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The Historical Roots of the Culture War

All human experience has context. There are always preconditions and prior circumstances—there is always a history. And invariably, the larger context is a complex reality that defies simple explanation. Yet to even attempt to understand a facet of social life without at least partially reconstructing both the institutional and historical setting within which it is rooted would be folly. Our understanding would be flawed from the outset.

The contemporary culture war is no exception. It would be frivolous to imagine that this conflict emerged spontaneously out of social and historical chance. Yet most discussions of the tensions in American society fail to consider the historical context. The truth of it is that the contemporary culture war evolved out of century-old religious tensions—through the expansion and the realignment of American religious pluralism. It is out of the changing contours and shifting balance of pluralism that the key actors in the contemporary culture war emerge.

THE EXPANSION OF PLURALISM

The Early Expansion

The story of American religious pluralism begins in the colonial period through the early decades of the republic. In this historical context there

was both unity and diversity. Though limited by the boundaries of Protestant faith and culture, the colonies themselves nevertheless exhibited a tremendous diversity: Congregationalists in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire; Anglicans in Virginia, Georgia, and the Carolinas; Baptists in Rhode Island; Anglicans and Catholics in Maryland; Anglicans, Dutch Calvinists, and Presbyterians in New York and Maryland; and Pennsylvania, as the New England consensus had it, was nothing less than "a swamp of sectarianism." The Second Great Awakening, coming on the heels of the republic's founding, only intensified the denominational diversity within the Protestant community. Religious sectarianism became widespread with the flourishing of the Campbellites, Stoneites, and Disciples, not to mention the Baptists and Methodists in the southern territories and the western frontier, the growth of the Shakers in New York and Massachusetts, and Unitarianism and Wesleyan revivalism under Charles Finney in the Northeast.

Yet the depth of dissension within the Protestant community should not be glossed over. Baptists distrusted Episcopalians, Congregationalists feared Presbyterians, Lutherans avoided Methodists and Quakers, "Old Lights" continued to resent "New Lights," and each denomination and faction was certain that its own version of the Reformation was the correct one while all the others were at least partially mistaken.

Still, a kind of "balance" was achieved in that sectarian division. The overwhelming majority of Americans were self-consciously rooted in variations of Reformed theology. Partly as a consequence of this, there was widespread agreement on, among other things, the evils of both Catholicism and infidelity, as well as an understanding of the spiritual mission of the nation—to be an exemplar of Christian (Reformational) virtue among the nations of the world in preparation for the coming Kingdom of God. Within this context there was also the balance of competing sectarian interests. No one denomination could press its own particular advantage without being directly challenged by the interests of other denominations. Thus, a measure of cultural consensus really emerged. All other differences aside, America was, in this *cultural* sense, a Christian, which again meant Protestant, nation.

The extent of the quasi establishment of a "common Protestantism" through the first half of the nineteenth century is rarely disputed and need not be described here.[1] In principle, however, it involved the accommodation of denominational differences and rivalries in the common effort to establish a Christian (Protestant) land. The practical outcome in many regions was not far from this ideal as Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, Christian Disciples, Lutherans, and others came together to forge a vision that would inform all of the major institutions of public life. The symbols and language of Protestant culture permeated republican political rhetoric and informed the conduct of electoral politics (in which anti-Catholic propaganda and parties provided rallying points). It influenced the formation and execution of law (seen clearly in the enforcement of blasphemy law and the like). It provided the vision for popular education: both the establishment of the common school and later the public school (where the moralistic schoolbook *McGuffey's Reader* became a staple of instruction and the reading of the King James version of the Scriptures a source of devotion) as well as the expansion of denominationally founded and governed colleges and universities. It offered the institutional mechanisms for the allocation and administration of public welfare. And finally, Protestant culture provided an agenda for social reform (as seen, for example, in the powerful initiatives of the temperance movement). It was, then, largely through the language and ideals of common Protestantism that the legitimating myths of institutions and society were formed and articulated.

But the "pan-Protestant" hegemony over American culture did not remain unchallenged. From the 1830s onward came a massive influx of Catholic and Jewish immigrants whose net effect was to severely upset that "balance."

In the 1830s, for example, 600,000 Catholics arrived on American shores. Through the 1840s, 1,700,000 additional Catholics came; as many as 2,600,000 more immigrated during the 1850s. Nearly half (43 percent) of these were Irish; roughly one-fourth (26 percent) were from Germany; one-sixth (17 percent) were from England, Wales, and Scotland; and the remainder were from Italy and Eastern Europe.[2] By 1880 there were 6,259,000 Catholics in the United States. The growth in the Catholic presence through the heart of the nineteenth century was, then, remarkable. Indeed, at the time of the first census in 1790, Catholics comprised only about 1 percent of the total population. Less than a century later (by the 1880s) they comprised up to 12 percent of the population. By the 1920s, 17 percent of the American population was Catholic, the single largest denomination in the country.

The massive immigration of Jews did not start until nearly fifty years after the first wave of Catholic immigrants arrived. In the late 1830s there were probably fewer than 15,000 Jews in a total American population of 15 million—barely one-tenth of 1 percent of the population.[3] By the 1880s, when the first surge of German Jewish (Ashkenazim)

immigrants arrived, the number of Jews had increased to roughly 300,000.[4] By the mid-1920s, the number of Jews had jumped to 4 million—from only about one-half of a percent of the American population to a full 3 percent, all in the course of four decades.

These Catholic and Jewish immigrants were not immediately diffused through the larger population and territory. Because of their pride in national heritage and culture, their often observable non–Anglo-Saxon characteristics, and their concern to maintain the theological and religious distinctives of their faith, there was a strong rationale (not to mention outside pressures) for concentrating their numbers in homogeneous communities. This they did in the largest cities of the Northeast and Midwest: New York, Boston, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Chicago, Baltimore, Worcester. In New York, for example, the proportion of the foreign-born grew from 11 percent in 1825 to 35 percent in 1845 to more than half of the city's residents by 1855 (and more than half of these were Irish Catholics).[5] The highly visible immigrant concentration in these centers of industry, commerce, and opinion formation created the impression that their impact in American life was even greater than their numbers alone would allow. It was no wonder, then, that many Protestants believed that "their" world was being threatened. In reality, it was. It is in this context that one can understand the legacy of anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism described in chapter 1.

Eventually, though, accommodations slowly evolved. Open, government-tolerated discrimination gradually ended. The crust of old prejudices slowly softened. In short, as pluralism expanded in this way, so did institutional and individual tolerance. By the middle of the century Will Herberg, in his famous book *Protestant, Catholic, Jew,* could observe that American culture had become a roughly comparable amalgamation of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish influences.[6] No one would deny the Protestant tilt of this consensus. Even so, the Catholic and Jewish communities had become large and formidable participants in American cultural life whose claims in public discourse could no longer be denied. Even the idea of returning to a more or less exclusive Protestant control over American culture was becoming less and less plausible and desirable in Protestant communities.

A New Consensus

What was happening, in fact, was that a new pluralistic "balance" was being forged around a broader Judeo-Christian consensus. New

competing sectarian interests were an important factor in achieving this balance, to be sure. Yet, above this was the continued, tacit acceptance on the part of all of the major players of a public discourse informed by, among other things, the suppositions of a biblical theism.

The role of biblical theism as a cultural cement in American public life requires some elaboration. Even in the middle of the nineteenth century when anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic sentiment was strongest, biblical theism provided the primary institutions and ideals through which an expanding and increasingly diverse immigrant population (Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish) adapted to a new life in America.[7] As Rabbi Solomon Schechter declared at the dedication of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 1903, "This country is, as everybody knows, a creation of the Bible, particularly of the Old Testament."[8]

At one level, biblical theism provided the language in which differences could be talked about. Thus, for example, although much of the anti-Catholic hostility was born out of economic rivalry and ethnic distrust, it took expression primarily as *religious* hostility—as a quarrel over religious doctrine, practice, and authority. So too the latent and overt hostility of Protestants toward Jews was often legitimated through the language of religious antipathy.

At a more profound level, however, biblical theism gave Protestants, Catholics, and Jews many of the common ideals of public life. Chief among these were the symbols of national identity. As Timothy Smith has argued, the migration and resettlement of bonded groups in the new land made the biblical imagery of the Exodus seem to be a metaphor for the American experience as a whole.[9] The linking of the American purpose with the Kingdom of God was, in reality, a prominent theme not only for the English Puritans, Scottish Presbyterians, the Dutch Reformed, and the French Huguenots, and all of their descendants, but for immigrant Mennonites, German and Scandinavian Lutherans, German and Russian Jews, and Irish and East European Catholics as well.

Related to this were the ideals of progress. The millennial and messianic promises of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures provided the common symbols of hope for the future. This became particularly clear at the end of the nineteenth century as the traditional ethical idealism common to each of these faiths matured as denominational ideologies and as programs of public welfare. Reform Judaism and religious Zionism, Catholic triumphalism and the Protestant social gospel movement all espoused the ideals of social progress, all believed in the continuous

unfolding of the will of God in human history, and all maintained a deep sense of their own particular place in this drama.

Thus, though based in sectarian commitment and overwhelmingly Protestant in character, the assumptions of biblical religion were sufficiently diffuse in public culture to allow for the participation of other biblical traditions, even during the middle to late nineteenth century. Through the end of that century and up to the middle of the twentieth, these biblical suppositions became even more diffuse. Nevertheless, the limits and boundaries of religious and cultural pluralism continued to be defined by what remained a deeply biblical, albeit no longer Protestant, culture.

Pluralism After the Second World War

After the Second World War, the balance represented in the new consensus was once more upset. Among the most important contributing factors has been the further expansion of pluralism.

Traditional Faiths

Between the mid-1920s and the mid-1940s the size of the Catholic community remained fairly stable vis-à-vis the larger population. After the war, however, it continued to expand. In 1947, about 20 percent of the U.S. population claimed to be Catholic. Twenty years later, in 1967, that number totaled roughly 25 percent and, by the mid-1980s, Catholics were 28 to 29 percent of the population.

The Jewish picture is slightly different. Leading up to and during the Second World War, a second major wave of Jewish immigrants swelled the size of their community to roughly 5 percent of the total population. A considerable portion of these were Orthodox Jews from Germany and Eastern Europe. Some of the new immigrants did not stay long but went on to Israel after its founding in 1948. It is partly for this reason that in the postwar period the numbers of Jews relative to the larger population declined to approximately 2.5 percent.[10]

Also within the biblical tradition are the Mormons, whose numbers have grown rapidly.[11] Between 1830 and 1880 the number of Mormons in North America had increased from 1,000 to 110,000. In 1890 the Mormon Church forbade polygamous marriages, which then allowed Utah to be admitted as a state (in 1896). At that point much of the legal and social opposition to the Latter Day Saints receded and their numbers

expanded dramatically. In the century following (up to 1991), the number of Mormons grew to 4 million, or 1.6 percent of the population.

Though minority faiths expanded numerically in this way, these developments were rather uncontroversial. These groups were part of the larger biblical tradition and by this time they were all well established in American society—in part because a substantial number of their adherents had become assimilated into the middle classes.[12] The more controversial developments were to take place in other quarters.

New Faiths

Religious and cultural pluralism expanded after the war, as religious traditions native to Asia and the Middle East began to appear in the United States in greater numbers. For example, in 1934 there was only one mosque in the United States and fewer than 20,000 Muslims. By 1988 there were 600 mosques or Islamic Centers and more than 4 million adherents nationwide.[13] These figures make Islam the eighth largest denomination in the United States—even larger than the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., the United Church of Christ, or the Assemblies of God. Just over half of these Muslims are recent immigrants from all over the world, particularly Pakistan, India, Turkey, Egypt, and Iran. The remainder are indigenous to America in the movement formerly known as the Black Muslims. Some speculate that soon after the turn of the century, the numbers of Muslims will surpass those of Jews, making them the second largest body of religious believers after Christians.

The growth in the size of the Hindu community is more difficult to assess because Hinduism tends to be a family religion in which a great deal of worship takes place in the home. Even so, estimates placed the number of Hindus in America in 1940 at about 150,000. By the early 1990s, this figure had grown to about three-quarters of a million, with forty Hindu temples. Like Hinduism, Buddhism has no central bureaucracy, no single leader for its many different schools; worship is very often a private matter and, therefore, a difficult phenomenon to track. The introduction of Buddhism to America came as early as 1893 with the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. At that time and throughout the twentieth century, virtually all of the Buddhist immigrants were of Japanese ancestry. By 1909 there were just over 3,000 Buddhists in America. The number of Buddhists gradually increased until 1960 when, over the following decades, Buddhism experienced the most dynamic

growth in its history in America. One of the largest of the Buddhist schools is the Buddhist Church in America (the Jodo Shinshu sect), which claimed in 1988 to have one hundred churches and 100,000 members. In 1960, it could claim only 20,000 members. The other Buddhist presence is the Nichiren Shoshu sect, which in the same year claimed to have forty-six community centers, six temples, and 500,000 members. For Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism the greatest concentrations of adherents are found in metropolitan areas, but in Hawaii, Buddhism competes with Catholicism as the dominant religion.[14]

Apart from the natural influx of non-Western religious faith through immigration, pluralism expanded through the indigenous adoption of exotic "new religions" by young people in the quest to find alternatives to traditional faith. Many were inspired by the faiths and meditative practices of Central and East Asia. Zen Buddhism, Transcendental Meditation (TM), Rajsneesh, International Society for Krishna Consciousness (better known as the Hare Krishna movement), Meher Baba, the Healthy-Happy-Holy Organization (or 3HO), and local yoga groups were all highly visible in the 1970s. They received wide attention in the media but their actual attraction depended greatly on the demands placed on adherents. Because of advertisement, short courses, and the few requirements placed on practitioners, TM and yoga had much greater appeal in the general population. According to a Gallup survey conducted in 1976, as many as 4 percent of all Americans claimed to participate in TM and 3 percent claimed to practice yoga techniques.[15] By contrast, the quasi-orthodox Buddhism of Hare Krishna and 3HO (which combined Sikh doctrine with the meditative techniques of kundalini yoga) had together, at their peak in the mid-1970s, as many as one hundred local centers of activity but probably less than 10,000 members nationwide.[16]

Also novel to the postwar period were new sectarian expressions of traditional faiths. Some of these were variants of Protestant faith such as The Way, the Children of God, the Local Church, the Fundamentalist Army, and the Christian World Liberation Front. Others, such as the charismatic movement, were Catholic in orientation (at least at the start). Still others were quasi-Christian movements, such as the Korea-based Unification Church (or the Moonies) under the leadership of Sun Myung Moon.

Perhaps the most important sector of the "new age" religious phenomenon included the various organizations that constituted the human potential movement. While the neo-Christian and the more exacting

Eastern religious groups lost much of their popularity by the end of the 1970s, the spiritualism of the human potential movement displayed enormous staying power. The message of human fulfillment was packaged and repackaged through numerous techniques of self-analysis, massage, encounter sessions, sensitivity training, pyramids, crystals, and the like. It was marketed through dozens of organizations such as the Inner Peace Movement (which, by 1972, had established 590 centers in North America), Scientology (with 28 centers and 2,000 members in the early 1980s), Erhard Seminars Training or *est* (which processed nearly 20,000 people in its first three years of existence in the early 1970s, and 500,000 by 1984), Lifespring (which, through its five-day sessions, "trained" more than 250,000 people by 1987), Psychosynthesis, Rolfing, Arica, and Silva Mind Control, among others. In sum, as many as 3,000 local centers of new religious activity were established in the 1960s and early 1970s. While hundreds of these became defunct through the 1980s, hundreds of others replaced them. According to public opinion surveys of the period, as many as 10 percent of the population actually became involved with them in one way or another. In cities such as San Francisco and Boulder, Colorado, between one-fifth and one-fourth of the residents participated.[17]

Secularists

Perhaps the most unnoticed but most momentous way in which religious and cultural pluralism expanded in the postwar period can be found in that part of the population claiming no particular religious faith, those individuals that social scientists call *secularists*. In public opinion surveys, these are the people who respond "none" when questioned about religious preference. Compared to the rest of the population, secularists are disproportionately well educated and professional and are found most commonly in the larger cities of the Northeast and West. Even though they do not claim to adhere to any particular religious tradition, it would be completely unfair to say that they live without any moral commitments and ethical ideals. Fundamentalists are totally wrong, then, to describe secularists as "amoral." It is equally wrong to argue that the secular or secularists are somehow ethically neutral, as in the myth that the institutions and people of science or the modern state are impartial on issues of value. Though oftentimes the principles are implicit and unarticulated, secularists do maintain and live by latent value orientations. These are articulated in various ways and (again) sometimes

they are not expressed at all. But in most cases, these values and ideals could be described loosely as "humanistic"—an ethical orientation in which human well-being becomes the ultimate standard by which moral judgments and policy decisions are grounded, and the paramount aim to which all human endeavor aspires. Particularly prominent in this general orientation are the ethical themes of autonomy and freedom, especially as expressed in the notion of individual or minority self-determination.

However one is to finally characterize the latent moral ideologies of the secularist population (and more will be said in the next chapter), it is, in the broader picture, a relatively distinct realm of moral conviction. What is significant about the secularists is that they represent the fastest-growing community of "moral conviction" in America. In 1952, secularists comprised only 2 percent of the population. Through the early 1960s their number remained fairly constant, so that in 1962, secularists still constituted only 2 percent of the population. Yet through the rest of the 1960s and after, their growth was dramatic. By 1972, secularists comprised 5 percent of the population. By 1982 they reached 8 percent and by the end of the decade, they made up approximately 11 percent of the population.[18] The most significant factor accounting for this growth was the expansion of higher education in the 1960s and 1970s, an institution that is well known for its secularizing effects on young adults.[19]

Toward Realignment

In one way, the postwar expansion of pluralism seems to be a natural evolution of a long process: since its founding, American culture has become increasingly inclusive of other, even "alien," cultural traditions. In this light, one could view the expansion of pluralism in the second half of the twentieth century as simply "the next stage" in the long journey toward total inclusiveness. The reality, however, is more profound than that.

The most recent expansion of pluralism signifies the collapse of the longstanding Judeo-Christian consensus in American public life. As it has been argued, however much Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, through the last half of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth, distrusted each other socially, even competed with each other economically, politically, and religiously, there remained a certain agreement about the *language* of public debate. The symbols of moral discourse, informed as they were by biblical imagery and metaphor, were symbols understood and even advocated by each tradition. With the expansion of pluralism in the second half of the twentieth century, that agreement has largely disintegrated. But the significance of the trend toward expanded pluralism does not reside in this disintegration alone but rather in its consequences: in the wake of the fading Judeo-Christian consensus has come a rudimentary *realignment* of pluralistic diversity. The "organizing principle" of American pluralism has altered fundamentally such that the major rift is no longer born out of theological or doctrinal disagreements—as between Protestants and Catholics or Christians and Jews. Rather the rift emerges out of a more fundamental disagreement over the sources of moral truth.

But this is getting ahead of things. To understand the nature and extent of contemporary cultural conflict, it is necessary to explore some of the historical and institutional preconditions of this realignment.

CENTURY–OLD FAULT LINES

With the tremendous rivalry and antagonism among religious traditions in the late nineteenth century, it would have been impossible then to have anticipated the kind of changes in the cultural landscape that were to take shape a century later. Yet fissures emerged within each of the distinct traditions of Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism that were not only remarkably parallel in character but were also nearly simultaneous in the closing decades of that century. These fissures would evolve into the major fault lines over which the contemporary culture war is now fought. What shape did these fissures take and how did they develop?

Of the fractures taking shape in the three historic faiths, those that occurred in Protestantism are the best known, but in all three cases, breaks appeared as each community struggled to cope with the intellectual and social dilemmas posed by life on the verge of the twentieth century: labor struggles, public health issues, and rising crime and poverty, all problems that had been brought about by industrialization and urbanization. Deep ethnic distrust and political instability had been the fruit of the rapid immigration and the slow assimilation of foreign populations. The credibilty of religious faith had been weakened by higher criticism, historicism, and the advances of science. Interestingly, the way in which each community of faith responded organizationally varied

considerably. In Protestantism the fissures were reflected within denominational structure, seminary education, and lay attitudes. In Catholicism, they were reflected almost exclusively in the opinion and policy initiatives of U.S. bishops. In Judaism the ruptures took shape in the formation of new denominational structures. Organizational differences aside, the substance of the response in each tradition was remarkably similar.

Progressivist Initiatives

By the 1870s and 1880s, it became clear to many leaders of all faiths that the problems posed by modern industrial capitalism were unlike any that had been confronted before. The effort to respond to these solely by attempting to evangelize the unsaved and to curb the vices of intemperance, prostitution, and profanity, as held by pietists in the Protestant tradition, was quickly recognized as inadequate. New and creative strategies were needed.

In Protestantism the intellectual and programmatic response came in the social gospel movement. Over the late nineteenth century, its advocates slowly came to reject an individualistic explanation of the afflictions of modern life in favor of a more "structuralist" explanation. It was not so much sin and personal moral failure that were to blame for human hardship as it was the brutal power of contemporary social and economic institutions. The only lasting solution would be found through institutional measures of redress. It was here in addressing the problems of labor, the demand for industrial education, the expanding requirements of poor relief, and the necessity of a spirit of Christian communitarianism in public life that the modern church could most effectively serve the cause of Christianity. By the 1890s an enormous literature advocating the tenets of the "social gospel" was being published and distributed. Prominent in this work was the manifesto "The Social Creed of the Churches," published in 1908. Translating these tenets into programmatic agenda was the motivation for new organizations, such as the Brotherhood of the Kingdom, the Department of Church and Labor of the Presbyterian Church's Board of Home Missions, the Methodist Federation for Social Service, and the Commission on the Church and Social Service.

A significant corollary of the social gospel movement (and in many ways a component of it) was a new spirit of denominational cooperation. This was reflected in such bodies as the Evangelical Churches of Christendom (1900), the National Federation of Churches and Christian Workers (1901), and the Federal Council of Churches (FCC, 1908). The first two groups failed not long after they were founded, but the FCC endured both as an effective ecumenical agency and as an important symbol of the ecclesiastical spirit of the age. At one level the FCC represented a concern to develop interdenominational toleration as an end in itself, but above all it represented the recognition, throughout the Protestant world, that if churches were to effectively address the problems of an industrial age, they would have to face them together.

Innovations were also being pursued among Protestantism's intellectual elite. At root was the need to reconcile traditional Christian theology with the discoveries of modern scientific inquiry. The challenge posed by Charles Darwin and Thomas Huxley was only one of many. Other intimidating tests came from breakthroughs in astronomy, psychology, sociology, and philosophy, which demanded that traditional interpretations of the Bible be reconciled with the methods of modern intellectual investigation. Historicism and higher criticism were powerful intellectual movements in European scholarship, and as they filtered into the discourse of the American academic community they could not be ignored. The net effect of all these pressures was something of a synthesis of old and new, a novel and bold "resymbolization" of the traditions. The most important reworking of the traditions involved the deemphasis of the supernatural and miraculous aspects of biblical narrative and an almost exclusive emphasis upon its ethical aspects. Such theological innovations not only allowed the mainline Protestant churches to keep pace with the intellectual currents of the period but they also provided much needed intellectual legitimations for their new programs of social activism as well.

Within Catholicism, liberal or progressivist initiatives came in the 1890s primarily in the form of new attitudes and policies articulated by particular bishops in the American hierarchy. In part, the new social approaches were associated with the rights of labor, particularly in the support for the Knights of Labor, a Catholic precursor of the labor union. The desire to cooperate with Protestants in the realm of education also played a role. But the movement that came to embody these progressive Catholic ideas more prominently than any other was the Americanist movement. Among its heroes were Father Isaac Hecker (founder of the Paulist Fathers), Archbishop John Ireland, John J. Keane (rector of the Catholic University of America), and Bishop Denis O'Connell, among others.

At the heart of the Americanist movement in the Catholic hierarchy was the desire to integrate the U.S. Catholic Church into the mainstream of modern American society. The Americanists sought to phase out what they considered unessential Romanist traditions and to present the Catholic faith in a positive light to a Protestant society. They hoped to eliminate the "foreign" cast of the church by Americanizing the immigrant population (through language and custom) as quickly as possible, by celebrating and promoting the principles of religious liberty and the separation of church and state, and by helping to foster American-style democracy globally. By the mid-1890s the Americanist movement acquired a more universal appeal by associating itself with the progressive views of biblical, theological, and historical scholarship emanating from Europe. This association was built upon mutual affinities: the Americanists' praise of religious liberty and the European modernists' advocacy of subjectivity in theology; the former's praise of democracy and scientific progress and the latter's program to reconcile the Catholic Church with the modern age.[20] The modernist movement within American Catholic scholarship was fairly modest at the beginning of the twentieth century. A journal of Catholic modernist thinking, the *New York Review,* was founded in 1905, and a few scholars published articles advocating the compatibility of evolution and the official teachings about the doctrine of creation, or the use of higher critical methods of biblical interpretation. The heart of Catholic modernism was in Europe. Yet whether European or American, the progressive theology of modernism was associated with, and found support in, the Americanist movement. As will be seen, such a rapprochement was to have serious consequences for the direction of the American Catholic Church within that very decade.

The progressivist impulse in Judaism had its origins as early as the German Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. The inchoate movement was small and somewhat formless through the first half of the nineteenth century, but with the immigration of German Jews to America after the 1850s, the ideas that would lead to Reform Judaism flourished. The earliest reformers had no intention of establishing a new denomination but, rather, aspired to shape the religious ethos of all Judaism. Indeed, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (1873); the rabbinical seminary, Hebrew Union College (1875); and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (1889) were all founded to serve the needs of Judaism as a whole. Even before the turn of the century they

provided the institutional nucleus of what was to become just one branch of American Jewry, the Reform movement.

As with the Catholics, accommodation to American life and purpose was perhaps the dominant inspiration behind progressivist Jewish thought. To that end, the worship service was shortened, the vernacular was introduced, the use of the organ was sanctioned, and the segregation of men from women in all aspects of the worship service was ended. More important than these modifications, though, were the theological accommodations. There was a decisive move away from traditional belief and ritual observance toward ethical idealism.

These theological alterations became crystallized first in a series of resolutions drawn up by progressives in Philadelphia in 1869 and then more formally in the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885. In these documents progressives maintained that a rabbinical Judaism based on ancient law and tradition had forever lost its grip on the modern Jew. The only viable course, therefore, was to reinterpret the meaning of Judaism in light of new historical developments. The entire range of traditional rabbinic beliefs and practices were abandoned. The first to be rejected was the traditional conviction that Torah or Jewish law was unalterable—that it was somehow sufficient for the religious needs of the Jewish people at all times and places. Accordingly, the doctrine of bodily resurrection was declared to have "no religious foundation," as were the concepts of Gehenna and Eden (hell and paradise). Repudiated as well were the laws regulating dress, diet, purification, and the excessive ritualism of traditional worship. And not least, the messianic hope of a restored Jewish state under a son of David was also disavowed.

In their stead was the affirmation of the universalism of Hebraic ethical principles—the idea that Judaism was the highest conception of the "God-idea." Having abandoned any conception of Jewish nationalism, the mission of Israel was now to bring the ethical ideals of the Jewish tradition to the rest of the world. Remarkable for the historical context in which they were made, the documents even extended the hand of ecumenical cooperation to Christianity and Islam. As "daughter religions of Judaism" they were welcome as partners in Judaism's mission of spreading "monotheistic and moral truth." In large measure the ethical truths they desired to proclaim could be translated into a language that harmonized with the Protestant social gospel. As stated in Principle I of the 1885 Pittsburgh manifesto, Reform Jews would commit themselves "to regulate the relations between rich and poor" and to help solve the

"problem presented by the contrasts and evils of the present organization of society." To leave absolutely no doubt about the rightness of their cause, the authors of the Pittsburgh Platform threw down the ultimate challenge to their nonprogressive rabbinical counterparts:

> We can see no good reason why we should ogle you, allow you to act as a brake to the wheel of progress, and confirm you in your pretensions. You do not represent the ideas and sentiments of the American Jews, [in] this phase upon which Judaism entered in this country, you are an anachronism, strangers in this country, and to your own brethren. You represent yourselves, together with a past age and a foreign land. We must proceed without you to perform our duties to God, and our country, and our religion, for WE are the orthodox Jews in America.[21]

The boldness and enthusiasm (even if not the audacity) expressed by these Reform rabbis in their campaign of change in Judaism was remarkable but it was not isolated. It was in large measure shared by progressives in both Protestantism and Catholicism as well. From the circumstances around them, it seemed as though the flow and momentum of history was on the progressives' side and thus the future would be theirs as well.

Orthodox Reactions

Given such reformist pluck it would have been odd not to expect strong counteraction within each tradition. In all three traditions leaders, who were equally articulate, vocal, and powerful, were convinced that the the progressive changes being advocated represented nothing short of apostasy. They rose up to defend the faith as it had been inherited from generations past.

The protest launched by the defenders of orthodoxy within Protestantism centered upon the defense of Scripture. By demonstrating that the Bible was the Word of God, inerrant in all of its teachings, they felt confident that they would have an adequate foundation to reject heresy and to prevent the ordinary believer from straying into impiety and irreligion.

Accordingly, dozens of Bible institutes and colleges all across the country were founded, including the Moody Institute (originally founded for urban ministry in 1886), the Bible Institute of Los Angeles

(1913), St. Paul Bible College (1916), Faith Baptist Bible College (1921), Columbia Bible College (1923), among many others. Annual Bible conferences also came to serve this purpose—the Niagara Bible Conferences, the American Bible and Prophetic Conference, the Northfield Conferences, the Old Point Comfort Bible Conference, the Seaside Bible Conference, among others. A flurry of new periodicals defending the orthodox cause were published—*Bible Champion,* the Baptist *Watchman, The Truth, The King's Business, Prophetic Times, Waymark in the Wilderness,* and so on. Perhaps the most daring effort to defend the orthodox faith was the publication and sweeping distribution of *The Fundamentals* in 1910. This twelve-volume work included over ninety articles systematically cataloguing and defending the major doctrines of the Christian faith, discrediting the Mormon, Roman Catholic, Christian Science, and spiritualist heresies, summarizing all of the major archaeological evidence that confirmed the truth of the Old Testament stories, and refuting the methods of higher criticism. Finally, in the effort to stem the pernicious influence of the "Bible-denying" Darwinian theory of evolution in the public schools, thirty-seven anti-evolution bills were submitted to twenty state legislatures between 1921 and 1929.

In the American Catholic hierarchy, the situation was different. Orthodoxy within Catholicism has always been defined more by fidelity to the teachings emanating from the Holy See than it is by adherence to specific doctrinal positions. Thus, intervening within any intra-Catholic tensions in America was the presence of the Vatican itself. By the end of January 1899, Pope Leo XIII made his views known. His opinion came in the form of an apostolic letter, *Testem Benevolentiae,* and though he was not totally condemnatory, his censure was still broad and effective. In the eyes of the Vatican, the Americanists' idea of presenting the truths of the Catholic Church "positively" in a Protestant context was seen as the watering down of doctrine, their praise of religious liberty was perceived as the praise of religious subjectivism, and their desire to accommodate the Catholic Church to American democratic institutions (the separation of church and state) was viewed as a desire to deny the temporal powers of the papacy—to introduce democracy into the Church.

The papal condemnation of Americanism was significant for many reasons but one of the most important is that it proved to be a precursor to the denunciation of modernism in American and European Catholic scholarship as well. The Vatican viewed the two movements as allied and therefore it moved quickly to quell the latter in the manner it had silenced

the former.[22] In 1907 Pope Pius X condemned the modernists, in his *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, for promoting subjectivist tendencies in theology as well as for adopting some of the principles of the Americanists. In 1908, the modernist periodical *The New York Review* ceased publication, almost immediately after a few of its articles had come under the critical scrutiny of Rome. In 1910, also due to the direct mediation of the Holy See, an associate professor of biblical studies at Catholic University was dismissed for disagreeing with the ordinary Magisterium—he had rejected the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.[23]

The character of the traditionalist reaction within Judaism was different still. Historical Judaism in the United States and Europe was, very simply, "Orthodoxy." Up to the mid-1800s the Orthodox had no real self-image of themselves as a movement within American Judaism—they *were* Judaism in America. There were, of course, those who attempted to modify and modernize the traditions, but plainly they were not in good standing with the conventional and taken-for-granted understandings of Jewish faith and life. But the pronouncements of the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh platforms forced the traditionalists for the first time to think of themselves and struggle to survive *self-consciously* as the defenders of the true faith.

All traditional Jews interpreted the Pittsburgh statement of 1885 as an insult and immediately proceeded to sever their relations with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Likewise Hebrew Union College was declared unfit to educate the next generation of rabbis. But beyond this, the response varied. The most orthodox and observant Jews found themselves a beleaguered and ghettoized minority, with few adherents and little resources. Of approximately 200 major Jewish congregations in existence in the 1880s, only a dozen of these, representing between 3,000 and 4,000 people, remained strictly Orthodox.[24] The larger portion of traditionalists pursued compromise. These traditionalists remained committed to traditional practices and teachings—to the foundation provided by biblical and Talmudic authority—but they were also committed to the political emancipation and Westernization (and therefore, deghettoization) of Jewish experience. They recognized that this would entail modifications to orthodoxy, but they were persuaded that these changes should only be made according to Talmudic precedent and with the consent of the whole community of believers.[25] In 1886, one year after the publication of the Pittsburgh Platform, the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York was founded and with it, the Conservative movement in American Judaism was formally launched. By 1913, after the founding in 1901 of the Rabbinical Assembly of America (the national association of Conservative rabbis) and the establishment of the United Synagogue of America in 1913 (a national union of the Conservative synagogues), the Conservative movement had become a powerful force in American Judaism.

The Aftermath

In the years to follow, no formal resolution of the tensions among progressive and traditionalist forces in all three faiths evolved—at least not one that was satisfactory to all parties. After the widely publicized trial of John Scopes, the biology teacher who defied Tennessee's anti-evolution law in 1925, traditionalist forces in Protestantism (Fundamentalists, as they were now called) had been widely discredited. The progressive forces in Protestantism (no longer referred to as modernists but simply called mainline Protestantism) held a position of undisputed domination for the first fifty years of the twentieth century. In Catholicism, the actions of the Vatican effectively put to rest most progressive tendencies until the 1940s: critical scholarship and liberal social planning in the Catholic Church simply came to an end. Not until the Second Vatican Council in 1965 did the progressive forces in the American hierarchy regain a prominent role in guiding the course of Catholicism. In Judaism, the progressive forces of the Reform movement retained sway. It is true that the Conservative movement was, through the twentieth century, the fastest-growing denomination in American Jewry, but on the whole, it evolved ideologically more in the direction of the Reform than in the direction of classic orthodoxy. Besides, with the revitalization and growth of the Orthodox Jewish movement in the years preceding and following the Second World War, a new public standard of traditionalism in Judaism was defined. In the public eye, Conservative rabbis could no longer publicly claim to be the exclusive heirs to historical Judaism. In short, the locus of orthodox tendencies in Judaism shifted to a revived Orthodox movement.

Though not politicized, by the 1950s the essential lines of division between orthodox and progressive forces in America's main faiths had been drawn. Not only had the particular ideological positions been roughly demarcated but so too had the institutional apparatus of intra-religious conflict: within Protestantism in the division between Fundamentalist and Evangelical denominations and mainline and liberal denominations; within Judaism in the continuum between the Orthodox/

Modern Orthodox movement and the Reform movement (with Conservatism somewhere in between); and within Catholicism in the development of different and opposing religiopolitical coalitions in the larger Catholic community.[26]

It is important to recall that up to this point, the divisions in all three faiths continued to emanate from the liturgical and theological program of modernism. With the further expansion of pluralism and the collapse of the Judeo-Christian consensus in public culture, the issues that would divide progressive and orthodox forces in the major religious traditions in the decades to follow would become far more extensive.

Although the arena of the conflict would become more extensive, it is still quite possible that these internal tensions would have remained at a fairly low intensity had it not been for two other changes in the composition of American religious institutions. The first was the waning of denominational loyalty; the second was the proliferation of parachurch organizations. Let us first examine the weakening of denominational boundaries.

THE WANING OF DENOMINATIONAL LOYALTIES

While there was no satisfactory resolution to the issues that first factionalized Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism, it could be said that the progressive and orthodox principals within each always implicitly understood the limitations of their quarrel. However deep the theological and ideological divisions were *within* each faith community between the 1880s and the 1960s, they never were more consequential than the ideological divisions that still existed *between* faith communities. No matter how complex and intense their internal disagreements might have been, Protestants, Catholics, and Jews retained a very clear theological and ideological distinctiveness.

What is more, a number of empirical studies of the postwar period confirmed the seemingly inviolable nature of lines separating Protestant, Catholic, and Jew. Perhaps the most famous of these was the 1958 public opinion survey of the residents of the Detroit metropolitan area. The study, titled *The Religious Factor,* found that vast differences still existed among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews not only in terms of their relative socioeconomic positions but in terms of their broader view of the world. Religious tradition was the source of significant differences in their general political orientation and commitment to civil liberties (such as freedom of speech and desegregation), not to mention the differences in voting behavior and in attitudes toward the exercise of governmental power (to set price controls, establish national health insurance and medical care, lessen unemployment, and strengthen educational programs). The religious factor also had a marked effect on the public's views of morality (such as gambling, drinking, birth control, divorce, and Sunday business), and on their views of the role of the family. Finally, religious difference had consequences for economic aspirations and attitudes toward work (as seen in their various views of installment buying, saving, the American dream, and the like).[27] In the mid-1960s, Rodney Stark and Charles Glock collected and analyzed national and regional data and discovered similar denominational differences in religious commitment. Religious knowledge, belief, experience, ritual commitment, and devotion all varied considerably depending upon denominational affiliation.[28]

Yet within two decades of these studies, new evidence was showing a certain reversal in these trends: people were becoming less concerned about denominational identity and loyalty.[29] At one level this change was seen in the marked decline in popular anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic sentiment. But an increase in *positive* sentiment appeared too. Surveys of the period showed that the majority of people of all faiths (up to 90 percent) favored more cooperation among local churches in community projects, in promoting racial tolerance, in sharing facilities, and even in worship.[30] The weakening of denominational boundaries extended to the relations among denominations with the Protestant community as well. According to Gallup surveys conducted from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, the overwhelming majority of Protestants had mutually positive feelings toward those belonging to the major denominations.[31]

The waning of denominational loyalty was reflected in people's attitudes but it was confirmed increasingly in their behavior. Since midcentury, Americans of every faith community have become far more prone to change denominational membership in the course of their lives.[32] The evidence on interreligious marriages is also suggestive of this pattern. For example, the proportion of Jews marrying non-Jews increased from 3 percent in 1965 to 17 percent in 1983. The proportion of interreligious marriage between Catholics and Protestants and of different denominations within Protestantism is considerably higher.[33]

As denominational affiliation has weakened so too have the effects of denominational identity upon the way people actually view the world. The 1987 General Social Survey showed no significant differences

among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews on most issues, including capital punishment, tolerance of communists, gun control, interracial marriage, welfare, and defense spending. And there was no significant difference between Protestants and Catholics on the abortion issue. What is more, the only significant differences among Protestant denominations exist according to their general location on the ideological continuum between orthodoxy and progressivism.[34]

What accounts for the lessening of denominational loyalty and its fading social and political effects is not a deep mystery. In brief, the social characteristics that had previously distinguished the adherents of different faiths have become less pronounced. Catholics, for example, have made tremendous strides in occupational and educational achievement since the early 1960s. By the mid-1980s Catholics were just as likely to hold a professional position as Protestants. (In 1960, they were only 80 percent as likely.) Likewise they were also more likely to have been to college than Protestants (whereas three decades before they were only 70 percent as likely). As a consequence of their socioeconomic mobility, Catholics moved out of their ethnic enclaves in big cities—they became "suburbanized." A similar pattern of mobility can be seen among Baptists, Lutherans, and other sectarian Protestant denominations. On the other hand, unlike the Catholic population, Jews in the United States historically (certainly since the early twentieth century) have always been disproportionately better educated, professional, and well off. But like the Catholics, they were socially distinguished by their ethnic solidarity. In 1952, for example, nearly two-thirds of all American Jews lived in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Yet the proclivity to cluster together regionally has decreased dramatically: in 1980, just over one-third of all Jews were located in these states.[35]

Whatever the cause, the reality is fairly clear: denominational loyalty receded considerably as a vital element of the religious landscape. It is only against this backdrop that one can see the changing place of para-church organizations in religious experience. For here we see something of an institutional inversion: while denominations have become *less* important for the religious life of the republic, para-church organizations—independent organizations often drawing support from a broader inter-denominational base on behalf of a particular political, social, or spiritual mission—have become *more* important. This is particularly true insofar as they provide the primary institutional framework within which an even broader and more portentous cultural realignment takes form.

RELIGIOUSLY BASED SPECIAL AGENDA ORGANIZATIONS

Of course, para-church and special agenda associations have long played a conspicuous role in the course of American religious life. In the nineteenth century alone numerous pan-denominational organizations were established to promote a particular mission. There were, for example, societies concerned with the calamitous effects of alcohol, such as the American Temperance Society (1826, which claimed 8,000 local organizations and 1.5 million members), the Women's Christian Temperance Union (1874), and the Anti-Saloon League (1895). Other associations were devoted to providing at least a basic education to all children, such as the American Sunday School Union (1824), the American Educational Society (1826), and to a certain extent, the American Tract Society (1823). Important organizations tried to counter the effects of industrialization upon the family, such as the White Cross Society (1883), Mother's Congress (1896), and the National League for the Protection of the Family (1896). Finally, organizations were committed to social service, such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA, 1851), and the Salvation Army (1880).[36] Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Catholics also developed their own para-church organizations, such as the Knights of Columbus (1882), the Catholic Workman (1891), and the Daughters of Isabella (1897).[37] Among Jews, such groups included B'nai B'rith (1843), the Jewish Chautauqua Society (1893), the Jewish Labor Bund (1897), and the National Council of Jewish Women (1897).[38]

Thus, the existence of extraecclesiastical organizations is by no means novel. What is novel, however, is their growth in number, their increasing variety, and their rising political impact.[39] According to figures aggregated by Robert Wuthnow, this is particularly true for a certain type of para-church organization, the "special agenda" groups. Of these, no more than a few dozen existed in the 1860s. In 1900 less than 150 were operating. By the end of the Second World War, 400 had come into being. But in the roughly forty years between 1945 and 1987 approximately 500 more new "special agenda" religious organizations had been founded and were in operation.[40] Notably, all of this growth corresponds to an equivalent growth among other, nonreligious voluntary associations—in 1880 and in 1980, those devoted to religious concerns comprised about 5 percent of all such groups. But when compared to

trends for religious denominations, the para-church or special agenda organizations have come to greatly outnumber denominations. And while membership in the mainline religious denominations has remained fairly stable since the mid-1960s, membership or involvement in the special agenda associations has increased substantially.

The vast variety of special agenda organizations is almost unfathomable. Umbrella agencies of interdenominational cooperation provide the bureaucratic mechanisms for both communication and the coordination of statements and activities among various (mainly Protestant) denominations.[41] Special agenda structures oriented toward the service and development of various faith communities have immense numbers and diversity.[42] The third and most important category of special agenda organizations includes the wide variety of religiously based public affairs organizations, political lobbies, and associations concerned with promoting particular social or political agenda in the public domain.[43] As one would expect, these organizations range considerably in size and budget. As a general rule, the closer they are to Washington, D.C., or New York City (where most of the special agenda organizations are located), the larger and better funded they tend to be.[44]

Special Agenda Organizations and Cultural Realignment

On its own terms, the expansion of these special agenda structures after the Second World War would seem a rather benign development. But *when coupled with the weakening of denominational ties, this expansion has actually encouraged the deepening of century-old intrafaith divisions.* Why? Because most of these groups are decidedly partisan both in nature and in agenda. More to the point, most of these organizations coalesce fairly tightly around opposing ends of the new cultural axis: orthodoxy and progressivism. This means that they increasingly provide the institutional framework within which a larger cultural realignment develops—the institutional setting within which a new and larger cultural conflict takes shape.

Illustrations abound. In Protestantism, the championing of orthodoxy or cultural conservatism by groups such as the Moral Majority, Christian Voice, the Religious Roundtable (which became the Roundtable), and the like in the 1980s are well known.[45] Dozens of other, less visible organizations also champion either part or all of the cause (especially such issues as abortion and pornography). The Christian Action Council (1975), for example, organizes Evangelical Christians who are

"committed to the principle that law and public policy in our country should be in harmony with the fundamental biblical principles of the Judeo-Christian civilization."[46] In a similar vein, the American Coalition for Traditional Values (ACTV) was founded in 1984 to unite Evangelical leaders in common cause "to restore traditional moral and spiritual values" in all sectors of U.S. society—government, schools, mass media, and the family. As with the Coalition on Revival (1990), Concerned Women for America (1979), the American Constitutional Rights Association (1979), the Christian Heritage Center (1964), the National Reform Association (1864), the National Pro-Family Coalition (1980), the Christian Law Institute (1972), Christian Family Renewal (1970), and other general interest Protestant groups, the moral rhetoric employed is very similar. Similar too is the practical agenda pursued: they oppose the Equal Rights Amendment, gay rights, liberal pornography laws, and abortion on demand; they support tuition tax credits, a voluntary prayer amendment to the Constitution, and a strong national defense.[47]

The progressivist agenda in Protestantism is also well represented by these associations. Largely because the denominational structures of the mainline Protestant establishment already endorse a more or less liberal social and theological program, the special agenda groups on this side of the cultural divide tend to proliferate around those issues not perceived as being adequately advocated by these bodies. Gay rights and needs, for example, are advanced by such groups as Integrity, a gay and lesbian organization for Episcopalians founded in 1975. With 2,500 members and nearly twenty-five local or regional affiliates, it is a relatively small organization but it is vocal. It maintains a speakers' bureau, sponsors conferences and a biennial convention, conducts seminars for the clergy and lay people, and publishes a newsletter. Integrity pursues clear objectives: to "minister to the spiritual needs of gay men and lesbians and to work for the full participation of gay people in both the church and the larger society."[48] Similar gay activist groups can be found among Lutherans, Presbyterians, Quakers, American Baptists, Pentecostals, Unitarians, and members of the United Church of Christ.[49] Women's rights are also energetically promoted by progressive Protestant groups.[50] Pacifism and peace initiatives are pursued as well.[51]

In Protestantism the division between progressive and orthodox is seen *within* denominations; progressive interests are generally pursued by the denominational leadership and culturally conservative interests are generally promoted by local ministers and the laity. This is particularly true for the mainline Protestant churches. One of the more

interesting cases is the 3 million member Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.[52] The Presbyterian Lay Committee, Presbyterians United for Biblical Concerns, Presbyterians for Democracy and Religious Freedom, and Presbyterians Pro-Life are all special interest groups that emerged since the mid-1960s. All are registered within the denomination but since their inception, they have aggressively challenged official church stands on theological, moral, and political issues. Especially outspoken is the Presbyterian Lay Committee founded in 1965, which has built a reputation around its unqualified criticism of the denomination's drift to the "theological and political Left." Its bimonthly magazine *Presbyterian Layman* is distributed free to over 620,000 members of the denomination, making it the single largest Presbyterian publication in existence.[53]

An analogous situation can be found in the 9.6 million member United Methodist Church (UMC). On one hand, progressivist ideals are preserved through the general boards of Church and Society, Discipleship, Higher Education and Ministry, and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, as well as by such special interest caucuses as the Methodist Federation for Social Action and the homosexual group Affirmation. On the other hand, there is a sizable grass-roots (and Evangelical) protest against denominational policy and drifts. The UMC's Evangelical caucus is called Good News (also known as the Forum for Scriptural Christianity) and was founded in 1966. Also part of the orthodox protest within the United Methodist Church is the group Methodists for Life (1978) a pro-life organization "opposed to abortion and to the Methodist church pro-abortion policy." But perhaps the most symbolic protest against progressivist tendencies in the denomination was launched in the closing months of 1987. Then, forty-eight local United Methodist ministers from eighteen states drafted the Houston Declaration in protest of the denomination's inclinations "to abandon the truths and traditions of the historic Christian faith." These ministers had numerous complaints but chief among them was the drift toward incorporating practicing homosexuals into the leadership of the UMC and toward abandoning the names "God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" in church liturgy. Not surprisingly, the document generated considerable reaction, both for and against. One theologian-minister called it "clearly heretical."[54]

After the 1960s, similar trends developed in the Episcopal Church.[55] The Lutheran Church, the United Church of Christ, and the Disciples of Christ also experienced divisions.[56] In a spirit of collective protest, in fact, renewal leaders within each of these denominations (plus the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., and the United Methodist Church and, significantly, the Roman Catholic Church) drafted the "DuPage Declaration: A Call to Biblical Fidelity" on 20 March 1990. This declaration was comprised of eight affirmations and eight corresponding denials ranging from the language of the Godhead to the nature of Scripture and of Christ, from the limits of legitimate sexuality and the sanctity of human life to the global mission of the church. In each of these areas they affirmed a thoroughly traditional and pietist interpretation of these issues and deliberately repudiated a humanistic and liberally politicized position.

Curiously, these divisions have also emerged within the so-called Evangelical denominations. The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod split in 1976 over precisely these issues. More significantly (because of its size), the Southern Baptist Convention was all but torn in two through the 1980s in a bitter struggle between the "fundamentalists" and "moderates" over these kinds of issues.[57]

As in the previous half century, the divisions in Catholicism continued through the 1980s to be reflected in the church hierarchy—with Joseph Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago and the U.S. Catholic Conference usually on the progressivist side and John Cardinal O'Connor of New York, in large part because of his vocal opposition to abortion, leading the cause of Catholic orthodoxy.

The cultural divide in Catholicism has gone far beyond disagreements among cardinals, however. Where the hierarchy has remained more intransigent in its orthodoxy, special interest groups have evolved to press the progressive agenda. Thus, for example, on the issue of abortion, Catholics for a Free Choice (1972) and (to a lesser extent) the Committee of Concerned Catholics (1986) defend the rights of women to choose in both childbearing and childrearing. On the issue of women's rights, Catholic Women for the ERA (1974), Priests for Equality (1975—2,300 member priests and 1,200 "supporters"), the Women's Ordination Conference (1975—2,000 members, 100 local affiliates), the Women of the Church Coalition (1977—2,000 members), and the U.S. section of St. Joan's International Alliance (1965) support the complete equality of women in the church and in the larger society. This would encompass the ordination of women into the priesthood and the elimination of sexism from the structures and understandings of the church, including the liturgy. On the issue of homosexuality, Dignity (1968—over 5,000 members and 120 local affiliates) and New Ways Ministry (1977) maintain that gay and lesbian Catholics are members of Christ's mystical body,

and therefore it is their right to participate fully in the sacramental life of the church. Other organizations, such as the Quixote Center (1975), press forward the range of progressive Catholic agendas from women's and gay rights in the church to aid to Nicaragua.

Conversely, on issues where the Catholic hierarchy has taken on a more progressive stand, special interest groups (largely lay) have surfaced to defend the traditionalist position.[58] The Catholic Traditionalist Movement (1964), Catholics United for the Faith (1968), Catholics for Christian Political Action (1977), the American Catholic Committee (1982), the Society of Traditional Roman Catholics (1984), and, perhaps most important, the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights (1973)—with its approximately 30,000 members (mostly lay people) and fourteen local affiliates—are representative of Catholic orthodoxy. Several important periodicals, *Crisis, National Catholic Register, The Interim, Challenge, Fidelity,* and *The Wanderer,* all stand in general opposition to women's rights, gay rights, a revised sexual ethic, theological modernism of any kind, and every other major progressive interest.[59] All of these would give spirited assent to the passage from Nehemiah used as the epigraph for *Fidelity* magazine: "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem is in ruins, its gates have been burnt down. Come, let us rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and suffer this indignity no longer."

The Jewish situation more closely resembles the Protestant case in that the cultural realignment largely takes on denominational form. Yet because of the very small size of the Orthodox community and the political liberalism that has long been a prominent tradition in American Jewish experience, the cultural divisions are not quite so prominent or even so politicized as they are in Protestantism or Catholicism. Still the rifts are visible. Though not by any means uniform, as Samuel Heilman makes clear, there is a strong voice of opposition within the Orthodox Jewish community against abortion rights (such as Orthodox Jews for Life), the liberalization of the role of women, gay rights, and pornography, and a strong voice of approval for tuition tax credits for private religious education, and even a creationist view of the origins of humanity.[60] It is noteworthy as well that the Conservative Jewish movement experienced a schism in 1990 along these precise cultural lines—in the formation of the Union of Traditional Judaism. The progressively oriented Jews who dominate the Reform and Conservative movements tend to stand on the opposite sides of many issues. Consider the 1984 New York congressional election between the liberal incumbent Stephen Solarz and his politically conservative challenger Rabbi Yehuda Levin. In

the election, the Jewish vote was split. The larger Jewish community supported Solarz. Yet, as we have seen from Levin's story in the prologue, numerous Orthodox rabbis and believers prominently and defiantly rejected Solarz's bid as a demonstration of their broader opposition to gay rights, abortion, pornography, and an isolationist foreign policy, championed by the incumbent.[61]

Corresponding to the divided sentiment are opposing para-church organizations. On the politically conservative side would be the National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs (1965), whose members represent the observant Jewish community on legal, legislative, and civic matters. The National Jewish Coalition (1979) is organized around the goal of promoting Jewish involvement in Republican politics. There is also the government affairs office of the Agudath Israel, which promotes the policy perspectives of orthodoxy.[62]

On the progressivist side are such general interest organizations as the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (1961) and New Jewish Agenda (1980). More focused associations include the World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jewish Organizations (1980), the Jewish Peace Fellowship (1941), and the women's organizations Ezrat Nashim (1972) and the Task Force on Equality of Women in Judaism (1972). As in Protestantism and Catholicism, the list goes on.

While this overview makes no pretense to being comprehensive, it does serve to highlight several new realities. The first is that the polarities existing for a century within Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism have evolved well beyond disputes over theological modernism. The disputes over the meaning of biblical authority (in Protestantism), over loyalty to Rome (in Catholicism), or over the inviolability of Torah and traditional ritual observances (in Judaism) remain important, that is certain. But now the conflict in each tradition has extended beyond the realm of theology and ecclesiastical politics to embrace many of the most fundamental issues and institutions of *public* culture: law, government, education, science, family, and sexuality.

Second, this overview serves to show the institutional embeddedness of the current conflicts. Opponents on whatever side and in whatever faith are not simply discontented; their discontent is organized, directed, and cumulatively speaking, very well funded. A cultural conflict this extensively entrenched will not simply fade away. Apart from the ideological passions that are at play, too much is at stake institutionally for that to happen.

THE REALIGNMENT OF AMERICAN PUBLIC CULTURE

Surveying religiously oriented public affairs organizations illustrates the wide scope and deep institutional embeddedness of the division between the orthodox and progressive within religious traditions. It also illustrates the way in which the polarities within each religious tradition mirror each other across religious traditions. Progressive circles within Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism, on the one hand, express virtually identical ideological concerns and programmatic interests. So too the orthodox within each of these traditions also display virtually indistinguishable anxieties and agendas.

Given this pattern, it is not at all surprising to see these organizational affinities reflected in the attitudes and opinions of the activists themselves.[63] A survey of the leadership of the three major faiths conducted in 1987, for example, documented just this—that two fairly distinct cultural orientations take shape across religious tradition on the basis of theological commitment.[64] The theologically orthodox of each faith and the theologically progressive of each faith divided consistently along the anticipated lines on a wide range of issues. Take the issue of sexual morality as an illustration. The orthodox wings of Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism were significantly more likely to condemn premarital sexual relations and cohabitation as "morally wrong" than each of their progressive counterparts.[65] The orthodox were also between two and three times more likely than progressives to condemn the viewing of pornographic films as morally wrong.[66] The same is true in their attitudes toward family life. For example, when presented with the statement, "It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family," Evangelical Protestants were three times as likely to agree, conservative Catholics were twice as likely to agree, and Orthodox Jews were nearly five times as likely to agree as their progressive counterparts.[67] This distribution of opinion was seen again and again on issues pertaining to the locus of authority in the family and the proper roles of women and men.[68] Not surprisingly, this pattern was generally reflected in the opinion of these leaders when asked about three divisive family policy issues: support for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), the morality of abortion, and homosexuality.[69] Lest one imagine that this range of views was unique to the private matters of family and sexuality, the range was equally evident in how they identified themselves politically.[70] Ideologically the same patterns held. For example, the survey showed that

by a margin of about 2 to 1 in the Protestant and Catholic leadership and 1.5 to 1 in the Jewish leadership, progressives identified themselves as Democrats. Even more telling, progressives in Protestantism were 6 times as likely, in Catholicism were 7.5 times as likely, and in Judaism were nearly twice as likely as their more orthodox counterparts, to describe their political ideology as liberal or left-wing.[71]

As one might expect, this cleavage in political opinion takes concrete form in the orthodox and progressivist views of capitalism and of America's role in international affairs. For example, the orthodox and progressivists differ in often dramatic but also predictable ways over the fairness of big business to working people; the best ways to improve the lot of the poor—economic growth or redistribution; and whether the United States would be better off if it moved toward a more socialist economy.[72] Likewise, they differ in their views of the role of U.S. multinational corporations in the Third World, Europe's neutrality in the East-West conflict, the nuclear freeze, the use of sanctions against the South African government for its policies of apartheid, the creation of a Palestinian homeland, and so on.[73] This survey made it clear, in sum, that the relative embrace of orthodoxy was the single most important explanatory factor in sorting out variation in elite political values. Indeed, it accounts for more variation within and across religious tradition than any other single factor, including people's social class background, race, ethnicity, gender, the size of the organization they work in, and the degree of pietism by which they individually live.[74] Other recent empirical studies have shown identical patterns.[75]

The New Ecumenism

What all of these events graphically illustrate is that the impulse for alliance building among the progressives of different traditions and among the orthodox of different traditions goes beyond mere ideological affinity. These affinities express themselves institutionally as a "new ecumenism"—a new form of cooperative mobilization, in which distinct and separate religious and moral traditions share resources and work together toward common objectives.

Through the better part of the twentieth century, ecumenism was a movement primarily within the mainline Protestant bodies, whose central concern was to join distinct Christian denominations through cooperative effort. In many cases there was an effort to actually unify denominations. This was understood in sociological terms as a bureau-

hostile secular environment.[76] Ecumenism, as it was argued, reduced the number of "competing units," allowing those that remain to compete more effectively for adherents. Under earlier circumstances ecumenism indeed functioned in that way.

Yet if the structure of religious pluralism has changed, then the nature and structure of religious cooperation must be changing as well. Ecumenism can now be understood as a much more encompassing social process. The associations being formed across traditions among the orthodox and among the progressive are not designed so much to maintain or win adherents against the onslaught of secular modernity but to marshal resources against each other and, more important, against the larger cultural forces that each side represents. The new ecumenism, then, represents the key institutional expression of the realignment of American public culture and, in turn, it provides the institutional battle lines for the contemporary culture war.

The clearest ways in which this new ecumenism takes tangible expression is in the joining of forces on behalf of a particular issue or event. When the Civil Rights Restoration Act was being decided in early 1988, for example, it generated organized and coordinated support from the National Organization for Women, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the U.S. Conference of Bishops, the National Abortion Rights Action League, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and a host of mainline Protestant organizations. It was opposed by Agudath Israel, the National Association of Evangelicals, the U.S. Catholic Conference, the National Right to Life Committee, the American Council of Christian Churches, and the American Association of Christian Schools, among others. So too, in the Act for Better Child Care debated throughout the late 1980s and eventually passed in 1990, the National Organization for Women, *Ms.* magazine, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, among others, worked in favor of the measure and squared off against such orthodox groups as Concerned Women for America, the American Council of Christian Churches (as editorialized critically by its own Fundamentalist News Service), and James Dobson's Focus on the Family publication, *Citizen.* The lineup is very predictable at this point: the pattern is seen again and again as policy issues come and go, from the nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court in 1986, to the Housing Now March in 1989, and so on.

Another significant way in which this new ecumenism takes form is within the newly expanded structure of special purpose organizations, especially in the way these organizations relate to each other. In some instances, as a matter of longstanding policy, some groups join other groups in realizing a particular policy objective. The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights provides a telling illustration of this dynamic on the side of orthodoxy.[77] The Catholic League was established in 1973 by a Jesuit priest as a Catholic counterpart to the Jewish Anti-Defamation League and the secular American Civil Liberties Union: "To protect the religious rights and advance the just interests of Catholics in secular society."[78] While it claims to be a nonpartisan organization, working to serve the needs of the whole Catholic community, the league tilts decisively toward the orthodox community in Catholicism. In this, it openly supports the work of like-minded Protestants and Jews. Indeed, the league's first major case came in the defense of Dr. Frank Bolles, a Protestant physician and right-to-life activist. (Bolles had been charged by a Colorado district attorney for "harassing and causing alarm" by mailing out anti-abortion literature.) In the first fifteen years of existence, the league also has publicly defended the right of a Jew to wear his yarmulke while in uniform; it supported Reverend Sun Myung Moon, the leader of the Unification Church, in his tax-evasion case; it has publicly "defended the right of parents [Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish] to give their children a God-centered education"; and so on. A similar dynamic operates on the progressivist side of the cultural divide. The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, for example, officially serves as a government liaison between the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis by representing the positions of these groups to the federal government. Beyond this, however, the center cooperates with a wide variety of liberal Protestant and Catholic denominations and organizations on progressive policy concerns, issuing statements in opposition to the nuclear arms race, to U.S. involvement in Central America, to the Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork. In both cases, the alliances formed are built upon a perceived self-interest. Both organizations tend to support groups and individuals of other religious faiths when such support also advances their own particular objectives.

The activists in these organizations communicate with each other, and even draw direct support from each other. For example, in an informal survey of forty-seven of these public affairs organizations, the leadership of all of these groups claimed to be in communication with individuals or groups outside of their own religious or philosphical

tradition and most of these had engaged in active cooperation.[79] The public affairs office of the Orthodox Jewish organization Agudath Israel, for example, regularly allies with Catholics on concerns over private education and conservative Protestants on moral issues. The overwhelming majority of these organizations were supported by grass-roots contributions and of these all but one or two claimed to receive contributions from Protestants, Catholics, the Eastern Orthodox Church, and Jews. In the early 1980s, for example, 30 percent of the membership of the Moral Majority was Catholic. Finally, roughly half of these groups sought to make explicit and public their commitment to coalition formation (that is, the larger ecumenism) by deliberately including representation from the range of traditions on their organization's board of advisors or board of trustees. The (orthodox) American Family Association, for example, advertises an advisory board that includes four Catholic bishops and one cardinal, three Eastern Orthodox bishops including the Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church, and dozens of Evangelical and Pentecostal leaders.[80]

The new ecumenism is further seen in the emergence of still other special purpose organizations whose explicit aim is to formally bind together the orthodox of different faiths or the progressives of different faiths to oppose coalitions on the other side. Such groups seem to develop with greater facility on the progressive side of the cultural divide. Bea Blair's organization, the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights (discussed in the prologue), for example, was founded in 1973 to consolidate the efforts of the various independent pro-choice organizations. By 1988, it had thirty-one member groups, including such diverse ones as the American Jewish Congress, Catholics for a Free Choice, the American Humanist Association, the YWCA, the United Methodist Church, and the Women's League for Conservative Judaism. The Religious Network for Equality for Women was founded in 1976 as a coalition of forty-one Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and humanist groups committed to education and advocacy on behalf of the cause of "economic justice for women." Among its members were associations representing Episcopalians, Catholic nuns, Baptists, Conservative and Reform Jews, Quakers, Unitarians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, and Mormons. An equal amount of diversity is represented in other coalitions for women's issues (such as Church Women United [1941] and the Panel of American Women [1957]), in the gay rights movement (such as the Lesbian and Gay Interfaith Alliance and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force), in antinuclear and pacifist groups (such as the Fellowship of Reconciliation [1915], Clergy and Laity Concerned [1965], the Interfaith Center to Reverse the Arms Race [1980], the Religious Task Force [1977], and Action Against Armageddon [1984]), in groups concerned with foreign policy (such as Coalition for a New Foreign Policy [1976], the Inter-Religious Task Force on Central America [1980], the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility [1974]), and in organizations generally committed to both countering the agenda of the religious right and advocating liberal conceptions of public life—such as People for the American Way [1980], National Impact [1969], Network [1971], the Interchange Resource Center [1978], and the Washington Interfaith Staff Council (WISC).

The number of formal coalitions drawing together orthodox patterns is far fewer in number primarily because of their commitment to the primacy of theological distinctiveness. A few do exist: one of the most important is the Center for Pastoral Renewal, which actively seeks to draw together theologically conservative Catholics, Evangelical Protestants, and Eastern Orthodox leaders for the purposes of forging a new orthodox ecumenism. The center sponsors annual Allies for Faith and Renewal conferences in which orthodox Christians of all confessions come together to work through common problems. The independent periodical *Touchstone: A Journal of Ecumenical Orthodoxy* works toward the same goals. The Coalitions for America, organized through Free Congress, draws together politically conservative activists, whether religiously oriented or not, on numerous issues, from abortion to national defense. Through the 1980s the National Pro-Family Coalition was active: this was a coalition of numerous "pro-family, pro-decency, pro-morality, and pro-life organizations" all committed to achieving a "just and humane society functioning in accordance with the moral imperatives of the Judeo-Christian ethic."[81] And Americans for Educational Choice, an organization closely affiliated with Mae Duggan's Citizens for Educational Freedom, is made up of theologically orthodox Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish organizations committed to educational choice through tuition tax credits or vouchers.

It is important to note that these coalitional organizations on both sides of the divide vary considerably in their size, scope of activity, and ability to actually unify member groups. A few, like the World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jewish Organizations, and the National Coalition for Public Education and Religious Liberty, have a staff of two to four people and a budget under $50,000 and their actual political engagement barely reaches beyond the letterhead on their stationery. Others, such

ic Liberty Lobby, Clergy and Laity Concerned, Concerned Women
America, and People for the American Way, have a staff of twenty
fifty or more, budgets of a half a million to 10 million dollars, and
efficiently administered. They carry enormous social power.[82] Yet
at is relevant here is neither the size nor effectiveness of the orga-
ations but their very existence. Their very presence on the political
dscape aptly symbolizes the nature and direction of a major realign-
nt in public culture.

Justifying the New Alliances

s essential to note that the realignment of public culture does not
e place without tension. For example, the memory of anti-Catholicism
anti-Semitism remains in the minds of many Catholics and Jews,
reshed periodically by incidents of interreligious prejudice. Suspicions
ll sides linger. Yet insofar as the resolution to the issues of contem-
ary public debate (abortion, the role of women, the changing struc-
e of the family, homosexuality, nuclear proliferation, the "failures"
ublic education, the meaning of the "separation between church and
e," and the like) is not forthcoming, the pressures for interreligious
ignment in public culture mount. At the same time, the pressure to
rate or overlook existing tensions also rises.

Yet it is not enough to simply tolerate the tensions. Given the long
ory of interreligious antagonism, realignment must be justified. On
progressivist side, such explanations are linked to basic concerns for
ival. As a publication of the Union of American Hebrew Congre-
ons in 1983 put it, the "renaissance of interreligious communication
cooperation . . . emerges out of profound concern with the moral
social issues of the 80's which uniquely threaten our physical and
ical survival. The nuclear arms race, the suffering engendered by
e of unemployment unsurpassed since Depression Days and radical
mpts to eradicate First Amendment Constitutional protections; al-
every social issue, every social welfare concern is being addressed
terreligious coalitions of decency."[83] A spokesman for the progres-
y oriented Washington Interreligious Staff Council agreed: "Dif-
nt communities of faith converge because they share the same
eption of the common good."[84]

Interestingly, on the orthodox side, the justification for interreli-
s cooperation is also linked to survival. A statement made in 1986
by the Fundamentalist writer Tim LaHaye is illuminating in this regard. Despite basic theological differences, he begins, "Protestants, Catholics and Jews do share two very basic beliefs: we all believe in God to Whom we must give account some day for the way we live our lives; we share a basic concern for the moral values that are found in the Old Testament." LaHaye continues,

> If religious Americans work together in the name of our mutually shared moral concerns, we just might succeed in re-establishing the civic moral standards that our forefathers thought were guaranteed by the Constitution.
>
> I realize that such statements may cause me to lose my fundamentalist membership card, but I really believe that we are in a fierce battle for the very survival of our culture. . . . Obviously I am not suggesting joint evangelistic crusades with these religions; that would reflect an unacceptable theological compromise for all of us. [Nevertheless], all of our nation's religious citizens need to develop a respect for other religious people and their beliefs. We need not accept their beliefs, but we can respect the people and realize that we have more in common with each other than we ever will with the secularizers of this country. It is time for all religiously committed citizens to unite against our common enemy.[85]

In 1984, the Evangelical activist Franky Schaeffer observed that

> our backs are against the wall and we are facing an aggressively secularistic society whose powerful elements are deliberately attempting to eradicate what little remains of orthodox religious influence in society. The majority of Christians are either asleep or simply do not care. The minority of activist believers no longer have the luxury of concentrating solely on denominational and church affairs and petty theological differences. *The time has come for those who remain to band together in an ecumenism of orthodoxy.* Unlike liberal ecumenicism which is bound together by unbelief, this ecumenicism is based upon what we *agree* to be the essence of the Christian faith, including an orthodoxy of belief in social concerns and priorities.[86]

It is not just the Protestant fundamentalists who feel these pressures to cooperate.[87] As the director of the public affairs office of Agudath Israel argued, "Joint efforts with Catholics and Protestants do not mean that

we Jews are endorsing their theology." He said, "We can overlook our religious differences because politically, it makes sense."[88] A spokesman for the Catholic League maintained, "The issues are too important to have a denominational focus."[89] Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman similarly noted, "As a Jew, I differ with a variety of Bible-believing Christians on theology, our nation's social agenda, and matters of public policy. I am, at times, repelled by fits of fanaticism and a narrow-minded, rigid dogmatism among fundamentalist extremists. Yet far greater than these differences and objections is the common moral and spiritual frame of reference I share with Christians, including fundamentalists. The Bible gave our nation its moral vision. And today, America's Bible Belt is our safety belt, the enduring guarantee of our fundamental rights and freedoms."[90]

The moral reasoning employed by both sides of the cultural divide to legitimate these alliances, then, is very much alike. In brief, though the alliances being formed among the orthodox or among the progressives across religious tradition are historically "unnatural" they have become pragmatically necessary. In the end, they are justified by the simple dictum that "an enemy of an enemy is a friend of mine."

THE COLLAPSE OF THE OLD DIVIDE

The divisions among Protestant, Catholic, and Jew have had such a significant place in Western civilization for so many centuries that it is difficult to imagine pluralism (at least in this context) in any other way. These formal divisions (and to a lesser extent, those ecclesiastical divisions within these faiths) remain the significant ones in the popular imagination, the relevant ones for public policy, and the decisive ones in intellectual circles, particularly in modern social science. They remain part of the taken-for-granted scenery of public life in America and Europe.

The ways in which scholars conceptualize pluralism is especially interesting, for here we see that the habits of social science are as difficult to break as any. With a few exceptions, social science has continued over the past two decades to measure religious and cultural pluralism in a manner that reifies, as it were, the divisions among the major religious traditions as the correct way to think about cultural pluralism in America. Based upon this methodology, social science has also gradually documented religion's declining significance as an explanatory variable. Whether one is a Protestant, Catholic, or Jew simply does not mean very much when attempting to explain variations in people's attitudes or values. As a result, the larger social scientific community has come to assume that general religious preference may be irrelevant or "epiphenomenal." Indeed, in many recent empirical investigations, formal religious variables have not even been included as a part of the research strategy. They just do not make any difference anymore.

Old habits die hard but die they must, for the evidence strongly suggests that the significant divisions on public issues are no longer defined by the distinct traditions of creed, religious observance, or ecclesiastical politics. These do remain strong sources of personal meaning and communal identity, but their consequence for public culture has dwindled substantially. In other words, it is increasingly difficult to speak of the Protestant position or the Catholic position or the Jewish position (or, for that matter, the Mormon or Buddhist position) vis-à-vis American public culture. Meanwhile, other kinds of differences have expanded: increasingly the politically consequential divisions are those that separate the orthodox from the progressive *within* religious traditions. And orthodox and progressive factions of the various faiths do not speak out as isolated voices but increasingly as a common chorus. In this, the political relevance of the historical divisions between Protestant and Catholic and Christian and Jew has largely become defunct.

Yet I want to stress again that the lines separating orthodox and progressive, or conservative and liberal, are not, in reality, always sharp. Some notable ideological cross-currents flow against the larger cultural tendencies. First, even if their numbers are relatively few, one cannot ignore the presence on the public scene of, among others, pro-life feminists and libertarians, Mormon and Pentecostal homosexuals, Evangelical Christian pacifists, and secularists (even atheists) who are politically conservative, and Fundamentalists who are socialists. Second, and even harder to ignore, are the myriad individuals that define themselves more or less in the middle of the ideological spectrum. Although some may lean ideologically toward the orthodox camp while others lean toward progressivism, no one can fairly describe them as extremists. Third, groups and individuals on the orthodox side have sharp disagreements with others on the orthodox side, and the same is true for the progressivist side. And fourth, there are some who would certainly be classified as being on one side of the cultural divide or another but they wish to

fight their battles alone—they choose not to be aligned at all. All of these realities cannot be disregarded. Yet recognizing the existence of these counterintuitive developments cannot negate the broader tendencies in the realm of public culture. The dominant impulse at the present time is toward the polarization of a religiously informed public culture into two relatively distinct moral and ideological camps.

4

Competing Moral Visions

The realignment of public culture takes institutional form in a shifting configuration of religious and political associations and organizations. This is the lesson of the preceding chapter. At issue are two *relatively* distinct and competing visions of public life. To identify the predominant and polarizing tendencies as "orthodox" and "progressive" suggests a great deal about the nature of these visions. Knowing something about the specific political agenda pursued by either side reveals even more. But to truly understand the depth of contemporary cultural conflict and its historical significance, it is essential to probe more thoroughly into the perspectives on public life being advocated.

Yet, does it go too far to suggest that both sides of the cultural divide represent something as coherent as "perspective"? Certainly there are no comprehensive philosophical treatises articulating in full measure the nature and profile of these visions. There are no modern manifestos declaring a coherent system of programs and goals. What actually exists in public discussion are, very often, nothing more than jumbled accumulations of pronouncements, accusations, appeals, and partisan analyses. It would be foolish to deny the complexity of the divisions, the subtleties and ambivalent moral commitments in the hearts and minds of ordinary Americans. As I have emphasized from the start, Americans find stances across a wide spectrum of values and perspectives. Despite this complexity, it is possible to discern certain cultural tendencies. That is to say, all of these pronouncements, allegations, complaints, and ap-