

Bargain "Religions"

Introduction

a. Many people

crowded, new ones being
uprising & church membership
1. Popularity - publicity cycle

a. Such national figures

b. Public image - advertising

c. Business

**BARGAIN
RELIGION**

BARGAIN RELIGION 50 YEARS AGO

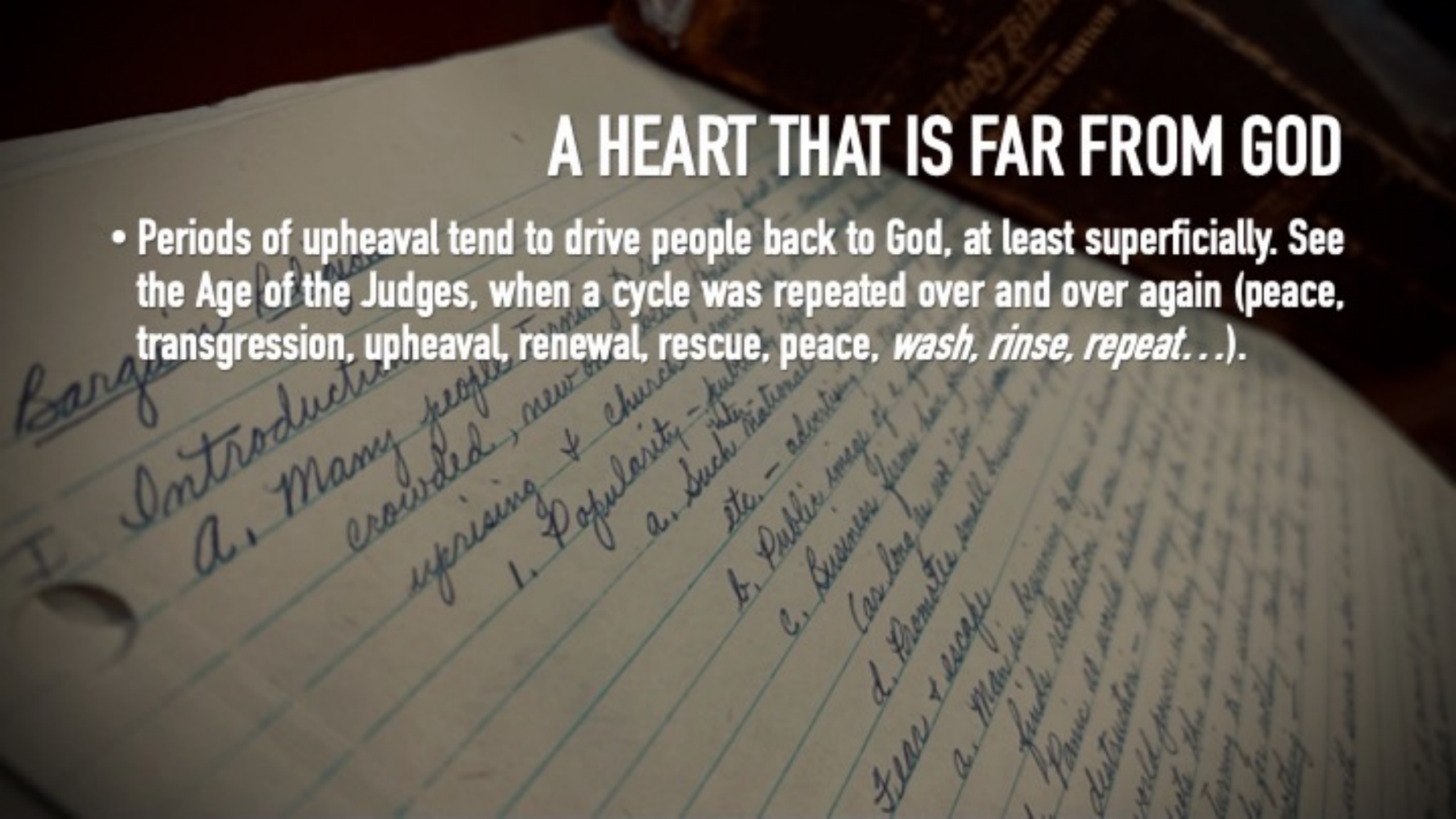
- Grandpa Bill's notes offer a peak into the religious environment of his time. Because of the popularity and charisma of religious leaders like Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, and others, American Christianity (broadly defined) saw a resurgence in the 1970s and 80s. Even up to 1999, 70% of Americans were members of a church or a synagogue.

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- Part of this was driven by fear — atomic destruction, unsettling cultural trends, the ongoing “cold war” between East and West, unrest in the Middle East, and the sagging international prestige of the United States post-Vietnam. Religion provided a sense of normalcy and safety.

A HEART THAT IS FAR FROM GOD

- Periods of upheaval tend to drive people back to God, at least superficially. See the Age of the Judges, when a cycle was repeated over and over again (peace, transgression, upheaval, renewal, rescue, peace, *wash, rinse, repeat...*).



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- In the period before the Babylonian captivity, Judah seemed on the outside to return to God, but much of it was showy fanfare. In Josiah's time, a Passover was celebrated that was greater than any for generations. Idols and high places were destroyed. The Law was read among the people. Yet, all of this was forgotten by the next king! Jeremiah and Zephaniah prophesied during the days of Josiah, if that's any indication (Zeph. 1:12, Jer. 7:1-11).

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- Isaiah 29:13-14, Matthew 15:7-20

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I. Introduction
a. m...

Turning to religion for help
once being established -
membership now paid

"In some respects this is not a healthy sign, because, instead of turning to Christ, men are turning to a weakened, watered-down counterfeit religion that in reality stands for nothing, teaches nothing, demands nothing, costs nothing, and is worth nothing – in other words, a bargain religion."

-Bill Fain

Bargain "Religions"

Introduction

a. Many people turning to religion for last time
crowded, new ones being introduced -
uprising & church membership now fast
1. Popularity - publicity cycle
a. Such as -
b. Public
c. Business
d. Promote small

So, what's
different today?

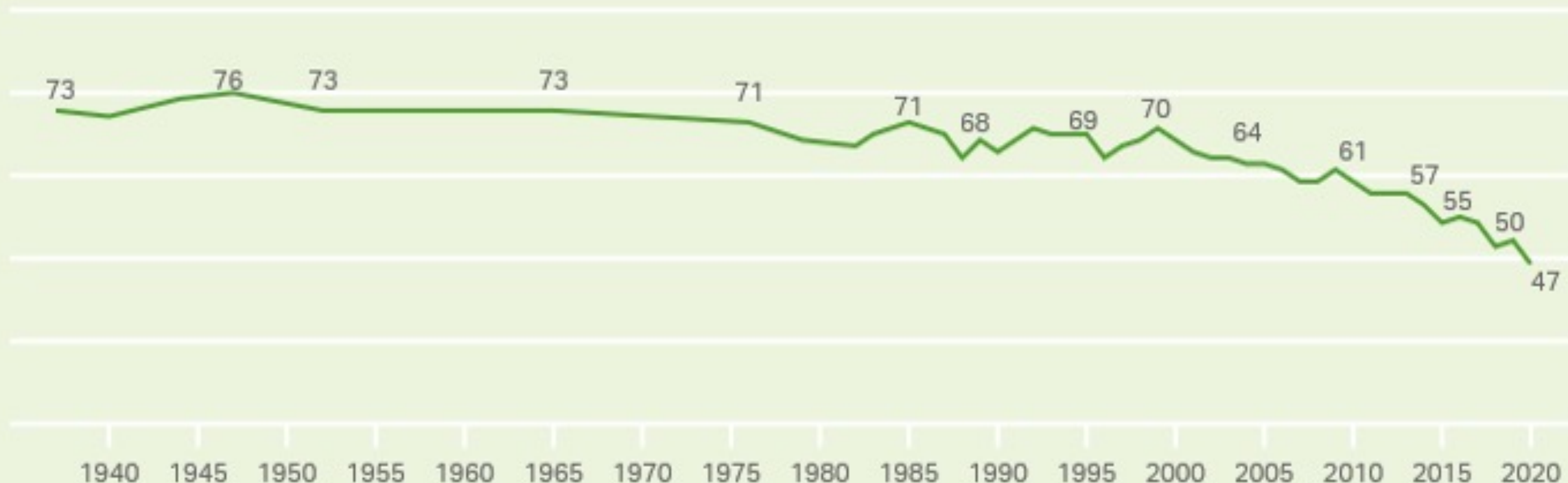
Fear & escape

a. Manichee beginning
funde adaptation
Panic at world
destruction -
world from nothing
but the world I had
turning it a world
to get nothing
nothing

Church Membership Among U.S. Adults Now Below 50%

Do you happen to be a member of a church, synagogue or mosque?

— % Yes, member



Based on annual aggregated data, usually based on two surveys

GALLUP

THEY'RE STILL SELLING A BARGAIN, BUT FOLKS AREN'T BUYING IT ANYMORE

- While the issue in the 1970s–80s was that Christianity was convenient and popularized by televangelists and their allies (resulting in a cheap pop-culture version of the gospel), the problem today is that churches are so desperate not to lose members that they've intentionally watered-down major components of the faith that are deemed offensive, divisive, or antiquated.

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- In their attempts at recapturing the popularity of the 20th Century, they've jettisoned everything that would make them unpopular today. Ironically, it is liberal Protestant denominations that are losing the most members!



WHEN GOING THE BARGAIN ROUTE COSTS YOU

- Adam and Eve (Genesis 3) — For one bite of food when they were not even hungry
- Lot's wife (Genesis 19) — For one last look at a life left behind
- Esau (Genesis 25) — For one bowl of red stuff
- Achan (Joshua 7) — For a garment he couldn't wear and gold he couldn't spend
- Samson (Judges 16) — For the caress of a woman who had "trouble" written all over
- Ahab (1 Kings 21) — For a field that foreshadowed his demise
- The fool (Matthew 7:26-27) — For a cost- and time-saving shortcut
- Judas (Matthew 27) — For money he couldn't find the will to spend
- Demas (2 Timothy 4:10) — For a world that will never be worth anybody's soul
- Matthew 16:24-27

THREE APPLICATIONS

- YOU CAN'T DO CHRISTIANITY ON THE CHEAP — While it might temporarily help attendance figures or standing in the broader culture, compromise with the world or watering down the faith isn't what God wants. Rather, it is total commitment, absolute self-sacrifice, and unapologetic rejection of the world (John 12:25, 14:14-19, 1 John 2:15-17).

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- SALVATION COSTS NOTHING AND EVERYTHING — Grace cannot be earned (Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 3:24-26). It is described in Romans 6:23 as the "free gift of God", but in the same context we are also called into the service of God! Anything short of complete surrender to Christ is unacceptable (1 Cor. 6:19-20, Matt. 10:37-39).

Bargain "Religion"

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- a. Many people turning to religion - crowded, new ones being sprung up
1. Popularity of church membership
- a. Such that - etc.
- b. Public Amusement
- c. Business
- d. Fear & escape
- a. Many people turning to religion - crowded, new ones being sprung up

I cannot afford the folly of bargain religion