, James M. Houston Collection.

⁴⁴ James M. Houston to Doug Coe, November 12, 1975, Box 3, Folder 1, James M. Houston Collection.

offered stronger faculty support or greater name recognition, D. C. connections made the University of Maryland Houston's ideal site.⁴⁵

For Houston, Cornerstone, already well established on the edge of a major American university, was appealing for other reasons as well. Its proximity to the University of Maryland offered Houston an opportunity to try out his model for university-embedded graduate institutes in an American context. In order to have any hope of success at penetrating the American university system, Houston knew he had to start at the top. As he told Coe, "I am seeing...more and more that a whole new area of approach to leadership must be to the top down administrators and to the university scholars, in order to see this further outreach in Christian faith and witness."⁴⁶ Such lofty aims, however, required high-caliber academic leadership. Houston suggested Ken Elzinga (b. 1942), an active evangelical Christian and a promising young economist at the University of Virginia as a possible choice for the director of the project.⁴⁷

Finally, Houston related a third contributing rationale to Coe: Regent was simply growing too large. Lest Coe think Regent was trying to launch an imperialistic takeover of Cornerstone, Houston emphasized "we have no ambitions at Regent to do anything else than to encourage brethren, and indicate that what has been possible in Vancouver is

⁴⁵ In a letter to a professor at the University of Maryland in December of 1975 Houston said as much: "[H]opefully with the backing of some of the Christian politicians...it will be possible at the University of Maryland, as perhaps nowhere else, to break the prejudices about church and state relationships on a secular campus" (James M. Houston to G. Gutsche, December 18, 1975, Box 3, Folder 7, James M. Houston Collection).

⁴⁶ Houston to Coe, November 12, 1975.

⁴⁷ Houston to Coe, November 12, 1975. Though it "was not an easy decision for me," Elzinga decided to turn down the offer for a variety of personal and professional reasons. He did, however, note that if Houston considered moving the school to Charlottesville, he might be inclined to take up the post: "If Barbara could be with me, i.e. if "Regent East" were to be in Charlottesville, I suspect my decision would be different" (Ken Elzinga to James M. Houston, November 20, 1975, Box 3, Folder 7, James M. Houston Collection).

possible again on many other campuses.”⁴⁸ Regent, in Houston’s view, was fighting the trend toward overextension made possible by new “technical and organizational structures.” For Houston these structures were “the Trojan horse that penetrates and secularizes our whole life.”⁴⁹ Replication was the only solution capable of keeping Regent small without compromising the College’s mission to help Christians around the world “think Christianly” within their professions and university.⁵⁰ Houston wanted to change the evangelical world, but he wanted to change it through a myriad of small ways.

Houston’s support for the College Park venture took multiple forms. In addition to laying out a vision and recruiting faculty for the 1976 summer program Houston also took on the task of personally coaching Hiskey from the other side of the continent. He passed along information on Regent’s policy regarding its Summer School faculty honorariums (\$600 for three hours of teaching five days a week over three weeks) and the payment of travel expenses.⁵¹ He sent Hiskey Regent’s own East Coast mailing list for promotion (not fundraising) purposes.⁵² He encouraged Beat Steiner (who was back in Charlottesville) to visit Hiskey in order to help with the venture.⁵³ Houston himself traveled to College Park to visit Hiskey and check up on the project’s progress in the fall of 1975. Apparently, Houston was not entirely convinced that the staff at Cornerstone had the administrative know-how to pull off such a large venture. In October Houston

⁴⁸ Houston to Coe, November 12, 1975.

⁴⁹ Houston to Coe, November 12, 1975.

⁵⁰ For Houston’s use of this term over the course of the 1970s, see James M. Houston, “The Christian Presence in the University”; James M. Houston to Doug Coe and Dick Halverson, July 13, 1978, Box 3, Folder 1, James M. Houston Collection.

⁵¹ James M. Houston to Jim Hiskey, May 30, 1975, Box 3, Folder 6, James M. Houston Collection.

⁵² James M. Houston to Jim Hiskey, March 17, 1976, Box 3, Folder 6, James M. Houston Collection. Houston also paved the way for Cornerstone to use Regent’s booth at Urbana in December of 1976 (James M. Houston to Jim Hiskey, December 23, 1976, Box 3, Folder 6, James M. Houston Collection).

⁵³ Beat and Barbara Steiner, interview.

also offered, “pending board approval,” to loan Hiskey the services of Regent College chief administrative assistant and “first class organizer,” Marguerite Dunn, for two weeks.⁵⁴ Once Dunn was in College Park Houston extended the offer a few more days because Vancouver was six weeks into a post office strike that brought admissions at Regent to a virtual standstill.⁵⁵ He was, however, concerned that Hiskey might misinterpret his motives in sending Dunn: “It was not in any way to interfere with your own organization and plans, but rather to simply encourage you that in the most practical way that we saw possible we were really doing all we could to stand by you and back you in this great project.”⁵⁶ This was no doubt true, but Houston was also too ideologically and emotionally involved in the idea to stand aside passively.

Even as Houston tried to assure Hiskey that he was not trying to meddle in the Cornerstone venture, he could not hide his concern. Just twelve days after assuring Hiskey of his intent to avoid interfering in the project, Houston wrote what he called a “candid” letter about his growing concern for the Maryland project. Houston was concerned that perhaps Hiskey was trying to play too many roles and do too much himself. While Houston believed “deeply...in the importance of personal relations,” which characterized the unstructured, discipleship-focused style Hiskey had carried over from his involvement with L’Abri and his own Christian Leadership Program, in this case

⁵⁴ James M. Houston to Jim Hiskey, October 22, 1975, Box 3, Folder 6, James M. Houston Collection.

⁵⁵ James M. Houston to Jim Hiskey, November 26, 1975, Box 3, Folder 6, James M. Houston Collection. The strike ran nearly eight weeks. Regent resorted to channeling their mail to a U.S. address and then driving it over the border.

⁵⁶ Houston to Hiskey, November 26, 1975.

Houston urged that Hiskey match his person-centered emphasis with “efficiency and institutional management.”⁵⁷

Perhaps most of all, Houston wanted to be sure that Hiskey understood that the Regent model was distinct from Hiskey’s earlier model—L’Abri. By 1975 Houston was convinced that an unhealthy mix of nepotism, dogmatism, and celebrity culture marked Schaeffer’s ministry. Houston saw Schaeffer as an intellectually isolated pontificator. He had told Schaeffer nearly as much at least twice, but the evangelical guru had downplayed his advice.⁵⁸ Thus, when directing Hiskey, Houston wanted to be sure to place distance between the College Park project and L’Abri:

[W]e need to focus more clearly on the model to follow at College Park—L’Abri or Regent? L’Abri [is] more unstructured, more related to a guru cult, where the leader dominates the structure. But even L’Abri has some organizational structure....[T]he L’Abri model has no chance of success on a university campus....This is exactly what we are struggling to overcome at Regent—the whole culture of evangelical guru-ism. It is unhealthy to be dogmatic without contradiction from one’s peers or betters. And it is unrealistic to challenge academic life with this attitude. This is Francis Schaeffer’s failing. No man today, in the complexities of our society, can afford to pontificate on so many areas, as he does.⁵⁹

Houston knew that his letter “must sound extremely harsh and judgmental,” therefore he reaffirmed his care for Hiskey and his deep desire “to see this venture succeed.” In order to accomplish the latter Houston recommended that Hiskey delegate the work. Replicating Regent would not be easy. Indeed, according to Houston, it demanded “a whole new lifestyle.”⁶⁰

⁵⁷ James M. Houston to Jim Hiskey, December 8, 1975.

⁵⁸ James M. Houston to Francis A. Schaeffer, May 1, 1975; Francis A. Schaeffer to James M. Houston, June 19, 1975. Houston and Schaeffer never again corresponded.

⁵⁹ Houston to Hiskey, December 8, 1975.

⁶⁰ Houston to Hiskey, December 8, 1975.

Throughout the spring of 1976 Hiskey and Houston worked to make the 1976 College Park summer program a success. Hiskey led the team on the ground and Houston did what he could while simultaneously running a growing graduate school in Vancouver. One thing Houston could do was exude vision and charisma through his letters. In the spring of 1976 he did just that—over and over again. Writing to his friend F. F. Bruce (and once again trying to get him to lend his time and name to another fledgling venture) Houston gave what was perhaps his most detailed vision. College Park was “a strategic opportunity,” he said:

[I]t will link and provide a depth to evangelical scholarship to some of the leaders in American society. There are a number of congressmen and Senators who have recently been won for Christ and they need nurturing and training....It seemed to me that it was more likely that with the influence of men like Senator Mark Hatfield and other influential Christian politicians we would have a better chance of succeeding in proximity to them, than in a more remote university situation. But once the precedent is established that there is such an institute in the University of Maryland, it can of course then be replicated elsewhere in the country. I really do believe that within the next decade we shall see a number of such institutions on some of the major universities. I have recently returned from a trip to Princeton, Columbia, Pittsburgh and Washington and found on each campus people who were already dreaming such possibilities.⁶¹

Houston concluded the letter with a personal appeal that framed the venture in heroic proportions. Houston urged Bruce to consider being involved in the project, which was “of real strategic concern for the future of evangelical scholarship.”

Bruce turned down Houston’s request, but disappointment did not last long. Overall, the 1976 College Park Summer Study Institute was an encouraging success. With a list of speakers that included Houston, John Stott, J. I. Packer, R. C. Sproul, Senator Mark Hatfield, and Charles Colson, the institute immediately rivaled Regent’s

⁶¹ James M. Houston to F. F. Bruce, April 9, 1976, Box 3, Folder 7, James M. Houston Collection.

previously unsurpassed Summer School.⁶² Celebrity teachers attracted over 150 students and also marked the big ambitions of Houston and the Students for Biblical Concerns who had helped Hiskey put the three-week even together.⁶³ As one Summer Study Institute brochure made explicit, the College Park effort was intentionally attempting to follow Regent's example by moving from the "summer program" toward a "school" centered on "biblical studies." Community, too, was a shared emphasis between Vancouver and College Park. "Like Regent College," the first brochure noted, "Cornerstone is convinced that academic objectivity is compatible with Christian commitment, and that Christian community is compatible with Christian scholarship."⁶⁴ Regent, it seemed, had been replicated.

Both Hiskey and Houston were pleased with the first College Park Summer Institute.⁶⁵ Writing to Young Life's national director, William S. Starr, just a few weeks after the conclusion of the 1976 Institute Houston enthused, "We were most encouraged at Maryland. We prayed that we might have 100, hoping at least for 50. Instead, there were 165 or more registered in the program and we believe a great work of God was done. We are very encouraged and I believe that within the next two or three years another venture like Regent will be established there."⁶⁶ Houston's vision was nearly

⁶² There was not direct competition between the schools due to the fact that the College Park Summer Study Institute and Regent College held their schools in different months and were separated by huge geographical distances. Still, some people may have chosen one rather than the other and high ranking evangelical professors were certainly sought out by both groups.

⁶³ On the number of students (153), see James M. Houston to William S. Starr, June 4, 1976, Box 3, Folder 17, James M. Houston Collection. Later Houston put the number registered at 165, see James M. Houston to John Dellenback, December 22, 1976, Box 3, Folder 6, James M. Houston Collection. It is helpful to compare these numbers to the numbers at Regent's Summer School, where Stott also spoke, the next month. Regent's Summer School drew in over 450 students (Houston to Starr, July 5, 1976).

⁶⁴ "Background and Development of the Institute," *Summer Study Institute*, 1976.

⁶⁵ Hiskey, interview.

⁶⁶ James M. Houston to William S. Starr, July 5, 1976, Box 3, Folder 17, James M. Houston Collection.

unbounded. He saw the success of the College Park Summer Study Institute as perhaps the beginning of a movement that would sweep through evangelicalism:

In fact I can see a score or more of informal experimentations on many campuses eventually becoming a number of similar ventures like Regent. There is keen interest at Princeton and there is also the beginnings of a program at Columbia University in New York and also an interest at Oklahoma State University. I believe that within a decade we shall see something that might be comparable to the Cistercian revival of the 12th and 13th centuries developing evangelicals through such cultural centres. How true it is that when we keep things to ourselves the spirit of God cannot operate. That when we scatter like the wind—God’s wind—a seed that goes into the ground to die, then there is much fruit.⁶⁷

Houston was beginning to think that by scattering Regent’s influence rather than seeking to build an institutional empire he was helping to catalyze a movement that might change the face of North American evangelicalism. This vision seems to have stuck with Houston for the better part of six months. By December he was still riding the wave of the idea’s potential. Writing to R. T. France at the Tyndale House, Houston again expressed his goal: “Our vision...is to make Regent a strong prototype that can be replicated elsewhere.”⁶⁸ Current developments at the University of Maryland, the University of Texas, Berkeley and Columbia led him to believe that replication was already at work.⁶⁹ Buoyed up by these examples Houston predicted “within a decade there may be a number of centres developing on similar lines as Regent.”⁷⁰

For Hiskey’s part, though he had been stunned when Houston first suggested developing Cornerstone into “Regent, East,” the success of the summer had done much to

⁶⁷ Houston to Starr, July 5, 1976.

⁶⁸ James M. Houston to R. T. France, December 10, 1976, Box 2, Folder 4, James M. Houston Collection. For a similar example, see James M. Houston to Joseph Bayly, December 22, 1976, James M. Houston Collection.

⁶⁹ Houston noted the work of Earl Palmer, an influential Presbyterian pastor in Berkeley. There was also a L’Abri-like experiment going on in the Bay area. In 1976 Houston was more interested in working with Stanford than Berkeley (James M. Houston to Jim Hiskey, October 17, 1976, Box 3, Folder 6, James M. Houston Collection).

⁷⁰ Houston to France, December 10, 1976.

convince him that Houston's vision might be possible. Like his mentor, he knew the success of such a venture depended on getting the right people—or person—to commit. Sometime in the early fall of 1976 Hiskey approached Houston about the possibility of a permanent relocation to College Park. Nothing better represented the high hopes many had for the Summer Study Institute's potential.⁷¹

That Houston seems to have seriously entertained Hiskey's request demonstrates his deep interest in the College Park project—and Washington D. C., in general—and perhaps suggests a slight ambivalence about leading Regent through the growing pains it was experiencing at the time.⁷² In a letter to Hiskey that fall Houston seemed to be holding the option within the realm of the possible, noting that he was “open to the will and ways of the Lord.” Houston informed Hiskey that he was praying along with him “that it is His will that I should be involved the way that you suggest for the future of the work at College Park.”⁷³

Houston's interest was not so great, however, that it precluded his asking others to step into the chief administrative role at College Park. As Houston scanned the horizon for individuals capable of leading a “Regent East,” he decided on Peace Corps director John Dellenback.⁷⁴ Writing to Dellenback in December of 1976 Houston laid out an expansive vision that explicitly moved from the idea of an institute to that of a college—C. S. Lewis College. “You know,” Houston began,

⁷¹ Houston refers to a suggestion in a letter to Hiskey dated October 7, 1976.

⁷² Among the problems Houston was dealing with at Regent around this time was the divorce of Regent New Testament professor Larry Hurtado. The faculty was not at all unanimous in its decision to let Hurtado go. James M. Houston to Doug Coe, August 4, 1976, Box 3, Folder 1, James M. Houston Collection.

⁷³ James M. Houston to Jim Hiskey, March 17, 1976; James M. Houston to Jim Hiskey, October 7, 1976.

⁷⁴ Houston had recently interacted with Dellenback at a White House Prayer Breakfast, see John Dellenback to James M. Houston, December 6, 1976, Box 3, Folder 7, James M. Houston Collection.

I am committed to seeing the replication of Institutes of Christian Studies attached to university campuses, such as Regent College represents. We are encouraged to see the progress made at Cornerstone....We had 165 students registered for the Summer School there in June 1976. By the grace of God we hope a full-time college will be established by 1979-80. I enclose our own academic brochure to show the kind of courses the new College Park Institute (that may be called 'C. S. Lewis College') might offer also.⁷⁵

Though Houston knew the idea of a C. S. Lewis College might seem “a far-fetched dream,” he hoped Dellenback would dream with him. Houston could see “an evangelical academic movement developing” with similar “colleges on university campuses.”⁷⁶ The name of the college demonstrated Houston’s high academic and spiritual goals for the institution. Houston would later reflect that the mission of the venture was to “create not a lot of fans for C. S. Lewis but to have 10,000 like him.”⁷⁷ Even at the time Houston saw a movement forming. It was the “Cistercian” moment for evangelical scholarship. Would Dellenback be willing to serve as the first president of such a college?⁷⁸ The answer, it turned out, was no. Like many of the high-caliber leaders Houston approached through the years, Dellenback was not willing to leave an influential and well-established post to commit himself to an unproven project.

The very fact that Houston could ask Dellenback to serve as the president of a college and not the director of a summer institute shows how far the idea had progressed within the span of little more than a year. Buoyed up by the success of the 1976 Summer Institute, Houston and the College Park team moved forward toward their primary goal—the creation of a degree-granting college. Led by Craig H. Johnson as official

⁷⁵ James M. Houston to John Dellenback, December 22, 1976.

⁷⁶ Houston to Dellenback, December 22, 1976.

⁷⁷ J. Edward Glancy and Joel S. Woodruff, “Celebrating Forty Years of Heart and Mind Discipleship: A Brief History of the C. S. Lewis Institute,” 2.

⁷⁸ Houston to Dellenback, December 22, 1976

incorporator, Hiskey and his team drafted articles of incorporation for “The C. S. Lewis College for Biblical and Theological Studies” in October of 1976.⁷⁹ The first official board meeting was held a few weeks later on November 5, 1976. Hiskey began the meeting by presenting his vision for the college to the three other members who were present. Drawing on his experience with both Houston and Schaeffer, Hiskey envisioned that C.S. Lewis College would offer serious “graduate-level” scholarship to “all men and women” by assisting them as they formulated a “worldview that integrates their academic and professional training with their Christian faith.”⁸⁰ Hiskey was clear that the school needed to be situated close to the University of Maryland campus in order to ensure that “our programs may have real relevance in the academic marketplace.” Lastly, Hiskey demonstrated his longstanding commitment to discipleship ministry and the formulation of Christian community. “We would like to see the learning that takes place in the college based upon the context of a community of believers studying and worshipping together.”⁸¹ Such an emphasis “would allow the current Cornerstone work of training young leaders, concentrated on character building, to take place in the college programs.”⁸² When taken together, Hiskey’s vision well represented the “content and community” or “head and heart” emphasis he found at L’Abri, in the person of James Houston, and in the nascent college’s British namesake.

⁷⁹ Craig H. Johnson, “Articles of Incorporation of The C. S. Lewis College for Biblical and Theological Studies, Inc.,” October 1976, Box 3, Folder 10, James M. Houston Collection. These articles emphasized that the college would focus on training lay people and cultivating Christian unity. The goals of Houston and the Fellowship were wed. C. S. Lewis College began with three trustees: H. Nelson Brunk, Perry E. Brunk, and Kenneth H. Michael.

⁸⁰ Craig H. Johnson, “Minutes: Board of Trustees Meeting, C. S. Lewis College for Biblical and Theological Studies, Inc.,” November 5, 1976, Box 3, Folder 10, James M. Houston Collection, 1.

⁸¹ Johnson, “Minutes,” November 5, 1976, 1.

⁸² Johnson, “Minutes,” November 5, 1976, 1.

Incorporation and the first official board meeting capped off a year filled with excitement for Houston and the folks at College Park. It also signaled the high water mark of C. S. Lewis College and Houston's replication ideal. With Houston's backing Cornerstone had been transformed from a small study center and student ministry into C. S. Lewis College, an aspiring graduate school with Regent-sized ambitions. Yet even in the halcyon days of 1976 there were reasons for concern. Not only had the college failed to sign on a president by the end of the year; it also faced a context that differed notably from Vancouver. Whereas the Federal system of British Columbia, not far removed from its days as a frontier province, made generous provision for the affiliation of smaller colleges with larger institutions, the situation in Maryland was less encouraging—a reality that Hiskey began to realize early on. Near the conclusion of the first C. S. Lewis College board meeting Hiskey listed what he termed “major obstacles.” These included: “building a library adequate to meet student needs and State requirements for accreditation,” and “the obtaining of \$500,000 to be spent over a five year period to meet the accreditation requirements of the State of Maryland.”⁸³ Unlike Regent, which had slid through provincial accreditation on the merits of the UBC library and a shoestring budget, the C. S. Lewis College had to stand—or fall—on its own. As Houston and Hiskey would soon realize, replicating Regent was difficult, if not impossible, outside of Vancouver.

⁸³ Johnson, “Minutes,” 2.

Trimming the Sails: From C. S. Lewis College to the C. S. Lewis Institute

The years 1977 and 1978 were tough ones for James Houston. At home, Houston was beginning to sense that many at Regent were looking toward the further growth of the institution through increased enrollment and perhaps even the introduction of an MDiv program. The dismissal of New Testament professor Larry Hurtado and its attendant controversy also took a toll on Houston. So, too, had the necessity of raising funds to pay for new buildings and a larger faculty.⁸⁴ There were encouragements: J. I. Packer had committed to come for the 1979 school year, and the properties offered Regent a lasting footprint on prime real-estate next to UBC.

On the whole, however, Houston was frustrated and tired. He and Rita “really need a break,” Houston wrote to a friend.⁸⁵ Growth had meant more administrative work and less opportunity to know students on a personal level. Each of these changes wore on Houston. Writing to a former student, Houston reflected on the situation, “It is my deep concern that Regent should remain a small college, that we really know our student individually and are able to nurture them in personal contact. To succeed is therefore so often to fail. Succeed perhaps before the eyes of men, but to fail in the needs of the spirit of God.”⁸⁶ To Houston, Regent’s success came at a high cost. Even the board’s efforts to reduce his administrative load by appointing Carl Armerding vice-principal in the fall of 1977 did not seem to help.

⁸⁴ In a letter to Bob Smith Houston described the financial situation at Regent as “tight” in the winter of 1977, see James M. Houston to Robert Smith, n.d., Box 3, Folder 7, James M. Houston Collection.

⁸⁵ James M. Houston to Patricia Coldman, January 6, 1978, Box 2, Folder 6, James M. Houston Collection.

⁸⁶ James M. Houston to S. Chowdry, August 9, 1977.

From 1977 through the spring of 1978 these circumstances made College Park an appealing option for Houston. By taking the helm at C. S. Lewis College Houston would again have the chance to create an institution from the ground up. Further, current realities guaranteed that it would be small, thus ensuring the potential for an emphasis on personal relations. There were downsides, however. As 1977 wore on Houston began to realize that replicating Regent would be more difficult than he had ever imagined.

The 1977 Maryland Summer Institute encountered problems from the start. Unlike Regent, which had followed up its first school by inviting even bigger names (e.g., F. F. Bruce, Hans Rookmaaker) in its second year, it was impossible for the College Park Institute to better a first year roster that included the likes of John Stott, J. I. Packer, Jim Houston, and Mark Hatfield. These were the biggest names in evangelicalism. Enthusiasm, financial contributions, and student enrollment lagged in 1977. In May of 1977, the College Park Summer Institute was still \$1,500 behind budget and counted only eighty registered students. Of these, over a third were repeat attendees.⁸⁷ Houston sprang into action, personally working to raise enough money to keep Bob Smith, one of the principle hands-on organizers of the venture, on the Institute's staff through until May of 1977, when income from program fees would come in.⁸⁸ In August, Hiskey wrote asking Houston, who was seemingly endlessly raising money for Regent, to raise some much needed cash for C. S. Lewis College.⁸⁹ Doubts were setting in. At about the same time

⁸⁷ "Minutes: C. S. Lewis College Board Meeting," May 26, 1977, Box 3, Folder 10, James M. Houston Collection.

⁸⁸ James M. Houston to Charles E. Hummel, April 7, 1977, Box 3, Folder 16, James M. Houston Collection.

⁸⁹ Jim Hiskey to James M. Houston, August 26, 1977, Box 3, Folder 6, James M. Houston Collection.

Hiskey confided to Houston that he was beginning to realize that “the college is [a] little big for me.”⁹⁰

Still Houston was convinced that C. S. Lewis College could succeed if given the right leadership. As he had done in the fall of 1970, Houston decided to test the waters himself during a sabbatical leave. In December of 1976 Houston had petitioned the Regent board about the possibility of a sabbatical in Washington D. C. during the fall of 1977 or the spring of 1978. The board agreed to the latter option, and Houston readied himself to spend four months organizing C. S. Lewis College and serving as the scholar in residence at Richard Halverson’s prominent Fourth Presbyterian Church in Bethesda, Maryland.⁹¹ During this time both Houston and his wife, Rita, would stay at the Fellowship House.⁹² Houston was as close as he would ever be to leaving Regent.

Beginning with his sabbatical, 1978 proved to be a watershed year for Houston. During his time in D. C., Houston worked to solidify C. S. Lewis College by compiling another stellar cast of speakers including: Halverson, Mark Hatfield, Edmund P. Clowney, Richard Mouw, Charles Colson, Carl Armerding, and Earl Palmer—who currently was involved in a similar Regent-inspired venture in Berkeley, CA.⁹³ Still the college struggled to pick up enough institutional momentum to surmount the realities of its context. There was no getting away from Maryland’s requirements that the school build a suitable library and a \$500,000 endowment prior to its official accreditation.

⁹⁰ Jim Hiskey to James M. Houston, September 6, 1977, Box 3, Folder 6, James M. Houston Collection.

⁹¹ James M. Houston to Jim Hiskey, February 18, 1977, Box 3, Folder 6, James M. Houston Collection.

⁹² James M. Houston to Sam Fore, April 12, 1978, Box 3, Folder 15, James M. Houston Collection. This worked out well, because Houston’s skills as a one-on-one discipler and teacher were desired by many in The Fellowship’s circle, see James M. Houston to Doug Coe, August 4, 1976.

⁹³ “Summer Study Institute: June 5-23, 1978 at the University of Maryland,” Spring 1978, Box 3, Folder 9, James M. Houston Collection.

Neither Hiskey nor any one else involved in the effort had the heart to take on the kind of fundraising necessary to meet those goals.⁹⁴ Thus even as Houston continued to seek out prominent evangelicals like Elisabeth Elliot and Michael Green for the 1979 school, he was coming to terms with the fact that C. S. Lewis College would never be “Regent, East.”

The most decisive blow to C. S. Lewis College came in July of 1978, just after the Houstons returned to Vancouver following their sabbatical. In an emotionally charged letter to Coe and Halverson, Houston related that after having “travailed before God” he had decided to remain in Vancouver.⁹⁵ “I wanted to come to Washington D. C.” Houston wrote, “It made such good sense. The call fitted my temperament and gifts, hand to glove.” Yet Houston had to think of others. First there was “Rita and the children.” Houston knew she would come if he wanted, but he was afraid that “she might also die within herself.”⁹⁶ During their time in Washington D. C. Houston had sensed his wife’s needs deeply. He told Coe and Halverson that he had pledged “myself to be her helpmeet as I had not been before. The family is the unit of Christian witness, not public Christian activities.”⁹⁷ Like other evangelical leaders before him (e.g., Harold Ockenga), Houston’s marriage kept him from a significant mid-career relocation.⁹⁸

For better or worse, Houston was also “married” to something else—Regent College. Though Houston had returned from his sabbatical to find what he termed “a

⁹⁴ Hiskey, interview.

⁹⁵ James M. Houston to Doug Coe and Dick Halverson, July 13, 1978.

⁹⁶ Houston to Coe and Halverson, July 13, 1978.

⁹⁷ Houston to Coe and Halverson, July 13, 1978.

⁹⁸ Harold Ockenga served as president in absentia for much of Fuller Theological Seminary’s early years. Several times the faculty at the seminary asked him to move to Pasadena and offer leadership to the school. Though it seemed like he would come more than once, he always opted to stay in Boston near where his wife was raised. While Ockenga gave various reasons for his decision, his wife’s role in his decision making process comes through most strongly in his personal letters. For a treatment of Ockenga and Fuller, see Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God*.

palace revolution” replete with “talk of removing me from the principalship, etc.” Regent still held a special place in his heart. “I am not indispensable [at Regent],” Houston told his friends, “but the central struggle of...Regent that gives it its uniqueness is inter-disciplinary study. I have not been able to give as much emphasis to this, as the college needs, to be established in its vision.”⁹⁹ Houston knew his work was not done at Regent. He also seemed to sense that he had been overextending himself for the last few years. In a particularly introspective moment Houston posed for himself the same question he had posed earlier to other enterprising evangelicals like Francis Schaeffer. “Perhaps,” Houston pondered, “a servant of God can only do one thing properly for a life-work of radical change in one’s society. This is mine: not to have more professional theologians, more seminaries, but men and women who learn to think Christianly in all their professions.”¹⁰⁰ Houston was ready to commit himself to this work at Regent for the long haul.

New Directions

By 1980, C. S. Lewis College had changed its name, its style, and its ambitions.¹⁰¹ No longer aspiring to be a college situated on the campus of a university, the C. S. Lewis Institute (no longer C. S. Lewis College) moved its courses into downtown Washington D.C., where they were hosted by places like National Presbyterian Church and the

⁹⁹ Houston to Coe and Halverson, July 13, 1978.

¹⁰⁰ Houston to Coe and Halverson, July 13, 1978.

¹⁰¹ The name change took place in the fall of 1979. For a brief discussion of this change and a more detailed discussion of the shifting mission and location of the Institute, see “Core Community Meeting,” November 4, 1979, Box 3, Folder 10, James M. Houston Collection.

Brookings Institution.¹⁰² This move had major implications for student demographics and the Institute's mission.¹⁰³ The C. S. Lewis Institute continued to work towards the wedding of the head and the heart, but it no longer specifically targeted a college-aged constituency.¹⁰⁴ On a programming level, the C. S. Lewis Institute developed a twin focus in the early 1980s. The continuing involvement of individuals like Hiskey and Houston (who served for a time as board chair) ensured that the C. S. Lewis Institute would be known for blending scholarship and personal discipleship (i.e., the head and the heart).¹⁰⁵ Some in the organization, however, desired that the Institute move in the direction of public policy or a think tank.¹⁰⁶ Discussions between these two camps grew increasingly polemical through the early 1980s and reached a crescendo in 1985. Those who desired that the Institute focus more heavily on public policy went their own way, leaving the C. S. Lewis Institute to those who favored an emphasis on discipleship of the head and the heart. In significant ways, this was a return to the Institute's Fellowship House roots. The C. S. Lewis Institute had come full circle.

For his part, Houston maintained close association with the C. S. Lewis Institute for the rest of his life.¹⁰⁷ The Institute became an outlet and a place of reprieve for him as he encountered personal disappointments at Regent. (He would spend at least one more

¹⁰² "C. S. Lewis Institute: Summer 1980" (C. S. Lewis Institute, 1980), Box 3, Folder 9, James M. Houston Collection.

¹⁰³ Hiskey, interview.

¹⁰⁴ This changed to some degree in 1999 when the Institute introduced the C. S. Lewis fellows program, which was primarily geared to recent college graduates. See "C. S. Lewis Institute Vision, Mission, Strategies, and Projects," c 2009, Box 3, Folder 10, James M. Houston Collection.

¹⁰⁵ Hiskey's leadership was complemented and then somewhat replaced in the late 1970s by the work of Rich Gathro, a young Cornerstone ministries partner.

¹⁰⁶ J. Edward Glancy and Joel S. Woodruff, "Celebrating Forty Years of Heart and Mind Discipleship: A Brief History of the C. S. Lewis Institute," 3.

¹⁰⁷ Houston's continuing involvement is represented by the fact that he did not miss a C. S. Lewis Institute summer program until 1992, see James M. Houston to Ernst van Eeghan, April 16, 1992, Box 3, Folder 11, James M. Houston Collection.

sabbatical in D. C.) These disappointments began soon after his return to Regent in the summer of 1978 and extended through the 1980s¹⁰⁸ To some extent, Houston was right when he told his friends that “a palace revolution” awaited him; the tide of opinion had turned away from Houston in his absence. By mid-July 1978 he was prepared “to resign as Principal an[d] stay on as lecturer in Christian Inter-Disciplinary Studies.”¹⁰⁹ The C. S. Lewis Institute, far removed from the turbulence in Vancouver, offered a safe environment where Houston was appreciated without peer.

Throughout the rest of the decade, Houston found solace in the friendships he had made in Washington D. C. In addition to Coe and Halverson, Houston poured out his heart to Chuck Colson, another D. C. insider with deep ties to The Fellowship and the C. S. Lewis Institute. After listing several possible reasons why public opinion among Regent’s Board and Senate seemed to have turned against him, Houston outlined what he felt was a new, more appropriate strategy at Regent:

The decision, therefore, to stay at Regent seems to be necessary. At the same time, the only way in which I can seek to see expressed more clearly the need to have training and wisdom for Christian persons [rather] than simply professional scholarship for its own sake means that I may have to take another strategy other than the use of power as Principal. I am therefore offering my resignation to the Board of Regent and to step down to be lecturer in Christian studies at the College. It may be that the Board wish to also call me Chancellor or some other title that would indicate a continuing advisory role in the College, but this is merely a cloak of conventionality to hide the radicalism of spirit that I believe is necessary to continue to serve here. As a lecturer I shall be academically at the bottom, not only now but indefinitely. For I also see that when we get caught up in the traps of academia, that creates its own in-built professionalism too.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Houston would later describe these years as a desert experience. See Thomas, “James M Houston, Pioneering Spiritual Director to Evangelicals,” December 1993.

¹⁰⁹ Houston chose this title saying “I do not think I am worthy of being called a Professor in a field that does not exist academically” (Houston to Coe and Halverson, July 13, 1978).

¹¹⁰ James M. Houston to Chuck Colson, July 27, 1978, Box 3, Folder 18, James M. Houston Collection. Houston later commented on the strategy of this decision by noting that even though the transition out of the principalship was hard, because his “passion was to apply theology to daily and

Using power from below, Houston hoped to accomplish at Regent College what he could not accomplish as Principal. He also demonstrated a subtle shift that was occurring in his thinking. By relinquishing (or being stripped of) his title as Principal, Houston moved further from the mainstream of academic life. More than that, his proposed position, “Lecturer in Cross-Disciplinary Studies,” had no attachment to a professional field of scholarship. By stepping away from the Principalship, Houston, who had once been a member of a recognized guild (geography), moved further into the margins of academie. How could he penetrate the modern secular university as a “lecturer” in an unrecognized field? It seems even Houston—whose capacity for scholarship and charisma had opened many academic doors—knew this was the end of a chapter. Together, the loss of his Principalship and the reality that the College Park endeavor would not be able to raise the \$500,000 necessary to set up a library and form “Regent East,” when combined with the excitement of Houston’s business and political connections in Washington D. C., helped shift his attention away from the university—a sphere of society he had been working to reform for years. In future years it would be discipleship in the “marketplace” (i.e., the business world, politics, etc.), not the academy, that most captured Houston’s attention.

Close observers like Carl Armerding, Houston’s successor as Principal at Regent College, noticed a change in Houston’s approach at about this time. As Armerding later reflected, “a significant shift occurred sometime in the late seventies when [Houston] apparently lost interest in the university as a change agent, and shifted his extracurricular

emotional life” he could “see the strategy of moving from administration because it was not understood” (Thomas, “James M Houston, Pioneering Spiritual Director to Evangelicals,” December 1993).

interest to the business community.”¹¹¹ Within the business community personal spirituality and relational connection held more allure than rigorous academics. As Houston sought to nurture his own spirit in the deep wells of Christian spirituality through the ages, he was well prepared to bring perspective and discipleship to business communities in Washington D. C., Vancouver, and around the world. As time went on Houston channeled more of his energy into this sphere of society in part by organizing and leading businessmen prayer breakfasts modeled loosely on the National Prayer Breakfast movement in the United States.¹¹²

Houston turned his academic pursuits in a similar direction. In the fall of 1978 he began teaching his first course in “spiritual theology.”¹¹³ Not only was the course a good fit with his longstanding emphasis on personal relations, Houston also found that evangelicals were hungry for personal soul care and theological learning that brought out the best from the classics of Christian devotion.¹¹⁴ In the face of this need he took on more students for spiritual direction and developed more courses related to the topic. Practically speaking, Houston was indeed living out his strategy—influencing the course of Regent from below. Houston countered the college’s decision to offer the M.Div. in

¹¹¹ Carl E. Armerding to Michael G. Collison, July 22, 1993, Folder 4, Regent College, Michael G. Collison Collection, 8. Armerding was not alone in his assessment. J. I. Packer biographer and one-time Regent faculty member Alister McGrath noted in 1997 that despite “[Regent’s] close proximity to UBC and affiliate status, Regent never really entered into the life of the university. Houston gradually shifted his interests from the university to the business community, reflecting a growing conviction that the best interests of Regent would be served by stressing the links between theology and everyday life” (Alister E. McGrath, *J.I. Packer: A Biography* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1997), 231).

¹¹² Boersma, Gay, and Hindmarsh, “Introduction,” 4.

¹¹³ Boersma, Gay, and Hindmarsh, “Introduction,” 4.

¹¹⁴ In this emphasis, Houston once again followed in the footsteps of C. S. Lewis, who spoke of his disdain for “chronological snobbery” and recommended that modern Christian readers always read at least one old book for every three new ones they read. According to Lewis this rootedness offered the modern Christian “a standard of plain, central Christianity (‘mere Christianity’ as Baxter called it) which put the controversies of the moment in their proper perspective. Such a standard can only be acquired from old books” (C. S. Lewis, “Preface,” in Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, Translated by John Behr (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2011), 10).

1979—the year after Houston’s title was changed to Chancellor—by almost singlehandedly developing Regent’s reputation as the evangelical world’s leader in spiritual theology. By 1984 Houston’s interest in the field of spiritual theology and his continuing desire to develop other Regent-inspired efforts internationally led him to resign from his position as Chancellor.¹¹⁵ Freed from administrative duties, Houston had two specific goals. He wanted to increase his involvement in “the furtherance of lay training in other parts of the world” while also pursuing a sense of divine call to be “the facilitator of the heart in others, in personal counseling.”¹¹⁶ Together these goals—lay education and spiritual direction—would shape the legacy of Houston, Regent College, and those institutions that sought to replicate Regent’s success. By the beginning of the twenty-first century few had done as much as Houston to raise the awareness of these two emphases within North American evangelicalism.

Conclusion

Throughout the rest of his long and distinguished career Houston maintained his emphasis on lay theological education and spiritual theology even as his primary target shifted from shaping the university to forming evangelical hearts. While Houston would never again become intricately involved in the creation of another North American attempt to recreate Regent’s initial goal of providing university-embedded lay theological education, over the course of the 1970s no one had been more of an international voice for university-embedded lay theological education than Houston. As Houston drew

¹¹⁵ James M. Houston, “Chancellor’s Report” (Regent College, November 8, 1984), Regent College Keith Shepherd Grant Collection; James M. Houston, “Chancellor’s Report” (Regent College, October 24, 1984), Regent College Keith Shepherd Grant Collection.

¹¹⁶ James M. Houston, “Chancellor’s Report,” October 24, 1984.

prominent evangelicals into his Summer School at Regent College and the Summer Study Institute at College Park, he exposed them—and his students, many of whom came to deeply care for him because he took time to listen to them—to his vision for replicating Regent College on university campuses across North America and the globe.

Thus even as Houston's own direction changed and his focus shifted away from replicating Regent College on the campus of other North American universities, there were some among his students and admirers who, emboldened by scope of his early vision and the example of Regent College, worked to launch their own innovative learning communities on university campuses across America. In the process these educational entrepreneurs did much to shape study center movement to which they belonged. It is to two of these communities—one at the University of California, Berkeley and the other at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville—that we now turn.

Chapter 5:

Lay Theological Education Berkeley Style: David Gill and the Transition from “Radical” Free University to New College Berkeley

In the late 1960s and early 1970s Berkeley, California, was about as far from the Washington D. C. establishment—not to mention the hills of Ligonier, Pennsylvania—as one could get. During these years Berkeley and the larger San Francisco Bay Area boasted some of the most notable expressions of the American counterculture. By 1969 the area was also home to one of the continent’s most ambitious and influential communities of countercultural Christians. Berkeley’s Christian World Liberation Front (CWLF)—a name inspired by Berkeley’s revolutionary Third World Liberation Front (f. 1968)—represented Jesus people with an intellectual edge.¹ Efforts like *Right On*, one of the Jesus movement’s most significant and long-running publications, and the launching of the Crucible, a free university where anyone could learn or teach, stood as intellectually informed models to which many other Jesus movement efforts would aspire.

Both of these initiatives demonstrate the degree to which the CWLF benefitted from the combination of intellectual vitality and countercultural activity that marked the university town. This context helped the CWLF largely avoid the anti-intellectualism that marked much of the Jesus movement. Instead, CWLF leaders drew on the example of thinking evangelicals like Francis Schaeffer and James Houston, whose learning

¹ This name was selected by minimally altering the name of the Third World Liberation Front, a prominent group on the University of California campus, see Heinz, “The Christian World Liberation Front,” 144. In a 2016 interview David Gill noted that this name was one of the many the group chose that would later be embarrassing. See David W. Gill, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, Skype, December 15, 2015, author’s possession.

communities (L'Abri and Regent College, respectively) were emerging as baby boomers' most compelling examples of culturally engaged and thinking evangelicalism. With these models in view, individuals in the CWLF launched a number of initiatives aimed at deepening the intellectual and cultural engagement of North American evangelicals. Eventually, some with CWLF ties would move on to develop an even more ambitious venture—a graduate school of theological and biblical studies for lay Christians. New College Berkeley (f. 1977), like its model, Regent College, sought to make lay theological education both desirable and viable. The result of these efforts was an educational experiment, at times exciting, at times unwieldy, that offered North American evangelicals a chance to experience lay theological education Berkeley-style.

Hippies, Jesus, and Berkeley in the late 1960s

If the American counterculture had an epicenter in the late 1960s it was Berkeley and the larger San Francisco Bay area. In the years following the Free Speech protests of 1964, the University of California-Berkeley's Sproul Plaza and nearby Peoples Park and Telegraph Avenue joined other Bay Area locations like the Haight-Ashbury District as hippie strongholds and countercultural seedbeds. In the face of an escalating conflict in Vietnam, the 1967 "Summer of Love" drew an estimated 75,000 people to San Francisco in search of alternative lifestyles, trips, and gurus to those offered by parents and mainstream culture.²

The hoped-for utopia, however, never materialized. Soon the lofty ideals that inspired the Summer of Love began to deteriorate in the face of overcrowding, rampant

² In 1967 alone an estimated 75,000 people came to San Francisco. See, Charles Perry, *The Haight-Ashbury: A History* (New York: Random House, 1984), 229.

drug use, venereal diseases, a predatory sexual culture, and organized crime.³ As the idealism of the counterculture faded into disturbing reality, a handful of evangelical Christians began to experiment with forms of evangelistic outreach geared toward the physical and spiritual needs and countercultural sensibilities of their hippie neighbors. In the late summer of 1967 Ted and Liz Wise began reaching out to hippies and street people through The Living Room, an innovative coffee house ministry located on Page Street about a block from the intersection of Haight and Ashbury.⁴ Within two years an array of similarly contextualized ministries began popping up, first in California and then across the country. In the summer of 1968 two Christian coffee houses and night clubs were launched in Hollywood alone, while David Berg's The Light Club began attracting a sizable following in Huntington Beach and Chuck Smith's Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa transitioned from stuffy fundamentalism to the nation's premier hippie church. In 1969 ministries with a countercultural bent spread to Seattle, Chicago, and Atlanta among other places. Soon participants and observers alike began talking about "Jesus People" and a "Jesus Movement."⁵ By the early 1970s the shift in America's spiritual landscape was undeniable. In February of 1971 8,000 Jesus People celebrated "Spiritual Revolution Day" by marching on the California State Capitol building with "One Way" signs and index fingers pointed to heaven.⁶ In March both *Newsweek* and the *Wall Street Journal*

³ A famous Haight-Ashbury broad sheet criticized the Haight-Ashbury scene by noting, "Rape is as common as bull shit on Haight Street." See Larry Eskridge, *God's Forever Family: The Jesus People Movement in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 30. For more on drug use, violence, and organized crime in the Haight-Ashbury District, see Perry, *The Haight-Ashbury*; Robert Houriet, *Getting Back Together* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1971), xix-xx.

⁴ Eskridge, *God's Forever Family*, 29-33.

⁵ For a full treatment of these individuals and the ministries they launched, see Eskridge, *God's Forever Family*.

⁶ Donald John Heinz, "Jesus in Berkeley." (PhD diss., Graduate Theological Union, 1976), <http://search.proquest.com.proxy.its.virginia.edu/pqdtglobal/docview/302807537/35C0C40DF132418EPQ/7>.

covered the new movement in front page articles.⁷ In June *Time* followed suit, and by the end of 1971 the Jesus Movement had been named the Top Religious News Story of the Year.⁸ The Christian press was not to be left behind. Though the Jesus Movement barely caught the attention of evangelical publishers in 1970, in 1971 evangelicalism's leading periodical, *Christianity Today*, published more than three dozen feature stories on the phenomenon.⁹ Even Billy Graham got in on the act. His 1971 book *The Jesus Generation* sold over half a million copies.¹⁰

Among the early Jesus People—or “Jesus Freaks,” as they were often called—few were as truly countercultural as those who made up Berkeley's ambitiously named Christian World Liberation Front (CWLF).¹¹ As an organization, the CWLF was part Jesus-Freak commune, part countercultural campus ministry, and part social justice advocacy group. Its founder was Jack Sparks, a university professor turned Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC) staff member, who moved from Southern California to Berkeley with his family and two other Crusade staff families in 1969.¹² Their goal—to “make Christ an issue on campus”—was traditional; their name and the means they used

⁷ Earl C. Gottschalk, Jr., “Hip Culture Discovers a New Trip: Fervent, Foot-Stompin' Religion,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 2, 1971; “The Jesus People,” *Newsweek*, March 22, 1971.

⁸ “The New Rebel Cry: Jesus Is Coming!,” *Time*, June 21, 1971. For an overview of the Jesus Movement in the press, see Donald Heinz, “The Christian World Liberation Front,” in *The New Religious Consciousness*, ed. Charles Y. Glock (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976), 143; Eskridge, *God's Forever Family*, 130-132.

⁹ Eskridge, *God's Forever Family*, 132, 335 fn 44.

¹⁰ Eskridge, *God's Forever Family*, 137-139; Billy Graham, *The Jesus Generation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1971).

¹¹ The best early treatments of the CWLF include Don Heinz's unpublished dissertation “Jesus in Berkeley,” and his chapter, “The Christian World Liberation Front” in Charles Y. Glock's *The New Religious Consciousness* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976), 143-161, and Richard Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals: Revolution in Orthodoxy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 94-98. For Sparks's autobiographical take on the CWLF, see Jack N. Sparks, *God's Forever Family*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1974). The best recent work on the CWLF can be found in David R. Swartz, *Moral Minority: The Evangelical Left in an Age of Conservatism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 86-110.

¹² Sparks had a PhD in statistics and taught previously at Penn State University.

to accomplish this goal were anything but the standard Crusade fare.¹³ Since 1951 Bill Bright's CCC had embodied its founder's staunch conservatism in theology, social mores, and politics. The organization was known for its emphasis on personal evangelism through a mass-producible, four-step evangelization process called The Four Spiritual Laws and a ministry approach geared primarily to fraternity brothers and clean-cut jocks.¹⁴ In Berkeley, where involvement in fraternities and sororities was cut in half between 1964 and 1972, Crusade's efforts in the late 1960s met with little success.¹⁵ A 1967 "This Is Life, Berkeley" campaign failed to stir revival even when Billy Graham showed up to cap the week-long campaign.¹⁶

Campus Crusade gave members of the CWLF a taste for bold and aggressive Christian witness in the university—traits that contrasted with the quieter, more intellectual, less activist style of IVCF. Though he kept CCC's activism, Sparks realized that Crusade's "straight" approach held little allure for most of UC-Berkeley's student body. Rather than rely on CCC's traditional strategies, he and his team intentionally sought to infiltrate the counterculture by adopting countercultural dress, lifestyles, and methods. In the process members of the CWLF embraced a version of what historian Grace Hale describes as "the romance of the outsider" in their search for authentic lives.¹⁷ Opting to identify with countercultural outsiders rather than the "plastic" middle-class and suburban culture many of them had grown up in, members of the

¹³ Sparks in Heinz, "The Christian World Liberation Front," 143.

¹⁴ For histories of Campus Crusade, see Richard Quebedeaux, *I Found It!: The Story of Bill Bright and Campus Crusade* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979); Turner, *Bill Bright & Campus Crusade for Christ*.

¹⁵ On the decline of fraternity's involvement at Berkeley in the mid-to-late 1960s, see Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (Toronto; New York: Bantam Books, 1987), 353. As Gitlin remarks, during these years "the radicals were hipper in Berkeley."

¹⁶ Heinz, "Jesus in Berkeley," 34.

¹⁷ Grace Elizabeth Hale, *A Nation of Outsiders: How the White Middle Class Fell in Love with Rebellion in Postwar America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1, 238-275.

CWLF carefully cultivated their countercultural style and wore it like a badge of honor.¹⁸ They grew out their hair, donned boots and overalls, lived in community, attended rallies, spoke from the steps of Sproul Plaza, and perfected the art of public display through street theatre troupes and public baptisms in UC-Berkeley's Ludwig's Fountain.¹⁹ As one CWLF participant-observer noted, it was by observing the student radicals that CWLF members "learned to leaflet, sign, poster, and bullhorn."²⁰ Sparks and his team then utilized these techniques to evangelize in the street, in political rallies, in topless and bottomless bars, and even at the occasional "love-in"—all places typical Campus Crusade workers were loath to go.²¹

For Sparks and many in the CWLF, living counterculturally was more than a mere technique; rather, "CWLF leaders embraced the cultural move to simplicity and to a kind

¹⁸ The façade and artificiality of middle-class and suburban life was commonly rejected as "plastic" by members of the counterculture in the late 1960s and 1970s, see Houriet, *Getting Back Together*, xix. Francis Schaeffer was among the first prominent Christians to make use of this term in his description of the problems that afflicted American middle-class Christianity, see Francis A Schaeffer, "The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century," in *A Christian View of the Church*. (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, [1970] 1982), 15-17; Francis A. Schaeffer, "The New Super Spirituality," in *Complete Works of Francis A Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview. Vol 3, A Christian View of Spirituality* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, [1972] 1982), 384-385.

¹⁹ Suzy Hagstrom, "Ludwig's Fountain Becomes Pool for Christians' Baptism Rituals," *The Daily Californian*, November 26, 1973, Box 1, Folder 17, CWLF Fliers and Letters Various Dates, 1973-1977, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California. Like thousands of others in the counterculture who helped fuel the rise of more than two thousand communes by the early 1970s, members of the CWLF were very interested in exploring the benefits of intentional community and simple living. Some of the key books that helped shape the way individuals in the CWLF thought about intentional community included Houriet, *Getting Back Together*; Benjamin David Zablocki, *The Joyful Community; an Account of the Bruderhof, a Communal Movement Now in Its Third Generation* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971); Dave Jackson and Neta Jackson, *Living Together in a World Falling Apart* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Creation House, 1974), and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954). For more on the influence of these books, see Walter Hearn and Virginia Hearn, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, December 2, 2015, author's possession; Donald Heinz to Crucible People, January 9, 1974, Box 1, Folder 13, The Crucible, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California.

²⁰ Heinz, "Jesus in Berkeley," 39.

²¹ The best accounts of early CWLF efforts to contextualize and spread the Gospel among members of the counterculture can be found in Sparks, *God's Forever Family* and Heinz, "Jesus in Berkeley," 36-43.

of natural look and life, like the broader counterculture.”²² For these Christians the countercultural imperative derived not merely from current cultural trends but directly from the original revolutionary—Jesus Christ. To members of the CWLF Jesus was a liberator and the “notorious leader of an underground movement,” not a staid embodiment of middle-class values and religious traditionalism.²³

By tapping into the larger countercultural ethos Sparks’s fresh method and easygoing personality soon attracted a small but growing number of individuals who joined him as members of what he described as “God’s Forever Family.”²⁴ While a few of those who joined the CWLF family seem never to have relinquished their middle-class sensibilities, many others—including Sparks himself—became thoroughly countercultural.²⁵ Sparks and many other members of CWLF joined their secular peers in the counterculture by emphasizing simplicity and communal living. Most CWLF members lived in extended family-like households, were deeply suspicious of the policies of the American government and western consumer culture—once they even put “San T. Claus” on trial for “economic imperialism scaring children” before acquitting him “by the

²² David Gill, email to author, December 1, 2016. According to Gill, the CWLF’s acceptance of the counterculture was not thoroughgoing. “CWLF rejected much that was conventional and traditional and felt like bondage. But CWLF also rejected aspects of the counterculture and political left that were sinful or non-biblical.”

²³ The earliest issues of *Right On* demonstrated this revolutionary understanding Jesus. The first issue contained a full page segment titled “New Berkeley Liberation Program” that linked liberation directly to Jesus, not the church. In the second issue the paper ran a full-page graphic laid out like a wanted poster. Above and below the profile of Jesus were the words, “WANTED: JESUS CHRIST.” After a list of his alias and his alleged crimes came the warning: “Still at Large!” See “New Berkeley Liberation Program,” *Right On* 1, no. 1 (July 1969): 4; “Wanted: Jesus Christ,” *Right On* 1, no. 2 (1969): 4. Because *Right On* did not copyright their material in the early years this image became a feature of Jesus Magazines around the world, see Heinz, “Jesus in Berkeley,” 174.

²⁴ Heinz, “Jesus in Berkeley,” 158-163; Sparks, *God’s Forever Family*.

²⁵ For a commentary on the difficulties Sparks’s original CCC partners faced when they attempted to integrate into the countercultural scene, see Heinz, “Jesus in Berkeley,” 35-43, 158. During a 2016 interview Gallagher described Sparks as authentically countercultural where as some of the other early CWLF staff members had much more difficulty shedding their middle class mindsets, see Sharon Gallagher, interview.

blood of Jesus.”²⁶ Sparks and other CWLF leaders joined with prominent social commentators like the French philosopher Jacques Ellul and the American countercultural theorizer Theodore Roszak in lamenting the perils of the “technocracy” and its unbending emphasis on technological expertise and efficiency.²⁷ Unlike many of their evangelical elders, but like many among America’s countercultural youth, members of the CWLF were much more inclined toward the ethos of pot-luck dinners and the emphases of E. F. Schumacher’s *Small Is Beautiful* (1973) than they were with the trappings of a national prayer breakfast or large-scale efforts of evangelical statesmen like Billy Graham or Bill Bright.²⁸ Ironically, this proclivity toward the small and local resulted in an influence that was felt throughout North America.

Right On: The Underground Press and Lay Theological Education

The principal means by which the CWLF sought to present its religious and political vision to the world was through the publication of its underground paper, *Right On* (renamed *Radix* in 1976). First published in July 1969, only three months after Sparks and company arrived in Berkeley, *Right On* was similar to most other CWLF efforts in that the style and artistic sensibilities of the paper were drawn not from evangelical precedents but from the counterculture itself. From the start *Right On* was designed to be a Christian alternative to secular—and sex-ad-saturated—underground weeklies like the

²⁶ Heinz, “Jesus in Berkeley,” 42.

²⁷ Ellul, *The Technological Society*; Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture; Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969).

²⁸ Regarding the frequency of pot-lucks, see Walter Hearn and Virginia Hearn, interview. Regarding esteem for Schumacher among CWLF leaders, see Jack Sparks, “Small Is Beautiful,” *Right On* 6, no. 1 (August 1974): 4; David W. Gill, “Chapters in My Life: David Gill,” *Radix* 12, no. 1 (August 1980): 4–6. Regarding ambivalence toward Graham and Campus Crusade, see David Gill, “Uprooting & Planting,” *Radix* 9, no. 1 (August 1977): 3. Even earlier than this the *Right On* editorial team had wanted to run a critical article of Crusade’s *Explo ’72*, but it was cut by one of the few conservatives at CWLF, see Heinz, “Jesus in Berkeley,” 306.

local *Berkeley Barb*.²⁹ At its height in 1972 *Right On* reached a distribution of approximately 50,000.³⁰ This was a significant number, but it was still much smaller than the leading Jesus paper, Duane Pederson's *Hollywood Free Paper* (1969-1979), which averaged 400,000 subscribers and by 1972 had a budget of almost \$220,000.³¹ Pederson's paper, however, was geared for a teenage audience, and its content fell far below the standard set by its Berkeley predecessor.³² As the first, the most substantial, and longest lasting (1969—present) of the Jesus papers that came to proliferate American evangelicalism in the 1970s, *Right On* exerted a notable and unique influence within the international Jesus Movement.³³

Right On's influence and distinctiveness became most apparent after 1971. In that year Judson Press published *The Street People: Selections from "Right On!" Berkeley's*

²⁹ Good treatments of the underground press during this era include: Laurence Leamer, *The Paper Revolutionaries; The Rise of the Underground Press* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972); Abe Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties: The Life and Times of the Underground Press* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985). Douglas Rossinow's *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), offers a good treatment of one of these publications, University of Texas-Austin's *The Rag* (257-261). Like the *Berkeley Barb*, *The Rag* found sex ads to be a lucrative source of income, but eventually discontinued them when criticism from feminists became intense. In many ways *Right On* emerged as an explicit effort to oppose the influence and message of the *Barb*. The first issue of *Right On* carried a critique of the *Barb* on its cover, see "Barb Bared," *Right On* 1, no. 1 (July 1969): 1. Later issues continued to highlight *Barb* missteps, see Don Heinz, "Coming Clean: An Invitation to the Barb Et. Al.," *Right On* 5, no. 3 (October 1973): 3,8,10; Sharon Gallagher, "Barb Folds," Summer 1980, Box 1, Folder 56, Right On/Radix, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California. In contrast to the funding model in the secular underground press, the Jesus Movement alternative press like *Right On* relied primarily on donations through their 501(c)3 organizations. *Right On* did experiment with vending machine sales in the early 1970s but this was not a sustainable way to fund operations.

³⁰ Heinz, "Jesus in Berkeley," 299.

³¹ Eskridge, *God's Forever Family*, 256-257. For big events like the Rose Bowl Pederson would run print runs of 500,000, see Heinz, "Jesus in Berkeley," 298.

³² In 1976 Heinz described Pederson's paper as "long on cliché and short on depth." The *Hollywood Free Paper* also reached its maximum circulation in 1972 before becoming the in-house magazine of Pederson's Jesus People USA, see Heinz, "Jesus in Berkeley," 298-299. The *Hollywood Free Paper* came out shortly after *Right On* was first published. For more on the *Hollywood Free Paper*, see Eileen Luhr, "A Revolutionary Mission: Young Evangelicals and the Language of the Sixties," in *American Evangelicals and the 1960s*, ed. Axel R. Schäfer (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), 61-80; Eskridge, *God's Forever Family*, 91, 161, 256-257.

³³ Feedback on *Right On* articles by both Francis Schaeffer and the Dutch art historian Hans Rookmaaker demonstrates that the paper was at least periodically read by individuals at both the Swiss and Dutch L'Abri.

Underground Student Newspaper, thus distilling the paper's ethos and content for evangelical readers across the nation.³⁴ More importantly, however, in 1971 the paper began taking contributions from two individuals who would come to exert a strong and lasting influence on the publication. Together David Gill and Sharon Gallagher helped *Right On* mature from a street paper into a publication notable among Jesus papers for its professionalism and intellectual vigor. In the process *Right On* transitioned from a loosely edited amalgam of articles that emphasized evangelism through psychedelic art, mediocre poetry, and countercultural critique into the CWLF's most influential educational forum.

David Gill (b. 1946) first came to Berkeley as a freshman at the University of California in the fall of 1964. Gill had grown up within the "Exclusive" Plymouth Brethren. While some among the Brethren (e.g., James Houston and many of the individuals who established Regent College) were "open" and willing to work with Christians from other church backgrounds, Exclusive Brethren emphasized separation from the world. Thus Gill grew up with a view of the Bible similar to most evangelicals without being assimilated into the network of evangelical para-church ministries or the wider evangelical subculture. For Gill, this "narrow sectarian stance" had ironic consequences. By "prohibiting fellowship with all other Christians," the Exclusive Brethren taught Gill how to live as "a 'Christian in the world' — without recourse to the Bible schools, summer camps, revivals and crusades, Christian student groups, or other supports."³⁵ Furthermore, like many who grew up in the sect, Gill's father, a lower-level executive in a San Francisco paper corporation, encouraged his son to opt for the

³⁴ *The Street People; Selections from "Right On," Berkeley's Christian Underground Student Newspaper* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1971).

³⁵ David W. Gill, "Radical Christian: The End (Part Two)," *Radix* 10, no. 6 (June 1979): 9.

pluralism of a secular university rather than a Christian institution.³⁶ For Gill, “nothing was more obvious when I graduated from high school than that I should go to Berkeley, nothing was farther from my world than the idea of going to a Bible school or a ‘Christian’ college.”³⁷

At Berkeley Gill found himself surrounded by a student body deeply concerned about free speech, civil rights, and the Vietnam War. As he experienced the development of the student movement, anti-war protests, and the emerging youth counterculture, Gill found that it was “black power, symbolized in Berkeley and Oakland by the Black Panther Party” that most “challenged and reoriented my faith, life, and thought.” The history major soon found himself supplementing his assigned reading by devouring over thirty books on black thought and history.³⁸ Gill’s interest in the subject was fueled by his own experiences as he came into personal contact with African Americans during his weekly trips to Alameda County Juvenile Hall. Beginning in 1966 Gill and a friend preached and witnessed weekly to crowds of up to three hundred people at the juvenile center.³⁹ In addition to leading weekend meetings and weeknight Bible studies, Gill also began publishing a weekly paper, *Straight to You*, for the inmates.⁴⁰

After his graduation from the University of California in 1968, Gill continued his ministry at the juvenile hall for three years while he taught history to high school and junior high students during the day and studied part-time for an MA in history at San Francisco State. It was during this time that he first came into contact with the work of

³⁶ For biographical information on Gill, see David Gill, “Autobiography,” *DavidWGill*, <http://davidwgill.org/Autobiography.html> (accessed September 9, 2015); David W. Gill, “Chapters in My Life: David Gill”; Heinz, “Jesus in Berkeley,” 121-130.

³⁷ David W. Gill, “Radical Christian: The End (part Two),” 9.

³⁸ David W. Gill, “Chapters in My Life: David Gill,” 5.

³⁹ Heinz, “Jesus in Berkeley,” 123; David Gill, “Autobiography.”

⁴⁰ Heinz, “Jesus in Berkeley,” 123.

Francis Schaeffer. Gill had been interested in apologetics since high school. By 1969 he was already a fan of the writings of John Warwick Montgomery and was working Montgomery's historical apologetics into his MA thesis, but it was his 1969 discovery of Schaeffer's *The God Who Is There* that most shaped him.⁴¹ Gill was inspired by Schaeffer's "swashbuckling writings," which attempted to unite theology, art, and the history of philosophy under a biblically inspired worldview.⁴² He wrote to Schaeffer with high praise: "Your books, especially *The God Who Is There* revolutionized my testimony at UC-Berkeley."⁴³ Revealing both his esteem for Schaeffer and a sense of vision he would come to be known for, Gill went on to ask if the Swiss guru had "ever considered a sort of 'Farel House West' in Berkeley?"⁴⁴ To the high school history teacher, evangelist, and budding religious entrepreneur Berkeley seemed to offer "an ideal place to take over an old fraternity house and use it to confront modern men... with the person of Jesus Christ."⁴⁵

The fact that Schaeffer responded to Gill's inquiry by offering him use of the L'Abri tape list and the names of a few L'Abri-friendly folks in the Bay Area rather than sustaining any discussion about the likelihood of establishing a L'Abri branch in Berkeley did not quell Gill's enthusiasm for Schaeffer or the work of L'Abri. Though Gill had had negative reactions to campus ministries like Campus Crusade and the

⁴¹ Gill, interview, 2015; David W. Gill, "Chapters in My Life: David Gill."

⁴² In his autobiography Gill uses the term "swashbuckling" to describe Schaeffer's writings. For more on Gill's early take on Schaeffer, see David Gill, interview. Gill's 1971 thesis, "Contemporary Christian Philosophies of History: The Problem of God's Role in History" analyzed six different Christian approaches to the role of God in history. One of his chapters dealt specifically with the historical apologetics of Montgomery, see David W. Gill, "Chapters in My Life: David Gill," 5.

⁴³ David Gill to Francis A. Schaeffer, February 13, 1970, Box 56, File 6. Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, The Library, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina. (Emphasis original.)

⁴⁴ Gill to Schaeffer, 1970.

⁴⁵ Gill to Schaeffer, 1970.

“harebrained eschatology” and “horrible singing” that marked Jesus Movement ministries like Linda Meissner’s Jesus People Army (f. 1969) in Seattle, the allure of hearing L’Abri’s Os Guinness speak was enticing enough to draw him to his first CWLF meeting in the spring of 1971.⁴⁶ At the lecture Gill met Guinness and started a life-long friendship, but he also discovered that Sparks and the CWLF were a different breed of Jesus people. “These were not your normal Jesus Freaks. These people were really thoughtful about life and politics, and yet they loved studying the Bible and they really did love Jesus.”⁴⁷ Furthermore, rather than the “funeral dirges” Gill was used to in his church, “the singing was great” at the CWLF meeting and “the whole atmosphere” brimmed with “so much life, so much love.”⁴⁸ He was hooked.

One of the first things Gill did as his attachment to the CWLF community grew was show Sparks three of the articles he had written for *Straight to You* just in case *Right On* might be interested in more content.⁴⁹ To Gill’s surprise “the next issue of *Right On* contained all three, without any editing whatsoever.”⁵⁰ He began passing out copies of *Right On* at the Juvenile Hall. Before long a copy of the CWLF’s paper made it into the hands of one of the elders at his Brethren assembly. When the members of Gill’s assembly became aware of his involvement in the CWLF they held a special meeting to discuss the issue. Within a week they gave Gill an ultimatum: cease his involvement with the CWLF or be excommunicated.⁵¹ Gill chose the latter.

⁴⁶ Gill, interview, 2015. For Gill’s assessment of Campus Crusade and Meissner’s ministry, see Heinz, “Jesus in Berkeley,” 123-124.

⁴⁷ Gill, interview, 2015.

⁴⁸ Heinz, “Jesus in Berkeley,” 124.

⁴⁹ Gill, interview, 2015.

⁵⁰ Heinz, “Jesus in Berkeley,” 124.

⁵¹ In addition to excommunicating Gill from his local assembly, the elders also informed all the other assemblies in the area of the decision, see Heinz, “Jesus in Berkeley,” 125

Freed of his church duties and almost done with his MA thesis, Gill had the time to throw his energies further into the CWLF. Though he was involved in a number of CWLF projects, it was his work at *Right On* that was especially significant. Biblically literate, energetic, well-educated, and fluent with the student scene at UC-Berkeley, Gill was exactly the type of person Sparks needed to bring better content, greater professionalism, and a degree of stability to the paper. Within six months Sparks offered Gill the position of editor. Gill accepted the editorship of *Right On* on the condition that the CWLF break its pattern of all-male leadership by appointing Sharon Gallagher co-editor.⁵²

Gallagher was a natural choice for the position. At the time of the 1971 meeting she had been working with *Right On* for three months longer than Gill and had proven herself as a writer and film critic.⁵³ Her resume was further enhanced by her connections to significant figures in the evangelical world. As a teenager in an LA-area Plymouth Brethren assembly she had been mentored by Laurel and Ward Gasque during the years Ward Gasque studied at Fuller Seminary.⁵⁴ Gallagher's father was unusual among Brethren leaders in that he had gone to seminary and spent time as a Baptist minister before returning to the Brethren fold. Perhaps because of this openness, Gallagher was not steered toward a public university but rather attended Westmont College—one of American evangelicalism's foremost liberal arts colleges. It was during her time at Westmont that Gallagher first came into contact with Francis Schaeffer, Os Guinness,

⁵² Heinz, "Jesus in Berkeley," 125; Gill, interview, 2015.

⁵³ Gill, interview, 2015. A detailed treatment of Gallagher's work at *Right On* and within the larger evangelical movement can be found in the chapter "Sharon Gallagher and the Politics of Spiritual Community" in Swartz, *Moral Minority*, 86-110.

⁵⁴ Laurel Gasque, W. Ward Gasque, Carl E. Armerding, interview.

and other members of the L'Abri Fellowship during their fall 1968 visit to the college.⁵⁵ She began reading Schaeffer's books, and in 1970 Gallagher and a friend from Westmont celebrated their college graduation by spending four weeks at Swiss L'Abri. L'Abri proved worth the trip. For Gallagher, the retreat center provided an "exciting" and "intellectually stimulating" setting in which she could finally engage topics in art and movies that her church had forbidden as beyond the pale of Christian pursuit and analysis. "Coming from a fundamentalist background where a lot of the things that I loved were verboten," Gallagher was thrilled, "to have somebody, you know, very Christian, talk about movies, talk about art, talk about books." For Gallagher, the entire experience was "very liberating."⁵⁶

L'Abri also gave her what she describes as "a taste for Christian community." Inspired to further explore all of these new trajectories Gallagher decided to defer her acceptance to a PhD program in counseling psychology at USC for a year and further explore Christian community. "I had been so profoundly affected not just by what I had been taught at L'Abri, but by a sense of Christian community in the countercultural setting, that I wanted more of that....So I thought 'I've been in school my whole life. I'm going to take a year off and do something else.'" During her junior year of college Gallagher had visited the CWLF and left impressed with the group's work and defining spirit. Following her visit to L'Abri she again visited Berkeley. This time she decided to

⁵⁵ Sharon Gallagher, interview, 2015. Francis and Edith Schaeffer visited Westmont in 1968 with Franky and Guinness as part of a fourteen city tour. Schaeffer had previously visited Westmont in 1965. For more, see Barry Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 76-78; Colin Duriez, *Francis Schaeffer: An Authentic Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 160-168; Edith Schaeffer, *The Tapestry: The Life and Times of Francis and Edith Schaeffer* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1981), 527.

⁵⁶ Gallagher, interview, 2015.

stay.⁵⁷ What attracted Gallagher most to the CWLF community was their “sense of the gospel’s immediacy: they not only preached, they fed and clothed people.” When her talents as a writer became known in the CWLF she “was quickly put to work for *Right On*” with the directive from Sparks that she “keep in mind the people we’re writing for.”⁵⁸ Gallagher set to work attempting to do just that as she drew on the techniques she learned at L’Abri to write film reviews and articles that covered current events with an explicitly evangelistic twist.⁵⁹ The quality of her work caught the attention of fellow *Right On* staffers and made her selection as co-editor seem natural to Gill.⁶⁰

The 1971 appointment of Gill and Gallagher as co-editors marked an important shift in the history of the fledgling publication. Beginning in late 1970 and growing more pronounced under the editorship of Gill and Gallagher, *Right On* gradually moved away from its identity as a street paper as it developed into a more professional and nuanced publication.⁶¹ Observers of the publication began to notice “more articles which were an intellectual presentation and defense of the Christian faith,” many of which followed “the kind of reasoning one might find at L’Abri or Wheaton College.”⁶² The paper’s layout also shifted, from a loose amalgam of stories and graphics to a tighter layout by May, 1971.⁶³ The September 1971 edition provided the names of the *Right On* staff for the first time and listed Gill and Gallagher as co-editors.

⁵⁷ Unless otherwise stated, all of the quotations and details from this paragraph are drawn from a December 2015 interview with Gallagher.

⁵⁸ Sharon Gallagher, “From Right On to Radix: A Short History,” *Radix* 11, no. 1 (August 1979): 3.

⁵⁹ For the influence of Francis Schaeffer on Gallagher and the CWLF during these years, see Swartz, *Moral Minority*, 95-102. For Gallagher’s emphasis on evangelism during these early years, see “From Right on to Radix,” 3.

⁶⁰ Gill, interview, 2015.

⁶¹ Heinz, “Jesus in Berkeley,” 283-284.

⁶² Heinz, “Jesus in Berkeley,” 283.

⁶³ Heinz, “Jesus in Berkeley,” 283.

Under Gallagher and Gill's leadership the staff at *Right On* began to conceive of its audience not as street people or anti-intellectual Jesus Freaks, but as literate and thoughtful Christians and curious non-Christians.⁶⁴ Beginning to offer more than evangelism and critiques of the counterculture's flaws, the editorial team sought out individuals within both evangelicalism and the secular culture for feature interviews. Between 1971 and 1973 Gallagher and Gill coordinated (and often conducted) interviews with individuals like "O Happy Day" gospel musician Edwin Hawkins, Black Panther leaders Bobby Seale and Elaine Brown, Dutch art historian Hans Rookmaaker, John Lennon and Yoko Ono, Hal Lindsey—a former Campus Crusade worker at UCLA and author of *The Late Great Planet Earth*, the decade's best selling non-fiction book after the Bible—and Paul Stookey of Peter, Paul and Mary fame.⁶⁵

In addition to covering current events and cultural icons, the *Right On* staff began working to better educate and inform their readers about what they felt to be the best in evangelical thinking past and present. Under the direction of Gill and Gallagher *Right On* attempted to highlight the work of individuals and movements that could function as models for a generation of countercultural Christians who had left Billy Graham and "establishment evangelicalism" behind.⁶⁶ Bonheoffer's *Life Together* came in for a positive review as did other books on communal living like Dave and Neta Jackson's *Living Together in a World Falling Apart*, which described life in several Christian

⁶⁴ Heinz, "Jesus in Berkeley," 291, 293.

⁶⁵ For a longer list of interviews, see Heinz, "Jesus in Berkeley," 291, 294.

⁶⁶ Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals*, 28-36.

communes.⁶⁷ Sparks himself reviewed E. F. Shumacher's *Small Is Beautiful* and urged his readers to "Get this one and *read it*."⁶⁸

Like many evangelicals, the *Right On* staff showed a special appreciation for C. S. Lewis, the Inklings (a group of writers headed up by Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien), and Lewis's friend and writer Dorothy Sayers.⁶⁹ *Right On* devoted nearly four full pages of its April 1972 issue to C. S. Lewis and his fellow Oxford Christian intellectuals. In addition to articles like "The Inklings of Oxford: An Introduction" and "Dorothy Sayers an Artist for All Seasons," the issue also included an interview with Regent College Principal, James Houston.⁷⁰ Because Houston had come to know Lewis when the two were part of an Oxford discussion group during the 1950s, the interview offered readers the sense of having personal access to Lewis.⁷¹ Over the course of the next decade articles like *Right On*'s tribute to "J.R.R. Tolkien: Man of Another Age" or Presbyterian minister Earl Palmer's five-page discussion of "Theological Themes in C. S. Lewis' Fiction" kept Lewis and others among the Inklings before the eyes of the publication's readers.⁷² The attention the paper devoted to Lewis throughout these years demonstrated the Cambridge

⁶⁷ Jack Buckley, "Media: Life Together," *Right On* 6, no. 1 (August 1974): 4.

⁶⁸ Jack Sparks, "Small Is Beautiful," *Right On* (July-August, 1974), 4.

⁶⁹ Though Sayers possessed the intellect and wit to be a member of the Inklings, she was not included in the group due to her gender, see Philip Zaleski and Carol Zaleski, *The Fellowship: The Literary Lives of the Inklings: J.R.R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Owen Barfield, Charles Williams*, 2015, 198.

⁷⁰ Jack Buckley, "The Inklings of Oxford: An Introduction," *Right On* 3, no. 10 (April 1972): 5; Donna Dong, "Dorothy Sayers an Artist for All Seasons," *Right On* 3, no. 10 (April 1972): 6. The issue also included an article on Lewis's friend and fellow-Inkling, Charles Williams: "Charles Williams: An Appreciation," *Right On* 3, no. 10 (April 1972): 7, 9.

⁷¹ James Houston, "Reflections on C. S. Lewis," *Right On* 3, no. 10 (April 1972): 5. This article was later reprinted in a July-August 1977 issue of *Radix*.

⁷² "J. R. R. Tolkien: Man of Another Age," *Right On* 5, no. 3 (October 1973): 9; Earl Palmer, "Theological Themes in C. S. Lewis' Fiction," *Radix* 9, no. 1 (August 1977): 12–16. Other articles featuring Lewis, Tolkien, and Sayers to appear between 1972 and 1982 include: Kathryn Lindskoog, "Bright Shoots of Everlastingness: C. S. Lewis's Search for Joy," *Radix* 10, no. 6 (June 1979): 6–8; David Downing, "Christian Elements in J. R. R. Tolkien," *Radix* 13, no. 3 (December 1981): 10–11; Barbara Reynolds, "Dorothy Sayers: Lively Minded Believer," *Radix* 12, no. 4 (February 1981): 10–11; Doug Anderson, "C. S. Lewis: Visioner of Reality," *Radix* 13, no. 3 (December 1981): 12–15.

professor's enduring power to inspire American evangelicals who were looking for models capable of blending a winsome and orthodox faith with intellectual curiosity and scholarly proficiency.

Another individual who frequently came in for the positive treatment in the pages of *Right On* during the early-to-mid-1970s was Francis Schaeffer. While L'Abri was mentioned in passing as early as 1970, it was not until May of 1972 that Schaeffer received extensive treatment in *Right On*.⁷³ In a review of Schaeffer's recent book *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century* (1970) Gill endorsed Schaeffer with only a small caveat. While he admitted that he differed with Schaeffer "on some points of his thinking," Gill poured on high praise: "I can say that his works are among the very most insightful, perceptive, creative, and stimulating that I have ever read. They are all highly recommended."⁷⁴ In 1974 *Right On* gave three full pages to an interview with Schaeffer in which the American expatriot rehearsed many of his most popular themes.⁷⁵ Three months later the publication gave similar treatment to Schaeffer's son, Franky, in a conversation that examined the possibility of Christian art.⁷⁶

It was in 1977, following the publication of Schaeffer's Franky-inspired book and film project *How Shall We Now Live?* that members of the publication's staff began to voice discontent with the direction of Schaeffer's work.⁷⁷ In March of 1977 Gallagher

⁷³ Heinz, "Jesus in Berkeley," 281.

⁷⁴ David W. Gill, "Schaeffer!"

⁷⁵ Danny Smith and Francis A. Schaeffer, "A Conversation with Francis Schaeffer."

⁷⁶ Dale A. Johnson and Franky Schaeffer, "A Conversation with Franky Schaeffer," *Right On* 6, no. 1 (August 1974): 3, 8. Notably, the younger Schaeffer's cynicism, which would become a characteristic feature of his later speaking and writing career both within and outside evangelicalism, was on full display during the conversation.

⁷⁷ For Franky Schaeffer's influential role in *How Should We Then Live?* and many of his father's later projects, see Frank Schaeffer, *Crazy for God: How I Grew up as One of the Elect, Helped Found the Religious Right, and Lived to Take All (or Almost All) of It Back* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2007), 267-293.

published a three-page review in which she soundly and repeatedly criticized her former mentor's failure to "qualify his analysis" or demonstrate the "critical attitude" that he had spent decades emphasizing to the thousands of individuals who visited his Swiss retreat. Unlike her positive experience at L'Abri, what Gallagher saw in Schaeffer's recent book and film forced her to ask "to what extent does Schaeffer set himself up as an absolute?"⁷⁸ Schaeffer also came in for criticism in a later review by Covenant Theological Seminary graduate and long-time *Right On* contributor Jack Buckley.⁷⁹ Buckley did not take issue with the intellectual content of the film; rather, he was disappointed with its cinematic quality as well as the book's failure to devote enough pages to images of the art pieces under discussion. Opining that Schaeffer's project "fails to measure up to the artistic or articulate excellence" of either Kenneth Clark's *Civilization* (1969) or Jacob Bronowski's *The Ascent of Man* (1973), Buckley lamented that "what might have truly been a Christian alternative...has been served to us half-baked."⁸⁰

While Schaeffer and Lewis were both common heroes within American evangelicalism, *Right On* was notable for its efforts to open evangelicals up to outside voices. Such efforts were nothing less than educational endeavors. From almost their first involvement with the paper Gallagher and Gill attempted to get their readers—and by implication the larger evangelical world—to wrestle with the work of countercultural voices like Theodore Roszak, and new movements within evangelicalism like the

⁷⁸ Sharon Gallagher, "How Should We Then Live?," *Radix* 8, no. 4 (April 1977), 12.

⁷⁹ For a brief biography of Buckley, see "Pastor of First Presbyterian Church to Retire," *Alameda, CA Patch*, August 27, 2012, <http://patch.com/california/alameda/reverend-jack-buckley-of-first-presbyterian-to-retire>.

⁸⁰ Kenneth Clark and Rogers D. Spotswood Collection, *Civilisation: A Personal View*, 1970; Jacob Bronowski and Mazal Holocaust Collection, *The Ascent of Man* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974); Jack Buckley, "How Should We Then Live?," *Radix* 8, no. 5 (May-June 1977): 12, 14. See also David Gill's critical essay "Jacques Ellul and Francis Schaeffer: Two Views of Western Civilization," *Fides et Historia* 13.2 (Spring-Summer 1981): 23-37.

socially-conscious 1973 Chicago Declaration and feminist voices from the Evangelical Women’s Caucus (f. 1974), including Berkeley’s own Virginia Hearn. While Gill supported all these efforts, he most frequently used his regular “Radical Christian” column and various other book reviews and articles as a means of introducing American Christians to the work of Jacques Ellul, a French philosopher and ethicist who emphasized the dehumanizing impact of the current political system and the “technological society” that undergirded it. For Gill understanding and disseminating Ellul’s thought would become a lifelong educational passion. In addition to writing his 1979 PhD dissertation on “The Word of God in the Ethics of Jacques Ellul” he spent his first sabbatical year (1984-1985) with Ellul in France and organized the founding of the International Jacques Ellul Society in 2000.⁸¹

Throughout the 1970s the publication continued to function as one of the foremost educational arms of the Evangelical Left—a loosely connected network of evangelicals who maintained traditional orthodoxy while adopting some of the most prominent causes (e.g., social justice, withdrawal from Vietnam, mutual disarmament, etc.) of liberal politics.⁸² Its staying power was a testament to both its unique place within American evangelicalism at the time and the dedication and capacity of its editorial team—

⁸¹ David Walter Gill, “The Word of God in the Ethics of Jacques Ellul” (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 1979), <http://search.proquest.com.proxy.its.virginia.edu/pqdtglobal/docview/1655602495/citation/99EB195A1B284C39PQ/1>. For more on Gill’s appreciation for Ellul and the International Jacques Ellul Society, see David Gill, “Autobiography”; “International Jacques Ellul Society,” <https://ellul.org> (accessed July 20, 2016).

⁸² The CWLF’s left-leaning politics, especially on issues like poverty and violence, may seem strange to the twenty-first century readers who are familiar with evangelicalism in a post-Moral-Majority era, but as scholars both past and present have pointed out, the Jesus Movement harbored a noteworthy number of “young evangelicals” and ministries who leaned left culturally and politically.⁸² Other contemporary efforts like Jim Wallis’s *Post-American* (later *Sojourners*) (f. 1971), The Chicago Declaration-inspired Evangelical Women’s Caucus (f. 1974), and Ron Sider’s Evangelicals for Social Action (f. 1978) joined the CWLF in an attempt to pull American Christians from the doldrums of the middle class’s comfortable affluence into a more active engagement with social issues.

especially Gallagher, who became sole editor in the fall of 1973 when Gill left Berkeley to pursue doctoral study at USC in Los Angeles.⁸³ *Right On* survived the breakup of the CWLF in the summer of 1975 when Sparks left the organization, taking a third of God's Forever Family, and the CWLF mailing list, with him.⁸⁴ When the Berkeley Christian Coalition (BCC) was founded in the fall of 1975 to replace CWLF, *Right On* took its place along with four other former CWLF ministries under the Coalition's umbrella.⁸⁵ Within the BCC *Right On* continued to mature. By the end of the decade the publication, like all BCC ministries, which were once financed through the CWLF and then the Coalition, became an independent entity responsible for financing its own budget.⁸⁶ Maturation also meant a shift away from the counterculture and student revolution. In the summer of 1976 "after some years of feeling uncomfortable with the name *Right On*" Gallagher and the publication's staff adopted a new name—*Radix* or "root/base."⁸⁷ Under this new moniker, which pointed to the long-time emphasis of individuals like Gill to inspire "radical" (i.e., root-based) Christianity, the publication continued working to

⁸³ Heinz, "Jesus in Berkeley," 477-478.

⁸⁴ Unbeknownst to almost all CWLF members, Sparks had become a Bishop in what would become the Evangelical Orthodox Church (f. 1979). The EOC was later admitted into the North American Antiochian Orthodox Church in 1987. For more on Sparks's transition, see CWLF, "From the Very Beginning" (CWLF, 1975), Box 1, Folder 51, CWLF-Member Outreach Correspondence, 1975-1977, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California; "BCC Newsletter: We Have a New Name," November 1975, Box 1, Folder 51, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California; Eskridge, *God's Forever Family*, 262-263. This was a jarring shift for many who were involved, see Walter Hearn and Virginia Hearn, interview; Sharon Gallagher, interview.

⁸⁵ "Berkeley Christian Coalition," c 1976, Box 1, Folder 13, The Crucible, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California.

⁸⁶ This shift occurred early in 1979. See "Berkeley Christian Coalition Restructured," February 1979, Box 1, Folder 4, BCC, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California.

⁸⁷ The name "Radix" was suggested by Gill, see Gill, email to author, December 1, 2016. Gallagher elaborated on the significance of the new name in an open letter. "We feel that Christ is the base from which we offer our cultural critique and that what we are, what we grow out of, is our rootedness in Christ." Sharon Gallagher to People, July 1976, Box 1, Folder 56, Right On/Radix, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California.

serve what Gallagher called its “dual purpose: evangelism for non-believers and education for the Christian community” well into the twenty-first century.⁸⁸

The Crucible: A Forum for Radical Christian Studies

In the early 1970s Gill had more energy, vision, and ambition than any one CWLF project could contain. By mid-1972 he was ready to build on the platform his position as co-editor of *Right On* and CWLF elder afforded him by expanding his educational efforts beyond the printed word. For some time individuals in the CWLF had discussed the possibility of founding a Christian educational alternative modeled on the free universities that popped up across the nation in the wake of the 1964 Berkeley Free Speech Movement and the founding of the Free University of Berkeley (FUB) in 1965.⁸⁹ While courses at these “free” universities usually came with a small price tag (e.g., FUB charged \$10 a course, but did offer courses to welfare recipients at no charge) it was the freedom within the programming of free universities that the adjective in their name most signified. In direct contrast to the hierarchies and bureaucratic mazes that student revolutionaries felt defined the nation’s traditional universities, free universities were dedicated to maintaining an alternate educational forum where “anyone can teach and

⁸⁸ Gill began emphasizing “radical” Christianity in 1972. “Most people who use the word ‘radical’ really mean ‘extreme.’ Radical has the denotation of ‘of or from the roots,’ that is, of getting back to the heart of something.” See “Berkeley Christian Coalition Restructured,” February 1979, Box 1, Folder 4, BCC, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California. For more on the Shift from *Right On* to *Radix*, see Sharon Gallagher, “From Right On to Radix: Notes on Our Purpose, Vision, and Name,” *Right On* 8, no. 1 (August 1976): 2; Sharon Gallagher, “From Right On to Radix: A Short History.” For a statement on *Radix*’s dual emphasis, see “Radix” in “Berkeley Christian Coalition.” At the time of this writing in 2016 Gallagher continues to serve as editor of *Radix*.

⁸⁹ The first three free universities were all located in the Bay Area. The best history of free universities is William A. Draves, *The Free University: A Model for Lifelong Learning* (Chicago: Association Press, 1980). Earlier descriptions of the phenomenon include: Paul Lauter and Florence Howe, *The Conspiracy of the Young* (New York: World Pub. Co., 1970); Jane Lichtman, *Bring Your Own Bag; A Report on Free Universities* (Washington D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, 1973).

anyone can learn.”⁹⁰ Tens of thousands of individuals of all ages took part in courses at one of the nation’s nearly fifty different free universities before the initial phase of the free university movement peaked in 1971.⁹¹

The CWLF’s push for a “Christian Liberation University of Berkeley” (with the unfortunate acronym, “CLUB”) fit well within this framework and was almost from the start one of the foremost examples of a Christianized free university. Initially, the fledgling educational venture was led by Ron Roper, a CWLF member with an affinity for philosophy and Reformed theology.⁹² In early 1972 CLUB members met at CWLF’s Dwight House “several times a week for prayer, lecture, question-answer, discussion, and tape listening” around the theme “On the Nature of Academic Witness.”⁹³ The theme for CLUB’s spring quarter, “Towards a Radically Christian Education Enterprise,” demonstrated the group’s desire to develop an educational environment that was simultaneously countercultural and thoroughly Christian.⁹⁴ Roper and other leaders of CLUB looked optimistically toward the future. Perceiving “the great desirability of living and studying more intimately and identifiably as God’s People in Berkeley” CLUB organizers were able to “conceive, prayerfully, of the liberation of a Fraternity House for just this purpose.”⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Draves, *The Free University*, 16.

⁹¹ Draves, *The Free University*, 47-48, 93-97. Alternative education in general thrived during these years before falling off in the mid 1970s only to flourish again in the late 1970s and early 1980s, see Jerry Mintz, ed., *The Handbook of Alternative Education* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1994), 5. In the spring of 1966 the FUB enrolled 750 students. When the movement picked up again in 1978 enrollment in the sixteen largest free universities ranged from 6,000 to 28,000 (Draves, 50, 81).

⁹² David W. Gill to Charles E. Cotherman, “Christian Liberation University Question,” July 21, 2016; Walter Hearn and Virginia Hearn, interview.

⁹³ CWLF, “Christian Liberation University: CWLF Newsletter,” 1972, Box 1, Folder 51, CWLF-Member Outreach Correspondence, 1975-1977, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California.

⁹⁴ CWLF, “Christian Liberation University,” 2.

⁹⁵ CWLF, “Christian Liberation University,” 3.

Before the 1972 academic year started, however, Roper left Berkeley in order to study at the Toronto Institute for Christian Studies (ICS, f. 1967)—an effort that he believed provided a working model for what the Berkeley group was considering.⁹⁶ Gill stepped in to fill the leadership vacuum by calling a meeting at his home and organizing a steering committee that soon included Sparks, Gallagher, Virginia and Walter Hearn, Jack Buckley, Don Heinz, and several others.⁹⁷ Together Gill and his group of countercultural friends rebranded CLUB as “The Crucible”—Berkeley’s newest free university.

Almost to a person the individuals who were present at the founding of The Crucible were among the best-educated members of the CWLF, which was itself more intellectually inclined than the vast majority of the Jesus Movement. Both Buckley and Heinz were ordained ministers with seminary degrees and an interest in communal living and alternative education.⁹⁸ Buckley was the director of the Covenant House, a small Christian community with a L’Abri-like emphasis on reasoned faith that was affiliated with a Presbyterian Church in Berkeley, and Heinz, a Lutheran minister, was a PhD candidate at Berkeley’s Graduate Theological Union (GTU), the largest affiliation of seminaries in the country. The steering committee also included two earned PhDs (Sparks, statistics; Walter Hearn, biochemistry). Hearn had worked for years as a tenured professor at Iowa State University before “dropping out” in the spring of 1972 when he

⁹⁶ Walter Hearn and Virginia Hearn, interview.

⁹⁷ The three other members of the original group were John Symons, Donna Dong, and Carmoreau Hatie. “The Crucible: A Forum for Radical Christian Studies, Winter Quarter, Jan-Mar 1973,” Fall 1972, Box 1, Folder 13, The Crucible, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California. On meeting at Gill’s home, see David W. Gill to Charles E. Cotherman, “Christian Liberation University Question.”

⁹⁸ In an interview Earl Palmer referred to Buckley as “a brilliant young man.” Buckley later joined Palmer’s staff at First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley. See Earl Palmer, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, telephone, August 17, 2016, author’s possession.

and his wife moved to Berkeley in search of Christian community and simple living.⁹⁹ In line with his self-described “experimentalist” personality, Hearn relished the chance to escape the academic rat race in favor of an experiment in countercultural living, which, for Hearn, included foraging in dumpsters for unspoiled food and other usable items.¹⁰⁰ An emphasis on simple living did not imply simple thinking, however. Both Walter and Virginia Hearn stayed abreast of current trends within science and the evangelical world through their combined work as freelance editors and Walter’s involvement in the American Scientific Association (ASA).¹⁰¹

Neither Virginia Hearn nor Sharon Gallagher had graduate degrees, though both had supplemented their undergraduate education through extensive reading, interviewing, travel, editing, writing, and seminar and coursework at L’Abri, Regent College, and elsewhere. By fall of 1972 Hearn had worked for years as an editor, most notably for Inter-Varsity’s *His* magazine, and Gallagher had nearly two years under her belt at *Right On* in addition to her experiences at L’Abri and two sessions of Summer School at Regent College.¹⁰² Both women had felt the sharp edge of sexism within the evangelical community and were intent on bringing biblically rooted egalitarianism to the fledgling

⁹⁹ Walter Hearn and Virginia Hearn, interview; Walter Hearn, “Somewhere Between: A Journey Toward Simplicity,” *Radix* 8, no. 4 (April 1977): 10, 11, 16, 17. Before leaving academia, Hearn contributed a chapter to E. M. Blaiklock’s *Why I Am Still a Christian*. This is the same book that Houston had contributed to on the condition that he not write as a geographer, but rather as a layman promoting “A God-Centered Personality.” For Hearn’s contribution, see Walter R. Hearn, “A Biochemist Shares His Faith,” in *Why I Am Still a Christian.*, ed. E. M. Blaiklock (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1971), 67–82.

¹⁰⁰ Walter Hearn and Virginia Hearn, interview.

¹⁰¹ In 2016 the Hearn family estimated that they had edited over 200 books since they moved to Berkeley, see Hearn, interview.

¹⁰² In the summer of 1971 Gallagher traveled with a carload of friends from L’Abri to take part in Regent College’s Summer School, where Os Guinness was speaking. Gallagher, interview, 2015. She returned to Regent’s Summer School in 1972 to study under Rookmaaker and in 1976 to study with John Howard Yoder and F. F. Bruce, see David W. Gill, “Letters from the Catacombs,” *Right On* 4, no. 2 (August 1972): 2; Berkeley Christian Coalition, “BCC Newsletter, October 1976,” n.d., Box 1, Folder 5, BCC, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California.

educational institution.¹⁰³ Their work paid off. Unlike most evangelical ventures at the time, including the 1973 Evangelicals for Social Action conference where Gallagher “felt a little intimidated, as if she had walked into an eastern men’s club,” the Crucible was an egalitarian learning community from the start. Well before the Evangelical Women’s Caucus was formed in 1974—after the few women who attended the original Evangelicals for Social Action conference noticed that it seemed easier for evangelical men to openly discuss the problems of racism than to actually deal with what Gallagher identified as “status changes that might affect women, their own personal house niggers”—the Crucible was offering courses that addressed sexism head on.¹⁰⁴ When the Crucible launched its first full term in the fall of 1972 one of its four courses was Gallagher’s, “Women’s Liberation in the Context of Radical Christianity.”¹⁰⁵ The following term the budding feminist followed up this original offering with a course entitled “Liberation and the Christian Brothers & Sisters.” The course promised to address issues such as “Masculine/Feminine Myths & Realities” and “Egalitarian Marriage.” The succinct phrase “Brothers welcome” demonstrated Gallagher’s hope that men would take part in the course alongside their Christian sisters.¹⁰⁶

Gill’s own intellectual development also shaped the Crucible’s progressive stance regarding gender roles and the role of women teachers. As the director of the Crucible,

¹⁰³ For a description of both women’s experience within the male-dominated world of American evangelicalism in the 1960s and 1970s, see Sharon Gallagher, “Radical Evangelicalism: A Conference Report,” *Radical Religion* 1, no. 3 & 4 (Summer & Fall 1974): 61–64; Sharon Gallagher and Robert L. Burt, “A Conversation with Sharon Gallagher,” *New Conversations*, Winter/Spring 1976; Sharon Gallagher, “How Should We Then Live?”; Virginia Hearn, “Women’s Place in the Evangelical Milieu: Is Progress Possible?,” *Radix* 8, no. 4 (April 1977): 18–19; Virginia Hearn, *Our Struggle to Serve: The Stories of 15 Evangelical Women* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1979).

¹⁰⁴ Sharon Gallagher, “Radical Evangelicalism: A Conference Report,” 64.

¹⁰⁵ Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals*, 95.

¹⁰⁶ Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals*, 95; “The Crucible: A Forum for Radical Christian Studies, Winter Quarter, Jan-Mar 1973.”

Gill's growing interest in the radical church tradition exerted a strong influence within the CWLF's free university. Shortly after his 1971 excommunication from his Brethren assembly, Gill read Donald F. Durnbaugh's *The Believers' Church: The History of the Radical Church*.¹⁰⁷ Not only did the book help deliver him "from the last vestiges of 'Plymouth pretension,'" it also enabled him "to see that the quest for a radically biblical church, non-Constantinian in nature, had been undertaken in many different times and places." Rather than accepting a Christianity marked by oppression and accommodation, these radical sects featured "recurring emphases on peace-making, community, simplicity, a working priesthood of all believers" and, significantly for the future of the Crucible, "a better record on the 'women's issue.'"¹⁰⁸ Inspired by this radical tradition, especially as it manifested itself through Anabaptist history and the contemporary work of Anabaptist scholar John Howard Yoder, Gill subtitled the Crucible "A Forum for Radical Christian Studies."¹⁰⁹

In his reflections following the completion of the Crucible's first full term, Gill expanded on the forum's successes and the significance of "radical Christianity."

It is our purpose to provide a 'free university' style program in which people (Christians or non-Christians alike) can study, and interact within the context of radical Christianity. By 'radical Christianity' we mean that we are not institution oriented or tradition oriented but rather are determined to uncover the *roots* of the Christian faith and explore the ramifications of our position in as many areas as possible.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Donald F. Durnbaugh, *The Believers' Church: The History and Character of Radical Protestantism* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1985); Gill, "Chapters in My Life: David Gill," 5.

¹⁰⁸ Gill, "Chapters in My Life: David Gill," 5.

¹⁰⁹ Gill, "Chapters in My Life: David Gill," 5. Yoder recommended an active but non-violent approach based on the clear teachings of Jesus in the gospels, see John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972). That Yoder inspired many evangelicals to embrace a more egalitarian view of women is ironic, given the recent revelation of personal conduct toward women, see "Theology and Misconduct," *The Christian Century*, <http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2014-07/theology-and-misconduct> (accessed October 17, 2016).

¹¹⁰ "The Crucible: A Forum for Radical Christian Studies, Winter Quarter, Jan-Mar 1973."

What this looked like on the ground was a vibrant array of courses, many of which would never be found at Regent College, much less a more traditional seminary. In the spring of 1973 the *Crucible* listed thirteen courses whose content ranged from Judith Sanderson's more traditional "Five Books of Moses: A Theological Study" and Jack Buckley's "The New Testament World" to Edith Black's "Prophet, Politicians, & Social Justice" and Jerry Exel's "Sex and the Spirit" and "Mysticism and the Transformation of Culture."¹¹¹ Both Black and Exel had come to the *Crucible* from outside the evangelical orbit. Black, a graduate of the liberal Union Theological Seminary in New York, was a graduate student in Semitic Languages at UC-Berkeley. She had a background in activism ranging from civil rights and anti-war to involvement in the student movement and women's liberation. Her involvement in communities of activism eventually led her to become a Marxist, a political orientation she abandoned for historic Christianity after suffering a physical and mental breakdown.¹¹² Like Black, Exel's courses also stemmed directly from his previous experiences as a sexually active gay man and his involvement in the occult. The summer after teaching his course on sexuality Exel co-founded "a sex institute" (called, Genesis: Institute of Continuing Creation) where individuals struggling with their sexuality could come for community and open discussions.¹¹³

By the spring semester of 1973 the number and diversity of *Crucible* courses, students, and instructors led Gill (a bit tongue-in-cheek) to declare the *Crucible* to be "the

¹¹¹ "The *Crucible*: A Forum for Radical Christian Studies, Spring Quarter, Apr-Jun 1973," Winter 1973, Box 1, Folder 13, The *Crucible*, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California.

¹¹² Edith Black, "Rediscovery of Faith," *Right On* 5, no. 8 (February 1974): 3. Black also deserves credit for donating the majority of materials that make up the GTU's extensive CWLF collection.

¹¹³ "Genesis Institute: Seminar on Sex & the Spirit," n.d., Box 1, Folder 22, Genesis, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California. Exel eventually compiled his frequent discussions on the topic of sex into his 1973 book *Sex & the Spirit*. Exel was removed from leadership in the CWLF in February 1975 when he decided once again to be sexually active in the gay community. For more on Exel and Genesis, see Heinz, "Jesus in Berkeley," 68-72, 356, 473-474.

fastest growing free university in Berkeley.” Gill believed this growth stemmed from people’s disappointment with what he described as the “baseless idealism and violent outworking of much education, whether establishment or countercultural.”¹¹⁴ For only \$10 a course—or half that if one purchased a \$10 Crucible membership, which also granted access to the Crucible’s small book and tape library at Dwight House—students could take part in “courses specializing in open-eyed realism and based on the kind of radical Christian commitment that stands up to both analysis and experience.”¹¹⁵ On a practical level, the latter emphasis was a key aspect of the Crucible’s draw. For individuals educated within the confines of established secondary and post secondary institutions, the Crucible offered more than just knowledge; it offered intimacy and a holistic experience. Over the first year classes were usually comprised of about ten people. Like the CWLF’s Monday night meetings, Crucible classes were informal affairs where people were free to sit on the floor, enter into discussion with the instructor, or in some instances bring their infant to class.¹¹⁶ In many ways the Crucible was Schaeffer’s L’Abri or Sproul’s LVSC devoid of stridency on the issues of inerrancy and Reformed theology and, most importantly, without a presiding guru.

By the summer of 1973 the Crucible had developed into a beloved part of the CWLF’s program. The Crucible’s 1973 summer newsletter summarized the sense of accomplishment with which the Crucible staff viewed their work: “Looking back on the past three quarters, we of the Crucible are very pleased with the progress which we believe has been made toward the development of an alternative educational structure in

¹¹⁴ “The Crucible: A Forum for Radical Christian Studies, Spring Quarter, Apr-Jun 1973.”

¹¹⁵ “The Crucible: A Forum for Radical Christian Studies, Winter Quarter, Jan-Mar 1973”; “The Crucible: A Forum for Radical Christian Studies, Spring Quarter, Apr-Jun 1973.”

¹¹⁶ “BCC Newsletter: We Have a New Name.”

Berkeley in which the pursuit of truth in all areas of life can take place.”¹¹⁷ Over the previous nine months the Crucible had managed to attract an encouraging array of students and teachers who helped make the still relatively new venture one of the largest and most intellectually rigorous free universities within the Jesus Movement.¹¹⁸ In addition to providing “opportunities for instructors and students to explore such areas as alternative life-styles, history, theology, Eastern thought, sexuality, violence, and the women’s movement,” the Crucible had also “sponsored public lectures, free mini-courses, and...a good tape and book library.”¹¹⁹ The Crucible’s momentum flowed into the wider CWLF and Berkeley’s Christian community as individuals involved in the free university also took part in the CWLF’s Spiritual Counterfeits Project (SCP) and “book raps” on authors like Schaeffer, Dorothy Sayers, and John Warwick Montgomery at Logos, an independent Christian bookstore at the corner of Channing and Telegraph.¹²⁰

Yet the Crucible’s initial success was not enough to quell looming uncertainty about its future. Gill’s departure in the summer of 1973 for graduate study in southern California left the Crucible without its founding director and most compelling voice. Gill’s replacement as Crucible Director was Don Heinz, who was writing a PhD dissertation at Berkeley’s Graduate Theological Union (GTU) based on his experiences

¹¹⁷ “Summer of 1973 Newsletter,” Summer 1973, Box 1, Folder 13, The Crucible, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California.

¹¹⁸ Swartz, *Moral Minority*, 106. Later in the decade the impulse for education within the heirs of the Jesus Movement spawned “discipleship schools” rather than free universities. One of the most notable of these was the Vineyard School of Discipleship, founded by Kenn Gullikson as part of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Beverly Hills 1975. The effort was made famous by Bob Dylan, who spent a short time at the discipleship school during his overtly Christian years, see John Hughes, “‘Ain’t Gonna Go to Hell for Anybody’: Dylan’s Christian Years,” *Popular Music History* 8, no. 2 (2013): 208-209; Thomas W. Higgins, “Kenn Gulliksen, John Wimber, and the Founding of the Vineyard Movement,” *Pneuma* 34 (2012), 212-213.

¹¹⁹ “Summer of 1973 Newsletter.”

¹²⁰ “Summer of 1973 Newsletter”; “The Crucible: A Forum for Radical Christian Studies, Spring Quarter, Apr-Jun 1973.”

as a participant-observer at the CWLF. Heinz shared Gill's commitment to alternative education but supplemented it with a stronger emphasis on communal living. Over the summer of 1973 Heinz utilized a series of planning meetings and pot-lucks at the Hearn's "Troll House" to put forth "A Modest Proposal for Crucible: A Community for Life-Style and Learning."¹²¹ Heinz's proposal stemmed from his sense that "the most popular [Crucible] courses seemed to be those dealing with life-style" rather than the more theoretical or biblical courses. Looking back to a model that Gill was moving away from, Heinz posed the question "Can there be a Berkeley L'Abri?"¹²²

Over the course of the 1973-1974 academic year Heinz worked to make his vision for a L'Abri-style work-study community a reality in Berkeley. As before, the Crucible offered an array of courses ranging from Fran and Emmanuel Osseo-Asare's "Inter-Racial Marriage" and Walt and Virginia Hearn's "Writers' Workshop" to Carole Craig's course "On Death, Dying, and Grief" and "The Lifestyle of the Single Woman," which Craig co-taught with Judith Sanderson.¹²³ Keith Craig's course, "Gourmet Cooking for the Single Person," was yet another example of the strong life-style emphasis that Heinz brought to the Crucible. Craig's course promised to expound on the art of "eating well while being poor," by providing "simple, palatable foods prepared with ease inexpensively and nutritionally."¹²⁴ During the winter quarter Heinz cut the length of the courses to two weeks due to lack of student commitment. Heinz sensed "that a ten week

¹²¹ Donald Heinz, "A Modest Proposal for Crucible: A Community for Life-Style and Learning," July 17, 1973, Box 1, Folder 13, The Crucible, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California.

¹²² Heinz, "A Modest Proposal for Crucible."

¹²³ "Crucible," Fall 1973, Box 1, Folder 13, The Crucible, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California.

¹²⁴ "Crucible."

commitment to many of these courses is nearly impossible for many.”¹²⁵ During this time Heinz complemented the Crucible’s standard program with what he described as “a separate work-study community” which was “coming into being as a second Crucible focus.”¹²⁶ Throughout the 1973-1974 academic year Heinz threw most of his energy into this residential branch of the Crucible by organizing discussions of Benjamin Zablocki’s *The Joyful Community* and often devoting the better part of his letters to Crucible supporters to descriptions of the development of the work-study community rather than its standard courses.¹²⁷

By May of 1974 the Crucible as a free university was on the verge of collapse. Writing from southern California, Gill took to the pages of *Right On* to comment on the Crucible’s uncertain future. Gill noted that “rumors” had reached him that “‘The Crucible: A Forum for Radical Christian Studies’ in Berkeley is about to cease.”¹²⁸ Reflecting on the Crucible’s short history and the decision by Crucible leaders “to continue operation in spite of a certain fuzziness of vision and a number of unanswered questions” following his departure the previous summer, Gill stated that he would be “very disappointed if The Crucible dies in its childhood.”¹²⁹ For Gill, who still harbored deep countercultural and anti-institutional sensibilities, the rationale for continuing the Crucible was not simply institutional survival. As a self-proclaimed advocate of “radical” Christian living, Gill was “well aware of the very relative value of education institutions as compared with educational experiences themselves.” “Still,” he insisted, “institutions

¹²⁵ “Crucible.”

¹²⁶ Donald Heinz to People, September 22, 1973, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California.

¹²⁷ Donald Heinz to Crucible People, January 9, 1974; Donald Heinz to People, September 22, 1973.

¹²⁸ David W. Gill, “The Radical Christian: Education,” *Right On* 5, no. 11 (May 1974): 7. Gill maintained his “Radical Christian” column throughout his time in southern California.

¹²⁹ Gill, “The Radical Christian: Education,” 7.

have value.” Not only did educational institutions “help to structure and order...learning experience,” they also possessed the potential to “make visible for a large group what was previously a blessing only for the privileged initiates.” To Gill’s mind this was exactly what the Crucible, as originally conceived, promised to do: “The Crucible made public some processes that many of us were enjoying privately. There was some sacrifice involved to be sure, but it seemed worth it in view of the sterility of secular education.”¹³⁰

In the end, the rumors of the Crucible’s death turned out to be exaggerated. At the end of the 1974 academic year Heinz left the directorship of the Crucible (though he remained on the steering committee) and the decision was made to hire a director from outside. Sparks and the Crucible steering committee decided on Bernard “Bernie” Adeney. From the start Adeney, the long-haired son of lifelong missionaries to China, proved to be a good fit for the program. Over the next four years Adeney led the Crucible out of its unstable infancy and through the upheaval surrounding the departure of Jack Sparks and the breakup of the CWLF. Under the BCC the Crucible gained greater independence, though it continued to make use of BCC buildings, especially Dwight House, for its courses. Like *Right On*, which left behind its countercultural masthead for the name *Radix* in 1976, under Adeney the Crucible pivoted away from the counterculture sensibilities that drove it in its early years. Some of these shifts were slight. In 1974 the Crucible’s staff began referring to the program as “A Forum for *Radically* Christian Studies” rather than “A Forum for *Radical* Christian Studies.”¹³¹ Less

¹³⁰ Gill, “The Radical Christian: Education,” 7.

¹³¹ The first time this name change shows up is in the fall of 1974, see “The Crucible: A Forum for Radically Christian Studies,” Fall 1974, Box 1, Folder 13, The Crucible, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California. Decades later Gill still mentioned the shift that this small difference represented, see Gill, interview, 2015.

noticeable but more significant was an accompanying shift in the content and style of the Crucible's course offerings.

In Adeney's first year Crucible course offerings took the form of slightly expanded Sunday school lessons. Sparks offered a Sunday morning "Bible study on Exodus" and Jack Buckley led "Discussions from a Reformed Perspective." A course in New Testament Greek and the "regular meetings of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship" rounded out the stripped down and Christianized course offering.¹³² By 1975 the Crucible had once again developed the capacity to offer a high number of courses, but the shift in focus from an emphasis on integrating Christianity with lifestyle and the counterculture was mostly gone. Courses now fell into three primary categories—Biblical Studies, Theology, Christian Perspectives—and a greater percentage of Crucible courses seemed to be aimed at Christian students who wanted to grow deeper in their faith. This is not to say that all Crucible courses were entirely sanitized. Occasionally, courses still appeared that would have had a hard time gaining the acceptance of most evangelical Sunday school superintendents. In the spring of 1976 the Crucible offered a course on "Christian Involvement in the Global Village" and in the fall of 1976 Crucible students could sign up for "Ecology: The Crisis and the Christian." The Australian John Hirt offered a two-part course in "Radical Discipleship" in 1976. In the spring of 1977 Gallagher again returned to the Crucible lineup of instructors to offer "Biblical Feminism," a course whose less strident title reflected the cultural shifts that were changing America, even in places like Berkeley, as the radical sixties mellowed through the seventies.¹³³

¹³² Bernard Adeney, "The Crucible Sprouts Anew in Berkeley," Summer 1974, Box 1, Folder 13, The Crucible, CWLF Collection, GTU Library, Berkeley, California.

¹³³ Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, [1987] 1993), 427-433.

New College Berkeley: Berkeley's Own Graduate School for Lay Theological Education

By the time Gallagher gave her 1977 variation on her favorite theme, the Crucible was no longer the sole venture in evangelical lay education in Berkeley. The new competition came from an old source. Since he left Berkeley in the summer of 1973 Gill had held on to his dream of being part of an alternative educational community in his hometown. By 1976, perhaps emboldened by his academic success at USC where he was nearing the final stages of a PhD program, Gill realized the time had come to act on his dream. Scanning the Berkeley horizon he determined to write to Earl Palmer. Palmer, well known in the Berkeley area and beyond as an excellent preacher, had earned an undergraduate degree from UC-Berkeley before going on to graduate work at Princeton Theological Seminary. Since 1970 he had served as Senior Pastor of Berkeley's historic, 2,000 member First Presbyterian Church, which was two blocks from the Berkeley campus and whose Sunday services were broadcast on KGO, the most listened to station in northern California.¹³⁴

In Palmer, Gill saw a potential partner with intellectual curiosity and the establishment connections he desperately needed. Writing to Palmer in March of 1976 Gill laid out his conviction regarding "the great need and potential" for what he now described as "a 'Regent College-style' ministry in Berkeley." In Gill's mind launching a version of Regent College in Berkeley made sense. Gill believed that a lay-oriented school would avoid coming into direct competition with the established seminaries that made up the GTU. Furthermore, as one who lived through Berkeley at the height of its

¹³⁴ Gill, email to author, December 1, 2016.

cultural influence, Gill counted on the city itself to be a major draw for students. “The least worry of all, I am convinced, would be students. Berkeley would be a natural, an ideal location.”¹³⁵ Palmer, who was familiar with Gill through the young scholar’s work in the CWLF and his articles in *Right On*, wrote back with a positive response a few days later. “I fully share your vision that a Regent type College is right for Berkeley, and I believe it could have a very significant ministry with wide implications,” Palmer opined.¹³⁶

It would be difficult to find a more complementary pair to found the new educational endeavor. Palmer brought a kind of mainstream, inclusive Evangelical credibility plus a large network of friends and colleagues to the project. The pastor was also a decade older than Gill, and therefore could function as what Gill would later describe as his foremost “cheerleader, encourager, and wise sounding board.”¹³⁷ What Gill brought to the endeavor was an extensive network of friends and admirers from the Jesus Movement, the BCC, and Quaker, Baptist, and Covenant churches. He also brought strong encouragement and support from his doctoral mentors at USC, who wrote letters to the leaders of Berkeley’s GTU urging them to welcome the new educational venture.

Together Gill and Palmer decided to host two informational meetings in 1976, one at San Francisco’s Menlo Park Presbyterian Church (near Stanford University) and another at Palmer’s church in Berkeley. For his part Palmer did all he could to harness the power of his Bay-area network for the venture. He reached out to local clergy and

¹³⁵ David W. Gill to Earl Palmer, March 15, 1976, David W. Gill, personal archive, Berkeley, California.

¹³⁶ Earl Palmer to David W. Gill, March 24, 1976, David W. Gill, personal archive, Berkeley, California.

¹³⁷ Gill, email to Cotherman, December 1, 2016. Thanks to Gill for his comments on Palmer’s influence. This entire paragraph draws on this email exchange.

laity alike in order to ensure that the meetings would be well attended. From the start Palmer's involvement also came with tangible financial benefits. The men who made up Palmer's Wednesday morning men's prayer breakfast utilized their group's small missionary fund to pay for Gill's airfare from LA to Berkeley for the initial meetings; it was the first financial contribution to what would become New College Berkeley.¹³⁸

Approximately fifty of Palmer's and Gill's friends attended the first informational meeting in Berkeley and around thirty attended the Menlo Park meeting. Many of those who attended demonstrated enthusiasm for the venture. Ten of the roughly eighty individuals offered to serve on a monthly "study committee" to further explore the feasibility of the new school. This study committee, chaired by Gill, included Earl Palmer along with Crucible faithfuls like Walt and Virginia Hearn and Sharon Gallagher as well as newcomers like Cal Farnham, Craig Anderson, Robert Schoon, Bev Schmidt, and Bob Baylis. After six months of planning, the study committee became a Board of Directors when New College for Advanced Christian Studies was officially founded on April 7, 1977.¹³⁹

From its inception, NCB's lay-emphasis was born out of the radical discipleship of the Anabaptist tradition, the Brethren rejection of a two-class ecclesial framework that distinguished between clergy and the laity, and a rich Reformed theology culled in part from Francis Schaeffer but also from European Reformed thinkers like Karl Barth and Jacques Ellul.¹⁴⁰ If all truth was God's and if all people were similarly called to pursue

¹³⁸ Earl Palmer, interview.

¹³⁹ This paragraph draws on my 2015 interview with Gill as well as Earl Palmer's description of New College's founding. For the latter, see David W Gill, *The Opening of the Christian Mind: Taking Every Thought Captive to Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1989).

¹⁴⁰ Gill, email to author, December 1, 2016. Gill notes that both he and Palmer held great regard for Barth's work.

God in the areas of His creation in which they found themselves, then a great need existed for educational structures that could teach people how to begin thinking well about this calling.

From the start, Gill desired to make New College a degree-granting graduate institution on the order of Regent College, rather than a free university or independent study center, developed out of his own experiences, both at the Crucible and later as a graduate student at USC. Gill was familiar with the lengths to which the CWLF and leaders at the Crucible had gone to try to influence the culture of UC-Berkeley. As early as 1974 he had urged Christians to counter modern education's "lack of a coherent and consistent world-view" by forming "new educational institutions to serve the people...at all levels" and by working to found "institutes...planted right next to the secular school or university." In regard to the latter need, Gill held up Regent College as "an example at which all Christians can rejoice."¹⁴¹

By the time Gill penned these reflections in the spring of 1974 Regent College had replaced L'Abri as his primary educational model. Gill, with his eyes set on a PhD (an educational choice inspired by the example of Regent), was already moving away from the model of Schaeffer's isolated pontificating. Furthermore, with the benefit of hindsight he was now able to take better stock of his own experiences at the Crucible. These reflections led Gill to believe that Christians would "never...penetrate the University of California and the academy" through "self-accredited study centers."¹⁴² Instead, he was coming to see that Christians needed a more "muscl'd up" means by which they could approach the academy as academic insiders and peers rather than

¹⁴¹ David W. Gill, "The Radical Christian: Education."

¹⁴² Gill, interview, 2015.

outsiders. Regent’s “first-class faculty” and its continuing ability to demonstrate what Gill described as “the progressive spirit for which we have long been looking” became his gold standard.¹⁴³

Gill’s interest in Regent College did not go unnoticed in Vancouver. By the fall of 1976 word of the Berkeley venture had reached Regent Principal James Houston. During a 1976 trip to Stanford Houston learned of a group working “to have something more like the L’Abri experiment” in the Bay area and what he described as Earl Palmer’s efforts to “organize something at Berkeley.” For Houston, the need in the area was great. “It is clear,” Houston noted to Jim Hiskey in late October of 1976, “that the Bay area with its four million people has been a vacuum for strong Christian leadership in student work. There is no significant evangelical seminary or college in the area.” Houston—then vigorously promoting the “replication” of Regent in places like College Park, Maryland—saw in Palmer’s efforts a clear example of Regent’s success:

Now the church leaders have suddenly realised the tremendous potential there is in the whole of the area and they are all scrambling to do something. They see the success of what’s happening at Regent and already they understand clearly what is going forward at College Park campus, and so this is obviously the motive behind Earl Palmer’s rallying letter.

Houston relayed to Hiskey how he had urged Palmer to “collaborate with other leaders in the area” before going forward with the project. Houston felt fairly confident that this would happen since “David Gill who has signed the letter with [Palmer] is in fact the candidate for a post at Regent.” To Houston’s mind the best scenario for Gill, and potentially Houston’s efforts to replicate Regent in the Bay Area, was a slower process that would allow Gill to spend “two or three years with us before going back to the Bay

¹⁴³ David W. Gill, “The Radical Christian: Education.”

Area.” This scenario would give Gill a chance to “gain some experience here,” but, Houston related to Hiskey, it would also mean “we would postpone the development of something in the Bay Area.”¹⁴⁴ Postponement of the Berkeley venture, however, was not an option that Gill and Palmer were ready to consider. Rather than spending several years learning the ropes at Regent College, Gill jumped directly into work as the Project Director of New College Berkeley.

Gill’s decision not to follow Houston’s timeline did not mean that he distanced himself from Houston and Regent College. Gill worked intentionally to develop close ties with Houston and other Regent College veterans like Carl Armerding and Ward Gasque—a task made easier by Gill and Gallagher’s Plymouth Brethren roots and Gallagher’s longstanding friendship with the Gasques. From the start the significance of Regent’s role as New College’s primary model was undeniable. New College adopted Regent’s original strategy by planning to launch their new institution with a summer school in 1978 before beginning a full-fledged academic program in the fall of 1979. New College advertised itself in language that harkened directly back to Regent College’s publicity rather than previous Crucible advertisements or the language with which people described L’Abri. In the fall of 1977 Gill echoed early Regent College publicity materials verbatim, by describing New College Berkeley as “an idea whose time has come.”¹⁴⁵ Like Houston before him, Gill promoted his educational venture as a remedy to the educational gap that existed between the growing professional education of

¹⁴⁴ Houston’s quotes in this paragraph are taken from James M. Houston to Jim Hiskey, October 19, 1976.

¹⁴⁵ David Gill, “New College Berkeley: An Idea Whose Time Has Come,” *New College Berkeley Notes*, Fall 1977. For Houston’s earlier use of this phrase in Regent College promotional material, see James M. Houston, “An Idea Whose Time Has Come,” *Regent College Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (Winter 1972).

Christian laity and the stagnant theological educational programs that were offered to lay professionals at most churches:

[I]t is clear that, on the broad view, most...confessed Christians have little sense of what it means to 'be Christian' in their vocations and in 'secular life.' And that is altogether understandable. Most Christians are educated (as doctors, business administrators, lawyers, educators, etc.) in institutions that do not (or cannot) help individuals to question the non- or sub-Christian values, ways and means, the goals typical of those professions. Thus, we have a fairly large group of professed Christians who, consciously or not, are living divided lives where the confession of Christ is not worked out into all areas of life.

Gill desired to meet this false dichotomy with a graduate program that would "specialize in the situation of the 'laity,' living, thinking, and working in the sub-Christian world of today."

Another indication of NCB's conceptual debt—the Vancouver school never backed New College Berkeley financially—to Regent College can be seen in the effort Gill put into understanding the minutia of Regent's business and organizational structure.¹⁴⁶ While Gill did not end up fulfilling Houston's hopes that he spend two or three years gaining experience at Regent, he did organize a week-long trip in early 1978 that functioned as a crash course in replicating the Vancouver experiment. The previous fall Gill described his hopes for the trip in a letter to Houston and Armerding, stating that he desired to "spend time looking at and listening to Regent College from top to bottom." He wanted to "look over your office procedures, record keeping systems, know more about your board governance, your library relationships, etc."¹⁴⁷ Such careful scrutiny was

¹⁴⁶ As long-time NCB Director Susan Philips has frequently noted, Regent College has always related to NCB more like a God parent than a biological parent. Thus while Regent attempted to encourage the fledgling venture over the years, it never offered NCB any financial assistance. Phillips and Phillips, interview, 2015.

¹⁴⁷ David Gill to Carl E. Armerding and James M. Houston, October 25, 1977.

necessary if New College were going to successfully launch what was essentially envisioned to be “Regent, South.”¹⁴⁸

By far the most important link between New College and Regent came in the person of Ward Gasque. Gasque joined NCB as the institution’s first president in the summer 1979, just before the college embarked on its inaugural fall semester.¹⁴⁹ Though Gasque only came to New College on a two-year loan from Regent, his hire was an indication of the direction Gill and New College’s Board of Directors desired to take their fledgling institution.¹⁵⁰ Like Gill at New College, Gasque had served as one of the most significant organizers and networkers during the founding years of Regent College just over a decade before. Since that time Gasque, who had earned his PhD under the famous British biblical scholar F. F. Bruce, had distinguished himself as both a capable scholar and academic administrator. Gasque’s far-ranging connections proved an enormous boon to the newly founded Berkeley venture. A born networker, Gasque’s involvement in the larger evangelical and scholarly community instantly raised the profile of NCB.

Theologically, Gasque shared Gill and Gallagher’s Plymouth Brethren heritage, and thus carried a longstanding commitment to lay theological education. Importantly for the Christian community in Berkeley, Gasque also came to NCB with the strong conviction that the Bible authorized women to participate in all aspects of the life of the church, a view he shared with Palmer, Gallagher, Gill and others in Berkeley, though not with all his colleagues at Regent. Not surprisingly given these views, Gasque held a

¹⁴⁸ For more on this visit, see “Regent College Visit,” *New College Berkeley Notes*, Spring 1978.

¹⁴⁹ David Gill, “The President: Ward Gasque,” *New College Berkeley Notes*, Fall 1978.

¹⁵⁰ In an effort to help get New College Berkeley situated on stable footing Gasque ended up staying for an extra year before returning to Regent College before the fall 1982 term. For more on Gasque’s decision, see Laurel Gasque, W. Ward Gasque, Carl E. Armerding, interview; Susan Phillips and Soo-Inn Tan, *Serving God’s Community: Studies in Honor of W. Ward Gasque* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2015), xxviii-xxix.

commitment to egalitarian education that was not merely theoretical. When he came to New College Berkeley he and his wife, Laurel, had just spent the better part of a year apart while Laurel studied for an MLitt in Art History at the University of Edinburgh. Given NCB's enduring financial uncertainty, the fact that Gasque was an individual of independent means did not hurt either.¹⁵¹

Under Gasque's leadership NCB expanded from a summer program into a fulltime graduate institution beginning in the fall of 1979. From the start Gasque and Gill worked to bring many aspects of the Regent College experience to NCB. Summer school courses at NCB provided the opportunity for students to interact with cosmopolitan evangelical super stars while also offering the "warm" and "personal atmosphere" that defined Regent's Summer Schools and similar efforts then beginning to pop up across North America.¹⁵² With an enrollment of ninety-eight, the 1978 NCB Summer School provided the boost of momentum it organizers had hoped for prior to the start of the fall 1979 semester. That September NCB also benefitted from the consolidation of energy and resources within the Berkeley Christian community when the leaders of the Crucible decided to merge their ministry—including their financial resources and library—with NCB. As the 1970s came to a close lay theological education had a new face in Berkeley.

Searching for Sustainable Lay Theological Education in Berkeley

The 1980s proved to be a whirlwind of successes and disappointments for Gill and the NCB community. The foremost American experiment in graduate lay theological

¹⁵¹ Gasque came into his wealth thanks to his mother's successful management of a South Carolina hotel, see Kenneth V. Botton, "Regent College: An Experiment in Theological Education" (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2004), <http://search.proquest.com/pqdtglobal/docview/305080117/abstract/FE2B427B616E4F05PQ/1>, 139.

¹⁵² "Summer School Revisited," *New College Berkeley Notes*, Fall 1978.

education began the decade with hope and a sense of promise, but by 1990 serious questions about the sustainability of the venture had emerged. The uncertainty with which New College Berkeley entered the 1990s came as a result of both internal and external factors, only some of which were avoidable.

For its own part the expanding NCB community spent a majority of the 1980s building up what they hoped would be a theological graduate school for the laity comparable in size and influence to Regent College. In addition to its Summer School faculties, which were loaded with big evangelical names ranging from John Stott and Carl Henry to James Houston, Madeleine L'Engle, Kathryn Lindskoog, and Bill Pannell, Gasque and his successor, William A. Dyrness, worked to build a first-rate full-time and adjunct faculty at NCB. In addition to standard courses in biblical studies and church history the college demonstrated its explicit emphasis on the laity by offering courses such as *The Theology of the Laity*, which was taught by Don Tinder, a long-time friend of Gasque and a member of the Plymouth Brethren who had earned his PhD at Yale under the direction of Sydney Ahlstrom. Furthermore, because NCB had access to a large and diverse pool of adjunct and visiting professors, students encountered a surprising array of course options ranging from Laurel Gasque's course on the life and music of Johann Sebastian Bach to a course on Christian writing and journal keeping taught by Walter and Virginia Hearn.¹⁵³

While Gasque's task was one of establishing New College, the task of building New College into a school on the level of Regent fell to Dyrness, a graduate of Fuller

¹⁵³ The Hearn's course was one of the few holdovers from the Crucible. For examples of the array of courses offered at New College, see "Be Challenged...Be Fed...New College, Berkeley...Courses for the First Fall," *New College Berkeley Notes* 2, no. 4 (Summer 1979); "New College Berkeley: Fall 1985 Course Schedule," *New College Berkeley Notes* 8, no. 1 (Fall 1985).

Seminary who had found his way to Hans Rookmaaker and a theology of aesthetics via Francis Schaeffer.¹⁵⁴ New College experienced significant growth and operational expense under Dyrness. In the fall of 1982 NCB was given the chance to acquire a geographical footprint by buying Dwight House from the BCC. Members of the NCB faculty and board saw in Dwight House a strategic opportunity to provide student housing in Berkeley's tightening housing market. Furthermore, because NCB was renting classroom space from the American Baptist Seminary of the West and did not own any of its own property, many at NCB sensed "a great need for a residential-fellowship center that could serve as a focal point of the college community."¹⁵⁵ Thanks to the generosity of a major donor NCB was able to raise the necessary \$100,000 within the two-month time frame that accompanied the offer of the property. By the winter of 1983 the former CWLF and BCC building had become an important part of NCB life.¹⁵⁶ In addition to providing student residences, Dwight House also offered space for building community among NCB students. The large house functioned as a community hub where students could meet together for meals, birthday celebrations, group sharing, and prayer.¹⁵⁷

Dwight House was not the only demonstration of NCB's expanding presence in the Berkeley educational scene. In September of 1982 the State of California approved New College's Master of Christian Studies (MCS), Master of Theology (MTS), and Master of Arts (MA) degrees and NCB transitioned away from its Regent-inspired, nine-month Diploma in Christian Studies (DCS) program toward a greater emphasis on its one

¹⁵⁴ On the influence of Francis Schaeffer and Hans Rookmaaker on Dyrness, see Laurel Gasque, *Art and the Christian Mind: The Life and Work of H.R. Rookmaaker* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 164. On Dyrness's vision for NCB to grow into a larger graduate school of theology, see Bernard Adeney-Risakotta, interview by Charles E. Cotheman, telephone, August 16, 2016, author's possession.

¹⁵⁵ "The Possibility of a Student Residence," *New College Berkeley Notes* 5, no. 1 (Summer 1982).

¹⁵⁶ "Dwight House Serving as Student Residence," *New College Berkeley Notes* 5, no. 2 (Fall-Winter 1982).

¹⁵⁷ "Dwight House Serving as Student Residence."

and two-year master's degree programs. With state approval of NCB degrees, Dyrness began his term as the school's second president by putting New College on a path that he hoped would lead to accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and full membership in the GTU.¹⁵⁸

Both of these emphases took money, however, and money was one thing NCB had in short supply. The need to attract a faculty who were up for the challenge of teaching courses suitable to the graduate degrees provided was one significant expense.¹⁵⁹ Between 1979 and 1985 NCB hired a fulltime staff that included seasoned scholars like Ward Gasque (1979), Francis Andersen (1979), Don Tinder (1979), William Dyrness (1982) alongside promising new scholars like Bernard Adeney (1982) and Joel Green (1985). Throughout the 1980s NCB was committed to paying these scholars a livable salary and promoting their professional health and scholarly writing by offering sabbatical leave on a schedule comparable to peer institutions. In some cases NCB found creative ways to finance its investment in its scholars. When Bernie Adeney was hired in 1982 after finishing his PhD at the GTU, New College managed to pay his salary by dipping into other areas of the budget. Adeney—the small school's second ethicist alongside Gill—was able to join the New College faculty full-time only because Gill pulled half of Adeney's salary out of the promotion committee's budget.¹⁶⁰

While dipping into another area of the school's budget made Adeney's hiring possible, other essential elements of the College's growing ambitions far outdistanced what the school's existing budget could handle. Nothing embodied this more than the

¹⁵⁸ "College News: New College Degrees Approved," *New College Berkeley Notes* 5, no. 2 (Fall-Winter 1982); William Dyrness, "President's Column: End of Year Countdown!," *New College Berkeley Notes* 8, no. 1 (Fall 1985).

¹⁵⁹ "College News: New College Degrees Approved."

¹⁶⁰ Bernard Adeney-Risakotta, interview, 2016.

College's efforts to gain accreditation through the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). In order to gain accreditation Dyrness and the NCB board and faculty knew that they would have to either develop a better library or find a way to become a part of the GTU's excellent library system. Eventually they decided on the second option, and in 1985 NCB applied for and was accepted unanimously as the tenth member school within the GTU common library agreement. While Dyrness was right to note that the agreement signified "a great step forward in our quest for accreditation," it also came with significant price tag—an annual membership fee of over \$100,000.¹⁶¹

Having secured suitable library resources NCB pressed forward in its quest for WASC accreditation. In 1986 the newly appointed NCB Dean, Joel Green, compiled and submitted an extensive accreditation candidacy report that was to be voted on by WASC officials in February of 1987.¹⁶² By this time significant changes were taking place at the college as the need for increased fundraising became unavoidable. Following his 1986 review as President, Dyrness was forced "to reflect on both my own vision and gifts and the particular needs of the college." These reflections led him to resign as New College President, effective August 1, 1986.¹⁶³ In his place the NCB Board hired Gill as the college's third president. It was hoped that Gill could fill the role as "a leader with the administrative skills and vision for lay ministry" that would "keep New College 'on target' and growing in the years to come."¹⁶⁴ What keeping New College "on target" and

¹⁶¹ William Dyrness, "President's Column: End of Year Countdown!"; Bernard Adeney-Risakotta, interview. As part of the agreement, NCB also gave its entire library to the GTU, see Susan Phillips and Steve Phillips, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, December 3, 2015, New College Berkeley Archives.

¹⁶² "Accreditation Update," *New College Berkeley Notes*, Fall 1986. This report can be found in the New College Berkeley Archives at New College Berkeley's office.

¹⁶³ William Dyrness, "President's Column: Change," *New College Berkeley Notes* 7, no. 3 (Summer 1986).

¹⁶⁴ "David W. Gill Appointed President of New College Berkeley," *New College Berkeley Notes* 8, no. 4 (August 1986).

“growing” essentially translated to was fundraising. More than any president before him Gill was hired to make connections with donors who could right an institution whose income had fallen far short of its expenses. It was the beginning of a trend in the direction of president as fundraiser. For his part Gill was looking more presidential than ever. Like Adeney, Gill looked like the consummate professional after trading in the beard and long hair that had dominated his profile since his days in the CWLF for a close-cropped haircut and a mustache.¹⁶⁵ This was yet one more indication that NCB’s roots in the counterculture were increasingly part of its history, not a significant factor in the institution’s future.

Over the next four years Gill worked to help New College achieve financial solvency without compromising its mission to provide quality graduate education aimed specifically at the laity. The task proved titanic. Even though NCB was pulling in some of its largest summer school enrollments ever—sometimes as many as three hundred students—New College’s full-time degree programs were still under enrolled. Graduating classes of twenty to thirty students was simply not enough. The quality of the students was excellent by all accounts, but New College needed *quantity* not just quality to fund its ambitious accreditation goals and a faculty made up of six or seven full-time professors and nearly twenty adjunct professors.¹⁶⁶ The extent to which New College’s lack of financial resources had hamstrung the school’s earlier idealism became unavoidable in the spring of 1987 when the WASC committee rejected NCB’s petition to

¹⁶⁵ “The Return of David Gill, Dean and Associate Professor of Christian Ethics,” *New College Berkeley Notes* 8, no. 1 (Fall 1985).

¹⁶⁶ On the quality of students, see David Gill, interview; Bernard Adeney-Risakotta, interview; Earl Palmer, interview.

become official candidates for accreditation until the school demonstrated that it had enough financial reserves to guarantee its long-term sustainability.¹⁶⁷

While the decision to pursue an ambitious plan of growth certainly gave NCB's financial woes a homegrown dimension, internal decisions were only part of what kept NCB from developing into the educational behemoth that Regent College had become by the late 1980s. Whereas Regent College had benefitted from its geographic and chronological location, New College found both to be impediments more than catalysts to growth. The American landscape was far more dotted with evangelical options for graduate theological study than was western Canada. For clergy and increasingly laity alike, Fuller Theological Seminary in southern California held a lion's share of the graduate theological market. For individuals who sought specifically lay-oriented instruction, Regent was still the more enticing option for those willing to travel for study. Furthermore, unlike British Columbia, which was marked in the late sixties by somewhat lax legislation related to the affiliation of colleges and universities, New College Berkeley as an autonomous institution found no space within California's legal framework for a formal relationship with UC Berkeley. Furthermore, Berkeley itself had changed. Once a destination city for thousands, Berkeley held less allure as the counterculture drifted from America's consciousness. By the late 1980s Gill's earlier claim that "the least worry of all, I am convinced, would be students" rang with irony. If anything was in shorter supply at NCB than money, it was students. "We always had a few who were willing to take the time and put in the effort and energy and money to do

¹⁶⁷ Editors of NCB's quarterly publication, noted that they "were disappointed to hear from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges that we must strengthen our financial reserves before becoming official candidates for accreditation." See "Accreditation Update," *New College Berkeley Notes* (Spring 1987).

serious graduate studies relating their faith to their profession, their academic discipline,” former NCB professor Adeney-Risakotta notes, “but there were always too few of them. We had some really great students, but we didn’t have enough.”¹⁶⁸

New College’s failure to attract a critical mass of students was partly a product of its time. Whereas the first generation of institutions in the evangelical study centers benefitted enormously from cultural forces that spurred a generation of young people to “drop out” of or at least delay professional obligations in favor of a peripatetic search for community, meaning, and personal edification at places like L’Abri and Regent College, NCB emerged at a cultural pivot point when economic scarcity was replacing post-war abundance and when a generation of baby boomers were starting families and being forced to settle into the jobs they had once rejected. Long-term studies of American collegiate freshman indicated that student motivations for attending college and choosing a degree program were undergoing a marked shift during these years. In the late 1960s nearly eighty percent of American freshmen endorsed “developing a meaningful life philosophy” as an “essential” or “very important” value, while only forty five percent of entering American freshman gave the same value to “being very well-off financially.”¹⁶⁹ By the time NCB was founded in 1977, college freshmen afforded the two competing values virtually the same importance in their decision-making process. By the next year the motivation for financial gain had overtaken the desire to develop a meaningful life philosophy in the minds of a majority of students. This shift in values continued until it

¹⁶⁸ Bernard Adeney-Risakotta, interview.

¹⁶⁹ Alexander W. Astin et al., *The American Freshman: Thirty Year Trends, 1966-1996* (Los Angeles, CA: Higher Education Research Institute, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles, 1997), 12-15.

stabilized in 1988 at levels almost exactly inverse of the 1966 findings.¹⁷⁰ Financial gain, not personal development, would motivate the vast majority of college students for years to come.¹⁷¹

These materialistic trends ran counter to the very ethos of NCB's emphasis on lay theological education. Whereas Regent College adopted the MDiv—a professional degree oriented toward those seeking employment in the church—in 1978 just as these trends were shifting, the board, faculty, and administration of New College made a principled decision to avoid taking a similar route.¹⁷² Regent was their model, but it was an earlier Regent, suited for an earlier age, not Regent in its contemporary, more pragmatic orientation that provided the framework for replication in Berkeley.

Furthermore, NCB's location in Berkeley meant that launching an MDiv program would be extremely difficult. For evangelicals, Fuller Seminary already had a large extension campus in the Bay Area. For mainline Christians, the Berkeley GTU was opposed to the launching of new MDiv programs in the area. Gill and others at NCB had assured Fuller and the GTU for years that New College would not offer competing professional

¹⁷⁰ Astin et al., *The American Freshman*, 13.

¹⁷¹ When the study ended in 1996 these trends were holding steady with no sign that student motivations would reverse anytime soon. Regarding the materialism of college students in the late 1970s and 1980s the sociologists concluded that “it could be argued that for many young people today, the making of money has become a kind of ‘philosophy of life’ in itself,” see Astin et al., *The American Freshman*, 12-14.

¹⁷² Whether the faculty, administration, and board of NCB realized this at the time is difficult to determine. What is clear is that at some point at least some members of NCB became aware of the difference between the direction NCB was charting and that of Regent. As Adeney-Risakotta notes, “Our model was Regent College in Vancouver, but even Regent College started offering the theology degrees and seminary pastor training. In part for the same reason, the obvious reason: people will do graduate theological education if there's a job waiting at the end of it. If you do a theology degree, an M.Div. or something, then you can become a pastor, and your degree will help you feed your family. A New College Berkeley degree won't help you feed the family. If you were a business person an MBA would but not a degree in theology or Christian studies. So the economic realities of doing a theological graduate school focused on lay education were difficult to maintain, unless there was a market for [it].” See Adeney-Risakotta, interview, 2016.

degrees.¹⁷³ Even these realities couldn't completely negate the idealism that had originally characterized the venture. Many in the NCB community chose to press on in the institution's current lay-centric trajectory hoping that at some point the tide would turn.

But there were some among the NCB faculty and administration who were beginning to have doubts. Among them was New College's president, David Gill. Gill, one-time author of the long running *Right On* column "The Radical Christian" and founder of both the Crucible and New College, was no stranger to idealism. But two years at the helm of New College convinced him that the time had come to seriously re-evaluate and restructure NCB. Gill found that together "the cost of being in the GTU Library, the doubling overnight of our facility's rent, the growing cost of living, especially housing through the 1980s" was overwhelming. "We just could not make it work despite a monumental effort," Gill remembered years later.¹⁷⁴

Recognizing the reality that the NCB model was unsustainable, Gill and a handful of NCB board members began fishing for mergers or partnerships with both Fuller Seminary and Regent College. Neither school bit. The financial uncertainty that marked NCB made both institutions unwilling to adopt the College into their existing programs.¹⁷⁵ When partnerships failed to materialize Gill, exhausted from endless fundraising and internal strife within the NCB community, worked with a couple likeminded board members to develop what he described as "a radical new educational model for our target

¹⁷³ Gill, email to author, December 1, 2016.

¹⁷⁴ Gill, interview, 2015. The "monumental effort" Gill describes was in part his efforts to put NCB in the black for the first time since he handed the institution over to Gasque in 1979. In order to do this Gill raised over \$300,000 to pay off all NCB's debts and then raised an additional \$130,000 to begin an endowment fund. Gill, email to author, December 1, 2016.

¹⁷⁵ Gill, interview, 2015.

lay audiences.”¹⁷⁶ Gill’s proposal included “decentralized, mostly noncredit” instruction “based in marketplace and church more than [in an] academic setting.”¹⁷⁷ The core faculty opposed these changes and the NCB board demonstrated an unwillingness to terminate the positions of faculty members who were as much friends and colleagues as employees.

Burned out after fourteen years at NCB, and wanting to give the institution plenty of time to choose a successor, Gill had turned in his resignation even before the outcome of this future of NCB study was known.¹⁷⁸ Having had no time to search for academic jobs during his final years at NCB, Gill took an interim position as senior pastor of University Covenant Church in Davis, California before eventually finding his way back into academia in 1992 as the Carl I. Lindberg Professor of Applied Ethics at the Evangelical Covenant Church’s North Park University in Chicago.¹⁷⁹ After nearly three decades of leadership, Gill was no longer a driving force in Berkeley’s Christian community.¹⁸⁰

Following Gill’s resignation the faculty assumed an even greater degree of influence in NCB’s decision making processes. As one of his final acts, President Gill, to break the conflict that had developed over competing visions for NCB’s future, nominated Richard Benner, a professor in the University of California’s business school and chair of the NCB Board, as interim president.¹⁸¹ Benner was among the few NCB

¹⁷⁶ Gill, interview, 2015; Susan Phillips and Steve Phillips, interview.

¹⁷⁷ Gill, interview, 2015.

¹⁷⁸ Gill, email to author, December 1, 2016.

¹⁷⁹ David Gill, “Autobiography.”

¹⁸⁰ After nine years at North Park in Chicago, Gill did return home to Berkeley but spent the next nine years (2001-2010) doing business and organizational ethics consulting and served as professor of business ethics for MBA students at St. Mary College. From 2010-2016 Gill moved to Boston to be inaugural Mockler-Phillips Professor of Workplace Theology and Business Ethics at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. In 2016, at age 70, Gill retired back to Berkeley where he continues to write and speak with an eye to ethics and the business world.

¹⁸¹ Susan Phillips and Steve Phillips, interview; Gill, email to author, December 1, 2016.

board members who believed that New College could be salvaged in its current form if given enough time.¹⁸² With his business school experience and connections Benner was seen as an individual who could help NCB tap into new pools of donors. Once again, however, NCB's optimism proved misplaced. With the approval of the NCB faculty Benner began his term in office by selling New College's only significant asset—Dwight House—for nearly half a million dollars.¹⁸³ As Adeney remembers, “the decision to sell the house was still with the hope that with a substantial infusion of finances maybe we could turn it around and we could do the kind of publicity that we needed to do, and we could attract more students.”¹⁸⁴ For Adeney and other NCB faculty the sale of Dwight House was seen as a measure that could stop NCB's “financial hemorrhage” and enable the College to “somehow turn the corner to start making a profit rather than a loss every year.”¹⁸⁵

It was not long before everyone at New College realized that hopes such as these were misplaced. When Richard Benner's term as interim president ended in 1993 New College hired Steve Pattie to replace him. Unlike all NCB presidents before him, Pattie, a businessman with a background in development, had no experience in the academy. As such Pattie's hire demonstrated the severity of NCB's financial situation. “As the organization shift[ed] it became more and more of the job of the president [to work] as fundraiser,” longtime NCB board member Steve Phillips remembers. “We felt [Pattie]

¹⁸² Gill, interview, 2015.

¹⁸³ As former NCB faculty member Bernard Adeney-Risakotta noted in a 2016 interview, “If [NCB] had an endowment, it was Dwight House,” see Adeney-Risakotta, interview, 2016.

¹⁸⁴ Adeney-Risakotta, interview, 2016. Later in the interview Adeney-Risakotta returned to his reflections on the sale of Dwight House: “My own memory is that it wasn't sort of the feeling that this is the end; we're going to sell Dwight House. It was more the feeling that we need a significant influx of resources so that we can do more promotion and get more students and not just survive for another year or two but somehow turn the corner to start making a profit rather than a loss every year.”

¹⁸⁵ Adeney-Risakotta, interview, 2016.

had the skills to fund the organization.” But Pattie, too, failed to right NCB’s financial woes. Within a year NCB had nearly exhausted its reserve—not only the \$400,000 NCB received from the sale of Dwight House but also the \$130,000 Gill had raised for an endowment fund.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, NCB’s long-running effort to gain WASC accreditation had come to an end when the college’s candidacy for accreditation expired in 1993.¹⁸⁷ In the summer of 1994 the New College Board recommended that the corporation of New College Berkeley be dissolved, effective August 31, 1994.¹⁸⁸

To some members of the New College community such drastic measures seemed unwarranted and unnecessary. Leading the charge was NCB’s Dean, Susan Phillips. Phillips, a Berkeley-trained sociologist who studied for her PhD under Robert Bellah, had been teaching at NCB since 1985. Even before that she had been closely connected to the work of New College through her husband Steve Phillips, who was among NCB’s earliest board members. A concern for current NCB students and a conviction that the college’s evangelical voice was desperately needed in the GTU community prompted Phillips to take action. Together with longtime NCB friend Sharon Gallagher, Phillips drafted “A Proposal for the Continued Ministry of New College Berkeley” in July of 1994. Arguing that the programs of NCB “can be sustained for significantly less money,” Phillips and Gallagher outlined a plan for a streamlined NCB. Rather than seeking WASC accreditation or full membership in the GTU, Phillips and Gallagher charted a course in which New College could cut its overhead by eliminating full-time faculty positions and partnering with the GTU as an affiliate, non-degree granting institution.

¹⁸⁶ Gill, email to author, December 1, 2016.

¹⁸⁷ Susan Phillips to Sharon Gallagher and Ranon, “NCB WASC Candidacy Information,” October 12, 2005.

¹⁸⁸ Susan Phillips and Sharon Gallagher, “A Proposal for the Continued Ministry of New College Berkeley,” July 1994, New College Berkeley Archives, 1.

This last step was among the most important of Phillips and Gallagher's proposal. As a full, degree-granting member of the GTU NCB was obligated to maintain its membership in the GTU library at a cost of over \$100,000 a year. As an affiliate member NCB could offer courses within the GTU and utilize the GTU library without paying annual membership fees.

With the help of Board pledges, grants, and conference fees from the multiple national conferences NCB was already scheduled to host in the upcoming year Phillips and Gallagher believed that the legacy and ministry of New College could be continued for at least another year or two in order to see if the proposed financial restructuring would succeed. Writing from Easton, PA, where her husband was now Provost of Eastern College, Laurel Gasque gave her support to Phillip and Gallagher's proposal in "A Passionate and Practical Plea." Gasque explicitly questioned the NCB Board's plans, wondering whether New College "may, in fact, be selling its future for a mess of potage." For Gasque, New College's "unique place in the history of Christianity in America" and role as an evangelical voice in the GTU was significant and worth maintaining if at all possible. True, finances were tight, but Gasque reminded the board that "strictly speaking, NCB is not financially bankrupt. At the edge, yes; but not totally gone."¹⁸⁹

Rather than dissolving NCB or letting it lie dormant, Gasque believed that NCB could be sustained if the Board chose to act on Phillips's and Gallagher's proposal. "I for one have confidence in Sharon and Susan's ability to sustain their modest proposal," Gasque noted. Citing Phillips's recent success at grant writing and Gallagher's ability to sustain *Radix* even as publications like the *Berkeley Barb* and *Eternity* magazine folded,

¹⁸⁹ Laurel Gasque to The Board of New College Berkeley, "A Passionate and Practical Plea," July 30, 1994, Folder, WASC Candidacy Extension Report, New College Berkeley Archives, 1-2, 4.

Gasque argued that the NCB Board afford the two the opportunity to continue the ministry of NCB for at least another year. “Sharon and Susan may not be flashy,” Gasque conceded, “but they are solid...If they are given the opportunity to sustain the vision of New College, I believe some will be surprised at how much desire there is out there to assist them.”¹⁹⁰

Gasque’s assessment proved well founded. Beginning in 1994 when Phillips became the Executive Director of NCB with Gallagher working as New College’s Associate Director (in addition to her continued editorship of *Radix*), NCB entered a new phase of its history that closely paralleled the personalities of its two directors. NCB emerged from the crucible of the early nineties with a scaled back sense of self that proved to be sustainable over more than two decades. Never flashy, but always solid in its commitment to the education of the laity and to being an evangelical voice in the GTU and within the diversity of Berkeley, New College failed to replicate Regent but succeeded in providing theological education for hundreds of lay Christians in the Berkeley area. Eventually, NCB tacked closer to Phillips’s own career trajectory, becoming a leader among American evangelicals interested in spirituality and spiritual direction. Unlike most similar ventures New College did all this while being led at the highest level by women—something that even in 2016 only one other member of the

¹⁹⁰ Gasque, “A Passionate and Practical Plea,” 6. Former NCB presidents Ward Gasque, Bill Dyrness, and David Gill, as well as co-founder Earl Palmer (since 1990 Pastor of University Presbyterian Church in Seattle) also lent their support and affirmation to the Phillips-Gallagher proposal. By this time some at NCB, including Bill Dyrness, Francis Andersen, Bernie Adeney, and Joel Green, had found other academic posts. Gill, email to author, December 1, 2016.

Consortium of Christian Study Centers (CCSC, f. 2009) could claim.¹⁹¹ The egalitarian legacy that marked Berkeley's evangelical community had born fruit.

This is not to say that Phillips, Gallagher, and NCB moved from success to success. Disappointments abounded, and NCB seldom operated on more than a shoestring budget. Lack of funds and its own facilities resulted in what feels like a somewhat transient experience for New College. Both NCB and *Radix* operate out of the cramped third floor of a house converted into office space a few blocks west of the UC-Berkeley campus. The rented space, which is only accessible by a back door entryway and three narrow flights of stairs, is not conducive to use for classes or community development. While this keeps operational expenses low, it also makes NCB seem like an organization without a home. Furthermore, while NCB's affiliate status with the GTU afforded New College instructors the chance to teach students at UC-Berkeley in addition to students enrolled in the GTU, New College's impact on the University of California has continued to be minimal and attracting University of California students to New College courses has proven difficult. The materialistic values of students, many of whom still value "being well off financially" far more than "developing a meaningful life philosophy" means that NCB picks up what students it can through an array of retreats, courses, and discipleship classes conducted at various times of the day in a variety of spaces. Thus while NCB has maintained its existence, financial realities and a lack of adequate enrollment in many of its courses has necessitated that the College minimize some of its early academic and relational commitments.

¹⁹¹ In 2017 the only other female-directed study center in the Consortium of Christian Study Centers was Missy DeRegibus's Cogito ministry at Hampden-Sydney.

Not all efforts to replicate Regent would face such difficult trajectories. While NCB struggled to pay its bills and entice students, other efforts founded by individuals who looked to Houston and Schaeffer as influences found ready-made communities of students and wider pools of donors by rooting their ambitions for lay theological education in the fertile, constantly renewing soil of large undergraduate student communities. One of the earliest and most notable of these efforts took place thousands of miles away from Berkeley at a university that vied with UC-Berkeley for the title of top public university in the country.

Chapter 6

The Lay Evangelical Mind and Mr. Jefferson's University:

The Charlottesville Center for Christian Study

In the summer of 1974 Beat Steiner returned to Charlottesville, Virginia with a new diploma in hand and a wedding on the horizon.¹ Steiner, a 1973 graduate of the University of Virginia, had met Barbara Butler, a Coloradan with ties to Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF), while both were students in the one-year Diploma of Christian Studies (DCS) program at Regent College in Vancouver. Not only had the two fallen in love during their time at Regent, through their studies and their close interaction with James and Rita Houston each had gained a deeper appreciation for the importance of cultivating a faith that blended personal spirituality and intellectual vitality. By the spring of 1974 Steiner had also become a vocal advocate for Houston's pet project—the “replication” of Regent College. Like Houston, Steiner thought that Regent's efforts to engage the university and inspire the hearts and minds of lay Christians could serve as a model for similar efforts in North America and around the world. What Steiner did not realize when he presented his paper “The Replication of Regent College” at Regent's first long-range planning conference in the spring of 1974 was that he would play a major role in bringing his mentor's hopes to fruition.

When Steiner returned to Charlottesville a few months later following his graduation from Regent College, it was with markedly less ambitious goals than replicating a graduate school for lay people. Steiner moved back to Virginia in order to

¹ For a short but useful biography on Steiner, see “A Beat With A Different Drum,” *Praxis* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1998).

join the staff of Daryl Richman's Action Ministries (f. 1968). Led by Richman and University of Virginia economics professor Ken Elzinga, Action Ministries had played a significant role in Steiner's own spiritual development during his time as a student. Steiner jumped into the rhythm of campus ministry with relish.

It was not long, however, before he found himself being pulled in a new direction—the creation of the Center for Christian Study (CCS), a Christian study center at the University of Virginia. Birthed out of a hybridized evangelical and cultural milieu that blended aspects of the counterculture and the Jesus movement with the intellectual rigor of a major university and the learning-in-community emphases of L'Abri and Regent College, the Charlottesville-based CCS would eventually grow from its roots in the campus ministry of Steiner, Richman, and Elzinga to become the foremost North American model for university-embedded Christian study centers.

Establishing and Evangelical Presence: Daryl Richman and Action Ministries

Though the Center for Christian Study was officially founded in 1975, it was the earlier ministry of Daryl Richman (b. 1934), an evangelical pastor turned campus-minister, that made the project possible in Charlottesville. By all accounts Richman was an unlikely candidate to pioneer a new student ministry at the University of Virginia.² The third of nine children, he was born into a farming family in the small town of Tower City, North Dakota. After graduating from the local high school (with a class of eight) in 1952, Richman went on to Concordia College, a Lutheran institution in Moorhead, Minnesota, where he earned a BA in English in 1956. By 1957 he had scraped together

² For a brief biography of Richman, see "A Friend for All Seasons" 2, no. 2 (Summer 1998).

enough money to follow the radio preaching of Charles Fuller to Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California.³ Boasting a faculty that included Carl F. H. Henry, Wilbur Smith, Paul Jewett, and Edward Carnell, Fuller was the flagship seminary for the burgeoning neo-evangelical movement. While at Fuller, Richman gained an appreciation for the importance of both the intellect and vibrant, personal faith in the life of the believer. Upon graduation Richman followed up on a connection he had made with a pastor the previous summer while working with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in Virginia.⁴ Soon Richman was pastoring two small Baptist churches in rural Fluvanna County, just outside Charlottesville, Virginia.⁵

In the fall of 1967 Richman's trajectory began to shift after a chance meeting in the University of Virginia's Memorial Gym. Richman had initially begun making the ten-mile trip to the Grounds (i.e., campus) in order to use the University's library. Before long, he was also taking full advantage of the University's decision to grant community members free access to the athletic facilities (e.g., the weight room) located in the gym.⁶ One day as Richman was working out, he struck up a conversation with a third-year commerce student named Bob Bissell. Though Richman had come to the gym primarily to work out and not to evangelize, he found himself asking Bissell, "What do you make

³ Harold Ockenga was also influential in the founding of Fuller Theological Seminary. For the Fuller Seminary story, see George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987).

⁴ Richman had met Rev. Grever while he was on the East coast helping with a month-long Billy Graham crusade in Washington D. C. during the summer of 1960. When the crusade finished, Richman assisted Rev. Grever in a ministry to individuals living in isolated mountain communities. Richman, interview by author, May 27, 2014.

⁵ For the first two years Richman pastored Slate Baptist Church and Preddy's Creek Baptist Church. Eventually he left these churches to assume the pastorate of Beaver Dam Baptist Church and Bybee's Road Baptist Church. All of these churches were small, rural congregations. To this day, Richman emphasizes how much he enjoyed pastoring in these congregations. He still has friendships with many individuals from these churches (Richman, interview).

⁶ Richman, interview.

of the claims of Christ?"⁷ A conversation ensued, and the two men agreed to meet within the week to discuss matters of faith at greater length. Bissell's roommate and other students soon joined Richman for conversations about the faith. In a matter of weeks these meetings expanded to include several female students at the nursing school.⁸ Sensing a call to this growing community of university students, Richman decided to step away from his pastorates in Fluvanna County and become an independent faith missionary to the University community through D. M. Sterns Missionary Fund.⁹ Shortly thereafter Richman moved to Charlottesville with his wife, Allayne, and their three young daughters.

Once in Charlottesville, Richman sought out a young, newly appointed economics professor named Ken Elzinga (b. 1941). Elzinga, who joined the University of Virginia faculty in 1967, was almost as new to his faith as to his position at the University. He had experienced a conversion to Christianity only a few years earlier during his time as a graduate student at Michigan State University. By the spring of 1968 Richman had convinced Elzinga to join him as he followed up on an invitation to speak at the St. Anthony's Hall fraternity.¹⁰ This engagement marked the beginning of Richman and Elzinga's team ministry to the University's fraternities (and eventually sororities). It also marked the beginning of Elzinga's preaching career. Elzinga soon became one of the most influential members of the evangelical community in Charlottesville. In no small part this was due to the fact that he quickly gained a reputation for excellence in both

⁷ Daryl Richman, interview with founders at the Center for Christian Study, DVD, September 2012.

⁸ The Nursing School and the Ed. School opened to women students before the College of Arts and Sciences. Women were not admitted to the college until 1970.

⁹ Richman did not receive any financial assistance through this group; rather, D. M. Sterns Missionary Fund functioned as a channeling agent that allowed other contributors to make tax-deductible contributions to Richman. Richman, interview.

¹⁰ David Turner, interview with founders at the Center for Christian Study, DVD, September 2012.

teaching and research. Elzinga would go on to become one of the University's most celebrated and best paid professors. His popularity among students only grew. Over the course of his career he would teach over 45,000 students—more than any other professor in the history of the University of Virginia.¹¹ From his first outreach with Richman, Elzinga became a lynch pin of evangelicalism at the University. His status as a respected academic gave credibility to the ministry of Daryl Richman, an academic outsider.

As Richman and Elzinga traveled the fraternity circuit, their ministry began to take on a more organized form. In the spring of 1969 Richman began referring to his ministry as “College Life.” Two weeks later, after some push back from another parachurch group who was already using that title, the name was changed to “Action Ministries.”¹² For the next decade Action Ministries would serve the University community as the foremost evangelical group on the Grounds.

Richman and Elzinga were at the center of this movement. Both men worked together to develop student leaders like Drew Trotter and Beat Steiner and to bring the “town” (i.e., the Charlottesville community) together with the “gown” (i.e., the University community).¹³ In the early years of Action Ministries this town-gown link was cultivated, in part, through the weekly Action Meetings. Even though these meetings were composed mostly of students, the logistics of carrying out the Sunday night

¹¹ “After Teaching 45,000 Students, Elzinga in a Class By Himself,” *UVA Today*, <https://news.virginia.edu/content/after-teaching-45000-students-elzinga-class-himself> (accessed December 11, 2015); The Cavalier Daily, *Professor Hoo: Ken Elzinga*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXMTk4MBTqI> (accessed April 1, 2016). In 2016 Elzinga's salary of \$221,800 put him among the best paid faculty in the University of Virginia's College of Arts and Sciences, see Cindy Guo and Lucas Halse, “By the Numbers,” *The Cavalier Daily*, April 4, 2016.

¹² Trotter, interview with founders.

¹³ The phrase “town and gown” comes up frequently in conversations with individuals who were involved in Action Ministries and the early years of the CCS. This reflects the depth of their emphasis on building bridges between these two constituencies. Their refusal to allow their efforts at the university to be devoid of community ties played an important role in the development of the CCS and the larger Christian community in Charlottesville. This emphasis is apparent in the 2012 CCS leadership-panel interview.

meetings required substantial involvement from the Christian community in Charlottesville.

Community involvement was especially important during the early years because throughout most of the 1960s and into the early 1970s the University of Virginia enforced, though somewhat unevenly it seems, a policy that largely prohibited religious groups from meeting on Grounds. This did not mean that there were no student ministries at the University. Most of the town's larger churches and established denominations had collegiate ministries, but these were usually housed in the church or in an off-Grounds building like the Baptist Student Center located adjacent to the University. Unlike denominational ministries with local churches or long-established off-Grounds property, evangelical para-church groups like Campus Crusade for Christ, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, and Navigators did not own property and struggled to find meeting spaces. This logistical problem no doubt explains why there were only two small evangelical ministries (IVCF and Navigators) at the University of Virginia in 1968 when Richman and Elzinga began holding Action Meetings. Without local infrastructure and access to university meeting spaces, para-church ministries were at a distinct disadvantage. For evangelical students who wanted access to a campus ministry that focused on personal salvation, not just the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement, there seemed to be few options.¹⁴

Faced with this dilemma, Richman and Elzinga decided to hold their weekly Action Meetings at local churches and private homes.¹⁵ Each Sunday at 5:30 p.m. a caravan of cars would leave the Memorial Gym parking lot and travel to the designated

¹⁴Drew Trotter, interview by author, Charlottesville, Virginia, March 6, 2014.

¹⁵ Richman, interview with CCS founders and directors.

meeting spot for that week. As the number of attendees grew to well over one hundred, keeping the cars together and ensuring that there was enough room to accommodate the students once they arrived became increasingly difficult. Flexibility was paramount. Richman remembers, “some...people took the furniture out of their living rooms and put it out on the lawns or wherever they could put it for the evening so that there was room for the students to get in.”¹⁶ In addition to providing gathering space for these meetings, the members of the Charlottesville community were also involved in providing sandwiches, cookies, and drinks for those in attendance.¹⁷

As Elzinga later noted, finding space off-Grounds for these meetings “was a huge obstacle,” to the work of Action Ministries.¹⁸ Yet it is not difficult to see how important this community involvement was for the development of town-gown evangelical ministries in Charlottesville. According to Richman, the necessity of holding the weekly meetings off-Grounds,

gave entre to a lot of people. The mothers and fathers who were living in those homes saw what was going on, and they all liked it because they were the ones who were volunteering their homes to us. That was a wonderful breakthrough, to bring the interest and the prayers, and the love, and certainly the support in a lot of ways, of the townsfolk to what we were doing here at the university.¹⁹

Involvement was not limited to parents of university students. Other interested members of the community took part in these meetings simply because they wanted to further the impact of Action Ministries. In two instances Action Meetings were held at Carr’s Hill, the residence of University of Virginia president Edgar Shannon. Elzinga believes that Mrs. Shannon, a committed Christian, had issued the invitation in part out of appreciation

¹⁶ Richman, interview with CCS founders and directors.

¹⁷ Richman, interview with CCS founders and directors.

¹⁸ Elzinga, interview with CCS founders and directors.

¹⁹ Richman, interview with CCS founders and directors.

for the concern demonstrated by Action Ministry student-leader Drew Trotter and several other Christian students who had previously come to Carr's Hill to aid the Shannons and their five young daughters when a group of student protesters marched on the residence.²⁰

As the influence of Action Ministries grew, a network of student leaders and committed community members expanded with it. Soon religious life at the University of Virginia began to look much different. The spiritual soil of the University, which had proved infertile for two different efforts to establish Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC) in the past, began to sprout a number of new Christian groups. Many of these efforts were launched (or re-launched) by student-focused para-church organizations like Campus Crusade, Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), and Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF).²¹ By 1981, Richman's annual "Christian Student Orientation," which began only after the University opened up Grounds to religious events, was providing information for thirteen evangelical student ministries at the University.²²

Evangelical efforts were not limited to university students, however. Some ministries sought to foster more overlap between evangelical Christians in the Charlottesville community and the religious networks of university students. In some cases these took the form of church-like gatherings. A Jesus Movement-inspired, charismatic community met at Oakleigh on Ivy Road. A Christian coffeehouse called The

²⁰ Richman and Elzinga, interview with founders. Here one catches a glimpse of how student protest during the Vietnam era played out at the University of Virginia. In his reflections on this event, Elzinga describes briefly the "rabble-rousing speeches" delivered at Cabell Hall earlier that night and his own experiences of crossing a picket line to give a lecture. Richman recalls that Drew Trotter was involved in leading the group of Christian students who defended the Shannons that night. Richman, interview.

²¹ According to Richman, Inter-Varsity had previously attempted to set up a chapter at the University of Virginia, but this chapter had not been sustainable. Richman, interview. Richman personally invited FCA to the university after he helped lead two athletes to Christ. Trotter, interview with founders.

²² "Christian Student Orientation," Fall 1981, Box, Pre-1987 Correspondence: Folder, (un-named), Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

Bridge provided space for conversation, counseling, and weekly music.²³ Likewise, The Well, a Christian bookstore located across the street from central Grounds, provided interested students and community members with current evangelical literature and offered the physical resources to publish a street newspaper called *The Well-Street Journal*.²⁴

A bi-monthly student-led street newspaper, *The Well-Street Journal* was an appropriation of the larger Jesus Movement and countercultural impulse toward underground newspapers.²⁵ (The paper was later called simply *The Street Journal* after the students who created the paper realized it was actually illegal to take the banner for their paper directly from the *Wall Street Journal*.)²⁶ The paper's artistic sensibilities and emphasis on presenting an intellectually viable faith demonstrated the influence of the most prominent of all Christian underground newspapers—the Christian World Liberation Front's *Right On*, whose bi-monthly distribution topped 50,000 by 1972.²⁷ *The Street Journal*, with its bi-weekly distribution ranging between one and two thousand copies during its roughly two years of existence (1971-1972), in no way rivaled its Berkeley prototype in influence, but the Charlottesville paper did provide a similar service for evangelicals in the Charlottesville community.²⁸ Like *Right On*, *The Street*

²³ “The Bridge,” *The Street Journal*, (October 23-30, 1972). The Bridge was housed in a “three-story building,” that served as “the base for a coffee house on Friday nights, offices for phone counseling and Bible study, living quarters for several counselors, and crash rooms to help others on a temporary basis.” The advertisement in *The Street Journal* went on to state, “[a] week at THE BRIDGE involves the close interaction of people working with each other to break down the dehumanizing barriers of modern society. . . . The music and the fellowship of the Friday night coffee house provide a real experience of open communication based on the love of Jesus.” The building was located at 508 16th St. N.W. in Charlottesville.

²⁴ A photo of The Well appeared on the last page of *The Well-Street Journal* c. 1971.

²⁵ “The Street Journal,” *The Street Journal*, (October 23-30, 1972).

²⁶ Trotter, interview, March 6, 2014.

²⁷ For a contemporary assessment of *Right On*, see Richard Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals: Revolution in Orthodoxy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 96.

²⁸ Beat and Barb Steiner, interview by author, telephone, March 25, 2014.

Journal was marked by a mix-matched style, and an emphasis on Jesus as a cultural outsider. Extensive networks of campus ministers and students provided a large pool of writers for both the Berkeley and Charlottesville ventures. The names of prominent Action Ministry and CCS leaders like Drew Trotter and Rob Gustafson show up frequently in *The Street Journal*'s bylines. Sometimes, as in the case of Trotter's piece entitled "Horatio & the Ghost," the paper became a forum for experimenting with the intersection between one's academic interests and one's faith. In other instances, the paper provided space for students to try their hand at poetry or apologetics. Like *Right On*, pages of *The Street Journal* were also filled with social commentary on issues ranging from the Vietnam War to racism. Extended discussions around topics like poverty and birth control also appeared frequently in the newspaper's pages.²⁹ While not as "radical" as its Berkeley counterpart, articles in *The Street Journal* still frequently challenged the status quo in politics and racial relations. In all of these ways *The Street Journal* provided a helpful function for Christians in Charlottesville by offering a means for evangelical students—many of whom were connected to Daryl Richman or Action Ministries in some way—to work out the implications of an evangelical faith that linked the intellect with personal piety and social action.³⁰

²⁹ For example, see, Barbara Gerber, "War No More!" *The Street Journal* (October 23-30, 1972); Rob Gustafson, "Civil Religion," *The Street Journal* (No Date, c. 1972); Tom Skinner, "Jesus Christ vs. Christianity," *The Well Street Journal* (No Date, 1971); Beth Thompson, "A Woman's Liberation," *The Street Journal* (December 18-25, 1972?). One issue of the paper devoted considerable space to issues of social inequality in Charlottesville. See, George Hughes, "Situations which We Once Regarded as Insolvable We Now Regard as Intolerable," *The Well Street Journal* (c. 1971).

³⁰ Richman referenced these three emphases during the panel discussion with the founders of the Center for Christian Study in September 2012.

Evangelical Para-Church Ministry Moves onto University Grounds

As evangelical Christianity gained momentum in the larger university community, some of Action Ministry's student leaders began to envision a more public outreach at Mr. Jefferson's University. In the spring of 1972 several evangelical students came up with an event that seemed well suited for a countercultural generation. Tapping into the anti-establishment ethos of the counterculture and its evangelical variant, the Jesus Movement, Beat Steiner and other evangelical students planned the three-day-event titled "Jesus Christ vs. Christianity."³¹ Organizers scheduled both teaching seminars and outreach events during the weekend-long event and lined up local Christian leaders as well as professors like William Lane and Richard Lovelace from Boston's Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary to teach. In addition to its educational emphases, the event would also serve as a sequel to the ground breaking 1970 IVCF Urbana conference. The Charlottesville event featured prominent campus evangelist Leighton Ford (b. 1930), the brother-in-law of Billy Graham, and Tom Skinner (1942-1994), an African American evangelist who had once been the leader of a notorious gang in New York City.³² Both men had played significant roles in Urbana 1970, an event that had challenged evangelicals to rise against the racial and class status quo.³³ The musical accompaniment at the Charlottesville event was also countercultural. Rather than the pianos and trumpets

³¹ Explo'72 was advertised in *The Well Street Journal* in the spring of 1972.

³² For more on the influence of Ford and Skinner on a generation of "Young Evangelicals" during these years, see Richard Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals: Revolution in Orthodoxy*, 1974, 86-94. For more on Ford, see Lauren F. Winner, "From Mass Evangelist to Soul Friend," *ChristianityToday.com*, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2000/october2/7.56.html> (accessed April 1, 2016). For more on Skinner, see "Leukemia Claims Evangelist Tom Skinner," *ChristianityToday.com*, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1994/july18/4t8051.html> (accessed April 1, 2016); James Earl Massey, "The Unrepeatable Tom Skinner," *ChristianityToday.com*, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1994/september12/4ta011.html> (accessed April 1, 2016).

³³ For more on Urbana 1970, see Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals*, 90-94; Swartz, *Moral Minority*, 33-38, 191.

of Billy Graham's crusades, John Fischer, a Christian folk singer from Berkeley, California, provided music at the event.³⁴

Beat Steiner did as much as anyone to ensure the success of this 1972 outreach. Steiner, the son of a Swiss scientist who had been lured to the United States from Switzerland as part of the post-World War II brain drain in Europe, had come to the University of Virginia with stellar academic and leadership credentials. As a high school student he had been elected governor of New Jersey's Key Clubs, and his grades had been good enough to garner a University Honor Award, which included a full academic scholarship.³⁵ Though raised in a Lutheran church, Steiner was agnostic towards Christianity until he adopted an evangelical Christian faith shortly after talking with Drew Trotter in the fall of 1969. Steiner quickly put his new faith and his natural administrative abilities to work in Christian ministries at the University.³⁶ The Ford-Skinner event was among the most challenging of these undertakings.³⁷ As far as Steiner knew, the University of Virginia had never hosted a large-scale evangelistic effort like this before. Furthermore, there were some—even some Christians—in the Charlottesville community who were not enthusiastic about changing the pattern. On the Wednesday before the weekend event, seven prominent Charlottesville pastors penned a short letter to the *Cavalier Daily*, the University's student newspaper, explaining their "reservations

³⁴ Ford, Skinner, and Fischer were each given a good amount of space in the *Well Street Journal* in the weeks leading up to the event. Later, organizers would edit these remarks for circulation in the *Cavalier Daily*, the University of Virginia's student newspaper. See, "Jesus Christ vs. Christianity" *The Well Street Journal* (Spring 1972).

³⁵ Trotter, interview, March 6, 2016; Steiner, interview by author, Charlottesville, Va, April 9, 2016.

³⁶ Interview with Trotter; Steiner, email to author.

³⁷ The event was officially hosted by the university's chapter of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. The fact that this fellowship already "numbered in the hundreds" is a testament to how quickly evangelical groups took off in these years ("Skinner Gets Them Together," *Christianity Today* 16, no. 18 (June 9, 1972): 45).

about the style” of the planned evangelistic event. While they admitted that “an evangelistic crusade” might be one way to help people grow in the faith, they were quick to add “it would be dishonest if we were to pretend that it reflected our understanding of what it means to preach the Gospel or build Christian community.”³⁸

For Steiner, the letter called to mind the seven churches reprimanded by Christ in the first chapters of Revelation.³⁹ For administrators at the University, the letter was all the impetus they needed to forestall the event. They immediately called into effect a somewhat selective no-use policy for religious events that seems to have developed in the 1960s, perhaps after the monumental *Abington-Schempp* Supreme Court decision of 1963 that outlawed Bible reading in public schools and stressed the divide between church and state institutions.⁴⁰ Just days before the event was set to be held they informed Steiner that evangelistic meetings could not be held on University Grounds, even though Steiner had successfully reserved the auditorium in Old Cabell Hall through the standard procedure.⁴¹ Through the help of Elzinga—who reminded University officials that decisions regarding the support of student groups held political implications during a budget year—the event

³⁸ “Community Members Explain Crusade Stance,” *Cavalier Daily* (March 15, 1972).

³⁹ Steiner, interview.

⁴⁰ For more on the Supreme Court ruling, see “School District of Abington Township, *Pennsylvania v. Schempp*,” *LII / Legal Information Institute*, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/374/203> (accessed April 22, 2016). It is unclear why university administrators did not enforce this policy initially. It seems that members of evangelical para-church groups were impacted by university policies more than established denominational ministries, in part because of para-church groups’ lack of off campus buildings, but also likely because of their lack of cultural clout. From the time of Jefferson and throughout the life of the University of Virginia religion had been a part of the life of the University. As a booklet published in 1944 by S. Vernon McCasland, the John. B. Cary Memorial Professor of Religion at the university, noted, Jefferson himself allowed for non-sectarian religious instruction. The university established a chaplaincy and a chaplain’s residence in 1855 and built a chapel in 1890.

⁴¹ At the time Cabell Hall was the largest space at the university other than the gym. Although before Steiner could go through the standard procedure to rent the building he and other concerned evangelicals had to “pray out” a music concert that was scheduled for Cabell Hall at the same time. Eventually the original concert was canceled. Steiner, interview by author, March 25, 2014.

was saved at the last moment, but University officials on the Facilities Committee insisted that future events of this kind would not be tolerated at the University.⁴²

As noted above, the University's policies were not opposed to religion, per se. At times various individuals at the University made religious options at local churches known to students by publishing pamphlets like "Religious Affairs in the University of Virginia Community, 1970-1971." The 1970 pamphlet, seemingly intended for distribution to students at the beginning of the new academic year, listed most of the nearby churches and provided a map pinpointing their locations. It also listed "University Religious Organizations, Programs, Committees, and Offices," which included addresses and brief descriptions of fifteen religious ministries. These ministries ranged from "The University Chapel Committee" and the "Baptist Student Union" to The "B'Nai B'Rith Hillel Foundation" and less traditional opportunities like "The Prism-Coffee House."⁴³ Most of these groups met in buildings located just off University Grounds, but some, like Madison Hall was "an official agency of the university for volunteer student involvement in local social needs."⁴⁴ It also housed the University's "Office of Religious Affairs," which was responsible for sponsoring and coordinating religious activities on Grounds.⁴⁵

⁴² Steiner, interview.

⁴³ *Religious Affairs in the University of Virginia Community, 1970-1971*, clippings file "Religion at UVA," Alderman Library, University of Virginia Library.

⁴⁴ *Religious Affairs in the University of Virginia Community, 1970-1971*, 10.

⁴⁵ In 1858 the first college YMCA in the world was established at the university and in 1905 the YMCA established Madison Hall, which grew, in the early 1970s, into one of the largest Christian and philanthropic student organizations in the country. Eventually, Ken Elzinga advised a group of University of Virginia students (Bill Wright, Sam Manly, Chip Grange) to develop Madison Hall into an independent, off-Grounds non-profit organization. In the 1970s student leaders sold the former YMCA building to the University, thus gaining the resources to move the service organization to a large private house adjacent to university Grounds. Kenneth Elzinga, email to author, July 5, 2016. Today, Madison House continues to function as the leading philanthropic organization at the University of Virginia. For more on religion at the University of Virginia in the first three quarters of the twentieth century, see S. Vernon McCasland, *The John B. Cary Memorial School of Religion of the University of Virginia* (Indianapolis, IN: The United Christian Missionary Society, 1944); *Religious Affairs in the University of Virginia Community, 1970-1971*, 1970.

If the University was opposed to religion on Grounds, efforts like Madison Hall made it hard for many to tell. For evangelicals who lacked the cultural clout and religious institutions needed to fit the University's system, the policy seemed starkly opposed to faith-based ministries. Evangelicals like Steiner and Richman and the para-church groups they represented noticed the way the University's policies seemed to perpetuate the virtual absence of an evangelical presence at the University.⁴⁶

The Ford-Skinner crusade was a watershed event for evangelical para-church ministry at the University of Virginia. On one level, the event was a large success in its own right. The presence of two prominent leaders, one a white preacher and relative of Billy Graham and the other an African American and former gang leader from Harlem, helped demonstrate the egalitarian power of the Gospel in the midst of a university community not-far-removed from Jim-Crow segregation.⁴⁷ The sessions were well attended, and multiple students made professions of faith in response to the messages.⁴⁸ Furthermore, the inclusion of professors from one of evangelicalism's top seminaries demonstrated the appeal reasoned Christianity held for some students even if the pull of the Jesus Movement was often in the other direction. In short, the 1972 conference tapped

⁴⁶ The story of the University's seemingly total and complete repudiation of religion on Grounds became a standard founding myth of the study center. As early as 1979 a friendly article in the *Cavalier Daily* began, "To maintain Thomas Jefferson's ideal of separation of church and state, no religious organizations were allowed to meet in most University of Virginia buildings for many years. But in 1973, this rule was abolished under freedom of speech requirements, and soon afterwards the first Christian orientation meeting was held. Today, several major Christian groups are active on-Grounds, and are attracting an increasingly large number of University students" (Christine Neuberger, "Born Again: Flourishing Christian Groups Attract Students, Sustain Faith on-Grounds," *The Cavalier Daily*, March 26, 1979, Religion at UVa--History, Student Preferences, University of Virginia, Alderman Library Clippings Files).

⁴⁷ The University of Virginia began accepting African American undergraduates in 1956. In 1958 Leroy Willis transferred from the University's School of Engineering into the University's crown jewel, the College of Arts and Sciences, see Lauren F. Winner, "From Mass Evangelist to Soul Friend," *ChristianityToday.com*, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2000/october2/7.56.html> (accessed April 1, 2016).

⁴⁸ Trotter, interview by author, Charlottesville, VA, March 6, 2014.

the equalitarian and experiential impulse of the Jesus Movement without surrendering the intellectual component that an environment like the University of Virginia demanded.

The groundwork for a study center was being laid.

In spite of all of this positive momentum, however, one thing remained unchanged after the event. Though university administrators had relented and allowed the event to proceed, they made clear that it was an anomaly and religious groups would still be prohibited from meeting on Grounds in the future. Steiner was determined to find a solution to this impasse. In a meeting with Dean D. Alan Williams, Steiner learned that university administrators saw the exclusionary policy as in keeping with Thomas Jefferson's own principles.⁴⁹ Williams informed Steiner that the University of Virginia had always maintained a strict policy restricting religious groups from the use of university buildings. Furthermore, Williams went on to assert that this policy complied with recent Supreme Court rulings supporting the separation of church and state.⁵⁰

Steiner was not easily persuaded. In the weeks after the event he teamed up with Jim Keim, a PhD student in the Department of Politics, to investigate Williams's claims. What they found changed the face of student ministry at the University of Virginia. After six months of research, Steiner and Keim presented their case to Ralph Eisenberg, the chairman of the Calendar and Scheduling Committee. They recommended that the University delete a statement from the university's student handbook *Colonnades* that read:

In accordance with the long-standing policy of the University to maintain the separation of church and state, University space may not be used for activities

⁴⁹ Williams was also Vice President of Student Affairs at the time, see "D. Alan Williams," University of Virginia Library, <http://search.lib.virginia.edu/catalog/uva-lib:2166698> (accessed March 7, 2017).

⁵⁰ Steiner, interview, March 25, 2014.

which have a primary religious objective or for meetings of religious groups or societies, except that the arena of University Hall may be used for such purpose.⁵¹

According to Steiner and Keim, the University's policy impinged on "the right of student religious groups to freedom of speech, press, assembly and religion."⁵² For legal precedent they looked to a previous Circuit Court case, *The Police Department of the City of Chicago v. Mosely*, in which the court ruled that once a public forum is opened to the public it must remain open to speech of all types.⁵³ Not surprisingly, another aspect of their challenge was an appeal to academic freedom. They based this appeal on "the character of the University of Virginia as an institution of higher learning in which we are free to follow truth wherever and so far as reason and evidence shall lead."⁵⁴ While these two arguments were strong, the most important aspect of their argument to come in their appeal to Jefferson himself.⁵⁵ Steiner and Keim noted:

At no time during the century and a half of the University's existence has it followed a policy of separation of state and religion which meant in practice the exclusion presently enforced. Beginning with the Rockfish Gap Commission Report and in every subsequent occasion Mr. Jefferson himself expressed the concern that the religious life of the students not be "precluded by the public authorities" (Minutes of the Board of Visitors, October 7, 1822). On the contrary

⁵¹ Steiner and Keim to Eisenberg, November 13, 1972 (personal collection of Beat Steiner). The University of Virginia library catalogue describes *Colonnades* as part of a long-standing tradition of student handbooks at the University. "Since the early 1880's, an introductory handbook about the University of Virginia has been distributed to incoming students. Originally it was published by the University of Virginia YMCA, and later by the University itself. Titles have varied frequently. Originally called the Student hand-book University of Virginia, by 1915/1916 it had become Handbook of the University of Virginia. This continued, still with slight variations, through 1948/1949. In the 1950's it became the Jeffersonian. With the 1970/1971 edition its publication was taken over by the University of Virginia, and the name changed to The Colonnades." See "The Colonnades," University of Virginia Library, <http://search.lib.virginia.edu/catalog/u3490040> (accessed March 7, 2017).

⁵² Steiner and Keim to Eisenberg, November 13, 1972 (personal collection of Beat Steiner).

⁵³ The case involved a man who picketed for seven months with a sign alleging that a local school practiced discrimination. The ruling stated that "once a forum is opened up to assemble or speak by some groups, government may not prohibit others from assembling or speaking on the basis of what they intend to say." See "Police Dept. of Chicago v. Mosely," http://www.oyez.org/cases/1970-1979/1971/1971_70_87 (accessed June 10, 2014); *Presbyterian Journal*, (January 16, 1974), 3; Steiner, interview.

⁵⁴ Steiner and Keim to Eisenberg, November 13, 1972, personal collection of Beat Steiner.

⁵⁵ Steiner, interview.

he himself designated a room in the Rotunda for religious worship subject to a neutral policy...the Rotunda rooms were used for religious worship and Sunday School, a chaplaincy system was established based on voluntary contributions of students and faculty, and the University itself entered a special relationship with the Young Men's Christian Association in 1858. These all indicate an early cooperation with voluntary religious life.⁵⁶

Unable to argue with Jefferson's own policies and a long history of religious practice at the University, University of Virginia administrators changed their policy regarding religious meetings on university space.⁵⁷ For the first time in over a decade Christian groups of all kinds were permitted to utilize university space for their meetings.

One of the first major events following this change in policy was a five-day conference in March of 1973 entitled "The L'Abri Lectures in Modern Religion and Culture."⁵⁸ Once again Steiner played a large role in bringing sought-after speakers to University Grounds. Through his official position as a member of Virginia Christian Leadership, a University-sanctioned student-led organization, still housed in the YMCA's Madison Hall, Steiner, with the help of nearby Eastern Mennonite University President Myron Augsburger, had been attempting to bring Francis Schaeffer and other speakers

⁵⁶ Steiner and Keim to Eisenberg, November 13, 1972.

⁵⁷ In order to achieve this goal Steiner teamed up with the University's student council. In a letter to President Edgar Shannon, Larry Sabato, student council vice president, included a recommendation the Student Council had just made to the Calendar and Scheduling Committee. It read: "(I move) that the Student Council endorse the recommendation of the University Calendar and Scheduling Committee to allow use of University space by religious-oriented organizations." He went on to note that "[c]ouncil aided Messrs. Jim Keim and Beat Steiner in their appearance before the Committee, and we hope that you will be able to swiftly approve your Committee's recommendation." Larry J. Sabato to Edgar R. Shannon, Jr., February 27, 1973, personal collection of Beat Steiner. On March 5, Shannon replied to Sabato, stating, "I expect to respond to their recommendations soon." Shannon to Sabato, March 5, 1973, personal collection of Beat Steiner. In light of the fact that Steiner reserved space in Newcomb Hall for the March 4-8 "L'Abri Lectures in Modern Religion and Culture," this change must have been largely underway prior to president Shannon's formal acceptance of the recommendation.

⁵⁸ The conference ran from Sunday, March 4 through Thursday, March 8. See "Marion Ritter and Rosemary Cooney, "Visiting L'Abri Fellows Present 'The New Inferno' Lecture Series," *The Cavalier Daily* (2 March 1973).

from L'Abri to central Virginia since the summer of 1971.⁵⁹ Steiner hoped that Schaeffer himself would come to Charlottesville. For Steiner, Schaeffer's blend of head and heart religion held strong appeal. Describing the situation in Charlottesville, Steiner noted, "We feel that College students and the churches in this area are in great need of a ministry which will further coalesce the community and minister to the hearts and minds of students and others in this area and throughout the country."⁶⁰

Steiner was unable to get the increasingly sought-after evangelical star to commit to an engagement at the University, but his efforts resulted in an on-Grounds lecture series featuring some of Schaeffer's top protégés.⁶¹ The 1973 L'Abri lecture series included talks by Hurvey Woodson, the director of L'Abri in Italy, Randal Macaulay, the director of the British L'Abri, and Hans Rookmaaker, a professor at the Free University of Amsterdam. These presentations were hosted in the heart of the University with afternoon and evening lectures held each day.⁶² In typical Jesus Movement fashion, the event concluded with "a multi-media Jesus Rock Presentation" by Christian rock band CRY 3 in Old Cabell Hall on Thursday evening.⁶³

By making use of multiple University buildings, the L'Abri Lectures demonstrated the significance of Steiner and Keim's efforts. In just under a year, the

⁵⁹ Beat Steiner to Francis Schaeffer, correspondence, personal collection of Drew Trotter, July 27, 1971. Augsburg was one of the most important Anabaptist voices in the emerging evangelical left during these years. He played a role in drafting the 1973 Chicago Declaration (Swartz, *Moral Minority*, 168-169.

⁶⁰ Steiner to Schaeffer, July 27, 1971.

⁶¹ Schaeffer had already held a lecture series, which several individuals from Action Ministries attended, in c. 1970 at Covenant College in Tennessee. In his response to Steiner, Schaeffer mentioned his desire that a second conference might be held in a different geographical area. He explicitly mentioned California as a possibility. See Schaeffer to Steiner, correspondence, personal collection of Drew Trotter, September 6, 1971.

⁶² Rosemary and Cooney, "Visiting L'Abri Fellows Present 'The New Inferno' Lecture Series," *The Cavalier Daily* (March 2, 1973).

⁶³ Virginia Christian Leadership, "The L'Abri Lectures in Modern Religion and Culture, SCHEDULE OF EVENTS," personal collection of Drew Trotter, March 1973.

university had been compelled to alter its policy regarding the assembly of Christian groups on Grounds. From this time on, religious groups were allowed to apply for the reservation of university facilities on equal footing with other student groups. The impact of this shift was enormous. With new access to university facilities, para-church collegiate ministries like Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship and Campus Crusade were able to prosper like never before at the University of Virginia.

By 1974 the prominence of evangelicals on Grounds was unmistakable. Not only had Christians lobbied successfully to hold Christian meetings on university-owned property, they had also landed some of the biggest names in American evangelicalism for revival meetings and lectures at the University. Furthermore, Richman's ministry and the larger Jesus Movement had helped to make evangelical Christianity an unavoidable part of student life in Jefferson's "Academical Village." By 1973 a random survey of twelve students at the University of Virginia demonstrated how significant a topic religion had become among the student population. Of the twelve students interviewed, more than half referenced "the Jesus Movement" or "Jesus Freaks," and many noted the influence of Richman's "Action '73" ministry.⁶⁴ Some of these students were adamantly opposed to these evangelical groups. Multiple students described the Jesus Movement as a "fad," and one described Action '73 as "garbage." A few gave opposite answers. One graduate student at the university responded by stating, "the Jesus Movement is not temporary in that it's a fad or a passing fancy. It's a search for new meanings, a new way to relate to

⁶⁴ Anonymous, Sally Dunaway, Richard Tontarski in, "Search for God in the Academic Village," *Cavalier Daily* (November 9, 1973).

life in general.”⁶⁵ Another student commented at length on the positive role Action Ministries had played in his spiritual development:

I was involved in my Church activities at home, but it was more or less a Sunday-type thing. While here, I’ve met many dedicated Christians and I’ve dedicated my life to the service of Christ and Christianity. So coming here has definitely made a difference, but quite an opposite difference than what most people think coming to a University (would make). I participate in Action ’73.⁶⁶

As these interviews show, whether or not students agreed with the goals and methods of the Jesus Movement or Richman’s Action Ministries, by the fall of 1973 the influence of evangelical Christianity on-Grounds was unavoidable.⁶⁷ As evangelical campus ministries began to find a warmer reception at the university, the number of students interested in learning more about their faith grew. The stage was set for the development of more lasting evangelical institutions.

Founding a Study Center in Charlottesville, 1975-1976

Evangelical efforts in Charlottesville were buoyed during the 1970s by a general rise in the number and influence of evangelicals, both in American society and in the nation’s universities, that resulted from the Jesus Movement’s emphasis on evangelism and growing evangelical affluence and prestige.⁶⁸ Yet even as the number of evangelical

⁶⁵ Joe Healy in, “Search for God in the Academic Village,” *Cavalier Daily* (November 9, 1973).

⁶⁶ John Parker in, “Search for God in the Academic Village,” *Cavalier Daily* (November 9, 1973).

⁶⁷ These trends seem to have continued throughout the 1970s. By 1979 another *Cavalier Daily* article detailed the changed religious landscape that had resulted from the decade’s evangelical surge. In “Born Again: Flourishing Christian Groups Attract Students, Sustain the Faith On-Grounds,” Christine Neuberger detailed an array of “flourishing” student ministries. Neuberger quoted Daryl Richman, David Turner, Skip Ryan and other ministry leaders like Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship’s director, Scott Sunquist, at length as she detailed the large number of students involved in collegiate ministries at the University. The half-page article also included an illustration of an outdoor baptism by John Kraft. The middle-aged-man who was baptizing several students bears a striking similarity to Daryl Richman. Christine Neuberger, “Born Again: Flourishing Christian Groups Attract Students, Sustain the Faith On-Grounds.” *The Cavalier Daily* (March 26, 1979).

⁶⁸ See D. Michael Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Christians in America grew, the ethos of the movement changed with American culture. As the hippie counterculture faded in the 1970s, many in American society underwent a reactionary turn toward conservatism.⁶⁹ The evangelical converts of the Jesus Movement were not immune to this trend. By the middle of the decade many of them had turned in their hippie dress for more standard middle-class styles.⁷⁰ The Jesus Movement had given American evangelicalism a fresh wave of converts; now American political and cultural currents were offering evangelicals a degree of social prominence and respectability they had not experienced at any other point in the twentieth century. When presidential candidate Jimmy Carter announced that he was a “born again” Christian, the prominence of American evangelicalism became unavoidable. In a cover story appearing a few weeks before the 1976 election, *Newsweek* declared 1976 to be “The Year of the Evangelical.”⁷¹ According to the article’s authors “the emergence of evangelical Christianity into a position of respect and power” was “the most significant—and overlooked—religious phenomenon of the ’70s.”⁷² As evangelicals readied themselves to move into the “halls of power” in the next decades, prominent universities like the University of Virginia served as important entry points to greater influence across the political, cultural, and educational spectrum.⁷³ In the wake of this shift Jesus Movement-era ministries like Charlottesville’s “Action Ministries” and Berkeley’s *Right On* took more dignified names

⁶⁹ As Donald Critchlow notes, the 1970s were a paradox, both an age of liberation and an age of reaction (Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman’s Crusade* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 214-221).

⁷⁰ Larry Eskridge, *God’s Forever Family: The Jesus People Movement in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 242-284.

⁷¹ Kenneth L. Woodward, John Barnes, Laurie Lisle, “Born Again!” *Newsweek* (October 25, 1976), 68-78. The magazine also carried a one-page insert titled, “Decisions for Christ,” in which the conversions of notable figures like Charles Colson and Eldridge Cleaver were described (75).

⁷² Woodward, Barnes, and Lisle, “Born Again,” 68.

⁷³ For the rising social prominence of evangelicals following Carter’s election, see Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power*; D. Michael Lindsay, “Evangelicals in the Power Elite: Elite Cohesion Advancing a Movement,” *American Sociological Review* 73, no. 1 (February 1, 2008): 60–82.

like “University Christian Ministries” (UCM) and *Radix*. Within university towns evangelicals still longed for spiritual and intellectual communities, but increasingly they turned their efforts toward ventures that better represented their upwardly mobile ambitions. In a few places, study centers, offering a blend of community living and hospitality in addition to a more intellectual educational aim, emerged as a means of bridging this cultural divide.

In Charlottesville general trends in evangelical and American culture combined with the influence of Francis Schaeffer and Jim Houston to produce a version of evangelicalism well suited to life in the shadow of a major research university. From the mid-1970s on, evangelicals in Charlottesville founded a variety of institutions that sought to further their rising intellectual and social ambitions without compromising their orthodox faith. Nothing better represented this impulse than the Center for Christian Study (CCS). From the beginning, the CCS was designed to be a place where community members and University of Virginia students could combine the best of evangelicalism’s emphasis on heartfelt, experiential faith with the community emphasis and intellectual sensitivity of Schaeffer’s L’Abri or Houston’s Regent College.⁷⁴ Once again, it was Daryl Richman, Ken Elzinga, and Beat Steiner who led the way.

Upon his return to Charlottesville in the summer of 1974, Steiner found Action Ministries little changed. But jumping back into ministry alongside Daryl Richman as a support-funded minister proved more difficult than Steiner had expected. He was eager to be involved in meaningful ministry, but he found it difficult to know exactly where to

⁷⁴ Many individuals who either took part in Action Ministries or the formation of the Center for Christian Study spent time at L’Abri and Regent College. David and Ellen Turner, Beat Steiner, Drew Trotter, Rob Gustafson, William Weldon, Skip Ryan, and Jane Spencer Bopp all spent time at L’Abri. The Steiners spent time at Regent College. Jane Spencer Bopp, interview by author, Charlottesville, VA, April 11, 2014; Steiner, interview.

begin.⁷⁵ Furthermore, though his time with James Houston had convinced him of the importance of theological education for all Christians, Steiner did not readily see an outlet for his passion for theological education in Charlottesville. Fresh from the intellectual heights of graduate theological study at Regent, Steiner found that the first year in Charlottesville was a “humbling” and “soul searching” struggle.⁷⁶ Perhaps sensing Steiner’s struggles, Richman suggested that Steiner head up a new ministry.⁷⁷ One day, as the two men were walking up Chancellor Street, Richman declared, “Beat...what we need in Charlottesville is a study center.”⁷⁸

The words resonated with Steiner. Not only had his time with Houston shown him that the idea of university-embedded study centers had merit and should be replicated, but his own experience as a Religious Studies major at the University of Virginia had convinced him that Christian students needed a forum for analyzing the secular study of religion in a community of faith—a sentiment Richman and Elzinga also emphasized.⁷⁹ The idea of a study center emerged in Steiner’s mind as an antidote to the way religion was handled in secular Religious Studies departments.⁸⁰ Like Richman and Elzinga, Steiner was concerned that the university’s Religious Studies Department, with its secularized study of religion and professors who were sometimes ambivalent on issues of traditional Christian orthodoxy (e.g., the bodily resurrection of Christ), was damaging the

⁷⁵ Center for Christian Study, “A Beat With A Different Drum,” *Praxis* (Spring 1998).

⁷⁶ Center for Christian Study, “A Beat With A Different Drum,” *Praxis* (Spring 1998).

⁷⁷ It is unclear where the exact terminology “study center” originated, but there is a good chance that it was popularized the most by R. C. Sproul’s early and widely known Ligonier Valley Study Center.

⁷⁸ Center for Christian Study, “A Beat With A Different Drum,” *Praxis* (Spring 1998). Steiner, interview by author, March 25, 2014.

⁷⁹ Steiner, interview by author, March 8, 2016; For a brief assessment of Richman’s suspicions of the Religious Studies Department, see “A Friend for All Seasons,” *Praxis*, 1998.

⁸⁰ Steiner, interview by author, March 8, 2016. As an undergrad at the University of Virginia Steiner majored in Religious Studies. In his opinion the Religious Studies department was marked by an unhelpful cynicism toward traditional Christian orthodoxy.

faith of evangelical students.⁸¹ Steiner himself had been at loggerheads with the faculty more than once over issues of faith. His dissatisfaction with the department ran so deep that he intentionally chose to write his Honors Thesis in Religious Studies under the direction of a faculty member in the History Department.⁸² Steiner was not the only evangelical student with close Action Ministries ties to take courses in the growing Religious Studies Department in these years.⁸³ Others like Rob Gustafson and Claire Brittain also took degrees in Religious Studies before joining the study center staff. Brittain, who came to the University of Virginia as a prestigious Echols Scholar in 1971 only two years after the University admitted the first women to the College of Arts and Sciences in 1969, followed up her time at the University of Virginia with a Masters from Yale Divinity School before returning to Charlottesville to join the study center staff in 1979-1980.⁸⁴ Still, feelings of suspicion remained among evangelical students and some faculty in the department.⁸⁵ Ironically, however, in the following decades it may have been the very existence of a robust Religious Studies Department at the University that

⁸¹ In a 1979 letter to Daryl Richman, Brittain referenced these suspicions noting, "I remember Ken Elzinga asking me once how I could major in Religious Studies and still maintain a conservative faith; at that point there were not many students doing this," (Claire Brittain to Daryl Richman, March 19, 1979, Box, Archives Programs, 1985-1989; Folder, Director Applications, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA). For more on the rise of secular religious studies in the modern university, see D. G. Hart, *The University Gets Religion: Religious Studies in American Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

⁸² Beat and Barbara Steiner, interview, February 28, 2016.

⁸³ While courses in religion had been offered at the University of Virginia throughout its history, the establishment of a modern Religious Studies Department in 1967 elevated the status of the academic study of religion at the university and soon became one of the largest and most prestigious religious studies departments in the country. By 1976 the strength of the department's faculty led the state of Virginia to honor the department's request to grant doctoral degrees, see Pat Wechsler, "Religious Studies Doctorate Now Offered at UVa," *The Daily Progress*, May 14, 1976, University of Virginia, Alderman Library Clippings Files, Religious Studies Department.

⁸⁴ Claire Brittain Kimmel, Skype interview by author, April 7, 2016. For more on the University of Virginia's 1969 decision to allow women to enroll in the College of Arts and Sciences (the University's crown jewel), see "University of Virginia Library," <https://www.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/women/coeducation1.html> (accessed April 21, 2016).

⁸⁵ These suspicions seemed to move both ways. While the Religious Studies Department and the CCS shared many students over the years, neither the department nor the CCS has ever been fully convinced of the helpfulness of the other's methods.

helped spur a more general interest in religion among the student body, thus channeling more students into the CCS.

Following his conversation with Richman, Steiner threw himself into the development of a center where Christian commitment and scholarly dedication would go hand and hand. In order to make this dream a reality, Steiner needed two things—relational connections and a physical space for the center. As Steiner began seeking out other individuals with a similar vision, Houston directed him to Jim Hiskey and the folks involved in Cornerstone’s Regent-style summer school just off the University of Maryland campus. Hiskey became an important resource for Steiner and the development of the Charlottesville study center.⁸⁶

The search for a suitable place to house the new endeavor played out in stages. In the spring of 1975 this real estate search resulted in the leasing of a former boarding house on Elliewood Avenue.⁸⁷ Steiner found the building in part through his connections within the Christian community of Charlottesville; the building’s manager was a Christian who was involved in the charismatic Oakleigh Christian Fellowship. Though the building needed extensive renovation and was only available on a month-to-month lease, its close proximity to The Corner (a popular student haunt full of retail shops and restaurants just off University Grounds) made it an ideal location for the fledgling effort. Unsure of what the future held, Steiner leased the building and organized a team of volunteers, who devoted time and financial resources to the project.⁸⁸ Foremost among

⁸⁶ This paragraph is based primarily on my conversation with Beat and Barb Steiner. Steiner, interview.

⁸⁷ This building is now a bar and grill called The Biltmore.

⁸⁸ Locher underwrote the renovation of the Elliewood building. In his reflection on Locher’s involvement in the project, Steiner credited what he described as “Daryl [Richman’s] absolute range of ministry capabilities,” which could appeal to farmers, students, and millionaires alike. Locher had become

these volunteers was Preston Locher, a businessman and future CCS board member who had made his fortune on the Alaska oil fields before relocating to Farmington, Virginia. With Locher's financial assistance and the sweat of local volunteers the building was successfully renovated from what Steiner describes as "a clubhouse for hippies" replete with a five-foot painting of a human head bleeding from a gouged out eye into a L'Abri-esque study center. In the summer of 1975 the Steiners, newly married, settled into the second floor of the house. The study center, with a library and reading room downstairs, officially opened to students in the fall.

It was not long before the Charlottesville community began to take notice. In late September Charlottesville's *The Daily Progress* ran an article featuring an interview with Richman and Steiner and a photograph of the building.⁸⁹ The article detailed the day-to-day rhythm of life at the center. Only a month into its first semester of operation the center was already buzzing with activity. Some students had "come to research the historical background to the book of Job" or to ask "questions about Genesis." Others took part in the Bible studies. On Thursday evenings, "a score or more of law students and their friends" gathered "in the cavernous, freshly painted living room" to "read from the book of Luke and discuss and analyze how the words of the apostle relate to their lives."⁹⁰

connected to Action Ministries and the study center project through his wife, a member of the women's Bible study that Richman led in Farmington. Steiner, interview by author, March 25, 2014. Elzinga has a similar take on the importance of Richman's ability to connect with diverse groups, see Ken Elzinga, interview by author, February 28, 2014.

⁸⁹ Charles Hite, "Charlottesville's Center for Christian Study," *The Daily Progress* (September 27, 1975). For a description of the Center for Christian Study in an early study center publication, see "Charlottesville's Center for Christian Study," CCS Archives.

⁹⁰ Charles Hite, "Charlottesville's Center for Christian Study," *The Daily Progress* (September 27, 1975).

In addition to spaces for group meetings, the Elliewood building provided students with access to Christian materials that they could not get through the university's library. The building's ground floor housed "a library filled with tapes, books and periodicals on all aspects of Christianity."⁹¹ By 1977 the library included approximately 1,200 volumes and over 1,000 taped lectures.⁹² In the early years one of the library's most prized holdings was a complete collection of Francis Schaeffer's taped lectures, which were donated by Bill and Betty Weldon.⁹³ Like the Lochers, the Weldons were people of means who became acquainted with the project through Richman's pastoral work in Farmington. Previous to their involvement in the Charlottesville study center Bill Weldon had also spent time at Swiss L'Abri, where he came to greatly appreciate the work of Francis Schaeffer.⁹⁴

Contributing the entire collection of reel-to-reel L'Abri tapes to the fledgling study center came as a natural outflow of these relationships. It also represented notable developments within evangelicalism. By the mid-1970s Schaeffer was well established as one of (if not *the*) leading spokesperson for intellectually engaged evangelical Christianity. Furthermore, in addition to expanding the minds and aspirations of North American evangelicals, Schaeffer's methods—be it community-based-learning or his use of technology (e.g., taped lectures, documentary videos)—foreshadowed evangelicalism's move into new methods of mass-producing the work of its celebrities.

⁹¹ Charles Hite, "Charlottesville's Center for Christian Study," *The Daily Progress* (September 27, 1975).

⁹² Daryl Richman to William Camp, Jr., June 27, 1977, Box, Archivees Programs, 1985-1989: Folder, Fundraising Appeal Letters, 1976-1986, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

⁹³ Daryl Richman to Friends of the Gustafsons, June 5, 1976, Box, Archivees Programs, 1985-1989: Folder, Fundraising Appeal Letters, 1976-1986, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

⁹⁴ Betty Weldon was a member of Richman's Farmington Bible study. Bill Weldon spent time at L'Abri in the early 1970s. The original tapes were reel-to-reel tapes, but Steiner and some of the early interns transferred these to cassette during the early years of the center. Steiner, interview.

L'Abri's massive effort to develop a broad mail-order tape ministry is a notable example of this trend. As previous chapters have shown, beginning with L'Abri no self-respecting study center during these years was without a tape library. In places like L'Abri, Regent College, or the Ligonier Valley Study Center, tapes were made in-house. For smaller efforts like The Crucible, Cornerstone, and the Charlottesville CCS, tape ministries began with tape libraries comprised of purchased tapes. Thus it comes as no surprise that in the first CCS brochure in the fall of 1975 special attention was given to its tape library, which included taped lectures from individuals like Francis Schaeffer, R. C. Sproul, John Stott, and Regent's Bruce Waltke.⁹⁵

While the extent of their collection of Schaeffer's tapes may have indicated the large ambitions some held for the Charlottesville venture, other realities demonstrated how uncertain the future of Steiner's study center really was. Foremost among these was the building's precarious lease agreement. From the start Steiner had been concerned about the month-to-month nature of the lease. It was not long before his fears proved to be well founded. In December of 1975 the building's property manager notified Steiner that the building was going up for sale. A month later the Steiners received their week's notice. Faced with the imminent loss of their residence, the young couple spent the rest of the morning searching for alternative housing. Thanks to a connection Barb had made through her position as a teacher at Meriwether Lewis School, they managed to find an apartment by noon of that day. Upon returning to the Elliewood building, the Steiners checked their mailbox. Inside they found a letter from Saint Paul's Episcopal Church. The letter informed them that after nearly two years of analysis the church had decided to

⁹⁵ "Charlottesville's Center for Christian Study," Fall 1975, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

end its housing ministry. As a result the church was looking to sell its “Koinonia House” at 128 Chancellor Street for \$57,000. The Steiners could hardly believe their eyes. They had found an apartment for themselves and a potential home for the study center only hours after they had received their week’s notice on the Elliewood property.⁹⁶ Like the Schaeffer’s last-minute efforts to find a house in Huemoz or the Houstons’ Oxford-Vancouver house swap, the acquisition of the Chancellor Street property functioned as an example of God’s miraculous provision for Steiner and the evangelical community in Charlottesville.

The timing of these events was momentous for the development of the Charlottesville CCS. The sale of the Elliewood building meant that the study center would have to close for the spring 1976 semester; however, the chance to purchase the house on Chancellor Street played a vital role in Steiner’s efforts to keep the concept of a study center alive in the minds of students and donors. As Steiner later noted, efforts to buy the Chancellor Street building “kept the momentum of the study center, as far as fundraising and admissions, going because we were able to say that we are going to continue [the Center for Christian Study] in the fall at this location and we need to raise this money.”⁹⁷

Steiner, Richman, and Elzinga began a new fundraising effort almost immediately. Together, the friends of Action Ministries and the study center raised enough money to cover the down payment on the Chancellor Street house by June of 1976. In order to purchase the building Richman and Steiner incorporated the work of

⁹⁶ Beat Steiner still refers to this as “the miracle of the study center.” This paragraph is taken exclusively from my conversation with the Steiners. Steiners, interview. Stories like this often played a key role in inspiring Christians to further commitment in various ministry ventures.

⁹⁷ Beat Steiner, interview.

Action Ministries and the Center for Christian Study under University Christian Ministries (UCM). UCM officially gained possession of the property on June 25. Within a week, a group of enthusiastic volunteers began renovating the building.⁹⁸ Led by Croxton Gordon, an expert carpenter with time to spare during summer recess from his studies at the law school, and Jane Spencer, a young nurse and future CCS board member who gave her entire summer to the project, volunteers worked throughout the summer to transform the Koinonia House into a suitable home for the Center for Christian Study.⁹⁹ At the end of the summer Richman quantified the scope of the undertaking:

Over 2,000 hours of volunteer labor have been put into the house. We are close to completing a total renovation of the Study Center, which has included the construction of an apartment on the ground floor, new porches and a face lifting for each of the eighteen rooms of the house. Five full-time workers were the mainstay of the project. A parade of plumbers, electricians, roofers, and carpenters were supplemented by dozens of volunteers who scraped, sanded and painted.¹⁰⁰

Richman reported that \$38,500 had been raised toward the total cost of the building.¹⁰¹

The relocated and freshly incorporated CCS was dedicated during a service at the University of Virginia Chapel on November 21, 1976.¹⁰²

Over the course of the next two years the house on Chancellor Street emerged as a resource for both students and community members who wanted to pursue a more

⁹⁸ Daryl Richman, Beat U. Steiner, and Rob Gustafson to Virginia Graduate, September 1, 1976, Box, Archives Programs, 1985-1989; Folder, Fundraising Appeal Letters, 1976-1986, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

⁹⁹ "Untitled CCS Document," c. fall 1976, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA. Spencer also committed herself to volunteering half-time at the CCS for the 1976-1977 school year.

¹⁰⁰ Richman, Gustafson, Steiner to Virginia Graduate, September 1, 1976, CCS Archives, Box, "Archives Programs, 1985-1989," Folder "Fundraising Appeal Letters 1976-1986." Again, the generosity of the Weldons was a (mostly) welcomed contribution. Some of the volunteers disagreed with Mrs. Weldon's choice of paint, calling the brownish green color "Well-Done" Green. Bopp, interview.

¹⁰¹ Richman, Gustafson, Steiner to Virginia Graduate, September 1, 1976. At this point fundraising efforts stagnated. No progress was made on paying the remaining \$19,000 of the mortgage for the rest of the academic year. See Richardson to Scott Bauman, May 2, 1977, CCS archives, Box, "Archives Programs, 1985-1989," Folder "Fundraising Appeal Letters 1976-1986 (May 2, 1977).

¹⁰² Board of Directors of University Christian Fellowship, "Dedication Service of the Center for Christian Study," personal collection of Jane Spencer Bopp (Nov. 1976).

intellectually robust version of Christianity than the Christian education programs their churches could offer. The activities at the house were not limited to CCS programing. The Chancellor Street house soon became the primary hub for evangelical student ministry at the University of Virginia. Undergraduate groups such as Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Young Life began making routine use of the building, as did groups of professional and graduate students like the Christian Law Fellowship and the Medical Fellowship.¹⁰³ The CCS provided free photocopying for the Christian ministries at the University and soon began hosting bi-weekly meetings that brought together representatives from nearly all of the university's recognized campus ministries. Once begun these meetings proved to be a lasting and unique part of the CCS's ministry. More than one observer over the years has commented on the abnormal degree of unity among typically competitive para-church campus ministries at the University of Virginia. For observers like Elzinga and Trotter the source of this unity can be traced directly back to these bi-weekly meetings.¹⁰⁴ Still, the CCS has always been closer with some student ministries than with others. The center's ties with IVCF, an evangelical student ministry long known for valuing both the head and the heart, were especially strong. Eventually, the CCS would provide office space for the director of the University's IVCF chapter.

Building an Evangelical Network in Charlottesville: Trinity Presbyterian Church

The impulse toward spiritual entrepreneurship among Charlottesville's evangelical population during these years was not limited to the development of the CCS.

¹⁰³ Richardson to Scott Bauman, correspondence, CCS archives, Box, "Archives Programs, 1985-1989," Folder "Fundraising Appeal Letters 1976-1986 (2 May 1977); Richman to Hovey Dabney, correspondence, CCS archives, Box, "Archives Programs, 1985-1989," Folder "Fundraising Appeal Letters 1976-1986 (June 15, 1977).

¹⁰⁴ Drew Trotter, interview by author, April 6, 2016.

Closely related to the study center was the development of another, more traditional evangelical institution—Trinity Presbyterian Church, which aligned itself with the conservative Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). From the start, Trinity functioned as an essential ally of the Charlottesville study center. It is not too much to say that the CCS’s ability to not only survive but also thrive throughout the late 1970s and 1980s even as similar efforts in other places failed to gain or keep momentum is in no small part attributable to the support of Trinity Presbyterian Church.

Trinity was founded in the summer of 1976 when Daryl Richman (ironically, a *Baptist* minister), Elzinga, and members of the UCM and CCS Board decided to try to rectify what they felt to be a lack of evangelical presence in the town’s churches.¹⁰⁵ The new congregation’s growth testified to the vitality of the evangelical community in Charlottesville. When the church met for the first time on August 1, 1976 in the Baptist Student Center just off university Grounds 110 people were in attendance. By November the number had risen to 250. The growth and location changes continued. By 1977 the church was meeting at St. Anne’s Belfield school and holding two services to accommodate nearly 400 worshipers. By 1979 the church numbered 600 and had moved

¹⁰⁵ That Richman, a Baptist minister, helped found a Presbyterian church is characteristic of his capacity for evangelical ecumenism. Virtually everyone who talks about Richman notes his ability to unite various evangelicals behind a larger vision without seeming to give a thought to his own role in the venture. The CCS also benefitted from this trait in Richman. For information on the founding of Trinity, see Dinah Adkins, “The Revival of Religion,” *The Daily Progress*, April 10, 1977, Jane Spencer Bopp, personal collection, Charlottesville, VA; “Young Congregation Outgrows Its Quarters,” *The Daily Progress*, January 20, 1979, Jane Spencer Bopp, personal collection, Charlottesville, VA; Trinity Presbyterian Church, “Special Anniversary Edition,” *ACTS 29*, August 1979, Jane Spencer Bopp, personal collection, Charlottesville, VA; “In the Shadow of Mr. Jefferson,” *Continuing: Presbyterian Church in America* 3, no. 9 (1976): 7–8; Sharon Kraemer, “After a Lot of Prayer and Spade Work,” June 1, 1989, <http://www.pcacep.org>, Jane Spencer Bopp, personal collection.

to another local school building.¹⁰⁶ In 1982 Trinity dedicated its own building and began holding two services in its new 1,000 seat sanctuary.

As a member of the newly founded Presbyterian Church in America (f. 1973, in Birmingham, Alabama), Trinity emphasized a Reformed theology and biblical inerrancy akin to that espoused by Francis Schaeffer and R. C. Sproul, both of whom also had close PCA ties. For Richman, Elzinga and the church's other founders, Trinity emerged as a remedy to Charlottesville's lack of church options for thinking evangelicals. Trinity aimed to fit the growing evangelical demographic of well-educated professionals by espousing a theology rooted in traditional evangelical orthodoxy without catering to the seeming excesses of emotionalism or anti-intellectualism that had defined many evangelical churches touched by the Jesus Movement. From the start Trinity was expected to serve both the University and greater Charlottesville communities as a "town and gown" church.

Even more than the CCS, Trinity demonstrated the rising social and intellectual ambitions of Charlottesville evangelicals. Joseph "Skip" Ryan, Trinity's founding pastor, was a graduate of Harvard University who had spent six months with the Schaeffers at L'Abri, worked as a Young Life staff member in Richmond, Virginia, and studied for an MDiv at Westminster Theological Seminary. Westminster was a staunchly Reformed seminary that had a history of conservatism dating back to its founding in 1929 by the polemical biblical scholar J. Gresham Machen.¹⁰⁷ Even from its early years, the school

¹⁰⁶ "Young Congregation Outgrows Its Quarters," *The Daily Progress*, January 20, 1979; Joseph F. Ryan to Francis A. Schaeffer, April 14, 1982, Box, Lectures and Programs '80s, 90s; Folder, Francis Schaeffer, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

¹⁰⁷ Though Machen did not fit the typical fundamentalist mold (e.g., he was not a teetotaler), he was a strict defender of traditional Reformed orthodoxy in the face of modernizing trends in the church. His

played a significant role in the life of American fundamentalism and later evangelicalism. Neo-evangelical organizer extraordinaire Harold J. Ockenga left Princeton Theological Seminary with Machen to be part of Westminster's founding in 1929, and Francis Schaeffer attended Westminster for two years before taking up his final year of study at outspoken fundamentalist Carl McIntire's Faith Theological Seminary (f. 1937).¹⁰⁸ In the early stages of Trinity's development Elzinga contacted longtime Westminster Theological Seminary president, Edward Clowney (1917-2005) looking for a pastoral recommendation. Clowney handpicked Ryan for the Charlottesville position.¹⁰⁹

Together Ryan's ties to Schaeffer and his connection to Clowney would help shape Trinity in the ensuing years. Later in life Clowney would be a "theologian in residence" at Trinity. Schaeffer also visited Trinity. In 1982, when Trinity moved into its first official building, Ryan invited Schaeffer to give a talk on "On Being a Christian in the 1980s" to commemorate the event. Schaeffer, who was dying of cancer and was used to turning down invitations by then, accepted Ryan's invitation. Trinity's connections to L'Abri did not end there. In addition to Ryan and other Trinity members like Elzinga and Turner who had personal connections to L'Abri, Charles D. Drew, one of Trinity's early associate ministers, was the brother of Mardi Keyes, who along with her husband Dick was a prominent member of the L'Abri community in Switzerland for six months in

most notable book is a short volume on the differences he saw between liberalism and the Christian faith: J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1923).

¹⁰⁸ For more on Machen and Ockenga's experience at Westminster, see Bradley J. Longfield, *The Presbyterian Controversy: Fundamentalists, Modernists, and Moderates* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 173-180; Garth Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 58-59. For more on Schaeffer's experience at Westminster, see Barry Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2008), 9-15.

¹⁰⁹ Trotter, interview, March 6, 2014. Clowney was also a frequent contributor to *Christianity Today*. His regular column, *Eutychus and His Kin*, however, was anonymous. Clowney would later come to Trinity himself to serve as "theologian in residence" in the last years of his life. See Drew Trotter, "Ed Clowney: A Personal Remembrance," *Praxis* 9, no. 2 (Summer 2005).

1970, then in the London and Greatham branches for over eight years before taking up the directorship of the Southborough, Massachusetts L'Abri outside of Boston in 1979.¹¹⁰

In addition to its connection to influential evangelicals, Trinity quickly became the epicenter of evangelical financial and social capital in Charlottesville.¹¹¹ By early 1982 Ryan reported to Schaeffer that nearly 800 people worshipped at Trinity each week. “A substantial number of these are University related,” Ryan noted. “Many are on the faculty (three professors are on our session). 250 or more of our morning congregation are students.” Many of these were students impacted by what Ryan called “a considerable explosion in Christian ministries here [at the University of Virginia] in the last years.” He reported, “Inter-Varsity, Campus Crusade and FCA are all strong. Their staff people are in our church and most of their student participants attend our church as well.”¹¹² In addition to Trinity’s influence on undergraduate ministries, the church also emerged as the worshipping community of choice for evangelicals in Charlottesville’s professional class. Ryan inferred this reality when he noted that many graduate students in the University’s prestigious law, business, and medical schools who had ties to the CCS’s graduate fellowships also attended Trinity. Ryan, an early Board member of the CCS, had

¹¹⁰ “Profiles,” *L'Abri, Southborough: Massachusetts*, <http://www.labri.org/mass/profiles.html> (accessed April 20, 2016). The Keyes, with the help of their Regent College-educated son and daughter-in-law continue to serve in this position through 2016. Like Ryan, Keyes earned his undergraduate at Harvard before going on to study at Westminster. For Drew’s relationship to the Keyes, see Joseph F. Ryan to Francis A. Schaeffer, April 14, 1982. These were not the only Trinity connections to the Schaeffers and L'Abri. In 2006 Trinity hired Greg Thompson, a standout student at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, to serve as senior pastor. He soon hired Wade Bradshaw as an associate minister at Trinity. Bradshaw was the director of British L'Abri for several years before becoming the director of Covenant Theological Seminary’s Francis Schaeffer Institute. Bradshaw’s published account of his L'Abri experiences is *By Demonstration: God: Fifty Years and a Week at L'Abri* (Carlisle: Piquant Editions, 2005). There are also family connections to the Schaeffers at Trinity. One of Schaeffer’s granddaughters currently attends Trinity (Wade Bradshaw, interview by author, Charlottesville, VA, September 16, 2016).

¹¹¹ Even today, Trinity’s congregation is full of lawyers, medical professionals and successful business people. Notable evangelical leaders range from the sociologist James Davidson Hunter to University of Virginia men’s basketball coach Tony Bennett have also called Trinity home in recent years.

¹¹² Joseph F. Ryan to Francis A. Schaeffer, April 14, 1982.

even met his wife, Barbara, a 1980 graduate of the University of Virginia's Law School and a lawyer in Charlottesville, in part through her involvement in the Study Center's Law Fellowship. Like the demographics of Trinity's congregation, the newly completed building project symbolized the high ambitions of Ryan and his congregation.¹¹³ Crowing a bit, Ryan described the scope of the project, "It is a large facility capable of seating close to 1000 people," and noted, "it is our expectation that we will be having two services beginning September 1, [1982]."¹¹⁴

The relationship between the CCS and Trinity Presbyterian Church would continue to deepen over the years. While Trinity's strong educational ministries eventually cut into the study center's community-based enrollment, the CCS's relationship with Trinity was still extremely beneficial for the CCS. For most of the study center's first decade the vast majority of its Board members, community supporters, and program constituency would also be members of Trinity. (As late as 2016 every CCS Director had been a member of Trinity, and many secondary CCS staff members also worshipped regularly there.) Ryan was himself a UCM Board member and went out of his way to boost the study center by writing invitations to speakers like Francis Schaeffer and Os Guinness. Occasionally, as in the case of the study center's Summer Program, Ryan also wrote to every pastor in the PCA on behalf of the program and made the

¹¹³ For a brief biography of the Ryans and a discussion of their high ambitions and subsequent ministry after leaving Trinity to take on the pastor at Dallas's large Park Cities Presbyterian Church, see *Skip & Barbara Ryan Story of Rescue* (Dallas, TX: PCPC Video, 2012), <https://vimeo.com/45947083>. Ryan resigned from the church in 2006 after confessing a long addiction to prescription medicine. After undergoing treatment he was again hired by Park Cities Presbyterian Church. In the spring of 2014, after being clean for seven and a half years, he relapsed and subsequently resigned from the church for the second time. For more on his second resignation, see John Freeman says, "Skip Ryan Confesses Drug Abuse, Resigns from Park Cities," *ByFaith*, August 18, 2014, <http://byfaithonline.com/skip-ryan-confesses-drug-abuse-resigns-from-park-cities/>; "Skip Ryan Resigns from Park Cities PCA and Redeemer Seminary," <http://theaquilareport.com/skip-ryan-resigns-from-park-cities-pca-and-redeemer-seminary/> (accessed April 20, 2016).

¹¹⁴ Joseph F. Ryan to Francis A. Schaeffer, April 14, 1982.

Trinity mailing list available to the CCS.¹¹⁵ More indirectly, Trinity became a stable means of support—spiritually and relationally even more than financially—for the CCS. As Trinity’s social and financial affluence grew along with its influence within the entire PCA, the connection between the study center and the church it helped birth continued to be of immense importance.

Between L’Abri and Regent College: the CCS in its First Decade, 1977-1985

As at Trinity, the procurement of a permanent geographical location also made a significant difference in the life of the CCS. Once the CCS had a permanent home, Steiner and other UCM leaders wasted no time in solidifying the study center’s programing. In the fall of 1976 the CCS brought in Dr. Edwin Yamauchi (b. 1937) for the inaugural “Staley Distinguished Christian Scholar Lecture Series.”¹¹⁶ Yamauchi was a professor of history at Miami University of Ohio and a frequent contributor to *Christianity Today* who had been raised Buddhist and then studied the Quran and Hadith in Arabic before being converted to Christianity.¹¹⁷ The next year the CCS hosted C. Everett Koop (1916-2013) and Harold O. J. Brown (1933-2007) for the Staley Lectures. Their presentation, “The Right to Live, the Right to Die: Where Will the Decision Lead

¹¹⁵ Ryan wrote a form letter to PCA ministers more than once on behalf of the Summer Program. For one example, see Joseph F. Ryan and PCA Ministers, March 27, 1987, Folder, Summer Program 1987, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA. For Ryan’s description of his rationale for offering the CCS the use of the Trinity mailing list, see Skip Ryan to Trinity Member or Friend, October 20, 1982, Folder, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

¹¹⁶ “The Staley Distinguished Christian Scholar Lecture Series,” October 1976, Jane Spencer Bopp, personal collection, Charlottesville, VA.

¹¹⁷ Yamauchi was also elected vice-president of the evangelical Conference on Faith and History in 1972, see “Personalia,” *Christianity Today* 26, no. 22 (August 11, 1972): 41. For examples of Yamauchi’s contributions to *CT*, see Edwin M. Yamauchi, “Historical Notes on the (In)comparable Christ,” *Christianity Today* 26, no. 2 (October 22, 1971): 7–9; Edwin M. Yamauchi, “Christianity and Cultural Differences,” *Christianity Today* 26, no. 19 (June 23, 1972): 5–8.

Us?” pointed toward future evangelical political impulses.¹¹⁸ Already by 1977 Koop and Brown had started catalyzing the evangelical charge against abortion by co-founding the Christian Action Council (now Care Net) in 1975.¹¹⁹ Both men were also close friends with Francis Schaeffer, who, reflecting the political propensity of Reformed theology, was also moving into a politicized pro-life stance at the same time. By 1977, Koop was on the verge of becoming a household name for American evangelicals. In 1979, he and Schaeffer would publish *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* and a companion video series, which detailed the issues of abortion and euthanasia in graphic detail.¹²⁰ In 1982 the pediatric surgeon achieved even more prominence when Ronald Reagan appointed him Surgeon General, a post Koop held until 1989.¹²¹

In addition to special speakers and events, the CCS also hosted a regular program of courses taught by an array of local teachers. According to an early CCS brochure, “the intent of these courses is to offer interested Christians the chance to study their faith in a more disciplined and deeper way.”¹²² During the fall of 1976 options for these four and eight week courses included five Bible courses, which were taught by Steiner, recent UVa graduates Rob Gustafson and Dave Petty, and Brian Lewis, a former coordinator for the Virginia Coalition on Nutrition.¹²³ Richman offered “Learning Personal Evangelism,”

¹¹⁸ “The Staley Distinguished Christian Scholar Lecture Series,” October 1977, Jane Spencer Bopp, personal collection, Charlottesville, VA.

¹¹⁹ Wunderink, “Theologian Harold O. J. Brown Dies at 74.”

¹²⁰ Schaeffer and Koop, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*

¹²¹ As Surgeon General Koop pledged not to use his post for promoting anti-abortion causes. His years in the Reagan Administration were defined by the AIDS crisis. Koop’s handling of the crisis alienated him from many evangelicals. For more, see William C. Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996), 231, 238-257.

¹²² “Courses: The Center for Christian Study,” c. Fall 1976, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

¹²³ Both Robert Gustafson and his wife Beth were 1972 graduates of the University of Virginia. Following graduation Rob earned an MA at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. See, Daryl Richman to Friends of the Gustafsons, June 5, 1976. For a Bio of Robert Gustafson, see “Rob Gustafson: Lifelong Learner,” *RTS Reformed Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (Fall 1997), <http://rq.rts.edu/fall97/gustafson.html>.

and Virginia Apple, a member of the faculty at the University's school of nursing, taught "Do I Have to Be Me? A Study of Personal Growth and Self Acceptance." In what would stand for nearly a decade as the CCS's best-attended course, Don Lemons, an assistant dean at the University's Law School, blended self-help with Christian commitment in a course entitled "Managing Your Time—An Exercise in Stewardship."¹²⁴ These courses were affordable--\$3 plus books for the four-week course and \$5 plus books for the eight-week course—and were "open to anyone in the Charlottesville community."¹²⁵ These courses, along with the study center's other efforts (e.g., the development of a library and the organization of lecture series) supported the CCS's larger efforts "to give expression to the principle that academic objectivity is compatible with Christian belief and that Christian community is the appropriate setting for Christian scholarship."¹²⁶ Like L'Abri and Regent, the CCS was developing a learning *community* that sought to develop both the heart *and* the mind.

Even amid success, however, growth did not come devoid of growing pains. Although UCM was still squarely in the hands of Richman throughout the late 1970s, leadership at the study center fluctuated in the years following the purchase of the Chancellor Street residence. At the time of the purchase Steiner was raising his own support to minister alongside Richman. Additionally, another young couple, Rob and Beth Gustafson, both UVA graduates, had agreed to serve as resident directors of the new

¹²⁴ Lemon's course garnered an enrollment of 85. When CCS staff analyzed the success of the evening program in 1984 Lemon's course still held the mark for the highest attendance. The second most highly attended course at that point was the CCS's 1980 showing of the film *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, which had an enrollment of 73. For more on evening course enrollment, see Chris D. Stanley, "The Study Center Evening Program: Where Do We Go from Here?," November 30, 1984, Box, Old CCS Notes, pre-1987, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

¹²⁵ "Courses: The Center for Christian Study," c. Fall 1976.

¹²⁶ "The Center for Christian Study" (University Christian Ministries, c. Fall 1977), Box, Archives Programs, 1985-1989; Folder, Brochures, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

study center.¹²⁷ The apartment in the basement of the Chancellor Street house was designed for their use. Within a year, however, both Steiner and the Gustafsons had moved on to different ventures. For Steiner, the move was vocational, not geographical. After conferring with Houston and Schaeffer, he enrolled in the University of Virginia's Law School for the fall of 1977.¹²⁸ In a letter informing his friends, family, and financial supporters of his decision to attend law school, Steiner described the rationale for his decision at length. Noting that he was "leaving the Study Center at the end of its first phase—its establishment physically and organizationally," Steiner went on to state that he was "entrusting [the study center] to Janet Bash and Bob Cochran," a 1976 graduate of the Law School.¹²⁹ By this point Rob Gustafson had accepted a teaching job at Westminster, a prestigious preparatory school in Atlanta.¹³⁰ It would not be until 1978, when UCM board members hired David Turner from among their own ranks, that the Center for Christian Study would have a long-term director.

Like Steiner, Turner's personal story has ties to Action Ministries, Francis Schaeffer, and James Houston. As an undergraduate at the University of Virginia, Turner had begun to deepen his largely dormant faith in Christ after hearing Richman and Elzinga preach during the 1968-1969 school year.¹³¹ In the weeks following the sermon

¹²⁷ Richman to [friends of the Gustafsons], June 5, 1976, CCS archives, Box, "Archives Programs, 1985-1989," Folder "Fundraising Appeal Letters 1976-1986." Richman's letter was an appeal for the financial support of the Gustafsons. They needed to raise \$540 per month to serve at the study center.

¹²⁸ This was a move that Steiner had been considering since his days as an undergraduate. In a letter to friends he noted that during the summer of 1977 he and Barbara had visited Schaeffer at Swiss L'Abri. Steiner reported that "[The Schaeffers] are excited about what they hear about Charlottesville and reminded me once again of the tremendous potential the study center has." Steiner to Family and Friends, September 8, 1977, CCS archives, Box, "Archives Programs, 1985-1989," Folder "Fundraising Appeal Letters 1976-1986."

¹²⁹ Steiner to Family and Friends, September 8, 1977, CCS archives, Box, "Archives Programs, 1985-1989," Folder "Fundraising Appeal Letters 1976-1986."

¹³⁰ Turner, interview.

¹³¹ Turner was a member of St. Anthony's Hall. He was converted in part by Ken Elzinga's preaching during the professor's first foray into campus ministry. Elzinga recalls being very nervous to

Elzinga checked in on Turner and offered him one of Francis Schaeffer's first books. Upon receiving the book Turner realized that he knew its author. Turner's family was an influential part of the business and Christian community in Roanoke, Virginia. They were also close family friends with Jane Stuart Smith, the Roanoke-born opera-singer-turned-L'Abri-worker. As a result of the Turners' friendship with the Smith family, the Schaeffers' had sent their daughter, Debby, to live with the Turners for several years while she attended Hollins College (f. 1842) in Roanoke, Virginia.¹³² Until his conversation with Elzinga, Turner had had no idea that the Schaeffer family was famous.

In the fall of 1970, following his graduation from the University of Virginia, Turner and his wife Ellen spent time with Francis and Edith Schaeffer at L'Abri.¹³³ The experience was extremely significant for the newly married couple. Like so many others, the Turners found L'Abri to be "an extraordinary place" where one could pursue both intellectual and spiritual formation within Christian community.¹³⁴ Turner would later reflect, "it was at L'Abri, shortly after graduating from UVA, that I came out of the

speaking that night at St. Anthony's Hall. Not only did he feel uncomfortable in a fraternity house, he had never given a public talk on his faith before. His trepidation was only heightened when David Turner, one of the few men in the room he knew by name, walked out in the middle of his talk. What Elzinga did not know at the time, however, was that Turner left the room under deep conviction, not out of disgust. In the face of Elzinga's claim that he was not ashamed of the gospel, Turner was forced to wrestle with the fear that had kept him from claiming his faith publically. When Richman became aware of Turner's sense of conviction, he did all he could to draw Turner back to the faith. As Turner recalls, "Daryl would call me relentlessly, just trying to encourage me to reconnect with the Lord." (David Turner, *Interview with the Founders*).

¹³² Turner, interview, April 22, 2014; Joseph F. Ryan to Francis A. Schaeffer, April 14, 1982. Hollins College was founded in 1842 in Roanoke, Virginia as Valley Union Seminary. It was initially a co-educational institution, but in 1852 under the direction of Charles L. Cocke it became a school for women. See "History & Mission | Hollins University," *Hollins*, <https://www.hollins.edu/who-we-are/history/> (accessed April 20, 2016).

¹³³ Turner, interview.

¹³⁴ Turner, interview.

‘spiritual wastelands’ of my own life.”¹³⁵ By the end of his time in Europe Turner was convinced that he needed to attend seminary rather than business school as he had previously planned. On the advice of Os Guinness—and against the advice of Schaeffer, who recommended Covenant Theological Seminary—Turner decided to attend Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS) near Chicago.¹³⁶ At TEDS Turner energetically immersed himself in his studies, but did not develop a sense of call to traditional pastoral ministry. After earning an MDiv in the spring of 1974, he returned to Roanoke, Virginia to work as the treasurer for his family’s large construction company.

Through all of these transitions Turner kept in touch with Richman. Turner’s theological education, when combined with his business acumen and continuing interest in the work of Richman and Action Ministries at the University made him a natural fit for the newly formed University Christian Ministries board. When he was offered an invitation to join the UCM board shortly after the Center for Christian Studies was founded, Turner accepted. It would be during a routine UCM board meeting that Turner would be tapped to lead the CCS.¹³⁷

Following the brief tenure of Rob Gustafson, the UCM board was tasked with finding a new director. Turner was heavily involved in the process. As time passed and the board continued to make little progress, some board members began to think that Turner himself might be the best candidate for the job. During one meeting Skip Ryan, UCM board member and pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church, asked Turner to consider

¹³⁵ David Turner, “University Christian Ministries: Winter, 1983,” University Christian Ministries Newsletter (Winter 1983), Folder, Newsletter Blurbs, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

¹³⁶ Turner, interview. This was actually against Schaeffer’s advice. Schaeffer had recommended Covenant Theological Seminary and Westminster Theological Seminary. Both were schools with more separatist, fundamentalist heritages than TEDS.

¹³⁷ Turner, interview.

the position.¹³⁸ When Ryan suggested the move, Turner responded by asking for six months to consider what he should do. During this period Turner sought council from Regent College Principal Jim Houston¹³⁹

Turner had been introduced to Houston through Bob Cochran, who had met Houston through Steiner and his own involvement in the Washington D. C.-based Fellowship.¹⁴⁰ Cochran had supplied transitional leadership to the CCS in the year between the Gustafsons' departure and Turner's arrival before leaving Charlottesville to take a faculty position at Pepperdine's School of Law.¹⁴¹ Turner, being a theologically trained layperson, appreciated Houston's efforts to equip lay people for a range of secular but theologically informed vocations. Through several long conversations with Houston, Turner's sense of call to the study center was confirmed. In August of 1978, he and his family moved to Charlottesville, and he began serving as CCS Director, a position he maintained through 1985.¹⁴²

Turner's hiring marked a significant period of growth and maturation for the CCS. In part this was likely due to Turner's own life experience. Unlike earlier directors who came to the study center fresh out of the University or a one-year program at Regent College, Turner had been out of school long enough to acquire a three-year master's degree, experience in the business world, and family obligations. The Center for

¹³⁸ Turner, interview.

¹³⁹ Turner, interview. Turner was introduced to Houston by Bob Cochran. Houston spent a number of hours with Turner thinking through the possibility of Turner's involvement as the director of the study center.

¹⁴⁰ Jim Hiskey to James M. Houston, August 11, 1977, Box 3, Folder 6, James M. Houston Collection.

¹⁴¹ Ken Elzinga to Friends of the Study Center, November 7, 1983, Box, Archivees Programs, 1985-1989: Folder, Fundraising Appeal Letters, 1976-1986, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA. Cochran would go on to have a long and successful career at Pepperdine: "Faculty, Robert F. Cochran Jr.," *Pepperdine School of Law*, https://law.pepperdine.edu/faculty-research/faculty/?faculty=robert_cochran (accessed April 20, 2016).

¹⁴² Turner, interview.

Christian Study had grown up in these years, too. No longer a dream housed in a building with a month-to-month lease, the study center was beginning to become a well-known institution within the Charlottesville and University of Virginia communities. Steiner, Gustafson, and Cochran had started to generate the momentum, now Turner was in a position to transition the CCS from survival to a clear mission.

Under Turner, the daily operations of the study center moved in a Houstonian direction toward a greater emphasis on the theological education of the laity. During these years, the educational work of the study center revolved around an intensive one-year internship that emphasized, “structured Christian learning and discipleship surrounded by an atmosphere of Christian community.”¹⁴³ Though the internship program predated Turner, it was Turner who transformed this loosely defined program into something that maintained a personal feel while still adhering to a set schedule of study.¹⁴⁴ Under Turner the Intern Program blossomed and took a central role at the study center.

Turner saw the Intern Program as a means of lay theological education that was “more intense than one’s Sunday school program but more accessible than a full seminary course.”¹⁴⁵ Over the first six years of Turner’s tenure intern cohorts ranged

¹⁴³ “The Center for Christian Study,” c 1984, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

¹⁴⁴ During 1977 the CCS had kept three recent graduates on as interns. The three men lived on the second floor of the Chancellor Street house and were responsible for basic household chores as well as involvement in campus ministry with Richman and individualized Bible study and counseling. The first three interns were Mike Guthrie, Howie Griffith, and Doug Smith (Ken Elzinga to Christian Student, Spring 1976, Box, Archives Programs, 1985-1989: Folder, Fundraising Appeal Letters, 1976-1986, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA). See also Daryl Richman to Hovey Dabney, June 15, 1977, Box, Archives Programs, 1985-1989: Folder, Fundraising Appeal Letters, 1976-1986, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA. During the early years the CCS was a residential community. Interns lived on the second floor and the director lived in the basement apartment, see Daryl Richman to Scott Bauman, May 2, 1977, Box, Archives Programs, 1985-1989: Folder, Fundraising Appeal Letters, 1976-1986, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

¹⁴⁵ Joseph R. Ryan, Jr. to Friends of the Christian Study Center, October 5, 1984, Box, Archives Programs, 1985-1989: Folder, Fundraising Appeal Letters, 1976-1986, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

between six and fourteen people.¹⁴⁶ Unlike L'Abri, most participants in the program did not live at the study center. By and large, the vast majority of those who participated in the program already lived in Charlottesville and attended Trinity Presbyterian Church.¹⁴⁷ Usually classes of interns were comprised of fewer than ten individuals, but in some cases a cohort might be as large as fourteen.¹⁴⁸ Interns attended lectures between 9:00 am and 12:30 pm every Monday through Thursday. When not studying, each of these interns worked various part-time jobs in the community.¹⁴⁹ Like Regent College's program of study, Turner's Intern Program revolved around a fairly traditional course of seminary study aimed specifically at lay people. There were courses on the principles of biblical interpretation, surveys of the Old and New Testaments, apologetics and evangelism, church history, and practical Christian living.¹⁵⁰ Like L'Abri or Regent College, the CCS never conceived of its goals purely in intellectual terms. Rather, Turner and the CCS staff emphasized that along with this 'growth in knowledge' interns would also encounter "a corresponding stress on personal spiritual growth" as "participants are continually challenged to apply what they are learning to their own lives, that they might not only

¹⁴⁶ Joseph R. Ryan, Jr. to Friends of the Christian Study Center, October 5, 1984.

¹⁴⁷ Full records do not exist in the CCS archives for internship programs participants each year, but the records that do exist give an helpful overview of the demographic represented by the program. During the 1983-1984 school year there were thirteen interns. All but one of these interns had come to the program as either a recent University of Virginia graduate or a Charlottesville community member. The lone exception was Mellissa Lochner, the daughter of successful businessman and one-time CCS Board member, Preston Lochner. She came to the program after spending several years in Aspen, Colorado. Of the thirteen participants eleven were affiliated with Trinity Presbyterian Church, one was a member of the charismatic Oakleigh congregation, and one was a member of Charlottesville's First Methodist Church. A notable member of this cohort was the internationally known Jamaican Jazz pianist, Alexander Monty. See, "The Center for Christian Study: Interns, 1983-1984," c. Fall 1983, Box, Arihives--Programs, 1985-1989, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

¹⁴⁸ In 1980 Turner lists the names of six interns in the University Christian Ministries Newsletter. See Turner, "University Christian Ministries," personal collection of Jane Spencer Bopp (Fall 1980), 5.

¹⁴⁹ David Turner, "University Christian Ministries," Fall 1980, Jane Spencer Bopp, personal collection, Charlottesville, VA.

¹⁵⁰ Center for Christian Study, "The Intern Program of the Center for Christian Study," (1984), CCS Archives, Box, "Archives Programs, 1985-1989," Folder, "Correspondence."

think, but also live ‘Christianly’ on a daily basis.”¹⁵¹ Still, like almost every venture inspired by Schaeffer, Turner’s program failed to reproduce Schaeffer’s broad-ranging familiarity with topics like art history and philosophy. Instead, Turner and the CCS staff contented themselves with imitating some of Schaeffer’s method (e.g., community-based learning) and his general appreciation for the intellect.

During Turner’s tenure interns were seldom if ever current university students, though they were often recent graduates.¹⁵² Interns were usually working men and women who were looking for, what an early CCS brochure describes as, “a quality ‘lay’ educational program that will better equip them to serve Christ both in their vocations and in their home churches.”¹⁵³ On the whole, participants in the program were usually divided fairly evenly between men and women. Racially, most participants were white; however, there were some notable exceptions. The 1983-1984 cohort of thirteen included the internationally known Jamaican Jazz Pianist Alexander Monty (b. 1944).¹⁵⁴ In many cases the nature of the year-long program, which required one to step away from fulltime

¹⁵¹ “The Center for Christian Study,” c. 1984.

¹⁵² During much of the CCS’s first decade the internship program and the CCS’s large student ministry (e.g., the UVa Law Christian Fellowship, f. 1973; the Christian Medical Fellowship, f. 1976; and the undergrad Sorority/Fraternity Christian Fellowship, f. 1978) had very little overlap.

¹⁵³ “The Center for Christian Study,” c 1984.

¹⁵⁴ Jeff Zeldman, “Monty Alexander: New Looks at Old Standards,” *The Washington Post*, January 12, 1984, Box, Arihives--Programs, 1985-1989; Folder, Interns, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA; Michael Dolan, “The Piano’s Jazz Master of Mechanics,” *The Washington Times*, January 12, 1984, Box, Arihives--Programs, 1985-1989; Folder, Interns, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA; “The Center for Christian Study: Interns, 1983-1984.” Following his time in the Intern Program Alexander continued his illustrious career as a jazz musician. In 2005 he was named among the top five jazz pianists of all time in Hal Leonard’s *The Fifty Greatest Jazz Piano Players of All Time*, see Gene Rizzo, *The Fifty Greatest Jazz Piano Players of All Time: Ranking, Analysis & Photos* (Hal Leonard Corporation, 2005), 19-21. For a brief biography of Alexander, see “Monty Alexander Biography,” *MontyAlexander.com*, <http://montyalexander.com/bio.php> (accessed April 20, 2016).

employment, virtually necessitated that interns be people with either time or money (or both) to spare.¹⁵⁵

In addition to the Intern Program, the study center's educational programing also included evening courses and, beginning in 1983, a week-long Summer Program. Both of these efforts were designed primarily to cater to Charlottesville's evangelical community, though the Summer Program, with its condensed schedule and well-known cast of lecturers, did attract out-of-town students. The Charlottesville Summer Program was a less ambitious version of Regent's highly successful six-week Summer School. The CCS Summer Program intentionally followed Regent's lead by bringing "the leading figures in evangelical Christianity" like James Houston (1983, 1985, 1987), J. I. Packer (1983, 1989), Tom Skinner (1985), Bruce Waltke (1985), John Stott (1986), Os Guinness (1985), Ed Clowney (1985), R. C. Sproul (1987), Gordon Fee (1988), David Wells (1988), Richard Neuhaus (1989), Becky Pippert (1989), Philip Yancey (1990) and David Gill (1991) among others, to Charlottesville as lecturers.¹⁵⁶ The CCS Summer Program also followed Regent's lead by emphasizing home-based hospitality for the event.¹⁵⁷ Many local Christians opened up their homes for out of town guests, pool parties and

¹⁵⁵ Interns might range from recent University of Virginia graduates like Jennifer Aylestock who spent a year in the internship program between college and matriculation at Johns Hopkins Medical School and Bob Kachur, who had a year deferment from Harvard Law School and professionals like Mary Davisson, a British school teacher who spent a year at the CCS before returning to England to teach.¹⁵⁵ Sometimes couples like Doug and Joanne Wallace and John and Terri Weiser completed the program together. Both the Wallaces and the Weisers were in their thirties with young families when they decided to take a year off from the banking and finance industry to pursue theological education at the CCS. Joseph R. Ryan, Jr. to Friends of the Christian Study Center, October 5, 1984; "The Center for Christian Study: Interns, 1983-1984." In 1983 participants in the intern program included "the usual recent college graduates" and "a world renown jazz pianist" and "a medical doctor taking Biblical studies to prepare for a foreign mission assignment" (Ken Elzinga to Friends of the Study Center, November 7, 1983).

¹⁵⁶ A nearly complete inventory of Summer Program brochures can be found in the CCS archives: Box, "Archives—Programs, 1985-1989; Folder, "Brochures." For information on the later programs I am drawing on Drew Trotter's CCS newsletters. These can be found in Box, "Archives" in folders labeled with the year.

¹⁵⁷ "The Center for Christian Study," c. 1984.

cookouts.¹⁵⁸ The ties to Regent College were more than methodological. During its first year of operation the CCS's weeklong Summer Program hosted Regent professors and evangelical celebrities J. I. Packer and James Houston.¹⁵⁹

Thanks to the all-star line up of speakers (and in no small part to the efforts of Ryan, who sent the program's brochure to everyone on Trinity's mailing list), the program was a triumph for the CCS.¹⁶⁰ Over two hundred and fifty students enrolled in the initial Summer Program.¹⁶¹ In Elzinga's estimation the 1983 Summer Program "was a significant step for the Center," and he anticipated that the program would continue to succeed for years to come. For Elzinga, the CCS filled a void left when Cornerstone and the C. S. Lewis Institute moved away from its successful College Park Summer School in the late 1970s. "We are more and more persuaded," Elzinga noted, "that an event like this east of Vancouver, B. C. is much needed, to the end that we might carry out, in our own mode, what Regent College is doing so many miles west of us."¹⁶² Like both L'Abri and Regent College, the Charlottesville Summer Program also sought to tap into the evangelical penchant to combine leisure and Christian education that had defined the camp meeting and Bible conference circuit since the nineteenth century.¹⁶³ Sometimes the

¹⁵⁸ "University Christian Ministries: Spring/Summer 1983: Special Supplement, Summer Program 1983," Spring/Summer 1983, Folder, Newsletter Blurbs, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

¹⁵⁹ Ken Elzinga to Friends of the Study Center, November 7, 1983.

¹⁶⁰ Ryan noted that even though "as a general rule, we do not allow our mailing list to be used for any materials except those which we ourselves produce," he was making an exception in this case "because of the tremendous educational opportunities which this program offers for the entire Christian community" and "because of the special relationship we have with the Center" (Skip Ryan to Trinity Member or Friend, October 20, 1982).

¹⁶¹ Elzinga to Friends of the Study Center, November 7, 1983.

¹⁶² Elzinga to Friends of the Study Center, November 7, 1983.

¹⁶³ Perhaps the most famous of these conferences were the prophecy conferences that emerged in the late nineteenth century at places like the famous Niagara Bible Conference for prophetic study (f. 1876), D. L. Moody's Northfield conference, and the Winona Lake Bible Conference that flourished in the early twentieth century. As Marsden notes, "the extended summer Bible conference with a series of famous speakers as the main attraction" was "on of the principle means of evangelical expression" when Billy

link between leisure and learning was explicit. As one latter endorsement of the Summer Program noted, “I don’t know of a better way to combine good teaching, a relaxing atmosphere, a beautiful vacation spot and a wonderful opportunity to spend time with friends than our Summer Program.”¹⁶⁴ With the exception of the summer of 1984 (when no Summer Program was offered) the CCS Summer Program continued to function as a vital aspect of the study center’s ministry until 1991, when poor attendance, even with the program’s newly condensed evening and weekend format, seemed to show that the Charlottesville Summer Program had run its course.¹⁶⁵ The cessation of the program likely came as a result of many factors, not the least of which was that Charlottesville, for all its beauty, was hardly a vacation spot comparable to Vancouver or Huermoz.

Sunday made Winona Lake his home in 1911 (George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 46, 132-133. For a good treatment of the Bible conference movement, see Ernest Robert Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 132-161. For a recent treatment of the Winona conferences, see Terry D White and Stephen Grill, *Winona at 100: Third Wave Rising : The Remarkable History of Winona Lake, Indiana* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 2013). In Wesleyan circles “camp meetings” had served a similar function since at least the early nineteenth century. For examples of this combination of leisure and learning, see Paul Keith Conkin, *Cane Ridge, America’s Pentecost* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 86-87; John H. Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 185; Terry M. Heisey et al., *Evangelical from the Beginning: A History of the Evangelical Congregational Church and Its Predecessors -- the Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical Church* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2006), 67-69, 132-133, 201-202, 316-317. The impulse to combine leisure and education was not limited to Christian groups. The highly successful summer Chautauqua Institute in New York provides one notable example, see Theodore Morrison, *Chautauqua: A Center for Education, Religion, and the Arts in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); Jeffrey Simpson, *Chautauqua: An American Utopia* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999).

¹⁶⁴ Drew Trotter to Friends, “April, 1990,” April 1990, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1990, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

¹⁶⁵ Trotter, interview, April 6, 2016. The final Summer Program hosted David Gill, formerly president of New College Berkeley and co-editor of the Christian World Liberation Front’s *Right On*. In his February 1991 newsletter, then CCS director Drew Trotter noted “This year’s Summer Program will run from Thursday night until Saturday at noon. This will provide opportunity for people to come who have not been able to in past years because of work commitments” (Drew Trotter to Friends, “February, 1991,” February 1991, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1991, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

When the CCS launched its Summer Program in 1983, the study center's longstanding Evening Program was already on the decline. This was a significant change at the CCS. Like the Intern Program, the CCS's Evening Program was initially a large and successful part of the study center's ministry. In many cases Turner and the CCS staff taught variations of the Intern Program courses related to the Bible for a different group of students in the evening. Sometimes evening courses ranged beyond standard Bible studies. In the fall of 1980 the CCS offered showings of the anti-abortion film series *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* produced by Franky Schaeffer and based on Francis Schaeffer and C. Everett Koop's book by the same title. Because attendance at these showings was greater than the Chancellor Street house could accommodate, the CCS requested, and was granted, permission to show the films at nearby St. Paul's Memorial Episcopal Church and The Baptist Student Center.¹⁶⁶ Turner coordinated a panel of local experts to comment on the video after each showing. This panel included lawyers (Bob Cochran and Barbara Ryan), doctors (Steve Meixel and Ed Rose), and Trinity pastor, Skip Ryan.¹⁶⁷ In the fall of 1982 Ryan and Trinity Presbyterian Church would again team up with the CCS for a Francis Schaeffer film series, "Reclaiming the World" followed by a visit by the Swiss guru himself.¹⁶⁸

Over time, however, the success of the CCS's Evening Program began to wane. By 1984 Turner and his staff were forced to seriously reconsider their efforts. From the launch of the Evening Program in the spring of 1977 through the spring of 1981 an average of eighty students attended evening courses each semester. Then, in the fall of

¹⁶⁶ David Turner, "University Christian Ministries."

¹⁶⁷ Turner, "University Christian Ministries."

¹⁶⁸ This film attracted the third highest enrollment in a CCS evening course during Turner's time at the CCS, see Chris D. Stanley, "The Study Center Evening Program: Where Do We Go from Here?"

1981, enrollment started to fall. Between the spring of 1981 and the fall of 1984 the average total evening program enrollment dropped to forty-two students per semester.¹⁶⁹ In a CCS report addressing the issue, Evening Program Director, Chris Stanley, hired in early 1983 after his graduation from Regent College (MCS), pondered the future of the program at length.¹⁷⁰ “It goes without saying,” Stanley claimed, “that our Evening Program is not in the best of health...it is difficult to see how the program can continue in its present form with the current level of attendance.”¹⁷¹ Stanley pointed to several possible reasons for the decline in numbers. In several cases publicity had been late or courses had changed at the last moment. Sometimes instructors were not able to present the material in an engaging way.

Surprisingly, however, Stanley found that the primary reasons for decline stemmed in large part from the growth of vibrant evangelical ministry options in Charlottesville—a trend the work of Richman and University Christian Ministries had helped to catalyze. Stanley pointed out that “the students of today have a much broader range of options for Christian education around the University than they did even a few years ago.” In the wake of flourishing student ministries, “most students already have all the Christian growth opportunities that their schedules (and their appetites?) can handle.”¹⁷² Students were not the only Christians in Charlottesville with a host of new evangelical options. Surveying the drop off in adult attendance, Stanley noted “many of the more ‘evangelical’ churches in town have taken steps in recent years to better provide

¹⁶⁹ Chris Stanley, “The Study Center Evening Program: Where Do We Go from Here?” (November 30, 1984), CCS archives, Box, “Old CCS Notes, Pre 1987,” Folder, N.A.

¹⁷⁰ “The Center for Christian Study,” c. 1984.

¹⁷¹ Stanley, “The Study Center Evening Program: Where Do We Go from Here?” (November 30, 1984), CCS archives, Box, “Old CCS Notes, Pre 1987,” Folder, N.A.

¹⁷² Stanley, “The Study Center Evening Program: Where Do We Go from Here?” (November 30, 1984), CCS archives, Box, “Old CCS Notes, Pre 1987,” Folder, N.A.

for the educational needs of their people. In particular, both Trinity and Oakleigh, major sources of students in past years, now have their own adult education programs.”¹⁷³

Ironically, it now seemed that Trinity’s success was hurting the CCS.

In response to these trends, Stanley included a final section of his paper entitled “What to Do?” In his opinion there were four possible paths forward. One path involved canceling “all lay education programs directed toward the community” focusing instead “on student ministry, the Intern Program, and the Summer Program.” The other three options involved tweaking the existing program in the hope that the Evening Program in some version of its current form could be salvaged.

The Study Center’s Uncertain Future, 1985-1986

Though Stanley cast his hope in the direction of the final three suggestions, reality voted in favor of the first approach. By 1985 not only was attendance and enthusiasm for the CCS’s Evening Program flagging, UCM was struggling simply to pay the bills.

Writing in July of 1984 Turner informed supporters of the CCS that the study center’s finances were “critical.” “We are operating with a monthly deficit of approximately \$2,000,” and the study center had closed out its fiscal year on June 31, 1984 “over \$12,000 in debt.”¹⁷⁴ Turner and other staff members had seen this financial crisis coming. As early as January 1985 they had already been planning to cut costs by trimming the staff (i.e., Stanley) at the end of June. For Turner it was time to not only evaluate the

¹⁷³ Stanley, “The Study Center Evening Program: Where Do We Go from Here?” (November 30, 1984), CCS archives, Box, “Old CCS Notes, Pre 1987,” Folder, N.A.

¹⁷⁴ David Turner to Friends of the Center, July 12, 1984, Folder, Newsletters, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

CCS's programing, but also to consider whether his employment at the study center—or even the educational mission of the center—was viable.

In a May letter to the UCM Board Turner described the previous year's Intern Program as "disheartening." "Students in general seem to be less interested in issues that one might describe as developing a Christian world-life view," Turner noted. With the corresponding decline in the Evening Program and the drying up of UCM funds Turner felt that perhaps "ministry in the eighties" required "new wineskins." Some of this change was personal. Turner was seriously considering returning to his family's construction business.¹⁷⁵ Other changes involved the ministry of the CCS. Noting that "the educational dimensions" of the study center "does not seem to be growing" Turner recommended that the Board return the ministry to the emphasis on evangelism and discipleship that had defined Richman's original ministry. He posited two ideas for the future of UCM. First, he recommended that the ministry should end the Intern Program and "find a new director whose strengths would be outreach and discipleship." His second recommendation, likely a response to UCM's desperate financial situation, was to "link the Study Center to Trinity Church," thus sharing staff and costs.¹⁷⁶

In the face of financial pressure, a seeming lack of community interest, and without a director, the UCM board gave serious consideration to Turner's suggested revision of the CCS's mission. Notably, this proposed shift in focus came at nearly the same time that other second-generation study centers like the C. S. Lewis Institute and the Ligonier Valley Study Center were also shifting their focus away from the study

¹⁷⁵ Turner planned to stay in Charlottesville and thereby "maintain limited involvement with the Study Center ministry" even as he returned to the construction business (David Turner to Friends, November 18, 1985, Folder, Newsletters, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA).

¹⁷⁶ This paragraph is entirely drawn from David Turner to Fellow Board Members, May 17, 1985, Board Minutes, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

center models of Schaeffer and Houston as they too adjusted to a changing culture and new financial realities. Although the CCS had existed since 1975 with the dual focus on campus ministry and Christian education, by the fall of 1985 the Board was prepared to follow Turner's suggestions and drop the study center's educational emphasis in favor of a campus-ministry focus. As Turner noted in one of his last CCS letters, the board was "increasingly...sensing the need to expand the evangelistic outreach and de-emphasize the educational programs."¹⁷⁷ In order to do this the Board opted not to immediately replace Turner, but rather to hand the responsibility for the Chancellor Street house over to Elizabeth Brown, formerly Turner's administrative assistant. Brown had been involved in UCM's thriving Fraternity-Sorority Fellowship since she was hired in the summer of 1983. Under Brown's leadership the Chancellor Street house functioned as a center for Christian outreach, including UCM's multiple graduate ministries and the undergrad Fraternity-Sorority Fellowship. The Board also decided to keep the successful Summer Program. All regular educational programming, however, was discontinued, and giving to the center decreased substantially.¹⁷⁸ It appeared that the Chancellor Street house's identity as a study center had come to an end.

¹⁷⁷ David Turner to Friends, November 18, 1985, Folder, Newsletters, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

¹⁷⁸ Turner to Friends, November 18, 1985.

PART III

**The Third Generation:
New Models, Enduring Partnerships**

Chapter 7

Building a New Model: Drew Trotter, the Center for Christian Study, and the Consortium of Christian Study Centers

In 1986 Drew Trotter (b. 1950) received a letter that would change his life. As an ordained minister in the PCA, Trotter was one of hundreds of PCA ministers to receive a form letter in the spring of 1986 from Joseph “Skip” Ryan, pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville, Virginia and a board member of the Center for Christian Study (CCS). Since 1975 the CCS, which was located just off the Grounds of the University of Virginia, had attempted to nurture the minds and the hearts of students and Charlottesville community members through a range of educational programming including an Intern Program, evening courses, and a week-long Summer Program in addition to several Bible studies for graduate and undergraduate students. Ryan’s letter, written on behalf of the CCS, advertised the study center’s upcoming Summer Program as a educational opportunity for both clergy and their parishioners.¹ For Trotter, the letter both inspired nostalgia and piqued his curiosity. Trotter was himself interested in study centers, and Ryan was an old acquaintance whom Trotter had met through mutual friends from the University of Virginia. In short order Trotter drafted a personal response to reestablish contact with Ryan and gain an up-to-date understanding of what was happening at the Charlottesville study center.²

¹ The actual 1986 letter does not remain, but a similar letter from 1987 is extant, see Joseph F. Ryan and PCA Ministers, March 27, 1987. It is notable that this letter is written on Trinity letterhead, not on the letterhead of University Christian Ministries.

² This is all based on an interview with Trotter conducted on April 6, 2016.

Trotter's quick response was inspired by his own experiences at the University of Virginia. As a student at the University (1968-1972) Trotter had been a leader in Richman and Elzinga's Action Ministries—the para-church ministry that birthed the CCS—and was familiar with the later development of the study center and many of those who came to occupy prominent roles in its ministry. Over the years, however, he had lost track of many of these relationships in the midst of raising a young family and pursuing his own academic and ministry career.³

Following his graduation from the University of Virginia in 1972, Trotter had first gone on to study for an MDiv at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary before spending three years as a Bible teacher and chaplain at the Westminster Schools, one of Atlanta's most elite preparatory schools.⁴ Throughout all this time Trotter desired to take up academics at the highest level. In 1979 he was able to do just that when he and his family moved to England where he began studying for a PhD in New Testament Studies at Cambridge University under the direction of Morna Hooker (b. 1931), the Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity.

During his first year in England Trotter followed up on a connection he made during a 1973 summer internship with the up-and-coming British-American pastor, Stuart Briscoe (b. 1930). In a sixteen-page letter to Briscoe, Trotter outlined a vision for a study center at Elmbrook Church, Briscoe's independent Milwaukee mega-church. Briscoe liked what he read and asked Trotter to move to Milwaukee to head up the venture. Following the completion of his coursework at Cambridge, Trotter did just that.

³ The biographical details of Trotter's life between his graduation from UVa and his hiring at the CCS are drawn almost exclusively from interviews with the author in 2014 and 2016.

⁴ For more on the history of the Westminster Schools, see "Our Story," *The Westminster Schools*, <https://www.westminster.net/history> (accessed April 25, 2016).

Beginning in 1981, Trotter, assisted by a staff of four or five other evangelicals who had already earned or were in the process of earning PhDs, built a program from scratch and developed his ability to teach courses in a variety of fields, from biblical studies and theology to ethics and church history.⁵ The program thrived and soon established a connection with Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS). This partnership allowed students to complete courses at Elmbrook study center for seminary credit.⁶

Thanks to his experience at the Elmbrook study center and his wider educational experiences Trotter knew a thing or two about running a successful study center when Ryan's 1986 letter reached him. What he did not realize at that time, however, was how ready he was to move on to a different venture. This realization only came a few weeks later when he received a second letter from Ryan. In his reply Ryan mentioned that the Charlottesville study center had been without a director since David Turner had stepped down in the summer of 1985. Ryan wondered if Trotter would be interested in filling the position. Trotter instantly knew the answer.⁷ By the next November he was in Charlottesville for an interview. After a few weeks of deliberation Trotter was hired as Director of the CCS.⁸

⁵ The Elmbrook Study Center is still active today: "Study Center," *Elmbrook Church*, <http://www.elmbrook.org/what-we-do/study-center/> (accessed April 11, 2016).

⁶ The Elmbrook Study Center maintains a connection with TEDS to this day.

⁷ Trotter, interview, April 6, 2016.

⁸ The decision took time because not everyone on the CCS staff and Board were united behind Trotter. Elizabeth Brown, who had served as David Turner's administrative assistant before assuming leadership of the CCS following Turner's resignation, was staunchly opposed to Trotter's hiring. This seems to have been primarily a personality conflict, though it is likely that Brown, who emphasized with Turner an evangelistic turn in the CCS's ministry may have also been opposed to Trotter's educational emphasis. See Trotter, interview, March 6, 2014 and David Turner to Friends, November 18, 1985, Folder, Newsletters, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA; David Turner to Fellow Board Members, May 17, 1985. Brown and her part-time administrative assistant Laura Scully both resigned in the early fall of 1987, see Drew Trotter, "CCS Newsletter: October, 1987," October 1987, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1987, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

Trotter officially joined the CCS on April 1, 1987. Over the course of what would be a nearly twenty-two year tenure at the study center, Trotter consistently worked to solidify the CCS's original dual-emphasis on discipleship training and theological education for the laity. Not surprisingly, Trotter's greatest programmatic expansion came in the area of the study center's educational ministries. Not content to follow the path away from educational ministry that Turner and the CCS Board began to chart in 1985, Trotter sought to reintroduce and revamp old CCS standbys like the Intern Program and evening courses with a program he called the "Diploma in Christian Studies." He also introduced a "Seminary in the Summer" program, which gave students the opportunity to earn seminary credit through TEDS (and later Westminster Theological Seminary and then Reformed Theological Seminary in Washington, D. C.) during a condensed two-week course at the CCS.

Expansion during Trotter's tenure at the CCS was not limited to programs, however. In the mid-1990s Trotter also spearheaded a \$900,000 expansion of the CCS's building that more than doubled available meeting space in the Chancellor Street house. He also helped raise the CCS's operating budget from approximately \$27,000 in 1986 to over \$900,000 during his last year at the study center.⁹ All of these activities helped to solidify the study center's institutional identity while also raising the prominence of the CCS. By the first decade of the twenty-first century, the Charlottesville CCS had emerged as one of the foremost models of a university-based study center, and Trotter had moved on to a position of national influence within a study center movement that—in

⁹ Trotter, interview, April 6, 2016; Shelly Pellish, "Fundraising Update" 13, no. 2 (Summer 2009).

part because of the work of the Charlottesville study center—was experiencing a fresh wave of interest and growth.

Expanding the CCS's Educational Goals

When he arrived at the CCS in April of 1987 Trotter inherited a set of CCS programs that consisted of several graduate Christian fellowships and the undergraduate Fraternity-Sorority Fellowship that had grown out of the work of Richman and Elzinga and was currently being led by Brown. Turner's Intern Program and evening courses at the study center had both ended in 1985. The only explicitly educational program still hosted by CCS in 1987 was the Summer Program, which Brown and the CCS Board had continued to organize even in Turner's absence. Thus when Trotter arrived in the spring of 1987 he also inherited a fully planned 1987 Summer Program, featuring the famous missionary Elisabeth Eliot, R. C. Sproul of Ligonier Ministries, and James Houston of Regent College in Vancouver.

This was the third time in the Summer Program's five-year history that Houston, the founding principal of Regent College and his era's most prominent evangelical advocate of lay theological education, was scheduled to speak at the event.¹⁰ Houston's frequent presence symbolized the many connections between Regent and the CCS. These were not lost on Trotter.¹¹ From the start Trotter emphasized the study center's shared

¹⁰ The Summer Program began in 1983 but courses were not offered in 1984, so the Summer Program of 1987 was the fifth. Houston spoke at the Charlottesville Summer Program in 1983, 1985, and 1987.

¹¹ Trotter was connected to Regent College even on a personal level. After teaching at Covenant Theological Seminary for many years his brother-in-law, Phil Long (PhD, Cambridge), was hired to teach Old Testament at Regent in 2000. Two years later Trotter's sister began teaching on a part time basis at Regent.

origins in both Schaeffer's L'Abri and Houston's Regent College.¹² Trotter had spent time at L'Abri during his college years, so he knew that Schaeffer's Swiss retreat offered a model for the reasoned evangelism and hospitality that to some extent characterized the study center's undergraduate and graduate ministries. It was Regent College, however, that offered Trotter a model for a formal educational program that combined an emphasis on lay theological education with a desire to be a Christian presence on the campus of a secular university.

In no small part Trotter's appreciation for Regent stood behind his decision shortly after his arrival at the study center to revamp Turner's defunct Intern Program as a more academically rigorous "Diploma in Christian Studies" program.¹³ From its name—the exact name of Regent's original one-year academic program—to its methodology, the CCS's Diploma program owed much to its Canadian predecessor. At the center of this instruction was an emphasis on the theological education of the laity. Trotter observed that even at a national level there were, "few programs that are geared specifically toward teaching lay people in their language and seeking to meet their need to develop a Christian mind; this is virtually the *raison d'être* of the Diploma program."¹⁴

Trotter also planned to include events that would give his Diploma Program a more L'Abri-esque ethos by seeking to combine classroom learning with outside activities ranging from local service projects to a "Fridays in Washington" program, which included trips to museums and Capitol Hill, in order to "develop each other

¹² In a 2014 conversation Trotter noted, "The study center became a cross between L'Abri and Regent College...That's something I've said a million times between 1987 and now," see Trotter, interview, March 6, 2014.

¹³ The use of the word "Diploma" is perhaps not solely attributable to Regent's influence. Like Houston, Trotter spent time in England and came to appreciate the British idea of a "Diploma" as opposed to the more American terminology of "Certificate" (Trotter, interview, April 6, 2016).

¹⁴ Trotter, "CCS Newsletter: December, 1987."

spiritually, physically, emotionally and intellectually.”¹⁵ Thus like Turner’s program before it and other study centers deeply inspired by L’Abri and Reformed theology (e.g., the Ligonier Valley Study Center), Trotter planned for learning to take place on a holistic dimension that involved the head, heart, and hands.

One of the things that set Trotter’s program apart from both L’Abri and Turner’s earlier Intern Program was the fact that Trotter, unlike either Turner or Schaeffer, possessed an earned doctorate. In September of 1987, nearly a decade after beginning doctoral studies at Cambridge University in the fall of 1978, Trotter was granted a PhD in New Testament Studies for a dissertation entitled, “Understanding and Stumbling: A Study of the Disciples’ Understanding of Jesus and His Teaching in the Gospel of Matthew.”¹⁶ As Trotter informed the readers of his newsletter, his degree had the potential to open “some exciting doors” at the study center, because “we can now offer graduate credit for the courses we will teach.”¹⁷ By December of 1987 Trotter had made arrangements with TEDS to partner with the CCS by sending professors to teach courses at the center and by accepting credit for the courses Trotter taught.¹⁸ Like Regent, the CCS was moving into the formal graduate instruction of lay people while maintaining an emphasis on personal contact, something Trotter ensured his readers would continue

¹⁵ Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: March 1993,” March 1993, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1993, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

¹⁶ On the dating of his being awarded the degree, see Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: October, 1987.” Trotter’s dissertation was titled, A. H. Trotter, “Understanding and Stumbling: A Study of the Disciples’ Understanding of Jesus and His Teaching in the Gospel of Matthew” (PhD Diss., University of Cambridge (United Kingdom), 1986), <http://search.proquest.com/pqdtglobal/docview/1774248880/F0D08B6D0F4D473FPQ/1> (accessed May 13, 2016).

¹⁷ Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: October, 1987.”

¹⁸ Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: December, 1987,” December 1987, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1987, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA. By 1989 Trinity was offering credit courses at seventeen extension centers. Ten of these were outside the United States. Two of the remaining seven included the Elmbrook Study Center and the CCS. See, “Trinity Evangelical Divinity School: ATS Report,” 1989, TEDS General Information, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

because the study center's new program would keep "the tutorial as a staple of its instruction."¹⁹

When the program officially began in the fall of 1988, Trotter was optimistic. Six students had registered for full-time study, four were taking courses for credit, and approximately twenty-five others were auditing the course. The numbers nearly mirrored Regent's first year of fulltime courses. Trotter was encouraged that the group contained "people who are just shortly out of college and some who are over fifty. There are males and females, blacks and whites, people who look to be in business, medicine, academics, ministry."²⁰ The program's first weekend seminar kicked off with an address by theologian and former *Christianity Today* editor in chief, Carl F. H. Henry, who spoke on the history and future of evangelicalism in the United States.²¹ The formula seemed right for success.

Yet for all its promise Trotter's Diploma program never really took off. Like most other evangelical efforts to train lay people after the mid-1970s, Trotter found that there were few people who were willing to take a year off for a Diploma program. In July of 1989 three of the original four Diploma students graduated.²² Unlike Regent, which had seen the number of fulltime students shoot up from four to forty-four during its second year, by September of 1992 Trotter's program only had six full-time students.²³

Trotter was still committed to the program, however, and was convinced that it could continue to expand as the key focus of the CCS's ministry to students and

¹⁹ Drew Trotter, "CCS Newsletter: December, 1987."

²⁰ Drew Trotter, "CCS Newsletter: October 1988," October 1988, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1988, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

²¹ Trotter, "CCS Newsletter: October 1988."

²² Drew Trotter, "CCS Newsletter: July 1989," July 1989, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1989, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

²³ Drew Trotter, "CCS Newsletter: September 1992," September 1992, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1992, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

laypeople. In June of 1993 Trotter informed his readers that the Diploma program, which “had never been full before” now had a waiting list. By the next fall Trotter was writing to supporters of the study center regarding what he described as “an exciting new direction we believe Divine providence is leading us in regard to the *Diploma in Christian Studies* program.”²⁴ Describing the Diploma program as “a very important part of the answer to the problem of lay theological education in America today,” Trotter outlined an ambitious plan. Noting that “over half of our graduates over the last six years have no degree from UVa, i.e. are coming to us *not* because they have been students here, we believe there is a market out there for the 30-40 students we would eventually like to have in the program.”²⁵ Such a shift meant that Trotter would have to spend more time traveling and recruiting students. He also planned to “hire the faculty necessary for us to retain the small group focus of our program.”²⁶ In order to meet the second of these needs Trotter entered into conversation with Jeffrey Greenman, a PhD candidate in Religious Studies at the University of Virginia who had earned an MDiv at Regent College. The young scholar had taught a class on the Old Testament in the fall, was currently teaching a class on the New Testament for spring semester, and, Trotter wrote in his August 1994 newsletter, “will, God willing, be joining us this coming fall as a second teacher in the *Diploma* program.”²⁷

This was the highpoint of Trotter’s hopes for a year-long Diploma in Christian Studies program based on the Regent model. In spite of his optimism during the fall of 1994 and early spring of 1995 the Diploma program never attracted the 30-40 students

²⁴ Emphasis original. Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: August 1994,” August 1994, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1994, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

²⁵ Emphasis original. Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: August 1994.”

²⁶ Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: August 1994.”

²⁷ Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: August 1994.”

Trotter had hoped, and Greenman, whom Trotter had predicted would stay on to teach in the fall of 1995, opted not to join the CCS staff. Instead, he launched into a successful academic and administrative career that in the fall of 2015 saw him come full-circle to serve as the fifth president of Regent College.²⁸ In the end, Trotter and the CCS Board determined that the program was not a good use of the study center's resources.²⁹ By May of 1997 Trotter's take on the Diploma program had changed, and he reported to readers of his newsletter on the "the scaling down and re-thinking" of the Diploma program.³⁰

Like the study center's Summer Program, which gradually lost momentum before its final year in 1991, the Diploma in Christian Studies program like other efforts in lay education at places like the Ligonier Valley Study Center and New College Berkeley ran headlong into a changing evangelical and American culture. Unlike the early 1970s when places like L'Abri and Regent thrived, American evangelicals in the 1980s and 1990s were less willing to take time off from their careers and their lives to spend a year studying for a Diploma, which was not even a formal academic degree. In addition to its Canadian location, which offered less competition in the area of evangelical graduate education, Regent College survived these cultural shifts reasonably well because it had the benefit of a head start during the prime years of the evangelical counterculture and while baby boomers were toppling previous enrollment norms in higher education. On top of this, the Vancouver college offered accredited academic and professional degrees. As noted above, by the 1980s and early 1990s American students were often interested

²⁸ "A Historic Moment: The Installation of Jeffery P. Greenman As President," *Regent College*, November 2, 2015, <http://www.regent-college.edu/about-us/news/2015/a-historic-moment-the-installation-of-jeffrey-p-greenman-as-regents-fifth-president>.

²⁹ Trotter, interview, April 6, 2016.

³⁰ Drew Trotter, "CCS Newsletter: May 1997," Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1997, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

more in the financial payoff of a degree than in the experience and content of learning.³¹ Both Turner's Intern Program and Trotter's Diploma in Christian Studies program had come onto the scene after this shift and had failed to secure high enough enrollment or financial vitality. Thus, even in places like Charlottesville, where the evangelical community valued education and had a relatively high level of affluence, the 1980s and 1990s were difficult decades for long-term lay education programs, which by their nature were often without ties to denominational finances and did not have ready-made pools of students who needed theological education for their clerical careers.

In the face of these changes all but the most well-established institutions of lay education had to curtail or completely eliminate long, celebrity-driven Summer Programs and year-long Diploma programs in favor of a variety of educational programs that either 1) offered seminary credit, 2) were based on one-time lectures and weekend conferences, or 3) tapped into an already present audience (e.g., college students, listeners and viewers at home). The CCS adapted to this new reality late, but under Trotter it did eventually adapt. In the process Trotter and his staff developed an educational approach that was more sustainable than anything the study center had previously tried.

A small but enduring effort that the study center launched during Trotter's tenure was the Seminary in the Summer program. Like the Diploma program, Seminary in the Summer offered students the chance to earn seminary credit for courses taught by Trotter and visiting scholars at the study center. The difference was that the Seminary in the Summer courses were condensed into two-week or week-long intervals. Over time, this program, in various versions, outlasted both the Diploma program and the Summer

³¹ For shifts in student motivation during these decades, see Eric L. Dey, Alexander W. Astin, and William S. Korn, *The American Freshman: Twenty-Five-Year Trends* (Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, Graduate School of Education UCLA, 1991).

Program. Campus ministers from groups like Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship found the timing, length, and for-credit nature of the program especially helpful.³² Over the years the CCS would switch its partnering institution, moving from TEDS to Westminster Theological Seminary and eventually on to Reformed Theological Seminary's Washington D. C. campus. Notably, each alignment took the CCS in a more Reformed direction. Furthermore, given Reformed Theological Seminary's close ties with the PCA, the connection only served to strengthen the CCS's already strong connection with the conservative denomination.³³

Even as the CCS moved away from extensive Summer Programs and the Diploma program Trotter continued to emphasize the importance of study at the *study* center. One way in which he did this was to turn the CCS's educational opportunities increasingly in the direction of courses offered on a no-credit basis. Such courses had been a part of the CCS's original programing in the decade before David Turner's resignation; however, they ended with Turner's tenure. Trotter revived them, and even in the midst of the Diploma program's most demanding years he conducted open lecture series, one-off talks, and at times worked with departments at the University of Virginia to co-sponsor lectures such as the two lectures by novelist Fredrick Buechner in March of 1992.³⁴ In 1997 the CCS began offering what Trotter called the "long course" and "short course"

³² On at least one occasion IVCF worked with the CCS to find housing to accommodate students. In the summer of 1989 IVCF arranged housing for the entirety of the two-week programs at a local fraternity house. See "Center for Christian Study: Seminary in the Summer" (Center for Christian Study, 1989), Folder, Summer Term Registration, 89, 90, 91, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

³³ As late as 2006 the Seminary in the Summer program was still in existence, and Bill Wilder, the CCS's director of educational ministries, was doing much of the teaching, see "Seminary in the Summer," *Praxis* 10, no. 2 (Summer 2006).

³⁴ Drew Trotter, "CCS Newsletter: August 1991," August 1991, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1991, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA; Drew Trotter, "CCS Newsletter: March 1992," March 1992, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1992, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

options as part of a revamped Diploma program.³⁵ In reality this new structure was the beginning of a shift in the CCS's regular educational ministry. Experimenting with a condensed pace that Trotter hoped would meet "the needs of those who cannot take a whole week off (or more) to do this sort of study pace," each "long course" was slated to run for three and a half hours on Monday through Thursday and culminate in all day sessions Friday and Saturday. There was a change, however, that went deeper than a condensed schedule. Although, as Trotter noted, the CCS had "encouraged people to take the long courses for credit, and credit is still available for some of the courses," he now expressed a desire to see a greater number of auditors even within these longer courses. "We would like to urge you, if you have an interest in learning about these subjects (and what serious Christian doesn't?!), please consider simply auditing one of the courses for the joy of learning more about God's Word." Unlike these long courses, the CCS's short courses, which consisted of "discussions lasting an hour and a half," would not be offered for credit.³⁶

By the late 1990s few of the CCS's not-for-credit discussion groups were as popular as Trotter's "Third Fridays" program, a monthly movie discussion that started in the fall of 1996.³⁷ For Trotter, the goal was to get people to "think Christianly about movies," a media form he described as "one of the great cultural barometers of our

³⁵ This would be one of the last times Trotter used the terminology "Diploma program." By this point the Diploma program had not graduated any students since 1995. See Trotter, interview, April 6, 2016.

³⁶ For Trotter's discussion of long and short courses, see Drew Trotter, "CCS Newsletter: June 1997," June 1997, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1997, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

³⁷ Writing in the winter of 1997 Trotter reflected on his interest in movies; "I have written and spoken extensively on film for years now, and seen come into the realm of serious Christian calling what was once simply a hobby of mine." See Drew Trotter, "From the Executive Director," *Praxis* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1997).

times.”³⁸ Trotter’s interest in movies as an art form and cultural commentary spanned the length of his tenure at the CCS and is perhaps traceable to the influence of Francis Schaeffer, who delighted in analyzing films with evangelical young people who had been told their entire lives to avoid the perils of Hollywood. Other Schaeffer-inspired evangelicals like Sharon Gallagher of *Radix* magazine had cultivated similar interests in film criticism following extended interactions with the Swiss-based guru. Trotter had lectured on movies at the CCS since at least February of 1991 when he and fellow Charlottesville resident, Ken Myers, author of *All God’s Children and Blue Suede Shoes: Christians and Popular Culture* (1989) and later founder of *Mars Hill Audio*, teamed up to present a weekend seminar entitled, “Show and Tell: Movies and Television in Contemporary America.”³⁹ From this point on Trotter’s emphasis on helping Christians engage with film grew steadily. By the early 2000s references to films and film reviews became standard features in his quarterly “From the President” column in the CCS’s journal *Praxis* (f. 1997).⁴⁰

Trotter’s emphasis on engaging film as a medium represented the ethos that he was trying bring to the ministry of the CCS. Trotter hoped that those who passed through the doors of the Chancellor Street house might be better prepared to “think Christianly” about all areas of life, learning, and culture, not just the explicitly religious ones. Like

³⁸ Trotter, “From the Executive Director.”

³⁹ Ken Myers, *All God’s Children and Blue Suede Shoes: Christians & Popular Culture* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989); Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: November 1990,” November 1990, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1990, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

⁴⁰ Trotter’s title changed from “Executive Director” to “President” in the fall of 2001. For examples of Trotter’s references to film in relation to 9/11, see Drew Trotter, “From the President: Culture Dissolved,” *Praxis* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2002). For other examples, see Drew Trotter, “Movies Tell Us About Ourselves,” *Praxis* 7, no. 2 (Summer 2003); Drew Trotter, “Lions and Witches and Myths, Oh My!,” *Praxis* 10, no. 1 (Spring 2006). Trotter also planned to write a book on movie viewing entitled *Show and Tell: How to View a Movie Responsibly*, but he never published it, see Drew Trotter, “An Open Letter to Our Friends” 12, no. 3 (Fall 2008).

Schaeffer before him, such a view did not always win Trotter the approval of his evangelical constituency. In the fall of 2002 Trotter noted that “twice recently” he had “heard charges against the position the Center for Christian Study has taken on the validity—no let’s put it clearly with all the starkness it was put to me—on the rightness of going to some movies.”⁴¹ Critiques alleged that when the CCS sponsored viewings of movies like the Academy Award-winning Best Picture of 1999 *American Beauty* it risked doing harm to the hearts and minds of evangelicals in the audience. While Trotter admitted “these charges have some merit in their assumptions both that movies are a powerful medium and that they can be harmful to the spirit,” what he offered was a full-throated appeal for evangelical engagement with film.⁴² This impulse would only grow with Trotter’s continued engagement with the medium. In the winter of 2009, Trotter wrote a piece for *Praxis* bearing the succinct title “Responsibility.” Once again Trotter took on Christian objections to movie-viewing. After addressing several of these issues ranging from questions of personal morality to issues of stewarding time amid already-busy schedules, Trotter refused to downplay a Christian’s “responsibility” to engage film. “At whatever level you can,” Trotter concluded, “you should be watching movies and discussing them with others in light of the gospel....[A]re you taking responsibility for this crucial element of our cultural life?”⁴³

In addition to these in-house discussion groups, Trotter’s growing reputation as an evangelical who could analyze film opened the door to a variety of speaking engagements and ministries across the country. Of these opportunities, none had more

⁴¹ Drew Trotter, “From the President: Signs...and Sometimes Wonders,” *Praxis* 6, no. 3 (Fall 2002).

⁴² Trotter, “From the President: Signs...and Sometimes Wonders.”

⁴³ Drew Trotter, “Responsibility,” *Praxis* 12, no. 4 (Winter 2009).

significance for the future of the CCS than his being invited to co-lead a workshop entitled “Media, Film, and the Image” at the November 1994 Harvard Veritas Forum.⁴⁴ Founded in 1992 by Kelly Monroe (later Kullberg), who was a chaplain to graduate students at Harvard University, and a “grassroots group of students and friends,” the Veritas Forum sought “to raise the hardest questions of the university, society, and the human heart to explore the possible relevance of Jesus Christ to all of life.”⁴⁵ In so doing, Veritas Forum events functioned like condensed and hybridized versions of Regent’s Summer School and an evening talk around the L’Abri fire with Schaeffer. Veritas Forum weekend conferences were always educational, apologetic, and star-studded affairs that offered Christian students a chance to interact with some of the brightest Christian minds of the day while simultaneously reassuring them that orthodox Christian faith and a rigorous pursuit of the intellect were not mutually exclusive. As sociologist Michael Lindsay notes, events like these also played a key role in fostering evangelical networks across various university campuses, a trend especially evident at elite schools.⁴⁶ In 1996 Monroe published an edited volume entitled *Finding God at Harvard*, which included short autobiographical pieces written by notable Christians who had passed through Harvard Yard over the years.⁴⁷ The book further publicized the Veritas Forum

⁴⁴ David McGaw co-lead the workshop with Trotter and Elisabeth Overman, Bruce Herman, and Bill Edgar contributed, see Kelly Monroe, “The Harvard Veritas Forum,” November 1994, Folder, Harvard Veritas, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

⁴⁵ Monroe, “The Harvard Veritas Forum.”

⁴⁶ D. Michael Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 90-91.

⁴⁷ Kelly Monroe Kullberg, *Finding God at Harvard: Spiritual Journeys of Thinking Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1996). Since then Kullberg has written a follow-up account that seeks to capture the influence of Veritas beyond Harvard: Kelly Monroe Kullberg, *Finding God beyond Harvard: The Quest for Veritas* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006).

and within the next decade forum events spread to over fifty universities across the nation.⁴⁸

By the time Trotter traveled to Cambridge, Massachusetts, in November of 1994, he was well acquainted with the Veritas Forum. Since first hearing about the program, Trotter had been intent on bringing a Veritas Forum to the University of Virginia. Thanks in large part to the long-standing campus ministry meeting, which brought the ministry heads of various campus ministries together at the CCS twice a month, Trotter was able to secure the required invitation signed by over eighty percent of campus ministry heads at the university.⁴⁹ In his June 1994 CCS newsletter Trotter noted that “though spear-headed by the Center for Christian Study” the upcoming Veritas Forum “is being actively promoted and co-sponsored by virtually every Christian group on the grounds of the University.” As such, he saw it as “a wonderful testimony to the unity that we do have here in Christ that so many groups could come together so quickly in order to pull off something of this magnitude.”⁵⁰ Only a few months later, in October of 1994, the University of Virginia became the third university in the United States to host a Veritas Forum. Only Harvard and Ohio State University hosted events earlier. Both had direct ties to Monroe.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power*, 91.

⁴⁹ Trotter, interview, April 6, 2016. The process usually took much longer. Trotter remembers encountering disbelief from the folks at Veritas when he claimed to be able to deliver the signed invitation within a few weeks. He remembers being told that it had taken nearly a year of work to get the signed document for the second Veritas event, which had occurred at Ohio State. The theme of unity among UVa campus ministries, which is in large part facilitated through personal connections ministry leaders make with each other at the CCS, frequently comes up in interviews. For more on Trotter’s take on the CCS as a force for unity among Christian groups at the University of Virginia, see Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: September 1993,” September 1993, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1993, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA. For the continuance of this trend, see William Wilder, “Strategic Plan, Section I,” November 2012, Possession of William Wilder, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

⁵⁰ Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: August 1994.”

⁵¹ Monroe was a campus minister at Harvard and was originally from Columbus.

Building on this promising start, the Veritas Forum became a staple of Christian ministry at the University of Virginia and the CCS. After experimenting with the idea of an annual Veritas Forum, Trotter and the leaders of campus ministries opted to host the event on a bi-annual basis.⁵² The 1996 Veritas Forum at the University of Virginia was an even bigger success than the first event. Over 1,600 people came to hear talks by leading Christian scholars like John Polkinghorne, George Marsden, Alvin Plantinga, and Edwin Yamauchi.⁵³ The Forum's numerical success would continue well into the next decade. It was not uncommon for Veritas Forum speakers like Os Guinness to fill the university's 500-seat Chemistry Auditorium to capacity for several nights in a row.⁵⁴ By the mid-2000s, however, interest among campus groups began to flag and Forum events drew much smaller crowds. After hosting Oxford University's John Lennox in the winter of 2012 the CCS and other ministry groups decided against continuing the program on a regular basis.⁵⁵

In some ways the study center's participation in the Veritas Forum represented an updated version of the once-successful Summer Program. Like the earlier program the Veritas Forum offered lay people an educational event that harnessed interaction with

⁵² For more on the initial push for an annual event, see Drew Trotter, "CCS Newsletter: February 1996," February 1996, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1996, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

⁵³ Drew Trotter, "CCS Newsletter: May 1997," May 1997, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1997, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA. For more on the 1996 Veritas Forum at UVa, see "The U.Va. Veritas Forum," *The Veritas Forum*, 1996, Folder, Veritas Forum, 1996, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

⁵⁴ Trotter, interview, April 6, 2014; "Engaging Issues of Truth Meaning and Purpose," *Praxis* 6, no. 4 (Winter 2002). In 2006 *Praxis* reported that 300 students showed up each night to listen to Donald Carson speak at the Newcomb Hall Theater, see "Faith, Healing, and the Meaning of Jesus: The 2006 Veritas Forum at UVa" 10, no. 4 (Winter 2007). Guinness returned for the 2009 forum: Wes Zell, "Living Sanely When Life Is Fired Point-Blank: Os Guinness Addresses Students at Veritas Forum 2009," *Praxis* 13, no. 2 (Summer 2009).

⁵⁵ At the time of this writing the last Veritas Forum at the University of Virginia took place on February 20, 2012. It was a one-day event, see "University of Virginia," *The Veritas Forum*, <http://www.veritas.org/location/university-of-virginia/> (accessed April 27, 2016).

celebrity speakers and fascinating discussions on a host of academic topics. Just as the study center's Diploma program was being reassessed and only a few years after the last Summer Program in 1991, the Veritas Forum provided Trotter and the CCS with a large event that managed to hit several of the points of emphasis in these earlier programs while also uniting campus ministries and reaching far more individuals. Perhaps more significantly, the Veritas Forum was aimed primarily at an audience of students and professors at the University of Virginia. In so doing it hinted at the study center's move in a similar direction. Whereas early study center educational programs usually aimed for community involvement and attracted at least as many non-students as students, during the 1990s the study center began to move gradually in a more student-centric direction. As it did, it charted a course that would not only help ensure its own viability, but also the viability of the evangelical study center movement in general.

Expanding the Chancellor Street House: Hospitality and the CCS as Place

From the start the Chancellor Street house itself had been the epicenter of the CCS's student outreach, especially its outreach to undergraduates. Located directly across from the University's sorority row and just a block from Thomas Jefferson's Rotunda and the heavily trafficked Corner, the house at 128 Chancellor Street was an easily accessible feature of university life. It was a place where students could stop in anytime to study or to enjoy a study break. The building regularly hosted meetings for campus ministers, a wide variety of Bible studies and small group gatherings related to other para-church organizations, and many of the CCS's own ministries like Fraternity-Sorority Fellowship and Graduate Christian Fellowship. Learning happened both in the house's meeting

rooms and “in the door,” where impromptu conversations between students or between a student and Trotter (or one of the four part-time staff members who joined him by December of 1988) were common.⁵⁶

In addition to the draw of the building’s study spaces, meeting rooms, and staff, the Chancellor Street house was also a magnet for student activity due to Trotter’s commitment to provide technology—in the form of public computers and a copier—for student use. Early into his time at the CCS Trotter purchased two Macintosh computers with the help of a grant from the Maclellan Foundation in Chattanooga, Tennessee.⁵⁷ These were the first computers at the study center, and they were quickly put to use. By the end of 1990 Trotter informed readers of his newsletter that “something may have to be done soon for our facilities to create more space for meetings” because the CCS’s fellowship groups were growing and “more groups are making use of our building.” Trotter noted that among these new groups one consisted of students who “did the entire production of a Christian student magazine on our computers.”⁵⁸ The situation only grew more congested over the course of the next year: “We have experienced a tremendous increase in the usage of our equipment and building, too,” Trotter noted. “Our copier and

⁵⁶ Only a year before the CCS staff had consisted of Trotter and Libby Lohr, a part time administrative assistant. During 1988 Trotter hired Tony Giles, a former college pastor at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville, as Co-ordinator of Outreach Ministries. When Lohr left the CCS in 1988 Trotter hired two administrative assistants, Jan Neumeister and Donna Ford, to replace her. Beth McKay, a Diploma program student, was also working on staff as an intern. See Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: October 1988”; Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: December 1988,” December 1988, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1988, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

⁵⁷ Trotter was a Tennessean and had connections to individuals involved in this foundation. He also used the grant to pay part of his own salary and to support CCS programing. For more on the Maclellan Foundation, see Mark O’Keefe, “Maclellan Foundation,” *Philanthropy Roundtable*, August 2005, http://www.philanthropyroundtable.org/topic/excellence_in_philanthropy/maclellan_foundation.

⁵⁸ Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: December 1990,” December 1990, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1990, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

computers are being used regularly for the ministries of InterVarsity, Campus Crusade, International Students, Inc., and the list goes on.”⁵⁹

By providing the use of free technology to Christian groups at the University the study center further established itself as the hub of Christian activity at the University of Virginia. As the number of students frequenting the Chancellor Street house grew, so did the CCS’s prominence. Much of the study center’s publicity came through word of mouth as former students informed incoming students and visiting speakers informed their colleagues about the CCS. Few things raised the prominence of the CCS more, however, than its connection to *Wide Awake*, a student magazine written and produced on the study center’s computers.

The major force behind the founding of *Wide Awake: A Christian Perspective at the University of Virginia* in the fall of 1990 was University of Virginia student Ron Rosenberger.⁶⁰ In 1990 he and a group of fellow students, including Greg Mourad and Robert Prince, founded the magazine as a means of challenging Christians “to live, in word and deed, according to the faith they proclaim and to encourage students to consider what a personal relationship with Jesus Christ means.”⁶¹ In order to secure access to both university funds and meeting spaces, Rosenberger worked to get *Wide Awake*

⁵⁹ Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: December 1991,” December 1991, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1991, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

⁶⁰ For academic treatments of this case, see Gregg Ivers and Kevin T. McGuire, *Creating Constitutional Change: Clashes Over Power and Liberty in the Supreme Court* (University of Virginia Press, 2004); Matthew E. K. Hall, *The Nature of Supreme Court Power* (Cambridge University Press, 2010). For contemporary and widely divergent perspectives on the case, see Jennifer Ferranti, “ROSENBERGER CASE,” *ChristianityToday.com*, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1995/august1/5t9062.html> (accessed April 27, 2016); Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, “The Difference Religion Makes: Reflections on Rosenberger,” *The Christian Century*, March 13, 1996, 292–95.

⁶¹ Steven P. Brown, *Trumping Religion: The New Christian Right, the Free Speech Clause, and the Courts* (University of Alabama Press, 2002), 63; Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, “The Difference Religion Makes: Reflections on Rosenberger.”

Publications (WAP) recognized as an official Contracted Independent Organization (CIO) at the University of Virginia.⁶² Having succeeded in obtaining this designation for WAP, Rosenberger applied in January of 1991 for \$5,862 in university aid from the Student Activity Fund to defray costs of publishing and printing the magazine.⁶³ The University, however, had restrictions on which groups could receive subsidization through the Student Activities Fund. Money from the Student Activities Fund could not be used for events solely intended for entertainment, charitable donations, public policy work, or religious activities.⁶⁴ Judging that the work of WAP fit the last of these categories, the University denied Rosenberger's request. Rosenberger appealed the decision to the Student Council in March of 1991, arguing that *Wide Awake* was not "religious activity" in the strictest sense. Losing his appeal, Rosenberger sought out the legal aid of the newly formed Center for Individual Rights, "a nonprofit public interest law firm dedicated to the defense of individual liberties against" what it describes as "the aggressive and unchecked authority of federal and state governments."⁶⁵ The Center for Individual Rights filed suit against the University's Rector and Board of Visitors on behalf of Rosenberger. Rosenberger lost his case in U.S. District Court that July and then again in the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in March of 1994 before eventually winning a 5-4 decision at the United States Supreme Court in June of 1995.⁶⁶ The case of *Ronald Rosenberger et al. v. Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia et al.* provided a

⁶² Hall, *The Nature of Supreme Court Power*, 167-168.

⁶³ Brown, *Trumping Religion*, 64.

⁶⁴ Ivers and McGuire, *Creating Constitutional Change*, 167-168.

⁶⁵ "Mission: The Center for Individual Rights," <https://www.cir-usa.org/mission/> (accessed April 28, 2016); The CIR first made a name for itself in the early 1990s through cases like *Rosenberger*, which challenged civil liberties issues on college campuses, see "A Brief History of CIR: The Center for Individual Rights," <https://www.cir-usa.org/history/> (accessed April 28, 2016).

⁶⁶ Hall, *The Nature of Supreme Court Power*, 118.

new precedent for state-funding of religiously oriented organizations based on the right of free speech.⁶⁷

One of the secondary beneficiaries of the *Rosenberger* case's prominence was the CCS. Because Rosenberger and his friends had produced the magazine at the study center, discussions of the case sometimes included information on the CCS. Writing just after the start of oral arguments, Trotter reflected on the case and its relation to the study center in his March 1995 newsletter. Trotter noted that "though some of us did offer some helpful comments and wrote articles for them along the way," he and other CCS staff members had mostly "stayed out of the way" throughout the publication process and as "local and national television, radio and newspapers...descended on the study center—filming and interviewing Ron Rosenberger, Greg Mourad, Rob Prince and other students who produced *Wide Awake*."⁶⁸ Trotter was "so glad we could be a part of what they did in the production of those magazines and, perhaps, of what they are doing in a broader way now for the cause of free religious expression on college campuses." Yet he was "bemused" by the variety of responses to the CCS's role in the case. There were some who were "ecstatic, as if we were now a part of some major new movement to bring the Gospel to America for the first time." Others were "wary," fearing CCS had capitulated to politics—to which Trotter noted that the CCS "was not part of the group suing the University and had declined to be part of the suit some time ago" because "our rights were not violated." Of all these responses, Trotter was most intrigued by "the one that

⁶⁷ The case and the justices' decisions can be found at "Rosenberger v. Rector & Visitors of the University of Virginia," *Cornell University Law School: Legal Information Institute*, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/515/819> (accessed April 28). For the Center for Individual Right's take on the case, see "Rosenberger v. University of Virginia: The Center for Individual Rights.", <https://www.cir-usa.org/cases/rosenberger-v-university-of-virginia/> (accessed April 28, 2016).

⁶⁸ All quotations in this paragraph are drawn from: Drew Trotter, "CCS Newsletter: March 1995," March 1995, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1995, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA. Any emphasis that appears is original.

treats us as if we were now ‘somebody’ because the Center was shown on national television or implies that our ministry now could *really* have an effect.” Calling this a “sadly shallow point of view,” Trotter emphasized that though he was “glad when Christians get some ‘good’ press,” it was the less obvious elements of the study center’s ministry that most encouraged him. Sounding every bit the Schaeffer-inspired evangelical he was, Trotter noted, “I am much more excited when the unknown, and likely to remain unknown except in the kingdom of heaven, student because of a lecture we sponsored is made to realize that Christianity is true and goes into the world to follow Jesus as faithfully as he or she can because of that encounter.”⁶⁹

By the second half of the decade, however, everything at the CCS seemed to be moving in the opposite direction. From the building and budget to Trotter’s vision for the study center, the second half of the 1990s was a time of unprecedented growth at the CCS. Perhaps as a result of the study center’s connection to the *Rosenberger* case, giving had increased to the point that at the end of the study center’s fiscal year in June 1995 Trotter was able to inform friends of the ministry, “We are better off than we have been for some time because of your generosity throughout the year.”⁷⁰ Other areas of the CCS’s ministry were poised to grow, too. Expansion, whether in terms of the success of the Veritas Forum, hoped-for developments in the Diploma program, the CCS’s expanded prominence in the media in the months surrounding the *Rosenberger* case, the

⁶⁹ Schaeffer was famous for emphasizing the importance of truth. As he noted in the first chapter of his widely read *The God Who Is There*, “*this change in the concept of the way we come to knowledge and truth is the most crucial problem, as I understand it, facing Christianity today*” (emphasis original), see Francis A. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, in *A Christian View of Philosophy and Culture*, First Printing edition (Westchester, IL: Good News Pub, 1982), 6, also 96, 139, 143. For Schaeffer’s emphasis on the significance of even the smallest and most insignificant people and places, see Francis A. Schaeffer, “No Little People,” in *A Christian View of Spirituality* (Westchester, IL.: Crossway Books, 1982): 3–181.

⁷⁰ Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: June 1995,” June 1995, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1995, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

study center's budget, or simply the growing use of the CCS building by students, was unmistakable on Chancellor Street. Of all of these areas it was the growing volume of student activity within the study center's building itself that would prompt the CCS's most extensive expansion.

In the early 1990s references to the maximization of space at the Chancellor Street house began appearing in Trotter's newsletters. By the end of 1993 he flatly stated that the CCS had "meetings going on at all times of the day and night (some days at least!), and the facilities we have are showing the need for expansion." Because of this, the CCS board of directors was "considering a building program that would as much as double our space."⁷¹ Over the course of the next two years Trotter and the CCS Board weighed their options and eventually settled on a plan. Designed by Bruce Wardell, a local architect who had previously taught an evening course at the CCS during Turner's tenure, the projected 5,000 square foot addition would more than double the size of the Chancellor Street house and cost nearly a million dollars.⁷² Earlier in the CCS's history such a large undertaking would have been completely unthinkable financially. By 1996, however, the CCS's *Rosenberger* bump in publicity, its growing pool of alumni, and the practical appeal of donating toward a building, enlarged and energized the study center's pool of donors.⁷³ Writing in December of that year, Trotter summarized "the building

⁷¹ Drew Trotter, "CCS Newsletter: December 1993," December 1993, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1993, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

⁷² In addition to being an architect Wardell was also a former Peace Corps worker. He taught an evening course at the CCS in 1983 on "Today's 'Post-Christian' Society," see "University Christian Ministries: Spring/Summer 1983," Spring/Summer 1983, Folder, Newsletter Blurbs, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

⁷³ Trotter places special emphasis on the impact the building project had as a boost to the CCS overall fundraising.

situation,” by announcing that “we have raised all but about \$100,000 of our needs, and we *can* cover that figure with projected new revenue from the apartment in our plan.”⁷⁴

In the fall of 1997 the CCS welcomed students to a building whose appeal had greatly increased. While much of the old section of house still retained the charm of small, cozy rooms (although the kitchen had been significantly expanded and improved to handle larger volumes of people), it was the added sections of the building that set the tone for a new paradigm of ministry at the study center. From a spacious meeting room that could hold upwards of one hundred people to a new third floor library with room for 10,000 volumes—more than double that of the CCS’s previous library space—the study center’s addition offered space for larger events, a better-stocked and situated library, and more nooks, crannies, desks, and chairs for study.

It was not simply that the CCS was *bigger*; in terms of both utility and aesthetics the renovated CCS building was significantly *better*. From the start Trotter and the CCS board had sought to create spaces “that were very beneficial to the academic project” while still allowing the study center “to feel like a home.”⁷⁵ The expanded library and meeting room helped the CCS achieve the first of these goals. So, too, did the newly expanded and relocated Splintered Light Bookstore (f. 1994), whose “owner, manger, and host,” Russel Hof, was a Charlottesville entrepreneur who had co-founded one of the town’s favorite eateries—Bodo’s Bagels.⁷⁶ With a name culled from a poem by renowned author and Inkling, J. R. R. Tolkien, Splintered Light offered perspective buyers

⁷⁴ “University Christian Ministries: Spring/Summer 1983,” Spring/Summer 1983, Folder, Newsletter Blurbs, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

⁷⁵ Trotter, interview, April 6, 2016.

⁷⁶ “Splintered Light Adds a New Perspective,” *Praxis* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1997). For Trotter’s reflections on the founding of the bookstore, which was originally located on the second floor of the study center before being moved to what is now called the “Richman Room” on the main level, see Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: June 1994,” June 1994, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1994, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

intellectual stimulation through its selection of nearly 2,000 “ecumenical, yet orthodox” volumes, while two easy chairs located in the store served as a constant reminder that patrons were invited to do more than simply shop.⁷⁷ Huf hoped that his store would “create an atmosphere where people feel welcomed to come and gather, sit and write a letter, meet in small groups and so forth.”⁷⁸

Even the building’s larger new rooms were planned with an eye toward creating an inviting, not just useful, space. Trotter worked with Wardell to ensure that both the large group meeting room and the new library were centered around fireplaces.⁷⁹ Furthermore with walls all-but-filled with large windows, both the new meeting room and library were brightly lit spaces that offered panoramic views of the city and outlying mountains from the study center’s location on Charlottesville’s third-highest point.⁸⁰ All of this demonstrated that the CCS, following the path of institutions like Regent College, had matured in its aesthetic self-consciousness. Space became not just functional but theological. As a latter staff member would write, “one of our theological convictions here at the Center is that while earthly institutions and spaces are not themselves ultimate, they matter greatly because they help point us towards that which actually is. Institutions and spaces are so important because they shape the sort of human life that can happen within them.”⁸¹

⁷⁷ Splintered Light Adds a New Perspective,” *Praxis* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1997).

⁷⁸ Splintered Light Adds a New Perspective,” *Praxis* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1997).

⁷⁹ Trotter, interview, 2016.

⁸⁰ “Center Expansion Makes Room for a Familiar Vision,” *Praxis* 1, no. 1 (Fall 1997). The library became a prime study spot for both graduate and undergraduate students. For reflections from a PhD student who wrote his dissertation in the CCS library, see Eric Vettel, “A Place for Study, A Place for Living” 7, no. 3 (Fall 2003).

⁸¹ Wes Zell, “Study Center Spaces: A Site That Supports Kingdom Work of All Kinds,” *Praxis* 11, no. 2 (Summer 2007).

Increased space also served the seemingly paradoxical function of making the study center both more autonomous and more connected. The new addition included a basement apartment that could house up to eleven undergraduate men. Not only did this initiate a new residential element in the study center's life that would eventually grow into the Faith and Life Residential Year (renamed the Elzinga Residential Scholars in 2010), the inclusion of apartments also afforded the CCS a means of income apart from fundraising.⁸² The opportunity to generate additional income in the building helped pay off the mortgage on the new addition and went some distance in helping to ensure the continuing sustainability of the CCS. More space also increased the ministry's autonomy in that it had less need to procure space from local churches or the University for mid-sized events.

With income, space, and a larger-than-ever profile on Grounds, the CCS was prepared to enter a new phase of ministry. As a sign of the CCS's increasing sense of institutional identity and rising ambitions, the ministry replaced Trotter's regular newsletters with its own quarterly journal, *Praxis* in the fall of 1997, just as the renovated building opened its doors to students. *Praxis* featured a number of stories on the newly constructed building and the CCS's expanded programming. By its second year *Praxis* was also offering the first published accounts of the study center's history.⁸³ Trotter and the CCS Board had decided they had a story worth preserving—and sharing.

⁸² "Receiving and Walking: The Faith and Life Residential Year," *Praxis* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2008); Trotter, interview, April 6, 2016. In the fall of 2008 the CCS began hosting an analogous community consisting of twelve women in the house next door to the CCS. The study center had previously decided against hosting female students in the CCS building because of safety concerns arising in connection to the fact that the CCS was open twenty-four hours a day. See Kathy Schneider, "Chancellor Street House Gives Faith New Meaning," *The Cavalier Daily*, c. 1998, sec. Life, 5.

⁸³ All four issues in the second volume of *Praxis* contained relatively long pieces detailing various aspects of the CCS's history. These include: "A Beat With A Different Drum"; "A Friend for All Seasons"; "Moving Beyond the Margins," *Praxis* 2, no. 3 (Fall 1998); "Of the Stacking of Many Books," *Praxis* 2,

In the midst of change, however, many former elements of the CCS's ministry remained. The new building continued to host its traditional fellowship meetings and its bi-monthly campus minister's meetings. While the new space afforded greater autonomy, it also allowed the CCS to better connect with and serve other para-church ministries at the university. When the new building opened Trotter counted "eight to 10 student ministries that call the Study Center 'home' for everything from large group meetings to photocopying."⁸⁴ In addition to regular leaders' meetings, the CCS also fostered collegiality among campus ministers by offering them the use of office space in the study center. In the fall of 1997 the area director of Young Life and the Virginia director of the Christian Medical and Dental Society shared office spaces with CCS staff members.⁸⁵ In the years to come the center would also host the staff members of the University of Virginia's IVCF chapter. More than ever the CCS was a hub of Christian activity at the university. The study center's influence had grown with its building.

It is little wonder that it was not long before CCS staff members were referring to the building as the ninth "member" of the staff.⁸⁶ As a place, the expanded CCS became what Elzinga described the year after the completion of the renovation as "a geographic locus of identity" for Christian students.⁸⁷ Over time the importance of the actual CCS building would only grow in the minds of study center staff and students alike. More than fifteen years after the renovation longtime CCS staff member Bill Wilder would note, "In

no. 3 (Fall 1998); "A Celebration of Spiritual Roots: Center for Christian Study's 30th Anniversary," *Praxis 2*, no. 4 (Winter 1998).

⁸⁴ "A Beat With A Different Drum," *Praxis 2*, no. 1 (Spring 1998); "A Friend for All Seasons" 2, no. 2 (Summer 1998); "Moving Beyond the Margins," *Praxis 2*, no. 3 (Fall 1998); "Of the Stacking of Many Books," *Praxis 2*, no. 3 (Fall 1998); "A Celebration of Spiritual Roots: Center for Christian Study's 30th Anniversary," *Praxis 2*, no. 4 (Winter 1998).

⁸⁵ "A Celebration of Spiritual Roots."

⁸⁶ Trotter, interview, April 6, 2016

⁸⁷ "A Celebration of Spiritual Roots: Center for Christian Study's 30th Anniversary."

the minds of most students, our ministry is inseparable from (and unimaginable without) our building on Chancellor Street.”⁸⁸

From the start the renovated and redesigned kitchen became an especially important feature of the new building as “hospitality came to play an increasingly important role at the study center.”⁸⁹ More than once it was actually parents, not the CCS staff, who led the charge. In the fall of 1999 a few parents decided to meet up at the study center for lunch on first year move-in day with some of their friends who were also dropping new students off at the University. What started as a small group of parents quickly grew into an official CCS event. By 2003, Move-In Day Lunch was a fixture of the study center’s regular programming. 175 students, parents, and siblings attended that year to eat and hear talks from prominent University of Virginia professors Ken Elzinga and James Davidson Hunter.⁹⁰ Elzinga’s involvement in the lunch was significant. The Move-In Day Lunch functioned as a revamped version of the Christian Student Orientation that Elzinga had spearheaded in the fall of 1973 and led for years after.⁹¹ Furthermore, Elzinga’s involvement sent an implicit message to incoming students: if one of the university’s most prominent faculty members could balance the Christian faith and the demands of the academy, students might infer that they could, too. As attendance at these luncheons grew rapidly to 250 people in 2004 to over 400 people in 2006 the event

⁸⁸ William Wilder, “Strategic Plan, Section I,” 14-15. Wilder would go on to note that the house’s importance to the ministry was “a reality also clearly reflected in the prominence of our house in both the older and newer Study Center logos.”

⁸⁹ Wilder, “Strategic Plan,” 10. It seems to have been with the addition of the new portion of the house and the renovation of the kitchen that hospitality moved into a more central place in the CCS’s mission. By 2012 Wilder would list hospitality among the CCS’s four major goals: “The Center for Christian Study seeks to promote Christian formation [t]hrough the communication of Biblical truth, [f]or the good of the University community, [w]ith hospitality and care, [i]n unity with other Grounds ministries.” (1).

⁹⁰ “175 Attend Luncheon,” *Praxis* 7, no. 3 (Fall 2003).

⁹¹ For an example of these earlier events, see “Christian Student Orientation.”

socialized Christian students into the University's Christian community before their feet even hit the Grounds.⁹² Describing the lunch, one CCS staff member noted:

[Students are] greeted by veterans of the lunch and their fellow classmates. Conversations happen, and in the course of these conversations they begin to realize they are not in this alone. Friendships form at Move-In Day with classmates who will become future roommates, sorority sisters/fraternity brothers, study partners, small group leaders...even future spouses. During the lunch they also hear from Center staff, Ground Ministry partners, and University Professor Ken Elzinga about the wider believing community at work at UVA.⁹³

With parents, upper-classmen, professors, and the leadership of various campus ministries at the University participating, Move-In Day lunches functioned as a symbol of the CCS's ability to foster unity among Christian groups and as a method for ushering incoming Christian students into the community of Christians at the University.

Over time the CCS continued to capitalize on its building and its location by expanding its range of hospitality-focused events. The study center's location adjacent to the University's sorority houses afforded it the opportunity to offer coffee, hot chocolate, or simply a chair and a warm room to hundreds of female students during winter rush week. Looking for ways to get parents and alumni more involved the CCS also began hosting a yearly football tailgate and events during parents' week and near graduation. Eventually, the study center also began offering what it called Exam Snacks. More than snacks, the program included a mid-morning breakfast, lunch, and dinner everyday during exam week each semester. Like the Move-In Day lunch, Exam Snacks only became a part of the CCS program after concerned parents began providing food during

⁹² Wes Zell, "Hospitality and the Move-In Day Crowd," *Praxis* 8, no. 2 (Summer 2004); Wes Zell, "Move-In Day Lunch Draws 400," *Praxis* 10, no. 3 (Fall 2006).

⁹³ Shelly Pellish, "Center Welcomes Class of 2011 Families," *Praxis* 11, no. 3 (Fall 2007).

exam week. Before long hundreds of students were assembling at the CCS, filling the building, its porches, and sometimes Chancellor Street itself, three times a day.⁹⁴

To some extent hospitality-focused events flowed naturally out of the study center's roots in L'Abri. Through their work at L'Abri and through their books, the Schaeffer's elevated the act of providing hospitality through meals and open spaces to aesthetic and evangelistic levels beyond the imagination of most evangelicals at the time.⁹⁵ In books like *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century* Schaeffer argued that Christians should “quit having so many meaningless meetings in your church” and instead offer hospitality to strangers even in “unantiseptic situations.”⁹⁶ It was hospitality that often first drew people to L'Abri and more often than not it was also hospitality that softened their hearts to the Gospel. With its close ties to L'Abri, the CCS had practiced a ministry of hospitality to some degree since it first opened its doors on Elliewood Avenue in 1975 and then up the road on Chancellor Street in 1976. A shift occurred, however, with the new building and the involvement of more parents as earlier generations of study center students grew up and as the CCS's reputation expanded. With the help of parents and the space afforded by the new building the CCS made hospitality one of its most defining features. Hospitality served two purposes at the study center. As more and more Christian and non-Christian students began to take part in events like Exam Snacks hospitality became both a way for the CCS to bless the university community and a means of getting non-Christians through its doors.

⁹⁴ By 2016 over 250 students were taking part in each of the three meals. The CCS hosted these meals over the course of seven days from May 5-12. Meals were offered each of these days except Sunday. See “Exam Snacks,” *Center for Christian Study*, <http://studycenter.net/examgoodies> (accessed April 29, 2015).

⁹⁵ Schaeffer, *L'Abri*; Schaeffer, *The Hidden Art of Homemaking*.

⁹⁶ Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*, in *A Christian View of the Church* (Westchester, IL.: Crossway Books, 1982), 64, 91-96.

The overall effect of this turn toward hospitality was a gradual shift toward a greater and greater emphasis on the *undergraduate* community. Throughout his tenure at the CCS, Trotter had emphasized that while many observers “may have thought that our programs are only for students,” the study center, even after the completion of the addition, was still “in the business of seeing laypeople take the faith seriously enough to study it with the rigor it deserves.”⁹⁷ Trotter was right; the study center continued to offer plenty of public lectures and opportunities for community involvement. Yet as much as Trotter emphasized “the study center is for lay people as well as students” the ministry’s momentum—aided in no small part by the presence of its building, which functioned as “a magnet for students”—was increasingly toward an emphasis on graduate and especially undergraduate students.⁹⁸ Of course, even this shift did not necessarily compromise the center’s emphasis on laity that directors from Steiner to Turner and Trotter had implemented. The vast majority of the students who took part in CCS events were, and would remain, members of the laity.

As the study center expanded its range of hospitality and invited more students to spend time in its inviting building, it also tapped into another element of L’Abri which some in the university community found unsettling. The study center, for all its efforts to engage the university community, was always prone towards functioning more as a “shelter” or safe house for Christian students than as a true partner in the university’s life. While some students who regularly took part in the life of the CCS emphasized that they were not “just living in a Christian bubble where we surround ourselves with Christian people and involve ourselves in Christian activities,” the study center could aid in the

⁹⁷ Drew Trotter, “From the Executive Director.”

⁹⁸ Wilder noted this transition in his 2012 “Strategic Plan,”

development of bubble-wrapped lives.⁹⁹ Not surprisingly, the concept of the study center as a kind of safe-haven was best demonstrated in the way parents came to view the study center. The increasing prominence of parents in the study center's life after 1999 both demonstrated and probably facilitated the CCS's shift towards undergraduate ministry while at the same time signifying that parents—perhaps especially the parents of female students, who often make up the vast majority of those who attend CCS events and study at the building—saw the study center as a safeguard against what they felt to be the perils of the secular academy.

From Frank Nelson's 1972 *Christianity Today* article "Evangelical Living and Learning Centers" to Gordon College professor Thomas Albert Howard's 2014 *Anxious Bench* blog post "Should I Send My (Christian) Child to a (Secular) State University?" evangelical commentators had long advised parents who had to choose schools other than Christian institutions to consider selecting schools based on whether the institution had a Christian study center.¹⁰⁰ As the CCS rose in prominence and implemented more programs like its Parents' Council (f. 2007) and regional outreach gatherings in places like Northern Virginia, Atlanta, Charlotte, and Richmond, larger numbers of Christian parents discovered the CCS before their students even matriculated at the University. As longtime CCS staff member Shelley Pellish noted, by 2007 "prospective students" were "stopping by the building in increasing numbers during their University Tours." The CCS

⁹⁹ Kathy Schneider, "Chancellor Street House Gives Faith New Meaning."

¹⁰⁰ Nelsen, "Evangelical Living and Learning Centers: A Proposal"; Howard, "Should I Send My (Christian) Child to a (Secular) State University?"

was emerging as a key aspect of the college selection process in the minds of many Christian students and their parents.¹⁰¹

Expanding the Movement: The CCS and the Consortium of Christian Study

Centers

As exciting as events at the Charlottesville study center were, however, Trotter and the staff at the CCS were not only concerned with forging better relationships with students and parents. By the early 2000s they were also working to forge relationships with other study centers. This was not an entirely new emphasis. From the time evangelicals began trying to imitate Schaeffer's L'Abri or Houston's Regent College there had been various efforts to develop connections among the *mélange* of "study centers." Members of the Charlottesville study center took part in a number of early gatherings meant to solidify a study center movement. In 1977 Daryl Richman of the CCS joined R.C. Sproul and thirty-four others for a "Conference on Study Centers" held at Westminster Theological Seminary. These individuals represented nine study centers ranging from those that were church-based, to others that were university-based or stand-alone organizations. Some, like Sproul's Ligonier Valley Study Center or the Reformation Study Center in Los Altos, California, sought to educate lay people through a combination of teaching and tape ministries. Others, like Birmingham Extension Seminary and Trinity Ministerial Academy, were church-based institutions that explicitly sought to prepare men for ministry. In the case of the Weaverville, North Carolina

¹⁰¹ Anecdotally, I have found this to be true as well. When attending an academic conference in 2014 I spoke with a professor who taught at a well-known evangelical liberal arts college. His daughter, a highly recruited athlete, was considering attending the University of Virginia in part because of the CCS. They planned to visit the CCS on their campus visit.

ministry, “The Greenhouse,” two couples sought “to provide nurture for Christians in an extended family context.” Those present at the Westminster gathering also included individuals from other interested organizations including Westminster Theological Seminary, Messiah College, Covenant College, the Presbyterian Church in America, and the Middlestates Association of Colleges and Schools. This range of organizational representation seems to have reflected both the geographical location of the conference and the theological orientation of the emerging study center movement.¹⁰² Following Schaeffer, the study center movement that emerged in the 1970s was overwhelmingly—and sometimes staunchly—Reformed.

The 1977 conference was one of a handful of similar conferences that sprang up during these years.¹⁰³ In spite of these early efforts, however, study centers without direct ties to organizations like L’Abri existed throughout the 1980s and 1990s in a state of relative isolation, sometimes receiving brochures or updates from other study centers, but seldom entering into any type of working partnership with similar ministries. In the early eighties Turner received pamphlets at the CCS from other study centers including: Sproul’s LVSC, the painter Wes Hurd’s Euguen, Oregon McKenzie Study Center (f. 1979), and the Christian Study Center, which was founded in 1983 in New Haven, Connecticut by Yale Divinity School graduate Randy Thompson, but no greater

¹⁰² “Conference on Study Centers.”

¹⁰³ A 1980 “Christian Study Centers Conference” had a mailing list consisting of twenty-eight centers. Among those listed were the LVSC, the Toronto ICS, Regent College, Charlottesville’s University Christian Ministries, the Southborough L’Abri, the Cornerstone Study Center, New College Berkeley, and Jack Buckley’s Covenant Circle in Berkeley. For a full list, see “Christian Study Centers Conference Pack,” June 21, 1980, Box 3, Folder 10, James M. Houston Collection.

partnership was ever pursued even though these centers were marked by similar influences and emphases.¹⁰⁴

The long-term impact of early study center conferences and efforts to create an informal network through mailing brochures to like-minded organizations was minimal. In the decades after the initial study center boom of the 1970s and early 1980s, the study centers that were able to survive (or in a few cases were founded) often existed as offshoots of church ministries (e.g., the Elmbrook Study Center) or as autonomous and isolated entities. On a cultural level, a generation of baby boomers had pivoted away from countercultural tendencies like communal living and alternative learning, both of which had helped catalyze the growth of the study center movement. Furthermore, by the mid-1980s some of the movement's most important leaders were either gone (e.g., Schaeffer) or had shifted their focus away from the study center model (e.g., Houston, Sproul). No network of similarly committed evangelical celebrities emerged to replace them.

In fact, it seemed that evangelical culture was moving toward new models of lay education based around widely marketed, media-based ministries. Sproul's move from

¹⁰⁴ Thompson, a pastor by training and profession, directed the Christian Study Center in New Haven for five years. He went on to pastor churches and serve with his wife as the hosts of Forest Haven, "a Christian organization that provides a rural, quiet place of healing hospitality and spiritual refreshment for Christian ministers and missionaries." See Tara R. Alemany, "Forest Haven, New Hampshire," *Forest Haven, New Hampshire*, <http://foresthavennh.org/> (accessed April 29, 2016); "Your Hosts," *Forest Haven, New Hampshire*, July 9, 2012, <http://foresthavennh.org/about/your-hosts/>. For more on Hurd, see "Gutenberg College: R. Wesley Hurd.," <http://msc.gutenberg.edu/authors/r-wesley-hurd/> (accessed April 29, 2016); "Home," *Wesley Hurd*, <http://www.weshurd.com/> (accessed April 29, 2016). The McKenzie Study Center would eventually found Gutenberg College, which offered students a Great Books curriculum. The study center became an institute of the college. See "Gutenberg College: The History of the McKenzie Study Center.," <http://msc.gutenberg.edu/about/history/> (accessed April 29, 2016). Like Turner, both Thompson and Hurd shared a deep appreciation for Lewis and other members of the Inklings. Thompson had written his MA thesis at the University of California, Santa Barbara on Charles Williams, the most eccentric of the Inklings. Hurd, who had been considering founding a study center since the early 1970s, envisioned that the McKenzie Study Center would be "something like Francis and Edith Schaeffer's L'Abri in Switzerland" but located "near a secular university" where, quoting Martin Luther, Hurd noted, "the battle rages." See "Christian Study Centers Conference Pack."

the LVSC to Orlando-based Ligonier Ministries represented the wider trend. In most cases the ministries that gained a foothold and then thrived were, like Sproul, 1) more conservative, both politically and religiously, and 2) adept at channeling their teaching into mass media. By the end of the 1980s a new batch of gurus like David Barton (b. 1954) and Ken Ham (b. 1951) was emerging as the principle educators of evangelical laity. They too seemed to owe a debt to Schaeffer, but in some ways a different Schaeffer than the Schaeffer their peers in the study center movement looked to. The individualized ministries of Barton and Ham reflected more Schaeffer's highly political and polemical later years—not to mention his experiments with mass-produced, easily digested films—than his work at L'Abri prior to *Roe v. Wade* (1973). Following the historical and political logic of Schaeffer's *Christian Manifesto*, Barton's *Wall Builders* (f. 1989) sought “to exert a direct and positive influence in government, education, and the family” in part by “educating the nation regarding the Godly foundation of our country” and “encouraging Christians to be involved in the civil arena.”¹⁰⁵ Ken Ham's *Answers in Genesis* (f. 1994), which had grown out of the Australian's Creation Science Foundation (f. 1979), was the biological counterpart of Barton's historical work.¹⁰⁶ Gearing his messages toward lay evangelicals, Ham spent years working to ensure that as many Christians and educational institutions as possible adopted a “young earth” view of origins as defined by a literal reading of the six-day creation account in Genesis. Through

¹⁰⁵ “About Us: Overview, Our Goal,” *Wall Builders*, <http://www.wallbuilders.com/ABTOverview.asp> (accessed April 29, 2016). See also Molly Worthen, *Apostles of Reason: The Crisis of Authority in American Evangelicalism*, 2014, 250-252; Randall J. Stephens and Karl Giberson, *The Anointed Evangelical Truth in a Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2011), 61-96, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=411022>.

¹⁰⁶ “History of Answers in Genesis,” *Answers in Genesis*, <https://answersingenesis.org/about/history/> (accessed April 29, 2016). See also Worthen, *Apostles of Reason*, 252; Stephens and Giberson, *The Anointed Evangelical Truth in a Secular Age*, 21-60.

massive self-publishing and media efforts both Barton and Ham gained celebrity status in the 1990s and through their extensive programs in lay education exerted a large, though controversial, influence on American evangelicalism.¹⁰⁷

While individuals like Trotter and others involved in the study center movement often shared with these “anointed” leaders a tendency toward a far-ranging generalist approach to scholarship and a capacity to don both the mantle of a preacher and an academic, for the most part Christian study centers like the CCS eschewed the overly simplistic biblical, historical, and cultural analyses of organizations like Wall Builders and Answers in Genesis.¹⁰⁸ Writing in the early 1990s, Trotter emphasized the point: “Part of the focus of our program is on the fact that there are no easy answers and that the answers we do have are tentative ones, seen through a glass darkly.” Trotter noted that this did “not mean that there are no answers at all to the pressing needs of life,” but it did ensure that there could be “no triumphalism here.”¹⁰⁹ For Trotter study centers were neither victims of a secular society nor emerging conquerors intent on the Christianizing of American history or university biology labs.¹¹⁰

Historically, this type of an emphasis on nuance has not been a formula for success within American evangelicalism; however, in the context of life at a major

¹⁰⁷ Barton was named among the twenty-five most influential evangelicals in America in 2005: TIME STAFF, “The 25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America - TIME,” *Time*, http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1993235_1993243_1993261,00.html (accessed April 29, 2016). For a discussion of the ways in which arguments of a nature similar to those of Barton and Ham led to the stagnation of the evangelical mind, see Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994). Ironically, Noll was also listed among the twenty-five most influential evangelicals in America in 2005.

¹⁰⁸ Stephens and Giberson convincingly argue that “the ability of evangelical leaders to combine the persuasive powers of a great preacher with the credibility of an academic generates enormous intellectual authority. . . . The anointed leaders of American evangelicalism achieve their success precisely because of their ability to don the mantle of the academic while employing the communication strategies of the preacher.” See Stephens and Giberson, *The Anointed Evangelical Truth in a Secular Age*, 267-268.

¹⁰⁹ Drew Trotter, “CCS Newsletter: September 1991,” September 1991, Box, Archives; Folder, Newsletters 1991, Center for Christian Study Archives, Charlottesville, VA.

¹¹⁰ Trotter explicitly rejected the idea of victimization during our 2016 interview.

university—whose academic culture demanded nuance and whose diversity ensured that different points of view could not be ignored—it worked. As the CCS navigated the shoals of the 1980s, when most evangelicals were more concerned with winning what University of Virginia sociologist, James Davidson Hunter, famously described in 1991 as the “culture wars,” Trotter and the staff of the study center were demonstrating an approach much closer to the concept of “faithful presence” that Hunter would develop in his latter book, *To Change the World* (2010).¹¹¹ According to Hunter, “a theology of faithful presence first calls Christians to attend to the people and places that they experience directly....[T]he call of faithful presence gives priority to what is right in front of us—the community, the neighborhood, and the city, and the people of which these are constituted.”¹¹² This meant that rather than focusing on evangelical standbys like “slick packaging or ‘high production values’” Christians and Christian organizations should work to cultivate “a preference for stability, locality, and particularity of place and its needs.”¹¹³ As the CCS gave up its efforts to attract students to its Diploma program or market its Summer Program or its tapes and instead focused on serving community members and especially its built-in constituency (university students) the ministry’s reach grew. In so doing Trotter and the staff at the CCS found themselves in a position to have a disproportionate impact on the future of the evangelical study center movement.

Trotter and other CCS leaders began to realize that the study center was attracting attention by the late 1990s. On one level, the nationally publicized *Rosenberger* Supreme Court case in 1995 certainly raised the prominence of the CCS, but it was the

¹¹¹ James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* ([New York]: BasicBooks, 1991); James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 238-254.

¹¹² Hunter, *To Change the World*, 253.

¹¹³ Hunter, *To Change the World*, 253.

construction of the new addition and to a lesser extent the publication of *Praxis* in 1997 that really caught the attention of other like-minded evangelicals. In a 1999 interview with the re-launched student magazine *Wide Awake*, Trotter noted that while “a lot of people have come and have wanted to know how to start a center,” there were still “not very many” other universities that had study centers comparable to the CCS.¹¹⁴ He was hopeful, however, that this might be changing. In the late fall of 1998 he had attended what he described as “the first annual conference for Christian Study Centers in the country.” While Trotter noted that the CCS, with its “own building, mailing list, etc.” was “rare” among those study centers represented at the event, he still found it exciting “to see these ideas spreading throughout the country.”¹¹⁵

The conference Trotter was referring to was the 1998 Francis Schaeffer Lectures, a lecture series hosted annually by Covenant Theological Seminary’s Francis Schaeffer Institute (FSI). The executive director of the FSI at the time was Wade Bradshaw. Bradshaw had spent time at Swiss L’Abri and had served for several years as the director of the English L’Abri before coming to Saint Louis.¹¹⁶ Bradshaw invited Trotter and Steve Garber (who in 2005 went on to found the Washington Institute for Faith, Vocation, and Culture) as the principal speakers for the conference.¹¹⁷ Trotter was slated

¹¹⁴ Astari Daenuwy and Drew Trotter, “Opening the Center Doors: Astari Daenuwy Interviews Drew Trotter, Director of the Center for Christian Studies,” *Wide Awake*, Spring 1999, Drew Trotter, personal collection. It is difficult to know how many people sought advice for starting a study center like the CCS. It seems likely that most of these individuals never brought their ideas to fruition or, if they did, founded church-based study centers like the CCS-inspired study center that Steve Morgan founded at Lake Avenue Congregational Church in Pasadena, California following a 1988 visit to the CCS. The CCS was not inspiring a host of university-based study centers in the 1990s. For more on Steve Morgan’s study center, see “A Celebration of Spiritual Roots: Center for Christian Study’s 30th Anniversary.”

¹¹⁵ Astari Daenuwy and Drew Trotter, “Opening the Center Doors: Astari Daenuwy Interviews Drew Trotter, Director of the Center for Christian Studies,” 15.

¹¹⁶ For more on Bradshaw see, Bradshaw, *By Demonstration*; Trinity Church, “Wade Bradshaw | Trinity Charlottesville,” <http://www.trinityville.org/Wade-Bradshaw> (accessed May 2, 2016).

¹¹⁷ Wade Bradshaw, interview with author, Charlottesville, VA, September 16, 2015. For more on Garber and The Washington Institute for Faith, Vocation, and Culture, see “Our History,” *The Washington*

to lecture on film during the evening, but because both he and Garber were interested in study centers, Bradshaw planned for an independent day session tailored specifically for individuals who were working in similar ministries.¹¹⁸ Scanning his Rolodex, Bradshaw began asking “anyone I knew who was evangelical and doing anything like a Christian study center” to attend.¹¹⁹ In the end he was able to contact individuals at about fifty institutions.¹²⁰ The response was heartening. “We had something close to one hundred percent acceptance,” Bradshaw would later remember, noting that of those who responded, “all of them mentioned that they owed a debt to Francis Schaeffer.”¹²¹

By bringing together study center directors from across the country and by helping individuals invested in these ministries think through the differences between L’Abri-style residential study centers and university-based study centers like the CCS, the 1998 conference marked the unofficial beginning of what would eventually become the Consortium of Christian Study Centers (CCSC). Through the conference Trotter and others who worked in various study centers were alerted to the large number and wide array of similar ministries. “We were all amazed at each other’s experiences,” Trotter remembers. “We had no idea that there were that many [study centers].”¹²² Filled with a sense of camaraderie, Trotter and five other conference attendees began holding annual

Institute, August 26, 2011, <http://www.washingtoninst.org/about-us/our-history/>. For more on Garber see his semi-autobiographical Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness*.

¹¹⁸ Trotter, interview, 2016.

¹¹⁹ Bradshaw, interview.

¹²⁰ Astari Daenuwy and Drew Trotter, “Opening the Center Doors: Astari Daenuwy Interviews Drew Trotter, Director of the Center for Christian Studies,” 15.

¹²¹ Bradshaw, interview. Once again one sees the strong connections between the study center movement and Schaeffer. Bradshaw’s involvement also demonstrates the significance of the relationship between Schaeffer, the CCS, and Trinity Presbyterian Church. In 2006 Greg Thompson, one of Bradshaw’s standout students at Covenant Seminary was called to serve as the head pastor at Trinity. One of the first things he did was hire Bradshaw to his staff. Thus when the Consortium of Christian Study Centers was officially founded in 2008, Bradshaw was present to enjoy the news with Trotter, a fellow member of Trinity.

¹²² Trotter, interview, 2016.

meetings filled with discussions of best practices, encouragement, and prayer.¹²³ In addition to Trotter, the group included the directors of three other prominent university-based student centers: Randy Bare of Westminster House, the student ministry of First Presbyterian Church in Berkeley, California; David Mahan of the Rivendell Institute (f. 1995), a graduate student-focused study center in New Haven, Connecticut; and Robert Osburn, director of the MacLaurin Institute, which was founded in 1982 out of a faculty IVCF chapter at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.¹²⁴ Others like Richard Howe, the founder of Christian Study Centers International (CSCI) and longtime director of the Day Spring Institute (f. 1983) at the University of Colorado in Boulder soon joined. By 2007 the group had grown to fourteen.¹²⁵

It was during the 2007 gathering—while the group was snowed-in at the Chesterton House in Ithaca, New York—that Karl Johnson, a three-time alum of Cornell (BS, MA, PhD) and founder (and since 2005, director) of the Chesterton House, challenged those assembled to consider developing a more formal organization. A little more than a year later, in July of 2008, representatives from university-based study centers in Berkeley, Boulder, Ithaca, New Haven, Minneapolis, and Charlottesville met at Northwestern University to officially form the Consortium.¹²⁶ By common consent, the group appointed Drew Trotter as full-time Executive Director of the CCSC beginning

¹²³ “A Brief History of the Consortium, “Consortium of Christian Study Centers,” <https://studycentersonline.org/about/history/> (accessed May 2, 2016).

¹²⁴ “A Brief History of the Consortium.” The other individuals represented at the first meeting were Steve Webb of Centers for Christian Study International and Luke Bobo of Covenant Theological Seminary. The name Rivendell, comes from the works of J. R. R. Tolkien. In Tolkien’s books Rivendell is, as the New Haven study center’s website notes, “a place animated by the love of wisdom and learning, and warmed by effusive hospitality.” It is also a safe haven in the midst of looming war. By choosing the name Rivendell, Christians at the New Haven study center demonstrate their affinity for members of the Inklings and, more implicitly, idea of a study center as shelter. See, “History,” <http://www.rivendellinstitute.org/about/history/> (accessed May 2, 2016).

¹²⁵ “A Brief History of the Consortium.”

¹²⁶ “A Brief History of the Consortium.”

January 1, 2009.¹²⁷ The new Consortium would function as a subsidiary of Rick Howe's CSCI while retaining its own elected Board of Directors.¹²⁸ In addition to serving as the Executive Director of the CCSC, Trotter was also named the National Director of Howe's CSCI.¹²⁹

Trotter was a natural choice. Over the course of his career his involvement in evangelical study centers had spanned the first generation (L'Abri) while moving beyond Schaeffer in important ways, not the least of which was the fact that Trotter held academic credentials. By 2008 he also had well over two decades of experience as the director of leading church-based and university-based study centers. During the late 1990s and early 2000s the Charlottesville study center had emerged as perhaps the foremost U.S. example of a university-based study center. In a trend that would only increase over the next decades, the CCS increasingly functioned as an essential stopping point on the pilgrimage of those who hoped to found a study center. The early history of the Chesterton House provides an insight into how this mentoring process worked.

By the mid-1990s Karl Johnson's own experiences as both a student at Cornell and a Christian who struggled to find versions of the faith that were both spiritually and intellectually rigorous had given him a desire for a ministry that exposed members of the university community to the best of Christian thought and cultural commentary.¹³⁰

Beginning his own doctoral studies in the mid-1990s, Johnson benefitted from an

¹²⁷ "A Brief History of the Consortium."

¹²⁸ This is how Trotter described CCSI in the fall of 2008 for interested friends of the CCS, see "History," <http://www.rivendellinstitute.org/about/history/> (accessed May 2, 2016). For more on CCSI, see "History: Centers For Christian Study International," <http://studycenters.org/about/history/> (accessed May 3, 2016); "Study Centers: Centers For Christian Study International," <http://studycenters.org/about/study-centers/> (accessed May 2, 2016).

¹²⁹ Drew Trotter, "An Open Letter to Our Friends."

¹³⁰ Karl Johnson, "About Chesterton House: For Charlie Cotherman," March 7, 2016, (in author's possession).

evangelical milieu in which resources like *Mars Hill Audio* (1993) and *Christianity Today's* more scholarly *Books and Culture* (1995) joined books like Mark Noll's *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (1994) and George Marsden's *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (1998) in calling for evangelicals to engage scholarship and the life of the mind more deeply and intentionally.¹³¹ Together with friends and local pastors, Johnson and other members of the Christian community in Ithaca began working to develop programs that would help Christians in their community better think through the contours of faith, life, and learning.

As Johnson began to consider starting a new ministry that would help meet the need for an intellectually engaged Christian presence at the university, a friend referred him to Trotter and the Charlottesville CCS. Johnson wrote to Trotter and was amazed by what he found. To Johnson, the CCS materials seemed “an intellectual feast.” Paraphrasing Cornell co-founder and inaugural president A. D. White, who had discovered a model for his new educational venture in Ithaca by looking to the University of Berlin, Johnson found that the Charlottesville study center was his “ideal of a [study center] not only realized—but extended and glorified.”¹³² Of the few other study centers that Johnson consulted in the lead up to founding the Chesterton House in 2000, it would be the Charlottesville CCS that most shaped the development of Johnson's work at Cornell.¹³³

¹³¹ Karl Johnson, “Our Story,” *Chesterton House*, <http://chestertonhouse.org/about/our-story> (accessed May 2, 2016).

¹³² “Our Story,” *Chesterton House*.

¹³³ Johnson also spoke with Bob Osborn, director of the MacLaurin Institute, but it was Trotter and the CCS that emerged as his principle model. Today the Chesterton House is arguably one of the most if not the most influential Christian study center. Johnson was a founding member of the CCSC. At the time of this writing Johnson was also the president of the CCSC Board of Directors.

Coming alongside other study centers with experience, encouragement, and counsel was exactly what Trotter hoped his new position as Executive Director of the CCSC would allow him to do. Trotter described his new position and his hopes in an open letter to friends of the CCS in the fall of 2008. While the CCSI had what Trotter described as “a passion for seeing study centers planted across the nation and...beyond its borders,” Trotter wrote that his task as National Director of CCSI “will not be so much in the ‘planting’ area of things, though, as it will be in the strengthening of centers that already exist alongside a number of universities.”¹³⁴ Trotter also saw his role as a promoter of what he identified for the first time in print as “the study center movement,” a phenomenon in which he noted, “our Center here in Charlottesville, has always been a leader.” Trotter’s role as Executive Director of the Consortium was closely related to his position at the CSCI, though different in that the Consortium was a collaborative effort that drew on the resources of existing study centers to fill positions on its own, independent elected Board of Directors.

Almost from the start Trotter found that his relationship to the CSCI was fraught with uncertainty and miscommunication.¹³⁵ In part this stemmed from the lingering effects of the financial crisis of 2008. As Howe’s CSCI struggled to find a way forward in the new financial climate, funding for Trotter’s position dissipated. On April 1, 2009, after having worked for three months without receiving a paycheck from CSCI, Trotter cut ties with Howe’s organization and filed for 501(c)(3) status for a newly independent

¹³⁴ Drew Trotter, “An Open Letter to Our Friends.” All citations in this paragraph are taken from this article.

¹³⁵ Trotter, interview, 2016.

CCSC.¹³⁶ Once again, it was the McClellan Foundation that offered Trotter an initial path toward financial viability.¹³⁷

Over the course of the next two years Trotter devoted himself to fundraising, developing CCSC infrastructure, and visiting numerous churches and sites where study centers were already established or where there was a desire to found a new study center.¹³⁸ In the process he further solidified a network of study centers and interested individuals that stretched from coast to coast and from the edge of the Caribbean into Canada. He also developed a four-part taxonomy of study centers that helped further define the mission of the CCSC and the study center movement in general. While the CCSC was concerned with *university-based study centers*, other models had existed from the start. *Destination study centers* like L'Abri and Schloss Mittersill in Europe and Sproul's LVSC in the mountains of central Pennsylvania all required that students come to them.¹³⁹ In order to attract students these study centers usually relied on exquisite natural beauty and/or a celebrity director. Remote locations, often far from hotels, also meant that destination study centers had to be residential.¹⁴⁰ From his own experience at the Elmbrook Study Center, Trotter was also aware of a significant subgroup of *church-based study centers*, which were usually, but not exclusively, found in either mega-churches or in churches of a distinctly Reformed cast.¹⁴¹ A fourth and harder to define

¹³⁶ Trotter, interview, 2016; "A Brief History of the Consortium," Consortium of Christian Study Centers."

¹³⁷ Trotter, interview, 2016.

¹³⁸ "A Brief History of the Consortium," Consortium of Christian Study Centers."

¹³⁹ Trotter, interview, 2016.

¹⁴⁰ Trotter, interview, 2016. The lack of nearby hotels and passable roads in the winter played a significant role in the development of programming at Sproul's LVSC. These factors also made a move to Orlando appealing.

¹⁴¹ Trotter, interview, 2016. Trotter noted the existence of study centers in mega-churches. The emphasis on study centers in churches that emphasize Reformed theology comes from my own observations. Throughout my research for this project it has become clear that the vast majority of

subset of study centers is what Trotter identifies as *city-focused study centers*. These study centers focus more on a region than on a particular university community or narrow demographic and include groups like the C. S. Lewis Institute of Washington D. C.¹⁴²

In 2011, after a series of fits and starts, the CCSC launched its website and, for all intents and purposes, its ministry. The transition from dream and development to tangible impact was signified by the CCSC's first Symposium. The event, hosted by the Charlottesville CCS and attended by over twenty representatives from various study centers and partner organizations, offered a taste of the movement's history while also denoting a new direction in the development of the lay evangelical mind and the evangelical presence within America's pluralistic universities.¹⁴³ In addition to a panel discussion featuring Trotter, Mahan, and Johnson, the program also dedicated time to an author-led discussion of James Davidson Hunter's book *To Change the World*. The book, with its emphasis on the importance of lasting institutions, common grace (i.e., the idea that God's grace touches all aspects of creation by restraining evil and granting Christians and non-Christians alike the capacity for good, meaningful work), and "faithful presence," would exert what Trotter described as "a strong influence on the study center movement" in the years ahead.¹⁴⁴

evangelical study centers stem from either conservative congregations in the Presbyterian Church (USA) or from the Presbyterian Church in America.

¹⁴² Trotter, interview, 2016.

¹⁴³ The CCSC also caught the eye of notable historian and evangelical commentator Mark Noll, who described the CCSC favorably in his 2011 book *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind*. In Noll's estimation the rise of study centers and the CCSC was a "modest but significant" sign that evangelicals were beginning to move beyond the "scandal of the evangelical mind" that he had described nearly two decades before. According to Noll, "The newly formed Consortium of Christian Study Centers, whose director Drew Trotter had headed up the University of Virginia's effective study center, provides even more opportunities for these institutes to contribute than before" (Mark A Noll, *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 157).

¹⁴⁴ Trotter, interview, 2016. Hunter does not devote a lot of time specifically to the idea of common grace in his book, but in some ways the entire book stands as an example of what a life based on a full appreciation of common grace might entail. This is because common grace means that "there is a world

The shift was subtle but significant. Whereas providing an alternative to the University of Virginia’s Religious Studies Department was the CCS’s original *raison d’état*, by 2011 Trotter, the CCS, and many of the study centers represented by the consortium were convinced that the path forward was more a matter of “faithful presence” demonstrated personally and through lasting institutions, than it was about the apologetics or cultural bluster that had once to at least some extent defined the movement. Deeply informed by Hunter’s ideas and the theological concept of common grace, Trotter and members of the CCSC, already emerging as the leading edge of the evangelical study center movement, were beginning to emphasize the university more as a friend, though, as Trotter notes, “a friend with whom we sometimes have great differences,” than as a front in the “culture wars.”¹⁴⁵

The emphases that marked the CCSC’s first Symposium in 2011 demonstrated the change and continuity that shaped an emerging group of study centers like the CCS. The Consortium’s description of a study center’s purpose continued to feature a familiar emphasis on Christian discipleship and Christian community, but it also encompassed a new vision that promoted study centers as “servants to the thought-life itself of the university” and partners with the university who could “participate fully” in its life—all sentiments it is hard to imagine Schaeffer or other first generation CCS leaders conveying

God created that is shared in common by believers and nonbelievers alike...[T]he goodness of creation is fundamentally and ubiquitously marred by sin but it is not negated by sin. I may be fractured, incomplete, and corrupted, but [God’s] goodness remains in it,” see Hunter, *To Change the World*, 232

¹⁴⁵ Trotter, interview, 2016. Trotter uses this phrase frequently. He believes he first heard it from Os Guinness.

to a similar degree.¹⁴⁶ Less about protecting evangelicals or providing a space for them as cultural outsiders, these two CCSC emphases demonstrated that evangelicals—at least those directing CCSC member centers, if not always the parents who promoted and financed them—had developed a new methodology and a new level of confidence since Schaeffer first began welcoming folks with questions to Chalet les Melezes in 1955. By the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century a new generation of lay evangelicals had created new, financially sustainable study center models marked more by intellectual curiosity and a sense of geographical place than by suspicion of the secular academy. In the process, leaders of these Christian communities effectively launched a new study center movement focused on maintaining a hospitable and faithful presence at some of North America’s most elite universities.

¹⁴⁶ “What Is a Study Center?” Consortium of Christian Study Centers,” <https://studycentersonline.org/about/what-is-a-study-center/> (accessed May 2, 2016).

Conclusion

In June of 2014 Bowdoin Christian Fellowship made the front page of the *New York Times*. It was a distinction the members of the Bowdoin College campus ministry would have rather avoided. After forty years as an evangelical presence on the campus of the Brunswick, Maine liberal arts college, the group received notice that Bowdoin would no longer recognize their chapter of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship as an official campus ministry.¹ The college's decision stemmed from a new antidiscrimination policy based on a 2010 Supreme Court ruling, which supported a public California law school's constitutional right to deny funding and recognition to student groups like the Christian Legal Society that maintained exclusive criteria for leadership.² At Bowdoin, the Bowdoin Christian Fellowship had always required that its leaders be Christians. Unable to reach a compromise between the college's bias policy and their conviction that a Christian ministry should be led by individuals who are themselves Christians, the ministry lost student activities funding and long-time volunteer advisers Robert and Sim Gregory lost swipe card access to university property.³

Amid these losses, members of the one-time Bowdoin Christian Fellowship found a new direction by looking to the evangelical study center movement. Since the late

¹ Michael Paulson, "Colleges and Evangelicals Collide on Bias Policy," *The New York Times*, June 9, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/10/us/colleges-and-evangelicals-collide-on-bias-policy.html>; Robert B. Gregory, "Bowdoin: One Year Later," *First Things*, <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2015/06/one-year-later> (accessed October 12, 2016).

² The case was *Christian Legal Society v. Martinez*. For more, see Robert Barnes, "Supreme Court to Consider Case against California Law School," *The Washington Post*, April 18, 2010, sec. Religion, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/17/AR2010041702908.html>; Charles J. Russo, "Mergens v. Westside Community Schools at Twenty-Five and Christian Legal Society v. Martinez: From Live and Let Live to My Way or the Highway?," *Brigham Young University Education & Law Journal* 2 (June 1, 2015): 453–80.

³ Michael Paulson, "Colleges and Evangelicals Collide on Bias Policy," *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/10/us/colleges-and-evangelicals-collide-on-bias-policy.html> (accessed June 9, 2016); Gregory, "Bowdoin: One Year Later."

1960s when the work of Francis Schaeffer and James Houston helped a generation of evangelicals engage the complexities of their society by founding free-standing spiritual and educational communities, many of them near university campuses, the study center movement had sought to help students balance the biblical command to love God with heart *and* mind. For the Gregorys and Christian students at Bowdoin, this model was extremely attractive. Not only did it offer an intellectually vibrant form of evangelicalism well-suited to university life, the model of a freestanding study center located adjacent to a university promised campus access without the restrictions of university policies. Within a year the Gregorys were able to found the Joseph and Alice McKeen Study Center and join Trotter's Consortium of Christian Study Centers (CCSC).⁴ "It is a paradox," Robert Gregory noted in the wake of these events, "that barriers of exclusion often create stronger communities of inclusion." Now rather than existing as a relatively self-contained InterVarsity chapter, Christian students at the McKeen Study Center are also part of a growing network of North American Christian study centers.⁵

In their turn toward the study center model, the Gregorys and their students at Bowdoin were not alone. As of December 2016, of the twenty-two member study centers in the Consortium, at least thirteen have been founded since 2000. Nine of these thirteen have been founded since 2010.⁶ This small but notable surge in the founding of

⁴ Gregory, "Bowdoin: One Year Later."

⁵ In some ways the phenomenon that Gregory notes here is similar to Rod Dreher's much-discussed "Benedict Option," which calls Christians neither to aggressive culture war nor fearful retreat, but rather to solidifying their commitment to their own local faith communities. For more, see Rod Dreher, *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation* (NY: Sentinel, 2017); Rod Dreher, "The Idea of a Christian Village: How to Conserve and Strengthen Christians in a Culture Hostile to Our Faith. An Exclusive Excerpt from *The Benedict Option*, *Christianity Today* (March 2017): 35-41.

⁶ For a list of the Consortium of Christian Study Center member study centers, see "Member Study Centers: Consortium of Christian Study Centers," <https://studycentersonline.org/membership/member-study-centers/> (accessed December 20, 2016). The CCSC website offers hyperlinks to the website of each member study center. Some of these websites give

university-based study centers represents a third generation of evangelical attempts to create spaces marked by hospitality, vibrant spirituality, and intellectual vitality.

The vast majority of the faith and learning communities in the CCSC can be traced back to some degree to the work of Francis and Edith Schaeffer and/or James M. Houston.⁷ While mid-century evangelical leaders like Harold J. Ockenga, Carl F. H. Henry and the “Cambridge evangelicals” did much to “awaken” the evangelical mind from the doldrums of the fundamentalist era, the mind they roused was largely a white, male, clerical one.⁸ To a significant degree it was Schaeffer, Houston, and the institutions they founded that helped push this intellectual and theological engagement beyond the walls of evangelical churches and seminaries. Together L’Abri and Regent College helped postwar evangelicals—especially baby boomers—navigate countercultural angst, unprecedented prosperity, and the shallowness of artistic and intellectual engagement within the evangelical subculture in profoundly powerful and attractive ways. By alerting North American evangelicals to the deep cultural heritage of Christianity and the Reformed emphasis on thinking Christianly about all areas of life, Schaeffer and Houston offered evangelicals in North America a model of community that shaped their spiritual, intellectual, and cultural aspirations.

histories and founding dates. Many do not, so I attained founding dates for many study centers through emails and/or phone calls.

⁷ An example of a study center that looks to a different model is the Rivendell Institute located adjacent to Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Rivendell focuses on sustaining the work of Christian graduate students and established scholars. In these emphases, Rivendell follows a trajectory similar to the Tyndale House at Cambridge University rather than a Schaeffer-influenced model. David Mahan, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, phone interview, May 24, 2016, author’s possession.

⁸ Owen Strachan, *Awakening the Evangelical Mind: An Intellectual History of the Neo-Evangelical Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015).

As spiritual communities L'Abri and Regent ushered many Baby Boomers into lives of Christian discipleship. L'Abri, the more evangelistic of the two ministries, saw more conversions. It also became a leading example of a prayerful, culturally sensitive version of Christian spirituality. Unlike Houston and the scholars at Regent College, the Schaeffers were first and foremost missionaries, committed to reaching Europeans and then a broader counterculture generation disillusioned with western culture and established forms of Christianity. Through their hospitality, fireside chats and later through their books and films, Francis and Edith Schaeffer pastored a generation, inspiring in many of them a longing to live lives of prayer and to cultivate a "true spirituality" that could stand up against the shallowness of American affluence and an evangelical subculture largely devoid of imagination.

In Vancouver, the cohort of primarily Plymouth Brethren and Anglican scholars who crafted Regent's identity in its early years also played a role in shaping the spirituality of a generation of countercultural baby boomers. In its first decade, Regent's unique influence on North American spirituality was primarily two-fold. Almost alone within North American evangelicalism Regent was able to convey and then disseminate to a large evangelical audience a spirituality focused explicitly on the whole people of God—lay people and clergy alike. At a time when a student generation distrusted hierarchies of any type, the flattening of lay-clerical divide held distinct appeal. Furthermore, because of Houston's emphasis on the importance of personal relationships, Regent also played a part in motivating many evangelicals to invest more deeply in intentional relationships and spiritual friendships. Eventually this emphasis would grow into a new theological discipline of spiritual theology and become one of Regent's most

recognizable legacies.⁹ In the early 1970s, however, Houston's emphasis on the value of persons primarily inspired evangelicals to emphasize the personal above the impersonal realities of their increasingly technological society.

It was a spiritual ethos befitting the time and yet somewhat out of place within North American evangelicalism where Billy Graham's mass rallies and Campus Crusade's national conversion drives were the primary models. Houston's influence stands out against the backdrop of these mass-produced evangelical programs. Regent College, and especially Houston himself, offered a divergent trajectory for evangelicals who favored a more personalized approach. The ministry of L'Abri shared this personalized, "small is beautiful" approach to ministry through the 1950s and much of the 1960s, but eventually shifted toward a program targeting larger and larger audiences. As this study has shown, there was a marked difference between study centers like the C. S. Lewis Institute or the Center for Christian Study, which drew on the example of both L'Abri and Houston's Regent College, and the Ligonier Valley Study Center, which drew primarily, if not exclusively, on Schaeffer's L'Abri as its model. For R. C. Sproul and the Ligonier Valley Study Center, Schaeffer provided a model that began in relationship and moved over time toward a more impersonal methodology. The method of Sproul's Ligonier Valley Study Center followed a similar trajectory from the personal to the technological. For the study centers examined in this project, it was those with a stronger dose of Houston's relationship-centered spirituality that most emphasized personal relationships and the importance of geographical place.

⁹ Houston and then Eugene Peterson would help make Regent College synonymous with the emerging discipline of "spiritual theology." For more on Houston's shift in this direction see, Thomas, "James M. Houston, Pioneering Spiritual Director to Evangelicals," September 1993; Thomas, "James M. Houston, Pioneering Spiritual Director to Evangelicals," December 1993.

By far the most important spiritual contribution of both L'Abri and Regent College to North American evangelicals was their vigorous emphasis on key aspects of Reformed theology, loosely understood.¹⁰ At Regent College Houston's influence and a general Plymouth Brethren impulse made Luther's emphasis on the priesthood of all believers an everyday reality by emphasizing the need for theological education for the *whole people* of God. Together both Regent and L'Abri offered theological education that sought to speak to the *whole creation* of God as well. Like Schaeffer and the ministry of L'Abri, Regent College turned general Reformed principles like common grace and the lordship of Christ over all spheres of creation into a rationale for engaging a wide range of professional and artistic vocations. Both Regent and L'Abri worked from these theological convictions toward engagement with art and culture in ways that propelled them far beyond the efforts of most North America evangelicals in these domains. Furthermore, whether expressed implicitly or explicitly, this Reformed emphasis on the Lordship of Christ over all creation helped launch those who spent time at Regent and/or L'Abri into positions of influence within important sectors of society. As individuals moved on from L'Abri or Regent into the careers in business, politics, and higher education, the Reformed theological convictions they gained in Huemoz or Vancouver played a significant role in catalyzing a vocational revolution within North American evangelicalism.¹¹ While Reformed theologians had emphasized similar theological

¹⁰ By this I mean that it was not only Calvinism that inspired them but also the theology of other early Reformers, most notably Martin Luther.

¹¹ L'Abri's influence across the four key spheres of society (art/culture, politics, education, business) has been well documented by Michael Lindsay, see D. Michael Lindsay, "Evangelicals in the Power Elite: Elite Cohesion Advancing a Movement," *American Sociological Review* 73, no. 1 (February 1, 2008): 60–82; D. Michael Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). No systematic study of Regent's influence has been produced as of yet, but it is possible to piece together a notable array of examples that demonstrate Regent College's influence in these spheres as well. Due to the College's turn toward Asia in the last decades of

principles before, it was Schaeffer and Houston who made them intelligible to Baby Boomers and conveyed them with contagious charisma. This influence across various vocational spheres would continue to expand in the years to come as new ventures like the C. S. Lewis Institute, New College Berkeley, and a small but influential number of well-placed university-based study centers continued to train young people to think Christianly about careers in a wide variety of professions.

This is not to say that L'Abri, Regent, or any of the study centers they inspired were able to fully implement Reformation claims like the priesthood of all believers or the Lordship of Christ over all of life. Sexism, usually latent but sometimes institutionalized, represents one notable example of the imperfect outworking of these theological claims. With the exception of the evangelical community in Berkeley, where voices like Sharon Gallagher, Ginny Hearn, and David Gill spoke out with clarity against gendered language and sexist practices, most of the institutions examined in this study (and many of the study centers they inspired) failed to create fully egalitarian communities. While the situation was most striking at places like L'Abri and the Ligonier Valley Study Center, where women were often funneled into domestic chores and where female teachers like Edith Schaeffer and Jackie Shelton Griffith were exceptions that proved the rule, for decades the institutions treated in this study, as well as most of their lesser known peers, were led almost exclusively by male directors. This was not a

the twentieth century, its influence across the spheres of society may actually be larger and more international now than that of L'Abri.

situation that would change quickly. By 2016 only two of the CCSC twenty-two study centers claimed female directors.¹²

That many of these study centers had close ties to the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), which to this day does not permit women to preach or hold elder positions, made it all the more difficult for women to gain ground in leadership at places like L'Abri, the Ligonier Valley Study Center, and the Center for Christian Study. Only part of the blame can fall on PCA policies, however. Even at places like Regent College, which was in no way affiliated with the PCA, larger evangelical norms and hermeneutical principles resulted in halting openness to women in ministry and leadership positions. While some at Regent like Ward Gasque and Clark Pinnock were champions of female leadership in the church and academy, there were others like J. I. Packer and Bruce Waltke who did not share their view.¹³ Even at Regent, openness to women in church leadership was an ambiguous evangelical openness, not a thoroughgoing enthusiasm.

While these shortcomings are notable and should not be glossed over, against the white, male backdrop of Harold Ockenga and Carl Henry's brand of neo-evangelicalism the institutions examined in this treatment still point, however hesitantly, toward an expanded willingness to open theological investigation to women as equals to their male counterparts. While women in the late 1960s and 1970s might not find many examples on the faculty of Regent College or among the teaching staff of ministries like L'Abri, the Ligonier Valley Study Center, or the Center for Christian Study, the nature of the

¹² The two study centers with female directors are New College Berkeley, which continues to benefit from the long tenure of Susan Phillips and Cogito led by Missy DeRegibus at Hampden-Sydney College in central Virginia.

¹³ Laurel Gasque, W. Ward Gasque, Carl E. Armerding, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, October 23, 2015, Regent College; Thena Ayers, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, October 26, 2015, Regent College; Linda Mercadante, interview by Charles E. Cotherman, phone, December 16, 2015.

training—i.e., training *for the laity*—offered at these places meant that women could study theology with far more freedom at L’Abri or even Sproul’s study center than at many evangelical seminaries at the time.¹⁴ More than a few of the women who cut their theological teeth at Chalet Les Melezes or in Stahlstown, Pennsylvania would go on study for advanced degrees.

Female evangelicals were not the only individuals to benefit from the lay-centric emphases and international appeal of places like Regent College and L’Abri. L’Abri and Regent College were international, and therefore diverse, communities. Both L’Abri and Regent College hosted students from around the globe. During the late 1960s and early 1970s L’Abri was an especially diverse place. Students came to L’Abri from every inhabited continent, and Schaeffer’s works were translated into tens of languages. Those who described L’Abri often mentioned the many languages and nationalities that came together under the roof of Chalet Les Melezes. Because of this, it was not uncommon for the Schaeffers to designate a German table or a French table at meals in order to accommodate guests who did not speak English. Even today, when one listens to Schaeffer’s taped Saturday night conversations, one is struck by the variety of accents one hears in the questions of L’Abri guests.¹⁵ For Sylvester Jacobs, one of the few African Americans who had the time and means to make it to L’Abri, Schaeffer’s community represented one of the most hopeful examples of Christian openness to

¹⁴ For examples of what women faced at some evangelical seminaries, see Thena Ayers, interview; Laurel Gasque, W. Ward Gasque, Carl E. Armerding, interview.

¹⁵ These recordings can be found in the Francis Schaeffer Collection housed in the library of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina.

diversity that he had seen.¹⁶ After years of bitterness in the face of American racism, Jacobs claimed that the Schaeffers and the community at L'Abri "gave me my life back."¹⁷

Regent, too, added significant diversity to North American evangelicalism. From the beginning, Regent was an international venture bringing students and professors together from Britain, Canada, and the United States. Within a few years this international reach expanded, and Regent hosted faculty and students from South America and Australia. Connections between Plymouth Brethren leaders in Britain, North America, South America, and Australia helped ensure Regent's international appeal. Regent's pioneering decision to host its annual Summer School featuring a changing rotation of international and internationally known speakers further aided these efforts. While Regent's fulltime faculty was almost exclusively comprised of white males, its Summer School faculties offered platforms for a more diverse range of emerging evangelical leaders. Over time, Canada's favorable relationship with Asian countries, especially China, would allow the school to further expand this diversity to include students and professors from a number of Asian nations.

As L'Abri and Regent College gained wider reputations as communities defined by cultural engagement, spiritual vitality, intellectual awareness, and diversity, they emerged as appealing pilgrimage sites and ready-made credentials for North American evangelicals, many of whom were baby boomers who had come of age amidst the anti-hierarchical, anti-traditional rhetoric of the secular counterculture and the emerging Jesus

¹⁶ For an assessment of Jacobs's positive assessment of Schaeffer and L'Abri, see Durez, *An Authentic Life*, 165-166. For Jacobs's own first impression of Schaeffer, see Sylvester Jacobs, and Linette Martin, *Born Black* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 98-107, 116-127.

¹⁷ Jacobs and Martin, *Born Black*, 116-127.

Movement. If a young American evangelical wanted to expand his or her options for campus ministry or other forms of para-church ministry in the United States, a short stint at L'Abri or Regent College sometimes seemed to be all the credential—and credibility—one needed. During the late 1960s and through much of the 1970s, L'Abri and Regent College both functioned as places where young evangelicals with a countercultural bent could both *belong* and *become*. Both of these place offered spiritual edification, intellectual stimulation, and the warmth of community while simultaneously working implicitly to expand the aspirations and relational networks of the young evangelicals who visited.

In the end, it was precisely this ability to fuel the imaginations and aspirations of young evangelicals that was one of the most significant and transferable legacies of L'Abri and Regent College. The aspirations places like Regent College and L'Abri fueled were by no means strictly spiritual or intellectual. By offering the cosmopolitan culture of Europe—be it trips to art museums, classy styles of dress, or connections to British culture and famous British evangelicals—the first generation of evangelical study centers functioned as training grounds for upward social mobility and heightened academic hopes at a time when many American evangelicals were encountering new levels of education and affluence. At L'Abri and Regent College ordinary evangelicals—most of whom were lay people who would go on to careers in fields like education, politics, or business—had the chance to rub shoulders with some of the most exciting and intellectually astute evangelicals of their time. Seldom, if ever, had so many average evangelicals had the chance to sit down for lunch or a one-on-one conversation with evangelical superstars of the caliber of those who regularly stopped by L'Abri or spent

three weeks teaching at Regent's Summer School. No longer were figures like Francis Schaeffer, John Stott, F. F. Bruce, or Hans Rookmaaker just names on the binding of books; rather, they became conversation partners, friends, and personal examples of thinking evangelicalism at its best.

The aspirational dimension of life at L'Abri or Regent was attributable to more than the high caliber of those who led or taught at these institutions; it was also a byproduct of the diverse pool of people who studied at L'Abri and Regent. Neither Huemoz nor Vancouver were sites easily accessible to evangelicals without some means and time for leisure. Geographical distance meant that both Regent College and L'Abri were frequented by a disproportionate number of evangelicals who came from families of some means. It was simply harder to get to Huemoz or Vancouver than to the local tent revival or Billy Graham crusade. The fact that Schaeffer's return to the United States in the mid-1960s focused primarily on Boston area-universities and a handful of evangelicalism's most prestigious liberal-arts institutions likely contributed to the number of well-off, high-powered evangelicals who made a Swiss pilgrimage. Once at Chalet Les Melezes or a Regent College Summer School these individuals formed lasting friendships and constructed evangelical networks that would serve them well for decades to come.

Of course, there were still many who found their way to L'Abri or Regent who did not come from families of particularly noteworthy financial status. For middle-class evangelicals raised in the cultural insularity of North American evangelicalism the aspirational dimension of these alternative evangelical learning communities was staggering. Not only did evangelical visitors encounter ideas, art, and teachers who inspired them to lift their gaze above the quotidian evangelistic programs and second-rate

art that defined many of their churches, they also made friends with fellow travelers who hailed from educational institutions and positions of cultural affluence that far surpassed the opportunities on offer in small-town America or in ethnic enclaves like Linda Mercadante's parents' store on Bloomfield Avenue in New Jersey. Thus in both their teachers and their peers, middlebrow North American evangelicals found spiritual, intellectual, and cultural norms to aspire to when they made the pilgrimage to L'Abri or Regent College in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These aspirations would serve them well in the years to come by equipping them with models of spiritual, intellectual, and cultural success and by initiating them into relational networks defined not by shared backgrounds but rather by shared experiences and theological perspectives they gained within these spiritual, intellectual, and aspirational communities. As many of those who found motivation at L'Abri or Regent College pursued advanced education or moved into professional life, the relational connections they formed at L'Abri and Regent would do much to sustain and empower their efforts for decades to come.¹⁸

To a lesser degree the institutions that modeled themselves on L'Abri and Regent College followed a similar tri-part trajectory by cultivating explicit identities as spiritual and intellectual communities with an implicit identity as communities that also held some aspirational allure. Leaders in these communities foregrounded the spiritual and intellectual components of their influence and usually failed to notice, or at least mention, the aspirational quality of their ministries. During its first decade, Sproul's study center, like the Center for Christian Study and the C. S. Lewis Institute, offered a range of

¹⁸ As sociologist Michael Lindsay noted so convincingly, the relational networks evangelicals formed at L'Abri helped nurture cross-pollination across a variety of fields, Sylvester Jacobs and Linette Martin, *Born Black* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977).

programming that alternated between lectures on topics of theological interest and practicums emphasizing the lived-out dimensions of discipleship. Thus, like L'Abri and Regent College before them, second- and third-generation study centers were places where the head and the heart were taken seriously.

Yet even when larger social or cultural aspirations went unmentioned, almost without exception these spiritual and intellectual communities also followed the lead of L'Abri and Regent College by functioning as aspirational communities, geared to equip young evangelicals with the cultural awareness and relational networks—both with other students and with evangelical celebrities—that would serve them well when they eventually settled down into professional life. The C.S. Lewis Institute, the Center for Christian Study, and New College Berkeley each tried hosting a Regent-like summer school featuring A-list evangelical celebrities. Though Sproul's Ligonier Valley Study Center never hosted a full summer school, Sproul did attempt to bring evangelicals of international fame to Stahlstown for lectures. In addition to playing into a rising celebrity culture within American evangelicalism and American society as a whole, these efforts further expanded the range of individuals who had the chance to come into contact with the best and brightest thinkers in English-speaking evangelicalism.

Given this aspirational appeal, it is notable that many of the most influential study centers formed in the second generation were based in the contiguous United States, thereby making it easier for more plain-folk evangelicals to come into contact with internationally known speakers as well as the ideas and communities of learners that accompanied them. In so doing this second generation of study centers expanded the reach of the spiritual, intellectual, and aspirational community L'Abri and Regent first

represented. Of course, there were fewer fresh flowers, New York styles, and British accents at these newer study centers, but they still represented an engagement with art, culture, and the intellect that often exceeded the previous experiences of the young evangelicals who came through their doors.

This is not to say, however, that all of those who made their way to the Ligonier Valley Study Center, New College Berkeley, the C. S. Lewis Institute, or the Charlottesville Center for Christian Study hailed from a cultural wasteland. With the exception of Sproul's rural study center, each of the other study centers taken up in this analysis was situated in communities defined by affluence and above-average cultural capital. Even Sproul's rural study center was primarily funded throughout much of its first decade by the patronage of a millionaire donor and individuals in a handful of affluent churches in Pittsburgh and Cincinnati. In the years to come this trend would hold steady. At the time of this writing the vast majority of study centers within the Consortium of Christian Study Centers are located at elite universities where alumni and parents often have deeper pockets and where students who matriculate frequently come with higher levels of intellectual and cultural awareness. For many plain-folk evangelicals, these study centers may be geographically closer than Regent College or L'Abri, but stringent admission requirements at the schools they serve mean that the entrance into many evangelical study centers is still *de facto* reserved for a select few. In this way, evangelical study centers may actually be following trends in American society as a whole that point to growing gaps between classes.¹⁹ It seems extremely likely that the

¹⁹ For examples of the growing divide between classes in America and the resulting loss of opportunity capital, see Charles Murray, *Coming Apart: The State of White America, 1960-2010* (New York: Crown Forum, 2013); Robert D Putnam, *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015).

lay evangelical mind is doing fairly well among the subset of North American evangelicals who have found their way into financial security and more elite institutions, while less financially affluent and less well-educated evangelicals may actually experience fewer opportunities for meaningful lay theological education today than they did in the 1970s. Francis Schaeffer was certainly not a perfect tutor, but he was better than gurus like providential historian David Barton and young earth creationist Ken Ham who hold pride of place in most plain-folk evangelical circles today. Furthermore, as the video revolution morphed into the wireless age it has become easier and easier for a host of individuals—dilettantes and charletans, alike—to gain the attention of plain-folk evangelicals who may have an interest in cultivating their minds but little framework for analyzing the merit of various educational options.

These realities cannot be overlooked and will continue to be a cause for concern within the evangelical world and American society as a whole for decades to come. The fact remains, however, that evangelicals who do have the chance to visit one of the growing number of evangelical study centers will typically encounter ministries that still follow an earlier precedent by functioning as spiritual, intellectual, an aspirational communities where students learn to love God, develop their minds, and form relational networks and vocational aspirations that will shape the rest of their personal and professional lives. In this way study centers are still communities where young people can learn to not just *think* but also to *belong*, *believe* and *become*. They are certainly not accessible to all evangelicals, but the fact that they are accessible to an increasing number, thanks to the recent growth in study centers and their movement in recent years to the campuses of less prestigious universities, means that at the very least a small, but

likely influential, group of young evangelicals will continue to foster the ability to “think Christianly” about their careers and their world.

Finally, it is important to emphasize the degree to which place matters to the institutions that make up the evangelical study center movement. From the start communities like L’Abri and Regent were defined not just by *what* they did but also by *where* they did it. Both the geographical location (e.g., the Swiss Alps, adjacent to a university) and the cultivation of institutional space (designed for open hospitality) mattered. At L’Abri and Regent College the natural beauty of the Swiss Alps or Vancouver’s mountain-backed skyline were important complements to the practice of prayer, study, and conversation. The beauty of place was not simply a matter of topography. Places like L’Abri and Regent College also had an internal beauty marked by a deep emphasis on cultivating personal relationships and deep hospitality—a practice the Schaeffers and Gasques, among others, cultivated as carefully as they did their artistic sensibilities.

While second and third generation study centers could not recreate Alpine panoramas, they could cultivate a sense of place devoted to fostering hospitable environments where relational kindness, inviting spaces, and attention to beauty (not to mention large quantities of free food) were everyday realities. Institutions in the second generation of study centers followed L’Abri and Regent College into the intentional cultivation of an ethos of hospitality. For later study centers, the impetus for creating hospitable spaces would come less from the increasingly obscure L’Abri or the increasingly seminary-like Regent College, but from Drew Trotter’s expanded 5,000 square foot Charlottesville Center for Christian Study. It was Trotter’s Charlottesville

study center that offered Karl Johnson a tangible model when he sought to found a ministry dedicated to cultivating Christian hearts and minds at Cornell University in the late 1990s.²⁰ For Missy DeRegibus, a graduate of Regent College and the founder of the Cogito, a study center at Virginia's Hampden-Sydney College, it was the Charlottesville study center and Trotter's encouragement, not her time at Regent College, where she earned her masters degree, that inspired her to seek to create a study center-type ministry in 2010.²¹

For the Charlottesville study center, it was the expansion of their building that paved the way for an orientation defined more by an ethos of hospitality than by its educational or discipleship-based programming. After the completion of the Center for Christian Study addition in 1997, the study center gained a larger national profile and stepped up its presence as a ministry of hospitality to undergrads at the University of Virginia. Located just off campus, adjacent to Sorority Row, and near popular shops and restaurants, the inviting space of the study center made it a prime stopping place for Christian and non-Christians students alike. This was (and continues to be) especially true during finals week when the study center offers study space and three free meals a day for the entirety of exam week.

Other study centers took notice. Many followed the Center for Christian Study's lead by crafting their identity, at least in part, by the contours of the buildings they occupied. For the Charlottesville Center for Christian Study the ability to welcome students into an inviting building with rooms for small group and large group study, a bookstore, and a library mattered. The story is much the same for the Chesterton House,

²⁰ Karl Johnson, "About Chesterton House: For Charlie Cotherman," March 7, 2016, In author's possession.

²¹ Missy DeRegibus to Charles E. Cotherman, "Dissertation on Study Centers," April 6, 2016.

which is centered in a large Tudor mansion replete with an industrial kitchen, large living and dining rooms, and a reading room stocked with books and over fifteen periodicals.²² The recently founded Upper House study center at the University of Wisconsin provides a model of place on an even larger scale. Located at the heart of the campus, Upper House harnessed the financial endorsement of a private foundation to design and build a state-of-the-art study center defined by architectural ingenuity and impressive aesthetics.²³ Upper House's innovative funding model and design have caught the attention of large donors and private foundations across the United States, a reality that may point to new trends in the evangelical study center movement in the decades ahead.²⁴

One of the likely reasons for the current interest in Upper House stems from a sense of concern among some U. S. evangelicals regarding religious freedom and the future of para-church ministries on secular campuses. As the example of Bowdoin's McKeen Study Center demonstrates, importance of place seems destined only to increase as study centers take on a variation of Scheaffer's concept of "shelter" by providing Christian ministries physical spaces where they can minister to students while avoiding the reach of university anti-bias policies. Tapping into a deep-seated impulse within the Christian study center movement, some evangelicals see study centers as a means of navigating secular universities without having to fully embrace the pluralism and secularity that define these environments.²⁵

²² "Our Facilities," <http://chestertonhouse.org/about/our-facilities> (accessed November 4, 2016).

²³ "History (Our Story)," *Upper House*, <http://www.upperhouse.org/about-us/history-our-story/> (accessed October 10, 2016).

²⁴ John Terrill, interview by Charles Cotherman, August 4, 2016.

²⁵ Thomas Albert Howard, *Should I Send My (Christian) Child to a (Secular) State University?*, February 16, 2014. Furthermore, as Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor has shown, even our idea of "secularity" is harder to pin down than we might even assume. According to Taylor, even as people of faith seek to avoid one version of secularity our "modern more order" assures that they cannot help but accept

Like L'Abri, however, the concept of shelter that still subtly marks many of the second and third generation study centers examined in this study or included among the membership of the CCSC is multifaceted. While university study centers do function as shelters in the midst of university life, many current leaders within the movement attempt to avoid framing the role of these centers in isolationist terms. While it is true that study centers often emerged as places where students could find a reprieve from the winds of liberalism and secularism that sweep through the modern university system, these are not the only ways in which one can understand how study centers, as geographical places and relational hubs, function as shelters. Within the inviting confines of the study centers that make up the CCSC, students can also find shelter in relational and practical ways few would criticize. In the midst of the perpetual busyness of university life, study centers function as third places—between the classroom and the dorm room—where students can relax, build relationships, find spiritual and physical nourishment, and craft and explore personal and vocational identities. Some study centers offer professional counseling services at no cost. Many offer study space, coffee, and food with no accompanying obligation that students take part in the study center's programming or a similar campus ministry. Increasingly these study centers have come to exchange sociologist James Davidson Hunter's language of "culture war" for his more recent emphasis on "faithful presence." Seeking to be a faithful presence within the universities and communities where they are located, a third generation of Christian study centers continues to develop spiritual, intellectual, and aspirational communities capable of awakening the hearts, minds, and social and vocational aspirations of new generations of evangelicals. Few of

other consequences of secularity. For more, see Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2007).

those who walk through the doors of these study centers today have heard the names Francis and Edith Schaeffer, fewer still James Houston, but the influence of the communities these evangelical entrepreneurs built continues to shape some of the most innovative efforts to help the evangelical laity in North America engage their hearts, minds, and culture.

Of course, the evangelical study center movement is not the only significant indicator of an expanding lay evangelical mind in North America. As individuals like Mark Noll and Michael Lindsay have shown, efforts to free the evangelical mind from the “scandal” that once characterized it have stemmed from multiple sources and taken a diverse array of trajectories.²⁶ The Lilly Foundation’s funding of young evangelical scholars, the rise of a cohort of leading Christian scholars in the fields of history and especially philosophy, and the faithful work of notable institutions like Wheaton College, Calvin College, and the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, among many others, have played a role in helping many evangelicals think with greater rigor and deeper theological consistency. L’Abri, Regent College, and the study centers they inspired are an important, unique, and often overlooked part of this larger story.

As this history has shown, the existence and continuing work of a small notable group of study centers points to the growing number of evangelicals who have come to believe in the importance of cultivating faith that transcends simple pietism or religious platitudes. Indeed, a general feature of the study centers treated in this work is a willingness to wrestle with the tough questions posed by contemporary culture and

²⁶ Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power*; Mark A. Noll, *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 151-167.

academic advances.²⁷ Still, blind spots and noticeable inadequacies remain. Though women likely make up more than half of those who participate in every one of these study centers, they are grossly underrepresented in positions of top leadership.

Furthermore, as opposed to the diversity represented by L'Abri in the 1960s and 1970s, study centers today often skew extremely white compared to the general university population.

These are important issues that evangelical study centers will be forced to address in the decades to come. They do not, however, mitigate the significant degree to which study centers represent one of the most enduring and visible expressions of the awakening of the lay evangelical mind that Francis Schaeffer and James Houston helped catalyze in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Together Schaeffer and Houston provided a trajectory for upwardly mobile evangelicals to gain theological insight outside of seminaries and without joining the clerical profession. In the process they awakened the lay evangelical mind to a range of vocational possibilities and provided a framework for expanding the theological, social, and cultural imaginations of middlebrow American evangelicals. They also connected a generation of some of North American evangelicalism's brightest minds with others who shared their faith as well as their intellectual and cultural ambition. For the next forty years a disproportionate number of influential evangelicals would share connections to Schaeffer and/or Houston. By the end of the 1970s both Schaeffer and Houston would shift their attention to other initiatives—for Schaeffer it would be politics, for Houston, spiritual theology. Yet even as their personal trajectories changed, many of their students picked up on their earlier emphases

²⁷ Worthen found the same to be true for many at many of the study centers and campus ministries she described in Molly Worthen, "Hallelujah College," *The New York Times*, January 16, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/17/opinion/sunday/hallelujah-college.html>.

by founding and continuing spiritual, intellectual, and aspirational communities that would continue to usher new generations of Christians into thoughtful engagement with their faith, their culture, and each other.

Archives List

Alderman Library Clippings Files, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

Center for Christian Study Archives, Center for Christian Study, Charlottesville, VA

Christian World Liberation Front Collection, Graduate Theological Union Library,
Berkeley, CA

Francis A. Schaeffer Collection, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake
Forest, NC

James Houston Papers, Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Keith Sheppard Grant Collection, Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Ligonier Ministries Archives, Ligonier Ministries, Sanford, FL

Michael Collision Collection, Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

New College Berkeley Archives, New College Berkeley, Berkeley, CA

In addition to formal archives, this project also made use of the personal archives of

Jane Spencer Bopp

David W. Gill

Dale Myers

Beat Steiner

Drew Trotter

Interview List

Bernard Adeney-Risakotta, Skype, August 16, 2016
Carl Armerding, Vancouver, Canada, October 23, 2015
Thena Ayers, Vancouver, Canada, October 26, 2015
Stuart Boehmig, Facetime interview, May 23, 2016
Jane Spencer Bopp, Charlottesville, VA, April 11, 2014.
Wade Bradshaw, Charlottesville, VA, September 16, 2015
Kenneth Elzinga, Charlottesville, VA, February 28, 2014
Sharon Gallagher, Berkeley, CA, December 3, 2015
Ward and Laurel Gasque, Vancouver, Canada, October 23, 2015
David Gill, Skype interview, December 15, 2015
Jackie Shelton Griffith, Skype interview, May 31, 2016
Os Guinness, Mclean, VA, October 19, 2015
Walter and Virginia Hearn, Berkeley, CA, December 1, 2015
James Hiskey, phone interview, February 23, 2015
James M. Houston, Vancouver, Canada, October 24, 2015
Claire Brittain Kimmel, Skype interview, April 7, 2016
David Mahan, phone interview, May 23, 2016
Earl Palmer, phone interview, August 17, 2016
Susan and Steve Phillips, Berkeley, CA, December 2, 2015
Daryl Richman, phone interview, May 27, 2014
Jack Rowley, phone interview, April 4, 2016
R. C. Sproul, phone interview, February 12, 2016
R. C. Sproul, Jr, phone interview, May, 24, 2016
Beat Steiner, Charlottesville, VA, April 9, 2016.
Beat and Barb Steiner, phone interview, 25 March 2014, March 8, 2016.
John Terrill, phone interview, August 4, 2016
Andrew J. Trotter, Charlottesville, VA, March 6, 2014, March 27, 2014, April 6, 2016.
David Turner, Charlottesville, VA, April 22, 2014.
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