



Ordinary People Extraordinary Things

Bruce Ballast

Session 13: Declension

Great Awakening	1735-1741
2nd Great Awakening	1799-1840's
Great Revival	1857-1858
Post Civil War	1865-1900's
Post World War II	1950's

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Factors contributing to Revivals

- Time of declension
- God's people feel called to pray
- Prayer leads church to confession and an outbreak of the Holy Spirit
- Revival produces leaders



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Are we primed for another revival?

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1957 96% identify with religious
tradition

1965 Beginning of decline

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UM	1965-1988	– 11 to 9.2 million
PCUSA		4 to 3 million
DofC		2.1 to 1.1 million
Episcopal		3.4 to 2.5 million
Lutheran		5% decline
PUS		7.6% decline
Mergers, but continued decline		

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Early 2000's

Post-Christian

2000 Census

Increase of 11%

Decline of 10%

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Forces of Decline

60's – fabric of society challenged

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Viet Nam War

Living Room War

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Death of God

October 22, 1965



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Death of God

Liberation Theology

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Death of God

Liberation Theology

Supreme Court Decisions

1962 Prayer

1963 Bible reading and prayer
unconstitutional

1968 Arkansas Law

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The ACLU and the New York firm of Skadden Arps attacked the Arkansas law with a powerful case. Their brief is so good that there is talk of publishing it. Their witnesses gave brilliant little summaries of several fields of science, history of sciences, history and religious philosophy.

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...impassioned believers, rebellious educators and scientific oddities. All but one of the creation scientists came from obscure colleges or Bible schools. The one who didn't said he believed diseases dropped from space, that evolution caused Nazism, and that insects may be more intelligent than humans but are hiding their abilities.

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Erosion of Morality

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If you want a bomb, the chemistry department will teach you how to make it; if you want a cathedral, the department of architecture will teach you how to build it; if you want a healthy body, the departments of physiology and medicine will teach you how to tend it.

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But when you ask whether and why you should want bombs or cathedrals or healthy bodies, the university is dumb and impotent. It can give help and guidance in all things subsidiary but not in the attainment of the one thing needful.

S. Barton Babbage.

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Death of God

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Supreme Court Decisions

1984 Tulsa case

1984 Creche display

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Death of God

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Supreme Court Decisions

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“I don’t see what right the church has to tell people how to live.”

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Christian Leader Failure

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Christian Leader Failure

7 million to 3 million (1986-1988)

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Megatrends:

The last time the U.S. experienced such a deeply religious period was during the 19th century, when the country's economy changed from agriculture to industry.

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...in this century we have watched the ideal of progress give way to the return of faith. The worship of science and the rational to a great extent has been thrown over for a religious revival that specifically values the emotional and non-rational.

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Renewals, but not revival

Neo-Pentacostalism

The Third Wave

Growth of Megachurches

Promise Keepers

9-11



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20% unaffiliated

33% of those under 30

Rise of the “nones”

20 – 30 Year olds

$\frac{1}{2}$ the rate

61% of churched high school graduates

78% to 88% in youth groups



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**What Will God
Do?**