

Since the 1970s, liberal American Catholics have sustained a Reform Movement to counteract the conservative drift of the Vatican and to preserve and expand on the reforms of Vatican II. The Reform Movement, composed of highly educated, middle-class Catholics, is intent on creating an alternative model of church that exemplifies Vatican II's open, receptive attitude toward the modern world. In response to backlash from church officials, the movement has increasingly abandoned the effort to reform Roman Catholicism from within, and has moved in a sectarian direction by creating independent worship communities. The movement faces a precarious future due to its rapidly aging membership and the unstable nature of its newly-formed communities.

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