

Welcome to Week 13

- As you enter class this week please
 - Get yourself some snacks and coffee
 - Fill out a name tag and introduce yourself to others at the table
 - Begin individually brain storming a list of important people, events, and themes in American Christian history between 1930 and 1970.

Christian History in America

Mid-Twentieth Century People,
Events, and Themes

Class 13 Goals

- Brainstorm our collective understanding of important people, themes, and events in American Christian History between 1930 and 1970.
- Examine the changing face of public religion in the context of the Cold War, the Civil Rights Movement, and the growth of official religious neutrality.

Opening Quotations

- Try to identify who said the following quotations, when, and in what context.

Quotation # 1

- Then look at our moral standard. There was a time a few years ago, which most of you with gray hair can remember, when this country claimed the Ten Commandments as the basis for our moral code. That is no longer true.
- The home, the basic unit of our society is breaking and crumbling, and the American way of life is being destroyed at the very heart and core of society.
- Look at the problem of sex. Everywhere, but especially emphasized and underscored here, we see sex placed before American young people. If we want to sell even a motor car tire, we have to use sex to do it. As a result, our high school and college young people are going to the dogs morally — encouraged by the press and radio across this Nation.

- Let us look for a moment at the political realm. Let's see what is happening — not only in the city of Los Angeles, but in the western world. The world is divided into two sides. On the one side we see Communism; on the other side we see so-called Western culture. Western culture and its fruit had its foundation in the Bible, the Word of God, and in the revivals of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. Communism, on the other hand, has decided against God, against Christ, against the Bible, and against all religion. Communism is not only an economic interpretation of life — Communism is a religion that is inspired, directed and motivated by the Devil himself who has declared war against Almighty God. Do you know that the Fifth Columnists, called Communists, are more rampant in Los Angeles than any other city in America? We need a revival.

Billy Graham's LA Crusade 1949



Quotation # 2

- “The great difference between our western Christian world and the atheistic Communist world is not political gentlemen, it is moral. . . . Karl Marx dismissed God as a hoax, and Lenin and Stalin have added in clear-cut unmistakable language their resolve that no nation, no people who believe in a god, can exist side by side with their communistic state. . . . Today we are engaged in a final all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity.”

Joseph McCarthy 1950



Quotation # 3

Here and now I want to make myself clear about those who disparage their fellow citizens on the relief rolls. They say that those on relief are not merely jobless--that they are worthless. Their solution for the relief problem is to end relief--to purge the rolls by starvation. To use the language of the stock broker, our needy unemployed would be cared for when, as, and if some fairy godmother should happen on the scene.

You and I will continue to refuse to accept that estimate of our unemployed fellow Americans. Your Government is still on the same side of the street with the Good Samaritan and not with those who pass by on the other side.

- "Peace on earth, good will toward men"-
-democracy must cling to that message.
For it is my deep conviction that
democracy cannot live without that true
religion which gives a nation a sense of
justice and of moral purpose. Above our
political forums, above our market
places stand the altars of our faith-altars
on which burn the fires of devotion that
maintain all that is best in us and all that
is best in our Nation.

We have need of that devotion today. It is that which makes it possible for government to persuade those who are mentally prepared to fight each other to go on instead, to work for and to sacrifice for each other. That is why we need to say with the Prophet: "What doth the Lord require of thee -- but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God." That is why the recovery we seek, the recovery we are winning, is more than economic. In it are included justice and love and humility, not for ourselves as individuals alone, but for our Nation.

We had to struggle with the old enemies of peace--business and financial monopoly, speculation, reckless banking, class antagonism, sectionalism, war profiteering.

They had begun to consider the Government of the United States as a mere appendage to their own affairs. We know now that Government by organized money is just as dangerous as Government by organized mob.

Never before in all our history have these forces been so united against one candidate as they stand today. They are unanimous in their hate for me--and I welcome their hatred.

I should like to have it said of my first Administration that in it the forces of selfishness and of lust for power met their match. I should like to have it said of my second Administration that in it these forces met their master.

Franklin Roosevelt 1936 – Madison Square Garden



Quotation # 4

- We need all of you. And you know what's beautiful to me is to see all of these ministers of the Gospel. It's a marvelous picture. Who is it that is supposed to articulate the longings and aspirations of the people more than the preacher? Somehow the preacher must have a kind of fire shut up in his bones. And whenever injustice is around he tell it. Somehow the preacher must be an Amos, and saith, "When God speaks who can but prophesy?" Again with Amos, "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." Somehow the preacher must say with Jesus, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me," and he's anointed me to deal with the problems of the poor."

- It's all right to talk about "long white robes over yonder," in all of its symbolism. But ultimately people want some suits and dresses and shoes to wear down here! It's all right to talk about "streets flowing with milk and honey," but God has commanded us to be concerned about the slums down here, and his children who can't eat three square meals a day. It's all right to talk about the new Jerusalem, but one day, God's preacher must talk about the new New York, the new Atlanta, the new Philadelphia, the new Los Angeles, the new Memphis, Tennessee. This is what we have to do.

- Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop.
- And I don't mind.
- Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land!

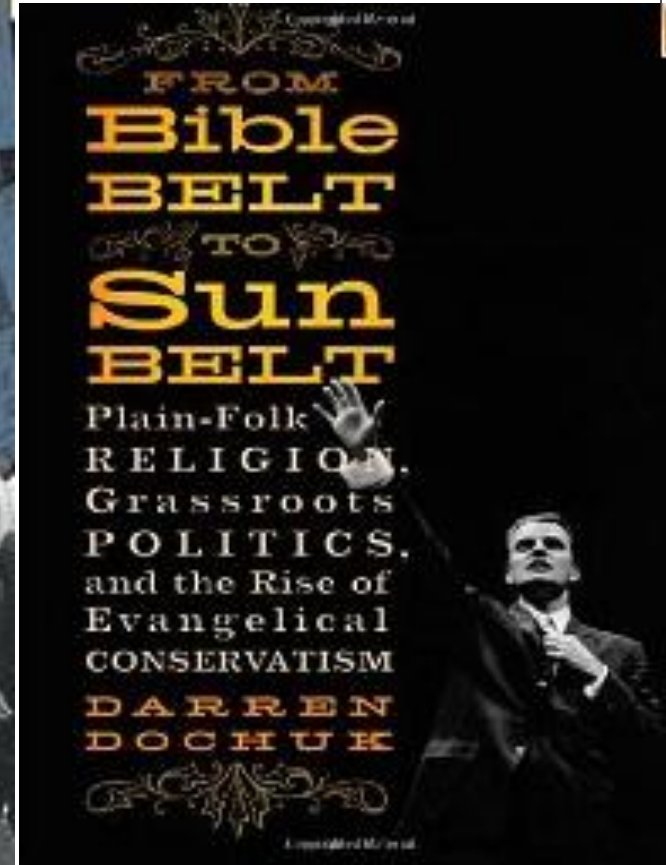
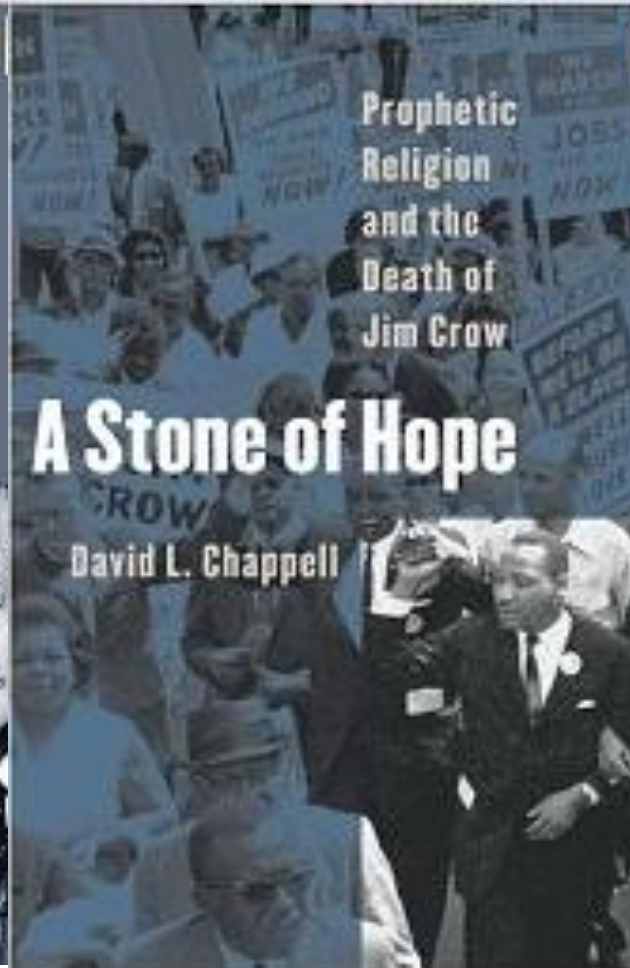
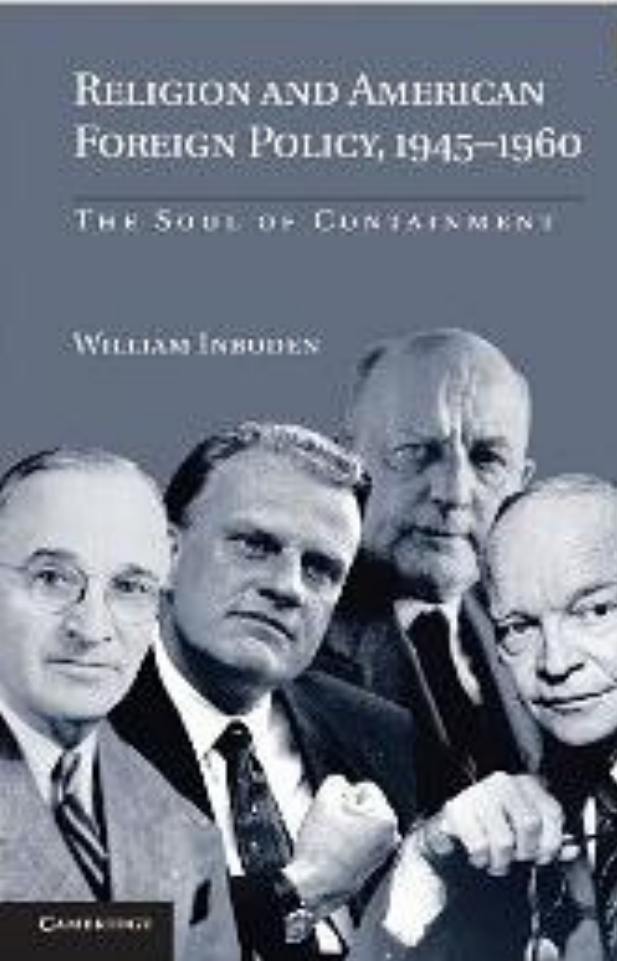
Martin Luther King Jr. Memphis 1968



For Table Discussion

- Based on the lists that you generated before class, what and who would you identify as the key themes, people, and events in American Christian History between 1930 and 1970?
- Try to reach consensus around your table for no more than 3 items in each category.

Suggested Resources



The Rise of Pentecostalism

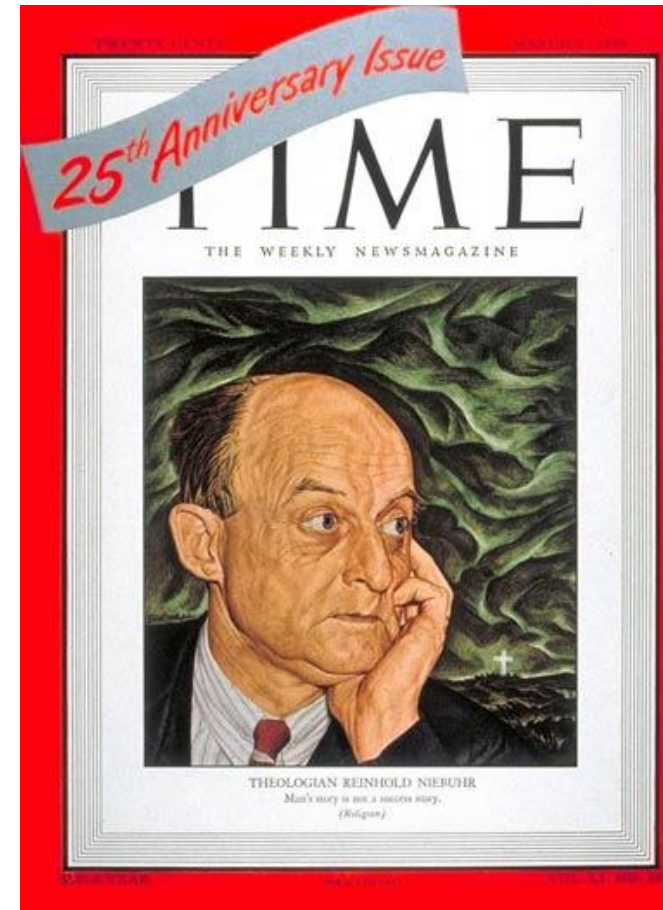
- January 1st 1901 – Agnes Ozman speaks in tongues at Bethel Bible College
- 1906 – under the leadership of Charles Parham – the revival spread to Azusa Street in Los Angeles.
- Initial meetings were integrated with significant female participation
- Soon missionaries spread Pentecostalism throughout the country
- Rise of new denominations such as Assemblies of God and Church of God in Christ
- Later Charismatic Renewal Movement in mainline denominations and within the Catholic Church

The Rise of Neo-Orthodoxy

- After World War I many mainline churches turned away from excessive liberalism toward Neo-Orthodoxy.
- Karl Barth – Commentary on Romans
 - “The Gospel is not a religious message to inform mankind of their divinity or to tell them how they may become divine. The Gospel proclaims a God utterly distinct from men. Salvation comes to them from Him, because they are, as men, incapable of knowing Him, and because they have no right to claim anything from Him.”

The Emergence of Reinhold Niebuhr

- Celebrity Theologian of the Mid-twentieth century
- Professor at Union Theological Seminary
- Encouraged people to embrace “loyalty to the ‘kingdom of God,’ the vision of a pure and unconditioned justice and love, [which] creates dissatisfaction with the imperfect love and justice of any given economic and political order.”



Niebuhr Continued

- How does one balance the pure vision of a just society with the need to compromise in a pluralist society?
- “If Hitler is defeated in the end it will be because the crisis has awakened in us the will to preserve a civilization in which justice and freedom are realities, and given us the knowledge that ambiguous methods are required for the ambiguities of history.”
- Called upon policy makers to make “emotionally powerful oversimplification” to call people to action.
- Became an important foreign policy advisor during the Cold War, yet proximity to power dulled his prophetic critique

Other Major Trends

- The Nationalization of Southern Christianity
 - With Great Migrations from the South to Northern Cities and the West Southern Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism spread as well.
- Government Social Programs displace Church based Charities
 - The Expansion of the Government Safety Net under New Deal and Great Society took the place of many faith based ministries.(Especially during the Great Depression the need greatly exceeded the ability of private charities to fully respond)

Supreme Court Secularism

- 1st Amendment – originally only binding on the Federal Government
 - Establishment Clause
 - Free Exercise Clause
- 14th Amendment (1868) – prevented states and municipalities from taking away the rights of citizens.
- 1940s Gitlow and Everson cases rule that municipalities must adhere to the Establishment and Free Exercise Clause.
 - Accepts Jefferson's notion of a "Wall of Separation"

Everson v. Board of Ed. 1947

“The 'establishment of religion' clause of the First Amendment means at least this: Neither a state nor the Federal Government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another. Neither can force nor influence a person to go to or to remain away from church against his will or force him to profess a belief or disbelief in any religion. No person can be punished for entertaining or professing religious beliefs or disbeliefs, for church attendance or non-attendance. No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever from they may adopt to teach or practice religion

School Prayer

- 1962 – *Engel v. Vitale* – Banned mandatory school prayer
 - *“It is neither sacrilegious nor antireligious to say that each separate government in this country should stay out of the business of writing or sanctioning official prayers and leave that purely religious function to the people themselves and to those the people choose to look to for religious guidance.”*

School Bible Reading

- 1963 – *Abington Township School District v. Schempp* – Banned publicly sponsored devotional Bible reading in the public schools.
- *“The place of religion in our society is an exalted one, achieved through a long tradition of reliance on the home, the church and the inviolable citadel of the individual heart and mind. We have come to recognize through bitter experience that it is not within the power of government to invade that citadel, whether its purpose or effect be to aid or oppose, to advance or retard. In the relationship between man and*

Religion and the Cold War

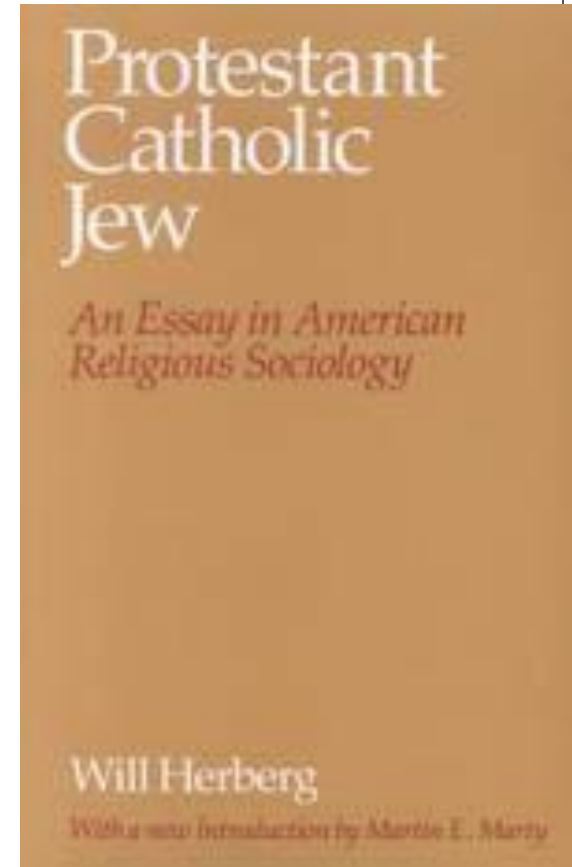
- America's fighting against "evil empires" in World War II and the Cold War predisposed it to see itself as the Godly nation fighting godlessness and tyranny.

Eisenhower and the Cold War

- “What is our battle against communism if it is not a fight between anti-God and a belief in the Almighty? Communists know this. They have to eliminate God from their system. When God comes in, communism has to go.”

Will Herberg

- In 1955 Sociologist Will Herberg claimed American society was created by a “triple melting-pot” of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews.
- Helped create the relatively new notion of a Judeo-Christian heritage.



Affirming our Civil Religion

- Addition of “one nation under God” to the pledge of allegiance.
- Addition of “In God we Trust” as the national motto and to currency.”
- “This Country makes no sense unless it is founded on a strong religious belief. And I don’t care what it is.”
 - Eisenhower
 - Ceremonial Deism or Evangelical Christianity?

A CORRUPT TREE BRINGETH FORTH EVIL FRUIT



A Plea for RACIAL SEGREGATION Based on Scripture, History
and World Conditions

You have done a masterful job in marshalling both Biblical and
Secular arguments

—James O. Eastland, U. S. S.

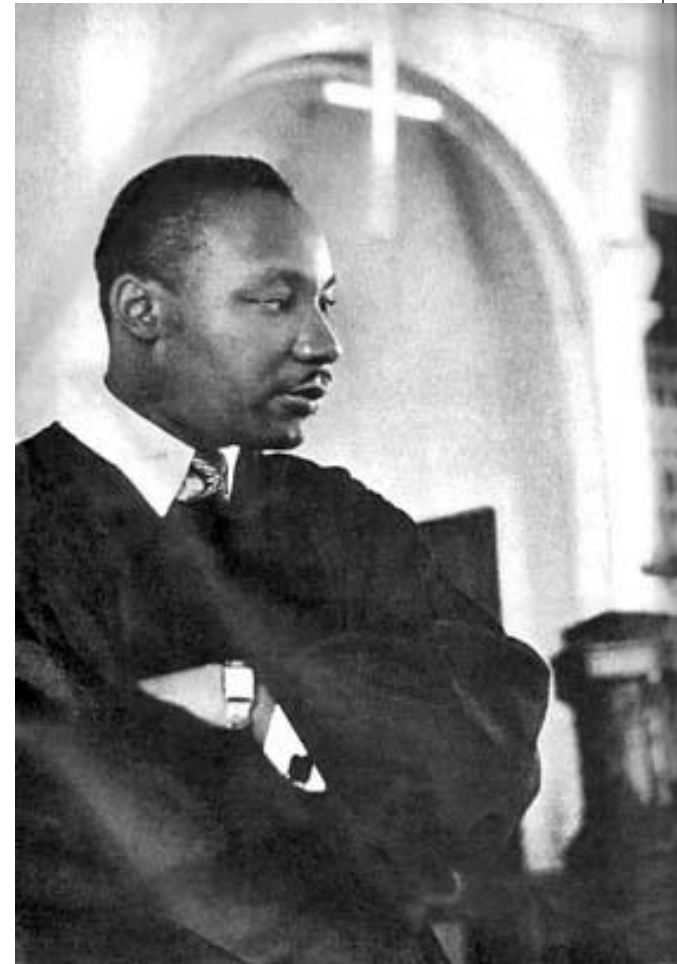


Contemporary Scholarship

- Jane Dailey, “Sex, Segregation, and the Sacred after *Brown*.” JAH (June 2004)
 - Argued that a theology of segregation was crucial to the resistance to the Civil Rights movements and just as much a part of American religion as King’s version.
 - Often fears of interracial marriage were expressed in religious language.
- David Chappel *A Stone of Hope*
 - Saw the Civil Rights movement as a religious revival.
 - Prophetic religion was key to the movement’s success and power.
 - The pro-integrationist message of the Bible, major southern denominations, and many religious leaders helped to mute white resistance.

Martin Luther King

- But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco-Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town.



Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute

King's Prophetic Critique

- American Segregation is a scandal in the eyes of God and contradicts the Gospel and core American values.
- American society must rededicate itself to fighting against poverty at home and overseas.
- American militarism is a threat to world peace and stability (especially in Vietnam)

King's Dream

- I have a Dream – or I have an eschatological vision?
 - We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream. (Amos 5)
 - I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together. (Isaiah 40)

Summing Up

- Religion maintained a vital place in American life during these decades despite official moves toward religious neutrality.
 - Neo-Orthodoxy and The Charismatic Movement revitalized mainline denominations and the Catholic Church.
 - Religious ideas were central how the nation approached the Cold War
 - Prophetic Christianity played a key role in the Civil Rights Movement.
 - Further moves toward secularism eventually helped give rise to the New Christian Right.