



Beyond the Ballot

*Evangelicals in the Political Arena
Pre-1970s*

Making America Great

- In the 1800s, an evangelical was a Protestant Christian
- Second Great Awakening (1800-1830)
 - Arminianism applied.
 - As the Revolution had stressed man's ability to choose a new country, the Awakening stressed man's ability to choose his God.
 - Since man can choose God, preacher needs to use any means necessary to elicit that choice.
 - A postmillennialism mixed with national optimism.
If enough Americans are saved and holy, Christ will return!

Making America Great

- Professions all over America, churches swelled with massive numbers.
- Evangelicals focused on social action to perfect America for Christ's return.
 - Fought against Sabbath-breaking, prostitution, Catholicism.
 - Built orphanages, shelters, worked for women's suffrage.
 - Many northerners saw slavery as the last major evil to fight. Civil War took on apocalyptic imagery (ex: Battle Hymn)

Making America Great

- Evangelicals in the north and south motivated to make America into a righteous empire.
- Widespread belief that America will usher in Christ's kingdom through revival and social perfection.
- Great social work accomplished.
- Evangelicalism, a revivalist movement. Not politically active on a large scale.

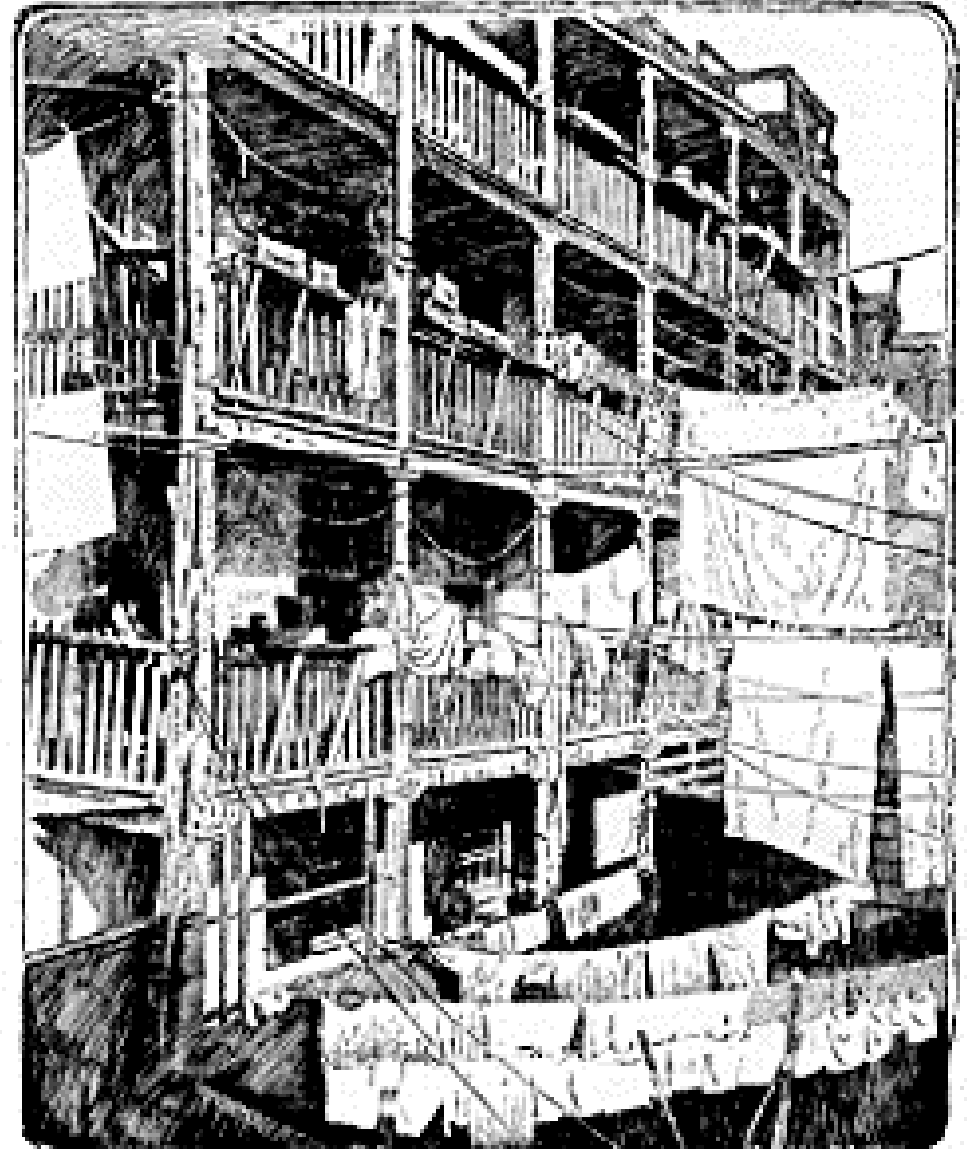
Cracks in the Foundation

Social & Theological Changes After the Civil War

- Industrial Revolution provided countless jobs
- 500,000 immigrants/year arrived for next 50 years.
- Cities exploded with growth around the factories.
- Catholicism began to seriously grow.
- Challenges to biblical authority from German seminaries (ex: higher criticism, evolution)
- Traditional seminaries started to reject biblical doctrines.

Social Problems

- City sanitation couldn't keep up with explosive growth.
- Real estate prices increased, and so did massive slums.
- Industrial waste (air, land, water)
- No safety protection in dangerous conditions (workers maimed)
- Children had to work to help dad make enough for the family.
- 10-15 people in a home (squalor)



AN OLD REAR-TENEMENT IN
ROOSEVELT STREET.

Cracks in the Foundation

The Second Great Awakening emphasized conversions. It didn't encourage that generation to think biblically.

The next generations of evangelicals couldn't think biblically. Thus, evangelicals responded in the following ways...

- America needs more conversions (Revivalism)
- Solution lies in social action (Liberalism)
- Call for personal perfection (Wesleyanism)
- Need more of the Spirit (Pentecostalism)

Cracks in the Foundation

By the eve of WWI...

- Evangelicals sensed differences in their ranks. Few people in the pews understood the gravity of it all.
- Hardly anyone saw the need to read “The Fundamentals.”
 - *We’re sending out record numbers of missionaries!*
 - *Prohibition laws exist in every state! (Inst. Tie, 1908)*
 - *America is still Christian!*
- Few churches emphasized making disciples.

Cracks in the Foundation

- Churches did emphasize God and country.

To be an American is to be a Christian.

- America needs more conversions (Revivalism)
- Solution lies in social action (Liberalism)
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To Preserve Christian Civilization
To Secure National Blessing

Reclaiming Christian America

WWI was a wakeup call

- Sudden realization for conservative evangelicals that our “Christian” America isn’t so Christian anymore.
- Evolution and higher criticism were being taught here. Where did these come from? Germany.
- Anti-German fury erupted, encouraged from the pulpits.
- Militant evangelicals who were ready to battle for the soul of America were known as fundamentalists (Mainstream level, fight was to save America)

Reclaiming Christian America

“The new theology has the ‘Made in Germany’ mark upon it... The new theology has led Germany into barbarism, and it will lead any nation into the same demoralization.” — T. Spencer.

“Christianity and Patriotism are synonymous terms... and hell and traitors are synonymous.” — Billy Sunday.

“All ills from which America suffers can be traced back to the teaching of evolution.” — William Jennings Bryan.

Reclaiming Christian America

- Mainstream Fundamentalism (1915-1925)
 - WWI sparked fears of changes brought by immigrants
 - Idolatrous love of country, and a vacuum of theology
- Sensationalists arose: Billy Sunday and W. J. Bryan.
 - Sunday preached racial purity, nationalism, and prohibition. Clan membership (4 million). Primarily fundamentalists.
 - Bryan preached against evolution though never read a book on it.
 - Highly inflammatory leaders, powerful speakers with no theological training.

Reclaiming Christian America

Fears and anger melded conservative evangelicals into a political force for the first time in history.

- Coalition with non-Christians to pass Prohibition.

Evangelical fury was largely focused on evolution.

- Scopes Trial (1925). Bryan sensationalized the trial, taunted evolutionists, arrogant.
- Darrow showed Bryan's ignorance of evolution, and Bryan gave a poor defense of biblical creation.
- Result: So humiliated, con. evangelicals went into retreat.

A Great Reversal

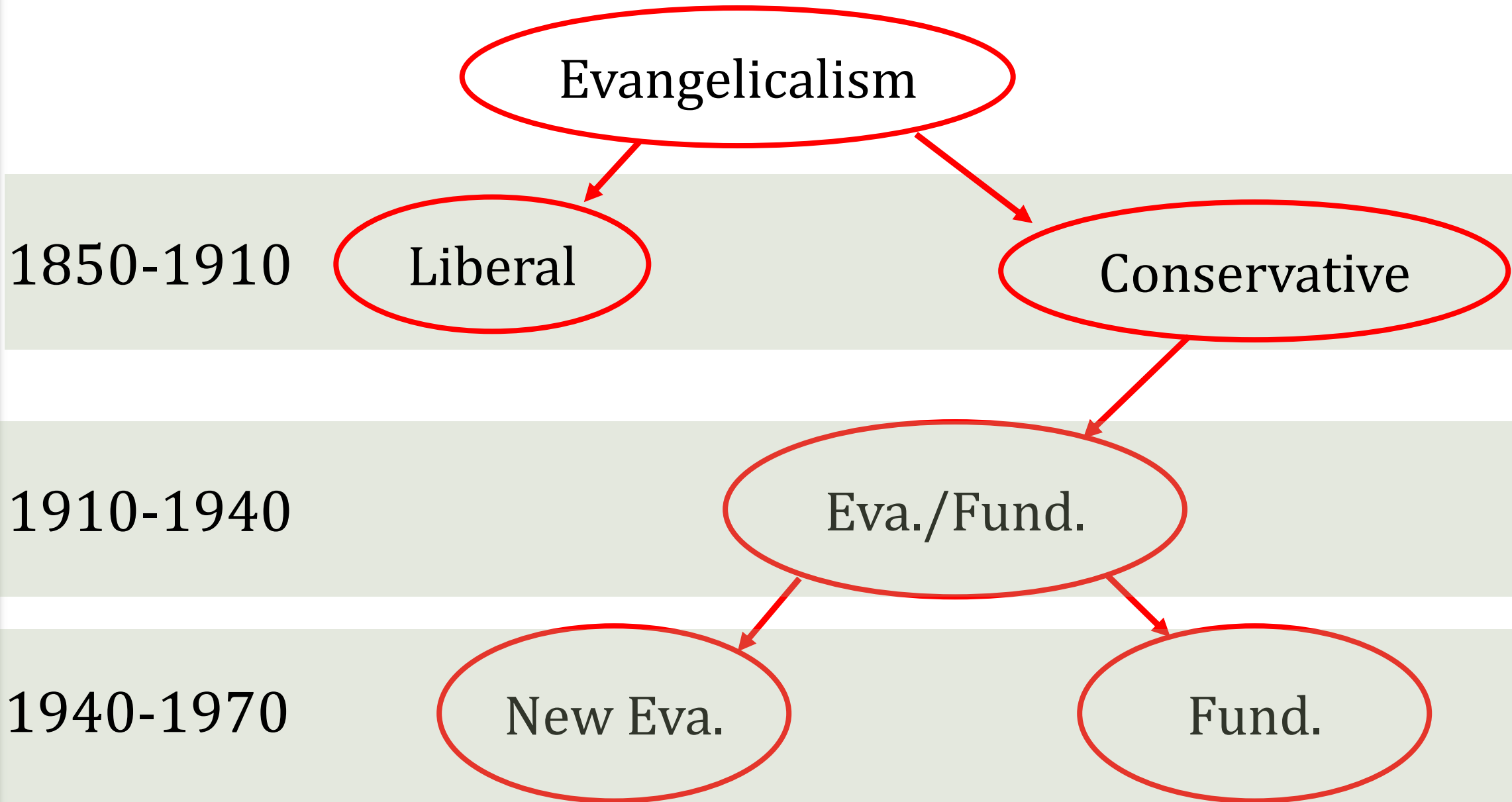
Main Reasons for retreat from politics & society...

- 1) Embarrassment at the Scopes Trial.
- 2) Realization that mainstream America isn't Christian.
Diversity of people, religions, morals.
- 3) Despair that all efforts to save America failed.
(anti-evolution, anti-Catholic, anti-alcohol campaigns)
- 4) Unclear what to do now.

A Great Reversal

“No voice is speaking today as Paul would, either at the United Nations sessions, or at labor-management disputes, or in strategic university classrooms whether in Japan or Germany or America.” — Carl Henry (1940).

- Assessment that fundamentalists had become silent. Isolated so much that you can't find anyone boldly proclaiming God's Word in public anymore.
- Suffering of WWII awakened some fundamentalists. *Doesn't God's Word have anything to offer a hurting world?*



Reforming Fundamentalism

Fundamentalist-Evangelicals

- Ex: Bob Jones, John Norris, John Rice
- Emphasis on doctrinal purity

New Evangelicals

- Ex: Billy Graham, Carl Henry, Bill Bright
- Emphasis on engagement (not necessarily making disciples)

Reforming Fundamentalism

New Evangelicals engaged...

- Strong Theological Emphasis (unlike Sunday and Bryan)
Ex: Fuller Seminary (1947), Resurgence of biblical scholarship
- Explosion of Mission Organizations
Ex: InterVarsity (1941), Campus Crusade (1948), etc.
- Revivalist Emphasis
Ex: Billy Graham Crusades

The New Evangelicals were not politically active.
(Fundamentalists were not either)

Fear and anger began to rise in the 1960s.
(Two powerful forces that move people to action)

- The Cold War, atomic weapons, and WWII.
- The sexual revolution, feminism, and gay rights
- Removal of prayer from public schools (1963)
- Legalization of abortion (1973)
- Impeachment of President Nixon (1974)

Reforming Fundamentalism

- Evangelicals and Fundamentalists were acutely aware that America was changing. Both groups felt an urgency to do *something* to save America.
(Pastors widely connected Christianity with patriotism)
- Two unlikely fundamentalist pastors emerged who would chart a path for doing something.
- Southern Baptist ministers:
Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson.