

# C H U R C H · O F · G O D



# 'Religion in Urban America'

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October 14, 2011

- General introduction to me and my research interests
- Quick 'crash course' in American religion
- 'Urban religion' as concept, as phenomenon, as evident in my research

- B.A. Sociology-Political Science University of New Mexico, 1979
- M.A. '85, Ph.D. 1988 – Sociology University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- Religion and politics
- Religion and social movements
- Religion and non-profit organizations
- Religion and immigration

# Religion and Politics

## ■ Urban politics of Springfield, Mass

- Abortion/contraception, homelessness, economic development
- Para-congregational movement groups
- Racial-ethnic-religious mobilization
- “Cultural power”

## ■ Political culture and ideology in American culture

- “Boundaries of the legitimate”
  - Concept of the ‘public good’
  - Conceptions of American national identity

# Religion and Social Movements

- Religiously based movements
  - Rationales for individual/group action
  
- Religion as ideology for mobilization
  - Injustice frames
  - Critiques of society from prophetic position

# Religion and non-profit orgs

- Issues in organizational theory
  - Secular non-profit organizations
  - Social Movement organization
  - Religious organizations
- Religious congregations and HIV-AIDS response
  - Cincinnati census
  - Programs available/rationale
  - Characteristics of congregations that offer programs

# Religion and immigration

- Youth & Religion Project
  - Involvement of young adults in religious orgs
  - Comparative data – race, religion, native-born
  - Second-generation non-Christian young adults
- Politics of immigration
  - P.O./attitudes towards immigrants
  - Discourse/rationale about immigration
  - Immigration and American national identity



# Leading to . . .

- Religion and 'Place'
  - Space and place
    - as social location
    - as physical setting
- Shaping of identities
- Shaping of practices

# Colonial religious landscape

- New England (MA, NH, CT– Calvinist Puritan) (RI – Baptist)
- Mid-Atlantic (NY, NJ, PA) – Dutch Calvinist, Presbyterian, Quaker
- Maryland – Catholic (mostly French)
- South – (VA, NC, SC) Anglican (C of E)
- Religion on the frontier was less ‘churched,’ and less controlled by religious or legal establishments; fewer were educated among clergy or laity; faith was more emotional, more individualist

# Major infusions of new religious options

## ■ Beginnings of revivalism

- First Great Awakening, CT River Valley 1740s
- Lowering boundaries of church “membership”
- Regular practice of ecstatic worship

## ■ Pietist Protestant religious groups

- Scot-Irish, Welsh, English w/c immigration
- Baptist, Methodist, Disciples of Christ groups
- North Carolina, VA, Appalachia, western PA
- Second Great Awakening, c. 1800 – 1825
- Religions emphasized abstinence, perfectionism, emotion, conversion, lay-driven

# New non-Prot. religious populations

## ■ First major non-Protestant groups

- Small groups of Sephardic Jews, English Jews and Catholics, and French Catholics in colonial period
- 1840s – 1860s – Major immigration from Ireland and Germany
  - Irish overwhelmingly Catholic – into major cities on east coast
  - Germans about 50% Catholic, some Jews – into northern ‘midwest’ and down Ohio River

## ■ Major westward expansion

- Down Ohio River Valley
- Into old “western reserve” (w. NY, n. OH)
- Into western Appalachia (KY, TN)

# Rending of the Nation

- Anti-Catholic nativism by Protestants
- Split in major Protestant groups over slavery
- Domination of South by pietist (“evangelical”) Protestantism
- Complete division of southern religion by race
- Push west across Great Plains, suppression of Native American religion, Mormons move west
- Chinese immigration 1849 - 1882

# 'Second Wave' of European Immigration

- 1880 – 1920 – about 25 million immigrants
- Primarily Southern and Eastern European  
– Italian, Greek, Pole, Russian, old Hapsburg Empire (Austria/Hungary)
- Overwhelmingly Catholic, with large groups of Jews
- Filling factories of northern cities
- New anti-immigrant nativist movement
- By 1920 - 1924, series of laws to stop immigration through quota system

# “Great Migration”

- Consolidation of Jim Crow apartheid system in South 1877 – 1910
- Ending of European immigration leaves labor shortages in northern factories
- Southern African Americans head to northern cities
- Infusion of southern religious styles and denominations into north

# Birth of Fundamentalism

- 1880s – 1920s European ideas on literary criticism and ‘modernism’ infusing American universities and Protestant seminaries
- Development of significant middle-class, discretionary income, mass popular culture
- Publication of *The Fundamentals* 1910-15, centered in eastern cities (Princeton T.S.)
- Focus on Biblical inerrancy – *sola scriptura*
- 1926 – Scopes trial in Dayton, TN
- Sectarian withdrawal (“come-outer”), focus in south, development of parallel institutions (e.g., schools, seminaries, business, etc.)



# Mid-twentieth century America

- Lessening ethnic boundaries among *white* Euro-Americans
- Development of Protestant denominational system – more stratified by class than ethnicity
- ‘Mainstreaming’ of American Catholics’ (esp. after WWII)
- Westward and Southern migration of Jews and Catholics (e.g., LA, Miami)
- Development of black middle class in northern and southern cities, class divisions in African-American religion
- Small groups of non-Christians in major cities

# Mid-twentieth century (con't)

- Protestant class divisions –
  - Upper/upper-middle-  
Episcopalian/Congregational/Presbyterian among  
whites – AME among blacks
  - Upper-middle/middle-  
Presbyterian/Methodist/Lutheran
  - Middle/Working/Poor-  
Baptists/Pentecostal/Assemblies of God/Holiness  
churches
  - Smaller ethnic enclaves remain (e.g., Missouri Synod  
or Wisconsin Synod Lutherans, Dutch Reformed  
Church of America) tend to be more conservative

# 'Mainstreaming' of American Catholics

- Proponents of “Americanism” win debate in early century
- Moving out of ethnic urban neighborhoods into suburbs, esp. after WWII
- More children into public schools and more into higher education (and thus middle-class jobs)
- ‘Ethnic churches’ (e.g., Italian, Polish, Irish) becoming less important

# The 1960s

- Vatican II (1962-65) reforms of RC church
  - makes American Catholicism more like other religions (e.g., relaxation of dietary rules, Latin mass)
  - decline in ordinations, shrinking of parochial schools systems
- 1964, Civil Rights Act; 1965 Voting Rights Act
  - economic and political openings for black middle class
  - more schools, churches, etc. become integrated
  - Civil rights issues divide white denominations

# Legacies of the 1960s

- Feminist and gay/lesbian mvts challenge traditional *sex/gender/family* norms;
- Decline in *legitimacy and trust* of all major social *institutions* (gov't, business, education, religion);
- 'Individualization' of cultural *authority* (spreading of logic of economic individualism to cultural realms)

# The 'Third Disestablishment'

- 1<sup>st</sup> – **Legal**, prohibiting legal establishment (1790s-1830s)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – Denominational, challenging Protestant domination of American society and culture (1920s-1960s)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – **Institutional** - challenge to authority of religious institutions and organizations
  - Decline of denominational identity and loyalty
  - Decline in authority of official teachings and doctrine
  - Spread of 'independent' and non-denominational churches
  - Spread of 'spirituality' and challenge to 'organized religion'

# Other Significant Changes beginning in 1960s

- 1965 immigration law ends quota system
  - Beginning increases in immigration
- Immigration shifts to East and South Asia, Latin America
  - First large numbers of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists
  - Latino Catholics changing RC church
  - Korean and Chinese Christians – mostly Evangelical Protestant

# Late 1970s and Conservative Reaction

- John Paul II becomes Pope (1978)
- Jerry Falwell, (fnded. Moral Majority 1978)  
Pat Robertson (Chr. Coalition) lead a  
public, political fundamentalism
- Iranian revolution (1979) inspiring Islamist  
mvts around world
- Menachem Begin, Likud in Israel (1977)
- Margaret Thatcher P.M. in England (1979)
- Beginnings of BJP and Hindu nationalism
- Ronald Reagan elected US Pres. 1980



# The Restructuring of American Religion 1950s-2000s

- Shift in the major divisions in American religion
- FROM denominational/religious differences TO liberal-conservative split that goes across all religious groups
- Growth in Evang. Prot while decline in Mainline
  - Higher birth rates and retention
  - Move of members into higher educ. & middle class
  - “De-regionalization” of the South
- More direct involvement by many religious groups in politics – making a public/personal division more pronounced
- Significant, publicly visible non-Christian groups

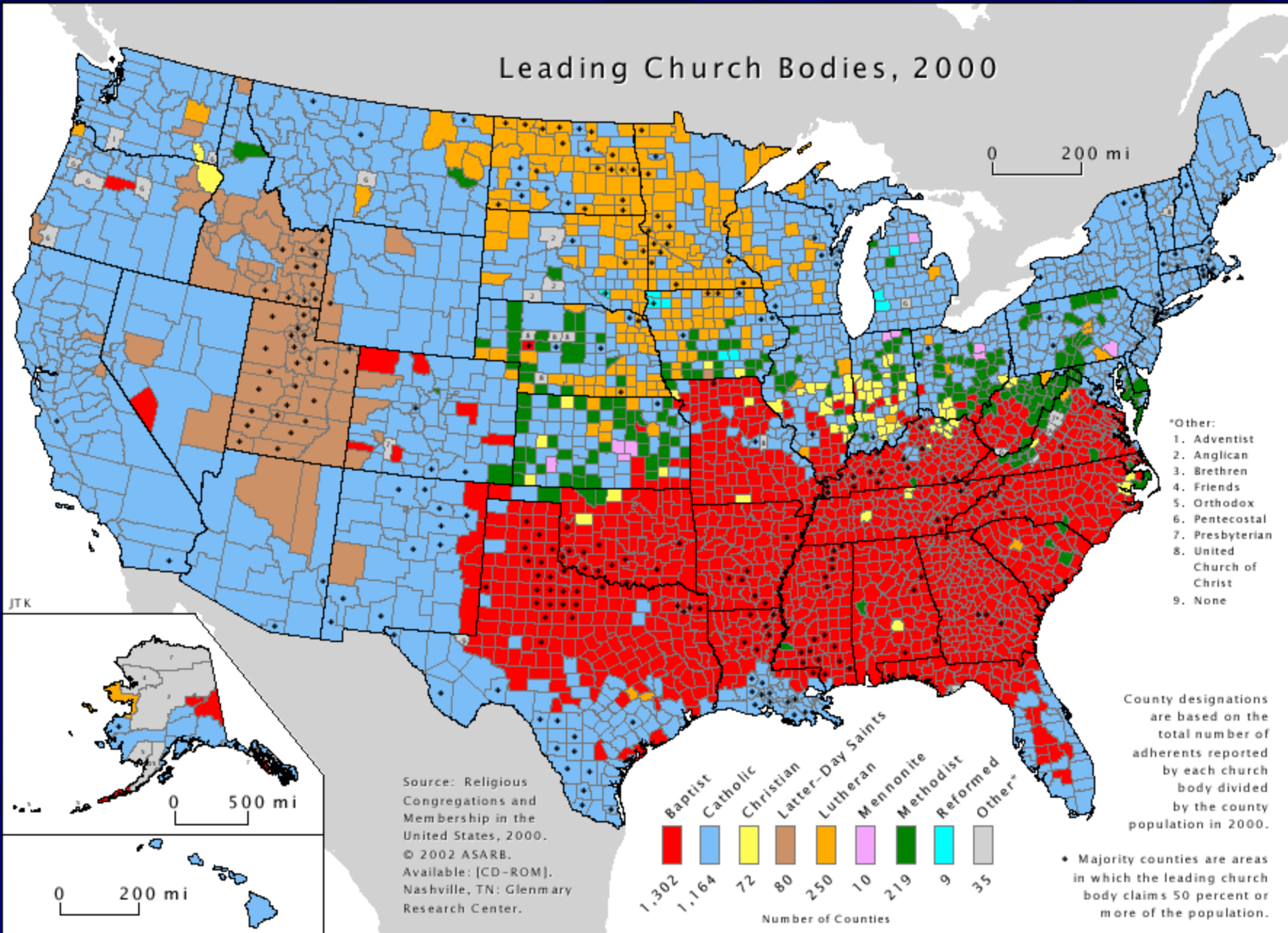
# Current American religious landscape

- Approx. 76% of Americans self-id as Christian
  - Catholic c. 25%
  - Protestant c. 51%
    - Baptist c. 16%
    - Methodist c. 7%
    - Lutheran c. 5%
    - Presbyterian c. 3%
    - Episcopalian c. 1.75%
  - Mormon c. 1.5%
- Approx. 2% Jewish
- Approx. .5 – 1 % Muslim
- Approx. .5% Buddhist
- Approx. .4% Hindu
- Approx. 14% Non-religious/None/Non-affiliated

## Broken down slightly differently

- Catholic – approx. 25%
- Mainline Protestant (white) – approx 23%
- Evangelical Protestant (white) – 25% – 33% (depending upon definitions)
  - Terms “mainline” or “evangelical” are not necessarily connected to denominational identity
- African-American Protestant – c. 6%

# Leading Church Bodies, 2000



# Religion by Region and Place

- Northeast dispropor. Catholic/Jewish (only region with a Prot. minority)
- South dispropor. Evangelical Protestant, esp. Baptists
- Northern Midwest home to Lutherans
- West, especially Pacific west, less 'churched' more 'alternative' spirituality, more non-Christian
- Catholics, non-Christians dispropor. urban
- Evangelical Prot. still dispropor rural, small town
- Evangelical new growth (and 'megachurches') in suburbs, exurbs

# General 'facts' of American belief/practice

- 18-30 yr olds 3 times as likely to have no affiliation as those 65+ yrs
- Women more likely to believe, belong, and attend than men (among Christians)
- About 90% of Americans say they “believe in God” in some form (this consistent for several decades)
- Many non-affiliates profess beliefs or pray
- About 40% of Americans say they attended religious services within the last week (consistent since the late '40s)
- Best empirical findings show about 22-25% actually attend services any given week

## Important aspects of American religion

- Cultural preferences for individualism and local control mean that even groups with episcopal hierarchies must negotiate with local congregations
- Experience & emotion generally valued in religion over formal education or theology
- While many want their congregations to 'do good,' congregations mostly provide 'religious services' for members, not social services for communities

# Important aspects, con't

- Most congregations in US are small (< 150), but most people belong to large congregations (> 1000)
- In general, congregations are getting larger, as costs continue to go up
- Congregations exist in a 'religious market'
  - Low barriers to entry (religion largely unregulated)
  - Voluntarism in participation (must meet demands)
  - Competitive market for members/resources
- Small congregations proliferate, often die
- While most congregations do not have episcopal authority, they often have 'strong preachers' with great internal ('charismatic') authority



# 'Urban Religion'

- As a distinct genre of religious practice and experience
- American cities as sites of diversity
- Marked by proximity and density
- 'Marketplace' organization most pronounced – 'religious districts'; 'shopping'
- Requiring active, consistent construction of similarity/difference – moralizing the 'other'
- Religious innovation – through synergy AND/OR retreat (e.g., fundamentalism)

# Suburbs and edge cities

- New migration to suburbs and the increasing ethno-racial diversity of suburbs
- Increasing class divide in religious expression and experience
- Land for building – road and car dependence, families as churchgoers
- Lends itself to congregational structures and traditional parish models

# Central cities

- Variety of locational sites – e.g., storefronts – but building expensive
- Necessity for entrepreneurial effort, ‘brand’ distinction
- Leads to organizational variety
- Creates ‘religious districts’ and complex ‘ecosystems’
- Scholarly questions as to the effects of built environment on religious practice

# Social locations in geographic proximity

- Springfield – ecumenical coalitions
- Cincinnati – small congregations, esp. in Afr-Amer community; scarce resources
- YRP – multi-ethnic youth groups cutting across neighborhoods/ethnic lines
- Creating an American Islam – impulses to unity and distinction
  - TCKs
  - Ethnic/class divisions
  - Negotiating gender

