

**A SURVEY OF CHRISTIAN HISTORY**  
**Thursday Morning Bible Study**  
**Week Ten: From 1965 to Present Day**  
**June 8, 2017**

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1-2*

**I. The rise of the Church Growth Movement (1965)**

- Founding of the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary by Donald McGavran, the father of the Church Growth Movement. Fuller becomes the center of research into how churches grow worldwide.
- Seminars are held across the US and pastors and leaders begin to follow church growth formulas that codify when to add pastoral staff; when to add a new service; how many parking places a church needs to grow etc.
- The emphasis is on reaching unreached people and conversions. The downside is it led to an overemphasis on attracting people and an under-emphasis on discipleship and lifechange. The "seeker sensitive" movement was a result.

**II. The 6 Day War – Israel re-captures Jerusalem (June 5-11, 1967)**

- Israel gained control of the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and the formerly Jordanian-controlled West Bank of the Jordan River, including East Jerusalem.
- For the first time since the end of the British Mandate, Jews could visit the Old City of Jerusalem and pray at the Western Wall to which they had been denied access by the Jordanians (in contravention of the 1949 Armistice agreement). For the first time since the Bar Kokhba Revolt in 135 the Jews controlled Jerusalem.

**III. The United Methodist Church is formed (1968)**

- Formed in Dallas Texas in 1968 in a union between the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church. With over 7.2 million members in the US, it is the largest mainline Protestant denomination in the US and the second largest after the Southern Baptist Convention.

**IV. The Jesus People Movement (1970's)**

- The Jesus People Movement began on the West Coast in the late 1960s and early 1970s and spread from there throughout North America, Europe, and Central America. Members of the movement were called Jesus People, or Jesus

Freaks. Many were young people of the Hippie Generation who had come out of the drug culture of the 60's.

- The Jesus Movement sought to return to the life of the early church. Jesus People often viewed churches, especially those in the United States, as suspect. They called for a return to simple living which resulted in many communes being formed. They had a strong belief in miracles, signs and wonders, faith, healing, prayer, the Bible, and powerful works of the Holy Spirit. The movement also emphasized evangelism and Jesus' Second Coming. Some of the most influential books by those within the movement included Ron Sider's *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* and Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth*.
- The informality of the Jesus movement's music and worship affected almost all evangelical churches. Some of the fastest growing US denominations of the late 20th century, such as Calvary Chapel, Hope Chapel Churches, and the Vineyard Churches, trace their roots directly back to the Jesus Movement, as do parachurch organizations like Jews for Jesus.
- One of the longest lasting legacies of the movement was its effect on Christian music. Street musicians of the late 1960s and early 1970s began to follow Jesus. They continued to play the same style of music they had played previously but now with a Christian message. Many groups developed out of this, most notably Barry McGuire, Love Song, Second Chapter of Acts, Petra, Phil Keaggy, Paul Stookey of Peter, Paul, and Mary; Randy Stonehill, Randy Matthews, Andraé Crouch (and the Disciples), Keith Green, and Larry Norman.

#### **V. China opened again to the West (1972)**

- February 21-28, 1972, President Nixon visits China
- Western missionaries returned shortly thereafter and found an exploding Chinese Church based on house churches!
- There were more Christians in China when the western missionaries returned than when they had left. Predictions of the church's demise were totally wrong!

#### **VI. The NIV Translation published (1973)**

- Translated by a group of Evangelical scholars in order to provide a more readable Bible in American English and to use the best textual scholarship available.
- The New Testament was published in 1973 and the Old Testament in 1978. It was revised in 1984 and once again in 2011. It has become one of the most popular translations of the Bible in use today.
- The NIV strikes a balance between the two philosophies of modern translators, literal and dynamic equivalence or word for word vs. phrase for phrase.

#### **VII. James Dobson forms Focus on the Family (1977)**

- James Dobson, Christian psychologist and formerly on the psychology faculty at USC, founded Focus on the Family in 1977. It featured a daily radio program that Dobson hosted which soon became one of the leading voices among Evangelicals

for issues related to family, marriage, parenting, fighting pornography, and the homosexual agenda in America.

- Through the 1980's and 1990's Dobson became one of the leading voices for conservative evangelical political causes. He left Focus in 2009 over a dispute with the new president and is no longer affiliated with FOF.

### **VIII. Pope John Paul II elected Pope (1978-2005)**

- Cardinal Karol Wojtyla was Archbishop of Krakow in Poland and the first non-Italian Pope since 1522 and one of the youngest Pope's upon election at only 58 years of age.
- He was a young man in Nazi occupied Poland and was ordained to the priesthood in 1946. He was ordained Bishop in Krakow in 1958 and participated in Vatican II. He was made Cardinal 1967. Most of his ministry in Poland was carried out under Communist rule.
- He was elected Pope in 1978. Pope John Paul II had an immediate connection with Catholic laypeople across the world. He was the most widely traveled Pope in modern history, visiting some 129 countries including the United States. At a public mass in Manila in January 1995 on World Youth Day he spoke to between 5 & 7 million people, the largest single gathering in Christian history. He especially understood the use of media to communicate the Catholic message to the world.
- Pope John Paul II was instrumental in the fall of Communism in Poland and in Europe. His visit to Poland as Pope in June of 1979 and his support of the Solidarity Movement was a catalyst for the collapse of the Communist government in his native land.
- After his death in 2005 he was declared a saint by Pope Francis on April 27, 2014.

### **IX. American culture changes from a church to an unchurched culture**

- Church membership peaks in America in 1967, 64% of Americans claim to be members of a church.
- Ever since then there has been a steady decline in the number of people who claim church membership and a growth in those who claim no religious allegiance, the so-called "none's".
- From the Supreme Court decision in 1962 to outlaw official prayer in public schools to the current day there has been a steady movement away from the values of the church in the culture. Included in that is the growing acceptance of homosexuality and gay marriage, abortion on demand, couples living together without marriage and today's gender confusion issues.
- Especially on both coasts and some large Midwestern cities Evangelical Christians and our values are in the distinct minority. The Millennial Generation (20's & 30's) is the most unchurched generation in our lifetimes.
- A 2014 Gallup Survey found the most church state in the Union is Utah with 51% church attendance. The most unchurched was Vermont with only 17%

attendance. Washington and Oregon came in at 24% tied for 45<sup>th</sup> place with only DC, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont with lower percentages.

#### **X. Christianity ceases to be the "*white man's religion*" (1984)**

- 1984 was a watershed moment in Christian history. For the first time there were more Christians in Asia, Africa and Latin America than in North America and Europe. The majority of Christians in the world today are among non-Caucasian races.
- The fastest growing churches in the world today are no longer in North America and Europe.

#### **XI. The rise of the mega-churches**

- Out of the Church Growth Movement began to emerge huge churches all over the world. In America Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago, Saddleback Church in Irvine, California and Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas are the most well-known examples of megachurches.
- The largest churches in the world are not in the United States.
  - The largest Presbyterian Church is in Seoul Korea – 20,000 members
  - The largest Methodist Church in the world is in Santiago, Chile – 40,000 members
  - The largest single congregation in the world is the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, Korea, at last count with 480,000 members in 2015.

#### **XII. The Jesus Seminar founded (1985)**

- The Seminar was founded by 150 liberal scholars and laymen looking to re-establish the search for the Historical Jesus. They used a voting method based on colored beads to determine whether Jesus actually said or did something reported in the Gospels. A Red bead was for Jesus said it. A Pink bead meant Jesus said something like it. A grey bead meant the saying contained Jesus' ideas but he didn't say it. A black bead meant Jesus didn't say this instead it reflects early church ideas about Jesus.
- Their conclusion from their research and voting was that Jesus was an itinerant Hellenistic Jewish sage and faith-healer who preached a gospel of liberation from injustice through startling parables and sayings. Jesus broke with established Jewish theology and social norms in both his teachings and his behavior. According to the Seminar, Jesus was a mortal man born of two human parents, who did not perform nature miracles nor die as a substitute for sinners nor rise bodily from the dead. Sightings of a risen Jesus were nothing more than the visionary experiences of some of his disciples rather than physical encounters.
- Representatives of The Jesus Seminar have become popular to quote whenever stories about Jesus surface in the media, especially Dominic Crossan.

#### **XIII. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe & Russia (1989-1992)**

- On November 4, 1989, East German guards refused to fire on demonstrators demanding to be let into West Berlin but instead opened the gates of the wall to West Berlin. Soon demonstrators were tearing down sections of the wall and the Communist government of East Germany soon collapsed. Germany was officially reunited on October 3, 1990.
- Similar movements happened in other Eastern European countries that had been part of the former Communist Warsaw Pact. They were led by non-Communists, many of whom were Christians, either Catholic or Protestant. They were people like Lech Walesa in Poland, or Vaclav Havel in what was then Czechoslovakia. Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania all soon followed.
- The Soviet Union itself was dissolved in 1991. Communism as an ideology was discredited in Europe. With the collapse of Communism native Orthodox churches, Roman Catholics and Protestants were now free to evangelize again and come out from under persecution and suppression. The church across Eastern Europe began to grow and missionaries were invited to come teach and help spread the gospel.

#### **XIV. September 11, 2001**

- The Twin Towers and the Pentagon were attacked by Islamic Terrorists led by Osama Bin Laden. The world and especially the US changed overnight.
- Church attendance spiked after 9/11 but then gradually subsided after a year.
- Since 9/11 we have witnessed increasing persecution of Christians in the Muslim world especially by Muslim Fundamentalists like ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

#### **XV. Mainline denominations fracture over the ordination of homosexuals and homosexual marriage**

- Beginning in 1978 the question of homosexual ordination came up for a vote yearly in the Presbyterian Church USA. The same issue was brought up again and again in the Methodist Church, Lutheran Church, Episcopal Church, United Church of Christ and in other mainline denominations. In the last ten years the issue of redefining marriage to be inclusive of homosexuals has also been debated vigorously.
- These debates have led to schism in the churches with many congregations leaving their parent denominations to either form their own independent churches or to join more conservative and evangelical denominations.

#### **XVI. Pope Francis elected, the 1<sup>st</sup> Latin American Pope (2013)**

- Francis becomes the first non-European Pope since Gregory III from Syria in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. He is the first Jesuit Pope and the first Pope from Latin America.
- Francis has shaken up the Catholic Church by rejecting many of the trappings of the papacy, including the elaborate papal apartments in Vatican City. He has been a champion of the poor and advocated for a softening of the church's rhetoric concerning homosexuality, divorce, abortion and other hot-button social issues.

## **XVII. Southside Christian Church founded (November 4, 2001)**

- Conditions at Manito Presbyterian Church in 2000: the church was growing but landlocked. We knew we needed to move. We had property out south on 65<sup>th</sup> but in order to build an adequate building with parking estimates put the cost at 5-6 million dollars. Plus property was still held in trust by the denomination.
- We formed three teams near the beginning of 2001. First was a denominational team to determine if we were in synch or out of synch with the PCUSA and how we should respond. The second was a team to look at commercial real estate to find an alternative site. The third was a team to determine the financial principles we would use in the process, especially the issue of debt.
- In the summer of 2001 the denominational team presented their conclusion to the congregation. We were out of synch and the options were to either stay to reform the PCUSA or walk away with nothing and leave. We recommended leaving.
- On September 9, 2001 the congregation voted overwhelmingly to leave the PCUSA and walk away from the building. It was 85% to 15% in favor. All the pastors, elders and the staff, except for the organist and janitor voted to leave.
- Later in September Pastors Doug and Galen renounced their ordination in the PCUSA and informed the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest of our determination to leave.
- We had asked the Presbytery to be able to stay in the building at Manito until January 2002 to give us time to find a place to worship. The Presbytery refused and told us we had until October 31<sup>st</sup> to vacate the property even though we did not know where we would be meeting and had no place secured. They would not allow the new church to exist side by side with those who had remained with the denomination.
- The real estate team had looked at multiple properties finding nothing. Finally someone suggested we look into the old Lincoln Heights Theaters which had been vacant for several years. It was in poor shape but we could see the potential.
- When the team approached the landlord he did not want a church leasing his building. Plus there was an Italian restaurant leasing what is now the kitchen end of the building including Promiseland 1-4. We agreed to meet with him again the next week and told everyone to *PRAY*. A week later the team met again with the landlord and he said he had no objections of having a church rent the building.
- We then told him we wanted a 10 year lease with an option to buy the building in years 7-10. He said he was never going to sell. We agreed to meet again in a week. We told everyone to *PRAY* again! He came back and said he agreed to let us buy the building in year 5 and after of the lease for 2.3 million dollars which included the Italian restaurant and all the parking. It was an extraordinary offer and we agreed.
- We held a massive work party on Saturday, October 27<sup>th</sup> to clean out the old theaters and set up for the next Sunday. The Youth Center became Promiseland. The back of the church offices became the nursery and what is now the Meeting

Place became the space where the youth groups met. It still had a sloped floor and limited lighting.

- The first worship service at Southside Christian Church was held on November 4, 2001. We had an overhead projector for worship lyrics and nursery alerts to parents. Parents had to walk outside around to the Youth Center to pick up their children from Promiseland.
- Over the next year we remodeled the two smaller theaters down in today's nursery area putting in flat floors and new ceilings. The restaurant went bankrupt and we were able to take possession of it as well.
- After about two years of occupancy we realized we needed to purchase the property ASAP because we were spending upwards of \$16,000 in rent. We asked the landlord if we could speed up the purchase of the building and he agreed. Three years after we moved in we had raised all the money, purchased the property and paid it off in full! We own it free and clear!
- Other things have happened since like the fall of the Senior Pastor who helped found the church and some people leaving after we changed our stances on baptism and women elders. But, despite all those events we are still here and as strong as ever. God has blessed us beyond measure!!!