

QUIVERFULL: FAMILY REFORMATION AND
INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for Departmental Honors in
The Department of Sociology & Anthropology
Texas Christian University
Fort Worth, Texas

Date: December 10, 2012

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INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY

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INTRODUCTION

The Quiverfull Movement has received increased media attention in recent years, especially following the publication of Kathryn Joyce's *Quiverfull: Inside the Christian Patriarchy Movement* in 2010. Joyce and other writers, often referencing her book, have portrayed these families' decision to have large numbers of children primarily as a strategy of political warfare for the Religious Right. (Joyce 2009:189-194) I disagree with this portrayal. After researching Quiverfull literature, film, blogs, and sermons, the rhetoric suggests that the primary motivations for having large numbers of children are religious, not political, although the potential political ramifications (i.e. more conservative voters) are acknowledged. The focus of the rhetoric is on allowing God full control of family size, so that he can send forth as children to serve him and spread the Gospel. (Campbell, 2003:181-182)

Families unite around this shared ideology in order to form an intentionally culturally-separate community, that, while not geographical isolated, in many ways seeks to function outside of mainstream American culture. Networks of like-minded churches and families compose the foundation of this community. Social networking, blogging, and conferences all help to reinforce these bonds and to spread the Quiverfull ideology, an ideology centered around the model of the "Biblical family." In this community, the "Biblical Family" chain of command is as follows: a wife submits to her husband and children submit to their parents, while the husband and father submits to God. In addition, the family ideally functions as a cohesive unit socially and economically. (Phillips and Phillips 2011a; Phillips and Phillips 2011d) I will demonstrate the ways in which the rhetoric within the Quiverfull community reinforces the importance of the "Biblical Family" model. The promoted ideals for economic structures, for worship, for marriage, and for education all seek to build and maintain this model of family life.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Throughout the research process, both my research and the focus of it have evolved. I originally planned to conduct interviews with families whose beliefs fit the typology outlined for this project. This religious typology included the following characteristics: evangelical Protestantism; holding the view of the Bible as the inerrant word of God; rejection of all forms of birth control and natural family planning on religious grounds; and believing that men are the spiritual heads of their households. I sent out several letters and e-mails to families who fit this typology, based on previous interviews they had done with news media or their own writings. My original focus was the religious socialization of the children within these homes, particularly the seemingly high retention rate of children to the faith. However, after sending out my interview requests, I received no response.

As a result, the focus of my project shifted to the ways in which rhetoric regarding the perceived optimal socialization of children and preferred family and community structures reflect gender ideals within the community. While I was unable to obtain personal interviews, I still had access to a myriad of primary source materials: blogs, books, online videos, films, a radio show, and recorded sermons. I was also able to conduct participant observation at the San Antonio Independent Christian Film Festival organized by Vision Forum Ministries, a prominent homeschool organization. In addition, I viewed sessions during Vision Forum's Reformation of Food and Family Conference via live-stream video.

I compiled a list of books, sermons, radio shows, blogs, and films produced by Quiverfull community members to read, listen to, or view and analyze in order to glean insights on gender dynamics within this community. Prior to beginning my formal project, I found many of the blogs I later consulted during my research through my interest in cooking and crafting. It became

apparent that an active online community of Quiverfull mommy bloggers existed. I used the blogrolls of the original blogs I found to expand upon my list. One of the larger homeschool organizations promoting this lifestyle, Bill Gothard's Advanced Training Institute, also provides a list of blogs published by ATI families that I used. I have included an appendix with a full list of the blogs reviewed.

I also referenced blog entries from these mothers on homeschooling and on childrearing, specifically which books and media materials these mothers advocated using with children to pass on their values on gender and family life.¹ I combined these mothers' suggested material with the books identified by Kathryn Joyce as some of the founding texts of this community; these included Rick and Jan Hess' book *A Full Quiver: Family Planning and the Lordship of Christ* and Mary Pride's *The Way Home: Beyond Feminism, Back to Reality*. (Joyce 2009:133-136) Lastly, I searched one of the largest Quiverfull homeschooling catalogues, Vision Forum, (which itself served as an additional resource) for books on the subjects of gender and family life. I also added films from the film festival I attended, as well as films from previous festivals that addressed the issues that I explored.

I reached the conclusions presented in this paper through both the textual analysis of the primary source materials that I collected and my own experiences and field notes taken as a participant observer at the 2012 San Antonio Independent Christian Film Festival. It was during my attendance of the festival that I had to most directly confront the issue of my own identity in relation to this project.

POSITIONALITY

When I entered the convention center where the film festival was being held, it quickly became apparent that I was (as far as I am aware) the only single woman on her own in

attendance. Everyone else seemed to be traveling in family groups or it at least circulating among groups of friends. In addition, I was also one of a handful of women in pants (even if they were covered with a tunic that just grazed my knees). I really had entered a world both familiar and foreign to my own, much like Alan Peshkin's description of the "terra exotica" of the conservative, Christian school environment he encountered. (Peshkin 1988:15) My status as an outsider was intensified throughout my time there. At the festival, I encountered an absolutist setting similar to the Christian school environment that Peshkin encountered during his research for the book, *God's Choice*. The rhetoric of the conference (and of the literature I consulted beforehand) clearly painted a picture of a worldview in which, much like the worldview Peshkin encountered, there are two clear sides believed to be in a battle for the American cultural landscape: Christians and non-Christians (often referred to as "secularists"). (Peshkin 1988:9-17) While I had certainly read and listened to similar messages prior to my experiences at the film festival, it is entirely different to be surrounded by a group of people listening and responding positively to a pastor, more or less, calling people like myself the enemy (i.e. feminists and non-Christians).

I am coming to this research project as a secular homeschooler, a feminist, and as someone who does not currently identify with any specific religious tradition. However, I am also coming to this with a history of frequent interaction with different forms of evangelical Christianity throughout my childhood and adult life. My religious upbringing was somewhat eclectic. I attended an Episcopalian school for part of my childhood and participated on and off in Baptist churches, as a result of my mother's Southern Baptist background. However, at home I was being taught universalism, and my mother left the Southern Baptist tradition over teachings on soteriology, gender, and sexuality. The majority of my friends and classmates during my time in

public school were also members of different evangelical Christian traditions, and, as a result, I often attended church with them, as well.

My religious and, especially, educational background and my maternal families' religious background made me a marginal insider to the community I studied. Some of my mother's family holds very similar gender and marriage ideals to those held by the Quiverfull community (with the exception disagreeing with the community's stance on birth control). I encountered many of the feelings that Dr. Miguel Leatham experienced as a "Novus Ordo" Catholic during his study of the traditionalist Catholic colony, Nueva Jerusalén. (Leatham 2001:81-85) I struggled specifically with my identity as a homeschooler, since, within this community, homeschooling is seen as almost an exclusively conservative, Christian pursuit. As a secular homeschooler, I was both an insider and outsider in relation to this community.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This Quiverfull community is a successor to organizations, like the Moral Majority, that was formed to try to reverse the changes that the 1960s sexual revolution brought to the general American perceptions of gender, family, and marriage. In fact, one of the founders of Vision Forum, one of the largest advocates of the Quiverfull ideology, is the son of Howard Phillips, one of the Moral Majority's founding members. Quiverfull gender ideals are rooted in the early conservative evangelical backlash to feminism, especially evangelical feminism, through complementarianism. As Dr. Elizabeth Flowers explores in her book, *Into the Pulpit: Southern Baptist Women and Power since World War II*, complementarianism was formulated as a reaction against evangelical feminism and asserts that men and women have inherently different and equal (in worth) roles in marriage, family, and church life. Complementarianism excludes

women from preaching and requires women to submit to their husband as a reflection of God's created order (i.e. Adam was created first Genesis). (Flowers 2012:50-54)

This justification and promotion of idealized gender roles through the interpretation of a group's creation myth mirrors the practice in the NRMs studied by Dr. Susan J. Palmer. The use of the creation myth underlies the importance of adhering to gendered norms by placing them in context of the creation of the natural world, portraying the group's gender roles as inherent to human nature. (Palmer 1993:346-347) The Quiverfull ideology builds upon this by going further than previous groups in attempting to restore what they perceive to be the correct Christian perspective on sex. In this ideology, birth control is rejected as the gateway to abortion; basically, the community rejects birth control, because attempting to control family size in any way is seen as usurping God's authority. The connection between sex and the possibility of procreation cannot be acceptably severed within this worldview.

The genesis of the Quiverfull movement is generally traced to the publication of two books: *The Way Home: Beyond Feminism, Back to Reality* by Mary Pride in 1985 and *Full Quiver* by Rick and Jan Hess in 1990. (Joyce 2009:134-135) In choosing to "let God decide how many children" (Duggar and Duggar 2008:42) join their family, couples reject all forms of birth control and natural family planning. It also important to note that in the latest edition of her book, Mary Pride, while still advocating many of the beliefs held by this community, has rejected the claim that she started any movement. (Pride 2010:219)

This community came into the national spotlight following the airing of Figure 8 Film's *14 Children and Pregnant Again* on the Discovery Health Channel and The Learning Channel. It was also my first introduction to the Quiverfull ideology. As a feminist and as someone who has grown up surrounded by various forms of evangelical Christianity, I was intrigued. In addition, I

received more exposure to this ideology as my parents searched for support groups and curricula for my sister and I as secular homeschoolers. The family featured in this film, the Duggar family, has repeatedly been referred to as “Quiverfull” in the media. While the Duggars have explicitly rejected the term as a self-identifier, they do hold many of the beliefs held by this community. (Duggar and Duggar 2011:92)

Their rejection of the term raises an important issue among these families: the dubious perception of the term “Quiverfull.” The term “Quiverfull” originated from within the community; however, the attention brought to the term through the publication of Kathryn Joyce’s book has largely focused on the potential political ramifications of these families choosing to have a large numbers of children.² I believe this focus on political motivations may be what makes some families who hold these beliefs reluctant to use the term as a self-identifier. When asked if she and her husband were Quiverfull, one mommy blogger answered yes, but she was very clear to define what that term means to her (i.e. it is a description of a religious belief, not a political movement).³ I think this gets to the heart of the issue. Many of these families do not conceptualize their lifestyles as the embodiment of a political movement with religious undertones. Rather, they generally acknowledge the political ramifications of having a higher than the average number of children, but see this choice as an expression of their faith in God.⁴

In light of the controversy surrounding the label, Quiverfull, I propose that a new name be considered for this community that might better reflect the families’ perception of their religious and social lives. The term “Biblical family” (or variations of it) is ubiquitous in the primary source materials that I reviewed during my study. Therefore, I suggest the term, Biblical Family Community or, the term used by one of the leading pastors within this community,

“Biblical Family Reformation.”⁵ However, the term, “Quiverfull” does still reflect an important metaphor within the community’s rhetoric. For this reason, I will be using the terms interchangeably throughout this paper.

THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

In addition to the historical background that I have provided, I feel that introducing a basic (although not extensive) theological framework is necessary to thoroughly convey the ideology of this community. As I have already stated, the concept of the “Biblical Family” greatly shapes the perception of optimal family life within this community. This ideal stems from a greater “Biblical worldview” that members of this community seek to foster within themselves and within their families. This focus on having a “Biblical worldview” is shared among members, despite denominational diversity. This worldview is shaped by the following theological presuppositions.

A. Soteriology

The families within this community are exclusively evangelical Protestants. They believe that salvation is only found through belief in the Jesus Christ, as Lord and Savior, and repentance from sin. This salvation is a gift of God’s grace and is not the result of any human effort (i.e. works). This is important to remember when looking at a community that places a high premium on orthopraxy. Good works are seen as evidence of true salvation by grace; however, these good works alone are not sufficient for an individual’s salvation. (Baucham, Jr. 2007:75)

B. Sola Scriptura

The orthodoxy of this community is shaped by the application of the doctrine of *Sola Scriptura*, or “Scripture Alone.” This doctrine not only presupposes the inerrancy of the Bible, but also asserts that all areas of life are addressed in the Bible either directly or indirectly.⁶ The

Bible is seen as the ultimate authority on matters of both orthopraxy and orthodoxy. A verse often cited in relation to this assertion is 2 Timothy 3:16: “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...”(KJV)

C. The Sovereignty of God

The belief in the sovereignty of God extends to every aspect of personal histories and world history, no matter how minute. Therefore, as Doug Phillips asserts in his sermon, “How to Think Like a Christian”, there is no such thing as coincidence or luck in this worldview. (Phillips 2002) In addition, every event in history, no matter how seemingly insignificant or how horrific, was ordained and directed by God. Every aspect of an individual’s identity and the course of their life are believed to be predetermined before their birth, and even before the birth of the Earth. (Phillips 2010d) This includes the family into which he or she is born.

D. *Imago Dei*

Imago Dei is the belief that all human beings are created in the image of God.⁷ As a result, all human life is equally precious and sacred, regardless of sex, age, disability, or any other characteristics. (Sproul, Jr. and Swanson 2010) Within this community, this includes embryos from the moment of conception. Several Bible verses are frequently cited to support this inclusion, including, but not limited to, the following: Psalm 139, Luke 1:41, and Jeremiah 1:5.

The concept of *Imago Dei* is important to comprehending the conceptualization of gender within this community. Both men and women are believed to be of equal value, because they are both created in the image of God. However, as Dr. Voddie Baucham, Jr. outlines in his book *What He Must Be...if He Wants to Marry My Daughter*, the duties, roles, and behavior of men

and women are perceived to be distinctly different. (2009c:49-50) Rejecting these boundaries could logically then be seen as an affront to the complete picture of God. (Botkin and Botkin, 2005:17-22)

E. Two Worlds

The worldview of this community is rooted in the idea of separation from “the world.” In this mindset, there are two competing worlds and worldviews that are diametrically opposed to one another. On one side there is “the secular world” and on the other there is the “Kingdom of God.” While members of this community certainly engage with and move within the outside world, they do not consider themselves to truly be part of it. As pastor, Dr. Voddie Baucham, Jr., succinctly phrased in the documentary, *The Return of the Daughters*, it, “I live in this world, but I am not of this world.” (Botkin 2007) This belief is drawn from the verse Romans 12:2: “And be not conformed to this world: but ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (KJV)

F. Dominion Mandate

The term, Dominion Mandate, refers to Genesis 1:28: “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have *dominion* over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” (KJV) As can be gleaned from the passage there are two elements to this “charge,” as Nancy Campbell refers to it in her book, *Be Fruitful and Multiply*. (Campbell, 2003:25) The Dominion Mandate not only commands believers to have children, but it also gives them responsibility and control over the natural environment.

While a distinct line is drawn between themselves and environmentalists, Christian or otherwise, the members of this group view the world around them as God’s creation, for which

they must provide care.⁸ In addition, it is important to remember that this group does not view this as a contest to out-reproduce each other and everyone else. They certainly desire children, but they believe that God is in control of their fertility. (Campbell, 2003:181-182)

G. The Great Commission

As has already been stated, the members of this community are universally evangelical. As reflected in the primary source material's focus on the subject, this group takes seriously the verse, Mark 6:15: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (KJV) This sense of duty informs the conceptualization of ideal family life, as it is seen as a *family* responsibility.⁹

H. God, the Father

The concept of God, the father also holds significant meaning in Quiverfull ideology. The image of God, the father, is used as a template for the perfect, loving, authoritative father figure that Quiverfull leaders encourage men to be. Understanding of the idea of God as the universal father is presented as essential to understanding earthly fatherhood.¹⁰

I. Denominational Preferences

While the members of this community share many critical core beliefs, there is denominational diversity. As Scott Brown asserts in his sermon, "How the Local Church Builds a Thriving Culture of Life," the two most commonly held to confessions of faith within this community are the Westminster Confession and the London Baptist Confession. (Brown 2010a)

LITERATURE REVIEW

In addition to my review of several primary source materials, I reviewed academic literature on other similar communities, as well as materials on childhood religious socialization and gender. I focused my search on communities whose feelings of separateness from the

dominant culture surrounding them greatly influences their identity as a group. In the case of the Hutterites and the Ultraorthodox Jewish community this includes geographic separation. (Hostetler 1974:153-156; Valins 2003:158-175) The Biblical Family Community is not geographical separated, but shares a sense of ideological separation from these groups. In addition, I chose to review literature on the Church of Latter-Day Saints, whose members share a sense of ideological separation with the Biblical Family Community. (Ostling and Ostling 1999:176-183) All three communities foster the maintenance of distinct gender roles. Both the Ultraorthodox Jewish and the Mormon communities share a strong emphasis on family life with this community, as well. (Hostetler 1974:182-184; Ostling and Ostling 1999:364-367; Bilu 2003:172-203; Rapoport, Garb, and Penso 1995:48-61)

In addition, I reviewed literature on community formation and maintenance. I concentrated on intentional communities, because of the emphasis on separation in the construction of community structure. Traditionally the term intentional community has been used to refer to communities that are separated from the dominant culture surrounding them both by boundaries of ideology and geography. (Brown 2002:6) However, I consider the Biblical Family Community to be an example of an intentional community, despite its lack of geographical boundaries. I base this assessment primarily on the emphasis placed on the cultivation of shared identity within intentional communities, that I see in the Quiverfull community's rhetoric. (Andelson 2002:135-138)

Conceptualization of kinship, economics, marriage, and education within this community all reinforce the sense of ideological separation that shapes their construction. As Andelson describes, this shared commitment to an ideology can foster the primary sociogenesis (community formation) of an intentional community. In addition, the community's structures are

ideally built around the shared ideology in order to help strengthen the commitment of the community members to secondary sociogenesis (the education of the next generation and the continuation of the community). (Andelson 2002:134-135) Leaders propose these family-focused models as contrasts to modern systems that are portrayed as being built upon “selfishness” and “individualism.”¹¹ In this way, these systems are formulated as a critique of the surrounding culture, as seen in other intentional communities. This approach to community formation places those who adopt them apart, and often at odds, with the surrounding culture. (Brown 2002:153-179)

Both technology and conferences facilitate the maintenance of the networks that compose the Biblical Family Community. This led me to seek out literature on the use of technology in community maintenance and on similar patterns of networking through conferences and retreats. While not a religious group, a group of Finland-based researchers were able to use conferences to network with other *like-minded* researchers. This network serves them as a tremendous intellectual resource and fosters the collaboration of researchers to accomplish goals that they could not have alone. (Korpela and Jouhki 2011:88-94) In the same way, families within the Biblical Family communities can connect with *like-minded* (a commonly used term within the group) families. The connections formed at these conferences support the formation of friendship networks that can serve as the foundation for future marriages, business partnerships, and ministry partnerships. In both cases, networking connections create the underlying structure of a community built on shared interests and goals.

The emotional, spiritual, and ideological bonds that undergird these networks are partially reinforced through online communications through Facebook, video sharing sites (YouTube, Vimeo), and blogging. Again, although not a religious group, the group of Dutch-

Indonesians discussed in an article by Kathryn Pentecost used Facebook in the same way to both strengthen existing bonds and form new ones. Facebook created a space for community formation among a group of marginalized people, who felt that they did not quite belong anywhere else. (Pentecost 2011:44-47) In the same way, the online Quiverfull community can provide support for other members of the community, who share a sense of separateness from large sections of their local community.

The original goal of my project was to explore the way in which families within the Biblical Family community religiously socialize their children. Prior to the shift in my project's focus, I reviewed literature on the religious socialization of children. This literature still applies to my projects review of home education and of children's literature. I reviewed several articles in which stories and toys were used to reinforce messages of morality or of gender norms. (Palmer et al. 2006:235-257; Varney 2002:153-174; Meneley 2007:214-243) I also reviewed the educational patterns of the communities I have discussed. Vision Forum's toy and homeschool catalogue illustrates the way in which play is used to encourage the continuation of the community's gender norms. The catalogue's children's products are divided into two categories: The Beautiful Girlhood Collection and The All-American Boy's Adventure Catalogue. Each section has its own mission statement, outlining the goals that the toys and books will help parents achieve.^{12 13}

The Beautiful Girlhood Collection includes toys designed to foster a love of homemaking in young girls and to help them prepare to take on their future roles as wives and mothers. The toys on offer include (or have included) miniature cooking appliances, sewing, knitting, and crochet kits, and baby dolls with accompanying accessories. In addition, the catalogue also offers a collection of books meant to provide girls with role models that are submissive, devoutly

religious wives, mothers, and daughters. These books include the Elsie Dinsmore series, originally published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Elsie is put forth as an example of an ideal self-sacrificing Christian young girl that young girls should seek to imitate.¹⁴ Vision Forum has also produced a line of books loosely based on the lives of female historical figures with coordinating dolls and costumes. I reviewed the four books in the series and found that the characteristics exalted in the section's mission statement are the same ones that are portrayed positively in the women of these stories. These include religious devotion, sexual purity, "femininity" (i.e. traditional Western, feminine dress and carriage), meekness, reaching out to others from the home as a homemaker, motherhood, and obedience to authority figures, especially to fathers and husbands (who are believed to be the spiritual authority in the home).¹⁵

Using the same methods as the Beautiful Girlhood Collection, the All-American Boy's Adventure Catalogue section of the catalogue sells child-size grappling hooks, swords, historical military costumes, and toy bows and guns to parents hoping to inspire their boys to take on the characteristics laid out as necessary to manhood in the section's mission statement. These include religious devotion, patriotism, leadership, sexual purity, "to take dominion," and a love of adventure that can be channeled into future missionary work.¹⁶ Children's books are also used to teach young girls and boys the sexual mores of the community (i.e. the importance of sexual purity). (Bishop 1999; Bishop 2004)

FAMILY STRUCTURE

I have chosen to model the outline of this section after the book, *The Family*, by J.R. Miller, sold by Vision Forum Ministries. The book, originally published in 1882, crafts a portrait of ideal, Christian family life that greatly resembles the model being promoted by Quiverfull leaders. Vision Forum sells *The Family* as an instructional guide for family life.¹⁷ Each chapter

title is named for a Western family member (i.e. Fathers, Mothers, etc.). (Miller 2004) My analysis will explore how the ideal family model promoted within this community influences conceptualization of ideal economic and social structures within the community. This analysis is based on the review of blogs, books, sermons, and films produced by members of the Biblical Family Community.

A. Family as an Intentional Community

One of the most defining characteristics of the Biblical Family Community is the way in which families are envisioned. As Doug and Beall Phillips suggest in the audio-recording, “How to Organize Your Home to Promote Family Unity,” included in their audio guide to Christian family life, *Family Strategies: How to Build a Healthy Family Culture in Your Home*, the family unit serves as the second-most important self-identifier to the members of these families (second only to their identities as Christians). (2011c) Membership in one of these families means that personal desires and dreams may have to be set aside if they do not fit into the vision for the family that a father has. There is a rejection of the “selfishness” that is seen as inherent to modern individualism.¹⁸ At the same time, the community does not reject individual identity entirely, as each person is seen as an individual born with unique gifts from God. As Baucham, Jr. states in his book, *What He Must Be...if He Wants to Marry My Daughter*, each person is expected to use these talents to serve God and their community within certain gendered boundaries (i.e. a talented female theologian may not preach to men within the community). (2009c:92-93)

This mirrors the functioning of intentional communities that reject or downplay personal identity in favor of a group identity. (Kamau 2002: 25-36) Individuals can pursue individual ventures, but they are encouraged to pursue them in the context of a family (either the family of

origin or the family of procreation). In addition, the primary focus of the lives of the children in these families is expected to be the continuation of “multigenerational faithfulness” and the furthering of their father’s “vision” for the family. (Sproul Jr. 2004:26-31; B. Phillips and Panel 2010b)

B. Husbands and Fathers

This community holds to a patriarchal family structure, in which a father is the spiritual leader of his family. As Dr. Voddie Baucham, Jr. teaches in his sermon, “The Four Ps: Is He Ready to Lead?,” he is believed to be serving as a representative of God to his family. (2009b) Part of the importance of fathers fulfilling their duties is found in the theological importance of their wife’s and their children’s conceptualization of a father and husband. They are modeling the role of God the Father to their children.¹⁹ Concurrently, as Dr. Baucham, Jr. asserts in *What He Must Be...if He Wants to Marry My Daughter*, their relationships with their wives should reflect the relationship between Christ the Bridegroom and the Church, his bride. (2009c)

The expected responsibilities of a Quiverfull father and husband can be divided into three categories: economic, spiritual, and physical.²⁰ In terms of economic responsibility, men are supposed to be the primary economic providers for their wives and children. The verse 1 Timothy 5:8 is repeatedly used by writers and pastors to drive home the importance of this duty: “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” (KJV)²¹ As Dr. Baucham, Jr. argues in *What He Must Be...if He Wants to Marry My Daughter*, these responsibilities toward his daughters remain as long as they are unmarried. (2009:163)

In addition to being economic providers, husbands are charged with being spiritual providers for their families. Daily worship as a family is an integral part of the “Biblical Family”

model. During these sessions of family worship, fathers serve as family pastors. As documented in the film, *Gather the Family*, produced by a studio run by a Quiverfull family, Franklin Springs Family Media, they lead singing, Bible reading, and often deliver a short sermon. (Carpenter 2011) In addition to serving as spiritual providers to their wives and children, fathers and husbands are to provide spiritual protection as well. This spiritual protection usually takes the form of regulating the influence of outsiders and media on those within his household. This may mean censoring books, films, or music or banning or monitoring contact with others outside the family. (Brown 2008)

The role of protector is not limited to spiritual matters. Great emphasis is placed on the importance of husbands providing physical protection for their families in the rhetoric of the Biblical Family Community. This responsibility is often summarized through the call of “Women and Children First!” As displayed in the film, *Act Like Men: A Titanic Lesson in Manliness*, a film produced by Colin Gunn and Shad Eash, both of whom have had their work featured at Vision Forum’s annual San Antonio Independent Christian Film Festival, the story of the Titanic functions as a historical allegory to exhort men to act as protectors to all women, especially those related to them. For this reason, it is rare (but not unheard of) for women to travel alone. (2012)

Men are also considered to be responsible for guarding their daughters’ virginites. The biblical story of Dinah is often used to warn fathers of the consequences of failing at this, as Scott Brown did in his speech at the 2008 Vision Forum Father and Daughter Retreat, entitled “How Fathers Can Protect Their Daughters in a Defiling Age.” (2008) In cases of consensual sex, the young woman is still held responsible for the act, but within this community, a large amount of blame is placed on the father for allowing it to happen, as Dr. Baucham, Jr. explains in

What He Must Be...if He Wants to Marry My Daughter. (2009) Men are considered to be the guardians of their home in every sense of the word.

C. Wives and Mothers

The guidelines for a model wife and mother within this community are found in Proverbs 31:10-31 and Titus 2:3-5. In effect, wives are supposed to be delegates of their husbands based within the home, although not confined there. They are to be teachers and nurturers. (Chancey and McDonald 2007:31-36) This community promotes a “sex complementarity model” of gender in which both the idealized expressions of masculinity and femininity provide a full picture of the nature of God. (Baucham, Jr. 2009c:49-50; Palmer 1993:346)

Wives are considered to be representatives of their husbands both in their homes and in their communities. This role as representative is dependent upon a delicate interplay of leadership and submission between husband and wife. Wives are assuredly allowed their own opinion, and husbands are expected to take their wives opinions into consideration during decision-making. However, if there is a conflict between husband and wife, the wife is supposed to yield to the decision of her husband, even if she feels that he is wrong.²² The only time she can rightfully go against her husband’s wishes is if he asks her to sin, as the importance of obedience to God is seen as surpassing the importance of obedience to man. (Botkin and Botkin 2005:35) As Dr. Flower’s found in her work with Southern Baptist women, the exact practical meaning of the ideology of “submission” and “biblical womanhood” are difficult to isolate. What would be considered submission in one home may not be in another. (Flowers 2012:21)

Several writers emphasize the influence mothers have on their children. The William Ross Wallace quote “The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world” appears again and again in print and public discourse within the community. (McBride 2011:109-110)²³

As the norm within this community is home education, mothers are often their children's teacher. Mothers are expected to stay at home with their children and are the primary caregivers for them. While their husbands may set the standards and goals of their home education, the mothers in this community execute them. Fathers are expected to be involved in their children's education, but their work obligations often necessitate that the bulk of the day-to-day teaching falls to the mothers. (B. Phillips 2010a)

The home is perceived of as a woman's workshop and as a base for community outreach. Women are considered to be responsible for making their homes havens for their families. While they can perform work outside the home, their primary career is supposed to be that of wife, mother, and homemaker. This career includes caring for and disciplining children, cooking, cleaning, sewing, gardening, and evangelism. In addition to caring for their own homes, women are expected to participate in charitable activities and reach out to unsaved friends, family, and neighbors by inviting them into their homes. Home businesses, which can include everything from blogging to selling essential oils, are also a common pursuit among wives and mothers within this community. As long as running them does not interfere with their duties as wives and mothers, home businesses and ministries are encouraged as an exemplification of the Proverbs 31 model. (Chancey and McDonald 2007:160-164)

The gender boundaries within this community are strict but not inflexible. While this community seeks to establish and uphold distinctly separate concepts of masculinity and femininity, there is some crossing of gender boundaries in activities. Women and girls hunt and fish and men cook and clean. (Botkin and Botkin 2011) However, the norm is that women complete household tasks and that men do the work outside the home. The suggestion that parents refer to their sons that cook as chefs and boys that sew as tailors in the book *Raising Real*

Men reflects this. (Young and Young 2010: 247-249) When taught to boys, household skills are put into terms of professional positions, in other words to work done in the public sphere. When girls and women hunt and fish, it is often seen as an extension of their duties at home, as part of providing nutritious meals for their families.²⁴ Even when boundaries are being crossed, the gender roles are maintained.

D. Sons

Based on the material geared towards parents within the Biblical Family Community raising boys, there seem to be two primary goals in the raising of sons for families in this community. The first is that they become Christians. The second is that they are prepared to be model husbands and fathers. Families favor the term “training” over “raising,” when referring to the process of bringing up children. This term is taken from Proverbs 22:6: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (KJV)

They seek to accomplish these training goals through family-integrated home and corporate worship practices, home education, and mentoring. Deuteronomy 6 provides the model that inspires these choices. The passage reads, “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” (KJV) This passage exhorts parents to be training and teaching their children throughout the entire day. Home education, family worship at home, family-integrated corporate worship, and, often, family businesses are all seen as facilitating this sort of relationship between parent and child. (Fernandez and Gunn 2011)

In addition to this model, a defining characteristic of this community’s child socialization practices is the rejection of the concept of modern adolescence. Boys are looked at as future young men from the time they are born. (Sproul, Jr. 2004:70-71) In his sermon, “Rebuilding a

Culture of Virtuous Boyhood: Raising Boys to be Godly Men of Courage,” Doug Phillips, the founder of Vision Forum, encourages parents to foster the development of courage, a love of adventure, and a feeling of duty towards women and children in their sons from early childhood. (2002c) Parents promote the development of these traits by giving their sons toys, like those described earlier from the All-American Boy’s Adventure Catalogue, that will ideally serve as props for play roles that embody these values: the knight saving the princess, the soldier defending his family and country, and the adventurous missionary. Boys’ play is the training ground for their future roles within the community. (Varney 2002:153-174)

In his book, *Preparing Sons to Provide for a Single-Income Family*, Steven Maxwell instructs parents to assist their sons in pursuing small business ventures and preparing to provide for a family. Many boys have started businesses that eventually supported their future families while still in their early teens. (2001:147-160) In one case, a 13-year-old boy even built and paid for a house for his future wife and children. He is now married with two children, and they live in the house he built in his teens.²⁵ During their teens, many boys enter into apprenticeships with men who work in a field in which they are interested. (Maxwell 2001:147-160)

While preparing boys to be providers, parents also begin preparing them for their other duties as husbands and fathers within this community. Boys are encouraged to study the Bible and theology diligently, because, as Dr. Baucham, Jr. points out in “The Four Ps: Is He Ready to Lead?,” they will be the future spiritual leaders of their households. (2009b) They are also encouraged to take on the role of protector at an early age. Even preschool age boys are charged with serving as protectors for their sisters and mothers.

Fathers inundate their sons with stories of that reinforce this charge by giving them popular literature that exalts these values and taking them on homeschool retreats focused on

developing this mindset, like those put on by Vision Forum. As exhibited in “Rebuilding a Culture of Virtuous Boyhood: Raising Boys to be Godly Men of Courage,” this includes everything from stories of knights and chivalry to the story of the Titanic. (Phillips 2002) There is even a father and son group dedicated to using the Titanic story to pass on these beliefs to next generation of young men.²⁶ They are also given missionary stories focused on concepts adventure, evangelism, and “dominion.” The goal of these stories is to inspire boys to grow God’s Kingdom to the ends of the Earth, to take dominion over the Earth. (Phillips 2002c)

Parents also charge their boys with the guarding of their physical and mental purity. The picture of a virtuous knight is held up as the ideal. Boys are taught that they are walking through a virtual minefield of temptation as they go through puberty and adulthood. They are warned against immodest women, pornography, and impure thoughts. Boys are encouraged to save their first kisses for their wedding day. (Bishop 2004) They are also taught standards of modesty. Modesty seems to be more heavily stressed for girls, but these families expect modesty from their boys as well. Practically, this may mean that boys do not go shirtless or wear shorts under a certain length (or at all). (Duggar and Duggar 2011:101)

Parents in this community are not only seeking to raise the next generation of fathers, husbands, entrepreneurs, and missionaries, but also the next set of pastors and church elders. In preparing their sons for church leadership, families generally look to Titus 1:5-9 for the requirements their sons must meet. Fathers of daughters have used this list to evaluate potential suitors. The primary requirements are his personal belief in correct doctrine and his abilities as father and husband. In “The Four Ps: Is He Ready to Lead?,” Dr. Baucham, Jr. asserts that as parents are training their sons to be good fathers and husbands, they are also training their sons to fill the roles of community leadership. (2009b) Furthermore, young men are also encouraged to

pursue positions of public political leadership if they believe that the Lord has called them to it. This community is fiercely patriotic and active in the political sphere.²⁷ Essentially, they are taught to pursue leadership in every area of life.

E. Daughters

In some ways, the training of daughters is the same as the training of sons, but, in large part, boys and girls are brought up with different goals. The most important shared goal for sons and daughters is that they become Christians. (Sproul, Jr. 2004:29-31) Deuteronomy 6 applies equally to daughters as it does to sons. Modern adolescence is just as strongly rejected in teenage daughters as it is in teenage sons and essentially for the same reason. Within this community, the teen years are a time of intensification of the training for future roles that began in childhood. (Davis 2007)

When setting goals for the training of their daughters, parents within this community look to the Bible verses Proverbs 31 and Titus 2. (McDonald 2004:51-55) Both verses outline the ideal wife, mother and homemaker. Proverbs 31 describes a woman who manages her household, is industrious, is generous, reaches out to the community, and devotes herself to caring for her husband and children. (KJV) Titus 2 commands women to care for their families and for older women to teach younger women to do the same for their families (or future families). (KJV) Girls are gradually trained from early childhood in the running of a household by helping their mothers. As large families are the norm, this often involves assisting with childcare along with household chores. By helping their mothers run their fathers' households, these girls are being prepared to run their husbands' household in the future (assuming she marries). (Baucham 2010)

The ideal outlined in the passages mentioned not only includes caring for the home and childcare, but also home business, evangelism, and charity work based out of the home. Girls are

encouraged to start and run home businesses and/or assist their fathers in family businesses. As detailed in *So Much More: The Remarkable Influence of Visionary Daughters on the Kingdom of God*, both boys and girls are expected to be entrepreneurial. (Botkin and Botkin 2005:82)

However, entrepreneurship for girls is not fostered as preparation to provide for a family as it is for boys, but rather it is exalted as part of the Proverbs 31 model of the quintessential homemaker, which includes home industry.²⁸ In this way, the community's approach to entrepreneurship training serves as another example of the simultaneous challenging and maintenance of the community's gender ideals.

Girls frequently participate in family evangelistic projects and may start and run some of their own from home. They are also expected to be deeply involved in a family's extension of hospitality to their friends or neighbors (hospitality will be discussed at greater length in a further section). Daughters are also supposed to reach out to their church community and the local community. Many girls serve as mother's helpers to women in their congregations. Volunteer work in their local communities is also popular pursuit. (Chancey and McDonald 2007:90) Girls may also participate in political (typically conservative) activism with their families while living at home. (Botkin and Botkin 2005:287)

The model outlined in these passages also promotes chastity and modesty. Parents teach their girls to treasure their emotional and physical purity from a very early age. They also encourage their daughters not only to remain virgins until marriage, but also to save their first kisses until marriage. (Bishop 1999) In addition to keeping themselves physically pure, girls and young women are expected to work to maintain emotional purity, as well. This means avoiding romance novels, love songs, and tamping down crushes on boys. They are trying to avoid eliciting romantic feelings for anyone besides the man they will someday marry. Girls and young

women are reminded of Proverbs 31:12 which says, “She will do him good and not evil *all the days of her life.*” (KJV) This includes the days of her life before she even meets him. They are also reminded that majority of the young men will eventually marry and should be treated as someone else’s husband. (Botkin and Botkin 2009)

Girls are taught from a young age to embrace modesty. Modesty is viewed as both an attitude and a manner of dress. The practical details of what modesty means in terms of clothing choices varies from family to family. Parents set standards for their daughters in terms of dress. Modesty can mean anything from wearing only long skirts to wearing shorts. What is shared between these families is the idea that modesty is important, and that the goal of modesty is to avoid drawing attention to oneself either by one’s dress or in one’s behavior. Girls are not expected to be silent, but they also taught not to be forward in public, especially with boys.²⁹ Parents discourage any behavior that they view as immodest. This can include being boisterous or “flirty”. As Stacy McDonald outlines in *Raising Maidens of Virtue: A Study in Feminine Loveliness for Mothers and Daughters*, perceptions of “flirty” behavior can include everything from the way a girl walks or stands to the way she talks with men and boys. (McDonald 2004:51-55) Flirting and immodest dress are described as “stumbling blocks” (1 Corinthians 8:9 and Romans 14:13) to girls’ Christian brothers. (Duggar and Duggar 2011:100) The details of what does or does not constitute improper behavior vary from family to family. As with modest dress, modest behavior is a shared value, but the exact definition of it is not universal.

In addition to modesty, displaying femininity in dress is also a shared priority. Many girls wear only skirts and dresses in order to obey Deuteronomy 22:5: “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.” (KJV) Not all families feel that this necessarily disallows

the wearing of pants by girls and young women; however, even in pants, these families feel that a girl's clothing, hairstyle, and make-up should clearly demonstrate that she is feminine.^{30 31 32} This can mean choosing lots of traditionally feminine colors and/or designs (i.e. florals, pinks, etc.) and wearing their hair long.

The time between high school graduation and marriage is considered to be a time in which young women can focus on ministry and theological study. One young, married woman featured in the film, *The Return of the Daughters*, which explored the topic of stay-at-home daughterhood, referenced 1 Corinthians 7:34 when she described the significance of her unmarried years: "...An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband." (KJV) If a young woman marries, it will likely be years before she will have the time to study the Bible as often as she is able while she is unmarried. (Botkin 2007) Whether she marries or not, studying scripture is considered top priority for men and women, as the most crucial goal for both is salvation not marriage. (Mally 2006:207-216) Furthermore, as Dr. Baucham, Jr. explains in "Fathers & Daughters: Why Every Father is Leaving a Legacy," a strong understanding of the doctrine and theology of her faith will be essential to raising future children in this faith community. (2009a)

Prior to marriage, it is normative for young women to live with their parents and siblings. This practice is known as stay-at-home daughterhood and is advocated regardless of a woman's age. (Botkin 2007) If a woman never marries or is abandoned by husband, her father is considered to be responsible for her until he dies. (Baucham, Jr. 2009a) Unmarried women within this community are generally referred to simply as "unmarried" as opposed to "single."

The term “single” is rejected, because married or unmarried, these women are always actively part of a family and a household. (Botkin and Botkin 2005:176)

While still at home, girls are also being trained to submit to the authority of their future husbands through their submission to the authority of their father. (Botkin and Botkin 2005:33-35) Young women are expected to obey their parents into adulthood as long as they still live at home. Girls’ relationships with their fathers are considered to be important foundations for their future relationships with their husbands. (Baucham, Jr. 2009a) Vision Forum holds yearly father-daughter treats and teas to help foster these relationships. Father and sons relationships are equally important, but there is a sense in which the father and daughter relationship is seen as being targeted more by modern American culture. Feminism and the encouragement of women’s independence is seen as eroding the ideal father and daughter relationship, in which girls are dependent upon their fathers as providers and protectors. (Botkin and Botkin 2005:16) In addition, their expectations for their daughters do vary more greatly from modern American expectations of young women than their expectations for their sons vary from modern American expectations for young men.

F. Brothers and Sisters

Siblings are expected to be close friends. (Mally, Mally, and Mally 2002:235-250) Parents seek to nurture these friendships through home education, parental involvement, and family worship. (Carpenter 2011) In order to assuage fighting, Matthew 18 is often quoted and taught to children in order to encourage them to settle disputes peacefully among themselves.³³ Matthew 18:15-17 states that, “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three

witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” (KJV) In practice, this means that the children should try to resolve an issue with a sibling on their own (for example, kindly asking for a stolen toy to be returned to them). If the offending sibling does not respond kindly, then a child should go to their parents.³⁴ Some parents purposely refer to their children’s siblings as each other’s best friends in order to reinforce this ideal.³⁵

Relationships between brothers and sisters are also seen as practice for how they will be expected to relate to the opposite sex within this community, as they get older. Girls are taught to practice submission to the leadership of their brothers in order to promote leadership behavior in them. This is suggested to girls even with brothers who are younger than them, with which some girls have expressed difficulty. (Botkin and Botkin 2008) Boys are also expected to practice part of their future roles, as I have already discussed, by acting as protectors of their sisters. (Phillips 2002c)

G. Grandparents

Grandparents are expected to play a pivotal role in the lives of their grandchildren. The idea of the later years being a time of leisure is rejected in the rhetoric of the Biblical Family Community. As Scott Brown describes in his sermon, “The Indispensable Role of Grandparents in the Life of Children,” delivered at the Vision Forum Baby Conference, grandparents are highly encouraged to mentor their grandchildren in this community, as part of the promotion of multigenerational faithfulness. (2010b) The younger generations are, in turn, supposed to look to their elders with great respect and to receive this mentoring with gratitude. The stories of the bravery, faithfulness, and courage of past generations are passed down as family legend to

inspire the next generation to embody the good characteristics that their grandparents and great grandparents did and to learn from their mistakes. (Phillips 2005) This involvement in the lives of their grandchildren may include living with the family of one of their children. Sons are expected to care for their widowed mothers and bring them into their households with their family of procreation.³⁶

JOINING THE FAMILY

A. Birth

I will begin my discussion on birth within this community by first addressing the characteristic of it that is generally most notable to outsiders: their rejection of all forms of birth control. In a way, this community's rejection of birth control, including natural family planning, is a purist form of the pro-life stance. As Nancy Campbell asserts in her book *Be Fruitful & Multiply*, this community believes that the idea of family planning through birth control led to the eventual acceptance of abortion. (2003:152-154) In addition, as this community believes that pregnancy begins at conception not at implantation, certain forms of artificial birth control, specifically the birth control pill and IUDs are considered to be abortifacients. (Campbell 2003:171) Couples who practice birth control, regardless of marital status, are considered to be defying God's design for sex. This community does not regard procreation as sex's only purpose, but the possibility for it is considered to be an essential part of God's design for sex. (Campbell 2003:23)

Surrendering control over family size is seen as a sign of faith in God's plan and his sovereignty. This extends not just to limiting family size, but at least to some ways of expanding it, namely in-vitro fertilization, based on the same objections that the community has to the birth control pill. (Zes and Panel 2010) As Rick and Jan Hess assert in their book *A Full Quiver*, this

approach to pregnancy and birth should not be altered by medical problems in mother or in a baby. A couple may practice temporary abstinence if a wife is struggling with chronic or terminal illness, but a history of medical problems related to pregnancy or even chronic problems made worse by pregnancy is generally not seen as reason enough to change these couples' approach. (Hess and Hess 1989:102-103) This approach is also not altered in the face of financial hardships. The belief presented in the rhetoric and in the literature on birth control within the community is that if God sends a child, then he will provide for that child. (Hess and Hess 1989:78-82)

Pregnancy itself is looked at as an act of self-sacrifice made in faith. Many mothers have described their decision to have as many children as God sends as offering their bodies to the Lord as a "living sacrifice."³⁷ Moving forward with multiple pregnancies, especially in the face of physical or financial hardships, is seen as an act of faithfulness to God and God's plan for their lives and the lives of their families. (Campbell 2003:129-132; Campbell 2003:182-183) The emphasis in this approach to family planning (or non-planning) is on the acceptance of whatever God has planned for each individual family, not on having as many children as physically possible. (Hess and Hess 1989:63-64) While incredibly large families, like the Bates family and the Duggar family (nineteen children each), with these views are shown the most in the media, they are not the norm in this community. Families within this community certainly tend to be far larger than the average American family of two children, although some do only have two or three children.

Leaders within this community also promote homebirth as being preferential to a hospital birth, in the case of a healthy pregnancy. (B. Phillips and Panel 2010b) Homebirths fit into the more home-based approach to nonemergency medical care that I will discuss in further detail in

a later section. Homebirths makes it easier to involve the entire family in the process of the birth. It also gives the parents more control over the process of birth than they feel that they would have in the hospital. Regardless of whether a couple chooses a hospital birth, birthing center, or home birth, Quiverfull couples will generally refuse to work with any doctor or midwife that has in any way participated in an abortion. (B. Phillips and Panel 2010b)

B. Adoption

Children do not only join these families by birth, but also through adoption, for which this community strongly advocates. Many couples have been converted to this approach to family planning following tubal ligations and/or vasectomies. Some are able to reverse these surgeries successfully, and others are not. Adoption can be a path to the expansion of a Quiverfull family. (Baucham, Jr. 2007:27) Families without infertility problems pursue adoptions, as well. Adoption is often presented as a fulfillment of James 1:27: “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” (KJV)

The term “rescue” is used repeatedly to describe the process of adoption in the rhetoric of the Biblical Family Community. In fact, Vision Forum Ministries organized to assist Christian families in adopting Haitian children following the 2010 earthquake under the name Rescue Haiti’s Children. (Phillips 2010a) The group certainly provided children displaced by the earthquake with much needed aid, but the slow adoption process was seen as discrimination against Christian families wanting to adopt them and bring them to the United States. (D. Phillips and Panel 2010a) The controversy surrounding other organizations arranging for the adoption of children with living relatives without their relatives’ consent was not mentioned in the discussion on the topic at Vision Forum’s Baby Conference.³⁸

The rescue being described is not just a physical rescue, but adoption is seen as a spiritual one as well. As detailed in the documentary, *Rescued*, bringing adopted children into a Biblical Family home saves them from being raised in a non-Christian environment. Being in a godly family is not seen as a guarantee that one will accept Christ, but the community considers the likelihood that it will happen to be increased. In particular, this community strongly objects to the adoption and fostering of children by same-sex couples. (Hedrick and Winton 2012)

However, they also have reservations about involving themselves in the foster care system in order to adopt children. While the community concedes that there are times when children need to be removed from home situations, they view Child Protective Services as overzealous. The rhetoric on the subject reflects a belief that Quiverfull families' beliefs and practices, particularly homeschooling and spanking, make them targets for persecution by the government in the form of the removal of their children. (Sproul, Jr. and Swanson 2010) Dealing with legal issues involving parental rights disputes were heavily featured in the sermons and symposiums of the Vision Forum Baby Conference and an entire lecture in the *Family Strategies* series previously mentioned is devoted to it. (Phillips and Phillips 2011b)

In order to protect their families against this perceived threat, many families have joined both the Homeschool Legal Defense Association and the Heritage Defense Fund. The first organization specifically deals with disputes regarding educational choices. The second deals with every other sort of dispute between parents and CPS. (Phillips and Phillips 2011b) Most commonly, Heritage Defense Fund's cases center around controversial medical decisions (for example delaying or not consenting to vaccinations) and/or corporal punishment. The name of the organization itself, Heritage Defense, is taken from the ubiquitous Psalm 127 from which the community's view on children is drawn. Children are viewed as parents' heritages, and CPS

threatens their ability to cultivate this heritage in the way they believe is right. Within this community, families are considered autonomous, and CPS undermines this autonomy.

(Hart 2010)

Adoption, or at least supporting adoption, is also seen as a way of living out a pro-life stance. Sponsoring and/or volunteering at crisis pregnancy centers and trying to convince women entering abortion clinics to choose adoption (or to choose to keep the baby) are common family activities. (Zes and Panel 2010) The adoption of special needs children is especially encouraged. This community does not support abortion under *any* circumstances, even when the mother's life is medically considered at risk. In addition to accepting any and all children that God sends them naturally, adopting special needs children is seen as a way of rescuing children who otherwise may have been aborted. It is also presented as proof of ideological consistency. This community holds that all human life is created in the image of God and is therefore sacred. All children are viewed as blessings from God, regardless of physical and/or mental disabilities. (Sproul, Jr. and Swanson 2010)

Adoption also necessitates the examination of two issues: the community's general view of race and its general view of infertility and miscarriage. Kathryn Joyce asserts that one of the primary motivators for these families fertility is to increase the Caucasian population. (2009:150-151) I have not found this to be the case. As I have outlined in my explanation of the doctrine of *Imago Dei*, the community believes that all human life, regardless of skin color, is created in the image of God and is *equally* precious. As Dr. Baucham, Jr. reminds his readers in the conclusion of *What He Must Be...if He Wants to Marry My Daughter*, as he addressed the topic of interracial marriage, the same two parents, Adam and Eve, are the perceived predecessors of all of humanity, within a inerrant Biblical interpretation. Christians are considered to be brothers

and sisters in Christ. In both cases, members of this community view all humans as connected through a genealogy that transcends racial boundaries. (2009c)

As a result of this belief, it is common for families within this community to adopt interracially. The description of the handling of the crisis in Haiti may seem to simply be an extension of white colonialism to the casual outsider, but it is more complicated than that. The tension is not so much between two races as it is seen to be a conflict between two worldviews or religions. Separating this cultural conflict from racial conflict can be difficult for an outsider, but the members of the community do not see them as the same thing. (D. Phillips and Panel 2010a; D. Phillips and Panel 2010b)

In addition, this community actually views their opponents as the true racists, particularly pro-choice advocates. Some members of this community believe that the placement of Planned Parenthood clinics in neighborhoods made up primarily of racial minorities is a racist attempt to reduce minority populations. Margaret Sanger's social Darwinist writings are also frequently cited as proof that the mindset behind Planned Parenthood is inherently racist. (Gunn 2007)

The community's generally accepted interpretation of infertility and miscarriage involves the tense coexistence of two conflicting ideas about the topics. On the one hand, it is generally accepted that barrenness can be a curse or a punishment from God. (Campbell 2003:45-47) On the other hand, it is also generally accepted that God may intend for a godly family to expand through adoption and not necessarily through birth. (Hendrick and Winton 2012) Interpretation of miscarriage is also a complex matter. At least some acknowledge that miscarriages can be part of the curse of barrenness. (Campbell 2003:45-47) However, godly women who reject the use of birth control and go through several pregnancies, also frequently experience miscarriage at least once during their childbearing years.

Miscarriages are treated the same as the death of a newborn child within this community. It is not uncommon to hear a mother or father say that they have x number of children *and x number in heaven*. This phrase has appeared in several Quiverfull blogger biography profiles and was used by Doug Phillips to describe his family size in a discussion on miscarriage. (Phillips and Phillips 2011e) This way of describing their family size acknowledges that they consider all of their children from the moment of conception to be full members of their families. Many also believe that, while salvation is not explicitly guaranteed to these children in the Bible, these children are likely part of the predestined elect, and that a miscarriage is God's plan for ushering a soul into eternity. They believe that they will meet these children after their own deaths, in heaven. (Phillips and Phillips 2011e)

C. Courtship to Marriage:

a. Courtship

A set formula for courtship does not exist. Rather, it is a set of very general guidelines that involve parents heavily in their child's search for a spouse. In general, courtships emerge out of family friendships or from interactions at conferences that would interest families with similar values. Couples have certainly met in other ways, but these seem to be the two most common, as evidenced by a plethora of courtship stories documented in the film, *To Be One*, and published on numerous Quiverfull family blogs. (See Appendix) Courtship is not unique to the Biblical Family Community. The movement towards courtship is evident in other conservative evangelical circles. (Telian 2009; Harris 2003; Ludy and Ludy 1999)

The foundations for a courtship are laid in chaste friendship between a young man and woman. The shift to courtship occurs when and if the young man feels that young woman is the one that God intended to be his wife. At this point, the young man goes to his parents to ask for

their feelings on the matter. Often parents and sons will pray over the matter. If his parents agree with him that this is the woman meant to be his wife, the young man then approaches the young woman's father (or mother, if widowed, or godly mentor, if parents are unable or unwilling to be involved) and asks permission to initiate a courtship with the young woman. Prior to agreeing to a potential courtship, the woman's father generally puts the potential suitor through some sort of screening process. (Harris 2003:195-197) This can be as simple as a short interview or as involved as asking for a series of theological position papers, as one father featured in *The Return of the Daughters* did. (Botkin 2007) If the potential suitor passes the screening process, then the woman's father approaches her about the possibility of a courtship. If the girl agrees, then the courtship process begins. (Harris 2003:195-197)

The courtship process is a period of communication between two prospective spouses and their respective families. This communication is supervised by parents and parent-designated chaperones. The communication period can include letter or e-mail exchanges, phone calls, and family visits. The purpose of the courtship period is for the young man and woman to assess whether or not they are meant to marry. During this period, couples hold to rules regarding physical contact set by themselves and their parents. (Ludy and Ludy 1999:187-198) During this stage, many couples choose to abstain from any sort of touch until it has been determined that the relationship will move forward into engagement.³⁹

In assessing each other, couples are less focused on physical attraction or even, initially, in romantic love than on shared values. (Telian 2009) This approach to love and marriage is believed to bolster the growth of the Biblical Family Community by ensuring that children carry the values passed onto them into marriage and eventually pass those same values onto their own children. The great degree of family involvement also reinforces the desired function of the

family as the primary social unit. Ideally, no individual makes a major life decision outside of the context of a family. Marriage is also viewed not only as the joining of two individuals but also as the joining of two families and two legacies. (Darnell 2008)

b. Engagement

If a couple and their families agree that a couple are each other's match intended by God, then the couple moves forward with a period of engagement. Engagement periods tend to be short, because, if prolonged, engagement is seen as a potential time of undue temptation for a couple that is still expected to maintain some physical boundaries. Many couples do wait to kiss until the wedding day, but some even extend the prohibition against touch until the wedding day as well, although this is uncommon. (Telian 2009)

c. Wedding Ceremonies

Each wedding within this community is unique. Six couples within this community have live-streamed their wedding ceremonies or posted partial videos of them online.^{40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47} Far more have been blogged about complete with photos by themselves or family members. (See Appendix) I have found that it is uncommon for a Biblical Family blog not to include the retelling of at least one person's wedding. It is from these videos and accounts that I draw my conclusions regarding wedding ceremonies within the Biblical Family Community. I focused on the contents of the vows and any unique symbolic elements added to each ceremony. This community seems to favor traditional Protestant vows mixed with more personal ones. In consenting to the marriage, a father is considered to be transferring his authority over his daughter to her husband.

These personal vows often address these couples' decision to welcome as many children as God sends.⁴⁸ Couples also often incorporate personal acts of symbolism into the ceremony

that demonstrate to the audience their commitment to the values held by the community. The most commonly incorporated symbol is an arrow or a quiver of arrows. (Telian 2009) ⁴⁹ While the term “Quiverfull” is not universally accepted as a self-identifier, the Psalm 127 quiver and arrow metaphor still retains prevalence within the community. The use of this symbol demonstrates the couple’s commitment to raising godly children that will continue the community.

d. Marriage After the Wedding

Within this community’s rhetoric, marriage is conceptualized as an embodiment of the relationship between Christ and the Church. Wives are supposed to submit to the authority of their husbands as the Church submits to the authority of Christ. Husbands are in turn are expected to love their wives self-sacrificially, putting her needs before his own. They are held responsible for providing protection and for providing financially and spiritually (i.e. spiritual leadership) for their wives and families. (Phillips 2002d) A couple’s marriage is viewed as the foundation of the family and their home. Attending to the needs of their marriage supersedes a couple’s role as parents, because keeping their marriage strong is considered to be the most important thing a couple can do for their children. (Baucham, Jr. 2007:49)

Marriage is also viewed as a covenant that can only be broken by death (or unrepentant infidelity or abandonment by a spouse). Divorce is abhorred within this community. Remarriage after divorce is viewed as adultery. (Phillips 2002d) In the opinion of some within the community, the one exception to this is status as a “grace widow” or someone who has been abandoned by a spouse for someone else, in which case, the offending spouse is treated as functionally dead.⁵⁰

e. Marriage and Community Reinforcement

Marriage reinforces and sustains this community by starting new families that produce children to maintain the community. The approach to marriage that the Biblical Family Community promotes reinforces the values held by that community, from the family-centered approach to courtship and engagement to the inclusion of vows to abstain from interfering with God's plan for their family size in the ceremonies. This resembles the social function of marriage in other religious communities. Marriages within the Church of Latter-Day Saints may be sealed for both time and eternity, reflecting their beliefs about the eternal nature of the family unit. (Ostling and Ostling 1999:165-167)

In the case of intentional communities, the ability of marriage to reinforce community values is especially integral to the maintenance of community. In the Hutterite community, baptism is usually a precursor to marriage and full adult status within the community. Commitment to the community and commitment to a marriage are interwoven together. (Hostetler 1974:235-240) In the same way, entering marriage within the Biblical Family Community is seen as a commitment to having and raising children in the same tradition. The Orthodox Jewish community also shares a high level of family involvement in the journey to marriage with the Biblical Family Community. The adoption of the role of matchmaker by many members within the Orthodox Jewish community reflects the shared community interest in encouraging marriages between young men and women, in order to pass on their shared heritage and faith. (Warlick 2011) In all of the communities discussed, marriage is the prerequisite for socially acceptable procreation, and, therefore, the nurturing of the next generation of the community.

FAMILY AS A UNIT OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FUNCTION

A. Family Worship

There are two primary expressions of family-integrated worship in the lives of these families: weekly (or more frequent) family-integrated worship within a local church body and family worship at home. Both practices are rooted in the community's reading of Deuteronomy 6. Parents are seen as those primarily responsible for the discipleship of their children.

(Carpenter 2011)

This community rejects the implementation (or at least their children's participation in) age-segregated programs, like youth programs, within their churches. Quiverfull leaders' objections to these practices center on the argument that such programs facilitate parents' abandonment of their spiritual duties towards their children. The film, *Divided*, which has been promoted and distributed by Vision Forum, argues against age-segregated worship, cites the origins of the Sunday school movement as the genesis of this abdication. The filmmaker, LeClerc, argues that the Church has foolishly adopted a method historically used to reach out to the children of unsaved parents and to provide basic education for child workers to disciple the children of believers with devastatingly little success.⁵¹

In practice, this rejection of age segregation means that all church attendees from the youngest infant to the oldest senior members worship together in the same service. Even as toddlers, children are expected to sit somewhat quietly and to show respect for the pastor and the reading of God's Word.^{52 53} Some local churches within this community are run according to this structure. Churches that follow age-integrated practices are connected through the National Center for Family-Integrated Churches, which provides a directory of such churches for interested families.⁵⁴ Other families that personally adopt this model remain in churches that do

have age-segregated programs; they just choose not to participate in them. (Baucham, Jr. 2007:214-215) In either case, the movement is towards family-integrated worship as the norm in church services.

A church body within the Biblical Family Community is conceptualized as a “family of families.” (Baucham, Jr. 2007:193) Church bodies consist of brothers and sisters in Christ, father figures, and even mother figures (the deaconate). The incorporation of all family members into organized worship bolsters the sculpting of the church into the reflection of family life. As is presented in *Family-Driven Faith*, a book written by a Quiverfull proponent and homeschool leader, Dr. Voddie Baucham, Jr., all of these families come together in a meeting of a larger family, united by God. (Baucham, Jr. 2011:193) As pastors provide instruction on orthodoxy and orthopraxy, they regularly emphasize the applications of the sermons to family home life. Equipping fathers to lead their families spiritually the rest of the week is considered to be part of the local church’s job. (Baucham, Jr. 2011:151-154)

Daily family worship in the home is viewed as a way of cementing the family together by clarifying and reinforcing shared beliefs and goals. Generally family worship takes place in the morning and/or the evening around meal times. Fathers usually lead family worship. Mothers may occasionally step in as their husband’s representative and lead, if they cannot be there. Widows also lead their family worship. Family worship sessions generally include singing, scripture reading, catechism (often the Westminster Catechism), and a small sermon from the person leading. (Carpenter 2011)

These sessions functionally resemble Family Home Evenings within the Church of Latter-Day Saints. (Ostling and Ostling 1999:182) Family worship sessions center the rest of the family’s daily lives. These sessions also tend to reinforce the beliefs of a family’s local church.

Therefore, the practice of family worship unifies both the family unit and assists in the unification of the local church community. (Carpenter 2011) Thus, a synergistic relationship exists between the local church and the home within the Biblical Family Community. The church supports fathers in leading their homes, and fathers generally support the church in their leadership. The combination of the two practices seem to intensify the convictions of the members of the community, especially youth, in a way that would seem not to occur with weekly church attendance alone.

B. Family-Centered Social Lives

Families within the Biblical Family Community have expressed a preference of friendships between families rather than isolated friendships between individuals.⁵⁵ This does not mean that individual friendships cannot form; they just tend to form within existing family friendships. Approaching friendships in this manner prioritizes family loyalty over loyalty to friends. (Phillips and Phillips 2011d) A high degree of family loyalty and unity is needed in order for families to function as coherent social and economic units. It is not uncommon for families to refer to themselves as “teams” or to use a naming theme to encourage this needed sense of unity. This emphasis on strengthening group unity mimics the stress placed on maintaining unity of purpose and belief within intentional communities. (Andelson 2002:136-138)

Family friendships are built through church participation and networking through conferences and retreats designed to draw in families with a commitment to building “Biblical families.”^{56 57} These meetings of “like-minded” families provide opportunities for them to form friendships and to have their beliefs reinforced by a larger community. In the case of the Vision Forum Reformation of Food and Family Conference, the opportunity for networking with other

families was used in an advertisement encouraging families to attend.⁵⁸ These gatherings also provide a pool of potential friends for their children, whose parents have similar beliefs. This reduces the chance that their friends will form friendships or attachments that may lead them away from the family and their church. (Duggar and Duggar 2011:231) The discouragement of forming significant relationships with unbelievers fits the pattern of social control used within intentional communities to hinder apostasy. (Hostetler 1974:257-260) The networks of friendships formed through churches and events like these form the framework for the larger Biblical Family Community. From of this network, groups of families can organize and complete large projects together, for example, political campaigns, films, and business ventures.

C. Home Education and Discipleship

Families with the Biblical Family Community typically refuse to place their children in public schools for both political and religious reasons. In the film, *Indoctrination*, made by Colin Gunn and Joaquin Fernandez to explore the topic of Christian homeschooling, the Department of Education is presented as an unconstitutional entity that should be disbanded. Within this worldview, education is an area not intended to be part of the purview of the federal government. (2011) Biblical Family leaders also object to the use of public funds for public schools, referring to the funds as “educational welfare,” as Kevin Swanson did in the film.

More importantly, families within this community have objected to placing their children in both public and private schools (even Christian ones), based on their religious beliefs. Their objections are rooted in the same passage that inspires them to practice daily family worship, Deuteronomy 6. Parents are viewed as the principal teachers of their children. They view discipling their children in the Christian faith as part of their duties and privileges as parents. Parents’ primary goal is that their children become Christians and adopt their parents’ religious

beliefs as their own. Therefore, the focus of schooling is not placed on academic subjects per se, as much as it is placed on the religious training of the child and the cultivation of a “biblical worldview.” (Phillips 2003)

The methods used to teach are also often structured in a way that reinforces family and community values. The doctrine of submission extends to the ideal conceptualization of homeschooling. Fathers are expected to be involved and to guide their children’s education. Mothers may be doing much of the face-to-face teaching, but they are doing it as representatives of their husbands (basically a principal-teacher chain of command). (Phillips 2003) Families within this community also favor unit studies or, as one mother described it, the “bus-stop method” of homeschooling (children follow along in a group until the teaching exceeds their abilities). (Duggar and Duggar 2008:189)⁵⁹ Both of these methods integrate as many family members as possible into lessons, regardless of age.

The fostering of a “biblical worldview” involves exhorting their children to analyze everything that comes before them in terms of the teachings of the Bible. The “Desert Island Challenge”, presented in Doug Phillip’s *How to Think Like a Christian* lecture, outlines this concept quite neatly: the audience is challenged to live as they would if they were stranded on an island with the Bible as their only source of knowledge for decision-making. When the world is approached in this way, nothing is purely secular. (2002b) This shapes the way in which academic subjects are approached. Every subject is presented through a religious lens. Through this lens, math is used to outline the universe that God created. Reading is essential, because it allows people to read God’s Word. (Botkin 2008a)

The two subjects in which the influence of this approach is seen most distinctly are science and history. The Biblical Family Community has overwhelmingly embraced young Earth

creationism. In this interpretation of world history, the world was not only created in six literal days, but also it is believed to be as young as six thousand years old. Essentially, the entirety of Genesis is viewed as an accurate account of historic events.⁶⁰ Therefore, all branches of science are truly branches of creation study. (Botkin 2008b)

The impact on history curricula within this community is just as profound. All of history, measured from Genesis to present (and eventually to Revelations) is presented as an unfolding of God's plan for the world and for humanity. In fact, historical re-enactors at Vision Forum's Reformation 500 event in 2009 wore nametags stating that they (their characters) were part of "His Story."⁶¹ When teaching history to their children, parents are encouraged by Quiverfull homeschool leaders to use it to demonstrate their belief in God's sovereignty and providence. (Botkin 2008b) In this demonstration, special attention is paid to the perceived hand of God in American history. In popular history texts within this community, like those produced by Vision Forum and Wallbuilders, the authors present the United States as a Christian nation with mostly Christian founding fathers. It is argued in these same texts that previous generations have slowly abandoned this Christian heritage. Parents encourage their children to work toward the goal of bringing the United States' laws and culture into alignment with the community's Christian values. (American Family Studios 2011)

The community's general approach to post-secondary education also reflects this emphasis on family involvement. Whether or not their children should attend college is a controversial topic within the Biblical Family Community. While Biblical Family literature on the subject concedes that attending a brick-and-mortar college far away from home may be necessary to the sons' pursuit of some career paths, it is not the preferred method. (Young and Young 2010:240-245) College courses are more frequently taken through distance education

programs and/or schools close enough to the family home that students can continue living there. Living at home allows students (both daughters and sons) to pursue a degree, while still fully participating in family and local church life. (Duggar and Duggar 2011:158)

Colleges and universities, both secular and (some) religious, are viewed with a great amount of suspicion. Parents are cautioned about the multitude of professors whose teachings contradict the “biblical worldview” that they have worked so hard to instill in their children. (Chancey and McDonald 2007:137-143) Coupled with isolation from family and their local church, the teachings of some colleges and universities are perceived as breeding grounds for apostasy (or at least the tempering of religious belief). (Chancey and McDonald 2007:137-143) Conservative, Christian distance-learning programs, like Vision Forum’s College Plus!, combats this combination but still enables students to pursue a degree. Students study at home and earn credit through CLEP examinations and online classes.⁶² Many families are also pursuing alternatives to career preparation, including apprenticeships.⁶³

The Biblical Family Community’s ideals for education support the continuation and maintenance of individual family communities, local church communities, and the larger community network. Both the content and methodology promoted support the values and ideological framework of these groups. Educational systems in intentional communities function in the same way. It is through a community’s educational system that a group’s beliefs are cultivated and nurtured in those that will inherit the community. (Hostetler 1974:215-218) Examples of this in other intentional communities include the German school within the Hutterite community and religious schools in Orthodox Jewish communities. (Hostetler 1974:215-218; Rappoport, Garb, and Penso 1995:48-61)

D. Family Economies

In addition to functioning as the primary social unit within the Biblical Family Community, the family household also serves as the preferred primary socioeconomic unit. Discourse within this community on economics greatly favors family businesses and views each household as an individual economic entity. Kevin Swanson refers to households taking this approach as “oikonomias” or “household economies.”⁶⁴ Fathers are tasked not just with providing for their families, but also with participating in entrepreneurship and encouraging their children (sons and daughters) to do the same. As Swanson phrases it, his household is a “seven-income household,” referring to the entrepreneurship of himself, of his wife, and that of each of his five children.⁶⁵ Every member of a household is expected contribute to financial maintenance of it in some, either by saving or earning money. Audio and video recordings and retreats aimed at fathers and their families that address the subject help foster this entrepreneurial spirit.^{66 67} Multiple families may also come together to take on new entrepreneurial projects (like making a film) together.

While individual family members are encouraged to pursue individual ventures, the main economic goal of a household is ideally to increase the success of a father’s ministerial and economic ventures. The “family mission” is considered to be the “career” of the wives and children in these families by leaders within the community. (B. Phillips and Panel 2010b) The duties of this job can include everything from frugality that provides the financial freedom to take business risks or actually working in a family business side-by-side with their family members. (Phillips and Phillips 2011a)

Within these family business ventures, fathers strive to include their sons and daughters in the business from a young age. (Carpenter, Carpenter, and Stubblefield 2008) As sons grow

older, some start their own business, and others enter into apprenticeships with their fathers or family friends in order to eventually take over a business. (Maxwell 2001:147-160) Vision Forum Ministries runs an internship program to mentor young men in this manner.⁶⁸ If college is necessary, a combination of college education and practical training through apprenticeships is presented as preferential to college alone, in Quiverfull literature on raising sons, like *Raising Real Men* and *Preparing Sons to Provide for a One-Income Household*. (Maxwell 2001:167-170; Young and Young 2010:140-145)

Home businesses seem to uniquely fit to the Biblical Family Community economic and social ideal, because they support family autonomy and, often, integrate the entire family. Leaders often present economic autonomy as an essential requirement for ultimately retaining educational and religious freedom.⁶⁹ The maintenance of the economic autonomy of a Quiverfull family includes the fierce avoidance of debt and the rejection of any form of government financial aid. The church is held responsible for providing aid to those in need through the private sector. (Phillips 2002a) Debt is viewed as slavery to the lender. As Christians should serve God above all others, debt can complicate individual and family service to God.⁷⁰

This avoidance of entanglement with the others financially echoes the financial separation maintained by other intentional communities. Specifically, the Hutterites follow a somewhat similar pattern of economic interactions with those outside the community. While certainly participating in business dealings with others, the group avoids entering into economic entanglements and incurring debts that could hinder the ability of its leaders to do what is best for the colony. (Hostetler 1974:257-260) In the same way, fathers within this community pursue economic autonomy so determinedly, because they view it as a condition that will allow them to

more easily make decisions for their families based on biblical principles and on what they feel God is calling their family to do.⁷¹

E. Family-Oriented Approach to Medicine

The rhetoric within the Biblical Family Community also favors a family-oriented approach to medicine that is consistent with their values. Home-centered healthcare reinforces the construction of the home and the family, grounded in their faith, as the center of daily life. From cradle to grave, family is responsible for caring for family. This ethic is manifested in Quiverfull leaders expressed preference for home births and midwife-assisted births in birthing centers over hospital births for healthy pregnancies. Part of the appeal of this approach to birth is that it allows husbands and, in some cases, children to be heavily involved in the process. The entire family is ideally involved in welcoming a new member; home births are presented as a way to facilitate the actualization of this ideal. (B. Phillips and Panel 2010b) This becomes especially significant, when taking into consideration that, while their numbers are growing, the women in the general population of the U.S. choosing home births and other alternatives are still in the minority of all U.S. births.⁷²

Another manifestation of this preference for family- and home-centered medicine is the popularity of home remedies and natural/holistic medicine for nonemergency medical problems among Quiverfull mommy bloggers. This includes everything from the therapeutic use of essential oils⁷³ to homemade cures for earaches⁷⁴ to a strong focus on nutrition. (Carpenter and Campbell 2008) Advice on these matters is generally passed from mother to mother and from mother to daughter. In more serious medical cases or in the case of medical emergencies, families will use doctors and hospitals. Home medicine is not used as a replacement for biomedical care, but rather it used as a supplement to it.

As parents and grandparents age, families within this community have demonstrated a preference for providing elder care within their own homes.⁷⁵ Unless medical needs require a parent to receive care outside of the home, families will often welcome older, ill family members into their homes and provide care, sometimes in collaboration with home nursing staff. This is seen as a way of carrying out the fifth commandment to honor their parents as they enter the twilight of this life. (Pennington 2009)

In addition, leaders within the Biblical Family Community have objected strongly to the recent passage of President Obama's healthcare bill. They object on both political and religious grounds.⁷⁶ They see this as an overstepping by the federal government outside its realm of authority. From a religious standpoint, many within the community object to use of public funds for birth control and abortion coverage. For this same reason, many are also choosing to sever ties with private insurance companies that cover these services. A popular alternative to traditional private insurance is the medical sharing ministry, Samaritan Ministries.⁷⁷ In this medical-sharing network, members do pay a monthly membership fee, but, instead of filing a traditional medical claim, medical costs and needs are sent to Samaritan. Then, Samaritan sends out newsletters containing these needs to members. Members send checks, and often cards and letters, to individual families to help cover their medical bills. The design of this program is taken from the command in Galatians 6:2 to "bear one another's burdens."⁷⁸

F. "Hospitality" and Family-Driven Evangelism

Hospitality within this community is viewed as a religious responsibility. Families are expected to joyfully open their homes up both to other believers and unbelievers. When traveling, families tend to prefer staying with other families. There is even a "hospitality network" called, A Candle in the Window, that connects families for this very purpose.⁷⁹

Families also welcome others into their homes in their daily lives. Homes are often places for gatherings of believers to socialize and worship together, after church or at other times during the week. (Duggar and Duggar 2011:130-131) Welcoming unbelievers into their homes is seen as an opportunity for family evangelism. (Botkin 2007)

One of the goals of every family within the Biblical Family Community is evangelism. Quiverfull leaders encourage families to take on the Great Commission as their family mission.⁸⁰ Evangelistic activities that involve the entire family are preferred. For example, very young children can be involved in passing out tracts and baking for and visiting neighbors.⁸¹ This preference follows the community's ideal of family-integration. On a larger scale, families may feel called to pursue long-term mission projects. Within this community, long-term missions are presented as more successful than short-term missions, especially overseas. Having a family based in a location is viewed as the most effective way to convert people to Christianity. In this way, families are displaying both orthopraxy and orthodoxy on a daily basis, as well as becoming involved with the lives of their neighbors that they are trying to convert.⁸²

As I have stated, many in popular media have portrayed the motivations of this community as largely political. I believe that, after following what they believe God has commanded them to do, this community's primary goal is evangelism. If anything, they are not producing little voters, but rather, as one family described them, they see their children as "little missionaries."⁸³

Involving the family and the home so intimately in evangelism efforts is seen to cement their importance. As with all other areas of life discussed, the conceptualization of ideal evangelistic practices is shaped by the community's understanding of the family and its ideal functioning. Families are supposed to work as evangelistic teams. While the evangelistic

approaches do differ in some ways, the importance of total family involvement in evangelism can also be seen in the Church of Latter-Day Saints. (Ostling and Ostling 1999:163-164) In both cases, the involvement of the family in evangelistic efforts bolsters the wider community's conceptualization of the family and its function.

G. The Family Table

Food plays an integral functional role in the Biblical Family Community. It reinforces the structure of the family, provides an opportunity for the training of children, and brings together believers. To some, it also has significance in theological understanding of biblical metaphors.

The family table serves as a stage for the acting out of gender roles and the strengthening of authority structures within the home. Ideally, fathers sit at the head of the table as a display of their role as heads of their households. Mothers often take the seat at the other end of the table, a position that presents them as the next in command in the household hierarchy. (Phillips and Phillips 2011c) In Biblical Family literature and sermons on family meals, mealtimes are also presented as training grounds for the children of the family. Parents are encouraged to have their children practice correct behavior for church by sitting for extended periods of time and giving a speaker their attention during dinners. (Carpenter and Campbell 2008)

Parents may also use meals as an opportunity to expand upon their children's education. This time is seen as a valuable instance for the discipleship of their children. It is not unheard of for family meals to last for hours and include discussions of everything from theology to politics. (Phillips and Phillips 2011c) Mealtimes also provide a chance to train daughters to embrace the family's and the community's ideal gender roles. In many families, mothers and daughters prepare the meals and serve the men and visitors. The women and girls are also often publicly lauded for their service. This behavioral pattern teaches daughters the gendered roles that they

are to play by placing great value on the assumption of them. The public bestowing of virtue on this behavior also teaches sons what to look for in a future wife. (Phillips 2008)

Food also has an important role in the local churches of this community. In addition to being a vehicle for hospitality, congregations also generally meet after morning services for fellowship meals, potluck style meals sometimes referred to as “pot-faith” meals, as luck does not fit into a worldview in which nothing happens by chance. (Duggar and Duggar 2011:131) In many churches within the community, the observation of the Sabbath with other believers is a day-long event that composes the core of the family’s social lives. (Fernandez and Gunn 2011) In both instances, the family mealtime and the community meals, food brings together members of this community in a way that is expected to foster the continuance of the community, either through the nurturing of the next generation, the solidification of community ties centered on shared beliefs and practices, or both.

TECHNOLOGY, MUSIC, AND FILM

Technology and media are handled with great care within this community. Technology and media in and of themselves are not viewed as problematic; however, the media content that new technology has made readily available to anyone with an Internet connection is viewed as dangerous. The community’s response to this threat has been to create its own media using the latest technology. This demand for media that fits the community’s values catalyzed the creation of the San Antonio Independent Christian Film Festival. This festival and the accompanying film academy training encourage and reward the production of films that exalt the shared values of the community, from their views on gender to evangelism.⁸⁴

I was able to attend the 2012 SAICFF and was most impacted by the films made for the young filmmakers category. The films reflect the intensity of the religious devotion that this

community is fostering and the influence of the message of Vision Forum on the next generation. Two filmmaking teams independently chose the same allegory as the inspiration for their films taken from the Vision Forum audio recording, *How to Think Like a Christian*. Two more of the nine films dealt with martyrdom. The other five films either recounted a biblical tale or dealt with theological issues (such as soteriology). The community recognizes film as an influential tool that can be used to share their faith. As one of the young filmmakers told the crowd, “Film-making is not a playground. It is a battleground.” These young filmmakers consider themselves to be honing their skills with a weapon for the cultural war in which they see themselves engaged.

Fueled by similar motivations, Vision Forum has also launched their own version of iTunes, Blue Behemoth. The influential ministry has preapproved all of the music, films, and sermons available on the site. The products are marketed as being safe for the conservative families that purchase toys and homeschooling curricula from Vision Forum’s catalogue. The company also sells preloaded iPods filled with material from the site.⁸⁵ A conservative Christian version of Netflix, known as Puritan’s Picks, has also gained some popularity within the community.⁸⁶

Each family sets its own rules regarding music, film, books, and Internet use. Most families have chosen not to have broadcast television in the home, due to both objectionable content and the distraction it creates. However, many do utilize DVDs in their homeschooling and watch occasional films together as a family. Music is also seen as a powerful, influential tool that can either reinforce or derail their teachings. As a result, many families favor classical and religious music and place restrictions on the music that their children access. (Brown 2008) Internet access is not uncommon in the homes of these families, but it is heavily monitored and

its use is restricted. These restrictions do not just apply to the children. Unrestricted Internet access is considered to be too great a temptation for some men and boys, as well. (Duggar and Duggar 2011:230)

Despite the perceived potential dangers, the Internet does play an integral functional role in the Biblical Family Community. Blogging and social networking sites, like Facebook, connect families with similar ideas across great distances. The use of social networking sites and blogging allows for fast and frequent exchanges of ideas between users. Easy communication through these means also helps maintain and build upon the connections made between families at conferences and retreats despite geographic separation. These communications help construct and bolster the web of networking ties that make up this community. This ability to connect to people in many different geographic areas is the logistical lifeline for the maintenance of a shared sense of separateness among people spread out over the United States and across the globe.

Online networking allows for collaboration like that found among women on both sides of the Southern Baptist ordination debate. (Flowers 2012:93-94) Time and resources can be pooled through these network systems in order to produce creative projects, like books (*Passionate Housewives*) or films (*Rescued*), and in order to rally support for political causes that reflect the values of the community. The blog fund-raising campaign for The Morning Center, a pro-life crisis pregnancy center supported by Samaritan Ministries, featured on mommy blogs was an example of this potential for collaboration.⁸⁷ In addition, the dialogue between community members that fosters the transition from “recruitment” (the initial adoption of the Quiverfull ideology) to “conversion” (the continuing process of each individual family trying to adopt or better embody Quiverfull ideals) appears to partially take place through these

networking communications. (Leatham 1997:299-301) Moms are able to swap ideas about raising children within their community and discuss issues in order to help and support one another in their journey as Quiverfull mothers.

CONCLUSION

The Quiverfull ideology has grown out of the response of conservative Christian groups, like the Moral Majority, to cultural changes resulting from the sexual revolution of the 1960s. Biblical Family leaders have built upon the pro-life stance of these groups and incorporated the rejection of birth control into a purist form of the pro-life stance. They present acceptance of birth control as the necessary precursor to the acceptance of abortion, as both are viewed as usurping God's authority over human life. (Campbell 2003:152-154)

In addition to their pro-life stance, the Quiverfull ideology also encompasses the theology of complementarianism that was formulated as a conservative response to the development of evangelical feminism. Complementarianism asserts that men and women are designed to take on different roles in the home and in church life; women are expected to attend to domestic duties and take on supporting roles in the public sphere, and men, and only men, are supposed to fill leadership roles in the family, religious, and political life. (Flowers 2012:50-54)

The Biblical Family Community's commitment to complementarianism greatly informs the conceptualization of the model family structure and its optimal functioning. The conceptualization marriage and authority structure within a Quiverfull home are built around the reinforcement of the gender roles outlined in complementarianism. Within marriage, wives are expected to submit to their husbands, and their husbands are responsible for providing protection and financial and spiritual support to their wives and children. The ideal marriage is described in Biblical Family rhetoric as a mirror of the relationship between Christ and the Church: the

Church submits to the authority of Christ, and Christ loves and provides for the Church self-sacrificially. (Baucham, Jr. 2007:49) Children are expected to honor and obey their parents in accordance with the fifth commandment. (Phillips 2003) Parents are ideally supposed to serve as their children's primary teacher as they believe is commanded in Deuteronomy 6. (Sproul, Jr. 2004:46-47) Boys and girls are raised within this community with the goal that they will take on the normalized gender roles of the community in adulthood.

As I have clearly outlined, the model of the "Biblical Family" has touched the idealized conceptualization of every area of the lives of those within the Biblical Family Community. The perceived optimal models for worship, for economic structures, for education, and for socialization are all built upon the idealized model for the family promoted within this community. By centering all social and economic life around the ideal family structure and function, the community seems to have amplified the importance of the ideal family life. The "Biblical Family" model is constructed as a critique of modern American family life. This antagonistic stance towards the broader culture seems to serve as a binding, shared identity. Their formulation of an ideal world and their harsh criticism of modern American culture create a common sense of separation from the broader culture, which appears to unite the community.

New technology has allowed this community to maintain its ties despite being widely geographically dispersed. Blogging, social networking, and e-mail have all supplemented and assisted in the maintenance of the networks of Quiverfull families that have formed through homeschooling conferences and mutual friendships. In addition, the creation of media from within the Biblical Family Community, that reflects their values, has provided an important tool for the continued growth and maintenance of a unified community dispersed over a large geographic. This access to efficient long-distance communication and dispersal of community-

specific media has allowed for the formation of a geographically dispersed intentional community. The Biblical Family Community is united by a shared commitment to what they believe is the correct, biblically based approach to family and culture.

APPENDIX: QUIVERFULL BLOGS

<http://www.10burnetts.com/>

<http://12paines.com/>

<http://aboverubies.org/>

<http://bontragerfamilysingers.com/Home.html/>

<http://www.brianjulieknox.com/>

<http://brothersandsisters.net/gracenotes/>

<http://chelseyhall.com/>

<http://www.davidlovespriscilla.com/>

<http://dortignacfamily.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.famteam.com/>

<http://franklinsprings.com/blog/>

<http://www.generationcedar.com/main/>

<http://hynesva.com/>

<http://inashoe.com/>

<http://inhisperfecttime.com/>

<http://ja20.com/>

<http://jeubfamily.com/>

<http://johnandaudra.notgrass.com/>

<http://johnmarshallfamily.com/>

<http://www.joyfullservice.com/>

<http://justinturley.com/>

<http://kathymomofmany.blogspot.com/>

<http://kenpierpont.com/>
<http://ladyofvirtue.blogspot.com/>
<http://littlearrows.blogspot.com/>
<http://www.lockwoodfamilytomexico.com/>
<http://martinpalooza.com/>
<http://mossfarm.blogspot.com/>
<http://muncksquiver.blogspot.com/>
<http://www.myblessedhome.net/>
<http://www.ncfic.org/blog/>
<http://www.noblecall.org/>
<http://plymouthrockranch.com/blog/>
<http://proverbs14verse1.blogspot.com/>
<http://quiverfullfamily.com/>
<http://www.raisingarrows.net/>
<http://raisinghomemakers.com/>
<http://www.raisingolives.com/>
<http://www.robertloveskendalyn.com/>
<http://www.sacredmommyhood.com/>
<http://scottbrownonline.com/>
<http://servenclan.blogspot.com/>
<http://smithefamily.blogspot.com/>
<http://www.smockityfrocks.com/>
<http://sophiassiege.blogspot.com/>

<http://srloomis.com/blog/>

<http://staddonfamily.com/>

<http://stelzlfamily.com/>

<http://stevenandersonfamily.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.thebatesfamily.com/>

<http://thecasoncrew.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.thecommonroom.com/>

<http://www.theduggarfamily.com/>

<http://thefullquiverhomeschoolhouse.wordpress.com/>

<http://theneelyteam.com/>

<http://www.thewilkesteam.com/>

<http://www.titus2.com/blog/>

<http://treasuresfromashoebox.blogspot.com/>

<http://visionarydaughters.com/>

<http://www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/>

<http://www.visionserve.org/>

<http://weloveyoujoel.blogspot.com/>

<http://wissmanns.blogspot.com/>

<http://yoursacredcalling.com/blog/>

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to provide a snapshot of the Quiverfull community in the United States, while at the same time, demonstrating how the ideal family structure informs other idealized social structures in this community. I will look at the history and evolution of the Quiverfull movement in the United States. My paper will also outline the core characteristics shared by Quiverfull families, these include: a) they are evangelical Christians, who view the Bible as the inerrant; b) the father is the spiritual and practical leader of the home; c) gender roles are starkly delineated and adhered to; d) children are viewed as blessings from God and all types of birth control (including natural family planning) are rejected.

In addition to providing this background, I will argue that each family is conceptualized as a micro-community that interacts with other families to form a web of social connections that serve as the skeleton for this community. While this community is geographically widespread, and even though some families within the community do not refer to themselves as Quiverfull, there is a sense of separateness from the “world” among these families. This sense of separation underpins a shared identity among these families.