THEOCRATIC BUSINESSMEN AND
PHILADELPHIA MUNICIPAL
REFORM, 1870-1900

By David J. Pivar*

IN RECENT years, historians have championed a re-evaluation
of religion as a force in American history. Some social his-
torians, reacting against economic interpretations, stress religious
motivation as an alternative source of interpretation. In their
"theory of social action" two roles of religion are emphasized:
the first as a cultural force, modifying and being modified, and
the second as a prime mover in the historical process. Winthrop
S. Hudson serves as a representative of the cultural approach
which categorizes American religions as culture-religions acting
as a force in "molding national culture" and ultimately being
"molded by a national culture."1 Hudson adopted a schema in
which religion and secular forces were dialectics which acted as
the important dynamic in social change. The second view of the
role of religion more specifically offers an alternative to economic
interpretations, especially as an alternative to the Matthew Jo-
sephson thesis postulated in The Politicos. Art Hoogenboom in
his study of civil service reform saw religion as a motivating
force. Somewhat differently, Irwin Unger in his study of The
Greenback Era made a systematic frontal attack on Charles Beard
and James Sharkey's revision of Beard's work on the period,
postulating as an alternative what might be called a "Troeltsch
approach" to the sociology of religion.2

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annual meeting of the Association at Meadville, October 8, 1965. Dr. Pivar
began the study of the role and function of religion in social change in his
1870-1900."

1 Winthrop S. Hudson, American Protestantism (Chicago: University of
2 Art Hoogenboom, Outlawing The Spoils: A History of the Civil Service
Reform Movement, 1865-1883 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961),
p. vii; Irwin Unger, The Greenback Era: A Social and Political History of
p. 7-9.
Actually, the question is not one of an economic or a religious interpretation. Nor is the question one of establishing artificial polarities which become exclusive in an incomplete "model of social action." Rigid use of dialectical categories distorts historical process. Rather, religious factors must be related to the position of the historical actor or actors in the social structure. The only systematic analysis, in historical perspective, of religion correlated with socio-economic factors was completed by the political scientist Seymour Lipset. What Lipset implied was stated explicitly by Robert Merton. Social theories must be related to social structure. In dealing with religion, the researcher must be aware that the religious fantasies and utopian strivings under study might be peculiar to the social group under examination. The study of religion as a force in the emergency of a civic conscience provides an opportunity to relate municipal reform to broad reform movements such as social purity, temperance, civil service, and allied reforms.

Municipal reform in Philadelphia in the late nineteenth century was led by businessmen. Until the end of the 1880's municipal reformers in politics were exclusively businessmen. Professionals or other reformers who allied themselves with them did so because they shared similar values, attitudes, interests, ideas, and probably social origins, or because they were their wives. Affiliated with various religious denominations, they sought consensus by emphasizing the essentials of religion rather than the forms. The need for religion as a capstone to preserve the equilibrium of civilization was assumed.

Working within the framework of a "Newtonian cosmology," reformers in Philadelphia implicitly operated upon a theory, unstated, which might be labelled "social equilibrium theory." Change could be achieved through ideological reformulation. Institutions, individually and in their interrelationships, needed only minimal structural modification. In the minds of municipal reformers, morally sound ideas were the dynamic that would transform and revitalize. Thus, Henry Charles Lea, famous medievalist, civil service reformer, and pioneer municipal reformer, who was im-

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important in initiating the Liberal Republican movement of 1872, described himself as a conservative to his British friend W. E. H. Lecky. Indeed he was, but a conservative social reformer. Richard T. Ely, whose writings were reprinted by the *Friends* *Intelligencer* in 1884, depicted socialism as the threat of the age. He held that only the churches were capable of defeating socialism, for they could absorb the principles of socialism within the structure of the church. Ely's viewpoint was widely shared. The churches and religion were the bulwark of the businessman's conception of "civilization." The hope of businessmen-reformers lay in the ability of churches and religion to meet new needs. The movement for municipal reform was one of "conservative social reform."

The process of ideological reformulation was central to the development of municipal reform. In 1868-1869 the American Social Science Association requested Philadelphians to institute the Philadelphia Social Science Association. The local association was to function as part of a communications network for the parent association. Meeting on social, economic, and political questions pertaining to the region, the local investigators could, in emergency situations, provide the parent association with information fitted within an acceptable ideological framework. It was within the Philadelphia Social Science Association that professionals and businessmen met and influenced each other. It was within the Philadelphia Social Science Association that the force of University of Pennsylvania professors could be tapped and directed. The Philadelphia Association continued operating throughout the late nineteenth century, despite the collapse of the American Social Science Association. It surrendered its autonomy with the formation of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, which continued its functions in expanded form. Most important, Professor Edmund James, professor of administration at the University of Pennsylvania, moving force behind the academy, and

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5 H. C. Lea to W. E. H. Lecky, May 6, 1894, November 15, 1895, and April 12, 1896, Henry C. Lea MSS, University of Pennsylvania.
7 Henry Villard to Henry Charles Lea, August 12, 1869, and September 19, 1869, H. C. Lea MSS, University of Pennsylvania.
proponent of business education, represented the triumph of the business community in the area of the "higher learning."

From its inception municipal reform performed social education functions intended not only to rationalize municipal politics on a non-partisan business basis, but also to inculcate what could be called the "Ben Franklin virtues" into the American public. Perceiving themselves as the historical middle class, businessmen-reformers levelled their weapons against Aristocracy in American life. Lacking an aristocratic class to serve as the enemy, they located Aristocracy in the social body of the nation. The persistence of patterns of "Aristocratic behavior" was the evil to be eradicated. As Independent Republicans, they were critical of Stalwarts and Half-Breeds. The assassination of James G. Garfield, a Republican Half-Breed, by a disappointed Stalwart office-seeker was characterized as a "political duel" between two contending factions within the Republican Party and symptomatic of "Aristocratic behavior" in politics. Similarly, the "spoils idea" attacked by civil service reformers was perceived as part of a system of "American Feudalism" which continued erroneous habits in the American people. Political parties, undergoing institutional transformation, were considered threats to self-reliance and individualism traditionally valued by Protestant religionists. One must also note that the "spoils system" taxed the businessman more than other groups. Civil service reformers sought the cultivation of social attitudes in the public which would lead to the acceptance of reform in government. In theological terms, reformers equated the acceptance of the "spoils idea" with the "democratization of sin and vice." In its broadest meaning, civil service reform meant the inculcation of a standardized behavior among the public: the acceptance of the value system of the reformers.

Municipal reform, which contained a conglomeration of specific reforms, sought a "Heavenly City of God" on earth realized


*Charles Richardson to Herbert Welsh, March 26, 1893, Herbert Welsh MSS. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.*
through the cultivation of social character. Each specific reform, coalescing into a municipal program, was an instrumentality in the creation of a new society, a new man, a new woman, a new man-women relationship, etc. The municipal reformers devised a program for social reconstruction which placed the formation of an ideal social character as its end. Ultimately the elevation of character was the test of the reformers' success. In the struggle between the forces of "light and darkness," education was the reformers' sanctioned technique for implementing the rule of rationality, internalized into character. Various social institutions were the scaffolding through which national character would be constructed.\textsuperscript{12} Law was an educator.\textsuperscript{13} Municipal reform organizations were assigned educational duties.\textsuperscript{14} Basic religious institutions, the family and school, were to be transformed into new social agencies for educating the child for citizenship.\textsuperscript{15} Social workers would contribute to the education of the newly arrived immigrant.\textsuperscript{16} No matter what the arena of reform, its objective was the same: the internalization of values believed needed for the operation of an urban-industrial society. Salvation was still the concern, but it was a social salvation to be attained through the development of social character.

Until the late 1880's reformers conceived the role of religion in the development of social character as mainly remedial. Christian morality, liberated from the restrictions of theology, served as a defense against barbarism or a reversion to barbarism. Christian morality was a block placed behind the wheels of civilization, preventing the vehicle from slipping backward.\textsuperscript{17} By the latter 1880's the expansive optimism of Americans, encouraged by economic growth, found expression in municipal reform ideology. A distinct shift to the offensive took place, with emphasis upon preventive

\textsuperscript{12} Selections from Mary A. Livermore (Boston: Massachusetts WCTU, 1892), p. 14.
\textsuperscript{13} Law was not only an educator; one was to be educated to accept the law whether it be the law of man, of God, of hygiene, or of nature.
\textsuperscript{14} Influence of the Spoils Idea, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{16} Union Signal, March 5, 1896, pp. 4-5.
\textsuperscript{17} Report of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Law and Order Society of the City of Philadelphia . . . 1886 (Philadelphia: Wise and Van Horn, printer, 1886), p. 11.
tasks rather than remedial. The focus narrowed increasingly upon
the cultivation of the "New Citizenship," the logical complement
of the "New Nationalism" which would find political expression
with the election of Theodore Roosevelt to the Presidency. This
secularization process broadened the social base of the new consen-
sus. Elizabeth Blackwell, clearly conscious of social process,
astutely recommended to women reformers that they should sub-
stitute the word "human" for "Christian" when making public
appeals.

In the process of establishing a "new consensus," municipal
reformers stressed the essentials of religion. In like manner, temper-
ance societies and law and order societies (the enforcement arm of the temperance move-}
the disintegration of the “Puritan Sunday.” Essential-minded reformers, on the other hand, were willing to keep the religious spirit without necessarily preserving the forms of worship. Therefore, they encouraged participation in cultural activities on Sunday, attendance at lectures, art museums, and cultural events as a form of recreation. The worship of culture became a substitute for actual church attendance. In other forms, the secularization process encouraged continuities in social change through which religious symbols and mechanisms were conserved but given new expression. A social religion, centered upon citizenship and Christian duties in civic life, was the end product of the process. This social religion was more subtle than traditional religion. For example, women reformers, operating within the Working Girls’ Clubs, sought to extend religious influences through the inspiration of character and personality. Practical talks encouraged a life of deeds, sanctifying service rather than creeds and forms.

To prevent conflicts over doctrines and dogmas, clubs were encouraged to hold their meetings in secular buildings.

This process of secularization, which promoted agreement on essentials, was evident within all aspects of reform which came to be known as Progressivism. It was evident among civil service reformers, municipal reformers, social purity reformers, moral reformers, labor reformers, and temperance reformers. It gained political expression too. In 1896 Robert Pattison, reform mayoralty candidate in Philadelphia, was a Catholic, actively supported by municipal reformers. Pattison had been a reform governor earlier.

The movement for municipal reform developed outside the churches. In 1886 the Committee of 100 in Philadelphia was made up exclusively of businessmen. However, it would be erroneous to conclude that they were the only people interested in municipal

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23 Abram Hewitt Lewis was a prolific writer on the problem of Sabbatarianism, while the National Reform Association led in the Sabbatarian reform movement. Lewis also assisted in founding the Seventh Day Baptists.


25 Grace Hoadley Dodge, A Bundle of Letters to Girls on Practical Matters (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1887). This was the first in the series of such practical talks.


The women's rights movement was exceedingly concerned with developing what Elizabeth Blackwell, first American woman physician, called a "moral municipal league." As early as 1876, a moral education society under the leadership of Dr. Harriet French existed in Philadelphia. Its activities were oriented towards an urban-industrial society and preparing the child for the necessities of such a society. In 1888, the moral education society was absorbed into the Philadelphia Social Purity Alliance under the leadership of the Reverend William McVickar, an Episcopalian clergyman who later became Bishop of Rhode Island. Religious leaders were also active in philanthropic and temperance organizations. The Law and Order Society and the Christian League had abundant representation from the clergy. Their involvement in politics or with municipal reformers was only minimal until the end of the 1880's.

With the exception of temperance reform, religious leaders usually acted on a personal basis rather than as spokesmen for the churches. Only temperance reform, an older reform, was absorbed into the churches as a denominational activity in the period before 1886. Women's auxiliaries in church temperance movements flourished after the Civil War. Clearly, institutional response lagged behind social response. A pattern was evident. The churches lagged as reform agencies. Reforms usually originated from secular sources.

Yet, three denominations absorbed new reforms and assumed new reform roles faster than other denominations. They were the Episcopalians, Unitarians, and the Society of Friends. The Quakers probably responded most rapidly and completely to reform, but their practice of working within their religious denomination meant that Quaker influence was felt primarily through individuals. Unitarian ministers were the only religious leaders to commit themselves so deeply to municipal reform that they accepted positions on the Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Municipal League. Theocratic overtones in reform were most evident among Unitarian ministers. Despite the more rapid responses of particular denominations, by the 1890's representa-

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30 A biographical sketch can be found in the General Union Library (New York City), which has biographical sketches of all Episcopalian bishops.
tives of every religious denomination made some contribution to reform. Essential religion had expanded to include Jewish reformers and rabbis.30

One should not ignore trends in philanthropic reforms. Religious-philanthropic reform possessed its own dynamic. It, too, moved toward organizational unity, or at least coordination and cooperation. In 1887 the Citizens' Representative Committee emerged from the Law and Order Society of Philadelphia. The Representative Committee gave a voice to philanthropic and temperance reformers on a central committee and began expanding their work into a broader social arena.31 The movement was abortive, and the committee was reabsorbed into the Law and Order Society, having first agreed to abandon the representative principle.32 The representative principle combined organizations rather than individuals. What was important about the appearance of the committee was the fact that it indicated that consolidation of splinters of reform was underway, and that a real effort would be made to understand reform splinters in their interrelationships. Reform was becoming integrated, gaining a wholistic outlook. It was consolidating for a major effort.

If religious-philanthropic reform reflected trends toward consolidation and/or coordination-cooperation, so too did civil service and municipal reform. Civil service reformers were the first to contemplate the systematic use of religion. In the late 1860's the suggestion was advanced to appeal through churches on a broad moral basis for civil service reform.33 In 1888-1889, Herbert Welsh, civil service reformer, conservationist, municipal reformer, and banker's son, launched a concerted campaign to have ministers preach a reform sermon on "Civil Service Sunday."34 The campaign was launched nationally and signaled the beginning of a systematically concerted effort to enlist churches in reform activities.

31 Minutes of the Presbyterian Ministers' Association, November 9, 1885.
33 Charles Collins to H. C. Lea, November 5, 1869, H. C. Lea MSS, University of Pennsylvania.
Increasingly, religious denominations reappraised their position on politics and reform. In the 1880’s they began expostulating upon the duties of the Christian in politics.\textsuperscript{55} In 1891, Frances E. Willard editorialized in the \textit{Union Signal}, organ of the National WCTU, in favor of municipal reform, contending that it was as Christly to act in politics as it was in other areas.\textsuperscript{56} Despite such admonitions, many reformers continued to hold anti-urban attitudes. Isaac Clothier, of the Strawbridge and Clothier department store, still advocated sending unemployed young women into the country for positions on farms. The risks, dangers, and temptations of urban occupations and life he believed too great for young women.\textsuperscript{57}

Herbert Welsh helped in defining the new relationship of the churches to reform. First, the churches had to adapt to the democratic tendencies of the present. Only then could the churches engage in the services which would assist in controlling changed conditions.\textsuperscript{58} The traditional function of the churches in promoting stability and order was redefined to meet the needs of a dynamic society. Yet essentially that function remained, and the churches remained social control agencies.

Even settlement house work performed religious functions. When Jane Addams advised the Women’s Christian Temperance Union on its proposed settlement house in Chicago, she reminded them that the purpose of the settlement was to save the American man and the American state. No middle ground was possible.\textsuperscript{59}

Charles Parkhurst, whose raids on the brothels of New York uncovered a condition of police compliance and propelled him into the national limelight, preached a gospel of social religion. Indi-


\textsuperscript{56} The WCTU had been active in municipal affairs, but a qualitative shift can be noted when religious sanction was provided for their activities. The city was accepted as a permanent feature of American society.


\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 4-5.
viduals might be religious, but the relations of man to man had become irreligious. The forces of morality and spirituality were to be brought to bear upon the man-man relationship. For Washington Gladden, whose writings appeared in the Philadelphia reform journal *City and State* in 1895, religion was the heart of the municipal organism. Civic religion meant recognizing the fact of a divine social order which would harmonize at some future time with the perfect city. Clean, bright, safe, and healthful, the perfect city of the future was to be administered for public service by property holders who would share public burdens. The civic sense was educated. Social religion was taught by settlement houses, for its object was to prevent crime by educating the ignorant. Social settlements and municipal reform were inextricably intertwined. Both struggled to educate the citizenry to a civic sense.

In a real sense, settlement houses and the moral state had only a transitional value. They were a means to an end, not an end in themselves. The ideal remained the inculcation of self-control mechanisms in the individual. Theoretically, the function of the state or settlement houses, being transitional, might very well result in the disappearance of both at some future time. Once moral principle was habitually rooted in character, a system of social control had been created, for character was a final court "from which there was no appeal"; it was an "invisible but invincible armor." It was internalized morality which intuitively warned the individual when he approached the limits of sanctioned behavior. It warned, "thus far and no farther."

What then was the "new society" which the civic conscience would assist in creating? The "new society" recognized that character was determined for the child. Only by transforming present institutions and changing present child-rearing methods could it

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1 "What the Minister Is For," *City and State*, I, No. 5 (June 6, 1895), 3.
4 "A National Temptation," *City and State*, V, No. 2 (July 14, 1898), 22.
5 Elizabeth Powell Bond, "High Ideals of Purity," *Philanthropist*, October, 1877.
be ushered in, for "The new society will still be the old society with, at best, but a new livery and better manners. From the men who are must be grown the men who ought to be, and from the institutions that are must be grown the institutions that ought to be." The "true foundation" of the new society was to be "essential religion," for morality had to be drawn from religious sources. It was considered the only force that could hold strong passions of the human race, mind and body in check.

Although the municipal reformers spoke in the language of democracy, they were not radical democrats in any sense of the word. They were conservatives who used democratic rhetoric for purposes of social control. They functioned upon the assumption that they were a moral elite. They functioned upon the assumption that they were the best and should govern. A tension existed between the rhetoric of democracy and the practice of elitism. This tension was resolved through the development of the concept of "municipal theocracy." While the economic system was in rapid change and formation, while habits of thought induced by rapid increase of wealth prevailed, the number of people active in municipal affairs would be reduced to a minimum. A concentration of power and responsibilities would result. At some future time, democracy might be practiced, but for the present the "Worst populations of Europe pour in," requiring municipal reformers to teach them obedience to law. The process would be long, for "man is a tolerably ferocious animal, and civilization has a long struggle with atavism." The Christianization of politics demanded that Christ control from within, not externally. People had to be educated to vote for the good man and the good platform. Only when these control mechanisms had been internalized could they be trusted in social affairs.

One might argue that elitism was a product of concentration

36 "The True Foundation," *City and State*, II, No. 16 (August 20, 1896).
37 These reformers were not motivated by a sense of noblesse oblige, but rather by a sense of stewardship.
38 James T. Young, "Municipal Theocracy," *Municipal Affairs*, II, No. 3 (September, 1898).
and organization in the late nineteenth century. To a degree it was, but the United Labor League also favored concentration of leadership. When efforts were made to consolidate district school boards and a bill was presented in the early 1890's to have the city school board appointed by the Board of Judges, the Labor League endorsed the principle of efficiency through consolidation but objected to the feature of the bill which provided for appointment, continuing to support the idea of an elected school board. Apparently, the position of social groups in a social structure does influence ideology.

The meaning and use of the term democracy had various expressions. The conservatives, for whom its use was rhetorical, saw no contradiction between democratic rhetoric and efficiency. Labor reformers favored efficiency, but did not confuse it with democracy. Philadelphia municipal reformers made no call for referendums or direct elections. Rather, they called for the removal of municipal politics from partisan politics. They advocated the administrative principle over the elective. They proposed a form of social change which would leave the social structure untouched.

To this point, the discussion of municipal reform has been almost exclusively a discussion of the role of men. Women played an important role which has been substantially ignored. A special need exists at least to describe the type of work done by women. Significantly, the political emergence of women in municipal affairs coincided with the formation of the Municipal League of Philadelphia in the early 1890's.

The Municipal League was an outgrowth of the movement for a “New Philadelphia.” It was the lineal heir of municipal reform attempts dating back to 1871. The prime forces behind its formation in 1891 were Herbert Welsh, who functioned as treasurer for various reform societies; William McVickar, who served as president of the Social Purity Alliance of Philadelphia; and Charles Richardson, who was active in the Committee for a New Philadelphia." Its immediate intention was to become a popular movement, developing ward committees. While it would be active...
in politics, the Municipal League persisted in seeing its role as basically educative.\textsuperscript{53}

With the formation of the League, a conscious effort was made to enlist club women into the movement. This was in keeping with a general trend underway nationally to incorporate women's groups into the broad movement for reform. Herbert Welsh met with Mrs. Mary Mumford, Cornelius Frothingham, and Mrs. Cornelius Stevenson to enlist women into the movement. The result was the establishment of the Civic Club as an outgrowth of the New Century Club, a women's organization in Philadelphia.\textsuperscript{54} Immediately, women reformers and Herbert Welsh delimited the scope of women's activities in reform. Welsh discussed the broad meaning of women's involvement, their role as extending homelike qualities to the municipalities. In doing this, domestic sanitarians could become municipal sanitarians, sweeping city hall clean.\textsuperscript{55}

Mrs. Mary E. Mumford was more specific in delimiting the work of women in the municipality. In keeping with the principle that good city government was good housekeeping, women would continue to serve as municipal sanitarians. The "Women's Health Protective Associations" would be spread to other cities. The Women's Health Protective Association was formed by a group of prominent Philadelphia women physicians and reformers to educate the general population in the laws of health. It was especially active in 1891, when the threat of a cholera epidemic led to Herbert Welsh's instituting a campaign for improved filtration of water by the city as a preventive measure.\textsuperscript{56}

Women would serve as school directresses. Mrs. Mary Mumford and Mrs. Cornelius Stevenson already served in that capacity. In 1895 the Civic Club promoted a concerted campaign to elect

\textsuperscript{53} Herbert Welsh to Francis Leupp, September 27, 1893, Welsh MSS, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Herbert Welsh to Carl Shurz, Charles J. Bonaparte, Edward Carey and Richard Dana, September 29, 1893, \textit{ibid.}  
\textsuperscript{54} The \textit{Commonwealth} (Boston), June 2, 1894; Herbert Welsh to Emily Hallowell, December 20, 1893; Herbert Welsh to Cornelius Frothingham, January 31, 1894, Welsh MSS, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.  
\textsuperscript{55} Herbert Welsh, \textit{The Relation of Women to Municipal Reform} (Philadelphia: Civic Club, February 23, 1894).  
\textsuperscript{56} Mary Mumford, \textit{The Relation of Women to Municipal Reform} (Philadelphia: Civic Club, 1895).
women school directresses in the Seventh Ward of the city. Women considered themselves natural educators. They performed the function in the family and saw no reason why they could not extend their activity into the school to prepare the child for citizenship.

Women were also fitted, Mrs. Mumford believed, to minister to the “low and degraded.” They could struggle with crime. Their activities in getting police matrons into the station houses of Philadelphia proved to them that they could replace the penal spirit with the reformatory spirit in the treatment of criminals. Women were also fitted for ministering to the “poor and the degraded.” Their pioneer work in social purity and their traditional roles as guardians of morals equipped them for this task. Further, Mrs. Mumford contended, they added humanity to their tasks and functions.

The work of women followed closely the program expounded before the Civic Club. In the field of education, women worked primarily through the Pennsylvania Education Association, which was organized in 1881. A history of the association credits women and women’s organizations with introducing physiology, domestic science, industrial education for women, and experiments in student government into the school system.

Special attention must be given to experiments in student government. These experiments in “self-government” came about for two basic reasons: (1) It was generally believed that the schools were organized along “aristocratic lines” and that it would be necessary to reconstruct them along democratic lines; (2) with the passage of the Compulsory Education Act of 1895, the last such act passed for any city of over one million in the United States or Western Europe, a special problem was raised by delinquent children who did not fit into the regular school system. In response to the problem, the George Junior Republic idea was accepted in


Philadelphia women reformers owed a direct debt to the work of Abigail Hopper Gibbons’s agitation for police matrons.

Mumford, Relation of Women to Municipal Reform, p. 10.


Philadelphia and a school patterned on the original one was established in the suburbs. The school was designed to teach citizenship. It was not quite a reform school, but rather a school that lay somewhere between a regular school and a reform school. It operated somewhat like a Youth Conservation Camp. The idea was further adapted for regular schools by a New York teacher. The Gill System was an attempt to introduce student government into the schools. Women reformers experimented with the system and it spread rapidly throughout the school system. The belief was that citizenship education of this type would have beneficial political effects at a future time.

In the broader field of social education, women reformers strove to educate young people to the principles of good citizenship through other techniques. A "League of Good Citizenship" was organized among children of newly arrived immigrants to teach them the principles of good health and clean communities. School baths were introduced with the intention of extending the principles of good health and acting as a preventive force for public hygiene. Mothers' meetings were established to go into the districts of the poor to educate mothers on the proper methods for raising children. While they were generally failures in elevating the condition of the poor, they were important in the women's rights movement as a technique for transforming the family from a religious to a social instrumentality. In Philadelphia, the Home Influence Association was active in the movement for mothers' meetings. By 1899, it was absorbed into the Philadelphia Auxiliary of the National Congress of Mothers. Both of these organizations were outgrowths of the social purity movement in the United States. The focus of the new child rearing was to prepare the child for citizenship, for as the Reverend Frederick Wines, a na-

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63 "The Gill School City," Municipal Affairs, I, No. 3 (September, 1897), 564-565.
66 The Minutes of the Home Influence Association are at Swarthmore College.
67 The Purity movement was directly responsible for the "Mothers' Crusade" which precipitated the formation of the Mothers' Congress.
tional philanthropic leader, pointed out to women reformers, the function of the family was to prepare the child for admission into the state. The new family, founded on egalitarian principles, taught ideal social roles which in the future, it was anticipated, would transform society.

Agitation for an education in household economics permeated every aspect of the women's rights organizations. Its religious content was explained by the view that the house was the equivalent of the body of the family, while the home was the soul of the family. This view corresponded with the position taken on physiology, that the 'body was the 'Temple of God.' It was held in trust, and therefore the obligation of men and women was to make it a fit vehicle for the soul. Obedience to laws of health was obligatory. Under this religious aurora, household economics and physiology became two devices that promised to usher in the millennium. Additionally, they tied everyday activities to teleological symbols, making them purposive.

One further contribution of women to essential and social religion should be emphasized. In 1881 Florence Kelley, daughter of "Pig-iron" Kelley, and Eliza S. Turner, prominent Philadelphia philanthropist, combined their efforts to assist in forming the New Century Guild of Working Women. Florence Kelley began by reading and discussing with a group of working girls after working hours. She soon decided that women were unequipped to meet the threats and temptations of urban-industrial society. To counteract this weakness, she and Eliza Turner developed an organization for working women which would raise their self-image, train leaders, and develop skills for an industrial society. Its function was similar to that of the settlement houses, antedating the first settlement house by almost four years, but it was organized for adjustments to society rather than for the cultivation of neighborhood spirit. The social values taught were similar to those held

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6 The family needs further study from the viewpoint of the sociology of religion to demonstrate its change from a religious to a social institution.
60 "Dr. Dyke on the Home," Woman's Journal, July 17, 1897, p. 288.
70 This concept was developed by the transcendentalists and is usually credited to Theodore Parker.
by leaders of the women's rights movement. Indeed, the first
was patterned after the *Woman's Journal*, an official publication of
the women's rights movement. In Philadelphia the New Century
Guild worked in the field of industrial education for women,
hoping at some future time to found a trades' school for women.
Eliza Turner's hopes were fulfilled when the Drexel family, which
originally provided $5,000 for the guild's experiment, endowed
the Drexel Institute of Technology. Guild classes were absorbed
by the new institute. Businessmen were becoming deeply com-
mitted to the social education movement.

Briefly, this article has explored the influence of religion in the
development of social, educational, and municipal reform in Phila-
delphia. It has focused upon the needs of the community. The
conclusions should be accepted only as tentative.

The techniques of social control and change used in municipal
reform promoted continuities. While forms of religion changed,
continuities in the essentials of religion were perpetuated. The
dualism of religion, which postulated a struggle between the
biological and social natures of man, contained in the mind of the
reformers the promise of man's perfection. The educated "second
nature" of man, his social self, would through use gain ascendancy,
while the animal in man would atrophy through disuse.

Was this concept of man primarily religious or was it merely
a business elite's alternative to socialism? The answer is like a
chicken-egg mechanism. It was both. The religious views of mu-
nicipal reformers were suited for a business utopia. They reflected
the best intentions of the business community and they were used
consciously as control mechanisms. It is the opinion of the re-
searcher that the control mechanisms were intended to prevent
deviation from sanctioned norms in social and economic thought.

Joseph May, minister to the First Unitarian Church and son of
Samuel J. May, recognized the dangers implicit within the move-
ment. Man could be reduced to an automaton unless freedom were
considered. While freedom of choice would be narrowed, man

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20 *Executive Board Minutes of the New Century Guild, December 27,
1889*, p. 110.
22 Herbert Welsh, *Speeches and Essays* (Historical Society of Pennsyl-
vanian), p. 6.
would still be free to be of service. In that manner, May concluded he would not be reduced to an automaton. What May was most concerned about was not the social gospel movement, but the moral education movement. Man was called upon to choose, but the spectrum of choice was delimited.

What can one say about the concept of civic conscience as it emerged in the late nineteenth century? To answer this question properly would demand an evaluation of its achievements and failures, going far beyond the limits of this article. It would demand a thorough evaluation of the role of religion in social change. It would lead to a better understanding of the origins of Progressivism.