

The Conservative Turn

American Religious History

Explosion of Pentecostalism

- Popular music, praise music, “Christian rock”
- Growing Hispanic presence
- Influences other churches: looser style, less liturgy

Rise of Evangelicalism

- Quiet suburban growth: megachurch
 - From “truth-oriented” to “conversion-oriented”
- Televangelism
 - Early stars: Oral Roberts & Billy Graham
 - Kathryn Kuhlman’s faith healings
 - Pat Robertson, “700 Club” on CBN
 - Jerry Falwell, “Moral Majority”
 - Jimmy Swaggart & Jim Bakker of PTL
 - Collapse in late ’80s

a Changing World

- New Deal and Great Society: Government takes over some traditional roles
- Government forces integration of the races in schools after 1954
 - Denominations establish “white academies”
- Immorality: Divorce, Vietnam, youth rebellion, the sexual revolution, drugs, music
- Government and religion
 - Supreme Court bans government-sponsored prayer in schools, 1962
 - Feminism and the Equal Rights Amendment, 1972
 - 1977 battle against non-discrimination laws for homosexuals
 - 1979, conservative evangelicals come out against *Roe v. Wade* (1973)

Families in a Changing Society

- Men lose identity as producers in transition to service economy, 1970s-80s
- Meaning of marriage changes to companionate marriage
- Working mothers, divorce, remarriage
 - Challenge to traditional teachings
 - Challenge of religious adherence
- Battle over same-sex marriage

- From theology to “morals” and “values”: James Dobson, “Focus on the Family,” 1977

Resurgence of Fundamentalism

- Axis from Oklahoma and Texas to southern California, funded with oil money
- Rise of Fundamentalist Seminaries
 - Dallas Theological Seminary, center for dispensationalism
 - Hal Lindsay, *Late Great Planet Earth*, 1970
 - Tim LaHaye, *Left Behind* series, 1995
- Fundamentalists take over Southern Baptist Church, 1979

Conservative Evangelical Politics

- Jimmy Carter, 1977-81, first born-again President
- New political activism
 - Election of Ronald Reagan, 1980–88
 - Republicans learn to cater to the religious right
 - Robertson, '88: Christian Coalition: Ralph Reed
 - George W. Bush's faith-based initiatives, 2001-2009
- Plateau and recent decline of membership

Catholic Conservative Turn

- Pope Paul VI
 - *Humanae Vitae*, 1968: no artificial birth control
 - Affirms celibate priesthood
- Pope John Paul II (1978-2005), celebrity pope
 - Experience under Nazis and Communists
 - Conservative on personal & sexual morality: Abortion issue
 - Strengthened papal control of bishops & theology (continued by Benedict XVI, 2005-13)
- Problems in the priesthood: shortages and child sex abuse scandals
- The Hispanic challenge

Recent Trends

- Reform Judaism rediscovers tradition
- Mainline denominations riven by controversies
 - Ordination of women
 - Anything having to do with homosexuals (lifestyle, ordination, marriage)
 - Loss of young people, shrinking numbers
- Rising secularism? Disillusionment with overpoliticized churches?
 - Recent poll: 20% “no religion”