

Christian Church History:
In The United States of America
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OUTLINE

Thesis: The "stable" foundation of the United States of America culture is Christianity. Throughout the history of the United States of America, Christianity continues to be one of the positive pillars of vitality in USA character and a research laboratory for improvement. Consequently, many modern Christian churches have remained champions of Puritanism.

- A. Church Apex: USA switched to a nation of organized religion including 2/3 of the citizens. The cause of success depends upon their Polity, Clergy, Doctrines, and Evangelizism.
- B. Otherworldliness: The churching of America was accomplished by aggressive churches committed to vivid otherworldliness.

I. Church: Definition & Historical Summary.

II. Church and State: phrase that refers to the continually varying relations between organized religion and organized government, which for centuries has troubled rulers, churchmen, philosophers, and common men.

A. State:

B. Separation:

- 1. Constitution: as well as democracy was inspired and took root because of the environment created by Christianity.
 - a. Mayflower Compact: (1620) regarded by some as the begining of democracy.
 - b. Cambridge Platform: (1648) influenced the shaping of the federal constituion.
- 2. Pluralism: To the degree that a religious economy is unregulated pluralism will thrive.
 - a. Urban: The "city on a hill" as religious as ever.

III. Sect-Church: The ideal types of a sect and church are best conceptualized as the end points of a continuum made up of the degree of tension between religious organizations and their cultural environments (Secularization: Internal factions demanding a return to a more sectlike faith are always a first sign of the secularization of a religious body).

IV. Polity: The three main types of church organization are Congregational, Episcopal and Presbyterian.

A. Congregational:

B. Episcopal:

C. Presbyterian:

D. Foundation of Progress:

- 1. Frontier Democracy: Baptist & Methodist Success 1776-1850

2. Camp Meeting: because of the great success of the camp meetings, both worldly and spiritually, once began they spread like wild fire!
3. Circuit Riders:

V. Clergy: Manufactured Ministers; Jesus warns his disciples about scholars, the "teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Mt. 16).

A. Colonial: Founding of Harvard and Yale; Manufactured ministers creating a monopoly of elite.

B. First Great Awakening: (1739-1742) Trend setters for the future: George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards.

C. Second Great Awakening: (1805-20) Catholic Clergy the new model.

VI. Catholic Arrival:(1850-1926) Success; number one in the United States.

A. Puritanism:

B. Immigration: (1800s)

C. Evangelism:

D. Revival: Parish Mission Revivals; model revivalist the Jesuit Francis X. Weninger.

E. Cultural Enclave:

1. Education:

2. Nuns:

3. Sect:

VII. Pentecostal: A Holiness Movement back to the Fundamentals of Otherworldliness. Puritanism resonates!

VIII. Conclusion:

A. Religious Antidote.

B. Church Antidote: Beneficial Worldview.

Positive Inspirational Questions?

The "stable" foundation of the United States' of America culture is Christianity. Throughout the history of the United States of America, Christianity continues to be one of the positive pillars of vitality in USA character and a research laboratory for improvement. Consequently, many modern Christian churches have remained champions of Puritanism. (1)

The most striking trend in the history of United States religion is growth or what Roger Finke and Rodney Stark call the "Churching of America." The USA shifted from a nation in which most people took no part in organized religion to a nation in which nearly two thirds of the adults participate. U.S. Churching was accomplished by aggressive churches committed to Puritanism's vivid otherworldliness, a belief in God's infallible Word as found in the Bible. The relative success of religious bodies will depend upon their polity, clergy, religious doctrines, and evangelism, especially when confronted with an unregulated religious economy represented by the United States' "separation of church and state."

John Wesley wrote in his Journal that any membership decline is a "sore evil," for growth is a sign of God's grace, "where the real power of God is, it naturally spreads wider and wider" (Wilke, 1986:15). When mainline churches, the "popular" churches become worldly, hence slothful, fundamental sects, the otherworldly Christian churches are industrious. Consequently, Christianity in the USA has

remained stable and continues to expand.

On the eve of the American Revolution only about 17% of Americans were churched. In other words, few Americans regularly attended a Christian church. By the start of the Civil War this proportion had risen dramatically to 37%. By the 1870's, the rate then began to rise once more, and by 1906 slightly more than half of the USA population was churched. Between 1916 and 1926 there was a net increase of 4,667 in the total number of U.S. churches. The number of Lutheran and Catholic churches increased by 2,746 (Finke, 1992: 208-9). Southern Baptist gained 1,178 churches. Many fundamentalist sects also increased their assemblies: Assemblies of God (553%), Church of God (442%), Christian and Missionary Alliance (169%), Free Will Baptists (274%), Pentecostal Holiness Church (60%), and the Salvation Army (310%). Adherence rates reached 56% by 1926. Since then the rate has been rather "stable" although inching upwards. In the 1960's, according to Peter Berger (1963: 84-9), USA denominations were spending more than a billion dollars a year on the construction of new churches. By 1980 church adherence, as in regular attendance and acceptance of the church creed, was about 62% (Finke, 1992:16).

Popular churches, such as Congregational, Episcopal, Presbyterian and later the Baptist and Methodist, are usually referred to as Mainline Protestant churches. Mainline Protestant churches have tried to relate biblical faith and

practice to the whole of contemporary life: cultural, social, political and economic. The focus has not just been on personal and family morality. They have tried to steer a middle course between mystical fusion with the world and sectarian withdrawal from it. From the U.S. genesis through the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, the mainline churches have been close to the center of American culture. The religious intellectuals who spoke for these churches often articulated issues in ways widely influential in the society as a whole. The Christian Coalition, also called the New Right, founded by Pat Robertson and led by Ralph Reed with 1.6 million politically active members is a prime example. (2)

Regardless of the direction a person wanders, be it north, south, east or west they will encounter a numerous diversity of Christian churches both old, very old and new. Any Beltway, even the Washington D. C. "Capital Beltway" leads to the foundations of Christianity. Typically, any person in any direction on average, can observe the magnitude of Christian structure within a five minute drive. Accordingly, not a great deal of time will be spent explaining the hypotheses of the decline of religion interpreted by notable scholars of religion and inspired by religious leaders that were once the king of "the city on a hill." The fact is, religion is here to stay and a force to be regarded by serious social science scholars.

Church. The word "church," in its most limited meaning, denotes a building in which Christians meet for religious worship. In a wider sense it denotes a variety of relationships, ranging from that of a group of Christians professing a strict creed to the whole body of faithful, either in the practice of their faith or in their dealings with the state.

The English word "church" is derived from the Greek word "kuriakos," meaning "belonging to the Lord," but it stands for another Greek word ekklesia, hence "ecclesiastical," denoting an assembly. The term "church" originally designated the place where the apostles and evangelists gathered believers together for worship and mutual support. From the outset the church has both a local and a general significance, denoting both the individual assembly and the world-wide community.

To the standard Christian, the Church is the "body of Jesus Christ" or the "living God." The Church is a building of which Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone or foundation, "a holy temple in the Lord", "a habitation of God through the Spirit." The Church is the "fellowship of saints" or "people of God." The Church is the "bride of Jesus Christ, saved and sanctified by Christ for union with Christ" (Bible: New Testament). In other words, each Christian Church is a Jesus Christ University. The life and teachings of Jesus Christ is the nucleus of the Christian

Church. (3)

Early Christianity, with members recruited from diversified classes of people, faced problems of discipline and order. As an inevitable alternative to confusion, the early church took on a structure of government (4). There is no indisputable evidence of a universally accepted procedure either of admission to clerical rank or of the settlement of disputes (repercussions of apathy for the Bible's wisdom). The hierarchical structure of the church grew in response to practical needs.

As converts became more numerous, they were grouped in a series of parishes, or churches, under the guidance of a bishop, or overseer. Since he was the integrating authority, his pronouncements on church matters were made *ex cathedra*, that is, from his official seat (Greek *kathedra* = chair). Therefore, the church where he resided became known as a cathedral.

In time the church as a whole developed a duality of ritual and practice in its Eastern and Western segments. This led, eventually, to a separation of the two parts. In the East several self-governing patriarchates emerged, in Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and later in Moscow. In the West the bishop of Rome claimed primacy over other bishops as the successor of Peter (one of the original 12 apostles), thus sole vicar of Christ, with final authority in matters of doctrine and discipline. From this

separation came the two divisions known as the Eastern Church and the Roman Church, with "church" in this instance meaning the entire body of the faithful and bishops within each area.

These remained the major divisions of the church until the Reformation of the 16th century. After this time many Christians of the Church of Rome separated into dissenting denominations or sects, each of which came to be known as a particular church (i.e. Anglican; Presbyterian > Episcopal > Congregational > Baptist & Methodist). Each remained within the Christian tradition but proclaimed a distinctive creed and ritual. Similar divisions within the Eastern Church emerged as the Armenian Church, the Coptic Church, and the Orthodox Church. One thing all shared in common however, was a varying relationship to the state, ranging in turn from coordination (Holy Roman Empire-Roman Church; Anglican established Church of England) to widely disparate attitudes often resulting in persecution (Puritans; Quakers; Jehovah's Witnesses). From such conditions a complex pattern of relations emerged that has come to be defined under the general title of "Church and State."

"Church and State" is a phrase that refers to the continually varying relations between organized religion and organized government, which for centuries has troubled rulers, churchmen, philosophers, and common men. The terms church and state have elusive significance. People primarily

familiar with Anglo-American and European cultures inevitably think of church as an entity having some structure like the Roman Catholic Church, or the Church of England, or some less closely organized sect such as the Congregationalist, Methodist or Baptist churches in the USA. They think of state as a separate entity.

State. Everywhere the state churches established the principal forms of Christian worship, doctrine, and moral teaching available to the overwhelming majority of Europe's populace, a hegemony created by the state with a power that accounted for its frequent scorn by contemporaries, reformers, and historians. From the time when Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire until modern times, most churches have been established in the sense of being state connected and maintained. This has often involved a large measure of state control, which in turn has been met by protests and exaggerated ecclesiastical claims. The Christian conscience can never equate its standards with those of public opinion or of political expediency (Adamic Covenant #2; Gen. 3), hence the emphasis on otherworldliness.

Side by side with the historic established churches there have been countless separated communions or sects, whose leaders were moved to reject practices approved or tolerated in the state church. For centuries, sects have developed in various churches in order to purify their

church from what was regarded as an inferior type of Christianity. In this way Quakers, Methodists, various Nonconformist and secessionist bodies have made a cumulative impression even upon the churches they left.

The early Christian ascetics, by their adoption of a life of hardship, similarly offered a criticism of successful and relaxed Christianity. The fundamentalist ideology has been part of the Christian movement from the start. At least in the formative stage, later religious orders showed a sincerity not prevalent in the routine life of the church. A number of these dedicated groups, especially Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits, made it their task to impart new reality to the life of the hierarchical church itself. A vast number of voluntary-group movements have also stimulated the Protestant churches from within, producing their own organizations in more or less harmonious relation with the ecclesiastical structure.

Separation. The liberty of every man to think out his own relation to God (confirmed early in the Old Testament by Jeremiah), which John Calvin and Martin Luther both preached and exemplified, worked powerfully to separate much of northern and western Europe from Roman Catholicism and subsequently to shatter the unity of Protestantism. Individual freedom to choose a religious belief inevitably led to independent judgment on political theory as well. Separation appears to have been the direction of

constitutional development in the modern states since the "enlightenment" of the 18th century. The principle of separation, consistently adhered to in the USA, appears in the constitutions of a number of modern nations.

When James I of England heard a group of his leading clergy discuss toleration of antiepiscopal Puritans within the Church of England in 1604, he protested, "No Bishop, no King," and added that the Puritans would either conform to the establishment or he would "harry them out of the land or else do worse." King James was prophetic. During his reign many Puritans were persecuted out of England to America, where during the next century and a half they got on without a bishop, and at the end of that time abolished the king.

The 17th and 18th centuries saw a concurrent growth of scientific knowledge and of religious rationalism. Scientism and skepticism set the tone of the 18th century "enlightenment," and neither was likely to strengthen governmental established religions. In America each of the thirteen colonies (except perhaps Rhode Island), originally had a government that fostered one or more religions. However, establishment never took hold because of the diversities of religions among the predominantly Protestant settlers, diverse immigration and the freedom with which they moved among the different settlements. With such a mixture of religions, governmental favoritism became difficult.

Separationism occurred because no single religious group could claim anything near the majority of supporters throughout the thirteen states necessary to establish it as the officially sanctioned religion of the new nation. Every religious group found itself occupying a minority status in the context of all thirteen states, and so each was quite naturally concerned with keeping government from interfering with what it wanted to do and teach religiously. The Free-thinkers resented having their taxes go to any religion; the sectarians resented their taxes going to false religions. Given that each of the religious groups wanted religious freedom for itself, even if few of them really wanted religious freedom for all, there was no other safe way to proceed but to create an unregulated, free market-religious economy. Nevertheless, from the genesis of the USA, numerous founding fathers and scores of later political leaders, cultivated the USA with a substantial-religious foundation that provided a firm-beneficial base for the future (William Federer, 1994).

Constitution. The first clause of the 1st Amendment, proposed by Episcopalian James Madison to Congress in 1789 and adopted in 1791, set the tone for the USA attitude toward separation of church and state: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." The Episcopal church has traditionally stood close to the center of power

in our society and attempted to influence the power structure from within.

Mayflower Compact (1620). The Massachusetts settlement of Pilgrims at Plymouth prospered from the first, and Congregationalism with them. The "Association and Agreement" known in history as the Mayflower Compact, although directed to the good ordering of the polity rather than of a church congregation, was drawn up like one of the church covenants with which the Pilgrims were familiar. It served as a basis for the government of the Plymouth Colony and is regarded by some as the beginning of democracy in America.

Cambridge Platform. The Cambridge Platform of 1648 was a plan of church government agreed upon by Congregational representatives of New England churches that eventually influenced the shaping of the federal constitution. This first ecclesiastical constitution to be drawn up in America was based on a draft by Richard Mather, with a preface by John Cotton, that remained the basis of American Congregationalism for 2 centuries. A Vindication of the Government of New England Churches, reprinted in 1700 by John Wise (1625-1725), the Congregational minister of Ipswich, Mass., came to be known as the Primer of the Revolution. In it Wise singled out the democratic principles in Congregationalism and set them forth as standards for the state.

Pluralism. To the degree that a religious economy is

unregulated pluralism will thrive. The natural state of religious economies is one in which a variety of religious groups successfully caters to the special needs and interests of specific market segments. This arises because of the inherent inability of a single product to satisfy very divergent tastes. Pluralism arises because of the inability of a single religious organization to be worldly and otherworldly, strict and permissive, exclusive and inclusive. The market will always contain distinct consumer segments with strong preferences on each of these aspects of faith. This occurs because of normal variations in the human condition such as age, social class, gender, life experiences, race and socialization. In fact, because of this underlying differentiation of preferences, religion can never be successfully monopolized, even when a religious organization is backed by the state.

Writing in 1776, Adam Smith noted how legal establishment of the church saps the clergy of their "exertion, their zeal and industry." In contrasting the USA and European religious situations Francis Grund (1837) noted that establishment makes the clergy "indolent and lazy," because "a person provided for cannot, by the rules of common sense, be supposed to work as hard as one who has to exert himself for a living" (Powell, 1967:77). A high degree of specialization as well as competition occurs where many faiths function within a religious economy. It follows

that many independent religious bodies will be able to attract a much larger proportion of a population than when only one state established church or very few religions have autonomy. Martin Marty points out "the key to America's success has been its ability to endorse competition as lawful, indeed as the very fiber of political and economic life, and to provide assurances that within that competition the loser retain full participation, civil and political rights" (1991:194). Proof is in the fact that mainline religions of the 1700's (Congregational, Episcopal, Presbyterian) took a back pew to the upstart religious sects with miraculous gains in membership (Baptist, Methodist).

Urban. The growth of cities increased religious participation. In 1890 and 1906 the percentage of the population reported to be church members was substantially higher in the principal cities (those of 25,000 residents and larger) than in less urban areas (1910 Census). Religious mobilization was higher in the cities and towns because it was easier for people to get to church. More important, people in cities and even small towns are more likely to have a church that is right for them. The primary impact of religious pluralism is to provide a broad spectrum of specialized religious firms competing to attract and hold a segment of the market.

Finke and Stark (1988) analyzed data for the largest 150 American cities in 1906 and found that cities with a

greater degree of pluralism had higher rates of religious adherence. Rather than being a source of secularization and religious decline, pluralism strengthens religion.

Prophetically, cities and states having higher rates of church membership had lower rates of crime, delinquency, suicide, alcoholism, and venereal disease (Finke & Stark, 1992).

Sect-Church. The ideal type of sect and church are best conceptualized as the end points of a continuum made up of the degree of tension between religious organizations and their cultural environments (Niebuhr, 1929). To the degree that a religious body sustains beliefs and practices at variance with the surrounding environment, tension will exist between its members and outsiders (i.e. Puritans, Baptists, Methodists & original Catholics). Churches are religious bodies in a relatively low state of tension with their environments. Sects are religious bodies in a relatively high state of tension with their environments. Church and sect differ greatly in their ability to satisfy different human needs, demands that are always reflected in distinct segments of the religious market. Churches serve the segment of the market with less desire for a strict and otherworldly faith and sects serve the segment seeking those features.

The underlying dynamics of sect-church theory is that social forces tend to influence the preferences of people

vis-a-vis religion. That is, as the general affluence and social standing of a group rises, otherworldliness as expressed through tension with the environment, becomes perceived as increasingly costly. For the clergy, the cost of remaining a high-tension sect are especially high. They often receive less pay and less community respect than their counterparts in "mainline" denominations, even though they face more stringent demands on their belief and behavior. The usual result is, the well-educated clergy and affluent membership are often the first to support a lowering of the tension with the surrounding culture.

The sect-church process accentuates the fact that new religious bodies nearly always begin as sects and if they are successful in attracting a substantial following, will over time almost inevitably be gradually transformed into churches. More to the point, successful religious movements nearly always shift their emphasis toward this world and away from the next, moving from high tension with the environment toward increasingly lower levels of tension (i.e. Colonial-Mainline Congregationalist, Episcopalians & Presbyterians). As this occurs, a religious body will become increasingly less able to satisfy members who desire a higher tension-version of faith. As discontent grows at some point, conflict within the group will erupt into a split and the faction desiring a return to higher tension will leave to create a new sect. If this movement proves successful,

over time it too will be transformed into a church and once again a split will occur (i.e. Colonial Baptist & Methodist). The result is an endless cycle of sect formation, transformation, schism, and rebirth. The many workings of this cycle account for the countless varieties of each of the major faiths. In the USA for example, the Church of England spawned the Puritan sect which developed into the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches which then produced Methodist sects resulting in churches that reproduced Pentecostal or Holiness sects.

The Methodists had achieved a virtual miracle of growth in the USA, rising from less than 3% of the nation's church members in 1776 to more than 34% by their apex in 1850, making them far and away the largest religious body in the nation. By 1890 the Methodists were overcome by the Roman Catholics which is still the largest communion today.

Holding a far smaller market share than the Baptists in 1776, the Methodists soon towered over them albeit, the Baptists too had displayed an outstanding growth rate. However, while the Methodist market share began to decline after 1850, the Baptists kept right on growing. By 1906 the Baptists had overtaken the Methodists, and since World War II they have become much more numerous than the Methodists, following only the Catholics in numbers (Finke, 1992: 145-48).

Historical data reveals the stability and growth of

Christianity. In spite of the "decline" of religion in the USA, hypothesis, inspired by mainline clergy waning in popularity. Foremost, a person must remember, Christianity started as a Pentecostal sect that conquered the Roman Empire, most of Europe much of America, and is still on a mission to spread the Gospel unabridged across the four corners of the earth.

The same underlying processes that transformed the Puritan sect into the Congregational Church subsequently transformed the upstart Methodists into the Methodist Episcopal Church. When successful sects are transformed into churches, that is, when their tension with the surrounding culture is greatly reduced, they soon cease to grow and eventually begin a decline.

Successful sect movements develop strong internal pressures to lower their tension with the surrounding culture. These pressures come from having an increasingly affluent membership and from an increasingly "professionalized" clergy. Together, the privileged laity and the "well-trained" clergy begin to lift restrictions on behavior and soften doctrines that once served to set the sect apart from its social environment in a process known as sect transformation or secularization. This same procedure has taken place invarious USA institutions such as the government. Internal factions demanding a return to a more sectlike faith are always a first sign of the secularization

of a religious body.

Polity. Social scientists agree that the structure of an organization can have tremendous impact on its efficiency and success (5). The three main types of church organization are Congregational, Episcopal and Presbyterian.

Democracy is best epitomized in the Congregational type where authority resides in local church members and their representatives who meet periodically in regional or national conventions. Authority lies within the local group, with the national denomination having little authority, at least of a formal nature.

In the Episcopal type, authority proceeds from the top down. Authority rests with the congregations' clergy and with higher-ranking clergy such as popes and bishops. After an early period of "trusteeship," during which lay members asserted control over local congregations, the Roman Catholic Church emerged in the USA with a fully episcopal structure in which bishops presided over their dioceses and pastors ruled over their parishes. Moreover, the USA Catholic Church was (and is) far more directly responsible to the Pope than is typical of national Catholic churches in Europe. Ironically, the reason for direct Roman control of the USA Catholic Church lies in the principle of the separation of church and state. The USA government has never negotiated any conditions for the appointment of bishops. Thus papal appointments within the USA hierarchy are subject

to no other authority, whereas in many parts of Europe the head of state holds veto power over such appointments.

Despite the strict authority held by a trained and professional clergy, however, USA Catholicism has always been in very close touch with its laity (at least until recently). A major reason for this involves the recruitment, training, and placement of parish clergy.

Midway between the democratic principles of Congregationalism and the hierarchy of Episcopatism is the Presbyterian type where authority prevails more in the middle range with elected representatives. Authority is in the hands of both representative committees of clergy and church members.

Foundation of Progress: Frontier Democracy. Major impediments to the churching of colonial America are common features of all frontier settings and also an important historical lesson for contemporary society. Transience, disorder, too many single men, too many criminals, and a shortage of effective and committed ministers are at the root of cultural degradation. Catapulting their grass roots, the two most successful sects were the Baptists and Methodists. In the frontier, the democratic congregational life of the Baptist and Methodist helped them establish churches. The local congregations were divided into small, close-knit groups called classes. Each class met on a weekly basis and was composed of approximately a dozen members.

Here is where the zeal of camp meetings or holistic inspiration was maintained, intimate fellowship was achieved, and the behavior of the faithful was monitored. The local preacher was frequently recommended by their class, and inspected by an "annual examination of character in the quarterly conference" (Gorrie, 1852:295). Although class-leaders, who were deemed responsible for the "moral and Christian conduct" of members, were appointed by the itinerant in newly established missions, the more common practice was for the local unpaid preacher to appoint and supervise their activities. As a result, the average Methodist communion was a model of congregationalism, in the sense that control actually resided in the hands of the adult membership.

Reverend C. C. Goss wrote in detail about the Methodist "miracle" of growth in the "first century of American Methodism" (1866:162): "When a person unites with the Church he is immediately placed in one of the classes, under the care of a person of experience and discrimination.... The Methodist Episcopal Church is not a spiritual lounging place, in which members can simply take comfort, it is not a spiritual restaurant, where persons enter to feast upon the good things of the kingdom; but it is a spiritual workshop, where persons who enter are expected to work for Christ. It would be a fatal day for Methodism if its members ever get too proud or too indolent to work for Christ. Its activity

has been its life, the law of its growth, and it can only exist and prosper by its continued operation...." Reverend Goss was prophetic.

In this era, the actual pastoral functions were performed in most Methodist churches by unpaid, local "amateurs" just like those serving the nearby Baptist congregations. A professional clergy had not yet centralized control of the Methodist organization. True, the circuit-riders were full-time professionals vested with substantial authority. However, they only visited a congregation from time to time and played the role of visiting bishop and evangelist more than the role of pastor. It was only when the circuit riders dismounted and accepted "settled" pastorates that the "episcopal" structure of Methodism came to force. Indeed, Methodist success may well be to the extent that they were able to create a national organization based on the circuit riders, thus having the best of both worlds, centralized direction and local control (Miyakawa,1964). In any event the Methodists and the Baptists were surprisingly democratic and thus able to respond to the actual desires of the frontier market.

Camp Meeting. It is uncertain just when or where camp meetings originated. The fact is, because of the great success of the camp meetings, both worldly and spiritually, once began they spread like wild fire! (6)

One of the first camp meetings took place at the Gasper

River Church in Kentucky during July, 1800. There James McGready, a Presbyterian, aided by several other ministers, scheduled several days of religious services to be held outdoors and suggested that people come prepared to camp over. This camp meeting drew farm families from substantial distances and was a grand success. In the spring a year later, a similar meeting was held in Logan County Kentucky making a lasting impression on souls, especially Presbyterian minister Barton W. Stone. Stone was then inspired to organize the ecumenical camp meeting of Cane Ridge Kentucky, which gathered a crowd of close to 20,000. A miracle, considering the largest Kentucky city of 1801, was Lexington with a population of 2,000. Needless to say, the news of such affluence spread throughout the USA. The power of the camp meeting was not a force to be ignored! The vigor of the spirit was definitely at work, be it body, mind, soul and/or economics. Worldliness brought the still vibrant meeting to a halt since the food supplies of the area was extinguished (Finke, 1992).

Cane Ridge holds a central place in USA religious history. Unlike previous meetings that may have been as large and certainly produced as much emotional response, Cane Ridge came to the attention of the eastern press. These press reports about Cane Ridge seem initially to have caused a joyful response from mainline church leaders. For the Ridge meeting was everywhere hailed as a miracle and the

"greatest outpouring of the Spirit since Pentecost" (Ahlstrom, 1975: 525). Similar to the urban revivals of Whitefield and Finney, the meeting at Cane Ridge was carefully planned. However, in a short time, pharisees from mainline churches began to denounce the camp meetings because of their lack of control. Stone was removed from the Congregational church. Also, the notable Congregational-revivalist Charles Grandison Finney was almost removed. Consequently, the Baptist and Methodist became very successful with the capitalization of modern methods of evangelism, democracy and especially the "camp meeting."

It was hard to sustain rural churches because so few families lived within reasonable travel distance of one another. Indeed, this is one reason why the Methodist circuit riders and the Baptist farmer-preachers so dominated these areas. Religious gatherings were the main cure for emotional needs of the lonely farm families. The camp meeting made it possible for farm families to take part in revival campaigns just like those going on in urban areas. It offered them a legitimate reason to take a vacation, and one that involved intense socialization. Within a few years, farm families all across the nation looked forward to spending a week to ten days at a camp meeting as soon as their spring planting was complete, or later after the fall crops were in. Many habits of the American character became embedded during the dawn of the camp meetings.

It was abundantly clear to all parties that enthusiastic preaching, revival campaigns, and camp meetings were potent methods for mobilizing religious participation. It was well known that the Baptists had benefited greatly from Whitefield's crusade, and even the popular press recognized the rapid growth of Methodism following the Revolution. Moreover, because 94% of USA people lived on farms in 1800, the camp meeting was even more important for church growth than were urban revivals.

Circuit Rider. It wasn't just enthusiasm and dedication that made the Methodists the masters of the camp meeting. Their system of circuit riders was ideal for organizing a number of neighboring communities to hold a camp meeting (i.e. Asbury). When they gathered for their annual conferences the circuit riders were able to share techniques and methods for holding successful meetings. In 1854 the Reverend B. W. Gorham distilled 50 years of Methodist experience with camp meetings into a massive Camp Meeting Manual, containing "practical observations and directions." "Preaching; not dry, dogmatic theorizing; not metaphysical hair splitting; not pulpit bombast; but plain, clear, evangelical Bible truth, uttered with faithful, solemn, earnestness, and with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" was the main reason for the success of camp meetings (1854: 163).

Clergy. The church, or what has been called New England

"communalism," valued order, harmony, obedience to authority, and these values centered on the figure of the "settled minister." Such a minister was "both the keeper and purveyor of the public culture, the body of fundamental precepts and values that defined the social community, and an enforcer of the personal values and decorum that sustained it (Bellah 1985).

Colonial. In his volume on the colonial clergy of New England, Federick Weis (1936) reported that of the 1,586 men who had ever served as pastor of a Congregational church, 95% were college graduates. Of these clergy more than 60% went to Harvard and 29% to Yale. Religious doctrine often seems to become accommodated and secularized whenever it is delivered into the control of intellectuals.

It may be that secularization ensues whenever religion is placed within a formal academic setting because scholars seem unable to resist attempting to clear up all logical ambiguities. Rather than celebrate mysteries, religious scholars often seek to create a belief system that is internally consistent. Finding that things do not fit exactly, they begin to prune, revise and redefine. Whether or not this corrosive effect of scholarship on religion is inevitable, this is what went on at Harvard and Yale, starting well before the Revolution (Ahlstrom, 1975:483-90).

Given the virtual monopoly on the "manufacture of ministers" enjoyed by Harvard and Yale, it is hardly

surprising that the liberal views of their faculty were shared by the Congregational clergy. As Ahlstrom reported, "A firm opposition to revivalism and the whole pietistic emphasis on a religion of the heart was a settled conviction with the liberals" (1975:474). Moreover, as the efforts by these liberals to adjust doctrine to reason led rapidly to Unitarianism and Deism, their opposition to emotionalism transformed their preaching style. Exhortations to repent and to be saved gave way, as Ahlstrom put it, to a well-styled lecture, in which the truths of religion and the moral duties of man were expounded in as reasonable a manner as possible. The high octane Puritan sect had given way to the mainline Congregationalist Church. The fire of the spirit had given way to formal lectures where reason had replaced the dynamics of emotion.

Tedious formal lectures ignoring the emotional needs of the people in conjunction with pomposity, were the Achilles heel of the mainline Colonial churches (Congregational, Episcopalian, Presbyterian). Also, this important lesson was mislaid by the latter mainline Methodist church after their apex in 1850. The Methodist clergy duplicated the path of the manufactured-elitist minister which marked the beginning of their decline. The clergy desired the social status and increased pay of the worldly well-educated. Where it once had been very easy to become a local Methodist minister, therefore they were in abundant supply, with the new

educational decree it became difficult to do so. The Methodist clergy soon had the advantage in bargaining for wages and locations. A monopoly interstate was protected to the detriment of the people!

To reiterate, by the 1860s the Methodist-Episcopal clergy was in the same dry professional-snare of the mainline. The dry wit of reason had replaced the emotional needs of the heart. Important historical lessons need repeating for people's prosperity. This same problem is facing contemporary Catholics, the biggest denomination in the USA.

First Great Awakening (c. 1739-1742). The majority of the people's emotional needs were not rekindled until the "Great Awakening" in which clergy like George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards lit a fire in the heart of the populace. Several primary results lived on to shape American religion. First, Whitefield demonstrated the immense market opportunity for the more robust, less secularized religion of Evangelicalism. In doing so Whitefield provided the model for itinerancy. Second, it was not the "mainline" denominations of the colonies that gathered the primary fruits of Whitefield's awakening of religious sentiments. Many of the people, brought shivering and trembling, to salvation by Whitefield ended up in Baptist congregations, causing a sudden spurt of growth that carried them past the Episcopalians to become the third largest denomination in

the USA by 1776. Not only did many of Whitefield's converts end up Baptists, but his revival methods also took root among the Baptists and subsequently were adopted by the Methodist sect movement developing within the Anglicans and nourished by the Wesley brothers.

Second Great Awakening (1805-20). Catholics had a major role in the progress of the Second Great Awakening (1805-20). Just as Francis Asbury was willing to ride nearly 300,000 miles up and down America to build Methodism, later in the century the Jesuit revivalist Francis X. Weninger was equally willing to travel more than 200,000 miles to preach to more than 800 Catholic parish missions. In similar fashion, no sooner had the Baptists put six railroad "chapel cars" into service to missionize in the western states, than the Catholics responded by commissioning three of their own (Hooker, 1931; Guarneri, 1987).

There are two kinds of Catholic priests. The "religious" priests are members of religious orders (i.e. Jesuits, Paulists). "Secular" priests are those who serve the local parishes and staff the diocese.

"Religious" priests typically take vows that are remarkably more restrictive than those taken by secular priests (i.e. poverty). Because the religious orders are of national and international scope, religious priests are trained in a few central seminaries and placed wherever they are needed, often far from home.

Secular priests, however, are typically local Catholics, recruited from, trained by, and assigned to their home diocese. The secular priests usually works amid his relatives and life-long friends and serves a community with which he is utterly familiar and sympathetic. Most priests come from families typical of the parish in which they reside (Fichter, 1961). Hence, like Baptist and Methodist clergy during the nineteenth century, Catholic priests were "of the people."

As graduates of local seminars, secular priests are trained by other local secular priests, not by "learned professors," and their interpretations of Catholic doctrine will tend therefore, to be quite orthodox and in keeping with local practices. Because all priests take vows of celibacy, moreover, the priesthood does not become a family occupation passed from father to son, as was typical among clergy of the old Protestant mainline churches. Rather, priests are recruited in each generation from among young men with more intense personal religious convictions. The doctrine that a clergyman must be "called" by God has long been a central Catholic teaching.

Catholic pastors held their own against the powerful sermonizing of Baptists and Methodists. The Catholic clergy also understood that sermons were for saving souls and energizing the faithful. They exhorted sinners to confess and be saved. The Catholic clergy did so in the most direct

and forceful language they could summon. Succeedingly, Catholics went the additional mile and did something more. Typically Catholics preached to their immigrant parishioners in their native tongue within the security of a familiar ethnic as well as religious community. A Catholic community that helped both to gain and retain the active participation of the immigrants and their children.

Catholic. Within the context of American culture, the Catholic Church was far more sect like than church like during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Roman Catholicism, which had only about 1% of the congregations in 1775, was the largest single religious denomination by 1890. (Finke, 1990:113-14), and continued to hold a growing lead thereafter. The basis of Catholic success is remarkably similar to that of the upstart Protestant, such as Baptist and Methodists. The Catholics aggressively marketed a relatively intense, otherworldly religious faith to a growing segment of the population. Besides offering familiar liturgy, symbols, and saints, the Catholic Church also emphasized personal renewal through devotional activities and in effect produced its own brand of revivalism. In terms of clergy, too, the Catholics were more similar to upstarts than like the old mainline Protestants. Whether they were sent from abroad or recruited locally, the Catholic clergy were not of genteel social origin, nor did they aspire to a comfortable salary. Priests, nuns, and brothers were ready

to go wherever they were sent and to do whatever needed to be done.

Catholic Arrival. (1850-1926) Locally, the parish church provided a secure haven for ethnic subcultures (much like other original Christian movements such as the Puritans), in which immigrant groups could retain aspects of their native culture, especially language, food, parentage and styles of worship, while adapting to their new nation. A major achievement of the USA Catholic Church was its ability (regardless of the overwhelmingly Irish hierarchy), to appeal to a broad spectrum of ethnic backgrounds and to prevent ethnic differences from producing major schisms. "In addition, above the parish level the church created an encapsulated social structure-a kind of parallel Catholic America-that protected Catholics from the dominant and often hostile Protestant environment" (Finke, 1990:115).

Puritanism. Catholicism, as a far more structured and integrated religious system, gives people a greater sense of coherence and stability than the more loosely structured Protestantism (W. Pickering, via Durkheim, 1975). R. L. Bruckberger a leading French Dominican student of the American Church complained that American Catholics resemble American Baptists more than they do Mexican or French Catholics. Bruckberger comments that "one often has the impression that American Catholics are more Puritan than anybody else and that they are close to setting themselves

up as the champions of Puritanism" (McAvoy, 1960:45-47).

Since 1890, contemporary Roman Catholics, are the largest religious denomination in the country, and their influence in every walk of American life, from values to politics, from education to art, is known and felt widely. The USA Catholic Church was severely criticized at the turn of the century for its "Americanizing" tendencies and for the tendency to adapt itself to the special circumstances in which it found itself on this side of the water.

Where religion does involve organizational commitment, the primary context is the local church (Bellah 1985). Larger loyalties are not missing, but a recent study indicates that even USA Catholics, for whom church necessarily has a larger meaning, identify their faith primarily with what goes on in the family and local parish. USA Catholics are much less influenced religiously by the pronouncements of the bishops or even the teachings of the pope than by family members and the local priest.

Immigration. Most of the millions of immigrants from "Catholic" nations who flowed into the USA in the latter part of the nineteenth century were at best potential American Catholic parishioners according to experts on Catholicism (Dolan, 1978; Finke, 1992: 109). To tap this potential, the Roman Catholic Church had to counteract the vigorous efforts of Protestant sects to recruit these immigrants by stimulating them to entirely new levels of

commitment and participation. The fact is, the great majority of people in "Catholic" nations are not very Catholic, they seldom attend mass, rarely participate in the sacraments, and do not contribute money to the church (Marty, 1991; Stark, 1991). Ironically, it is only where the Catholic Church is in the minority and partially tested in such a free-religious market as the USA, that Roman Catholics can generate the vigorous participation associate with USA Catholicism (Stark & McCann, 1985). The Roman Catholic Church became an extremely effective and competitive religious institution when forced to confront the free-market religious economy of the USA.

The poignant religious lesson of USA history, noted early by Baptists and Methodists, was used to the advantage of the Catholic clergy. To survive in the USA, first the Catholic Church had to appease the emotional needs of the people while surmounting ignorance and apathy. Of course, this was precisely the task that had faced the Baptists, Methodists and other mainline churches when confronting an overwhelmingly unchurched population following the Revolution. Even as the first large waves of Catholic immigrants began to arrive, USA Protestantism had not yet enlisted the majority of the population in a local church. Given the similarity in the situations they faced, it is not surprising that Catholics and evangelical Protestants employed similar tactics.

Evangelism. The manner of evangelism created at the dawn of Christianity by the first evangelist Jesus Christ, utilized revivals, miraculous cures, heartfelt religious experiences, and emotional spiritual renewal. Activities that are usually associated with various sects of evangelical Protestantism. However, each of these methods was also an important part of the parish life of the immigrant Catholic church. By the middle of the 19th century, evangelism had come to the head of parish life. The widespread neglect of religion to which European immigrants had been accustomed and the competitive spirit of the USA religious environment demanded something more than ritual and ceremony. Led by the religious orders, especially the Jesuits, Passionists, Paulists, and Redemptorists, Catholic revivalism and devotionism spread to every region of the nation. The primary objective was the renewal of Catholic parishes and the mobilization of the nominally Catholic population.

Revival. At the center of this new evangelical surge was the Catholic revival campaign called "parish missions," occurring about as frequently and regularly as Baptists and Methodists revivals. In his authoritative study of Catholic revivalism from 1830-1900, Jay Dolan (1978:44) reported that "as many as thirteen [religious orders] were conducting missions at any one time." The Redemptorist Order alone conducted 3,955 local revivals from 1860 to 1890.

Like Protestant revivals planned far in advance and requiring weeks or even months of preparation, the Catholic parish mission was not a spontaneous outburst of renewal. Dolan noted: "Handbooks spelled out in detail the sermons that should be preached, the ceremonies that should be conducted and the atmosphere to be created" (1978:60). The famous Jesuit revivalist Francis X. Weninger published three books in which he attempted to share with other priests his insights about holding effective missions.

The results of a parish mission in N.Y. City in 1863 were quantified in the local Catholic paper: "fifteen to thirty priests were occupied without interruption from morning to night in hearing confession [and] twenty-thousand persons approached the tribunal of penance" (Garraghan, 1984:92).

A typical Catholic revival lasted for eight days, but many went on for two weeks. Jesuits such as Father Weninger preferred a two-week revival, because this allowed them to devote the first week to women and the second week to men. The idea being it was initially easier to draw women to the services. Once the proper spirit had been established among the women, they would "urge their husbands, sons, or brothers to avail themselves of its graces" (Garraghan, 1984:96).

The parish pastors did not wait for immigrants to come to mass. They went out and rounded them up, often making

effective use of revivalism and emotional worship services. In his insightful history of American Jesuits in middle America, Garraghan noted "a curious feature of these early parish-missions was the large number of adults who made their first holy communion on such occasions. This delay in receiving the sacrament was due in most cases to neglect on the part of the parents" (1984:97). There is ample testimony that this neglect was the common "Catholic heritage" of the vast majority of immigrants as they came down the gangplanks. Thus, entirely dependent upon voluntary contributions from members for the support of the church, and facing vigorous competition from highly skilled, itinerant Baptist and Methodist evangelists who were ready to travel the nation exhorting the faithful, the Catholic religious orders quickly responded by sending forth equally skilled evangelists to ride many of the same trails.

Cultural Enclave. The ethnic and social class homogeneity of most parishes allowed the Catholic Church to serve the specific needs of special segments of the religious market, while the diversity across the parishes allowed specialized appeals to the broad spectrum of immigrants. The national church gave ethnic groups local autonomy without sacrificing the unity of the larger whole. (In contrast, the Lutherans were fragmented into 21 different denominations in 1916). With fresh new vigor, the Catholic Church demonstrated the religious harvest obtained

from pluralism and the profits of diversity.

Many ethnic parishes were also partly sustained by mutual benefit societies that were brought over from their homeland. These societies provided members with insurance benefits in time of sickness or death and also provided the immigrant with a sense of ethnic identity. The mutual benefit society became the ethnic group's representative organization, and the immigrants turned to their society to initiate actions on behalf of their specific ethnic group. For this reason, the societies often served as the catalyst for establishing a parish and remained an active part of parish life once the parish was established (Dolan, 1985; Gleason, 1987). These societies, along with numerous publications and other organizations, helped to cement the bond between ethnicity and religion.

Up until 1880 the mutual benefit societies and the numerous devotional confraternities (prayer groups) were the two main types of societies found in the parish (Shaw, 1987). However, after 1880 the parish "was transformed into a community institution" (Dolan, 1985: 204). Suddenly there was a sharp increase in both the number of societies and in the stated purpose of the established parish societies. The societies now included social, recreational, and charitable groups as well as the long-standing devotional and mutual benefit societies. The parish was rapidly becoming the social and cultural center for the parishioners it served.

Education. (7) Perhaps the most visible institution in the Catholic subculture was the parish grammar school. Because each school was created and sustained by the parish, Catholic education was greatly decentralized. Each school was a reflection of the parish itself (Shaw, 1987; Perko, 1988). If it was an ethnic parish, then the school could transmit the ethnic heritage as part of its curriculum.

As a whole, the parish subculture passed on a culture that was different from the dominant culture. The Catholic parish could provide social, religious, and cultural supports that were simply not available from the Protestant churches. Catholicism and ethnicity were intertwined in the local parish to provide the immigrants and their children a community unto themselves.

Nuns. The key to the parochial school system and indeed a central element in the life of the Catholic community was the American nun. These USA nuns initially made the parish school possible (The nuns of the USA were also responsible for the extensive network of 543 Catholic hospitals and 645 Catholic orphanages, (1916 census). Receiving salaries of less than a third of those paid to a teacher in the public schools, nuns made it possible for even poor parishes to sustain parochial schools. What was most crucial was their direct role in shaping and passing on Catholic culture. Still highly noticeable today, "Sister said," became a key phrase in the conversation of Catholic children. Each

immigrant group supported religious orders of its own national background, and these orders in turn provided nuns familiar with the language, culture, and religious beliefs of the people. Despite their lack of official authority, religious women essentially ran the local parish schools. According to Catherine Ann Curry, women in religious orders outnumbered priests by two to one in the period 1820-1860, and by 1900 the ratio was at least four to one. This was the essential fact making Catholic education possible.

Sect. In the final analysis, the Catholic Church succeeded in the USA because it too was an upstart sect. It offered an intense faith with a vivid sense of otherworldliness. Catholic evangelists could depict the fires of hell as graphically as any Puritan. Like the Protestant upstart sects, moreover, the Catholic Church made serious emotional, material, and social demands on its adherents. To be a Catholic was a far more serious undertaking than to be an average member of the mainline Protestants (i.e. Congregational, Episcopalian). Also, the USA Catholic Church was served by ardent clergy and nuns, recruited from the common people and prepared to make great sacrifices to serve their faith. The Catholics too could staff the frontiers and wilderness areas because they were prepared for hardship and little or no pay.

The "sectlike" nature of the Catholic Church in nineteenth-century USA is also demonstrated by the reaction

of the prominent members of the old colonial mainline denominations. They were even more contemptuous of "papists" and "Romanism" than they were of Baptists, Methodists, and "muscular" religious responses.

Sect movements can be strengthened not only by their opposition to the world but by the pressures the world imposes on them. Protestant prejudice did much to cement solidarity among USA Catholics of diverse ethnic backgrounds and to spur them to high levels of commitment!

Pentecostal. The Pentecostal movement gave birth to denominations that have been growing rapidly, while the denominations that drove out the Holiness Movement have been rapidly losing out ever since. The largest Pentecostal denominations in the USA are the Assemblies of God, the Church of God in Christ, the Church of God (Cleveland Tenn.), the Pentecostal Holiness Church, and the United Pentecostal Church.

The Holiness movement developed in classic sectarian form as Christians among American Methodists felt that both the goal and method of attaining Christian perfection were being neglected. As Arthur Piepkorn attests so succinctly, "[They] sought to recapture Wesleyan perfectionism in order to make American Methodists into holy people" (1979:3). They stressed the sanctified life, renounced unholy practices such as the use of alcohol and tobacco, membership in secret societies, and encouraged continuation of the Methodist-

inspired camp-meeting approach to instruction, conversion, and spiritual reinforcement.

Historians credit John Wesley as the founder of the Holiness Movement in reaction to what he perceived to be the worldliness and secularity of the Anglicans. Eventually his commitment to such principles as "Christian Perfection" drove him from Anglicanism. The great USA social movement that came to be known as the Holiness Movement arose within Methodism during the latter half of the 19th century and was, in large part, a call for return to Wesleyan principles. Linked closely to revivalism and camp meetings the movement generally called for a reaffirmation of Puritanism or traditional Methodist theology.

The result was rapid growth throughout the nation. By 1887 the national association reported holding 67 national camp meetings as well as 11 Tabernacle meetings. By 1892, the state and local holiness associations reported hosting 354 meetings for the promotion of holiness each week and maintained a list of 304 holiness evangelists. With the support of 41 periodicals, and four publishing houses devoted exclusively to the publication of holiness materials, the growing strength of the movement became apparent to all (Peters, 1985).

Whenever one of the mainline churches loses devotees by becoming too worldly, there is always an emotional Puritan sect to pick up the pieces of religiosity (8). The

Pentecostal are a prime example of a successful modern Christian movement in high gear, fervently on fire for the Lord. Today the Pentecostals are a Christian crusade that deserves recognition. Pentecostals have retained the important instructions of Christian history, first implemented by Jesus, then used by sects in order to become flourishing mainline churches and always, a revelation to the Christian church.

Conclusion: Religious Antidote. With exegesis and restraint, "religion picks up the pieces" in an attempt to explain what otherwise cannot be explained. Genuinely what religion is and does functions to help people adjust to and accept the vagaries and vicissitudes of life. The dialectic or overlap between the realms of "is" an "ought" has traditionally been at the core of religion. Consequently, advances in knowledge escalate majestic questions that perpetuate religion.

Religion is clearly one of the foremost forces in society to preserve traditions, conserve established social order, stabilize word view, and transmit values through generations. There are many benefits to the institution of religion if honorably used. Spirituality directs a person focus outward to many beneficial procedures, such as peace, truth and harmony, "the greatest good for the greatest number," socialist thinking, concern and sensitivity for others in the here and now as well as the future, thus long-

term planing as well as many other advantages.

More often, religion is future oriented. Frequently, people engage in religious activities in the belief that such behavior can solve problems in the here and now, not the pie in the sky by and by. Intertwined social solidarity and shared morality is unified power available for future amelioration. The Civil Rights Movement demonstrated that religious institutions can provide necessary agents for liberation such as leadership, polity, and values. Religious institutions provide both support network for social movements and visions for superior standards of living.

Religion has a future to the extent that humanity has a future. Religion is an expression of the confrontation of people with their enviornment, both physical and social, as well as with each other. Religion is a reflection both of the precariousness of human existence and of the imperfections with which people relate to other people. In other words, religion is a salvation that picks up the pieces!

Church Antidote. According to Jeffrey K. Hadden, church attendance has fluctuated in some religious sectors, but the overall picture reflects an "amazingly stable" portrait (1985:60). After the revival of the 1950's, reported church attendance dropped back to the range of 40% and has remained at that level since 1972 (Gallup, 1985:42). The relevance is that 40% of all USA citizens are attending church at least

once per week. In other words, people of the USA attend church more so than any other institution! (9)

Beneficial Worldview. The Christian church enters into the world culturally and socially in order to influence (Ernest Troeltsch). When the church sets itself against worldly powers, the church can mobilize tremendous resources of resistance. Through the sacraments and the word, the church takes all individuals where they are and nurtures, educates, and supports them in whatever degree of Christian life they are capable of attaining. Thus, the church is an archetype of team work, foremost accord! The stress on the objectivity of the sacraments in the church type can operate to maintain the unity of the more pure and the less pure in a united body, consequently, the promotion of equality!

The great contribution that the church idea can make today is the emphasis on the fact that individuality and society are not opposites but require each other. The church idea reminds us that in our independence we count on others and helps us see that a healthy, mature independence is one that admits to healthy seasoned dependence on others. A church that can be counted on and that can count on its members can be a great source of strength in reconstituting the social basis of our society. Such a church may also, through its social witness, have the influence to help move our society in a healthier direction.

I will leave you with one final thought: What institution has ameliorated humanity and the planet Earth more so than the Christian church? What is humanities alternative?

END NOTES

1. The nation's spiritual eclecticism, demands for ecclesiastical power and authority, persistent belief in miracles and other forms of divine intervention, and rising rather than falling church adherence are sometimes appended to accounts that stress the Puritan origins of American religion and culture. Almost everyone drank from the same Reformation well (e.g. Westminster Confession, Cambridge Platform 1646-48). John Calvin was the theological father of the Puritans (1509-1565), a second generation Reformation giant who led a Reformed community in Geneva, Switzerland, and wrote the leading Reformed text, The Institutes of Christian Religion. Despite the presence of Anglicans, Quakers, Catholics, and others whose notion of "reformed" religion was not strictly Calvinistic, the convictions about the depravity of human nature and the need for divine grace Calvinism placed at the center of Christian life dominated the Puritanism that was the most powerful early American ideology. Indeed, the impact of Puritanism was such that virtually all treatments of the origins of American culture give Puritanism center stage.

2. Nearly every discussion of religion in the USA news media distinguishes certain denominations as the "mainline" churches while applying terms indicative of extremism, such as "sects," "fundamentalists," or the "Religious Right," to the rest of the nation's religious bodies. That a set of denominations enrolling only a minority of Protestants, and whose members had been notable for their inactivity and their rapidly declining numbers, can still be identified as the mainline is a tribute both to the public relations skills of the National Council of Churches and to the biases of the media against any religious body that puts primary stress on faith and worship.

3. According to the Bible: Christ's personal ministry had gathered out the believers who were, on the Day of Pentecost (50 days after Christ's resurrection), made by the baptism with the Spirit the first members of "the church, which is his body." The Epistles present a Church which is the body of Christ, made up of the regenerate who are associated with Him "in the heavenlies," co-heirs with Him of the Father, co-rulers with Him of the coming kingdom; and, as to the

earth, although strangers and pilgrims, yet His witnesses and the instruments for doing His will among men (Acts 1:8; I Cor. 12:12-13; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; Eph. 1:3-14,20-23; 2:4-6, 21-22; 1 Pe. 2:11).

Mt. 16:17-9 Jesus said, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but my Father, who is in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Historically Acts recounts the first 30 years of the Christian church. It is also a bridge that ties the church in its beginning with each succeeding age. Acts may be studied to gain an understanding of the principles that ought to govern the church of any age.

The success of the church in carrying the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome and in planting local churches across the Roman empire demonstrated that Christianity was not a mere work of man. God's power was at work (Acts 5:35-39).

Eph.1:22-23 And God placed all things under [the] feet [of Jesus Christ] and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

4. Noahic Covenant #3: reaffirms the conditions of life of fallen man as announced by the Adamic Covenant, and institutes the principle of human government to curb the outbreak of sin (Gen.9). Found throughout the New Testament is ample counsel on harmony, thus order.

5. This has been especially stressed in studies of religious organization (Harrison, 1959; Wood and Zald, 1966; Szafran, 1976).

6. Martha's Vineyard near Bedford, Mass., was one of the many Methodist camp-meeting sites transformed into "respectable middle-class summer resorts" when the fiery sect became a mainline, thusworldly church (W.W. Sweet, 1933:333).

7. Between 1780-1829, forty colleges and universities were successfully founded in the USA. More than half were religious (29): 13 Presbyterian, 6 Episcopalian, 4 Congregational, 3 Baptist, 1 Catholic, 1 German Reformed, and 1 was a joint effort by the Congregationalists and Presbyterians (only 11 were public) (W. W. Sweet,1964b).

8. Available evidence does suggest from some time early in American history down to the present, the USA has experienced a continuous "boom" in religious adherence and

belief (Lipset). An overwhelming proportion of people in the USA report they believe in God, and that proportion has fluctuated very little between 1935-1985. The proportion professing belief in God has never dipped below 94% and has moved as high as 99% during the revival period of the 1950s (Gallup, 1985:50). The USA was the only industrial country among thirteen surveyed in 1975-76 by the National Gallup organization in which a majority of 56%, said that "their religious beliefs are very important" to them, while an additional 30% said they were "fairly important" (Census, 1977:544-555). In 1968, Glock & Stark asserted that Southern Baptist were the most religious group studied, followed by Missouri Lutheran.

9. Hadden and George Gallup Jr. resolve the one notable characteristic of USA religion has been stability. Marking 1935 as the beginning of scientific polling, the Gallup Organization's annual Religion In American report for 1985 highlights a half-century assessment of religion. In the introductory essay, George Gallup Jr., concludes: "...perhaps the most appropriate word to use to describe the religious character of the nation as a whole over the last half century is "stability." Basic religious beliefs, and even religious practice, today differ relatively little from the levels recorded 50 years ago" (1985:5).

According to Johnstone, the statistical measures presented reveal more stability than significant change in religion (1992:305). Although mainline membership has declined other churches show much growth. 1960-1982 the Church of the Nazarene grew by 62%, the Seventh-Day Adventists increased by 90.8%, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints added 92.6% and the Assemblies of God grew by 120% (Jacquet, 1984: 246-47).

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