Events in the intervening period have not only confirmed, but have strengthened the perception of a conservative trend in the nation. Politically, the turn taken by the 1976 primary election campaigns has been widely interpreted as reflecting a resurgent conservatism. Juridically, the Warren Supreme Court has been replaced by the Burger Court. The quiescent, career-oriented student generation of the late seventies is strikingly contrasted with the activist students of the late sixties.

Many commentators are agreed that the cyclical swing in the direction of personal libertarianism, with emphasis on the rights of individuals, reaction against traditional social values, espousal of value-systems emphasizing self-gratification, and optimism regarding human nature, probably reached its apogee at about the end of the sixties. The pendulum is now seen to be swinging in the other direction toward a more societally-oriented definition of liberties with emphasis on the rights of larger groups over against individuals, recovery of certain traditional values, and a less optimistic view of human nature. Public pornography has probably reached its outer limits and beginnings of a movement in the other direction can be discerned. Sexual license and experimentation with alternatives to monogamous marriage and nuclear families are beginning to decline. These trends will probably accelerate as the reality of the conservative tide is increasingly recognized and affirmed. The chaplaincy of 2000 AD will probably reflect a conservative rather than a libertarian and individually-oriented social climate.

As reflected in the armed forces, this social climate is likely to take the form of lessening attention to the rights, comforts, and gratifications of the individual soldier, and a deemphasis of “human goals” types of programs. Instead, the emphasis will be on the well-being of the larger group, on discipline and a recovery of traditional military values. The assumption of the author’s 1975 study seems increasingly confirmed:

This army will be marked by professionalism, with far less emphasis than in the past on crash programs to deal with massive social problems such as drug abuse, race tensions and dissidents. As the climate of professionalism becomes more pervasive, Army authorities will perceive it as less and less necessary to devote attention to ‘people problems’.

The churches, as leading opinion makers, were among the early social institutions to reflect the conservative trend. While religious conservatism and social conservatism are by no means identical, they express similar dynamics. Critics may not agree on reasons as to Why the Conservative Churches are Growing,