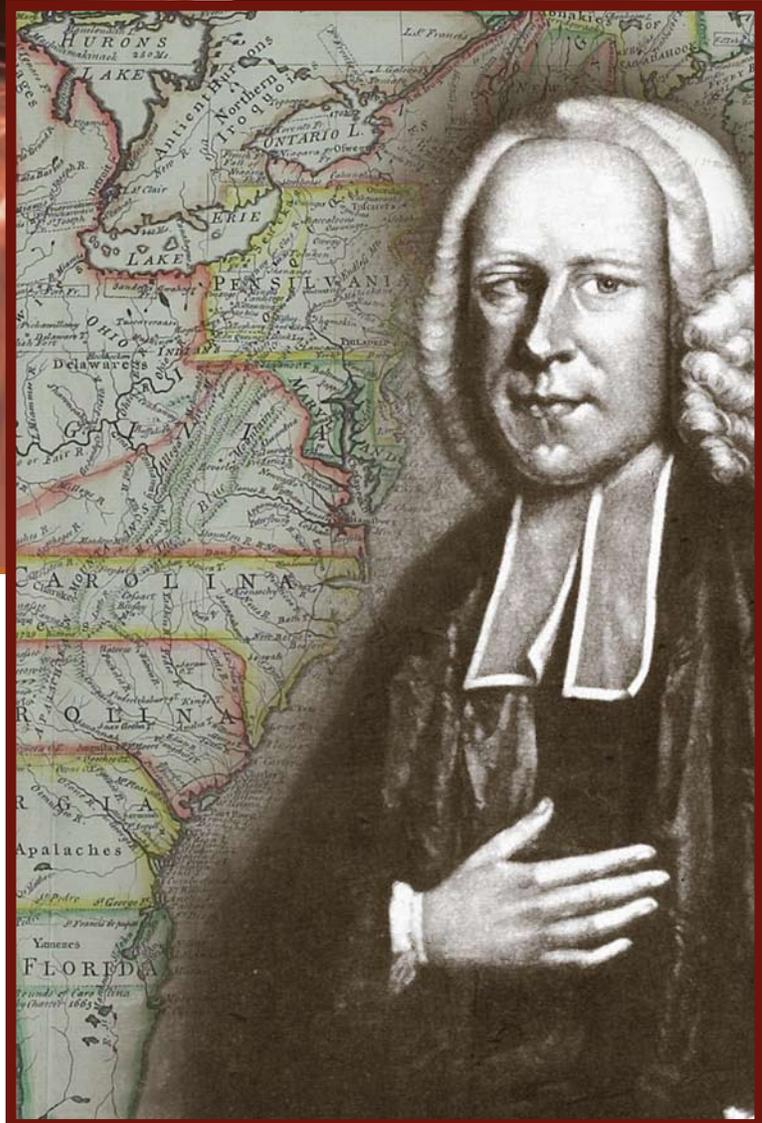


christianity in america



1700 C.E. - present

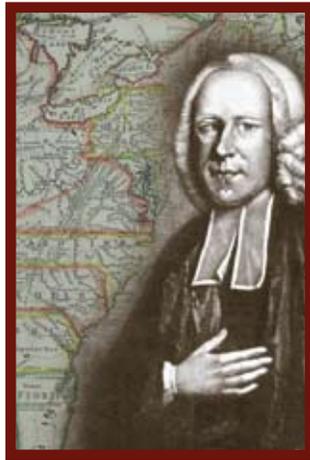
"How is it possible for a society to escape destruction if the moral tie is not strengthened as the political tie is relaxed, and what can be done with a people who are their own master, if they are not submissive to God?"

– Alexis de Tocqueville,
Democracy in America (1835)

table of contents

Introduction	page 1
Insiders and Outsiders: The Puritan Heritage	page 7
The Great Awakening and the American Revolution	page 11
Revivalism: An American Tradition Linking Religion and Democracy	page 16
Slavery: An American Paradox	page 21
Religious Outsiders: Catholics, Utopians, Millennial and Indigenous Movements	page 24
The Protestant “Golden Age”: Reform and Missions (1860-1917)	page 36
An Alternate Landscape: Modernity, Intellectual Change and the Decline of Protestant Control	page 42
Civil Religion	page 53
Post WWII: Evangelical Resurgence, Increasing Pluralism and Civil Rights	page 56
Closing the Twentieth Century and Opening the Twenty-first Century	page 64

introduction



introduction

“Like America’s Jesus himself, who was born among Protestants but now lives among Christians and non-Christians alike, the United States has developed from a Protestant country into a nation, secular by law and religious by preference, that is somehow both the most Christian and the most religiously diverse on earth.”

- Stephen Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon*

American Culture is a Paradox: Religious and Secular

- How does this work?

- What does Christianity in America look like and why?

Religion as a Unifying or Organizing Principle

Not a person’s faith commitment to a particular religion but rather interpreting religion as a reference point for understanding a person’s highest commitment, ultimate value - their world view.

- It is a way of asking how people understand themselves and their experiences.

- It is a way of examining the sentiments and symbols they value and how they use these sentiments and symbols to express themselves.

- Professed Worldview vs. Functional Worldview

introduction

The Interrelationship Between American Religion and American Culture

QUESTIONS:

- What does American religion tell us about American culture?

- What does American culture tell us about American religion?

The Role of Cultural Shaping Conduits In American History

SIX CONDUITS: (Not necessarily in this order but religion is the wildcard.)

- Politics

- Education | *particularly higher education*

- Media

- Business

- Science/Technology

- Religion

introduction

Control of Cultural Shaping Conduits

In the history of this country there has been a struggle among various sub-cultures vying to become cultural insiders, meaning that they want control over the six cultural conduits that will allow them to penetrate the culture with their particular message and values.

- Secularization as a strategy

- The power of the Religion Conduit

Three Major Themes of This Course

1. Insiders who shape culture and Outsiders with a different moral vision who want a voice in how things work.

2. Transition from Protestant dominance to competing religious sub-cultures

3. Secularization of the culture while maintaining religious vitality

introduction

Dynamic Relationship Between the Secular and the Religious

Not a simple move from religious to secular, but rather a constant repositioning of the religious and the secular.

- **THE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES ARE CRITICAL FOR UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA.**

- **Civil War: A defining moment in the nation's early history of the nation**

- **Competing Moral Visions of the Nation:**

NORTH

- Worldview: Reform and Progress

- Millennial Outlook

- Bible

SOUTH

- Ordered Society

- Millennial Outlook

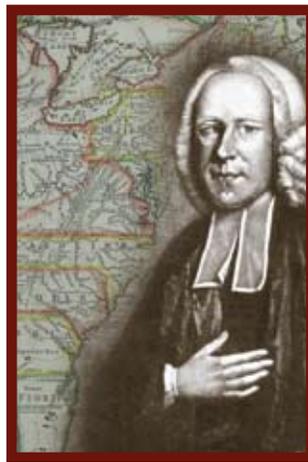
- Bible

introduction

Five Critical Questions for This Course

1. What is the self-conscious, unconscious identity of the nation? Are they the same?
2. What ideas, concepts, sentiments and symbols have defined, shaped and guided our national identity?
3. At critical points in American history, who had the power to define the concepts, sentiments and symbols that shaped the country, and what events caused this power to shift from one group to another?
4. What effect did this shifting of power have on the nation's identity?
5. What crises have caused the nation to question its identity?

insiders and outsiders: the puritan heritage



insiders and outsiders: the puritan heritage

Sources

John Winthrop's *Plan* | Perry Miller's Essay, *Errand in the Wilderness*

What is CHRISTENDOM? What Relationship Does It Have to the Settling of America?

Puritans Insiders: New England | Theology Shapes Culture

- **1620** | Plymouth Bay | *Separatist Pilgrims*
James I (Divine Right), Mayflower Compact, William Bradford joins Massachusetts Bay Co. -1691
- **1630** | Massachusetts Bay | *Puritans of Church of England* | Charles I
These Puritans were on “an errand” to set up a true church and true government.
John Winthrop's *City on a Hill*, citizenship based on church membership and baptism, 1644.
Set up two-house legislature.
- **Covenant Theology**
Covenant of grace with individuals and nations. Individuals are part of an ordered Society, where Government assists the church in fulfilling the covenant: civic responsibility and moral superiority.
- **Issue: “Doctrinal Error has no rights.”**
Heretics have no place in this society..
- **Chosen Nation Language** | New England as the “New Israel”
Christ is Lord over the whole realm of human life and endeavors.
Puritans provided the biblical language for the nation's emerging identity.

insiders and outsiders: the puritan heritage

English Civil War (1640-1660)- Effect on Puritan mission/vision

Westminster Confession of Faith meets Cromwell's Model Army and religious toleration for dissenters.

- **Outsiders** | Emphasis on individual, equality and conversion as a spiritually leveling doctrine for men and women. Experience vs. doctrine.

KEY POINT: The Role of Time and Space in allowing outsiders room for experimentation in the New World.

The Outsiders

- **Women** | *Anne Hutchinson*

Grace vs. Law. Challenges the social order with preaching, theology, and claims to personal revelation by Holy Spirit.

- **Seekers** | *Roger Williams*

Separatist Puritan to Baptist to Seeker. Rhode Island for dissenters.
Toleration for all except Quakers.

- **Anabaptists, Mennonites, Amish, Baptists**

- **Quakers, Society of Friends** | *George Fox, William Penn*

"Inner Light" and community of discernment. Pennsylvania (1681), religious toleration and social equality for Native Americans and Slaves.

insiders and outsiders: the puritan heritage

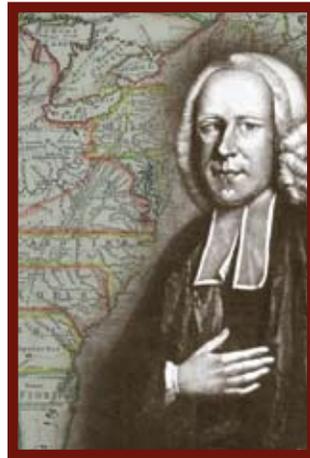
Colonial America: Characterized by Cultural/Religious Diversity, Not Unity

- **The South** | Virginia to Georgia
1607 - Jamestown as an economic experiment. Anglican Church has the insider power but overwhelmed by the size of parishes, the lack of priests, lay control of parishes and being surrounded by outsider types.

- **Middle Colonies** | New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey Maryland
Religious mix: Dutch Reformed, Catholics, Quakers, Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Mennonites, Presbyterians

- **New England**
Puritans

the GREAT AWAKENING and the AMERICAN REVOLUTION



the great awakening and the american revolution

Sources

Jonathan Edwards | George Whitefield

Democratizing sentiments of the Awakening had a role in leveling the social playing field.

Spirituality has an equalizing effect in the society. Spiritual experience serves as a source for unity.

Key Figures

- **Jonathan Edwards** | 1703-1758
Congregational Pastor in Northampton, Mass. *A Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (1737).
- **George Whitefield** | 1714-1770
Pop star status. Instead of invoking authority as a means of gaining popular control and influence, he became popular and used his popularity to gain authority and status.
- **Gilbert Tennent** | 1703-1764
New Jersey Presbyterian. Conversion of slaves and “*The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry*” (1740)

Inner Divisions and Outsider Institutions

- **Old and New Lights**
Presbyterian division. Revivalist supporters and detractors.

Princeton (Presbyterians 1746), Brown (Baptists 1764), and Queens (Dutch Reformed 1764)

the great awakening and the american revolution

Two Major Streams of Thought Converge | Enlightenment and Pietism

	<u>Enlightenment Rationalism</u>	<u>Continental Pietism</u>
Source of Authority	Reason/Will	Bible
Sign of a Changed Life	Morality	New Birth
View of God	Transcendent/Deistic	Immanent/Savior

- **Commonalities**

- Challenged established authority
- Focused on the individual
- Emphasized freedom of conscience and will
- Empowered the court of public opinion

- **Questions**

- What effect did the Awakening have on diversity in the colonies?
- How did the Awakening affect Outsider groups?
- What were its effects on the social hierarchy of the day? Church hierarchy?
- How did the Awakening challenge Puritan insiders?
- What is the relationship between the Awakening the Revolution?

the great awakening and the american revolution

Dissent: The Revolution, The Republic and Liberty of Conscience

- **Sources** | John Witherspoon and Thomas Jefferson
- **Traditions of Dissent** | Unifying Beliefs and Common Cause
Prior to the Revolution, several streams of dissenting tradition coalesced, contributing to a uniquely American form of dissent during the Revolutionary period.
- **Dissenting Traditions** | Protestants and Whigs
(progress and reform vs. status quo, aristocracy and tradition)
 - The Awakening: Anti-authoritarian, egalitarian and experiential
 - Scots-Irish Presbyterians and Cromwell's Commonwealth vs. Church/State connection of Anglicanism and Crown.
 - The Enlightenment Tradition: Deists, Morality and Newtonian Universe
 - Locke/Jefferson and Puritans: Society must be founded upon moral law, natural law. The source of the law varied but Reason and the Bible were not contradictory, yet.
 - *Competing Moral Visions*
- **A Dissenting People**
Congregationalists, Baptist, Presbyterians joined with the Whig/Commonwealth or Non-Conformists traditions.

the great awakening and the american revolution

- **A Dissenting People | Definitions**

1. **Tyranny**

Monarchy as the union of political and ecclesiastical power.

The established church represented the growing arbitrary power of the monarchy.

Interchangeable terms: Bishop, King, Pope, Prime Minister, Priest.

2. **Rights**

Life, Liberty and Property (English Common Law tradition and biblical justice)
and the inalienable right of conscience (Religious toleration).

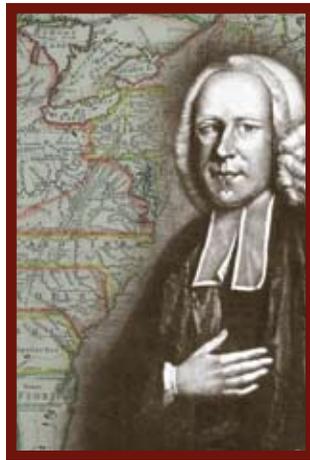
Civic Virtue

- Law was common the ground between biblical teachings and moral philosophy.
- Dissenters were a voice for virtue and they viewed the world through the lens of both Whig history and Protestant theology.

THE REVOLUTION ALLOWED THESE SIMILAR BUT DIFFERENT VIEWS TO BLEND IN CREATING A NEW NATION:

- **Biblical Symbols and Democratic/Republican Sentiments**
- **Declaration of Independence Language**
- **Madison and Leland's personalities**
- **A Secular Constitution with a Bill of Rights | First Amendment people**
- **Product = A Simultaneously Religious and Secular Nation**

revivalism:
an AMERICAN TRADITION
linking religion
and democracy



revivalism: an american tradition linking religion and democracy

Sources

Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*

Charles Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*

Connect the Following Periods of American History: Sentiments, Language and Symbols Revival Experience was Linked To Popular Sovereignty

- Great Awakening | 1720-1740
- The American Revolution | 1775-1783
- Revivalism | 1780-1830

New Vocabulary

- Age of Democratic Revivals | A time of popular and democratic versions of the Gospel
 - “Constructing a roof with no walls”
 - “Where I expect to find a priest, I find a politician”
 - “In 1740 America’s leading intellectuals were clergymen and thought about theology; in 1790 they were statesmen and thought about politics.”

What is the Relationship Between These Three Items?

- Populist Religious Leaders | Burnt Over District | Cane Ridge, Kentucky

revivalism: an american tradition linking religion and democracy

Questions

- What is influence of revivals on the relationship between church membership and cultural influence?
- How do revivals accelerate the assault on authority structures in the new nation?
- Why do the Methodist and the Baptist experience exponential growth during this period?
Frontier Presbyterians (*Cumberland Presbyterian Church*)
- Geographically, where do these revivals find the most receptive audiences compared with the Great Awakening? Why?

Charles Finney (1792-1875)

Former school teacher and lawyer who experienced a dramatic conversion in 1821 and became a preacher and the Father of the modern revival movement in America. Led Oberlin College to be a center for reform/abolition.

He turned the eclectic, decentralized, annual camp meeting into a **permanent institutional feature** of American evangelicalism. Finney's "New Measures" found in his *Lectures on Revivals* were the result of combining a simple Biblicism with the basic tenets of SCSP/Enlightenment rationalism where the reason and the Bible were compatible. The unexpected results of the Holy Spirit bringing revival via gospel preaching became the planned, organized and expected results of a systematic approach to evangelism.

REVIVAL BECAME REVIVALISM.

Revivalism: an American Tradition Linking Religion and Democracy

Areas of Influence | Revivalism's Power to Reinforce Democratic and Republican Sentiments

Seen in development of indigenous movements like Jehovah's Witnesses, Millerites and Mormons.

- **Free Individual**
Affect on theology and politics.

- **Formal Education vs. Direct Inspiration and Charisma**

- **Science and Technology**
Blending of science and Bible for pragmatic results.

- **Primitivism**
Loss of traditional authority structures left people free to use the Bible to create their own worldview and tradition. Restorationist movements abound: Alexander Campbell, Joseph Smith etc.

- **Back to the Bible**
Interpreting the Bible with impunity; free of traditional constraints.

Revivalism: an American Tradition Linking Religion and Democracy

Areas of Influence | Revivalism's Power to Reinforce Democratic and Republican Sentiments

- **Missions**

“Great Century” of Protestant missions.

- **Reform**

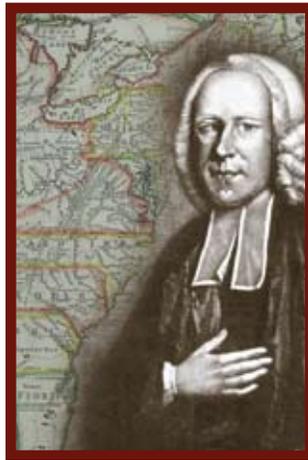
Slavery, poverty, temperance etc. | “Post-Millennial outlook”

Tension of Popularity/Growth and Social Respectability

The Methodist path of respectability from sect to church...

Francis Asbury to Lorenzo Dow to Nathan Bangs

slavery: an AMERICAN PARADOX



slavery: an american paradox

Sources

- **Albert Raboteau** | Egalitarian impulse's effect on slaves and their understanding of Christianity.
- **Samuel Ringgold Ward** | Interprets the sale of his mother as the “will of God”, helped by Quakers. It is not your word but your deeds that matter.
- **Frederick Douglas** | Slave Owner Christianity vs. Slave Christianity
Spiritual freedom and physical freedom, Old Testament stories provide self-worth and identity.
- **Thornton Stringfellow** | Necessary Evil to Positive Moral Good

Paradox of Evangelical Theology and Practice of Slavery

Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists = 83% of Protestantism

Differences in Doctrine; Social/Economic Class; Geography (North/South) meant that a single solution to social issues like slavery was not possible.

Why American Slavery Was Different Than Past Forms of Slavery

- Slaves denied legal status as human beings and instead defined as property.
- Economic and social forces separated slavery from Biblical/Christian critique.
Compartmentalization of business from faith.
- A different Christianity for slaves created. Faith but not freedom.

slavery: an american paradox

Paradox

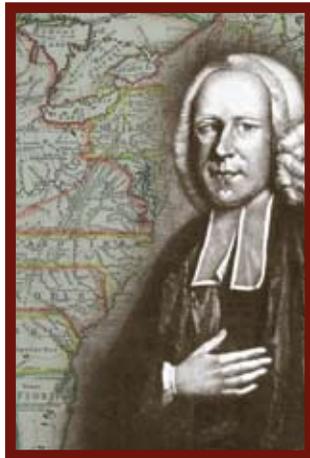
Slavery existed side by side with the radically equalizing vocabulary of individual and natural rights expressed in the Declaration of Independence and Constitution.

Christianity Among the Slaves

By 1860 Christianity is the religion of the slave population.

- Oral culture, spirituals, power of Biblical stories in light of circumstances.
- The Black Preacher became the leader in the black community.
- The emergence of the Black Church within denominations was an expression of individual freedoms.
- The church became the center of the black community; the main avenue for access to cultural systems: education, business etc.

religious outsiders:
catholics, utopians,
millennial and indigenous
movements



religious outsiders: catholics, utopians, millennial and indigenous movements

Sources

- Jay Dolan | Social class and the limits of charity.
- Alex de Tocqueville | Catholicism and Democracy are Compatible
- Charles Taze Russell
- Mary Baker Eddy
- Booth Tucker

The Church/Sect Interplay in American Christianity

Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch | Using the Church/State model for church as a social organization akin to or attached to the nation/family: Lutheran, Anglican, Congregational, etc.

- Characteristics

CHURCH | INSIDER

Natural social group

Born into - social obligation

Inclusive - universal

Liberal theology/ethics

Official clergy/doctrine

Social/political status quo

Have power/influence

SECT | OUTSIDER

Voluntary association

Joined - special experience

Exclusive - individualistic

Conservative theology/ethics

Lay led (women) - inspiration of Spirit

Minority view - separatist - isolated

Want power/influence

RULE OF THUMB: Social, economic pressures of cultural assimilation eventually creates conformity. The sect becomes a church within three generations, reinvents itself, or ceases to exist.

religious outsiders: catholics, utopians, millennial and indigenous movements

Growth and Expansion of Outsiders/Sects/Movements | 1770-1910

RELIGIOUS SUB-CULTURES

Catholics (Irish, French, Italian, etc.)

Lutherans

Oneida

Brooke Farm

Shakers

Millerites

Mormons

*Holiness
(Wesleyan, Free Methodist, Nazarene)*

Pentecostalism

Christian Science

Jehovah's Witnesses

Quakers

Amish

Mennonites

Native Americans

THEOLOGICAL/PHILOSOPHICAL MOVEMENTS

Romanticism

Perfectionism

Millennialism

Universalism

Illuminism

Revivalism

Americanism

Utopianism

Syncretism

Monism

Spiritualism

religious outsiders: catholics, utopians, millennial and indigenous movements

Catholics | Outsiders with an Insider's Heritage

Blacks rejected due to race; Catholics rejected due to beliefs.

- **American Catholicism** | Lay trustees and simpler worship

- **Immigration** | Threat to Protestantism
1790-1830, 300,000 Catholics. 1830-1860, 3 million Catholics.
Irish, German, Italians, French

- **Role of Language and Culture in Faith for Both German Catholics and Lutherans**
Sub-cultures within the larger culture

- **Catholics | Free Church | Southern Outsiders**
Freedom of religion for all meant government taking on the role of protecting individual rights and states rights.
 - Jeffersonian Democrats

 - 19th Century
Republican Party = Anti-slavery, Anti-Catholic Northern reformers
Democratic Party = Pro-slavery, solid Southern Protestants and Catholics voted together against the Republican Party.

religious outsiders: catholics, utopians, millennial and indigenous movements

Women and Changing Social Roles

Populist language and attitudes combined with religious freedom/Experimentation.

Provides an outlet and opportunity for women to find a voice in the culture.

(Abolition, Temperance, Working Poor, Mentally Disabled)

Romanticism | Europe, 1750-1800 | America, 1836-1860

Romanticism, unlike the Enlightenment that preceded it, was a less a system and more a mood or outlook. It was an interpretive grid for understanding life, specifically religious life and Christianity.

- **Germany**

Goethe (1749-1832); Hegel (1770-1831); Schlegel (1772-1829); Schleiermacher (1768-1834)

- **Great Britain**

Burns (1759-1796); Byron (1788-1824); Blake (1757-1827); Coleridge (1772-1834);
Shelley (1792-1822)

- **America** | Transcendentalists

Emerson (1803-1882); Thoreau (1817-1862); Whitman (1819-1892);
Theodore Parker (1810-1860); Horace Bushnell (1802-1876)

religious outsiders: catholics, utopians, millennial and indigenous movements

Romanticism | Europe, 1750-1800 | America, 1836-1860

- **Characteristics**

1. Importance of individual intuition, feelings and imagination as source of truth.
2. The world as a living organism that is interrelated vs. a mechanism that is particular.
3. 18th century was essays; 19th century is biographies and novels.
4. Depth of experience, religious consciousness, God consciousness, and immanence.
5. Reemergence of history and process, all knowledge is historical and is conditioned by it, including the Bible and theology.

- **Friedrich Schleiermacher** | Father of Theological Liberalism

Religion arises out of self-awareness, FOAD.

Not knowing doctrine or doing morality but a total dependence on God as found in Christ; an experience of dependence. Theology is an expression of our experience with Christ and reflects the worshiping life of the Christian community. This theology offered a very existential source of faith and authority.

religious outsiders: catholics, utopians, millennial and indigenous movements

New Sectarianism | Indigenous Religious Movements

- Utopian and Spiritualist Movements

1. Brooks Farm | 1841

George Ripley, a Unitarian minister, sought a practical expression for his Unitarian beliefs. He and 15 others wrote up Articles of Association and bought a farm in NY. Went bankrupt in 1847 due to lack of support.

2. Oneida Community | 1851

John Humphrey Noyes (1811-1886), convert of revival movement in 1831. Student at Yale Divinity School. He focused on Perfectionism and socialism as a way of creating the ideal society. Started with 205 people communally sharing of all things, including wives and children.

1879 | The religious aspect of the community was in decline, but they employed a number of people in the area for their silverware business and they reformed as a Joint Stock Co.

3. Church of Christian Science | 1879

Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) New Englander disenchanted with traditional religion. Dramatically cured of a long-term illness by a mind-cure specialist named Phineas Parkhurst Quimby. Eddy took Quimby's views and reinterpreted them using Christian/biblical language. Essentially Monism with a twist. God is all of reality and since God is spiritual then all of reality is essentially spiritual. What is empirical is illusion (sickness of any kind is a mental condition). One must prepare one's mind to accept God's transformative power over all other realities. Mind over matter in the sense that God is MIND. Published *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* in 1875.

religious outsiders: catholics, utopians, millennial and indigenous movements

Millennial Movements | Pre-Millennial

- **Millerites | Seventh Day Adventists**

William Miller (1782-1849) Vermont frontiersman, radical Jeffersonian and Deist. Became a Calvinistic Baptist with an intense interest in Bible and second coming of Christ. He traveled as a Baptist preacher who promoted his particular millennial interpretations based on his own calculations and literal readings regarding the second coming. Miller founded and published his own magazine to promote his views. Prepared with ascension robes and climbing to high places to await the Second Coming.

- **First Prediction** | March 21, 1843 - March 22, 1844

- **Second Prediction** | October 22, 1844 | “Great Disappointment”

- **Reinventing the Movement** | Ellen White (1827-1915)

Reinterpret the second coming as occurring in Heaven and not on earth. Establish a new Sabbath/Saturday in accordance with Bible and create new standards via dietary laws of Bible. Sylvester Graham (cracker) and John Kellogg (cereal) were advocates of the meat-less diet.

religious outsiders: catholics, utopians, millennial and indigenous movements

Millennial Movements | Pre-Millennial

- **Mormons**

Joseph Smith (1805-1844) a seeker and claimed to be led by an angel to a set of gold tablets that he translated into what became known as the *Book of Mormon*.

A Restorationist movement designed to recreate the church based on a new revelation that reinterpreted the Bible and rejected the prior 1500 years of church history.

The American Indians were the lost tribes of Israel, so Mormonism saw America as the true “promised land” and themselves as the New Israel.

American society and the church were apostate and therefore the true followers must separate themselves from the society, form a new, pure church and await the fulfillment of the God’s Kingdom.

- **Continually Reinventing/Restoring the Movement**

1844 | Trouble in Navoo, Illinois where Smith tried to set up his new church society. He was arrested and killed. Brigham Young took over the movement and begins an Exodus to the “New Zion”, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Mormons have priest and prophets that keep their millennial hopes alive. They have reentered society and have become the quintessential middle class Americans.

They have adopted and promote the Puritan language of America as the “city on a hill.”

religious outsiders: catholics, utopians, millennial and indigenous movements

Millennial Movements | Pre-Millennial

- **Jehovah's Witnesses**

Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916) A merchant from Pennsylvania who believed a literal reading of the Bible and scientific calculations would produce the time of the second coming.

Rejected formal means of interpretation or other Christian doctrines. Millennial dawn occurred in 1874, but the end would be in 1914. 1879 founded and published *Zion's Watch Tower*.

- Rejected the Trinity and the reality of Hell offering a second chance.

- Millennial views of God's Kingdom led them to reject all forms of allegiance to earthly governments refusing military service, pledge of allegiance, national holidays etc.

- **REINVENTING THE MOVEMENT** | Joseph H. Rutherford (1869-1942)

After failure of millennial prediction, Rutherford refocused on unique doctrines and started the international evangelistic movement that has grown the Jehovah's Witnesses over the past century.

religious outsiders: catholics, utopians, millennial and indigenous movements

Turning Revival into Denominations | Institutionalizing an Experience

- **Holiness Movement (Methodism) | 1870s**
 - Wesleyan Methodists | Free Methodists | Nazarenes | Salvation Army | Christian and Missionary Alliance
- **Factors separating holiness people from formal Methodism:**
 - Issue of Respectability | education, social status, formal authority structures
 - Renewal of Piety | focus on personal holiness
 - Reform issues | abolition, temperance etc.
 - Revival as an ongoing practice/experience | Holiness Camp and Prayer Meetings
 - Focus on Perfectionism and Second Blessing
 - Place for women ministers | Phoebe Palmer
- **Boundaries of Behavior and Belief**
 - Separation from the world
 - Social boundaries of smoking, drinking, dancing, make-up, gambling, etc.
 - Second Blessing | Filling with the Spirit for perfection and empowerment
 - Healing
 - Millennial Kingdom expectation and Second Coming

religious outsiders: catholics, utopians, millennial and indigenous movements

Turning Revival into Denominations | Institutionalizing an Experience

- Pentecostalism | 1900
Church of God | Assemblies of God

Charles Parham (1873-1929) January 1, 1901, holiness service in Topeka, Kansas experienced glossolalia and then began structuring the practice and experience of “speaking in tongues” as a doctrinal teaching for the church.

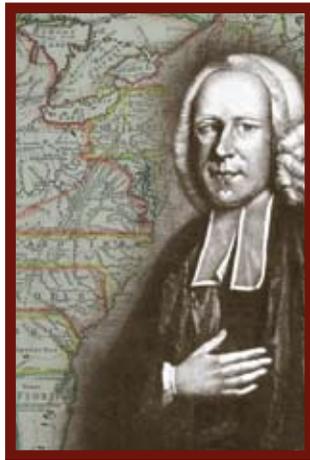
William Seymour - 1906, follower of Parham led revival service in Los Angeles at the Azusa Street Church and experienced the same phenomenon.

International Church of the Four Square Gospel | 1927

Christ as Savior, Baptizer, Healer and Coming King. Pentecostal/Holiness group.

Aimee Semple McPherson | Personality, use of radio, advertising, marketing

the PROTESTANT
“golden age”
REFORM AND MISSIONS
(1860-1917)



the protestant “golden age”: reform and missions (1860-1917)

Sources

Russell Conwell | Mary Lathbury | Frances Williard

A Protestant Dominated Culture

American culture was already very pluralistic but Protestants were still the insiders that dominated the cultural conduits of the society and therefore Protestant religious belief was a central force that shaped American culture during this period.

How was Protestant religious belief interpreted and expressed?

Protestant and Progressive | What Happens When You Wed These Two Principles?

Progressivism was characterized by an unfettered faith in progress, an uncritical optimism that saw the advance of science and technology as heralding a new era, a new day in the history of mankind.

Protestants, as the insiders with the power, harnessed their theological beliefs about God and America as God’s chosen nation to these progressive views.

the protestant “golden age”: reform and missions (1860-1917)

The Result | Three Premises of American Culture

- Western Civilization is superior.
- Anglo-American democratic principles are the highest expression of that civilization.
- These principles were meant to triumph throughout the whole earth.

Golden or Gilded Age?

A time of major reform movements driven by Protestants and their views of civic responsibility, but they were being challenged on many fronts by the growing problems of urbanization, industrialization and immigration.

The great paradox was that America was both a **spiritual** and **materialistic** place to live.

- Mark Twain | *The Gilded Age*
- Henry Adams | *The Dynamo and the Virgin*
- **Methodological Secularity**
Removing certain areas of human activity from organized religious control.
Check your religious beliefs at the door along with your hat and coat.

the protestant “golden age”: reform and missions (1860-1917)

Protestant Insiders | Maintaining the Religious and Economic Status Quo

Hard Work as a Social Program

- **Principle of Incorporation**

Effect on business in terms of moral, ethical responsibility of ownership and means of production.

- **Theology of Wealth and Work**

- Gospel of money and success equals blessing and the natural God ordained order for society.

- Rockefeller, Carnegie and J.P. Morgan | reward, punishment and benevolence.

- What is the proper relationship between owners and workers?

- What empowers people to change their lives?

- Henry Ward Beecher | Hard work and thrifty habits equal prosperous life.

“God helps those who help themselves.”

- Russell Conwell | “Acres of Diamonds” Theology

Assumes a level playing field for everyone with same opportunities provided within the culture, and that hard work and strong ethics are enough to create a prosperous and happy life.

- What is relationship between periods of Reform and periods of material success in American culture?

the protestant “golden age”: reform and missions (1860-1917)

Significant Movements

- **Women and Reform Movements**

- Frances Williard | Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)
Temperance movement that used a religious platform to accomplish social change when the normal avenue of politics was closed.

- **Missionary Movement**

- An effort to bring Christianity and civilization to the world.
Women make up 60% of the missionary force.

- Dwight L. Moody
Evangelistic tour of campuses in 1886 led to a Student Mission Movement: SVM
Motto: “The evangelization of the world in this generation.”

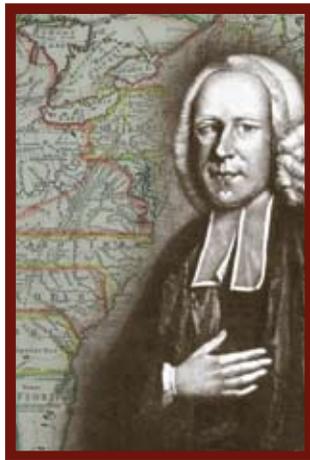
the protestant “golden age”: reform and missions (1860-1917)

Significant Movements

- **Nativism | Christianity and American/Western Civilization**
 - Christianity is Western Civilization.
 - American way of life is the highest form of western civilization.
 - American democracy is the highest political attainment of western culture.
 - WWI and other foreign policy decisions are connected to “making the world safe for democracy.”
 - Joisah Strong: *Our Country* | Salvation of the world in the hands of the Anglo-Saxon race.
 - President McKinley’s reasons for the Spanish American War and the annexing of the Philippines.

- **The Social Gospel vs. Protestant Progressivism**
 - Pre-millennial vs. Post-millennial views of the culture.
Charles Sheldon: *In His Steps* | WWJD?
 - Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918)
Middle class German immigrant Baptist living and ministering in Hell’s Kitchen.
The “Kingdom of God” as a just social and economic system on earth.

an ALTERNATE landscape:
modernity, intellectual change
and the decline
of PROTESTANT CONTROL



an alternate landscape: modernity, intellectual change and the decline of protestant control

Sources

Charles Hodge | Lyman Abbot | Washington Gladden | William Jennings Bryan

Andrew Dickson White | *A History of the Warfare of Science and Theology in Christendom*, 2 vols. | 1895

Charles Darwin | *On the Origin of the Species* | 1859

- Darwin provided an alternative explanation for the existence of all reality. A naturalistic view of the world was growing among academics and especially scientists. There is a uniformity of natural causes that explain our reality.

Consequences

- **Social Darwinism**

The application of Darwinistic ideas of process and progress to cultural and social forces with a twist of pragmatism.

- **Oliver Wendall Holmes** | Law

Law was a product of social and political forces, not a moral absolute or transcendent value system.

- **Charles Beard** | Constitutional History

The constitution was product of social and economic forces, not a transcendent document for the ages.

an alternate landscape: modernity, intellectual change and the decline of protestant control

Consequences

- **Social Darwinism**

- **Auguste Comte** | Sociology

Human society has advanced through the ages via stages from primitive to advanced.

Religion was the most primitive stage.

- **William Graham Sumner** | Social Sciences

The struggle for existence on this planet as advocated by natural pragmatism should trump the notion of purpose, meaning and design.

“Man has not more right to life than a rattlesnake.”

- **John Dewey** | Education

Public education must be for the masses and should promote the highest values of the culture. Democratic values and human freedom should be based on those values, not on the narrow sectarian values of any specific religious system.

- **Higher Criticism**

Relegating the Bible to the level of any book of knowledge and subjecting it to modern, academic research methods without regard for faith commitments.

an alternate landscape: modernity, intellectual change and the decline of protestant control

Consequences

- **New Theology** | Old Liberalism
(Albrecht Ritschl, Adolf von Harnack)
Theology became another academic discipline subject to the rules and guidelines of any other discipline.
- **American Universities**
Some universities began jettisoning their ties to particular denominations and or the Christian mission and perspective that used to guide their educational strategies. *The Soul of the American University*.

The Decline of the Protestant Establishment

- **Sources**
David Hollinger | Richard Fox | Walter Lippmann
- **Increasingly Pluralistic and Secular Climate**
The social, intellectual and moral climate of American culture was changing and the dominant insider Protestants were trying to decide how to respond.
- **Two Protestant Questions**
 1. Can we continue to dominate the culture and still hold onto our traditional belief systems?
 2. Do we opt for maintaining our influence on the culture by modifying our belief systems?

an alternate landscape: modernity, intellectual change and the decline of protestant control

The Decline of the Protestant Establishment

- **Three Responses in the Protestant Community**

1. Liberals | Influence the culture by refitting our theological system with inclusive and pluralistic ideas and giving up our exclusive claims for religious truth.
2. Holiness/Pentecostal | Retain our sectarian/separatists *contra mundum* stance by giving up any claims of control in the culture and retreat into our sub-cultures in order to maintain holiness and purity.
3. Fundamentalists | Maintain our traditional belief systems and fight the growing secularization and the intellectual assaults on our faith.

- **The Role of the South as a New Ethnic Group**

The South as a culture lived the last part of the 19th century and entered the 20th century intent on maintaining its cultural and religious values. They were evangelistic, revivalistic and moralistic dissenters.

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Fundamentalism vs. Liberalism (1920-1940)

By the late 19th and early 20th century the battle for control of the culture became one in which Liberal Protestants joined forces with Modernists to battle what had become know as Fundamentalism. Fundamentalists were a loose coalition of militant Protestants intent on preserving the culture as they envisioned it.

- **1910-1915 | Creation and publication of *The Fundamentals*,**
a 12 booklet series that defended traditional Protestant theology and values against liberalism.

- **Fundamentalist's Core Beliefs:**

- Inerrancy of Scripture/Premillennialism
- Virgin Birth
- Miracles
- Sacrificial Atonement
- Bodily Resurrection
- Historical Parousia
- Scottish Common Sense Philosophy
- Intellectual and Moral Absolutes

- **Fundamentalists Opposed To:**

- Evolution
- Communism
- Liberalism/Modernity
- Ecumenism
- Biblical Higher Criticism

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Fundamentalism vs. Liberalism (1920-1940)

- **Fundamentalist Representatives:**

- J. Gresham Machen
- Charles Hodge
- Billy Sunday
- Benjamin Warfield
- William Jennings Bryan

- **Liberals/Modernists Core Beliefs:**

- Scientific Method
- Social Pragmatism and Progressivism
- Higher Criticism and Postmillennialism
- Darwinistic Principles
- Historical and culturally determined intellectual and religious beliefs

- **Liberals/Modernists Opposed to:**

- Narrow Mindedness
- Sectarianism
- Religious Dogmatism
- Exclusivism

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Fundamentalism vs. Liberalism (1920-1940)

- **Liberals/Modernists Representatives:**

- Harry Emerson Fosdick

- Lyman Abbott

- Washington Gladden

- H.L. Mencken

- Clarence Darrow

- **Turning Point | Scopes Trial, 1925**

Dayton, Tennessee | John T. Scopes, Defendant

William Jennings Bryan, Prosecution | Clarence Darrow, Defense | H.L. Mencken, Media

Marsden's *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. Joel Carpenter's *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism*.

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Fundamentalism vs. Liberalism (1920-1940)

- **Modernity**

What characterized Modernity and why were Fundamentalists and others opposed to it?

- **Walter Lippmann** saw modernity's problems as it sought to build a civilization with a shared morality.

- **Consumer culture, emphasis on choice as freedom, role of advertising, the new morality. Hollywood and the growth of the entertainment industry.**

- **Other Critiques of Modernity:**

Sinclair Lewis | *Elmer Gantry* and *The Jungle*

Ezra Pound

Ernest Hemingway and the "lost generation"

Carl Becker

John Dewey's *A Common Faith*

an alternate landscape: modernity, intellectual change and the decline of protestant control

Fundamentalism vs. Liberalism (1920-1940)

- **Neo-Orthodoxy**

- Karl Barth (1886-1968) *Romer Brief* | Attack on classical liberalism and a focus on bringing a more traditional theological view of sin, the cross and salvation back into vogue in the aftermath of WWI.

- H. Richard Niebuhr (1894-1962) *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1957)
American Protestantism and Society.

- Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971) *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (1932) | The Kingdom of God and the uncritical use of politics in defining God's kingdom. The kingdom of God cannot be equated with any social-political system.

- **The New Deal**

- FDR saw the government as the means to bring the country out of the Depression, but only through a pragmatic and unified approach that gave the government an even larger role in shaping American public life.

- After the New Deal, the federal government was seen as the largest single contributor to maintaining the American way of life and providing an expected standard of living. The American way of life, as we know it, was created during and after WWII.

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Fundamentalism vs. Liberalism (1920-1940)

- **The New Deal**

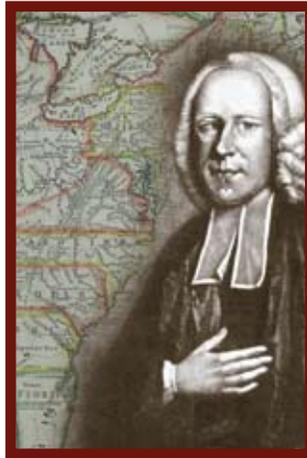
- Question: Was this national expectation of prosperity and growth, this standard of living, sustainable over time?

- **Summary:**

Many areas of the culture that Protestants had formerly controlled or influenced were lost in the 20th century and the way in which they responded to this repositioning of their power has shaped the story of American Christianity over the last 75 years.

Role of the nation state as ultimate in the lives of people, a secularized version of the Puritan vision.

civil religion



civil religion

Source

Laurence Moore | Protestant diversity and consensus of civil religion creates unique American Christian faith.

Political Principles and Religious Sanctions

- **American Civil Religion** =
Secular Constitution + Creator God + Puritan Covenantal Language

American Patriotism

Veneration of the nation and its principles as if they were a result of Divine Sanction.

Symbols

- Flag

- Holidays

- Pledge of Allegiance

- Shrines

- Anthems

civil religion

Ultimacy

- Giving Transcendent Meaning to National Identity and Purpose
Supreme sacrifice for the nation: *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*

Civil Religion and National Crisis

Civil Religion blends Christian language and sentiments with Republican/Democratic language and sentiments to create a hybrid faith that provides a sense of national unity in the midst of rampant religious plurality and cultural diversity. **CIVIL RELIGION IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN TIMES OF CRISIS, WHEN THE NATION'S EXISTENCE IS THREATENED.**

Rituals of Civil Religion

- Swearing In with Hand on Bible

- State of the Nation Address

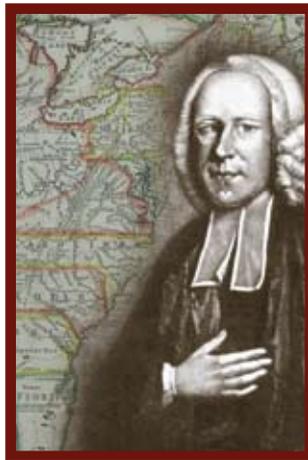
- Opening Congress with Prayer

CIVIL RELIGION CAN SERVE AS UNIFYING FORCE IN THE MIDST OF RAMPANT RELIGIOUS PLURALISM, BUT IT IS NOT CHRISTIANITY.

Sources

Robert Bellah, *The Broken Covenant*
Sydney Mead, *The Lively Experiment*
Noll, Hatch and Marsden, *The Search for Christian America*
Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*

post WWII:
evangelical resurgence,
increasing pluralism
and civil rights



post WWII: evangelical resurgence, increased pluralism and civil rights

JFK's Inaugural Address | A Secular, Post-Millennial Vision of the Nation

- Questions/Issues

- Why the radical contrast between the decade of the 50s and the 60s? From optimism to disillusionment in a decade - why?

- What effect does WWII have on American's perception of themselves as a world power and their view of America as a Christian nation with a world mission?
Renewed Idealism of the nation?

- New creations: Atomic power/weapons; WCC; United Nations

- Facing the new threat of Communism and Cold War: Korea, McCarthy and the Domino Theory

- *The Irony of American History*, Reinhold Niebuhr's critique of America

Renewed Faith | Revivalism

- Breadth and Depth? Professed worldview and Functional worldview.

- SBC | "A million more in '54"

- Faith in Faith? | Jane Russell, Eisenhower, Norman Vincent Peale and Billy Graham

post WWII: evangelical resurgence, increased pluralism and civil rights

“The American Way of Life”

- Will Herberg | *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology*
 - What is the real religion of Americans?
 - Questions about toleration, what direction would things go?

Religious Groups Reinventing Themselves

- **Fundamentalists to Neo-Evangelicals**
Billy Graham, Carl F. H. Henry (Fuller Seminary) vs. Bob Jones and John R. Rice
George Marsden's *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism*
- **Pentecostals**
Gained respectability. Formed institutions and entered mainline culture: Oral Roberts University and Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship.
- **Jews**
Became more secularized in order to be mainstream. Kept out of political and academic positions. They entered law, medicine, business and entertainment.
- **Catholics**
JFK | Bishop Fulton Sheen | Thomas Merton | Dorothy Day | Vatican II (1962-1965)

post WWII: evangelical resurgence, increased pluralism and civil rights

The 1960s | The Emerging Counter-Culture

- A decade of extremes and contrasts | Insiders vs. Outsiders
- The myth of the nation was questioned and critiqued
- Perceived artificial values of previous generation were rejected outright
- Dropping out of society, alternative lifestyles and rebellion against authority
- Time of anti-heroes and protest songs
- Rejection of Enlightenment objectivity and privileged roles of science, government and technology.

The 1960s | Key Events, Movements and People

- Vietnam | 1959-1973
- Assassination of JFK | 1963
- “God is Dead” Movement | 1966
Time magazine cover. Mainline denominations try to ride the wave of cultural rejection of traditional values and ideas. Harvey Cox’s *The Secular City*.

post WWII: evangelical resurgence, increased pluralism and civil rights

The 1960s | Key Events, Movements and People

- **Woodstock** | 1969

A human-centered, counter-cultural revival movement seeking to achieve salvation and peace without an appeal to religious doctrines.

- **Liberation Theology** | Jurgen Moltmann, Gustavo Gutierrez and Leonardo Boff

- **Jesus Movement**

A youth led, revival movement not dependent on the denominational or institutional structures of American Christianity.

- **Feminism** | 1964

- Phrase “women’s liberation” was coined in America. It meant a rejection of traditional roles for women in society and a demand for equality under the law.
- Evangelicals ordained women but rejected Marian theology based on biblical interpretation.
- Catholics revered Mary, but rejected the ordination of women as biblically unwarranted.

- **Beatles US Tour** | 1964

post WWII: evangelical resurgence, increased pluralism and civil rights

The Civil Rights Movement

- Sources

Martin Luther King, Jr. | “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

South as a new ethnic group following Civil War, entered the 20th century intent on maintaining their 19th century cultural values and way of life. “Stacked their arms but not their principles”
Civil War did not resolve the civil rights issues of Black Americans.

Progressive American Democratic Faith meets Black American’s Millennial hopes and expectations.
The Declaration of Independence meets Jim Crow.

- Irony

Blacks could appeal for justice by using the prophetic message of the Bible and its imagery, but Catholics had to adopt a secular public image in order to assimilate into the culture and gain acceptance.

- Shifting Political Allegiances

- Solid South | Voted Democrat against the party of Lincoln in order to maintain the status quo.

- Republican Party was the party of reform/change via the government until the mid 20th century, with FDR’s administration, when Democrats began to carry the reform mantle.

- Mid 20th Century | Liberal Democrats and Liberal Protestants became reformers and took control of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party became the party of the conservative social and political status quo.

post WWII: evangelical resurgence, increased pluralism and civil rights

The Civil Rights Movement

- **Civil Rights Leadership**

The role of the pulpit and the black preacher as the voice in the black community and the place for addressing social and political injustices, for a disenfranchised people with no public or political voice.

- **Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968)**

Doctorate from Boston University | Pastor, Dexter Ave. Baptist Church, Montgomery, Ala.

- **Figures Influential to MLK**

Walter Rauschenbusch | Reinhold Niebuhr | Mahatma Gandhi, *ahimsa*

- **Significant Events**

1955 | Montgomery Bus Boycott

1956 | Kitchen Crisis. Phone call death threat led him to a sacrificial understanding of faith which he connected to the prophetic act of preaching and the opposing social injustice.

1957 | Helped organize the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)

1963 | Arrested on Easter in Birmingham. Writing of letter.

1963 | August March on Washington and "I Have A Dream Speech." He tied together the American dream of freedom in the Declaration of Independence with biblical themes of freedom and justice with a millennial hope of peace.

1964 | Passing of Civil Rights Act and Nobel Peace Prize

1965 | Montgomery to Selma March

1968 | Shot in Memphis

post WWII: evangelical resurgence, increased pluralism and civil rights

The Civil Rights Movement

- **Other Black Movements**

- African Colonization Movement | Decolonization and independence in Africa (Ghana etc.)

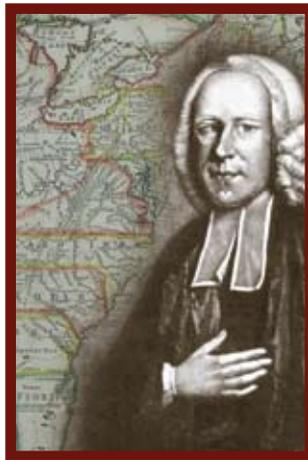
- Father Divine

- Nation of Islam | Elijah Mohammed and Louis Farakan

- Malcolm X

- Black Panthers | Black Pride

closing the
twentieth century
and opening the
twenty-first century



closing the twentieth century and opening the twenty-first century

Sources

Nancy Ammerman | James Reichley | Robert Wuthnow

Events and Phenomena

- Bush to Clinton to Bush to Obama
- 9/11
- Iraq and Afghanistan
- Globalization
- Immigration
- Climate Change
- Sub-prime Bust, Bailout and Economic Recession

closing the twentieth century and opening the twenty-first century

Two Party Polarity | Plurality and Secularization

Protestant and Catholic - but now with increasing plurality of faith traditions. Conservative and Liberal, but now with increasing nuances of issues that create sub-categories within each group.

Bishop: *The Big Sort*

Issues/Persons Highlighting the Public Role of Conservative Evangelicals Over the Past 35 Years

- Roe v. Wade
- Jimmy Carter (prophet) | Ronald Reagan (priest) | George Bush | Bill Clinton
- Equal Rights Amendment
- Gay Rights Movement
- New Age Movement | Spiritually monistic, individualistic and a-historical
- Non-Denominationalism | Fragmenting evangelicalism
- Jerry Falwell and Moral Majority | Pre-millennial and reformist? Christian America?
- Robert Schuller, Jimmy Swaggert, Pat Robertson, Tammy and Jim Baker
- Bill Hybels | Willow Creek
- Rick Warren | Saddleback Church
- Southern Baptist Convention | Picture of denominational fragmentation in the midst of claims for power and control over the sub-culture.
- Personal Peace and Affluence vs. Social Consciousness and radical views of the gospel.

closing the twentieth century and opening the twenty-first century

Post-modernity | What is it?

- The problem of interpretation and meaning
- The unifying narrative vs. the competing metanarratives
- Ethnic and religious loyalties are more powerful than national identities.
Therefore the role of toleration in maintaining the national faith/myth.
- **Question:** Can the national myth withstand the assault of ethnic and religious forces found within competing sub-cultures?

Emergent/Emerging?

R. Webber's *Ancient-Future Church* and *The Younger Evangelicals*

- **Leaders/Popularizers**
Rob Bell, Erwin McManus, Donald Miller, Rick McKinley, Chris Seay, Brain McLaren,
Mark Driscoll, Shane Claiborne

closing the twentieth century and opening the twenty-first century

Overarching Themes for Interpreting the Nation's Religious History

- Nation of Paradoxes
- Religious and Secular
- Functional and Professed Worldviews
- Insiders and Outsiders | Competing moral visions
- Rise and Decline of the Protestant Center
- Secularization as a Process
Not the movement from religious to secular, but rather the continual repositioning of the religious and the secular assisted at times by religious people who help accelerate the process of secularization.
- Questions
 - What does Christianity in America look like in 2020?
 - American Christianity or Christian America?
 - Whose moral vision will shape the nation in the next 25 years?
 - Does America have a single compelling story anymore?