



# Making Chastity Sexy: The Rhetoric of Evangelical Abstinence Campaigns

*Christine J. Gardner*

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Even though they are immersed in sex-saturated society, millions of teens are pledging to remain virgins until their wedding night. How are evangelical Christians persuading young people to wait until marriage? Christine J. Gardner looks closely at the language of the chastity movement and discovers a savvy campaign that uses sex to “sell” abstinence. Drawing from interviews with evangelical leaders and teenagers, she examines the strategy to shift from a negative “just say no” approach to a positive one: “just say yes” to great sex within marriage. *Making Chastity Sexy* sheds new light on an abstinence campaign that has successfully recast a traditionally feminist idea—“my body, my choice”—into a powerful message, but one that Gardner suggests may ultimately reduce evangelicalism’s transformative power. Focusing on the United States, her study also includes a comparative dimension by examining the export of this evangelical agenda to sub-Saharan Africa.

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