

# PAUL B. HENRY INSTITUTE

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FOR THE STUDY OF CHRISTIANITY AND POLITICS

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## Former Michigan Speaker of the House Delivers Annual Henry Lecture

Former Michigan House Speaker Paul Hillegonds delivered the fifth annual Paul B. Henry Lecture on the Calvin College campus on April 30, 2001. Paul Hillegonds was a close friend of Paul Henry's in the Michigan legislature, in which they served contemporaneously from 1979 through 1985. While Paul Henry moved to the U.S. House that year, Hillegonds remained in the state legislature until 1996, and served as House Speaker from 1993 through 1996.

Each spring the Paul B. Henry Institute sponsors the annual Henry Lecture. The Lecture is intended to bring a prominent Christian political practitioner to Calvin's campus for a public lecture that addresses some aspect of the interplay between religion and politics. If he or she is able, the lecturer will spend a day on campus and in the community, meeting with students in small, informal groups or in their classes, getting to know other faculty and staff in the Calvin community, and visiting with interested citizens in the Grand Rapids area. In this way, the Institute hopes to inspire Calvin students and the community to actively integrate a Christian worldview and practical politics by presenting, over time, a variety of examples how such integration and action operate.

In an effort to make these lectures as nonpartisan or bipartisan as possible, the Institute has established a rotation of sorts, with a Republican delivering the address one year and a Democratic official the next. U.S. senators who had just completed elected public service gave each of the first three lectures. Those lecturers were Mark Hatfield



of Oregon in 1997, followed by Paul Simon of Illinois and Dan Coats of Indiana. U.S. Representative John Lewis of Atlanta, Georgia delivered the 2000 lecture. Mr. Hillegonds was the first state-level official, and probably the closest personal friend of Paul Henry, to be invited to deliver a lecture.

Hillegonds devoted the first portion of his address to defining a faithful approach to politics, and how he saw Paul Henry exemplifying that approach. Describing politics as "the process that occurs whenever two or more people are trying to transform conflicting ideas into a consensus," Hillegonds noted that each of us participate in politics in some arena. As such, persons of faith are unavoidably "political," and must claim that activity as legitimate Christian endeavor. Hillegonds noted that "Paul Henry understood this very well. For him, the question was not whether faith-centered people should become involved in politics. He was called to be involved – and constantly struggled with how best he could fulfill that

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calling... Paul at heart was a teacher and a healer who joyfully engaged friends and opponents in a dialogue about ideas. In an invitational, nonjudgmental manner, he shared his thinking and listened to different viewpoints. Constituents and colleagues wouldn't always agree with Paul's conclusions, but we respected the values, discipline, openness and self-effacing sense of humor he employed to study and resolve policy questions."

Hillegonds went on to recall Paul Henry's appeal to his state legislative colleagues, noting that "we also respected

Paul because he genuinely liked us and the diversity we represented. He was intelligent, highly moral and a rising political star, but he relished serving an institution and constituency whose members had a wide range of skills, values, life experience and perspectives."

The second portion of Hillegonds' lecture was devoted to encouraging thoughtful lay involvement in politics. In his view, extremist groups have poisoned the political waters for many citizens, creating widespread disillusion just

when involvement in critical. He said such groups have laid fertile ground for political parties today to exploit easy issues of passion that divide the public, rather than work on complex questions of wide public concern. Christian individuals and groups should be able to rise above the temptations of exploitation and vitriol, but too often they have not, Hillegonds claimed.

Former Speaker Hillegonds' very personal and heartfelt message was well received by a warm and appreciative Gezon Auditorium crowd.

## Cooperative Clergy Study Project

The Henry Institute is coordinating a major cooperative study project of the role that clergy play in American religious and public life. In the summer of 2000, a group of scholars met at Calvin College to create a questionnaire that could be used to measure the social and political attitudes of clergy across a wide variety of Protestant and non-Protestant denominations.

Each of the scholars attending the Calvin meeting was assigned the task of examining ministers from one or more denominations. This was done through mailing a questionnaire with a common core of questions to random samples of clergy from each of the denominations involved. Following the meeting, several other scholars have also become involved in the project. Although the questionnaire mailed to the clergy was fairly extensive, preliminary returns have been generally encouraging. Ultimately, the data sets created for each denomination will be merged to form one data set that should prove to be an invaluable resource for scholars studying the social and political role of clergy. The first public presentations of some of the denominational data occurred at the biennial

meeting of Christians in Political Science meeting in June. Panels at the American Political Science Association in late August, the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion in October, and the Southern Political Science Association in early November were also devoted to papers related to the study.

The scholars and denominations involved in the project include:

*Sherrie Steniner-Aeschelman* and  
*Donald Gray*, Eastern College,  
**American Baptist**

*James Guth*, Furman University,  
**Southern Baptist Convention**

*Sue Crawford*, Creighton University,  
*Melissa Gilbert*, Washington  
College, and *Laura Olson*, Clemson  
University, **Disciples of Christ**

*Mel Hailey*, Abilene Christian  
University, **Churches of Christ**

*Dan Hofrenning*, St. Olaf University,  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in  
America**

*Jeff Walz* and *Steve Montreal*,  
Concordia University, Wisconsin,  
**Missouri Synod Lutheran Church**  
*Beau Weston*, Centre College,  
**Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

*Brent Nelson*, Furman University,  
*Beverly Busch*, Georgia  
Southwestern University,  
**Presbyterian Church in America**  
*Corwin Smidt*, Calvin College,  
**Reformed Church in America**  
*James Penning*, Calvin College,  
**Christian Reformed Church**  
*John Green*, University of Akron,  
**United Methodist Church** and the  
**Unitarian Universalist Church**  
*Margaret Poloma*, University of  
Akron, **Assemblies of God**  
*Lyman Kellstedt*, Wheaton College,  
**Mennonite Church and Non-  
Denominational Clergy**  
*Chris Gilbert*, Gustavus Adolphus  
College, **Episcopalian Clergy**  
*Linda Beail* and *Greg Crow*, Pt. Loma  
Nazarene University, **Nazarene  
Church**  
*Paul Djupe*, Denison University, **Rabbis**  
*Ted Jelen*, UNLV, and *Mary Bendyna*,  
Georgetown University, **Roman  
Catholic Church**  
*Eric McDaniel*, University of Michigan,  
and *Khari Brown*, University of  
Michigan, **Church of God in Christ**  
and **African Methodist Episcopal**

# Marching to Different Tunes?

## Religious Groups and the 2000 Election

The presidential election of 2000 proved (at times) to be both fascinating and troubling. Its extremely close nature in terms of popular and electoral college votes made the post-election, if not the general election, campaign a contentious one.

The election was unusual for another reason—the prominence of religion. From discussions of one’s favorite political philosopher and appearances at Bob Jones University to the historic nomination of a Jew to a national ticket and discussions of the role of faith-based organizations in the delivery of social services, religion was in the news throughout the campaign.

Using data from the Survey of Religion and Politics, a national survey of over 4000 people conducted by the University of Akron for the Ethics and Public Policy Center in the spring and again in late fall of 2000, this essay briefly discusses the ways in which members of different religious traditions related to the presidential election campaign of 2000—in terms of their vote choice, reactions to President Clinton, positions on policy issues, and stances with regard to social theology.

### Religious Traditions and Politics

Over four-fifths of the Bush vote came from an alliance of evangelical Protestants and mainline Protestants, coupled with substantial minority support from Roman Catholics (see table). In contrast, the Gore vote was composed mainly of a coalition of minority faiths, especially black Protestants, Jews, and seculars, as well as a bare majority of Roman

Catholics and a substantial minority of mainline Protestants. Together, these groups provided Gore with about two of every three Democratic ballots cast.

The extent to which one participates within a particular religious tradition helps to shape such support. For example, regular church-attending evangelical Protestants (85%), mainline Protestants (65%) and Roman Catholics (57%) supported Bush in greater numbers proportionately than did less regular church-attending evangelical Protestants (55%), mainline Protestants (57%) and Roman Catholics (41%) (data not shown). This emerging divide in American politics, one based on religious commitment, is serving to establish a new religious order to American politics, transforming, if not replacing, the old ethno-cultural align-

ment of American politics based on religious affiliation.

Still, religious traditions continue to play an important role in contemporary American politics by fostering certain values and framing political issues in particular ways. This can be inferred from the varied reactions expressed by members of the major traditions to both President Clinton and issues of public policy. Evangelical Protestants were the least likely to rate Clinton as having done an excellent or good job, while an overwhelming majority of black Protestants rated Clinton’s job performance as excellent or good. Far fewer members of all the traditions rated President Clinton’s personal life in such positive terms (less than one in five in each tradition other than Black Protestants).

Similarly, members of different religious traditions expressed different policy positions during the course of the 2000 election campaign. These differences were evident in the expected places—e.g., abortion and gay rights—as well as in other issues such as hunger, health insurance, and the environment, and often in surprising degrees (often 25% or more).

At the same time, however, there were certain issues that served as “wedge” issues in the campaign—issues that worked against the traditional alignments of specific religious traditions. Two issues in the 2000 campaign may be potentially important in softening the strong tie between black Protestants and the Democratic Party as well as ties between mainline Protestants and

	EP	MP	BP	RC	Jew	Sec
<b>Presidential Vote 2000</b>						
Bush	75	60	4	47	23	35
Gore	25	40	96	53	77	65
<b>Clinton Ratings</b>						
Job (excellent/good)	42	49	82	58	59	57
Personal (excellent/good)	9	9	45	15	16	20
<b>Public Policy Positions</b>						
Abortion—solely woman’s choice	24	38	43	33	59	58
Homosexuals—equal rights	48	64	63	69	80	75
Gov. should spend more to fight hunger/poverty	46	43	63	47	70	48
U.S. should have comp. nat’l health insurance	36	36	55	43	51	46
Strict rules to protect the environment needed	46	60	43	53	73	58
Gov. should provide vouchers	46	33	56	46	20	30
Gov. money for rel. orgs. to provide soc. services	43	36	65	46	25	35
<b>Social Theology</b>						
Separate from world to avoid evil	9	8	19	8	15	19
Involvement in world to oppose evil	91	92	81	92	85	81
Foster social justice	20	29	41	34	36	31
Foster individual morality	80	71	59	66	64	69
Better to compromise	31	53	34	49	80	52
Better to stick to your principles	69	47	66	51	20	48

EP=Evangelical Protestants  
MP=Mainline Protestants

BP=Black Protestants  
RC=Roman Catholics

Jew=Jewish  
Sec=“Seculars”

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the Republican Party are those of vouchers and the public funding of religious groups for provision of social services. Governor Bush campaigned harder on these two issues than did Vice-President Gore, but black Protestants proved to be the most supportive of both policy positions, while mainline Protestants were among the least supportive.

Finally, with regard to social theology, members of different religious traditions express mixed levels of agreement on various matters of how religion should relate to politics. An overwhelming majority within each tradition believes that religious people “should involve themselves in the world as much as possible to oppose evil,” and especially surprising was the number of evangelical Protestants who agreed—given their historic ties to fundamentalism and its separatist tendencies. Similarly, an overwhelming majority of members in each religious tradition indicated that “religious communities should concentrate on fostering individual morality” rather than promoting social justice. Even mainline Protestants, with their historic link to the Social Gospel movement, were reluctant to express social justice views, as only one out of three mainline Protestants did so.

On the other hand, most Jews and a bare majority of mainline Protestants and seculars (as well as about half of Roman Catholics) stated that, in politics, it is “better to compromise to achieve something tangible” rather than “sticking to your principles even at the risk of achieving nothing,” but only about a third of evangelical and black Protestants did so.

Thus, today, evangelical Protestants are fairly comfortable with the idea that religious groups (though not necessarily churches as institutions) should be engaged in political action, becoming more “mainstream” in their political perspectives. However, they are more likely than others (except black Protestants) to emphasize principle over accomplishment in terms of compromise.

### **Diversity Among Evangelical Protestants**

While these “tendencies” of members of the six religious traditions serve to differentiate such groups from each other, it is also true that there is considerable variation politically within each tradition (with the exception of partisanship among black Protestants). Evangelical Protestants, for example, are frequently treated as a monolithic bloc of voters, but considerable diversity around the “central tendency” is evident within the ranks of evangelicals.

In order to tap into this diversity, we divided our evangelical Protestants (based on denominational affiliation) into four groups based on their characterization of their home congregation: fundamentalist evangelicals (25%); evangelical evangelicals (23%); pentecostal evangelicals (26%); and liberal evangelicals (26%).

When we divide them up this way, it is clear that evangelicals are far from a monolithic group (data not shown). Pentecostal evangelicals were the least likely of the four groups of evangelicals to cast their ballot for George Bush and to support homosexual rights.

Evangelical evangelicals were the most likely to vote for Bush and least supportive of President Clinton. Liberal evangelicals were the most supportive of President Clinton, and the most likely to state that homosexuals should have the same rights as other Americans. Except for the issues of abortion and vouchers, evangelical evangelicals were the least likely of the four groups to favor governmental action, while liberal evangelicals were generally the most likely to do so.

Interestingly, evangelical evangelicals were among the most vocal supporters of vouchers as a means to pay for children to attend non-public schools (including religious schools), but they were the least supportive of public funding for religious organizations to provide social services. Thus, while evangelical evangelicals were the most likely evangelical group to support Bush at the polls, they were the least likely of all evangelicals to support one of his key proposals with regard to the role that religion should play in American public life.

### **Conclusion**

The religious underpinnings of American politics are not likely to disappear soon, as both the Republican and Democratic parties have strong religious constituencies. In 2000, the religious order of American politics produced relative partisan parity. As a result, any future electoral shifts among religious groups, or the emergence of new religious forces within American public life, will have major political significance.

## **Graduate Student Workshop**

The Henry Institute hosted a week-long workshop on survey research and American religion, July 21-28, 2001. The workshop was directed by Corwin Smidt, Executive Director of the Henry Institute, along with James Guth of Furman University and Lyman Kellstedt of Wheaton College. It is anticipated that this workshop will become a regular program of the Henry Institute and that it will host such a workshop on a biennial basis (during the summers of odd-number years). The following grad-

uate students were selected to participate in this year's workshop:

*Kedron Bardwell*, political science,

University of Iowa

*Kevin den Dulk*, political science,

University of Wisconsin

*Jean McSween*, political science,

University of Virginia

*Brian Newman*, political science,

Duke University

*Michael Rodriguez*, political science,

Temple University

*Mark Caleb Smith*, political science,

University of Georgia

*Katherine Stenger*, political science,

University of Washington

*Kraig Beyerlein*, sociology, University

of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

*Kevin Dougherty*, sociology, Purdue

University

*Tim Fisher*, sociology, University of

Southern California

*Elizabeth Pullen*, sociology, Drew

University

# Institute Publishes Paul Henry Book

The Henry Institute has published an edited volume commemorating the life and work of its namesake, the late Paul B. Henry. *Serving the Claims of Justice: The Thoughts of Paul B. Henry*, is a nearly 300-page collection featuring both the wisdom of Paul Henry and the thoughts of others who worked with him over the years in his academic and political careers.

The primary materials in the book are selected articles Paul wrote and speeches he gave that discuss the interplay between Christianity and politics. These fourteen items, arranged in three sections, cover a variety of themes. Section one contains Paul's earliest writing on Christianity and politics. It contains two items dated before his arrival at Calvin College in 1970, but most of the selections are materials from his Calvin years. A common theme in this section is criticism of evangelicals for a deadened social conscience. Sometimes gently, sometimes pointedly, Paul calls evangelicals to expand their concern beyond individual salvation to wider social problems, particularly racial injustice and poverty.

Section two is knit together by a more practical thread. Most, but not all, of these items were written during Paul's time in public service, first in the state legislature and then in the U.S. Congress. Focusing on practical politics, in many of these excerpts Paul chides politically conservative Christians about their style of activism, their view on the legitimacy of politics, and the issues on which they focus. Other articles strongly defend America's governmental and political

party systems and individuals' involvement in them. Finally, the section includes a variety of documents that reveal how Paul thought about and acted on the issues he faced in elected office. These items illustrate how Paul applied his understanding to daily controversies. There are constituent letters, House floor speeches, short articles or speeches intended for secular audiences, and other texts that show how Paul thought through policy questions. The issues run from the obscure, such as detailed requirements for federal arts funding, to the momentous, such as starting a war in the Persian Gulf. They also run from the intriguing, such as military aid to the Nicaraguan "contras" to the embarrassing, such as Paul's entanglement in the House bank scandal of the early 1990s.

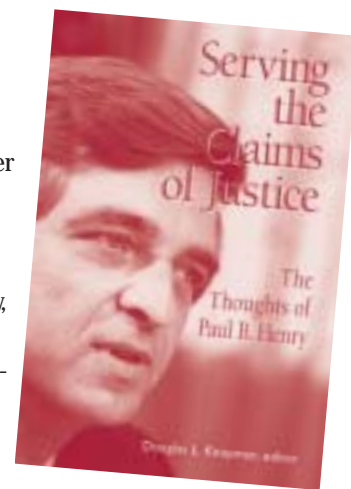
Two articles, which make up most of section three, present broader contributions to the integration of Christian faith and politics. "Reflections on Evangelical Christianity and Political Action" and "Morality vs. Moralism" were talks given in 1989 at Messiah College and Pepperdine University, respectively. Together with the articles "Love, Power, and Justice" and "Christian Perspectives on Power Politics" in the first section of the book, they present Paul's most developed thinking on morality and Christian action in politics.

At the end of each of the three major sections are personal essays by Paul's academic and political colleagues. Essayists include Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, U.S. representatives Fred Upton of Michigan and David Price of North

Carolina, Fuller Theological Seminary President Richard Mouw, Pepperdine University professor Steven Monsma, and Calvin political science professor Jim Penning. Nationally syndicated columnist David S. Broder was kind enough to contribute the foreword. Henry Institute Program Director Doug Koopman edited the entire volume, and contributed introductions to each of the three sections, and a general introduction and conclusion.

All of the materials for the book were obtained from the Paul Henry Archives housed at the Calvin College library. Calvin College senior Ryan Hunt worked during the summer of 2000 to assist Koopman with archival research and other administrative details necessary to complete the volume.

The highly accessible book will be of obvious interest to friends of Paul Henry. It is also suitable for scholars of religion and politics, and for the educated layperson interested in the interplay between religion and politics. As Koopman states in the introduction, *Serving the Claims of Justice* "honors a dear friend to many, an unforgettable man who, as a Christian, was a gifted political scientist and politician. As such it is intended to faithfully illustrate to others how Paul Henry integrated his own vibrant Christian faith with high level public service."



## Symposium on Religion and Politics

The Henry Institute is sponsoring a symposium on religion and politics, May 3-4, 2002, with the intent of holding such an event on a biennial basis each spring in even number years thereafter. The purpose of these symposia is to provide a distinct opportunity for scholars working in this field of study to come together in order to present papers related to their

current research, foster personal and professional networks, facilitate joint research endeavors, and learn about research opportunities in the field. The symposium is open to both faculty and graduate students (perhaps even some undergraduate student panels) across different disciplines of study (e.g., political scientists, sociologists, historians, reli-

gious studies). The nature of presentations may be either normative or empirical in emphasis and may relate to different facets of analysis related to the topic (e.g., political philosophy, political history, comparative politics, electoral politics, constitutional law, sociology of religion). For more information contact Henry Institute Director Corwin Smidt.

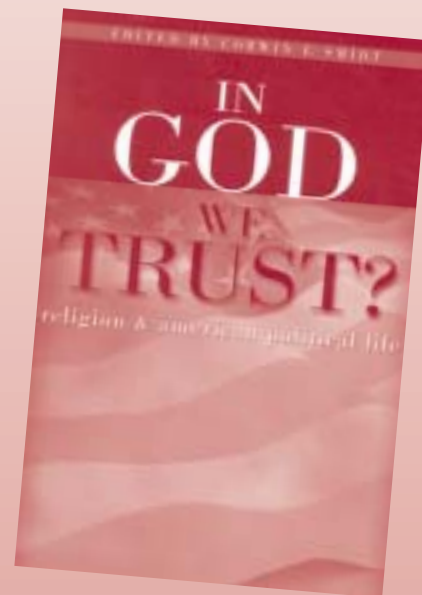
## New Edited Volume on American Politics

Along with *Serving the Claims of Justice: The Thoughts of Paul Henry*, edited by Program Director Doug Koopman, the Henry Institute is responsible for another volume on the interplay between religion and politics.

Corwin Smidt, Executive Director of the Henry Institute, edited *In God We Trust? Religion in American Political Life*, published by Baker Academic Press. The volume is intended to serve primarily as a supplementary text in introductory college courses on American politics in that it is structured to parallel most commonly used political science textbooks in American politics. Each chapter explores

the relationship between religion and American politics for each standard topic addressed in such courses (e.g., Political Culture, Public Opinion, Congress).

Ted Jelen of the University of Nevada-Las Vegas notes “Corwin Smidt has truly assembled an all-star lineup. The studies in *In God We Trust?* represent a variety of Christian perspectives, and yet are all balanced, nuanced, and carefully presented. The works contained in this collection will provide first-rate introductions to students approaching these topics for the first time and also contain valuable insights for more advanced scholars.”



## Henry Website

For more information on Institute publications and other activities of the Henry Institute and its staff, be sure to see our website at [www.calvin.edu/henry](http://www.calvin.edu/henry) or contact us at **(616) 957-6870**

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