

the church from society.¹¹¹ These movements, which included the civil rights movement, feminist movement, sexual revolution, ecology movement, black power movement, among others, all had as their common fiber a revolt against the standards of U.S. society up until that time, including the influence of the church.¹¹² Because of this “the relationship of churches to society went through significant changes,” most notably, “was the collapse or substantial erosion of much of the church culture that had been built up over a period of two hundred years.”¹¹³ The idea of “shared public morals” were replaced with individualistic decisions based on private judgement and pleasure, and, maybe most significant, “people no longer assumed that the church had anything relevant to say on matters beyond personal faith.”¹¹⁴ For most of U.S. society, “moral truth had been relativized, and society became individualized,” thus completing the full disestablishment of the U.S. church from a functional Christendom, to a Deistic civil religion, to an increasingly post-Christian society.¹¹⁵

Specific Developments Impacting Christ UMC

With a general understanding of societal changes in Western and American culture, the next task is a look at the parallel developments in the American church that have particularly impacted Christ UMC in Jackson, MS. These specific developments are the lingering Christian culture, the corporate, bureaucratic denominational structure, the church as volunteer society, the parachurch movement and the rise of the megachurch.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 54.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 54-55.